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The Smell of Petroleum: Health, Insecurity, and Citizenship in "Revolutionary" Ecuador

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The Smell of Petroleum: Health, Insecurity, and Citizenship in "Revolutionary" Ecuador

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by

Nicholas Scott Welcome

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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by

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Dr. Juliet McMullin, Chairperson

This project explores how the environmental and health impacts of energy production challenge emergent discourses of citizenship in Ecuador. I follow the relationship between Ecuador's national petroleum refinery and the city of Esmeraldas, a largely afro-descendant and historically marginalized community, as the nation negotiated a national structural transition that would test the promise of a "revolutionary" future, new substantive citizenship rights, and new imaginaries of state care. The petroleum industry represents a critical planning struggle for Esmeraldas; originally built outside of the city the refinery complex is now surrounded by shantytowns that are continuously exposed to contaminated air and water. While the city was promised a golden age of development, their three decades long experience with the oil industry has left them with a population explosion, mass unemployment, decaying infrastructure, and a public health crisis. However, in 2006 residents were hopeful for a fundamental change as a newly elected government promised to embed social justice and well being into the national conceptualization of citizenship. This "Citizen's Revolution,"

pledged to redistribute Ecuador's energy resources to improve quality of life and the quality of citizenship for all Ecuadorians. However, this project illustrates that while the new political regime intends to promote wellbeing through energy production, corporate logics continue to shape the biopolitical processes of making environmental contamination and its health effects in/visible, even as Esmeraldeños employ novel conceptualizations of citizenship and spectacular protests to push for a livable environment.

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We're All Contaminated…

Early one morning in October 2009 I crossed the city of Esmeraldas on my way to interview a career employee of PetroEcuador, Ecuador's national petroleum company. The path from the city center to the Villas de CEPE, the gated community that houses workers of Ecuador's largest petroleum refinery, is a study in contrasts. As you traverse the urban milieu, you move through crowded, chaotic streets of densely packed apartment buildings in the city Center, to sprawling autoconstructed shantytowns of low lying homes in the Southern Barrios, before finally arriving at a fortified oasis of calm near the edge of the municipality. Through the trip, the presence of the State Refinery of Esmeraldas looms on the horizon, expelling a stream of smoke and flame from its principal chimney. On humid days, the particulate matter, gases, and ash produced by the refining process interact with the landscape and climate, generating an unmistakable haze that envelops the marginalized barrios surrounding the oil complex. For locals, this industrial miasma fundamentally shapes their experience of the city and the state, as contamination indexes the ill health, disasters, and social conflict created by the presence of the industrial complex.

Nonetheless as you cross the bridge at the barrio La Propecia, the urban area undergoes a transition; pollution recedes to the background and honking and exhaust

spewing taxis, cars, and buses virtually disappear, to be replaced with an empty road abutted by a long unadorned wall separating the gated community from the rest of the Esmeraldas. Entering the Villas through its lone security post, the changeover from urban cacophony to a sea of calm is complete. Where in the city the oil industry is characterized by disorder, smells, and dust, inside of the Villas tranquility reigns. Light breezes blow between large white A-Frame and small colorful ranch style houses that sit evenly spaced across a meticulously kept lawn. Interspersed among the homes are athletic fields, an elementary school, and a community center. All in all it is a material representation of the good life that labor for the state can bring to a select group of employees privileged enough to work within a critical industry. The villas embody the imaginaries of care for those entrusted with maintaining oil production and protecting the interests of the state.

Order and disorder, cacophony and silence, stillness and wind were the perfect juxtapositions of processes that shaped the topic of my interview that day, worker health. While the refinery is central to the national economy, local residents question whether its construction in 1976 has had a positive impact on the city. When the state decided to build the facility, they made extravagant promises based on its potential to make Ecuador into a "modern" nation. It was supposed to generate thousands of jobs, draw other industries, and make the long marginalized and largely Afro-Ecuadorian community a "pole of development." However after more than three decades the refinery never met its potential, instead becoming infamous for industrial disasters and quotidian contamination that freely spreads to the communities surrounding the oil complex. Everyday residents describe the refinery as a monster in their midst, as they are exposed to volatile events

and more insidious forms of risk. Petroleum workers, *petroleros*, were locally understood to be the exception to this generalized uncertainty, but the conversation I would hold that morning would force me to reconsider what I thought I knew about the industry.

As I arrived at the Villas I met Bernardo, a fit but older afro-Ecuadorian worker, who had the morning off. He picked me up in a used but immaculately kept SUV and drove me to his house inside the gated community. At the time, my research was primarily concerned with exploring how health shaped local understandings of the community's relationship to the state. My primary goal was to track the conceptualizations of health of everyday Esmeraldeños, but I had unexpectedly managed to develop a number of relationships within the PetroEcuador workforce in the first few months of my fieldwork. The broadening focus of my project had the potential to reveal connections between the concerns of privileged worker-citizens, the petroleros, and everyday residents, who felt they received no benefits from the oil industry at all. Bernardo and I introduced ourselves to each other and made small talk. While Bernardo looked fit and happy, as he enjoyed the benefits of public employment, he had in fact developed several health conditions that he linked to more than thirty years of laboring in the refinery. At first he was relaxed, he sat in his yard wearing a plain PetroEcuador polo shirt and bright Bermuda shorts. Nevertheless as we moved to begin the interview he immediately surprised me; as he sat down he exclaimed, "Well I'm impotent!" While I sat there dumbfounded at the overt honesty, he began listing his diagnosed and presumed conditions, the symptoms, and his prescribed medications. He was a thin, healthy looking man, but he had contracted diabetes over his career and he believed he had a

heart condition; he presumed that one of the two had led to his impotency. In an industrial milieu, where masculinity is a critical part of the identity of workers, the admission was completely unexpected.[1] As we moved into the actual interview, his willingness to share his story diminished. His responses to my questions were clipped and getting him to expand on what his thoughts was like pulling teeth. In the short interview it became clear that his health was a major frustration and he kept reaffirming that once he retired in a couple of short years, he would finally be able to move away from Esmeraldas, escaping the refinery and its contamination and hopefully living a healthier life. The refinery gave him healthcare, but it did not seem to be improving his condition, making leaving the city altogether his best option. Whether he moved to La Union, an agricultural community two hours from the coast, or Tonsupa, a beach community to the south, it did not matter, he just wanted to be outside of the city, away from the refinery, where there was "clean air" and "good wind." After half an hour I powered off my audio-recorder; he stood up, stretched and then started repeating, "We're all contaminated! We're all contaminated! We're all contaminated!" over and over, waving his hands in frustration before sitting down and slumping in his chair.

In that moment the promise of petroleum embodied in labor looked very different. Where residents saw workers as a favored class, here was a man who saw himself withering away as industrial work stole his health. Bernardo was supposed to be one of the few who enjoyed the good life in Esmeraldas, as petroleum supported a lifestyle that

[1] A vast majority of employees at the refinery are male. Most female workers are in administrative positions and at the time of my fieldwork workers asserted that there were only two women working in operations. Petroleros estimated around 95% of the workforce were male.

most locals can only dream of. Health dominated our discussion, but it was also apparent that he was having larger issues with PetroEcuador itself. After Bernardo's declaration he calmed down, sipped some juice and we chatted a little more. On my way out he offered to give me a quick tour of the Villas. We hopped back into his SUV and he drove me past miniature neighborhoods that evoked 1960s American suburbia, past the workers private commissary, and finally to the furthermost corner of the complex, where a public gazebo stands between two halves of the mansion inhabited by the Superintendent of the refinery. After explaining the purpose of the place, he looked at me, laughed, and gestured back, "I don't come over here much, this part of the complex is full of snakes…" Where health was a significant worry, this comment alluded to another point of conflict for the workers; in the past two years, PetroEcuador had become something both familiar and strange.

In 2008, following a decade of political upheaval, newly elected president Rafael Correa Delgado, sponsored a new national constitution that promised to create stability by reconfiguring the meaning of citizenship to create just and sustainable development in Ecuador. Over the previous decade, Ecuador's political system had been repeatedly derailed by public unrest that forced six different presidents from office (Colloredo-Mansfield 2009, Becker 2011). Ecuadorians believed that the systematic unrest showed that their citizenship was without substance. Under the government project, popularly known as the Citizen's Revolution, Correa promised to recraft citizenship, so that all Ecuadorians would benefit from their relationship to the state (Acosta and Martinez 2009). Citizenship would become a status that reaffirms belonging within the state,

promoting well-being. A critical component of this pledge was the promise to redistribute state resources, such as its oil wealth, which required critical reforms within PetroEcuador. The reforms in PetroEcuador challenged Bernardo's subjectivity as both a worker and a citizen. Where his heath problems weakened him physically, changes in the corporation were sapping his faith in the state, making him want to abandon the life he had built over the previous three decades. In this environment of "revolutionary" change, where citizenship is supposed to generate well-being, how did reforms provoke such frustrations?

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Petroleum is a substance that embodies the tensions of modernity. Many imagine petroleum as having nearly alchemical properties; as oil sublimates through material states people regard it as a blessing, creating modernity as it is transformed into energy, money, infrastructure, and development. However, many others experience oil as a curse, a modernity based on false consciousness and mystification that saps the strength of the state, as the petroleum industry corrodes democracy, sickens communities, and provokes social conflict across the commodity chain (Mitchell 2009, Acosta 2009, Apter 2005: 14). Petroleum creates an illusory empire of signs that stems from the dominance of rent circulation over value production (Coronil 1997: 10). Petroleum makes us ignore its fundamental materialities, in favor of the secondary processes it generates. In Ecuador, oil is both sacred and profane, holding the potential to both engender new social relationships and destroy them. It holds a special place in the national imagination; the creation of the petroleum industry represented a transition in the economic base of the

state, drawing Ecuador into the neoliberal economy at a critical juncture of world history. The development of the industry in the 1970s effectively characterized energy production as eternally under crisis, as the whims of the market constantly flow between boom and bust. The movement between the two statuses means someone, either producer or consumer, is always in a crisis state. In the capital of Ecuador, Quito, oil has supported massive construction, state spectacles, and a range of governments, from liberal to conservative, and radical to populist. Petroleum is the lynchpin of the national economy, accounting for two-fifths of the national GDP, and over half their export income. The collective of government ministries, apartment buildings, and corporate offices that compose the Quiteño skyline represent the potential of oil to build, but in oil's sites of extraction its impact is lived very differently. In the Amazon, foreign companies like Chevron-Texaco, Occidental, and Shell have all employed questionable business and environmental practices (Sawyer 2004, Zeigler-Otero 2004, Kimerling 1991). Chevron in particular has been locked in a decades long dispute with Ecuador, as it has been accused of letting waste leak from processing sites, contaminating local aquifers and sickening both indigenous and mestizo communities. Oil waste is matter out of place (Douglas 1966), which forces communities to question their relationship to the state. The presence of waste and ill health has made many Ecuadorians feel as if they have a phantom citizenship as the state fails to intervene in industry to promote well-being (Sawyer 2001: 160).

The contrasts between the sites of government and the sites of exploitation may make the industry seem dichotomous, but this is an effect produced through the extremes

of representation. The commodity chain of oil is in fact a diverse process both creating and limiting the possibilities of citizenship and democracy as it traverses the nation (Mitchell 2009: 400). As oil crosses political nodes it has the potential to act in many ways across an assemblage (Mitchell 2009, Watts 2005, and Bennet 2010). Oil is vibrant matter, interacting with people, processes, and other things to produce wide-ranging affects (Bennett 2010: viii).

I drew attention to Bernardo in the introduction because his story illustrates the multiplicity of oil's power dynamics and official relationships shape his positionality as both a worker and a citizen. Labor, development, and health produce a variety of affects in relation to oil, as each has their own political nodes that must be navigated and each has a special relationship to the state. Bernardo's citizenship is not just shaped by labor, but the meeting of all of these other processes. The fact that he was being tested by the new constitution revealed both the potential for and liabilities of change. Workers and residents of the city are made subjects of a variety of processes that potentially alter how they understand their citizenship. In this text I would like to explore how Ecuador's national petroleum refinery draws together multiple affects, shaping the sociality of the coastal city of Esmeraldas to illustrate how petroleum structures the politics and experience of citizenship.

Between extraction and exploitation, crude oil faces a long journey, crisscrossing the nation through the OCP and SOTE pipelines as it makes its way to the coast for

processing or exportation (Valdivia 2008, Widener 2011).[2] Ironically as petroleum moves from the amazon to the coast, collecting in an ever-shrinking network of pipelines, we often lose track of its transformations and their multitude of affects.

A perfect representation of this phenomenon is the introduction of the documentary *Between Midnight and the Rooster's Crow*. This documentary, which focuses on the construction of the OCP pipeline, begins with an image of a canoe and follows the path of oil from the moment it is extracted from a well in the Amazon, trailing the liquid matter as it moves up to the Ecuadorian Sierra and back down the coast as it is transported via pipelines. But as the movie reaches the transition from the OCP to the refinery, the voyage suddenly end, cutting off a critical juncture in petroleum processing. What is left out of this vision of liquid energy is the site that condenses and pulls together all of these meanings, producing the dialectic between countervailing values; the movie erases the refinery of Esmeraldas. The refinery is a site that concentrates hydrocarbons, breaking apart chemical chains to create substances laden with value, both economical and symbolic. It is a complex with wide ranging social effects, revealing the potential of petroleum to do both good and bad. *Between Midnight* leaves out the most critical site of the petroleum commodity chain for Ecuador, as the refinery is the one location where the state can create added value. It shows crisis, the

[2] OCP – Oleoducto Crudos Pesados, the Heavy Oil Pipeline. SOTE – The TransAndean Pipeline. These are the two systems of transport to bring oil from the Amazon to the coast. The SOTE is state owned and was built in the 1970s. It transports, Napo Crude, the lighter of Ecuadorian crude. The OCP is owned by private, foreign corporations and transports Orient Crude, the heavier of Ecuadorian Crude. All crude transported via the OCP is refined outside of Ecuador due to its low quality.

environmental and human costs of oil, and value, the network of institutions and infrastructures that make oil, but loses the piece where these states connect.

In my dissertation I will ask how do different materialities of oil in Esmeraldas create possibilities and limitations for citizenship and democracy in Ecuador, as oil can engender sentiments of both belonging and distrust? I hope to illustrate how the meeting of oil infrastructures with urban communities draws together a multiplicity of affects through the diverse relationships the city has with energy. In the 1970s Esmeraldas became the focus of the state's development plan; the end of the banana boom had decimated the community and the state asserted that the construction of the refinery would make the municipality a critical industrial site for the entire nation. The proximity of Esmeraldas to Quito, the northern Amazonian oil fields, and the Panama Canal made it an ideal location to place the facility, the site of exportation for all crude and refined petroleum products from Ecuador (Cuero-Caicedo 2000: 60). However, while the petroleum industry would grow to dominate the national economy, many Ecuadorians feel that the oil trade does little to benefit them. Typically the broader narrative of oil in Ecuador has focused on the impact of these corporations, losing site of the presence of Ecuador's own national petroleum company, PetroEcuador, within these larger neoliberal processes. When Rafael Correa Delgado was elected president for the first time in 2006, he promised a radical departure from global neoliberalism as part of the search for an alternative economic model. His movement, the Citizens Revolution was supposed to instill a neo-socialist development model that would emphasize equality, harmony, and respect as critical components of the conduct of politics (Dietrich 2005, Acosta and

Martinez 2009). Following other leftist-populist leaders of Latin America like Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales, Correa argued that a socialist-inspired reconstitution of the nation would correct for decades of disenfranchisement that campesino, indigenous, and afro-Ecuadorian communities had faced, as citizenship had largely benefited those with connections rather than the citizenry at large. Correa promised to make citizenship substantive, a status that reaffirms membership in the state, rather than one that acts as a formalized modality of inequality (Holston 2008:16-22, Postero 2006). This revolutionary text promised to radically reconstitute the meaning of citizenship by creating new rights for communities to monitor and preserve their environment while widely redistributing the benefits of state industries to improve the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of all Ecuadorians. It promised to affirm Ecuadorians as healthy citizens, able to take agentive action to protect their health and environment, rather than being unhealthy subjects, who had to have proper action dictated to them (Briggs and Mantini-Briggs 2003: 10).

While the constitution promises a more substantive citizenship, it leaves open the question of what actually constitutes this substance? How does the state create new imaginaries of care and sentiments of belonging? I will focus on the interactions of different materialities of petroleum because each reveals different dynamics power and knowledge construction that shape the everyday lives of Esmeraldeños. Oil generates mobile regimes of governmentality as multiple bureaucracies structure the intersection of oil and citizenship (Foucault 2008: 77, Mitchell 2002). The practices and processes of governance shape the relationship between people and things modifying and directing the

conduct of the community (Rose 1999, Foucault 2008). For example, when we talk about petroleum we generally focus on its most common states, oil and gasoline, which allow for mobility, generate labor, and provide energy. However petroleum is a substance that can transition into multiple forms. It can be made into asphalt, becoming the sin qua non of modernist transportation infrastructure, it can be converted into electricity, changing the value of different modalities of energy production, or it can turn into waste, transforming into dangerous and corrosive substances as it interacts with the environment. Petroleum actually represents an assemblage of objects, which affect one another as they change form (Bennet 2010, Mitchell 2009). As the assemblage changes, oil produces affects; intersubjective responses that shape the sentiments of belonging and imaginaries of care that infuse citizenship (Schwenkel 2013, Thrift 2004, Bennet 2010, Bennet and Joyce 2010). I will draw attention to how the diffuse materialities of petroleum engender a variety of affects that intersect. In Esmeraldas this took on a distinctly negative quality as supporters of the president and supporters of other parties repeatedly entered into conflicts. Throughout this text I will refer to the production of *malestar* or malaise – the sense of decline, dread, and uncertainty engender by change. The variety of discourses and practices of change produced a largely negative sentiment as community members were articulated as corrupt or enemies of the state Conflict and cooperation are never just about oil, they illustrate how oil works as an agentive force, shaping health, infrastructure, citizenship, and well-being as the petroleum assemblage constantly shifts and as new affects contribute to the larger emotional environment of the city.

Ecuador's constitutional claim to well-being, health, and quality of life actually represents an interesting intersection of different materialities of oil as each physical state has different potential to engender positive and negative relationships to the nation. To illustrate the possibilities of oil to generate new relationships I will ask how has Ecuador's constitutional project and its promise of a new citizenship shaped the struggle to produce and maintain a healthy environment in Esmeraldas? In particular I am interested in how different iterations of oil underlie local conceptualizations of well-being. I believe that the spirit of the constitutional reforms sought to build stronger bonds throughout the state, promoting well-being by harnessing the positive relationship between health, economic possibilities, identity, and social relations (Adelson 2000, McMullin 2010). In this project I use the long-term struggle over the impact of the refinery to explore how residents understand citizenship, well-being, and political change. Over the life of the industrial facility Esmeraldas has grown exponentially and urban shantytowns now surround the complex. The fundamental problem of oil is that in all of its material forms it leaks or breaks down becoming a danger to people. Residents of the city live with perpetual industrial contamination; regular oil leaks and spills have polluted local water sources and smoke, particulate matter, and toxic gases emanate from the refinery exposing wide swaths of the city to heavy metals. Numerous environmental and epidemiological studies have shown that contamination exceeds international standards and residents believe that the rates of cancer, asthma, and other chronic illnesses are unusually high but lawsuits and attempts at political solutions have resulted in few substantive changes to industrial policy causing many residents to question what

their citizenship really means. They contend with pollution, the remainder of industrial processing, they cope with a lack of infrastructure, despite all asphalt for the nation being produced in Esmeraldas, and they have faced massive disasters, as industrial facilities have failed. While the diffuse materialities of oil shape their well-being, most residents see the refinery as a white elephant that does little to benefit them directly, creating a historical lack of faith in the government as the state fails to produce anything more than a spectral or phantom relationship. Oil can generate sentiments of belonging but it can also provoke distrust. Petroleum is always in the background of political discourse in the city. Sometimes Esmeraldas has erupted in mass rejection of the facility, but more often than not it becomes an issue that the political class uses to pull everyday support.

The new constitution created hope for change, as it promised to both reconfigure what the state's responsibilities to its citizens were by tying together a number of ideals for the economy, labor, environment, and health under the banner of "quality of life" and by giving cities and provinces mechanisms to monitor and regulate their own environments. I plan on using health and well-being, critical aspects of the new right to "quality of life," as an analytical lens to follow what the constitutional changes mean on the ground for everyday citizens and employees of the state petroleum company PetroEcuador. I will argue that even as the state has undergone a structural transition, corporate logics have continued to shape the cultural, legal, and scientific management of communities forcing Esmeraldeños to question the substance of their new citizenship rights. Rather than facilitating positive change in the petroleum industry the process of implementing the new constitution has created new legal and political obstacles to

change, forcing residents to employ spectacular public displays as they try to make the social practices that grant meaning to different materialities of oil legible to the national public. Each materiality of oil and its affects works through citizenship discourses as they become apprehended as issues of concern for governance, illustrating where citizenship creates agency, where it creates new constraints, and how the community finds new forms of agency in spite of these constraints. The fight for a better quality of life works through both oil and citizenship. I hope to show how the present discourse of citizenship still relies on formal modalities of power and where community members create substantive relationships despite the state's power dynamic. Together these will show the possibilities of "revolutionary" citizenship.

In this text I will be drawing from a number of strands of theory. Connecting them all is an interest in how different materials engender affect, sentiments, and politics of value (Bennet 2010, Mitchell 2009, Choy 2011, Schwenkel 2013). The material power of oil generates many types of relationships, which articulate with citizenship (Holston 2008, Postero 2006, Caldeira 2000, Ong 2006, Petryna 2002, Goldstein 2004, Briggs and Mantini-Briggs 2003). Citizenship is one imaginary of care engendered by oil, but in the processes of contesting and reifying citizenship, imaginaries of care take on multiple registers of meaning. When the community resists they often employ public spectacles that challenge the imaginaries of belonging in the state, creating a spectacular modality of citizenship. In other situations, when health, healthcare, and science are inserted into the debate citizenship adopts a biological frame of reference. When they try to convert these into official claims, they invoke a legal register for citizenship. The concept of well-being

is useful for drawing together how the spectacular, legal, and biological modalities of citizenship are employed in concert to shape local understandings of processes and to assert collective rights. They are used together in an attempt to grant greater collective and individual agency, as the impact of oil is translated through different economies of knowledge. The spectacle is particularly important when the other modalities of citizenship fail, as it has the possibility of constructing a broad audience of witnesses, forcing action. Each modality of citizenship seeks to make the diffuse processes that energy engenders legible to the state. How these are bracketed, recognized, or made visible, shape both the state and local knowledge of oil (Scott 1998, Povenelli 2011). In particular I am interested in the play between concepts like neoliberalism and neosocialism, visibility and legibility, and revolution and change, structural violence and biopolitics. Through the remainder of this text I will trace the affects of petroleum through its diffuse materialities, to illustrate how the oil assemblage articulates with citizenship to both create and constrain agency. Different modalities of citizenship and their interaction reveal the potential for change in Ecuador and its liabilities on the ground. In the following section I will offer a brief history of neoliberal oil in Ecuador to illustrate many common processes that shape local understandings of the impact of petroleum and the potential for change.

A Brief History of Neoliberal Oil in Ecuador

In Ecuador the petroleum industry is deeply associated with the advent of global neoliberalism. Prior to 1970 the Ecuadorian government had been actively researching

its energy potential with the support of the Gulf-Texaco Corporation. In the earlier half of the 1900s Ecuador has sought oil resources in the Amazon but failed to find away to make it a viable industry. The Amazon region was sparsely inhabited and extracting, exploiting, and transporting oil was deemed too difficult (Muratorio 1991). In the late 1960s the Ecuadorian government contracted with Gulf-Texaco to do a proper investigation of the quality and quantity of hydrocarbon resources Ecuador had. To this point there was only sporadic drilling in the Bay of Guayaquil. In 1967 Ecuador discovered its first exploitable petroleum deposits near the northern Amazonian community of Lago Agrio. In photos of the day, workers can be seen lighting a pool of exposed crude to test its quality. The fact that it turned into a roaring fire pouring out choking black smoke, confirmed that it was of a high enough quality to be transformed into oil and gasoline. Ecuador signed a twenty-year contract with Gulf-Texaco and neoliberal oil was born.

The state was dependent on private corporations, as Ecuador had no expertise in oil processing. Following the lead of the American company the government decided to build a pipeline from the Amazon to the Coast to export crude. Understanding that if they were to make any money from this venture Ecuador would need to develop a larger refining capacity. They chose to build a new refinery in the Coastal city of Esmeraldas. Quito had been strongly considered as the site of the refinery but concerns over possible water shortages made Esmeraldas the better location. Already a port, Esmeraldas was a marginalized community that could be refashioned to the needs of capitalist enterprise. In 1972 the state welcomed the first barrel with a massive ceremony that featured the

president Guillermo Lara, a military dictator who came to power in a bloodless coup, and the local bishop, Angel Babisotti, presiding over the filling of a wooden barrel with the first oil to pass through the SOTE pipeline. Everyday residents took oil and blessed themselves with it like it was holy water. It was a massive spectacle that was repeated with a military parade in Quito as they moved to entomb the first barrel "for all time." The spectacle is the first key process that I would like to draw attention to. They state was going out of its way to interpellate oil as a critical agent in the future of the nation. Petroleum would create modernity and turn Ecuador into an international power. Reflecting other similar processes, oil promised instant development and a new consumer culture (Apter 2005: 42-43). The state was trying to reimagine its relationship to its citizens, creating a broad audience to the spectacle of change (Anderson 1983, Goldstein 2004). They used bodily forms of memory making to incorporate residents in the imagined future of the state (Taylor: 1997, Connerton 1989). However just days after the first barrel ceremony, Esmeraldas would face its first industrial disaster as the pipeline suffered a minor explosion just outside of the city of Esmeraldas. Media reports asserted that two locals, a man and a woman, had been observing the construction of the critical piece of infrastructure, when one lit a cigarette causing a gas leak to ignite. No one was harmed but liquid crude leaked for days. The birth of the industry was baptized with a flood of leaking oil.

By 1976 the State Oil Refinery of Esmeraldas was in full operation as a group of young workers had gone to the Colombian refinery Barrancabermeja to train (Valdivia and Benavides 2012). The first few hundred workers were largely new to the city as few

Esmeraldeños managed to acquire fulltime or technical positions in the refinery. Decades later, workers would assert that the state feared employing too many locals due to their radical political tendencies. The refinery was supposed to make the lives of the Afro-Ecuadorian community better, but they were largely excluded from quality labor. The installation of the refinery did not mean the city itself would benefit from its presence and over the next few years tensions began to grow. The growth of the oil industry during a global intensification of neoliberal policies, subjected the nation to cycles of boom and bust. The 1973 oil crisis in the US intensified the fervor produced by oil, but subsequent price crashes illustrated that Ecuador had little buffer to deal with the volatility of international markets. In the 1970s two critical tendencies of neoliberalism became apparent in Esmeraldas. First, the national oil industry was a class-based project whose benefits bypassed the communities where it was extracted and refined. Wealth was consolidated by a few (Harvey 2005). Rather than oil wealth "flowing" through the nation, it illustrated a tendency to make hops, skips, and leaps, accumulating in the sites of commerce and government rather than the sites of production (Ferguson 2005). Secondly in the sites of production it created a gradation of rights as certain groups reaped the benefits of labor, while others coped with the burdens of industrial waste. Oil creates both positive and negative exceptions to neoliberalism that often became racialized in practice (Ong 2006). The industry was fundamentally built on a claim that the market is better at distributing resources and that it promotes a competitive pattern of individualized consumption (Ong 2006: 11).

By the early 1990s the problems of oil were becoming apparent across the nation. In the 1970s Texaco had signed an exploration and exploitation contract with the state creating a local subsidiary called TexPet. Under this deal Texaco was responsible for training Ecuadorians, developing oil resources in the Amazon, and ensuring that international standards were followed in production practices. However, over the twenty-year agreement residents in the amazon became concerned as flaring oil derricks burned gas, spreading smoke, and creating black rain. Oil sheens were seen on local water sources and the areas around abandoned wells leaked noxious waste (Kimerling 1991). Texaco closed down TexPet in 1992, but left hundreds of abandoned wells across the Amazon. The wells were often improperly constructed, lacking covers, and flooding into other water resources. Several studies pointed to the presence of unusual cancer levels, unusual cancer varieties, as well as a host of other conditions that locals believe are provoked by exposure to this dangerous substances (San Sebastian and Cordoba 1999, Hurtig and San Sebastian 2005). The combinations of corporate disregard and state inaction, created the feeling that residents of the amazon had a phantom citizenship Sawyer 2001:160). In 1993 residents of the amazon collectively sued Texaco, now part of Chevron, claiming the company blatantly disregarded industrial environmental standards (Sawyer 2002). The situation represented the combination of two critical processes. Oil created a structural violence that was dependent on a local iteration of biopower (Farmer 2003, Fassin 2007 Petryna 2002, and Foucault 1978).

Structural violence focuses on the individual embodiment of suffering as experienced within a particular social system (Galtung 1969 and Farmer 2003). For Paul

Farmer "suffering is structured by historically given (and often economically driven) processes that conspire – whether through routine, ritual, or as more commonly is the case, the hard surfaces of life – to constrain agency (2003: 40)." Social, political, and economic forces structure an individual's susceptibility for disease and structure their risk for more extreme forms of suffering i.e. violence (2003: 30). In this approach multiple social axes; race, gender, and socioeconomic position; must be simultaneously considered to break through barriers to the understanding of suffering that arise from geographic and cultural difference. As the name structural violence implies the primary concern here are with the social structures that cause and exacerbate health problems by offering "immodest forms of causality" for illness (Farmer 1999)." As culture is bracketed together with misperceptions about the community, there is a greater probability that a problem will be misrecognized (Povenelli 2011: 50). Here the neoliberal economy, embodied in the petroleum industry, structures risk. The importance of petroleum allows for its human impact to be ignored.

But its also not that simple, the corporation does not just ignore them, it goes out and seeks to dictate how their health will be made legible. Biopower is the process by which states began to build knowledge and exercise power over populations. Biopolitical policies are those that deal with the control over relations of people as far as they are members of the same species and over their relations with the environment (2003:245). These policies govern individual and social risk. An inherent aspect of this is that they define the normal and the pathological. Biopower is primarily concerned with the processes, practices, techniques, and technologies of governance. As the state denies the

health impact of oil processing, it redirects blame on the community. This creates toxic confusion as the law, science, and media each make claims about the causes of ill health (Auyero and Swinstun 2006). The community becomes confused as no one seeks to rectify the situation. Health is normative and symbolic; it is malleable and changeable through time and as our definitions of and understandings of the body change (Canguilhem 1989:199-200). Defining health through "normality" makes "unhealthy" or "diseased" a social signifier denoting the lack of discipline for an individual or a group and obscuring the social context of health. Health becomes something achievable through proper habits and economic and political constraints are not recognized. Since health is an achieved status it associated with individual success (McMullin 2005: 810). Those near oil sites are made legible as being already ill, rather than examining the processes that shape health.

In Esmeraldas this trend was just starting to become apparent. Over the early life of the refinery workers did not fear major accidents. Industrial fires would not become a concern until the late 1990s. The refinery occupied a space on the edge of the city. Over the years Esmeraldas would grow to surround the complex, but largely there were no major incidents until there was a gas leak in 1986 that caused panic in the community. Children from a school near the refinery fell ill and became nauseous as they were exposed to an unknown gas. There were no permanent effects of the event, but it made residents more wary of the industrial complex. Such processes provoke dysplacement, the creation of an uneasy relationship between them and the spaces where they live. The replacement of the root *dis* with *dys* emphasizes that people do not abandon these

communities in the face of pollution, rather the cope with an impaired environment and hope for a productive intervention (Davis-Jackson 2011: 607-608). Into the 1990s Esmeraldeños became more concerned as quotidian contamination changed the quality of their environment. Even as pollution became more and more visible, the state and PetroEcuador denied its presence. Between spills and leaks, a miasmatic atmosphere was created around the refinery that would have disastrous results in 1998, just as the refinery passed its estimated use-life. In February, a landslide would destroy an already corroded pipeline, eventually igniting an inferno that would bisect the city sowing widespread panic. Such events granted Ecuador the character of an absent-present state in Esmeraldas; one where the government makes substantial promises, raising expectations through public spectacles, yet where if a project is delivered on, it is slowed by tortuous negotiations through multiple scales of government and intrusive micromanagement, leaving the community with degraded results (2009: 19). Here the absence of state intervention had disastrous consequences.

Over the following decade, Ecuadorians would increasingly challenge the neoliberal economy. Massive marches and public spectacles of rejection would force out six presidents between 1996 and 2006. During this period the lawsuits against Chevron would move from court to court, never being settled. In the interim, dozens of new petroleum companies started operations in Ecuador, with many of the same results. Oxy, Perenco, and PetroBras would all have conflicts with the state. In 2006 President Rafael Correa was elected under the promise that he would fundamentally change the nature of the state. Correa promised a constitutional project. He asserted that citizenship was

meaningless in the neoliberal economy and he proposed an alternative inspired by an amalgamation of indigenous beliefs, 19th century liberalism, and socialism of the 21st Century. Correa contended that state resources were being badly mismanaged and he believed that the philosophy of *Buen Vivir*, Living Well would challenge the neoliberal hegemony. Living well was an interpretation of the indigenous philosophy *Sumak Kawsay*, which asserted that harmony, respect, and equality, were needed to make Ecuador a just state. This was both a rearticulation of citizenship and a just and sustainable plan for national development. It was a romanticized appropriation of a pre-capitalist world that would now be supported by capitalist flows of oil. The constitution would be approved in 2008, becoming Ecuador's 20th since 1830. Oil was a foundational element of Living Well. Correa asserted that state resources needed to be redistributed; Ecuador's oil wealth would be made available to all citizens as he promised to build new infrastructure, invest in Education, and create new social programs. PetroEcuador was identified for immediate changes. Correa instituted multiple plans; they decided to invest in a new refinery in the province of Manabi, they promised to defer from drilling in the Yasuni ecological reserve, a site of extreme biodiversity and home to uncontacted indigenous communities, and they try to diversify their energy infrastructure, moving away from diesel power generation to hydroelectric. Foreign corporations were forced to renegotiate their contracts and many were expelled from the country. These were all supposed to represent a new form of socialism, one that did not abandon capitalism, but which did challenge the worst aspects of neoliberalism. It put the state above

businessmen. The assertion that Ecuador was rejecting neoliberalism would become the hallmark of Correa's movement, the Citizens Revolution.

However, while the state tried to project radical change, a dramatic rupture from the past, it was challenged by its own discursive practices. Neoliberalism is often represented as a thing, rather than a heterodox set of practices, that are adapted in each new location. They claim to reject neoliberalism, but through the early years of the Correa administration, several incidents sowed doubt as the oil industry itself remained largely unchanged. The nation is still fundamentally dependent on oil, and to preserve the national economy, they act in a capitalistic manner. In practice, this critique of neoliberalism, like many scholarly critiques of the concept, can create a muddied obscured picture of what practices constitute neoliberalism on the ground (Shever 2012: 17-23 and Mains 2012: 6). Government discourse promotes their interpretation of socialism of the 21st century as neoliberalism's opposite, neosocialism. A problem with this representation of neoliberalism is that posits fixity – capitalism is considered neoliberal but statist or socialist practices are not. Drawing from JK Gibson Graham (1996) and Erik Olin Wright 2010, Appel argues that in reality all states are a mixture of capitalist, statist, and socialist policies (Appel 2013: p.c.). Following this conceptualization a state can be both neoliberal and neosocialist. The challenge is that in Ecuador the lexical employment of neoliberalism often represents a vulgarization of the concept as all social ills are attributed to it, obfuscating the relations and practices that can be deemed neoliberal, a tension that permeates present statecraft.

As the state moved to reform PetroEcuador an interesting event occurred. In 2011 Wikileaks released a trove of diplomatic cables from the United States. Cable 73671 contained an in-depth diagnosis of how the US embassy viewed PetroEcuador. Originally written in 2006 the cable declared the state company to be "fossilized," due to its complicated business structure, it was a "stone age" corporation due to its out of date practices and technologies, and "petrified" due to its large, unionized workforce. The cable listed several recommendations of what the company could due to become "modern." Streamlining the workforce, emphasizing efficiency, rooting out corruption, and privatizing to attract investment and new technologies, were at the forefront of the list. The Correa administration was challenging the US and supporting Wikileaks at this time. What was interesting though is that in fact Correa's recommendations for reforming the company were nearly identical to what the US embassy was suggesting. Correa claimed a radical difference from the US but he supported every suggestion short of privatization, raising the question of whether his tactics were fundamentally different than neoliberal industry.

Taken together these three moments highlight critical processes that petroleum continues to provoke and which will be repeated elements in the rest of my dissertation. First the state and community both continue to rely on spectacles to challenge the meaning of citizenship. They display their opinions on the streets creating a spectacular register for citizenship. Second citizenship is interpreted through health, granting citizenship a biological register. As residents have lived along the oil industry, their ill-health is often declared their fault, denying the role of environment. In Esmeraldas,

being Afro-Ecuadorian, largely determines how the state interprets your health. Third, both of these process depend on different tactics of trying to make pollution and ill-health legible and visible to the state in an attempt to come to a legal resolution of the problem. Even as pollution itself is seen, the state denies it has an impact. Lastly the tensions between the interpretation of Ecuador as neoliberal and Ecuador as neosocialist, frames how residents create expectations for the state. Each of these processes articulates with different materialities of oil, shaping how citizenship is understood on the ground as the collective agency implied in citizenship is contested, constrained, and co-opted.

A Note on Methods and Representation

In the course of this research I have engaged in extensive practices of participant-observation. From February 2009 to June 2010 I conducted my primary fieldwork in Esmeraldas, which was followed by a return research visit from June 2011 to September 2011. Over the course of this project I engaged in numerous ethnographic methods in a variety of locations that allowed me to observe how normal residents cope with the presence of the refinery. Originally my project was solely focused on how everyday community members understood their relationship to PetroEcuador. My concern was with how they dealt with both quotidian contamination and industrial disasters. However over the course of my fieldwork, I was able to develop relationships among the workforce, broadening the focus of my project. Where petroleros were commonly seen as the beneficiaries of oil development, workers themselves faced several critical issues that challenged their sense of belonging to the state. Over the term of this project I

interviewed 30 current and former employees of PetroEcuador and 41 residents from three different sectors of the city, the city Center, the neighborhood La Tolita, and a complex of neighborhoods to the east of the refinery, which I will collectively call La Propecia. The vast majority of the worker interviews were with men, as they dominate the PetroEcuador workforce. Women are generally relegated to administrative positions, but I did interview some. In the community I interviewed many more women, 26 compared to 15 men. Over the history of the refinery, women have repeatedly been at the forefront of community organizing and protest and historically women face the worst of pollution, as they are less likely to leave the area around the refinery during the day. Household chores often put them in contact with industrial waste as they use the rivers to wash. A majority of the observations for this research were conducted either in public spaces or in locations such as worker meetings, community meetings, and government offices. In the community I conducted both structured and unstructured observations in sites where people believe they come into contact with pollution or locations critical to their daily lives.

Over the course of my project the city of Esmeraldas was consumed by a variety of protests as locals rejected a number of Correa's key proposals. In the field I was forced to improvise methods due to the host of protests (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007). Petroleros, educators, students, city residents, and even the police were involved in collective street protests. In these events I largely followed alongside the demonstrations, as you never knew when a confrontation might erupt. Originally I also conceived of two experimental methods. One, a draw-a-body test, was a complete failure, as most locals

refused to seriously engage with it as it was considered to close to a form of play. A second method, a hot-spot mapping project, was a success, but not as intended. In this method I wanted to get locals to designate places with positive and negative values on a map. I asked questions such as what locations are dangerous, where do you come into contact with pollution, what are good spots for recreation, and what places are economically important? The flaw in this approach was that locals were either unable or unwilling to denote positive values of place. The concerns of insecurity, disaster, and pollution articulated together to create a negative self-representation of the city. However, the collection of this data was highly revealing process; as people talked through their problems, the maps became a useful object to elicit conversations. They showed how people both connect and disconnect risk to place, offering many moments where I was able to explore the complexities of oil production. All of these methods were supplemented by archival work in the field, which largely focused on collecting the media history of industrial disasters.

In this environment two critical processes of representation, the image of the community, and the image of researchers, shaped my fieldwork. Esmeraldas is known as an Afro-Ecuadorian city. Shipwrecked slaves founded the community in the 1500s. These groups gradually welcomed runaway slaves from Colombia, and mixed heavily with the local indigenous communities. The colonial history of Esmeraldas granted the province with a dangerous reputation that continues today. Ecuador has a racialized social hierarchy that is largely shaped through the national myth of mestizaje, racial mixing. However in this model, Ecuador is primarily a mixture of indigenous and

Spanish communities. Afro-Ecuadorians are the nation's "ultimate other," falling outside of this model and often only being rendered legible through limited representations that emphasize insecurity and violence (Rahier 1998: 422). I view them as a compromised community in the national imagination. Esmeraldas is marginalized culturally, economically, and geographically, which often interpellates the community as being subjects that are already sick, already susceptible to risk, and already suspect in the eyes of the state. My work attempts to challenge this view by illustrating how race becomes an interpretive stand-in that obscures more than it reveals. This shapes the experience of disaster, health, and insecurity,

In this environment I became something of an oddity. Esmeraldas is Ecuador's tenth largest city, but its also one that his a very small foreign presence, with exception of Colombians who have a large refugee population in the municipality. Rather than being viewed as a US citizen, a group who only come to the province as missionaries or tourists, Esmeraldeños often believed that I was either a Cuban doctor, a group who became more common during the Correa administration, or Venezuelan petrolero, a group who were assisting with repairs in the refinery. The ambiguity of my position both created opportunities and limitations to my work. It was a limitation as locals often interceded in my observations, whenever I did something considered remotely risky, like take a photo. Fears of insecurity often shaped how locals related to foreigners and like most visitors my first few months in the field were an experience of constantly being corrected until the community became used to my presence. The benefit of this ambiguity was that people were wiling to talk outsiders about their experience with the

refinery, because they were desperate for assistance. They wanted something to change, and as the relationship between different sectors of the community like petroleros and the state deteriorated, people were willing to talk as they searched for allies in their struggle.

That said an issue in Esmeraldas is that relationships are often interpreted through a larger framework of mistrust (Goldstein 2005: 37-39). Locals have little faith in authorities; as the state and PetroEcuador fail to deal with industrial issues they have learned to not have confidence in what the local powers say. This is not to say that I did not develop relationships based on trust, it just highlights that the starting point of the relationships begins at a greater distance. The history of antagonisms gives the community little reason to have confidence in researchers; as they see the refinery being studied over and over, without any significant change, science and activism are both suspect until proven otherwise. To address this problem I spent months developing relationships before I started interviewing. To cement these relationships I often distributed copies of the few publicly available studies of the refinery. In the history of the refinery, there has only been one successful lawsuit. The lack of information on the refinery's impact makes it difficult for the community to challenge PetroEcuador. By doing small things like distributing what information I have, I both built stronger relationships, and gave community members information that they might be able to act on. Through this, my knowledge is partial in that like most residents, it is incomplete, and I generally take the side of the community (Nelson 1999: 42-43, Clifford 1986). In the field I did not act as an activist but I did sympathize with the community's goals. My work was primarily concerned with addressing the issues of misrepresentation created as

the state sought to maintain oil production aligning me with residents and workers rather than the state and corporate management.

What Remains…

In the remainder of this text I will highlight the practices that shape the intersections of the materialities of oil and the meaning of citizenship as Ecuador undergoes a "revolutionary" process to create well-being. The Citizens Revolution asserts that it will create a more substantive relationship between citizen and state, but as I will show, a problem with this political discourse is it often gets reduced to official statuses rather than meaningful relationships. Through these pieces I will show how formalized relationships still dominate the citizenship discourse but I also would like to propose an alternative conceptualization of citizenship, produced as community members create imaginaries of care and bonds between one another, the state, and the city of Esmeraldas. The play between oil and well-being highlights both the possibilities and limitations of citizenship in Ecuador. Through these chapter the question of whether the public is being treated as subjects, who must have actions dictated to them, or citizens, who act with their own agency is a central theme. Within these examples I will show the movement between agency and constraint to show how the public creates agency even as the government forms new structures that constrain individual and collective acts.

In Chapter 1, "Time Bombs" I explore how the refinery creates the conditions of its own decay. In this chapter I will explore how the presence of the refinery fundamentally altered the urban milieu of Esmeraldas. In this case, petroleum waste, the

remains of the refining process, interacts with the environment creating an industrial miasma. I will argue that as pollution emanates from the refinery, it interacts with environment becoming a form of vibrant matter that is an unhealthy irritant to people, and corrosive substance to infrastructure (Bennet 2010). As the refinery expels waste, its own structures face accelerated deterioration, creating new forms of exposure and a broader environment of structural violence. Here I will discuss the 1998 SOTE Pipeline fire, one of the most mythologized moments in the city's history, an event that fundamentally shapes how residents understand their relationship to the refinery as hundreds of homes were destroyed, numerous people perished, and dozens more were severely burned. This chapter will illustrate the historical conditions of the refinery, where the community was fundamentally treated as subjects of power. The ongoing issues of contamination made people more willing to accept the Citizens Revolution.

In Chapter 2 "Carnivalesque Democracy" I will step away from oil for a moment, to discuss the rise of Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa Delgado and his Citizens Revolution. In this chapter I will discuss how the government has sought to craft a revolutionary image and engineer the affect of politics. I will illustrate how the president's carnivalesque style of governance provokes conflict in Esmeraldas as the discourses of the state and local history create recombinant memory (Schwenkel 2009). Esmeraldas has a history of rebellion that articulated in unexpected ways with the government's revolutionary identity. I will highlight how children become affective agents, channeling larger sentiments of malaise and redirecting them back at the president in spectacular displays of youthful resistance. In Esmeraldas, children proved to be the

one segment of the community that could protest without the fear of reprisals. This chapter will introduce the critical narratives of local history to show how the revolution created the possibility of citizenship agency, but also where the governments own actions constrain public actions.

Chapter 3, "Bleeding Out" will turn to the issue of labor. It explores the political logics and changing subjectivities that underlie a public protest by illegally fired state petroleum workers. In this incident, workers volunteered to lay down in front of the provincial courthouse, stick hypodermic needles in their arms, and bleed out into the street to protest both their firing and the changing work regime in the refinery. This spectacular performance was a visceral call to the government to grant these workers their constitutional rights as the restructuring of health care and other benefits that promoted well being, left labor feeling as if they were worker-subjects rather than worker-citizens. I argue that the citizenship spectacle in this case needs to be understood as both a performance by workers challenging the fundamental changes in life, labor and citizenship that were "bleeding them out" and as action performed on them as political and cultural factors restrict what forms social movements take and what they can do to protest corporate restructuring in a "revolutionary" moment. This chapter will explore how conceptualizations of health, well-being, and quality of life frame citizenship even as the uneven implementation of constitutional changes in the energy industry generates insecurity. The workers act was in response to the removal of their rights of protest, forcing them to find alternative means to draw attention to their plight, in the face of a system that viewed them as corrupt.

Chapter 4, "Adjusting Accounts" will return to the issue of citizenship by highlighting how civil insecurity shapes the local relationship to the state. In this chapter I will explore how insecurity acts as the "other" environmental problem of Esmeraldas. Esmeraldas has a reputation for violence but the question remains of whether this represents the current reality or the continuation of racialized stereotypes from the past. Here I will explore how narratives of violence become flexible, creating impunity as the stories of crime constantly change. I will focus on the interrelationship between quotidian crime and an extreme event that raised tensions across the province. I will show how the state interpellates the community of Esmeraldas as one that is already compromised due to its location near Colombia and a perceived history of violence. This chapter will highlight how culture and a social phenomenon like insecurity become bracketed together in a manner that helps the government deny responsibility and take no action. I will illustrate how refinery labor creates exceptions within a broader landscape of insecurity.

In "The Smell of Petroleum," chapter 5, I will return to the issue of contamination, highlighting how people connect the environment to their health. The smell of petroleum indexes the presence of dangerous, but often-invisible gases and particles. Borrowing from the work of Tim Choy (2011), I will trace how particular particles both reveal and obscure the health impact of the refinery. In Esmeraldas there is a fundamental disconnect between how residents identify danger and how scientists do it. I will discuss three different tactics of environmental indexing to explore the moral economy of knowledge produced as corporate, state, and local practices of knowledge production conflict. Particles of dangerous substances often become a stand in for beliefs

about the particularities of place or people, which can hide the impact of the refinery. I will highlight how science constrains significant action from being taken.

In the final chapter, "The Revolution is in Neutral" I will conclude with a discussion of how infrastructure failure reveals alternative imaginaries of care within Esmeraldas, as locals are forced to depend on one another as the city and national government fight over who is responsible for fixing the city's streets. In 2010 Esmeraldas faced extreme drought followed by its wettest winter ever. The two events stressed the larger assemblage of infrastructure in Esmeraldas, as potable water, electricity, and the city's streets failed. With city's critical infrastructure failing, protests quickly spread. Under these conditions it was a surprise when potholes became the focus of popular discontent. This chapter will ask how can an object as mundane as a pothole incite protests and engender a political battle that challenges both the city and state? This chapter will highlight how infrastructure provokes affects that can be used to create new bonds in the urban milieu and new agentive tactics of coping with problems. This chapter will show that while the state claims the revolution is underway, on the ground it feels like it is in neutral.

Chapter 1

Time Bombs: Disaster and Decay in an Industrial Miasma

Disaster and Decay: The Miasma and the Milieu

Thursday February 26th 1998 should have been a festive and relaxing day in Esmeraldas, Ecuador. As the epicenter of the national Carnival holiday and with thousands of tourists descending from the Ecuadorian Sierra, most residents were taking the opportunity to make a little money or spend time at the beach. But as residents returned home from a day of revelry, an event happened that would permanently scar the psyche of the city. Just after dusk, the smell of petroleum began to permeate the air in the southern barrios of the city. As home to Ecuador's National Petroleum Refinery, the city's residents were concerned that there might be a gas leak or small fire, common occurrences that at the time were seen as more of an annoyance than a threat. However unbeknownst to anyone, days of El Nino spawned downpours had saturated the landscape, provoking a small landslide that ruptured the trans-Andean petroleum pipeline, (SOTE) at the point where it enters the city. The SOTE pipeline, which transported diesel from the coast to the Ecuadorian highlands and crude from the highlands to the coast, leaked a volatile mixture of the two substances for hours. As curious residents went outside to investigate the smell, an errant spark ignited the gas, producing towers of flame that ripped through the community. In grainy television

footage of the day, thousands of residents can be seen running from their homes as the fires spread down drainage ditches, through neighborhoods, and eventually to the Esmeraldas River, bisecting Esmeraldas and generating widespread terror as fire flowed over water, cutting off all exits from the city. Over night, hundreds of residents, firefighters, and petroleum workers battled the blaze, eventually extinguishing it the next day. Several people perished, dozens were burned, and hundreds more were left homeless. Amidst the wreckage of their community and with black rain falling on the their homes, Esmeraldeños were left wondering how could such a disaster take place in the middle of their city?

In this chapter I will take up this question in order to explore the social processes that shape exposure to industrial disaster and contamination in Esmeraldas. In the 1970s, the Ecuadorian government built the Refinery, under the promise that it would make the long marginalized Esmeraldas a modern industrial center, creating a golden age of development in the community. In the decades since the construction of the petroleum complex, Esmeraldas has remained marginalized while its population has grown exponentially. Originally built outside of the city, the refinery is now surrounded by urban shantytowns and planned neighborhoods that residents erected as they strived to create a better life for their families. The infrastructures of the petroleum complex crisscross the southern half of the city, creating a landscape of potential disaster. Building on Foucault's conceptualization of the miasma and the milieu I will trace how the processes of "modernizing" Esmeraldas articulated with local desires for land and quality housing to produce a volatile environment (2007: 18-21). In particular I will highlight

how the settlement of the sector around the refinery structures exposure to risk, where intersections of class, gender, and ethnicity articulate together to produce structural violence (Briggs and Mantini-Briggs 2003, Farmer 2003, and Petryna 2002). I employ structural violence with a Foucauldian conceptualization of biopolitics to illustrate how the community understood their relationship to the refinery before the constitutional changes of 2008. The construction and management of the refinery left the community feeling that their citizenship had a phantom quality, as it seemed to largely lack substance (Sawyer 2001: 160). This chapter will demonstrate how the refinery ate away at many community members sense of citizenship, as they seem to have limited agency when confronting industrial accidents and everyday pollution. State power is employed unevenly making some communities live, while letting others die as they are exposed to waste and disaster. The structures that create their exposure to risk and the processes that denote the severity of risk constrain community agency.

The milieu is a site of government intervention, where the state shapes the relationship between people and things, configuring how the community conducts itself in regards to risk and security (Foucault 2007 and Rose 1999: 3). This notion highlights the interactions of natural "givens" - swamps, hills, and rivers – with unnatural "givens" – collectives, houses, and industry (Foucault 2007: 21). The urban milieu of Esmeraldas is a complicated mixture of spatial formations shaped by the presence of the refinery. In this spatial milieu, governance is conducted through an absent-present state, where authorities can be both overly present, interfering with the day-to-day construction of space, or completely absent, letting neighborhoods develop at whim (Colloredo-

Mansfield 2009: 17). The presence of the refinery in this milieu acts a singularity both pulling people towards the facility, through the promise of a better life, and pushing them away, as it produces pollution that makes them ill and corrodes the material structures of the city. It creates a sort of dysplacement due to inconsistent state intervention. Borrowing from Deborah Davis-Jackson, dysplacement does not imply a complete alienation of a community from a place, but instead highlights how communities live in uneasy coexistence with alienating processes (2011: 607-608). The replacement of the root *dis* with *dys* emphasizes that people do not abandon these communities in the face of pollution, rather the cope with an impaired environment and hope for a productive intervention. Esmeraldeños compare the experience of living next to the refinery to that of living next to a "time bomb," as the city's development did not take into account how the urban milieu and the refinery would interact. The refinery exists as a potential disaster; residents never know when there might be a gas leak, oil spill, or fire. The city of Esmeraldas itself, already exists as an outlier in the imagination of the national community; tragic events there are commonly blamed on residents, rather than authorities. Esmeraldas is understood as a compromised space, I would like to follow how perceived, conceived, and lived space interact through processes of governance (Kahn 2000, Soja 1996, Trouillot 2003). I will ask why do people reside near a facility with the potential for danger? I seek to highlight how both shantytowns and planned communities articulate with the refinery's presence to create a potential calamity.

Intervention in a milieu is practice of governmentality intended promote to security. Drawing on the historical example of France, Foucault argued that the

biopolitical management of the milieu was designed to eliminate dangerous elements, miasmas, from the community (Foucault 2007: 18-19). In this example Foucault is making a broader argument, asserting that the governmentality links security, territory and population, as government intervention promotes safety though the management of communities. In this chapter I will follow what is in many ways a literal interpretation of this argument, highlighting both the production of industrial waste and the miasmatic qualities of such pollution. Typically when we think of miasma we associate it with the intense mixture of death and decay produced by a swamp. A miasma refers to a noxious atmosphere, an emanation, a carrier of illness and disease, a corruption (Taussig 2004: 175). A swamp, while seen as a dangerous space, is in fact a lively force, where life and death are closely linked in an infinite feedback loop. Living and inert matter are constantly interacting with one another. In the social milieu, state intervention seeks to remove dangerous emanations and interactions. However in Esmeraldas, the production of the urban social milieu has created unexpected articulations between the community, the natural environment, and the refinery. The refinery, which was installed along a small river in what were once swamplands, shapes its own environment. I am interested not in a natural miasma, but the miasmatic qualities of petroleum pollution, an industrial miasma.

I will draw attention to the interactions of pollution with people and things, as I treat petroleum pollution as a form of vital matter that interacts with other matter, to produce wide-ranging affects, both cultural and physical (Bennet 2010: viii). Petroleum waste is matter-out-of place (Douglas 1966: 36). In this environment, the landscape, the porous remains of reclaimed swamps, and the climate, the weather and humidity of the

equatorial coast, interact with the contamination of the refinery, producing new substances that are both dangerous to humans and corrosive to material structures. The refinery is supposed to limit such emanations, but the national petroleum politic often leaves the refinery to run on its own, with minimal intervention. Natural environment and pollution interact to create conditions that reproduce insecurity and danger in relation to the refinery.

I would like to bring attention to the interactions of waste with the environment, drawing the potential for disaster to the forefront, and for now, pushing health issues to the background. I will return to a full discussion of health and pollution in Chapter 5. Recently, humanistic approaches to studying pollution have highlighted the production of "toxic confusion," as community members encounter waste, they are confused by social processes that variously connect and disconnect it from associations to risk (Auyero and Swinstun 2009: 6). Over the past two decades there have been dozens of studies on the impact of the refinery. Some deny the substances have any impact in the community, others claim it is impossible to make direct connections between pollution and health, while others still blame health issues on community members themselves (Jurado 2006, Harari 2004). Asthma, unusual cancers, and blood conditions are considered a quality of the place or a result of personal habits, not a condition produced by living near heavy industry. People respond by atomizing pollution into its constituent parts. Molecules of lead, sulfur, and polyaromatic hydrocarbons become the focus of investigation, rather than the collective interaction of these materialities.

However, I will assert that this atomization of contamination is in fact a secondary process. Locals do not focus on individual substances until they are taught to do so by the press, scientists, and lawyers. Rather community members address pollution as a thing, an assemblage of all of these other materials, which interact with one another, the environment, and living bodies (Bennet 2010: 21-23). By working laterally and giving the interaction of waste and environment in shaping disaster primacy, I believe I will be able to make a more substantive argument about health later. I will argue that the interaction of the pollution assemblage means the refinery's own waste exacerbates its decay, continuously propelling it towards another cataclysmic event. The refinery creates the conditions of its own demise. In this frame I am interested in illustrating how the refinery exists as a quasi-event; as the refinery saturates the environment with contamination it creates the possibility of an event. How this is apprehended and aggregated shapes whether there is an agentive response and what kind of response can be made (Povenelli 2011: 13-14).

In what remains of this chapter I will explore the interactions of the urban milieu, the refinery, and the industrial miasma. In the first section I will address how the refinery engendered a variety of settlement patterns that placed residents close to volatile processes. I seek to identify how both planned and unplanned neighborhoods structure exposure. I will illustrate how the geography of imagination for the community, shapes its geography of management, that becomes self affirming of spatial stereotypes (Trouillot 2003: 2) Lived space here is shaped by the national imagination of the community (Kahn 2000: 7, Soja 1996: 18). In the second section I would like to turn to

how the community understands the interactions of pollution and the environment. I want to highlight how the industrial miasma becomes an affective agent in the community that has disastrous implication for the integrity of people and things (Bennet 2010, Bennet and Joyce 2010, Davis-Jackson 2011). In this section I will illustrate how residents understand the impact of pollution as a whole rather than through its constituent elements. By following the totality of pollution as an industrial miasma, I hope to show the variety of ways that pollution interacts with living and non-living bodies, accelerating decay. Dissipation and emanation, metaphors of circulation, are critical to various representations of the problem. Finally in the last section I will highlight the events that create dysplacement and structural violence in the community (Farmer 2003, Davis-Jackson 2011, Briggs and Mantini-Briggs 2003). This section will draw attention to a series of industrial accidents, the most important of which is the 1998 SOTE fire. Industrial fires have their own mythology in the city, highlighting the tensions provoked by state intervention, or the lack there of, before, during, and after such cataclysms. The 1998 incident is one of the most important moments in the history of the city, and it fundamentally shapes all discussions of the impact of oil processing on the community. It's the type of day where all Esmeraldeños can tell you where they where and what they did in response to this disastrous industrial failure. The universality of the experience therefore shapes how the entire Esmeraldeño community thinks about the refinery, PetroEcuador, and governance.

Population Explosions and the new Urban Milieu

In the national imagination, the city of Esmeraldas has largely been considered a backwater by authorities. Home to the largest concentration of afro-descendant people in the nation, a community who settled the area through a combination of shipwrecks and runaway slaves, the city has had a marginalized presence in the state. For most of their history, Afro-Ecuadorians have been placed in the savage slot, with the province, city, and everyday people being regarded as dangerous (Trouillot 2003: 1). In the independence period the loss of Spanish expeditions due to the treacherous landscape of swamps and mangroves forever shaped the geography of imagination of the province (Trouillot 2003: 2, Jurado Noboa 1995: 9-10). Locals actually flourished by living off these marshes, but this colonial geography of imagination engendered a geography of management, where the state stayed largely absent from the province even in the post-independence era. In the 1950s the construction of a road from Quito to Esmeraldas city spurred the development of plantation agriculture, making the state a stronger presence. The city grew to more than 50,000 people, as it became Ecuador's national banana port, but as the boom ended in the 1960s, the local economy was devastated forcing an exodus of residents. In 1972 the government, under the control of a newly installed military dictatorship, targeted the development of Ecuador's petroleum industry as the primary path to creating a modern state. To maximize the state's profits Ecuador needed a large capacity refinery and Esmeraldas was ideal due to its proximity to Quito, the northern Amazonian oil fields, and the Panama Canal. The military junta promised that petroleum would create a golden age for the city and their largely afro-descendant community,

asserting that the modern plant would not only employ 10,000 residents it would be a "pole of development" by drawing other industries. It was a dramatic departure from previous interventions. Excited at the proposition of state investment, the community accepted the facility and the refinery was constructed 3 kilometers from the city center.

The refinery acted as a singularity drawing migrants from the interior of the province and from other regions of the nation. At the time the city of Esmeraldas occupied a sliver of land, where the city's commercial center is located today. It was a small community of largely wood and cane houses organized around a boardwalk of warehouses for agricultural products. To the north of the center, were large farms of wealthy, and generally absent, landowners interspersed on the path to Pacific Ocean, to the south lay smaller homesteads of independent farmers and one former hacienda, and to the east and west lay a the river and a series of largely uninhabitable hills. The site of the refinery was largely a swamp that existed between the Teaone River and several small bodies of water. It was a porous, unstable landscape, a fitting example of the imagined geography of the province.

For the earliest generation of refinery employees to go to work, they had to take a bus from the Center; they were dropped of at a footpath and had to walk the two kilometers to the construction site. The site of the refinery was well away from any established networks of homesteads, with the exception of an agricultural school, creating a green zone around the future complex. As CEPE, Ecuador's original petroleum company, erected the industrial facility they drew heavily on local labor giving Esmeraldeños hope that the plant would be a source of development. In the name of

convenience these laborers started the first small housing settlements in what would become the southern neighborhoods of Esmeraldas. The construction of the industrial complex necessitated the installation of new power lines, water lines, and roads, creating infrastructure that the laborers could tap into as the sought to escape the city center, where large landholders controlled most of the real estate. As the refinery entered into operation in 1976 there were much fewer opportunities for labor available to Esmeraldeños. Fearing a local tendency towards socialist-inspired and pro-labor politics CEPE primarily hired primarily non-Esmeraldeños for permanent positions in the plant, importing workers from major cities and the Ecuadorian highlands. Of the original group of workers only 20% were from Esmeraldas. This had profound effects on the city at large. First the promise of government jobs drew thousands of people to the city from other parts of the province and beyond. While the refinery never came close to generating the promised employment, currently it only employs 1,200 workers, the rumor of jobs was powerful on its own. As migrants arrived to Esmeraldas this required the expansion of the urban limits. These original worker homesteads were generally away from the immediate construction site, on a series of small hills across the riverine valley. At the time there was a distinct lack of available land in the city and newly arrived migrants had few options for housing. The arrival of a middle class of petroleum professionals sparked massive rent inflation in the city, as businessman took advantage of petroleros generous wages, driving up prices across Esmeraldas. Inflated rents and the lack of available land structured two different strategies of settlement.

The most common strategy was the rise of invasions by landless Esmeraldeños. Even before the construction of the petroleum complex, land was a site of contention in the community. In the 1960s the northern part of Esmeraldas, between the commercial center and the Pacific shore, was filled with plantations controlled by wealthy non-residents. The concentration of good land left the majority of residents living in marginal zones on unstable hillsides or on the edges of mangrove swamps along the Esmeraldas River. Community members, most notably a man named Juan Chiriboga, started a series of actions to take over "unproductive" land. In the night groups of 50 to 100 people would go to a farm and set up an encampment. However, in this period landowners responded with violence often burning down the camp and the invader's homes as a deterrent. While largely unsuccessful at creating new settlements this process produced a new political class of community organizers in Esmeraldas and in 1980, after the construction of the refinery, Juan Chiriboga used these networks to rise to political prominence, eventually becoming a local representative to the national assembly. Having failed in his original attempt to acquire land for the community Chiriboga, now employing his access to new resources, targeted the land around the refinery for settlements (Walmsley 2011: pc). The forested area now had access to basic resources like water and electricity and roads, allowing much larger incursions of people. [1]

Under Chiriboga the tactics and targets of invasions changed. This new land was largely owned by the state itself, not individuals. Residents of the city center would hold

[1] Chiribogismo, is now a local idiom that describes the politics of land invasion. The current city government rejects invasion as a land settlement tactic, rejecting Chiribogismo. In city documents it is identified as one of the largest problems facing the city both in the past and present.

meetings for months to organize and identify targets. Seeking to be self-sufficient the area around the small Teaone River was particularly attractive because of its farming potential. Community members would organize a group of people large enough to not be intimidated by threats and in the night they would invade. By targeting untitled properties the Esmeraldeños used constitutional provisions that allowed individuals to claim ownership of "uninhabited" land. If the invaders built a structure and lived in it for five years the property was considered theirs. The groups would spend the time dividing the invaded terrain into standard plots ensuring that each person could now be self-sufficient and build a better life for their family. They filled in the spaces between the original construction homesteads and the rivers with autoconstructed shantytowns, gradually encroaching on the refinery as the population of the city progressively grew from 25, 000 to more than 200,000 residents.

As the urban poor invaded the green ring around the refinery, the government was also facing pressure form the local middle class to create affordable housing options. With rapidly rising inflation because of petroleros, the middle class was barely able to subsist. In the 1980s the government built two communities to relieve pressure, a gated community for petroleum workers and a planned community for the middle class. The Villas of CEPE were essentially a model community. Featuring an elementary school, sports fields, potable water, and housing for many different size families the Villas are an oasis of calm in a largely chaotic city. Intended to create bonds between the workers and the corporation, the Villas were designed as a safe area away from any possible industrial disaster and the everyday contamination of petroleum processing. For the non-petrolero

middle class, the government created a pair of neighborhoods named La Tolita under a national housing plan.[2] These neighborhoods were built to the southeast of the refinery, and while they are within the green ring around the refinery air currents generally keep pollution away from them and each house was constructed with a cistern ensuring potable water for residents. Under both of these housing plans the middle class were given an opportunity to create permanent roots. While both are near the petro-industrial complex they were designed with the possibility of a refinery disaster in mind.

Both the shantytowns and middle class communities were aspirational strategies to improve community member's lives. However, differences in the communities highlight potential risks, as the new urban areas were settled in haphazard manner. Rather than containing growth, local government encouraged settlement and the state let the urban milieu grow unchecked. In the case of neighborhoods settled by invasions, vast auto-constructed shantytowns were incorporated into infrastructure in an incomplete manner. The promise of water, roads, and electricity drew people; nonetheless, infrastructure did not materialize evenly. For example most of these homes were not on the water network. Residents pulled water from collective taps or from the river. When the homes were first built, the water was relatively clean, but eventually this placed largely the Afro-Ecuadorian poor into contact with both human and industrial waste as the refinery entered into operation and the population grew. The Rio Teaone slowly became an open-air sewer. Women in particular were at risk as cooking, cleaning, and washing, placed them near the river on a daily basis. In the planned communities this was

[2] *Plan Techo* – Plan Roof –It was a nationwide plan to support the middle class by creating affordable housing, instituted by president Leon Febres Cordero.

not an issue. The Villas, to this day, are one of the few locations that has consistent water supply and the La Tolita communities were built with cisterns, as the inadequacies of the water system were recognized.

The poor are also much more likely to confront air pollution, as prevailing winds generally take smoke and particulate matter away from La Tolita, through the mass of shantytowns. On most days, the residents of La Tolita can see the smoke of the refinery rising, but the smell of the facility rarely reaches them. The impoverished neighborhoods of La Florida and 15 de Marzo, are very different, consistently facing the onslaught of smells and dust that the process of refining petroleum produce. Again women are more likely to face exposure, as employment makes men mobile citizens, crossing the city and in an out of the worst of the refinery's impact zone. Women are more likely to spend all day in this environment. For air and water pollution, class acts as a barrier for some, while the intersection of race, class, and gender, represent a multiplicity of exposures for others.

A final issue is that over time, land settled by invasion has often changed hands. As the area filled quickly, invasions also shifted from quality to marginal lands. Even as local politics encouraged invasions they had no control over when or where new neighborhoods would develop. The process created a dangerous intersection between the urban milieu and the industrial miasma as neither the municipal government or the state stepped in to organize the community. Speculation in land values became a tactic of social mobility. Using the constitutional provisions to the letter, many residents would move in, construct a structure, and wait out the period they needed to acquire legal title to

the land. Once title was in hand they would sell the land immediately. Many families from the center organized or participated in multiple invasions as a way to make money. In one interview I did I met a family that put three children through medical school and two through nursing school by participating in six different invasions and the selling off the properties. First the parents participated in an invasion and then the children. The effect of this is that while some residents used the land themselves, many others used it as an aspirational strategy, selling it off and creating a second generation of property owners. The first generation often never had to deal with the industrial tragedies.

Taken together this rise of the urban milieu creates the potential for structural violence, as possible exposures to risk are shaped by intersecting processes of ethnicity, gender, and class. Social, political, and economic forces structure an individual's susceptibility for disease and structure their risk for more extreme forms of suffering i.e. violence, industrial disaster, structures that are created as community agency is limited (Farmer 2003: 30). The haphazard settlement of the city reconfirmed the national imagination of place. A community that was expected to be dangerous by authorities who perceived it as such already, articulated with how locals conceived the space through experience, creating a lived space shaped between these tensions (Kahn 2000: 7, Soja 1996: 18). A city that is imagined nationally as dangerous, ugly, and disorganized, was actually made so by the insertion of the petroleum industry into the milieu. The urban milieu of Esmeraldas was born from and expanded due to the presence of the refinery, a position that compromised the possibilities of state interventions for both the city and the industry. The state could make them live or let them die, a process that different

settlement strategies of the area illustrate (Foucault 2003: 241). Planned communities were designed with some threats in mind, while those that developed organically could be written off as a local problem that did not require state intercession. The biopolitics of places articulates with structural violence to constrain agency.

Going to Waste: The Industrial Miasma, Dissipations, and Emanations

When arriving to Esmeraldas for the first time by way of the highway, the Refinery compels your attention. The giant metal structure lies between the base of a hill to the north, with the provincial thermoelectric plant and the Rio Teaone to the south. The refinery's torch, the primary smoke stack that should incinerate most particulate waste, burns with a red orange flame that can be seen across the southern barrios. Streams of smoke rise up, generally moving towards the Center to the north or the shore of the Esmeraldas River to the east. On a normal humid day, the moisture in the air keeps the smoke and dust from traveling far, creating a haze that envelops the community. Along the Teaone River, the sheen of oil can be seen even when there is not enough of the viscous material to drive residents away from their chores. For Esmeraldeños, this is what petroleum waste looks like; smoke, dust, smells and fluids articulate with the land and the climate to create a particular atmosphere around the refinery, this is the industrial miasma. The interaction of waste and the environment creates what can be seen as a "dangerous air" (Foucault 2007: 18-21). It surrounds the refinery and adjacent neighborhoods, potentially exposing them to industrial waste when the flows of wind and water do not disturb it. Yet over the past thirty years, CEPE and then PetroEcuador, have

consistently denied that there is enough free floating matter to hurt people, even as residents face new forms of illness and the industrial facility itself has become prone to decay and accidents. In this section I will explore the production of the miasma by highlighting what the refinery means to the state and the actual processes that produce pollution. I will then turn to the interaction of people, pollution, and other materials to illustrate two different perceptions of how residents and workers see movement with the industrial miasma, dissipation and emanation. These offer different logics of contamination, highlighting different approaches to thinking about the interactions pollution provokes.

What is the refinery and why is it so important? The refinery represents the one point in the petroleum commodity chain, where an oil producer can create substantial added value. The refinery in Esmeraldas embodies the connections between crude and refined infrastructures. In Ecuador, a nation whose economy is largely dependent on petroleum rents; a majority of crude oil is exported. The refinery represents a fundamental insertion of the state into the global neoliberal economy. After extraction and transportation, the petroleum company has no way to extract more value from the commodity. By processing crude in the refinery, Ecuador creates value, either selling it to their citizens or exporting it. Through most of Ecuador's petroleum era, crude products and gasoline have been sold to the United States, but over the past decade this has shifted to China and Venezuela. This does not mean the oil does not eventually come to the US; it means that the other nations have inserted themselves as intermediaries, extracting value by paying with preferential contracts in exchange for injections of cash

that create liquidity for the state. The refinery is itself a giant chemical reactor, breaking down chains of hydrocarbons, in order to create a variety of petroleum products. Asphalt, fuel oil, diesel, gasoline, and jet fuel are petroleum products based on different atomic weights. The lighter the product, the more valuable it is. In the process of refining, impurities are separated out, as chemical chains are altered to promote value. What remains behind is a toxic mélange of polyaromatic hydrocarbons, lead, sulfur and other substances. These three substances are of particular importance as their presence diminishes the value of the finished product. In the Middle East, sweet light crude is produced, meaning it has fewer impurities, especially sulfur. Middle Eastern petroleum products are always sold at a premium because of this. In Ecuador, only the heavy, more sour crudes are available, meaning it requires more refining to extract sulfur, stripping it of value. Crude from Ecuador is always sold at a reduced price in relation to the international WTI price benchmark.[3] In newer oil facilities, chemical processes of cracking allow more oil to be extracted from a barrel of crude, however in an older facility like the Refinery of Esmeraldas, cracking is limited, and much more of a barrel of crude goes to waste.[4] The industrial miasma is the interaction of the environment with the chemical remains of neoliberal economy. Major interventions by the state are unlikely, as the failure of the refinery would definitely prevent exports of refined products, and can

[3] The WTI index is one of two international price benchmarks for crude petroleum. WTI, the West Texas Intermediate, is recognized as the most average of world crudes. It is neither heavy nor light, nor sweet or sour, it is of average quality in terms of impurities. Oil from the Middle East, the highest quality, sells above this price, while crude from Latin America, the heaviest and dirtiest, sells below it. The other international benchmark is Brendt Crude, from the North Sea. This crude sells for slightly more than WTI, but this is widely considered an effect of European markets rather than a quality issue in the petroleum.

[4] Cracking is what makes tar sand crude production feasible, but the larger interaction of chemicals on these substance, has unknown affects on people or the environment.

possibly stop the exports of crude. The refinery exists in a compromised position between city and state, as decisions benefiting one might not be in the interest of the other.

When the state invested in the refinery, they employed Japanese and Korean companies to erect the facility. The site seems to have been chosen because it was away from the old city center, and near the ocean, allowing for the network of pipelines to bypass the 1970s population centers as oil flowed to the transportation terminal. A critical issue of governance is that in the early history of the refinery, the state had limited standards for how it managed dangerous materials. The potential hazards of its operation were largely a mystery to residents and workers alike. Workers, who were involved in its construction, would joke with me thirty years later, that they had no clue what they were doing. Men would take naps in the shadow of the torch, directly under burning particulate waste; they would play with mercury in their bare hands, not recognizing the dangerous qualities of the substance; and they would smoke cigarettes on the property, not fully cognizant of the acts potential to provoke an inferno. They were newly trained employees, living through the birth of a national industry.

Over the years, the refinery's impact became more and more apparent, until it could not be ignored anymore. Through uninterrupted use of industrial machinery, flaws in the system became visible, as chemical processes and intense heat took their toll on the technologies of refining. As the refinery stayed in operation, use not only made the machinery decay and wear out, but also accelerates these processes. Small oil and gas leaks became prevalent. In 1986, a gas leak expelled a cloud of invisible material over the southern neighborhoods, forcing the evacuation of several schools. A friend, who was a

six-year-old student at the institution, said the odor was so overpowering that he and his classmates were vomiting and fainting. The petroleum company responded that over the next few years, expansions designed to generate more productivity would also make the refinery a self contained infrastructure that would leak nothing. Workers assert that the original core installations of the refinery are a marvel of durability. Some of the oldest plants function best, but through its life, the refinery has also had two expansions of questionable quality. When giving tours to neighborhoods committees in the 1990s, refinery officials asserted that rather than employing open waste pits that could flood, overflowing into the river, the company planned to build enclosed waste tanks that would be closed to the elements. CEPE also claimed that the installation of a scrubber to burn off sulfur before it left the facility would limit the possibility of such a toxic release in the future. However, while the corporation invested in production, more than doubling petroleum output, neither of these promises would come to fruition. In fact the lack of a scrubber would become a sort of joke in the community, referenced by politicians and citizens alike as a critique of the refinery management's honesty. It was installed but never brought into working order. The refinery still leaks waste and expels smoke and dust, the same way it has since it entered into operation. One of the most fundamental ways that the state can intervene in the production of the miasma is by regulating the facility, but accidents are generally met with minimal fines, because they are considered unavoidable and unintentional.

So what are the effects of pollution? How does it interact with the environment? While residents are primarily concerned with illness, they draw attention to smoke and

dust, oil sheens, and smells, which also reference the affects and interactions of pollution with other materialities. The sight, smell, and feel of the substances engender insecurity as they mediate the toxic waste of the refinery. Even if we do not consciously register them, they are always part of the subconscious experience of being near the industrial site, indexing the presence of danger (Davis Jackson 2011: 611-612). Pollution is a form of vital matter that interacts with other matter, to produce wide-ranging affects, both cultural and physical (Bennet 2010: viii). The term "pollution" embodies a tension; it is both a thing and an assemblage of things (Bennet 2010: 21). The materiality of the thing creates affectivity for pollution that exerts an influence as a consequence of its position in a network of relations (Bennet and Joyce 2010: 5). When locals first talk about waste, they generally discuss it as a whole, experienced as a mixture of dust, smells, gases, and liquids. Yet as residents move to politicize their concerns, the press, scientists, and lawyers teach them focus on certain elements – polyaromatic hydrocarbons, lead, or nickel (Auyero and Swinstun 2009: 6). The effect of this is that the experience of pollution and the science of pollution have two different lexicons and two different standards. Residents consider pollution an assemblage of things and experiences; officials only care about direct and (un)provable exposures. For a resident, constant irritation makes pollution hard to ignore, for authorities the onus of investigation is finding direct exposures of *x* substance on *y* day. But that also does not align with how pollution is experienced in fact. It is a fundamental tension that pervades the system, creating massive delays for substantive state intervention due to toxic confusion. While lawyers and scientists fight, nothing changes on the ground.

Using the miasma to think about disaster, offers a way to highlight the interaction of pollution with other bodies and materials. While we know substances have health effects, this approach emphasizes how corruptive such mixtures can be. Some scientists may deny waste impacts health, but it is hard to deny how it actually corrodes metal and cement, degrading the material structures of the city. It is not a significant leap of logic for residents to connect changes in the environment, changes in other materials, to their bodies. As a philosophical concept, the miasma has a lot of baggage. It has connotations of both the natural and the sacred. The etymology of the word from Greek highlights that miasma is a sacred pollution, a defilement, a stain (OED 2012, AHD 2012). Typically when we think of miasma we associate it with the intense mixture of death and decay produced by a swamp. A miasma refers to a noxious atmosphere, an emanation, a carrier of illness and disease, and a corruptive element (Taussig 2004: 175). Nonetheless Taussig's iteration of the miasma identifies a key process, that of vital and not so vital materialities infinitely interacting together. The smell and atmosphere of a swamp is the byproduct of such interactions. In Esmeraldas these qualities infect conversations of pollution, as the interactions of waste and environment expose the meanings of contamination. However, a key issue remains, one of how these processes are represented; residents suggest pollution emanates from the refinery, while workers and the facility management emphasize that pollution dissipates. This small twist of logic offers very different imaginaries of interaction between the city and the refinery as mediated by the environment. The stories of Maria Ines and the school *Ciudadela de los*

Muchachos, highlight the experiences of the community, while the stories of work accidents highlight labor and management's perspective.

Maria Ines, is a life long resident of Esmeraldas, who grew up in the city Center, but moved to the neighborhood 15 de Marzo, adjacent to the refinery, in her late twenties. An Afro-Ecuadorian woman in her early thirties, she was a single, pregnant, but self-sufficient mother of one, who lived in a nice house in a rough neighborhood. The barrio 15 de Marzo is one of two that directly abuts the refinery compound and the vast majority of the neighborhood residents are economically marginal. It was one of the last communities settled by invasion and therefore was located on some of the most precarious land in the city. The neighborhood is divided from the refinery by a swampy marsh. Maria Ines had had a number of jobs, but most recently she had temped as a secretary at the refinery compound during the rehabilitation of one of its factories. Through our conversation she repeatedly came back to how the industrial miasma interacted with both her own body and her home. Maria Ines had been forced to leave her temp position because she developed an "allergy" to the refinery. Whenever she would enter work she would proceed from sneezing to coughing fit, gradually growing more unwell during a workday. She was diagnosed with a throat irritation from being exposed to dust and the refinery doctors suggested she wear a mask. Maria Ines was not just exposed at work however, each night when she would arrive home, the winds that blow through the city would die down, and particulate matter would settle. She could seal the house and close the windows, but that close to the refinery complex, smells and dust would infiltrate her personal space anyway. Most nights the lack of wind meant that the

smell of petroleum waste would engulf her house as it emanated from the refinery. Waste was not just a thing, but also an atmosphere with a clear source. Other residents of the barrio would confirm that at night, the smell would permeate everything, while during the day dust would blow through their neighborhoods, and globules and sheens of oil would flow down the Teaone River. When entering this neighborhood, or even the refinery, the most common bodily reaction you notice, is that your eyes burn. There may no visible pollution in the moment, but your body always reacts (Davis-Jackson 2011: 615-616).

Her home was located in the shadow of the empty *Ciudadela de los Muchachos* – City of the Boys, a former catholic school that was forced to close because of the refinery presence. The institution was a trade school for the poorest of the city's children that predated construction of the refinery. Before the construction of the refinery and the thermoelectric power plant, it had been the largest structure in what would become the southern barrios. It taught a range of subjects from carpentry, to automotive engineering, to agriculture. In fact the school was one of the largest farms in the municipal district, selling milk, meat, and rice in the city. The students were taught to be self sufficient through farming and other trades, being made responsible for animals and collecting crops. However, the pollution of the refinery regularly seeped onto the campus. The marshy land where they grew rice was near the site of waste pits, and the sheen of oil could often be seen in the rice fields after major storms. Flooding in the wet season often overloaded the waste system of the refinery, pushing it over the banks of drainage ditches and into the fields. Students commonly had to chase down cattle, as the sulfur from the

refinery, would mix with the moisture, creating acid rain.[5] The cement fence posts of the campus would corrode, not over decades, but over a couple of years. Cattle would commonly be lost to accidents after escaping to the refinery grounds. After a major gas release incident in 2006, the Catholic Church felt it was better to move students away to the city center, abandoning this campus, and their agricultural focus because of recurrent problems.

Maria Ines faced the same dilemma. She had built a life in 15 de Marzo but she was worried about her son and her pregnancy. Her six-year-old son was attending an elementary school near the refinery and his classes had already been disturbed by one gas release. To Maria Ines and the Catholic school, the refinery pollution was a corrupting influence on their environment. The problem with pollution is that it shapes the broader atmosphere and environment of the city. Pollution has a number of physical states that emanate from the complex. It's a gas, a smell, a sheen, and a particle; it is matter out of place. Taken together this had direct bodily affects as it irritates and corrupts. It is not a dangerous substance, but dangerous substances, which interact with one another. Dust causes allergies but may hold more insidious substances like nickel or lead. Polyaromatic hydrocarbons spread through the water or attached to particles. Water and sulfur mix in the air, becoming corrosive. It's a complex of interactions that are not reducible to one exposure; in reality they have a lifetime of contact with pollution through multiple materialities. Taken together the industrial miasma, as a whole is an atmosphere that emanates from the refinery, articulating with the environment, and potentially creating

[5] A more accurate description would be acid mist.

illness and catastrophe. As an assemblage, the industrial miasma is a powerful and insidious mixture of substances.

Within the refinery the corrosive register of waste is recognized, however they represent the movement of pollution very differently, as dissipating. Inside the facility it is well understood that pollution shapes the labor environment, but they contend that the farther contamination moves from the refinery the refinery, the less dangerous it is. This is reaffirmed through corporate epidemiology. They acknowledge the dangers of the site, but the claim constant flows of the air promote circulation, dissipating such substances as winds move them away from the city (Harari 2004). Pollution has a source, but the environment sees to circulation, removing the dangerous airs. As an example it closely follows how Foucault represented governmentality. The refinery asserts that circulations and flows of wind promote dissipation, lessening the burden of waste on the milieu (2007: 18-21). However inside of the refinery workers recognize the power of chemical reactions as the industrial miasma can literally eat through cement and metal. The model of dissipation still acknowledges that at the source of waste, concentrations of substances produce dangerous reactions. Over the life of the refinery, this has always been a concern. Workers regard the two expansions of the refinery as compromised. The same quality of construction materials was not used and they claim problems are more commonly experienced in the newer facilities. On the refinery grounds this is a common concern for workers. While climbing on pipes to make repairs, they always must be careful as decades old metal or cement might fall apart at the touch. Workers have been known to fall through concrete structures or to fall off of pipes. Such an event happened

during my fieldwork, as a worker fell to his death as a pipe gave way beneath him. It was a short fall, no more than three or four meters, but fatal nonetheless. The problem for workers is that this corrupted environment is highly unpredictable, you never know when there might be an incident.

This was driven home to the community in November 2009 as two temporary workers experienced sever burns as they cleaned the inside of a storage tank. That afternoon, I was sitting on my porch, when all three of the refinery ambulances screamed past my home on their way to the hospital. The workers were removing residues from the inside of a massive storage tank that could hold over 200,000 barrels of gasoline. Every couple of years the inside needs to be scrubbed in order to prevent the collected compounds from polluting the refined product. The workers were using hoses to power wash the interior of a tank when the residue behind them ignited. It is commonly believed that it was a spontaneous combustion produced from a chemical reaction of residue and either air or water. One worker had 2nd and 3rd degree burns over 60% of his body while the other had them over 25% of his body. Both were rushed to the hospital and were in dire condition, forcing them to seek treatment in the United States. The worker with lesser burns survived but the other perished months later in the course of treatment. This is an extreme example of a daily situation as the refinery is actually accelerating its own decay. Due to material failures and corrosion, the refinery leaks substances such as sulfur. Sulfur combines with moisture, corroding pipelines, leaking more substances, and so on. Leaks create more leaks and when maintenance is deferred and the facility has past its use life, this is a pressing issue.

In this milieu dissipation and emanation offer different logics of circulation for the miasma. Both workers and residents see the industrial miasma as a corrosive atmosphere with the potential to produce bodily harm. But from the perspective of the refinery, the affects of waste are largely contained within the facility. The farther you move from the refinery, pollution should be less and less of a concern. Residents however, see the industrial miasma as an emanation. It is an unnatural atmosphere that moves over the landscape, interacting with climate and geography to become something more powerful. It not only saps the use life of the refinery, it corrodes the environment around the facility. The problem with the view of dissipation is that it does not acknowledge the daily shifts of flows and circulations in the environment. In the city, daytime is often very windy, but in the evening the winds tend to settle. Rather than expelling contamination over a massive swath of land, it collects around the refinery, corroding and corrupting well beyond the petroleum complex (Jurado 2006). As the refinery operates twenty-four hours a day, non-stop, the release of waste is constant. Winds may push pollution away, but when the die down, the miasma reforms. A second issue with dissipation is that it does not acknowledge the persistence of substances in the environment. Substances do not just degrade, the change form as they interact with the environment in new ways, contaminating water, food, and air. Dissipation infers that things disappear with circulation and distance; emanation highlights how they persist and change through interaction in the environment. The bodily registers of feeling consistently show that while the refinery denies the existence of pollution, it is constantly touched, smelt, and seen by residents creating dysplacement. Residents could leave, but

their lives are intertwined with a site and a local political economy that does not offer them surplus resources or social relations that could facilitate leaving. One key frame of reference here is that workers are in the center of the miasma all day long; they acclimate to it in some ways, so when they encounter less concentrated pollution outside of the complex, it is not considered something worth worrying about. However residents of the surrounding neighborhoods are confronted anew each time that a cloud of gas or dust settles over their neighborhood. Each time they experience this it is an affront to how the environment should be as the miasma takes on specific bodily registers of feeling. The refinery creates a corrupted, corrosive environment for them, as the milieu does not expel dangerous substances like it should, rather it collects them, producing a distinctive atmosphere near the industrial facility, that propels more interactions between such substances. This atmosphere mediates the governmentality of people and things.

Volatile Settlements: Fires, Disaster, and the Biopolitics of Structural Violence

The 1998 SOTE fire was not an isolated event; rather it is the most serious of incidents in a string of leaks and fires. Between 1997 and 2000 there were two major fires tied to petroleum installations in Esmeraldas and eight oil spills (Accion Ecologica 2007). What then makes the 1998 fire an event that had to be addressed? As the refinery was past its use life and as its own processes corroded the facility, such problems became common. The disrepair of the refinery was a quasi-event. It had the potential to become something more and at times it did, yet it largely avoided apprehension as a phenomenon, leaving it as a possibility that did not require an agentive action (Povenelli 2011: 13-14).

Small incidents, especially those that are not identified through the aftermaths of counting victims, are not considered eventful, as their catastrophe is limited (Fortun 2001: 77). The combination of fires and spills and their movement to the status of an event, highlight the processes where biopolitics and structural violence intersect through the refinery (Briggs and Mantini-Briggs 2003, Farmer 2003). Collective agency is almost unimaginable in this environment; the settlement of the community structures risk, but the biopolitical projects of knowing risk employed imaginaries of the community as already compromised, while ignoring the presence of pollution. Risk cannot be apprehended in a legal sense, when the science of risk does not address the real concerns of the public. The community, like the communities surrounding the Bhopal disaster had both too much information, gleaned from experience, and too little information, as there was little official work done on contamination at the time (Fortun 2001: 348). As the refinery leaked corrosive substances, its own infrastructures were under attack. In this larger milieu, the extent of the industrial miasma reached across the southern barrios. Five months before the SOTE fire, the conflagration of a waste pit outside the refinery, sowed insecurity in the community, as the facility became the center of the towering flames. The fire showed that neither the city nor the refinery had the full complement of equipment to put a blaze out quickly.

The 1998 fire was much more complicated. It is the type of day where residents can tell you exactly where they were. During the Carnival holiday, Esmeraldeños either work in tourism or enjoy the holiday with friends at the beach. Carnival also happens in the wet season, and this was the wettest in decades due to an El Nino event. As a long

slow rain settled over the community most people were out enjoying themselves. Just after dark a small landslide, crashed into the SOTE pipeline. The SOTE pipeline was already a compromised infrastructure – It actually predates the refinery and had been in operation for decades. In many sections it was regarded as corroded and PetroEcuador planned on rehabilitating it in the coming months. The small landslide broke the polyduct, a pipeline that carries crude from the highlands to the coast, and diesel and water from the coast to the highlands. It leaked a volatile mixture of crude and diesel for hours. I will pull together several stories to highlight how the affects of this break were experienced.

Isabel was 16 when the SOTE fire happened. Now a local legal professional she was a high school student at the time, living in one of the most affected neighborhoods, La Propecia,

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> "I had just come home from Atacames. It was Carnival and I wasn't even in real clothes, just a long T-shirt and a bikini. I had gotten a sunburn at the beach so I went outside to pour water over myself. I smelled gas and my dad came from the street screaming at me and my mom, to run. I didn't know what was happening, and then I looked at the sky above the Villas and there were flames everywhere. My dad stayed at the house but my mom and I fled to the center. It was the worst moment of my life."

The mixture of petroleum had slowly seeped out, first flowing down the hill to a series of drainage ditches that were built alongside the refinery Villas. The urban milieu channeled through the community rather than away from it. The substances moved down the ditches, eventually reaching the Teaone River. The Teaone winds through the southern part of the city, meaning the noxious fluids went through every neighborhood south of the Center and East of the refinery, until it finally reached the Esmeraldas River, in the

barrio La Propecia. It went under both bridges that cross the Teaone River. The smell of petroleum was the first sign of danger. Lenin was a petrolero, who was also an educator. He had spent the day writing at home,

> "I was sitting at my house in the Villas working. It was rainy but hot, so I wasn't even wearing a shirt. I was in my patio when I smelled petroleum, but I couldn't figure out where it was coming from. I was looking around and that's when it ignited. On the other side of the Villas I saw the flames, and a dozen houses were on fire. All of the homes near the highway were in flame. I ran over wearing nothing but shorts, and we started pulling people out, but it was too late for most and the houses burned. I wanted to go to the refinery but the bridge was blocked by flames."

The flames followed the trail of gas through the local water system, growing in size and drawing more attention along the way. As the fire consumed the Rio Teaone, it made the two bridges that you need to cross to flee the city impassable. The city was bisected, with no available exit from the center. The community rightfully panicked. Some fled to the center while others stayed to help people, and to fight the fire. Like the Bhopal disaster, people had no idea where they could turn as they fled (Das 1995, Fortun 2001). Petroleros, the civil brigade, and firefighters organized themselves, trying to figure out where they could intervene, when smaller explosions were heard.[6] As the flames crept back onto land they engulfed homes and trees, spreading from the river shores. In each home there was at least one canister of propane for cooking. If they wanted to fight the fire, they needed to remove all of these, so they organized volunteers to bust down the doors of now abandoned home. One resident, Leon, a physically imposing former political militant and now a college educator, was one of these volunteers. He joked, "I

[6] The Civil Brigade is like FEMA. They are responsible for preparing for emergencies in the community. The do both immediate aid and disaster preparedness planning.

ran through La Propecia knocking on doors and then knocking them down with a karate chop! Like a ninja! If we didn't then the home would have exploded and people would lose everything!" On the other side of the southern barrios, the risk was made evident to Marcelo, a radio station employee, "We arrived from La Tolita and could go no further. Right where we were, the fires were immense, and they approached a propane store, down in Los Mangos (a neighborhood on the shore of the Rio Teaone). We arrived when it exploded. They say you could hear the explosion in the center"

As volunteers attempted to intercede, most residents fled as fires moved through the neighborhoods. Burn victims were brought to the hospital, but Esmeraldas had no burn unit, and they were left suffering on stretchers. While residents fled to the Center, the fire followed them, moving up the Esmeraldas River. This was terrifying, along the river there was both a gas station, and at the port, there was a massive fuel terminal for cargo ships. The disaster had the potential to turn apocalyptic. Residents tried to abandon the center by canoe, but amid the fear and darkness of the moment, this was hazardous, and one toddler died falling into the river, lost to the currents. On the Isla Vargas Torres, an island adjacent to the center and the most marginal of land in the city, a wall of flame approached. Rosa, a seamstress and life long resident of the isle, "As the fire came towards us we had nowhere to go. The river made the gas go down both sides of the isle. We couldn't go to the center, we couldn't go to Tachina, we watched as the flames surrounded us." Luckily, just as the flames reached the shore near the city's commercial center, heavy rains started, and the flames died down.

Amidst the smoking ruins of the city, black rain fell, staining homes, as residents tried to figure out what happened. The politics of blame occupied the city. Was it residents' fault for moving to marginal land? Was it the city's fault for allowing invasions? Was it PetroEcuador's fault for being unprepared? Was it the state's fault for not regulating the refinery and maintaining the facility? In retrospect there were a number of critical issues. The largest of problems was that the creation of the urban milieu had exposed this community to several forms of risk. As invasions filled the milieu of the southern barrios, people settled along the rivers to have access to water for drinking and cleaning. This facilitated chores, but left people in the path of the flames. Generally class and race intersected together to shape the disaster. Poor residents, largely afro-Ecuadorian, who had participated in invasions were among the most affected, losing homes, and facing severe burns. La Tolita, the planned community for the middle class was spared, as natural flows of air and water, pushed the leaking matter away from them. The most densely packed, autoconstructed neighborhoods were those that lost the most homes to the fire. In an immodest claim of causality many outsiders blamed the victims for moving places that broader social processes had pushed and pulled them to the southern barrios (Farmer 1999: 4).

Resident's blamed the state and PetroEcuador. They accused each of running the refinery with total disregard to the health and well-being of residents. In similar disasters like the 1992 Cholera epidemic in Venezuela, the 1984 Bhopal disaster in India, and the 1986 Chernobyl meltdown in Ukraine, the pursuit of development without regard to the integrity of the community created some of the conditions that led to the tragedies

(Briggs and Mantini-Briggs 2003, Das 1995, Petryna 2002). In this case the constant leaks and deterioration of the refinery, created the day-to-day miasma and corrosion that led to the failure of the pipeline. The conditions that made this tragedy possible were created through the lack of intervention by the state in the management of the PetroEcuador. The urban milieu and the industrial miasma made the pipeline fire possible.

This generalized politics of blame does hide the impact of land speculation for some. A year before this event an associate named Karin, had been working for the Civil Brigades to compile a risk map of these neighborhoods. It was actually designed to combat flooding. They were seeking to pay residents to move away from the river. However residents resisted. Some accepted the agreements, but then sold their old properties to new people. The state did not follow-up to make sure the properties stayed empty. Others just said no, not wanting to lose the land that they had struggled for. The flood-risk map, lines up perfectly with the worst of the damage in these neighborhoods. The state had tried to intervene beforehand, but when the project ended, nothing had really been different as the properties stayed inhabited. For some, land was an aspirational strategy, where they profited from its sale, placing others at risk in the process. For others it was a way to build a better life, and the government offers were not substantial enough to draw them away. While the land was compromised to some, others refused to leave. They were dysplaced by the environment, living in uneasy coexistence with processes that could hurt them, only to be physically displaced by the fire (Davis-Jackson 2011: 607-608). In a sad irony though most of the fatalities attributed to the fire,

where of the middle class families of petroleros. Their Villas were intentionally placed away from the refinery as a safety measure. Yet their location was still near petroleum infrastructure, and this proved to be disastrous. The state had considered the dangers of being to close to the plant itself, but the broader oil infrastructure goes over and under some neighborhoods. Built alongside the pipeline, the Villas were exposed to this extended oil network. With the exception of the toddler perishing as her family fled, all of the confirmed fatalities were family of petroleum workers.

The state's response was mixed. Many blamed residents for living in these areas, but in reality neither the state, nor CEPE-PetroEcuador, nor the city had ever created an official policy for settlements. Blaming residents for where they lived erased the actual history of the processes that placed them there (Farmer 2004: 308-309). The urban milieu had been settled haphazardly, with intervention seeking spatial organization only coming after the fact. The logic supporting these beliefs drew on images of the city as a dangerous place. Esmeraldas, an ugly disorganized city, from some perspectives, was bound to have such a tragedy. However, the ad-hoc processes of invasions were actually encouraged by local government and the state sponsored the creation of the Villas. This was not a carefully organized milieu, created through a clinical, calculated Weberian bureaucracy; it was created organically in the moment as spatial and economic factors dictated when and where the community settled. The refinery claimed the accident was an act of god, rather than a true failure of the complex. They denied wrongdoing but affected workers received generous settlement offers, often in the hundreds of thousands of dollars per death or for those facing permanent disability. The city government on the

other hand eventually supported several neighborhoods in a lawsuit. In 2000, the city's newly elected mayor, Ernesto Estupiñan, supported the communities in their suit. Estupiñan had been a career petroleum worker and the first secretary of the national petroleum workers union He was already in opposition to the PetroEcuador management as he had been illegally fired twice over his union activities and this incident drew him even more support. Over time though PetroEcuador made minor settlement offers to communities, and all but one accepted.

La Propecia, the neighborhood where the two rivers meet was the exception. They sued in the face of great odds. No community group had ever won a major settlement against PetroEcuador in Esmeraldas. Typically spills, leaks, and fires were met with fines ranging in the tens of thousands of dollars. Yet in 2002, the community proceeded with their case. The case focused on both the development of the milieu and the effects of the industrial miasma. Residents of La Propecia drew attention to the decrepit state of the oil facilities. They asserted that PetroEcuador had allowed the refinery and the oil pipeline to fall into disrepair. PetroEcuador countered that their facility was in complete working order and that the event was an unavoidable act of god. PetroEcuador lost and they were declared culpable due to the deteriorated conditions of the pipeline, the improper construction of the pipeline, the accelerated decay of oil installations, and the larger effects of pollution in the city, made them responsible for what had happened. The judges recognized the role of pollution in creating the conditions that led the disaster. They recognized pollution as a lively mater that can corrode (Bennet 2010: viii). As the barrio had made the claim as a collective and as they

said this was a universal experience for the city, La Propecia was awarded an $11 million settlement to paid in the form of new infrastructures. La Propecia would receive a pledge of boardwalk, sewers, potable water, soccer fields, a community center, and paved roads for themselves and they would also open a maternity ward in their neighborhood and install a burn ward in the city hospital, as their gift to the other affected communities. PetroEcuador appealed a number of times. They attempted to reaffirm that it was an unavoidable moment created by the rain, something completely unforeseen that cannot be blamed on anyone. The asserted that that their installations were up to standard; contesting the reports of independent engineers. Eventually they claimed that they should not be responsible for rebuilding La Propecia, because the construction of infrastructure was the responsibility of the state, not the state corporation. In 2004 the case was finalized and La Propecia won.

Nevertheless, this marked a transition, characterized by the politics of waiting. Waiting forces people to act as "patients of the state," docile subjects whose hope for a service or project subordinates them. The ambiguities of waiting – the possibility of completion – are used as a form of social control (Auyero 2012: 15-20). PetroEcuador set out to limit their responsibility by managing time, slowly approving projects and not in the intended manner. A body was created with one representative from the city (the mayor), one from PetroEcuador (a lawyer), and one from the neighborhoods (the barrio president), who were tasked with finalizing the plans for each project. Over the following months PetroEcuador sought to control this committee by supporting a community member in opposition to the barrio president. He was not an official

employee of PetroEcuador, but he did happen to drive a company vehicle. The projects wallowed as a legal battle developed over a contested election. PetroEcuador claimed the barrio representative was out of the country and could not have been present to sign critical forms when he did. The case was dismissed. By 2009 only the burn and maternity wards had been built, but they were not properly staffed or funded. The only infrastructure project that proceeded was the pavement of the neighborhood's streets, which came to a tragi-comical conclusion. As the panel of three officials met, PetroEcuador contracted the roads project without permission from the other two parties. The roads in the neighborhood were uneven and rather than taking the time to level them down, the company built them up, despite the presence of homes. Walking on the street along the Teaone, it is impossible to not notice that something is wrong. The level of the road is a meter to two meters above the level of most foundations. While standing in the front entrance of some homes, the street outside is at chest level. When it rains, water flows from the street into the homes. A decade after the settlement only half of the money has been spent and PetroEcuador has sought to dismiss the rest because of delays. The committee itself has had tragic end. The barrio president has been accused of killing the man PetroEcuador had supported for the position. In the toxic political atmosphere there are a number of theories of what happened ranging from frustration over the political interference to claims as innocuous as it being the result of a fight over a dog. The barrio president was never charged, but fled the city fearing reprisals from the deceased man's family and the power vacuum still persists today.

Conclusion: Accelerated Decay

In this chapter I have tried to highlight how the production of the urban milieu and an industrial miasma have articulated together to shape experiences of space and disaster in Esmeraldas. The miasma was one of the root conditions that made the 1998 fire possible. Exposure to contaminants corroded the pipeline so that when the landslide happened, there was no way that the oil infrastructure could cope. The lack of government oversight or management in the refinery effectively let it run at will. As long as production remained steady, the state would not intercede. However, industrial waste mixes with the quotidian flows of air, the marshy land that the refinery is built on, and the equatorial climate to create something more, an industrial miasma that occupies the local urban milieu. While much effort has been directed at health, by focusing on the material affects of pollution I hope to show that the refinery not only creates the conditions of its own decay, but it accelerates them. In terms of my larger dissertation this chapter acts as an introduction two critical processes that I will come back to throughout the remainder of the text, the interplay of the material affects that the presence of the refinery engenders, and the interplay of politics, especially the politics of citizenship, well being, and waiting.

The materiality of pollution is an important register in the city. As lively matter interacts with climate, the conditions of the urban milieu change. The industrial miasma grabs the attention of the community through the senses, decay, and ill health, connecting the industry to larger processes of structural violence. In the following chapters I will pay special attention to materiality in regards to health and infrastructure, again

highlighting its liveliness, the ability of material objects to act on a larger assemblage. The miasma is a physical environment producing particular affects that impact quotidian life, which was made possible by the processes that shaped the settlement of the urban milieu. The city of Esmeraldas has been fundamentally altered by the presence of the national petroleum industry. The refinery became a singularity within the larger urban milieu of the city as people were pulled and pushed near it, dictating how and where the city grew. People connect the refinery to this disaster, but the industrial miasma also has much more insidious affects, altering the sociality of the city. Viewing pollution as lively matter highlights its potential as an affective object to engender particular modes of politics.

Politics is the second key issue here. The experience of the fire grounded local political discourses of the community. This event illustrated that there are intersecting governmentalities of the state, the state corporation, and the city. While it is imagined these would work in concert, the actual separations between them illustrate what Mitchell has called the "state effect" (Mitchell 2002). Mitchell asserted that the state is less a thing in and of itself, and more of collection of disparate bureaucracies that must be drawn into concert. The state tries to appear as a singular but in reality it is the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities (Foucault 2008: 77). The production of the urban milieu was shaped by the absence of concerted intervention between bureaucracies. The lack of intervention from the 1970s through the court cases to settle the fire illustrate a geography of management for the community by the state, but one that would create a social climate where promises of change would become meaningful. The lack of

intervention made residents question their political subjectivity and their citizenship as disastrous events and everyday decay remade the city. As they wait and nothing changes, dissatisfaction with the government simmers, periodically rising to a boiling point. The dysplacement that the public feels in this environment is directly connected to the perceived insurmountability of the official bodies that create structural violence. When they engage with the state it is always from a disadvantaged position. The biopolitical process of knowing pollution, the place, and the people operate to naturalize problems, ensuring that the refinery continues to operate without interruption.

In this environment the rise of the Citizens Revolution, the political project of Rafael Correa Delgado had a special resonance, as Correa promised to recraft the citizen state relationship, creating substantive citizenship, by harnessing public resources like PetroEcuador, to benefit all Ecuadorians. While happening nearly a decade earlier, the events of the 1998 SOTE fire, propelled desires for real change, one that would lessen the burden of the refinery. By promising revolutionary change, Correa tapped into the hope that Esmeraldas could be made better. The state promised to create a level ground where individual and collective agency would become a reality. The community was promised a new style of governance where their voice would be heard, where science would not be conducted at the whims of the corporation, and where the refinery would become a facility that would improve Esmeraldas, rather than corroding it. In this chapter I sought to illustrate the intersection of biopolitics with structural violence; through the remainder of this text I will emphasize how the public finds new forms of individual and collective

agency through citizenship, as well as new forms of constraints as they try to build a livable environment.

Chapter 2

Carnivalesque Democracy: Political Malaise and the Engineering of Affect

Political Malaise and the Engineering of Affect

On July 29th, 2011 I was near the end of my second research trip in Esmeraldas. It was an oppressively hot afternoon; one that Esmeraldeños refer to as a *solazo*, as the sun beats down on you, sapping away all motivation as the humidity rises. It was also the start of Ecuadorian Independence Day, a week of festivities bookended by a *pregon*, a parade of cultural groups celebrating local history, and a military parade, where students and military personnel would commemorate national history. Two years earlier, when I first started fieldwork, the *pregon* was at a nadir; the public school that sponsored the festivity did not expend a lot of effort, leaving the affair as little more than a demonstration of marimba dancing. That July afternoon, I was seated at a café with a friend, drinking coffee, and debating whether I would bother going, when I heard the start of the parade passing nearby. With the festivities so close, I mustered the effort to head down the street and as I reached the parade route I was greeted with a stunning spectacle, as thousands of city residents flowed past. The massive three-hour procession was a cacophony of noise and color, featuring small marching bands, traditional dance groups, and the candidates for Ms. Esmeraldas, interspersed with students who performed short skits with political messages.

It was a massive exhibition of community spirit, but among all of the performances one in particular compelled the public's attention. A leading group of the parade featured an older teenager dressed in a suit reminiscent of those worn by Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa Delgado. The young Correa lookalike walked down the street, following a group of students dressed in the typical tan and green uniforms of the Ecuadorian police. "Correa" alternated between shouting insults at the "officers" and posing for a camera, as students dressed as the press and political sycophants fawned over him. Eventually, after repeatedly being referred to as lazy, corrupt, and traitorous, the "police" turned around, charging Correa with their weapons drawn. A second group of officers, dressed in the coastal police's more militaristic camouflage, intervened, grabbing Correa and dragging him into a waiting ambulance inscribed with the word "hospital" The ambulance sped up and drove wildly through the streets. Silence reigned for a brief moment, before the crowd erupted in laughter at the performance. One lone student trailed behind, with a sign that read, "When the law is not managed with responsibility, everything is disorder and chaos." The display was a play on the word *manejar*, to drive or manage, as the chaotic exit of the ambulance reflected the anxieties and malaise that were being provoked by Correa's administration.

The event was a perfect, mimetic recreation of the 30th of September 2010, when police, frustrated with proposed reforms for law enforcement and sick of being publicly derided by Correa, briefly detained the president in a public hospital in Quito. Police asserted that this was a cry for attention in response to Correa's actions; it was an uprising that reflected their frustration. The president was freed, but in the aftermath

Correa declared that it was an attempted coup, an overthrow of the democratic order. The student's display was shocking in this context; the public performance not only publicly celebrated what many saw as a coup d'état, it happened as Ecuador was undergoing a political and economic reimagining of the nation that was supposed to grant new rights to citizens, including voting rights for those as young as sixteen. The spectacle raises the question, why did the students engage in a carnivalesque display that subverted and critiqued the established hierarchy, when they were presumed to have benefited from the reforms that Correa sponsored?

When I arrived in Ecuador in 2009, the nation was undergoing an unprecedented economic and political transition. In 2006, Correa had been elected president, as he pledged to refound the nation and end years of social instability. During the previous decade, Ecuador's democracy had become increasingly transgressive, where personal insults, interparty conflicts, and mass public uprisings routinely stalled the day-to-day processes of governance (Andrade 2000, Colloredo-Mansfield, Becker 2010). The normalized disruptions prevented six consecutive presidents from finishing a full four-year term in office. Correa's political project, the Citizens Revolution, vowed to end this cycle of conflict and stagnation by recrafting Ecuadorian democracy to make citizenship substantive, a status that empowers the community, rather than a formalized modality of inequality (Holston 2008:16-22). The text enshrined the notion of *Buen Vivir*, Living Well, as a national philosophy designed to embed well-being into the national conceptualization of citizenship to promote equality, respect, and harmony in politics and beyond. Most importantly it proposed extensive changes for governance, as it required

the state to promote new civil rights, grant greater agency to communities, reform the political system, and redistribute state resources. The consecration of the new constitution in 2008 showed Correa could make due on his promises, and in 2009 he sought re-election to lead Ecuador as they moved to turn the constitutional promise into institutional reality.

As Correa's second election approached, his administration sought out opportunities to demonstrate that Ecuador really was changing. The state adopted a two-prong strategy to publicize the shift, targeting key public institutions for immediate reforms, while simultaneously adopting new practices of state remembrance to justify these proposals. The Citizens Revolution identified sites where they could engineer a reimagining of the state by provoking a rupture with the problems of the immediate past in order to create new continuities between their political project, Ecuador's indigenous history, nineteenth century liberal movements, and transnational discourses of twenty first century socialism. This reimagining of history juxtaposed Correa's own personal story with those of everyday people, fashioning bonds between him and the community. His political capital as a father and professor was employed at the forefront of proposals, most notably in education. A critical intersection of these practices was the interpellation of children, the embodiment of the Ecuador's political future, as "revolutionary" political subjects, who were to be the agents, purveyors, and true beneficiaries of change.

However, even as the state sought to engineer affect and project hope, new fractures were developing on the ground. While election caravans raucously toured the city of Esmeraldas, trying to draw support to parties with messages of a better tomorrow,

the actual relationship between Correa's party *Alianza Pais* (PAIS) and allied parties, like the locally powerful *Movimiento Popular Democratico* (MPD), were fraying. Early reforms and proposals for future reforms proved controversial and the increasing acrimony of the campaign drew attention to the possible failure of the constitution to change political culture. Correa scored a resounding victory, but many of his allies broke with him and Esmeraldas would become immersed in a seemingly endless cycle of insults, demonstrations, and protest as the state's proposals proved locally unpopular.

In the months after the election an interesting trend became apparent, as Correa targeted sectors as varied as education, the petroleum industry, insecurity, environment, and infrastructure, for investment and reform, teenagers always seemed to be at the forefront of protests both as agents of resistance and as the subjects of ill conceived plans. When PetroEcuador challenged long held employment benefits, workers understood this as a threat to their family; when infrastructure in the city failed, students were among the first to occupy the streets; when the state debated in/security policies, teenagers were identified as a compromised community; and when the health impact of the refinery is mentioned, children are always used as an examples of victims. The national insecurities about the present and the future continually played out both on and through children. Yet, even as children and their families protested they also were routinely employed as participants in spectacles of the state during holidays such as Independence Day and Carnival. The mixture of anger and resentment embodied in protests and the jubilation conveyed in marches and festivals created a strange mixture of affects that played out across Esmeraldas. While the constitution promoted well-being, a process that

emphasizes the positive relationship between health, economic possibilities, identity, and social relations (Adelson 2000), many Esmeraldeños experienced Ecuador's political changes as well-being's antithesis, malaise, an embodied anxiety that affected everyday sociality. In the context of restructuring, this collective sentiment proved to be a powerful force that reshaped the sociality of presidential supporters and opponents alike, as each person worked through the contradictions of Ecuador's constitutional project to find their own understanding of political change.

In what follows I would like to explore how the political processes of constitutional reform designed to produce well-being, can engender a widespread feeling of malaise that sparks social conflict and repeated protest. This chapter will ask what aspects of the reimaging of Ecuadorian democracy engender malaise? I will focus primarily on the interplay between the carnivalesque mode of politics and the invocation of history and memory, two aspects of change that shape of the affective registers of the Citizens Revolution. I will argue that the student's reenactment of the police "coup" was a reflection of the anxiety students experienced as new political subjects. It was a powerful symbol, where children became affective agents who were able to transgress where others were unable to, shaping public sentiments engendered by the political change.

In this chapter I will set oil aside for a moment to explore the practices that shaped the larger experience of citizenship in Esmeraldas during the period in which I conducted fieldwork. The social climate of the community framed how locals understood the impact of constitutional reforms. While I was in the field I noticed an interesting

tendency; even as populist politics tried to engineer affects on a day-to-day basis, these processes had a special intensity around holidays (Independence Day, Carnival) and pseudo-holidays (election day, tax day), days where provincial and national identities are displayed, commemorated, and contested. Holidays act as points of culmination and transition for Ecuadorian democracy as state spectacles are used as a platform to demonstrate the success of past promises and as a stage to make new pledges for the future. Such festivities often marked a temporary cessation of street protests, which were replaced with creative displays that speak to the states representation of history and change and residents experience of it. These festivities also frame my experience in the field between February 2009 and August 2011. Holidays in particular raised questions of, How is the relationship between state, city, and citizen recrafted? What are people's expectations of change? and What kind of "revolutionary" subject is produced in this process? While most locals understood revolutionary change as a good thing, what constitutes revolutionary is an open question that shaped the shared experience of malaise.

Malaise is an interesting condition to think with as it speaks to our ability to affect and be affected by people, processes, and things (Spinoza 1959, Massumi 2002, Anderson 2010). On the one hand malaise is inter-subjective, an affective register that connects large numbers of people, while on the other hand, it is a very personal experience, produced as each individual negotiates the new institutional and discursive practices of the state. As an "object" of inquiry affect names the "surface of contact of modalities of power and acts a hinge between desired outcome and the actions that make

up the exercise of power (Anderson 2010: 163)." Affect highlights the aleatory, processual nature of the social that is being constantly undone and remade (Anderson 2010: 166). Like morale, malaise is a shared experience that is difficult to capture in one moment due to its instability, it is an affect produced in response to excess. Yet even as the collective sentiment of malaise seemed to infuse every relationship granting a special intensity to political reform, malaise itself is difficult to track forcing us to ask how can the production of sentiment be observed? Rather than being the "primary datum" malaise, like morale, illustrates the variety of points of contact for power in a society and their affects (Anderson 2010: 177). Malaise and morale are after-affects, emotive remainders produced in response to larger processes. Morale is not one thing it's the confluence of hope, certainty, and progress. Malaise operates in similar fashion, at the meeting point of decline, dread, and uncertainty. It is not one sentiment but the collective excess of affect produced through a variety of processes. Both malaise and morale represent larger emotional climates. Shifts in the representations of citizenship challenged many realms of belonging, revealing a multiplicity of contact points between citizen and state creating a multiplicity of possible affects. Drawing from approaches that emphasize the post-Fordist and post-socialist production of affect, I want to highlight how while the expectations of change are tied to the present and future, they are also fundamentally intertwined and dependent on the sensibilities of the past (Muehlebach 2011: 62, Schwenkel 2013: 257).

Thrift has noted that cities are often "roiling maelstroms of affect," an affect that can be engineered and managed as part of other political processes (2004: 57). Rather than passively engaging with affect, politics is often oriented around shaping affective

registers to propel action and create bonds between people, communities, and states (Masco 2008, Anderson 2010). This chapter will draw attention to two intersecting techniques of engineering affect, the carnivalesque tendencies of political populism and the role of state spectacles of remembrance, which illustrate ways that the new political system has created agency as well as new constraints on citizenship.

Bakhtin introduced the notion of carnivalesque to describe the inversions of social hierarchy, which are produced through chaos and humor (1965, Andrade 2001: 300). During Carnival power is supposed to be subverted as spectacle and spectator become one (1965). The carnivalesque is not just a ritual feature of culture, but also a mode of understanding that plays with inversion of hierarchy through psychic forms, the human body, geographic space, and social order (Bahktin 1965: 109, Stallybrass and White 1986: 4-6). The carnivalesque employs transgression to critique and denaturalize social hierarchy. Transgression smashes the rigidities of identification by projecting itself into the forbidden territories excluded in political formation (Foucault 1977: 33). In this chapter I will consider the carnivalesque a modality of apprehending and contesting power relations that relies on both the spectacular construction of political subjectivity and transgression.

Ecuador's political system has become carnivalesque, with transgression taking on both positive and negative connotations. First, over recent years the political system has become increasingly uncivil. A series of presidents routinely used insults as part of populist tactics of securing support. They actively personalized politics reinterpreting everyday democracy an epic battle between good and evil, but also challenged commonly

held sentiments of decorum. The public transgression of politicians sought to break class barriers to create an image of leadership through spectacle, which contributed to public uprisings, corroding the political system. The 2008 constitution promised to disrupt these practices by emphasizing the need for respect and harmony, yet political discourse routinely falls back into such representations. The incivility of populism draws attention to the political, as incivility offends the principles and disrupts the practices of citizenship (Holston 2008: 275). Incivility has the potential to undermine constitutional principles by challenging the sentiments of belonging that infuse such relationships.

This tendency propelled an alternative vision of the state. President Correa's Citizens Revolution has also adopted a carnivalesque logic, asserting that their movement is designed to upend the established hierarchy. Regular citizens were supposed to become agentive citizens, full participants in democracy, rather than subjects held apart as spectators. The entire system was supposed to undergo a transgressive shift, by destroying the rigidities of identification as it sought to promote equality. In the spectacle of the state there was supposed to no longer be a division between spectator and spectacle, making all Ecuadorians part of the political process. The radical notion of equality embodied in Ecuadorian citizenship was designed to challenge the incivility of the past, as oligarchies were upended and the promise of citizenship came to fruition. However, during the course of my fieldwork the political culture of Esmeraldas increasingly mixed the two connotations of the transgression, drawing some people into a closer embrace with the state, while pushing others away, as many of the same political practices persisted. This proved deeply problematic, as teachers, public workers, oil

workers, and even the police would all be represented as enemies of the state in Correa's political discourse and in public spectacles.

Yet, even as carnivalesque discourse provoked doubt for some, the state employed spectacles of remembrance in holidays to fashion new bonds with communities. Holidays are a critical moment for elucidating the tensions that infuse Ecuadorian democracy and the recrafting of relationships not just between citizen and state, but also between the state and its provinces, as such demonstrations often employ representations of history that may contain discrepancies with local memory. Borrowing Schwenkel's concept of "recombinant memory" I would like to explore how the display of history in such spectacles articulates local and national memory in ways that reproduce insecurities. Recombinant history refers to the entanglement of historical scripts and memorial practices, the interweaving of discrepant memories, knowledge formations, and logics of representation (2009:12-13). Rather than emphasizing the transnational processes of memory construction I will primarily explore the tensions that develop as provincial and national understandings of history recombine, a process that illustrates the asymmetrical remaking and co-production of historical narratives. Populism and spectacles are both used to reimagine the nation (Anderson 1983). Recombinant memory highlights the multiplicity of these processes in the national geo-body (Schwenkel 2009: 13).

The political project of the Citizens Revolution is particularly notable for recrafting history, a process that invokes memories of the past decade of political upheaval, the liberal-conservative divide of the 1800s, and even recent experiences. As

scholars have demonstrated the construction of national history can be used to justify past, present, and future actions. The Citizens Revolution seeks to correct national silences in the historical memory, but in a marginalized province like Esmeraldas, the process is also notable for creating new silences and reproducing unease. As Trouillot illustrates, the "processes of fact creation, assembly, retrieval, and their retrospective significance produce new silences (1995: 26)." While the Ecuadorian government represents its self as a progressive or radical movement, its actual practices provoke doubt, as it not only rewrites the history of the nation but of the province. Events such as parades during Independence Day illustrate such tension, as new and old historical "facts" are displayed on the streets. Children are critical in this process, as they become a proxy through which political debates are held. They are used as political stand-ins that incorporate and inscribe meanings through bodily and other practices of memory (Connerton 1989, Taylor 2003, Sturken 1997). Such processes have created productive connections between the politics of children and presidential personhood. Locally children were at the forefront of the Citizens Revolution as they embody its future. While the role of children is often scripted, the events that I will discuss illustrate that children can also assert their own agency. Children become affective agents, who are able to work with broader public sentiments like malaise, harness them, and redirect them.

It what remains of this chapter I would like to trace these intersecting processes through my time in Esmeraldas, paying special attention to the agency of teenagers. I arrived in Esmeraldas the day that the 2009 election campaign started. I would like to use four different holiday moments to mark critical changes in the province. Each holiday

itself highlights a different characteristic of how the Citizens Revolution is imagined by the government and how it is experienced by Ecuadorians in the streets. These events largely represent the unplanned of fieldwork. Going into the field I had no clue that the constitutional changes would take on such myriad forms, shaping both everyday life and these special moments. This chapter will progress as follows; first I will discuss the 2009 election and its affects in the community. While the constitutional changes were widely regarded as a necessary, few could predict the responses they would engender. In this section I will highlight the issues of partiocracy and personalization that infuse politics, review the larger changes constitutional reform put forth, and illustrate the first step children took to being revolutionary subjects. In the second section I will explore how Independence Day is represented through marches in Esmeraldas and Quito. The gap between these representations emphasizes recombinant history and the insecurities Esmeraldas has with state power. This section will also introduce the tensions that developed over education reforms, proposals that would provoke the largest sustained series of protests in Esmeraldas. Third I would like to turn to Carnival itself to illustrate how transgressive politics forced residents to ask what does citizenship mean now? This section will ask what do normal people need to do to be heard? In the final section, I would like to turn back to Independence Day 2011 to illustrate how children have become revolutionary subjects with their own forms of agency, a new form of revolutionary subject.

Partiocracy and the Personalization of Politics: Election Day

In March 2009 I arrived in the city of Esmeraldas to a raucous scene. As I moved into my first apartment I heard a loud commotion coming from the streets below. In front of my home throngs of adults, children, and seniors clad in bright green shirts, marched north on the city's *malecon* – its largest thoroughfare. Rows of motorcycles drove by waving flags stenciled with president Rafael Correa Delgado's profile on the neon green and blue of his party *Alianza Pais* (PAIS). The motorcycles were trailed by dozens of cars whose chassis were adorned with images of PAIS candidates for the national assembly, the provincial prefecture, and the municipality; which were in turn followed by a mass of supporters escorting flat bed tracks equipped with giant speaker systems that broadcast Correa's message to the nation – *la patria ya es de todos!* – "the fatherland is now for everyone!" The participants cheered, clapped, and honked horns for nearly ten minutes as the caravan of the Citizens Revolution's slowly moved through the city. After the street calmed, I asked my new landlady whether this was normal and she smirked and replied that it was "normal for a campaign."

I returned to my unpacking, but twenty minutes later I again heard a commotion from outside. In front of the house was a nearly identical scene as people, motorcycles, cars, and flatbed trucks streamed by. However this group was clad in the orange and blue of the locally powerful *Movimiento Popular Democratico* (MPD), a party formed out of unions and that also identified as revolutionary. The city's mayor and prefect were running for reelection on the promise that "the change would continue," referring to the successes they had had in improving the basic quality of life of Esmeraldeños during the

past decade. While MPD ran its own local candidates, it actually supported Correa for president. The MPD followed the same path through the city as PAIS, cheering, clapping, and honking along the way. The day that I had arrived to Esmeraldas was the official start point of Ecuador's 2009 presidential campaign and over the following seven weeks this scene would be repeated a dozen times a day as major and minor parties alike tried to draw attention to their causes.

The caravans grabbed the community's attention, as hopeful participants demonstrated their faith in the political future of the country. Yet, the caravans also raised a critical question: What did residents actually expect from the constitution? I will argue that these political spectacles of hope were fueled by fears that Ecuador was becoming a failed state due to its political system. The campaign was an event that sought to harness and engineer affect. The constitution engendered expectations for dramatic improvements in the lives of all Ecuadorians as it sought to fashion new bonds between citizen and state, in order to leave Ecuador's recent political history behind. The past shaped the sentiments of the present (Muehlebach 2011: 62, Schwenkel 2013: 257).

Over the previous decade, politics in Ecuador had become transgressive, where politicians challenged each other's authority through insults and the country regularly fell into protests that challenged the social hierarchy of the nation (Colloredo-Mansfield 2006, Becker 2011). Stripped of substance, political discourse was often grounded in the system of populist partiocracy. Partiocracy refers to the tendency for political parties to be ruled behind closed doors as miniature oligarchies that serve the interests of political

leaders rather than constituents.[1] The notion of partiocracy comes hand in hand with increasing personalization of politics, where political adversaries are not just represented as having different opinions but are instead pathologized as fundamentally insane or corrupt.[2] The larger system of partiocracy depends on charismatic populism, which imbues party heads with special significance. The image of the party and the person become difficult to disassociate.

Between 1996 and 2006 Ecuador transitioned between multiple leaders that were known for their populist transgressions. The challenged the bourgeoisie hierarchies and stratification of cultures by using spectacular transgressions to emphasize their political activity (Foucault 1977: 33). In 1996 Abdala Buccaram, a millionaire businessman from Guayaquil, would run against Jaime Nebot, scion of a family of conservative politicians and mayor of Guayaquil. Both men were notorious for publicly deriding opponents, using personal insults and dramatic displays of anger to undercut each other. Buccaram would prove victorious, but his political style was so divisive that after less than six months, he was declared "mentally unfit to hold office" and forced into exile in Panama by the military after being accused of embezzling millions. An interim president would rule for six months until the next election, when Jamil Mahuad assumed the presidency. Mahuad, was not prone to insults, but is infamous for being the president that dollarized the national economy, moving away from the use of the Sucre as coinage and deepening the reach of the global finance into Ecuador. Mahuad's presidency lasted for eighteen

[1] Partiocracy is my translation of partidocracia – The local term suggests that the larger political system is democratic but internally parties are not with candidates being chosen by party leaders behind closed doors, not through primaries.
[2] Thank you Taylor Nelms for helping develop this point.

months, but widespread malaise over the shift drained his support, forcing him to flee into exile in the United States, where he remains today. His vice-president, Gustavo Noboa, took over Mahuad's term, but public unrest over proposed free trade agreements with the United States prevented his administration from moving forward on any significant proposals. Noboa sought reelection but lost to Lucio Gutierrez, who rode a wave of indigenous and leftist support to power. Gutierrez came to office by harnessing the resentment embodied in massive street protests challenging free trade agreements (FTAs). This presidency was bi-polar as it started off anti-FTA, but eventually shifted to a pro-FTA position. He too was forced out due to massive public protests as he worked with conservative groups to replace Ecuador's entire constitutional court and declared martial law in Quito, which thousands of Ecuadorians challenged in the streets.[3] As he fled Ecuador, Gutierrez famously dismissed protestors, as *forajidos* – "outlaws," as he asserted their actions were misplaced and illegal. Their numbers were so great that he had little choice but to take a helicopter from the Brazilian embassy to escape. His replacement, Alfredo Palacios, would finish the presidential term, drawing support primarily from the left. As president, Palacios was largely a placeholder, but became notable for drafting a young economics professor, Rafael Correa Delgado, as his Minister of Finance. Over ten years, six different men, from both conservative and liberal backgrounds, would hold office, placing both the economic and political systems in disrepute. The political system appeared carnivalesque, as the grotesque realism of carnival is relocated in the governing dynamic of the state (Stallybrass and White 1985:

[3] The Constitutional Court was Ecuador's highest court, it is now called the Supreme Court.

19). The excesses of politics produced malaise, as governance was replaced with populism.

The normalized political upheaval and grotesque state of the system created an opening for Correa to seek the presidency. Ecuadorians were universally frustrated with their government, as systematic unrest showed that democracy and citizenship were largely lacking substance. Correa joined a nascent party of academics and leftists called *Alianza Pais* (PAIS) and quickly rose among its ranks to become their presidential candidate. Correa's only pledge during the 2006 election was that he would sponsor a constitutional assembly to refound the nation. This was not unheard of in Ecuador; Correa was proposing that Ecuador redesign its political system for the 20th time since 1830. The key difference was that the new constitution would seek to correct decades of political disenfranchisement, by basing the constitution around the notion of *Buen Vivir* – Living Well, which sought to embed well being into the conceptualization of citizenship (Acosta and Martinez 2009). The constitution recognized that class, race, ethnicity, and gender, were consistently used to divide the nation and it sought to dismantle institutionalized privileges that supported some citizens more than others. Justice and equality became the keywords of the revolution.

The constitution itself represented an ideological project. As systems of ideas and representations, ideologies dominate the mind of a man or social group that always express a class position (Althusser 1994: 120). Ideological state apparatuses interpellate the subject through "the imaginary relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them." Here representations do not

necessarily correspond to reality but they do make *allusion* to it as people "represent their real conditions to themselves in imaginary form (Althusser 1994: 123)." These ideological apparatuses interpellate subjects by imagining them in relation to a social process. Living Well was an ideology designed to embed well being into the conceptualization of all social relationships. In its universal approach, living well can be seen as both a development plan and a substantive conceptualization of citizenship. The text promised to 1) reform the political system to make Ecuador a truly representative democracy, 2) decentralize power and decision making by giving parish, county, and provincial governments more resources to direct projects, and 3) redistribute resources, the states energy income, so that all Ecuadorians would benefit.[4] It sought to imagine new connections between citizen and state as it inverted social hierarchy through the promotion of radical equality. Outside of these general axes of intervention, the constitution was notable for giving Pacha Mama, the embodiment of nature, rights as a living being; legalizing civil unions to homosexual couples; and reducing the voting age from 18 to 16. The authors of the constitution argued that young adults should be made into democratic subjects and active participants in politics sooner. Taken together the proposed reforms identified dozens of points of contact between citizen and state that the government could manipulate and engineer to engender new affects (Anderson 2010: 177).

Correa promoted the constitution as the end of Ecuador's "Long Neoliberal Night," the belief that the governments of the past largely supported national and

[4] In Ecuador there are four political scales nation, provinces, counties, and parishes. The position of Mayor is the highest elected official for a county. There is no differentiation between a county and the county seat.

international business interests over the well being of its own citizens. The constitution tried to imagine an alternative social world by capacitating an alternative set of political and economic practices (Povenelli 2013: 7) The text itself is an amalgamation of ideals that draws from Ecuador's liberal period, indigenous beliefs, and recent reconceptualizations of socialism. Living Well is an interpretation of the indigenous concept Sumak Kawsay, which emphasizes that stability will come from harmony and respect (Acosta and Martinez 2009). The constitution strongly embraces the 19th century liberal beliefs of Eloy Alfaro. Alfaro was famous for promoting secularism and challenging entrenched institutions like large landholders and the Catholic Church, a struggle that Correa likened to his battle against entrenched business and political interests. Lastly the magna carta is a complicated critique of neoliberalism that both reflects and diverges from anthropological critiques of the concept. It reflects Ong's assertion that neoliberalism is both a claim that the market is better at distributing resources and that it promotes a competitive pattern of individualized consumption (2006: 11). Drawing from Heinz Dietrich's conceptualization of "socialism of the 21st century," which inspired Hugo Chavez, PAIS asserted that the text would guide a fair distribution of resources, giving workers equivalent value for their work while enshrining direct participatory democracy as a fundamental political practice (2005: 110-135).[5] The system depends on rational-ethical-aesthetic subjects to redefine national institutions from the inside (Dietrich 2005: 136). PAIS the self-identifying party of the "burning hearts and clean hands" set out to do just that.

[5] Dietrich would later become an advisor of Chavez until he disassociated himself from Venezuela's vision of socialism after he claimed it suffered from a lack of true democracy.

In practice this critique of neoliberalism, like many scholarly critiques of the concept, can create a muddied obscured picture of what practices constitute neoliberalism on the ground (Shever 2012: 17-23 and Mains 2012: 6). While there are scholarly critiques that emphasize that there is not just one "neoliberalism" rather a heterodox set of practices, in Ecuador neoliberalism is reified into one thing, an economic system that consumes and exploits. PAIS discourse promotes their interpretation of socialism of the 21st century as neoliberalism's opposite, neosocialism. A problem with this representation of neoliberalism is that posits fixity – capitalism is considered neoliberal but statist or socialist practices are not. Drawing from JK Gibson Graham and Erik Olin Wright, Appel argues that in reality all states are a mixture of capitalist, statist, and socialist policies (Gibson-Graham 1996, Wright 2010, Appel 2013: p.c.). Following this conceptualization a state can be both neoliberal and neosocialist. The challenge is that in Ecuador the lexical employment of neoliberalism often represents a vulgarization of the concept as all social ills are attributed to it, obfuscating the relations and practices that can be deemed neoliberal, a tension that permeates present statecraft.

Along with the constitutional project, PAIS established an image making project that sought to engage the media in new ways as they attempted to craft a revolutionary aura for Correa. Moving beyond normalized modes of propaganda, PAIS instituted a public campaign that adopted an advertising approach to producing state image-objects. Taglines and slogans of the party crept into official advertising, while the ads themselves feature a much higher production value than anything seen before. Correa's party was PAIS but the larger political project of the constitution was known as the Citizen's

Revolution. After the first election, slogans of the party became official slogans of the state, infiltrating national advertising. This provoked anxieties, as people were unsure whether PAIS was really disrupting partiocracy or seeking transfer their identity to that of the state. The Citizens Revolution represents a rebranding of the state, an attempt to manage its image gap, the gap between the corporeal reality of experience and the abstract nature of images (Mazzarella 2003: 20). State publicity sought to interpellate the citizen into the image of the revolutionary program. The production of these image-objects involves a constant tension between the particular embodied memories that they evoke and more explicitly articulated projects of value. Sometimes these reinforce one another sometimes they contradict one another (Mazzarella 2003: 47). State advertising proliferated with images of Correa publicly taking on his enemies in the name of change as they attempted to manage his presidential aura, rationalizing his work and producing affective resonances. In the election this focused on his opponents, Lucio Gutierrez and Alvaro Noboa, who both had long histories as political candidates. As a revolutionary movement they needed to show that the continuum of history had exploded (Benjamin 1968: 261). Correa needed to embody this rupture with the past and PAIS tapped into both these frustrations and the hope for the future. It sought to project the president as a strong presence, who would take control of the disparate state bureaucracy and push change through. The quantity of publicity was staggering. According to Benjamin the image and its context of employment could "overturn our habitual assumptions and serve a most reactionary purpose (Benjamin 1968: 222)." Advertising needed to illustrate that the future could be different under Correa by channeling his aura. An aura is an element

of an image that can elicit action. The aura creates distance that encourages the viewer to look for a spot in the photograph that "conjures a memory" or recreates a long lost connection (Mazzarella 2003: 54). The aura of the image interpellates the viewer and the subject that's viewed. In Ecuador the aura is used to interpellate the president as a citizen, a fighter, a revolutionary, and the embodiment of the state. It connects citizens to a past of political stability and the possibility of a better future. It moves to make the viewer an ally; a partner in this broader struggle of citizenship, emphasizing that change was "for everyone" and was "underway."[6] Nonetheless, there was an inherent tension in this practice; as the image of Correa increasingly became the focus of advertising, partiocracy was reaffirmed as the party and the president became difficult to separate. Correa's manufactured aura always framed the debate, grounding his political project within partiocracy, rather than dismantling the system.

On the streets of Esmeraldas it was an open question whether change was in fact underway. At first the campaign primarily revolved around caravans and graffiti. Party members would stage such events repeatedly through the day, while at night party militants would cover the city in posters and graffiti, engaging in illegal and transgressive practices that imprinted the city with their image (Caldiera 2012: 386). In Esmeraldas, support for Correa was largely assured, as he was cross-listed as the presidential candidate for the three most popular local parties, PAIS, MPD, and the Partido Roldista Ecuatoriano (PRE). All identified as leftist and each sought to prevent the ascension of the once-exiled president Lucio Gutierrez and the banana magnate Alvaro Noboa to

[6] "Ya es de todos" is another official catch phrase saying x public institution was now for everyone.

power. In Esmeraldas the campaign for the provincial prefecture, the body that controls public works, and the campaign for the local mayoralty absorbed most of the political effort. The political parties inscribed the city with their identity, imprinting buildings with slogans and stencils in moments of democratic excess. The city became a kaleidoscope of party colors, as propaganda became so excessive that the city government's environmental department proposed fining parties for "visual contamination."

This campaign was qualitatively different from previous elections, as every single elected position in the country was up for grabs. Just in Esmeraldas, city dwellers needed to vote for president, four provincial representatives for the national assembly, 15 candidates for newly created "national" representatives to the assembly, mayor, prefect, vice prefect, seven city council members, and local parish board members. Within these processes there was little to no debate on proposals, instead it was largely a referendum on the image of politicians. It focused on the personalization of party leaders and the expectation that constitution would provoke substantive change. In caravans and propaganda posters, the stencils and photos of Correa were constantly on display, with little more than taglines to provide substance. The tensions of the election were only expressed in incidents that placed Correa and the MPD mayor of Esmeraldas, Ernesto Estupiñan together as Correa had used Estupiñan as a representative of the corrupt political system. Estupiñan had come to power by harnessing the frustrations of afro-Ecuadorians, a political marginalized community. Caravans and graffiti drew on each man's aura to produce an affective response and pull people to their cause, however, both

also showed that excesses of engineering can push people away from the party. Tensions exploded on Election Day itself.

On that Sunday morning the city was peaceful. Esmeraldeños from across the country returned home to vote and most public sites, commercial centers, churches, and restaurants remained closed. In Ecuador, voting is mandatory, and most people return to their birth province to participate. In a strange coincidence I had to leave Esmeraldas that afternoon to attend to visa issues. Arriving in Quito that night I was stunned when I saw multiple news stories of rioting in Esmeraldas, disruptions that were quite literally in front of my home. The counting of ballots was tortuous, as they had to recheck each for dozens of positions. Correa clearly won the presidency, nearly doubling the vote of Gutierrez and the local assembly positions were settled quickly as well, yet the local mayoral contests for Esmeraldas city, Atacames, Mompiche, were all contested. In Esmeraldas three parties, the MPD, PRE, and PAIS each claimed victory. Over the first week of counting, party militants from each city took over the streets in front of the local election office. Images of the first night featured shots of residents setting bonfires of tires and branches alight. The next day stories and showed masses of party militants in mutual combat, hurling stones, and striking each other with sticks. Feeling overwhelmed, election official moved from their office, taking over a local school to count.

In this environment of distrust, who could be employed to impartially count ballots? Ironically it was young adults, those who had just been granted the right to vote who were seen as the least indoctrinated into the party political system. Students from a prestigious Catholic high school were placed in groups of two and paired with election

officials to count the vote. During the election children were the only ones allowed to touch the ballots, as adults observed behind them. With all of the expectations for systematic change, the only demonstrable difference was the participation of students in the process. When votes were counted a deep ambivalence towards local politicians was revealed. Estupiñan won, but it was a tight race between him and the local PRE candidate, with the margin of victory less then one percent. The PAIS candidate who claimed victory was a distant third. While examining the results an interesting trend became apparent; the combination of null votes, those intentionally damaged to not count, and blank vote, those where no selection of a candidate was made, collectively outnumbered the votes that winning candidate received. Estupiñan was victorious but only sixteen percent of locals voted for him. This malaise would spread over the coming months.

Rebel! Rebel! Rebel!, the Remaking of Provincial Memory: Independence Day 2009

In the interim to Correa's second inauguration, the Citizens Revolution started promoting key reforms. Esmeraldeños were wary of state promises, which illustrate underlying insecurities within the community. Esmeraldeños possess an ambivalent relationship to the state as their history has been removed or edited from national history, an issue mirrored in how the state treats the province in general. The selective invocation of histories of Ecuadorian Independence Day are revealing in this regards. Independence Day in Esmeraldas represents a situation of recombinant history making (Schwenkel 2009: 12-13). The processes of fact creation, assembly, retrieval, and their retrospective

significance produce silences that Esmeraldeños have tried to correct (Trouillot 1995: 26). Power is central to these practices, as power shapes whose voices are heard (Chakrabarty 2000), which is limited by structural factors (Schmidt and Patterson 1995).

Until 1998, Ecuador as a nation had a strong mestizo identity that was enshrined in their constitution. The self-representation of the nation emphasized that the country was produced through a mixing of Spanish and indigenous peoples. Afro-Ecuadorians were left out of this matrix, making them Ecuador's ultimate other, a position that left them largely out of the history books (Rahier 1998: 422). Ecuador's 1998 challenged this view, recognizing Ecuador as "plurinational," a nation of nations, seeking to create a greater symmetry of in history making but in Esmeraldas, a province that was already geographically and socially marginalized, this meant the contributions of Afro-Ecuadorians continued to be silenced. The few areas where they were publicly accepted were the arts and sports. It is an ironic history, as struggles of Esmeraldeño resistance shape national history. Runaway and shipwrecked slaves originally settled Esmeraldas in 1543. The Spanish targeted the region around the modern city of Esmeraldas for exploration due to rumors of mineral wealth. They believed that there would be Emerald mines, and named the region Esmeraldas, to reflect this "mineral dream" (Jurado Noboa 1995: 9-10). Until 1599, the region stayed largely independent from Quito, as the landscape and disease swallowed colonial expeditions whole. Through the colonial period the Spanish had little success in controlling this province, making this the first of four foundational moments in Esmeraldas' history of rebellion (Estupiñan Bass 2002:21, Walmsley 2004 58).

Rebellion is often equated with Esmeraldas. In 1809 Quito tried to break away from Spain, marking the "first call of independence" in the Americas. However, Quito was unsuccessful and Ecuador would not have freedom until 1822. In Ecuadorian history, the declaration of independence is commonly attributed to the break of Guayaquil from the Spanish in October 1822, yet in reality the first successful separation happened two months earlier when the Esmeraldeño community of Rio Verde asserted their freedom. History books focus on Guayaquil, but Ecuadorian Independence Day is celebrated on the date of the Rio Verde declaration. Ecuador would become part of Bolivar's Gran Colombia before becoming its own nation in 1830. In the early independence period Esmeraldas stayed largely unsettled by anyone except for Afro communities. Ecuador became a bi-polar state, with conservative landowners holding power in the Sierra, and liberal business elites controlling Guayaquil and the coast. During this period Quiteños sought to build a new port in Esmeraldas in order to limit the power of Guayaquil. The endeavor would require the construction of a road through Esmeraldas, a project, which repeatedly failed. Esmeraldas was treated like a token between the two polarities (Rueda Novoa 2001: 150-153). This experience shaped local expectations of the state. In the 1890s Esmeraldas supported the liberal revolution of Eloy Alfaro, who fought against the Catholic Church to build a secular society. Alfaro was notable for uniting the various regions of Ecuador, and installing the nation's first railroad. In 1912 Alfaro was assassinated, but an Esmeraldeño lieutenant of his, Carlos Concha led a three-year rebellion in protest. Repeated defeats of conservative forces in

Esmeraldas by machete wielding Afro-Ecuadorians, granted the entire province with a dangerous reputation (Estupiñan Bass 2002:21, Walmsley 2004 58).

This history of rebellion is foundational to the province and much of the political engineering of affect draws on these histories, recombining them in many different ways. The rise of Ernesto Estupinan as mayor is illustrative of this. In 2009 possible reforms for the oil industry, education, and security had special resonance in the community. Oil and education had the potential to be explosive in Esmeraldas due to the MPD. The MPD had come to power in the municipal and provincial governments in response to partiocracy and Afro-Ecuadorian disenfranchisement. Esmeraldas was treated as a prize to be distributed to loyal supporters of national parties prior to 2000, a situation that reflected the political interference the province had faced since the independence of Ecuador. The community suffered as politicians treated city coffers as personal bank accounts. In 2000, Estupiñan harnessed frustrations with the lack of local representation to rise to the position of mayor. Estupiñan would be the first self-identifying Afro-Ecuadorian to hold the office of mayor in Esmeraldas (Johnson 2009: 365). Estupiñan's political backing came from public workers and education unions, which was augmented by his ability to harness cultural spectacles like Carnival to create positive representations of the community. Among Estupiñan's first acts was the declaration of strike to draw attention to the host of problems it was facing. In 1998 landslides had destroyed one hillside neighborhood and the trans-Andean Oil Pipeline (SOTE). The second incident provoked a conflagration that bisected the community trapping a majority of people in

the city center as walls of flames followed waterways. The experience illustrated the need for positive state intervention but little was coming.

In July 2001, just before Independence Day, the city and province entered into a strike, shutting down the national petroleum refinery and blocking provincial highways to compel the attention of the state. Petroleum workers openly participated, and years later, they would argue that their actions had little to do with PetroEcuador itself, rather they were caught up in the "spirit of the day." This strike was a public moment designed to reaffirm local cultural identity and as the community waited for a government response, local intellectuals recrafted three symbols, the provincial motto, song, and seal. The seal had featured a light skinned Afro man standing looking down with a cornucopia and the sea in front of him, which was supposed to show the abundance of resources in the province. The new seal made simple changes, darkening the man's complexion and shifting his head so he looked forward rather than down. It represents Esmeraldeños looking up in defiance and towards a better future (Walmsley 2004: 57). Alterations in the provincial song highlighted rebellion as a positive quality of the community. First a line that said, "Your children go forward falling," was changed to, "Your children go forward fighting," emphasizing that the Afro community would not give up. The provincial motto, which is featured in both song and seal, was changed from, "Free through nobility, great through nobility," to "Free through rebellion, great through rebellion." The end of the provincial song reaffirms the positive sense of resistance, by closing with the line, "Rebel! Rebel! Rebel!" Each symbol had featured Afro-Ecuadorians, but all were interpreted as problematic as they were originally produced

through asymmetrical power relations, that insinuated negative qualities for the community. In a moment of recombinant memory, locals took this opportunity to project their understanding of rebellion as it was shaped through slavery, resistance, and state neglect. They drew from different scripts while representing the province. In Esmeraldas the transgressions of rebellion were understood as a positive characteristic of the people. They argue that when the system fails, when their rights are taken away, the political system should be upended.

In 2009, the sentiments that fueled these changes were resurrected, as Esmeraldeños were unsure what to make Correa's early proposals. Between the election and inauguration, Correa proposed his reforms for PetroEcuador and Education, which were deeply unpopular in Esmeraldas. Correa sought to reform the entire education system, creating a national system of education standards, but he proposed these without input from teachers or their union. While the proposals were designed in congress, they had little weight until after Correa's next term started. Oil was different in this regard as Correa declared a state of exception for PetroEcuador to push through reforms immediately.[7] During this period there were few protests but the accumulation of malaise became visible in unusual ways.

For me this became apparent just before Independence Day 2009. It was late July and the entire city was preparing for the coming holiday. This was also the time for taxes and middle class professionals often sought the help of cyber café attendants to submit their forms. One day I entered a café to look up information about Correa's 1701st decree

[7] Discussed in depth in Chapter 3

as president, which extended a state of exception for PetroEcuador. The cyber was packed with teachers filling out tax forms as the lone attendant slowly worked through each person's case. I began looking for information on the official webpage of the presidency, which was covered with images of a smiling Correa. While absorbed in the site, I was startled when an elderly woman sitting behind me blurted out "Damn Correa!" It was obliquely addressed at me rather than to me, and she continued on without waiting for a response,

> "Do you know what he's trying to do to us teachers? He's trying to push us all out. I've been a teacher for 26 years and I might lose my job because of damn Correa. You know I might just decide to start selling drugs. I would be better off! The 'easy life' would be a lot better than losing my job to him. UNE has done great work for this country and he's just trying to kill it for himself. The easy life would be better than this. You guys know what's happening right?" [8]

She employed local slang for the drug trade, *la vida facil*, as a contrast to being a public servant. I could not see her as she was right behind me but I could see the other women in the room, who were all shaking their heads in affirmation. When I finally turned around and looked at the woman, she fit the local stereotype of a teacher. She was a short and petite afro-Ecuadorian woman in her mid 50s, wearing a long dress and school polo shirt. It was the basic uniform all teachers in the city wear. She was visibly frustrated, and as I moved to talk with the cyber attendant she sat and glared at the images of Correa on my computer screen. While protests from the student, teachers, and college unions were becoming increasingly common, this was the first time someone had forced the issue onto me. The proposed reforms had special significance for elderly teachers, as they were the

[8] UNE – *Union Nacional de Educadores* – Ecuador's National Education Unions.

most likely to have fallen behind on training, which could possibly lead to the end of their career. In Esmeraldas, a vast majority of the middle class are educators. There are few paths of social mobility in Esmeraldas, and a career in education is the most common. The lack of input, the concentration of power in the presidency, reflected the typical position of Esmeraldas, not the promise of reasoned discourse that living well asserted.

A week later the Independence holiday offered productive contrasts to this event. Independence Day concludes with a massive military parade, where teachers and students from every local institution march through the city. The celebration in Esmeraldas is relatively extravagant, although it pales in comparison to the largest celebration held in the center of Quito. That morning, I sat at home and watched the Quito celebration on television. Running through Quito's largest park, La Carolina, the "military" parade starts in similar fashion to the one in Esmeraldas. Students dressed in their school uniforms, and some times more elaborate costumes, parade through the city accompanied by students playing drums and glockenspiels. They stream past bleachers erected along the park playing short songs. After two to three hours of student processions, they are followed by military personnel dressed in the traditional uniforms of the nineteenth century, who goose step in precision formations, while shouldering muskets. The primary purpose of the display is to connect citizens to national history. It is a typical parade in all respects, espousing the dominant narrative of the nation and projecting order as strictly regimented groups pass through the city.

The parade in Esmeraldas starts much the same as students march by institution. However in Esmeraldas the student displays often try to incorporate local culture with wooden marimba, bomba drums, and cununu drums occasionally being inserted into the mix to create a localized experience. In these displays the wealthiest and poorest schools are most likely to adopt local history but for different reasons. Wealthy schools employ traditional instruments to specifically tie themselves to local culture and as an attempt to win contests based around performances. The poorest of schools often employ these traditions out of necessity, unable to afford the modern drums that are typical for most institutions. With each group of students walks the united faculty of the school, who are showered with applause. In the context of the proposed reforms for teachers, they showed they had the support of the city.

The more dramatic difference is with the presentation of the military. Where soldiers in Quito celebrated the nation's military past, those in Esmeraldas celebrated the military present. It highlights a critical ambivalence, as the difference in military display illustrates how the state sees the province. In 2009 there was a possibility that Correa himself might be present for the festivities. During the prior year's celebration his presence had signaled a boon for the city as made pledges to build a culture house for the city and a bridge across the Esmeraldas River, a long hoped for and expensive project. In 2009 Correa did not appear but the military prepared for the event as if he was there. The military parade began with a flyover by newly acquired combat jets. On the street, ranks of military personnel marched by division led by a group of military police in full riot gear. The riot squad chanted their loyalty to the state, as they used Billy clubs to beat out

a marching rhythm on their shields. Marines, air force, army, and navy personnel followed them. Interspersed amongst the regiments were examples of the new military technologies the government had acquired. River patrol boats were driven through the city on trucks, and tanks, armored personnel carriers, and other vehicles followed in sync.

The ambivalence in the displays is provoked by the possible histories that they can represent. On the one hand they speak to the need to secure Ecuador's northern border. In 2008 Colombia and Ecuador broke diplomatic relations after Colombia attacked a rebel FARC base situated just inside Ecuador, in Angostura. They killed a high-ranking FARC leader named Raul Reyes and at least sixteen FARC personnel. The incident was troubling for Ecuador as it showed that the border was porous and the Ecuadorian military could not keep rebel or paramilitary forces out. Colombia showed it was willing to ignore Ecuadorian sovereignty in its drug war. The event also raised the specter of rumors over the financing of Correa's election campaigns. Opponents had asserted that FARC secretly donated money to Correa, who granted FARC safe passage in Ecuador. While these events happened in the Ecuadorian Amazon, the presence of the border led to fears that a similar event could happen in Esmeraldas as paramilitaries used the rivers and ports of Esmeraldas as a drug transshipment point. The display showed the technologies of security that Ecuador could draw on to prevent the recurrence of such an event. It was an attempt to show that the state could protect its citizens. On the other hand many felt that these soldiers were most likely to be used against Esmeraldeños due to the provincial reputation for rebellion. With such a long history of distrust, displays of riot police and military personnel did not reaffirm the sense of belonging that the new

constitution proposed. In this sense, the embodiment of memory is an active process with which subjects engage in relation to different social institutions and practices (Sturken 1997: 10). Through these events Esmeraldeños and national authorities draw on a number of localized histories.

In this case there are large discrepancies between the positive and negative iterations of rebellion. For Esmeraldas this underlies the state, citizen relationship, as state powers are absent when needed and overly present when not. In this case teachers embody this tension because of their relationship to children. The juxtaposition of their political battle with the government and their celebration on the streets by the community reveals the tensions between the commonly held desire to see children and teachers do better. But as the agency of teachers is constrained by the state, the process provokes malaise as different desires for change compete. In the parade itself the state is largely concerned with producing an image of authority, but one that is transient, disappearing into other processes once the parade ends and less overt symbols of power are employed. Revolution has a different meaning in a land of rebellion.

Carnivalesque Democracy: Carnival 2010

In the months following Correa's inauguration, proposals in the assembly were not advancing. In response, the government, and more importantly the presidency, began to concentrate powers rather than redistribute them. Redistribution was a fundamental proposal of the constitution. Provinces, cities, and parishes were supposed to have more opportunities to shape their own policy. If a community wanted to build a road or a park, they were supposed to have options in pursuing its construction instead of depending on

the state to make a decision. Regular citizens were supposed to have a voice, but many of the government's proposals sought to push reforms without consultation with the effected sectors of society sparking protests. The president increasingly ruled by decree, circumventing both congress and the courts. In this situation the question is raised of what do citizens need to do to be heard?

As recent history has shown in Ecuador public protest has proven effective at removing politicians, if not in reforming the system. Drawing multitudes of people to the street provokes change but also instability. Protests have the possibility of harnessing affect, but the also can reproduce malaise, provoking even deeper frustrations. In Esmeraldas the months following the inauguration illustrated how multiple processes contributed the larger sentiment of malaise. In the city, multiple sectors of people were under threat do to proposed changes. The largest movement was education and between teachers, high school students, and college students the city experience two to three protests a day. This movement articulated with petroleum workers protesting labor policies, fisherman protesting piracy, taxi drivers protesting insecurity, and so on. On any weekday the traffic of Esmeraldas might be ensnared three or four times as protestors walked the same circuits through the city.

The same frustrations played out across the country, eroding the presidential aura that Correa had crafted. Through this the president harnessed the power of the media and advertising inundated the airwaves. Even after the campaign was over, The Citizen's Revolution never seemed to stop campaigning. New controversies arose. One of the first was the proposed creation of "Revolutionary Neighborhood Committees" for the Citizens

Revolution. The committees were supposed to be ground level organizations for the Citizens Revolution to establish new connections for Citizens. Yet it was unclear whether these committees were a proposal from the state or a proposal from Correa's party PAIS. The name of the committees mimicked the name of Cuba's neighborhood committees. In Cuba these are commonly understood as sites of control, where rumors of indiscretions can be relayed to officials. In Ecuador no one was sure what to make of these and they drew on a dangerous precedent from international socialism. The anxiety the proposal bred, lead to their cancellation.

Even more damaging was the revelation that Correa's brother, a wealthy Guayaquileño businessman had received hundreds of millions of dollars in illegal contracts. Family of politicians were forbidden from contracting with the state, but Fabricio Correa, had used companies that only existed on paper to work around the prohibition. This was damaging to Rafael Correa as it challenged his image of honesty. Fabricio Correa asserted that of course his brother knew of the contracts while Rafael Correa said he had no knowledge of this what so ever.

Under these conditions, Ecuadorian democracy turned carnivalesque. Bakhtin introduced the notion of carnivalesque to describe the inversions of social hierarchy, which are produced through chaos and humor. During Carnival power is supposed to be subverted as spectacle and spectator become one (1965). During this period Ecuadorian democracy took on many of the characteristics that the new constitution sought to eliminate. Respect and harmony were distant dreams in the political system as public transgressions were used to challenge political opponents and anyone deemed an enemy

of the revolution. There was a crisis of value as desire and disgust co-mingled (Stallybrass and White 1986: 21). In Ecuador, grotesque jokes have been used to draw attention to the transgressions of politicians. The story of the artist Pancho Jaime is revealing in this regard. Jaime was an artist that self-published comic books on the streets of Guayaquil to critique the conduct of politics in the city and nationally. Andrade argues that Jaime employed overtly sexual imagery in comics to draw attention to the machismo and misogynistic tendencies of local politics (2000). Jaime's strategy was to use images of deviant sexuality to illustrate the carnivalesque processes of politics, which left little positive change in the city of Guayaquil. Jaime identified a troubling trend that would only grow worse. His critiques were scathing enough, that members of elite families had him assassinated.

In the case of the Correa brothers, their family relationship became the fodder of jokes. With their father absent for most of their lives, the elder Fabricio acted as a father figure for the younger Rafael. Fabricio was a self-made millionaire, building a fortune through construction services. Prior to Rafael's first election, Fabricio was credited with coining the name "*La Revolución Ciudadana Democratico*," the long name of the Citizens Revolution; imbuing the revolution with his brother's image, as the initials of Rafael and the Revolution, RCD, align. He was a consultant to the president until the accusations of corruption arose. Rafael's denial and Fabricio's affirmation of the accusations produced an immediate schism, provoking filthy commentaries about the incestuous relationships between money and power. Rafael distanced himself from his brother, claiming to in fact be a self made man, and Fabricio responded by making jokes

about the "pink circle" of close associates that were leading the president down the wrong path, as if he was a wayward child. As a commentary it referenced both inappropriate relationships between Correa and his staff, and accused the president of engaging in a diluted form of "pink" socialism. Fabricio insinuated that the president violated their family relationship and that only those with connections to the president's closest advisors would have his ear. Rafael Correa had increasingly relied on his closest advisors, who many accused of benefiting directly from the Revolution. For instance, the Alvarado brothers, who were in charge of Correa's publicity machine, owned their own public relations firm that contracted with the state. It was the same sort of political oligarchy that had always controlled the government, meaning the president's Citizens Revolution had changed nothing. The jokes undercut the president as his brother became one of his most forceful critics, but they also highlighted his own tactics of dealing with the opposition. Rafael Correa had adopted similar practices of insults and jokes to deal with his enemies, challenging their manhood and loyalty when questioned. Every Saturday the president holds a long press conference and discussion with citizens. In these sabatinas, Correa would routinely denigrate his opponents; opposition assembly members and indigenous leaders were called *pelucones dorados*, "golden bigwigs," to claim they acted as oligarchs, reporters would be titled "Chucky," after the maniacal doll from the Child's Play horror movies, when they questioned the president, and NGO representatives and environmentalists would be named infantile, when Correa challenged their right to exist. It reflected the same carnivalesque political practices of the ousted president Buccaram and the former president Febres Cordero, as they used their

presidential platform to challenge all opposition. The carnivalesque becomes a resource of actions, which may be invoked both to model and legitimate desire and to degrade. These actions depend on clear discursive oppositions between high and low culture, official and public, and the grotesque and the classical (Stallybrass and White 1986: 16). Social hierarchy was reversed as the president publicly rained down insults on everyday citizens. The leaders of unions, opposition politicians, and his own brother would become targets of the president's ire. Cartoonists entered this debate; the popular Chamorro, consistently drew Correa sitting on a throne, facing away from the reader, to a future that only he could see. They increasingly called him "Your Majesty," implying that Correa acted like a despot, not a democratically elected president.

In Esmeraldas, increasing tensions often directed the president's insults at Ernesto Estupiñan, who was represented as a member of an oligarchy. As protest movement after protest movement developed in the city, malaise spread. This was not just happening in Esmeraldas and Education protests gripped the nation. The national teachers union, UNE, lead the FEUE and FEUSE, the high school and university student unions, in mass marches. The education unions adopted a new mascot, a placard of a choking Correa surrounded by a noose made of the UNE flag. Underneath it demanded that the president "respect the constitution." The government responded with a creative response. They did not disallow marches in Quito and Guayaquil; instead they restricted the movement of buses from provinces, preventing students from joining. If a protest was held in one of the metropolises of Ecuador, only students from that region could participate as all other groups were prevented from accessing the nation's highways.

Correa held mass demonstrations to demonstrate the backing he had with some groups, but then disallowed others from traveling to do the same. The participation of young adults in the democratic discourse was curbed. It was ironic as Correa's own history involved him being a high school and university student leader. Young adults in Esmeraldas had few ways to release their frustration with the state.

In this situation it begs the question of what can people do if they are dissatisfied? Citizenship was limited as people were restricted to protesting in their home city. By Carnival the tensions were high. Severe weather conspired against the community and the celebration faced a second year of low incomes, as problems with the roads prevented tourists from arriving in the city. Carnival is a weeklong holiday structured through transgression. The throwing of water at whoever is near is a constant during this period as people are allowed to drink in the street and families move from party to party. Its most important feature is a massive parade. Unlike the Independence Day festivities, this parade is devoted exclusively to local culture. Rather than marching in neat regiments, students and culture purveyors, dance through the city, trying to draw the crowd into the event. During the holiday there is little separation between spectacle and spectator. The holiday also has a reputation for insecurity, and minor crimes like theft and pickpocketing are common.

One afternoon during the holiday I was waiting for a friend who worked on state sponsored community programs, in her office. She was attempting to sort out problems with a community she was working with. The office, a small institution that organizes state projects for Afro-communities is an unusually busy hub, despite only having two

staff members, and was an excellent environment for casual observations. The projects were interesting as they represented a new practice of the state for building relationships with communities. The projects combined self-sufficiency for communities, while affirming afro-Ecuadorian culture, but such programs always faced the threat that projects would fail, as communities often ate the money out of necessity. My friend Karin was dealing with a group that was building a small business based on natural resource extraction. The group was behind in the construction of a communal building and her bosses were becoming increasingly frustrated. She was trying to explain, that they could lose the project with more delays. I was waiting for her to take me to interview a friend of hers but the meeting dragged on, becoming increasingly conflictive. Three hours later the meeting finally concluded, with frustrated community members leaving, and Karin and her work partner Alicia stopping to organize the office before we would leave. I sat engrossed in a newspaper when I smelled cigarette smoke, matter that was completely out of place in that environment. In the center of the room was a greying and disheveled Afro-Ecuadorian man taking long, slow drags off a cigarette and staring into nothingness. Karin turned around and asked the surprise visitor, if she could help him, and he looked at each of us before exclaiming, "I want to talk to the president!" Karin and I looked at each other, and he once again interjected, "I want to talk to the president!" Karin then explained that while it was a government office, she had no actual contact with the president and encouraged him to go to the local Governor's office, just down the street. The man, who had quietly slipped in, started wandering the office, pausing near the window, to take a drag from his cigarette again. For the next five minutes we existed in

an uneasy standoff, as the man explored one half of the office, Karin and Alicia moved to the backside of the space, placing me between him and them. The man would occasionally insist on seeing the president again and then return to his contemplation before suddenly running out of the office. We assume that when the prior group left, he grabbed the door before it automatically locked and slipped inside.

I draw attention to this event not to illustrate the possibilities of insecurity in the province but instead to highlight his simple, but muddled demand, "I want to see the president!" The situation provided an interesting contrast to what had been happening in the office just minutes before as well as what was happening across the country. In the new democracy, hierarchy was supposed to be inverted and politicians were supposed to be accountable to everyday citizens. The man's demand illustrated the core expectation of the revolution, the people would be heard, but in this environment the question was how? The Revolutionary Neighborhood Committees proposal could provide a direct contact between president and citizen, but to only those involved in the party. Mass demonstrations of students, draw the attention of the president, but do not equal a conversation or reflexive exploration of why the students resist. The projects in that small government office, offer some support to communities, but any attempt to make new demands on the state has to wade through layers upon layers of bureaucracy. In light of these projects, the man's simple demand is revealing as it highlights the expectation of residents to be able to talk with or confront the state. It's a carnivalesque approach to democracy, as the equality promised in the constitution requires the old social hierarchy to be overturned. Yet this situation demonstrates that it is nearly impossible for a normal

person to directly connect with the president. The social hierarchy has not be overturned as much as critical pieces have been substituted. Whether these will operate differently is the open question for the community. As the demands of the community are not addressed, or are often completely ignored, the frustrations that feed malaise grow. With the relationship between state and society being recrafted, almost all relationships were in a state of flux, contributing to this process.

Child's Play: Independence Day 2011

September 30th, 2010, will go down as one of the most infamous days of the Correa administration. For a month the national assembly had been under pressure from the president, who was frustrated with the lack of movement on the constitutional packages for water, the justice system, and other critical sectors. Correa had begun threating to invoke the *muerte cruzada* – the cross death, a provision of the new constitution that gave the president the nuclear option of dissolving the assembly after a year in office if they were not progressing on their obligations. Correa's style created a schism between him and most of his former allied parties, stripping PAIS of the majority in the assembly. It raised the specter that once again Ecuadorian democracy would fail. One law that did move through the legislature was one that took away bonuses that police officers received when they moved up and rank or received commendation for service. The rationale was that under Correa, these groups had received significant raises and the old system of bonuses was unnecessary and prone to corruption.

On September 30th, the police took to the streets as protestors, with a group infiltrating the legislature's security and taking control of access to the assembly building. Their presence forced the assembly members to acquiesce to negotiation. For them, the approved changes directly threatened benefits that they saw as the result of meritocracy, benefits that had to be earned. In Quito military personnel joined in by taking over the national airport Mariscal Sucre. Across the nation other members of law enforcement joined creating barricades and refusing to patrol. In the city of Esmeraldas, the provincial police headquarters was surrounded by law enforcement who engaged in a carnivalesque spectacle, where officers, those trusted with upholding the law, set tires ablaze adopting the typical tactics of protestors. Martial law was declared in the city, and the military, not the police, was made responsible for patrolling the streets.

That morning in Quito, Correa approached the police screaming,

> "If they want to kill the president, here he his, kill him if you desire, kill him if you have the power, kill him if you have values instead of cowardly hiding in the crowd! I won't take a step back, if they want to take the bases, if they want to leave the citizenry without defense, if they want to betray their police mission, betray it! This president, our government, will continue doing what it has to do.

In the moment Correa, expressed righteous indignation at the police actions, tearing at his own shirt and pounding his chest, in a display the evoked the populist pomp of his political critic Jaime Nebot. Correa arrived claiming to want to mediate, put after the insults police responded by launching a tear gas canister near his feet and as he fled he aggravated a knee injury. His police security brought him to the National Police Hospital, which was surrounded by protesting officers. Over the course of the day, Correa would declare a state of exception, as political allies negotiated with the officers. Rank and file

PAIS supporters would attempt to enter the hospital to rescue Correa but they were thwarted. Eventually the military entered, saving the president. One civilian, two police officers, and two soldiers would perish in the event.

After the incident, the Citizens Revolution tried to control the narrative of the day. Following Trouillot the government shaped fact creation, assembly, retrieval, and their retrospective significance, producing new silences (1995: 26). There was critical debate about whether this was an attempted coup d'état or if it was a protest that had just gotten out of control. The lynchpin of this argument was the question, Was Correa kidnapped by the police? Correa had been brought to the hospital by his own security to protect him, but the protesting officers occupied the facility. Some claimed that Correa had lines of communication out of the hospital and never stopped ruling the nation. However, anonymous police were heard over the radio, asserting that his own security detail should kill Correa. Correa asserted that it was an attempted coup and this was the fact that they tried to control. To start with the government copyrighted the terms 30-S and *Prohibido Olividar* – prohibited to forget. The term 30-S was employed by a blogger to title the situation, and "prohibited to forget" became the state's official catch phrase. The government did not coin the terms, but instead forcefully took control of them. Vinicio Alvarado, a member of Correa's inner circle claimed that the copyright was to prevent the distortion of the events after the fact. The following February, Emilio Palacios, the opinion editor of one of the largest and most conservative newspapers in the country, *El Universo*, would write a scathing editorial claiming that Correa had ordered the military to open fire on the hospital when it was full of civilians. Palacios was calling for an

investigation, Correa responded with a lawsuit. Correa sued Palacios, El Universo, and two of the newspapers directors asking for $40 million dollars and three years of prison for each defendant. In an overburdened court system the judgment arrived in record time, finding the defendants guilty, and raising questions of whether the critics were being railroaded. Immediate alarm bells went off and it was found that the judgment was not written on the judge's computer, but one owned by "Chucky7," another reference to the maniacal doll in the Child's Play movies. The defendants appealed, claiming that this was the Internet handle of one of Correa's own lawyers, asserting that the president's allies effectively wrote the decision against his critics. They appealed, winning a $10 million reduction in the fine, but the Supreme Court affirmed the larger decision. Palacios fled into exile in the United States, but before the fine was due Correa forgave his accusers dismissing the case. Correa himself was facing accusations that he was curtailing press freedoms.

Through these events I was at home in the United States, returning just months before the anniversary of the event. In Esmeraldas, the city was little different as protests continued to occupy the streets. Some groups, such as petroleum workers, had been effectively cowed by the state, but other groups, most notably students and teachers, continued to be a thorn in the president's side. In Esmeraldas the teachers discourse had shifted as they had lost their battle to have a voice in reforms. Dozens of teachers were fired, while many with lesser training were prevented from taking permanent positions. A group of these teachers were occupying the entrance to the local Governors office as part of a hunger strike. Around twenty teachers huddled together with signs claiming the

government was starving them as it took away their livelihoods. The strike went through most of the summer months, but the teachers were forced to relocate after an incident where a teacher attempting to light a tire on fire, was splashed in the face with lit gasoline, after a police officer kicked the tire. Community members also questioned whether it was really a hunger strike, accusing the participants of dramatizing their plight, as protestors went as far as substituting participants to prolong the spectacle. Such events sapped the authenticity of the protest.

Insecurity had taken up a position as an even more critical issue and that summer Catholic and Evangelical groups banded together to hold a March for Peace. The organizers wanted it to be a massive rejection of violence, uniting the different political parties, children and adults, and catholic and evangelical, together. Nonetheless, the government refused to allow public school children to participate, as they feared an incident where they would be responsible for any harm that befell the students. The afternoon of the march thousands attended, clad in white but it was still largely a debacle. As the participants approached the city's Civic Plaza, it was apparent that they did not have the desired turn out. The local catholic bishop was ill and did not attend, nor did representatives of the Citizens Revolution. The plaza was less than half full as one MPD representative and a local vicar preached their discourses that Esmeraldas in fact was not a violent place and had a culture of peace. Surprisingly national television stations were present and near the end they recorded an interview with a group of participants that I was sitting near. The group of thirty or so adults, dressed in immaculate white, chanted, "Live Peace Live! Live Peace Live!" as two members gave interviews to the press.

However, while the mass of protestors created the impression on TV that there was a mass of people rejecting insecurity, the plaza behind them quickly emptied due to the lack of a turnout. Due to the lack of children, people were unable to draw out the numbers needed to truly capture the public's attention.

In this situation what can students, children, teens, or young adults do to be recognized by authority? The Independence Day *pregon* of 2011 was a perfect storm of meanings for a protest to capitalize on, uniting the practices of partiocracy and populism, recombinant memory, and carnivalesque politics. It was a crucible where students could create a commentary on the malaise that the community felt and redirect it, engineering the larger affect of the city. In this type of moment children become affective agents, channeling public meanings to critique the power structures that shape their lives. They pick up on the multiple points of contact that produce malaise as an after-affect, create a second order discourse out of them, and publicly and creatively act out their frustrations on the street. The high school that sponsors the event, the "5th of August," named after the Esmeraldeño declaration of independence in Rio Verde, is special within the community. The name itself highlights a spirit of resistance shared among the larger community. It is a public school with a good reputation. As a public school, it was always involved in the education debates, as a critical site for both the teacher's and student's unions, and over the high school career of these children they had witnessed the curbing of their rights to protest even as the government asserted that they had a better education and new channels to the government. The connection with the teachers union made the institution an MPD stronghold. But ironically the school also shares one wall

with the Esmeraldas provincial police headquarters, a massive residential facility. One benefit of being a police officer in Esmeraldas is that your high school age children will probably attend this institution. Many of the kids involved in the *pregon* had experienced the reforms in both education and policing, seeing their teachers, parents, and friends interpellated as corrupted subjects of the state. When the president derided and insulted protestors, he was targeting their social relations.

The *pregon* marked the perfect carnivalesque response, as the students became rebellious subjects that challenged the president's actions and his narrative of the events. They illustrated that the president's actions were a grotesque iteration of the political (Stallybrass and White 1986: 8). It was a mimetic recreation, as their young "Correa" impeccably simulated the events, from the insults, to the attack, to the rescue, to borrow from the president's aura (Taussig 1991). But the students highlighted that it was Correa's own incivilities that had propelled the situation. As Correa, posed in front of the camera to insult the police, it focuses the situation on how the president tried to control the press and project affects. His uncivil comments, demonstrated that the Citizens Revolution, did not in fact guarantee respect and harmony, drawing a critical critique of what citizenship had become. Incivility offends the principles and disrupts the practices of citizenship (Holston 2008: 275). The Correa lookalike's actions incorporated the president's actions, passing meanings through the recreation of his gestures and positions (Connerton 1989: 72-73). From insult to righteous indignation, the student captured what the public had seen broadcast and inscribed live on television. The student invoked the same mannerisms and same defiant pose that Correa had, right before a tear gas canister

landed at his feet forcing his retreat. They tapped into his repertoire of populism and vitriol and the history of Correa's own public performances (Taylor 2003: 20-21). As he moved down the street preceded by the "police" and with reporters and sycophants trailing him, the student's performance drew on alternative understandings of the events to challenge the official narrative of the day. Instead they took apart the president's preferred assemblage of what happened and recombined the events to highlight how Esmeraldeños experienced 30-S. The student's "play" was a symbolic action that was not merely play, it articulated and redirected cultural and political meanings (Stallybrass and White 1986: 43). The student's final message, "When the law is not managed with responsibility, everything is disorder and chaos," clearly designates that the president was responsible for the discord that lead to this entire situation. In this litigious environment it was a brave act, one that could only happen by harnessing both the negative and positive iterations of the carnivalesque mode of politics. In some ways the student can be seen as a sort of Homo Sacer, able to challenge authority without punishment due to his status as not-quite a citizen (Agamben 2005: 8-9). The student, no more than sixteen years old, reversed the social hierarchy in the performance, turning the president into a child to reveal the contradictions of Correa's own actions. As Correa threatens and screams, he comes off to many as petulant, not a defender of the lawful order. Young "Correa" showed the grotesque iteration of citizenship that the revolution was producing. In a land of rebellion, the revolution was being challenged, as it did not fulfill the expectations of the community. It reversed the malaise produced through a multiplicity of reforms that were forced through, rather than negotiated, and redirected the sentiment at the nation's

highest authority. Through this the sentiments of multiple pasts were referenced, illustrating the instability of the moment (Muehlebach 2011: 62, Schwenkel 2013: 257). The most convincing element of the street play's impact though was the carnivalesque laughter that followed the performance. Following Bahktin carnivalesque laughter is qualitatively different than normal laughter; it is the laughter of all people, not the laughter of one event but a universal, ambivalent laughter that is triumphant but mocking. (1965: 11-12). The response following the student's display re-engineered the sentiments of the moment, inverting the positionality of Correa in relation to the community. Symbolically denuded of his power, the community could laugh at the president, breaking the silences produced by the official discourse of recent history.

Through my fieldwork these processes shaped my larger experience of the city. In the events that I will discuss with petroleum labor, industrial pollution, insecurity, and infrastructure, the inability of Ecuadorian citizen's to be heard consistently shaped how they understood revolution, change, and reform. They were more often subjects of the revolution, rather than its agents. They had little power to shape what was happening in institutions and instead took the opportunity to shape power on the streets, harnessing the rolling maelstrom of affect in the city. This is a central issue that will become apparent through the following chapters; the revolution changed some political structures, but never addressed the fundamental power relationships between citizen and state, nation and province. The events I discuss in this chapter are a central narrative of the Citizens Revolution, illustrating that while citizenship was supposed to be made more substantive, the political culture itself has changed little. The carnivalesque mode of politics continues

to produce malaise as an after-affect, as normal people have little voice in critical processes. In each of the following chapters this will be a critical theme that shapes the imagination of belonging in the community and resident's experience as new revolutionary subjects.

Chapter 3

Bleeding Out: Life, Labor, and Spectacular Citizenship

Introduction: Bleeding Out

In late June 2009 the city of Esmeraldas was captivated by a series of visually arresting and unusually visceral public protests. Every day for a week, newly laid off workers from Ecuador's National Petroleum Refinery would congregate in front of the provincial courthouse and perform the same ritual. Under an oppressive summer sun and in front of crowds of chanting supporters and curious onlookers, a small group of volunteers clad in company uniforms would block a principal avenue of the city, lie down in the street, and stick hypodermic needles into their forearms, staining the pavement with their blood (Figure 1).

During the previous year President Rafael Correa Delgado promoted a "revolutionary" project to refound the Ecuadorian state by drafting a new constitution oriented around the philosophy of *Buen Vivir*, or "living well." Living well is both a development strategy and conceptualization of citizenship, which posits that for a nation to be truly equitable, the economy needs to be inclusive and intercultural. It asserts that by eradicating state and nonmarket privileges, a better quality of life will be achieved for all Ecuadorians (Acosta and Martinez 2009, Becker 2011: 50-51).[1] The proposal's

[1] *Buen Vivir* is a translation of the indigenous concept *Sumak Kawsay* (Acosta and Martinez 2009). The Quichua term is a verb, emphasizing that it is a process rather than a thing.

Figure 1. Petroleros Bleeding Out, Esmeraldas, EC

cornerstone is an understanding that for most Ecuadorians, citizenship has little substance due to persistent social inequalities engendered by the neoliberal economy.Yet, even as the move to living well promised to reshape the state, Correa felt its implementation might drag on, so he preemptively issued a series of mandates to accelerate reforms in key national industries.

The protesting petroleum workers, or *petroleros*, were caught between two contradictory mandates. They were the intended beneficiaries of a labor initiative called Mandate 8, which converted all long-term contract laborers at state enterprises into full-status employees. Mandate 8 would cut out the middlemen in contracting labor, saving the state millions, while improving benefits for the affected workers as they moved from private to public employment. But even as Mandate 8 promised to make them full employees, these workers became subjects of Correa's plan to reform PetroEcuador. Citing a need for fundamental restructuring to combat bureaucratic "inefficiency" and "unfair" benefits, Correa declared a state of exception to wrest control of the company from its corporate managers and place it under the jurisdiction of the Ecuadorian Navy, who were under orders to streamline the company. As Mandate 8 took affect in April 2009, 127 petroleros were horrified to learn that rather than being made full-fledged employees, they had been dismissed by naval managers to downsize the company labor force. In the following months, the workers would sue, claiming they were illegally terminated and in early June a judge ruled in their favor. However, the navy ignored the ruling and workers responded with this spectacular, embodied performance to draw the public's attention to their plight. Cut off from their livelihood for months and facing the negation of their right to work, the petroleros felt they had little choice but to lie down in the street and open their veins to show the city and nation that the state and PetroEcuador were "bleeding them out."

In what follows, I trace the shifting political subjectivities of state petroleum workers as they negotiate Ecuador's rearticulation of "life," labor, and citizenship with

their sense of self. I will ask how do public workers make sense of this new citizenship, as the state refashions "quality of life" into "living well?" To illustrate the contradictions that the constitutional changes have engendered for petroleros, I will draw on recent anthropological approaches to citizenship. Over the life of the refinery, petroleum workers have conceptualized citizenship through their status as "laborers for the state;" while this drew strong bonds between their identities as workers and Ecuadorians; the unintended consequence of this particular brand of citizenship is the creation of a class distinction between those who have access to a higher quality of life through their positions at the refinery and the wider population. Labor and petroleum shape the local experience of citizenship, interpellating workers as petro-citizens who adjust to and internalize the needs of the industry as their own (Valdivia 2008: 458-459). A position as a petroleum worker represents a positive exception to the larger national neoliberal economy, producing a gradation of rights (Ong 2006: 101). When the discourse shifted, the quality of life to which the workers were guaranteed access as a part of their previous citizenship arrangement was reframed and reconstituted in spectacular ways as a form of inequality, as the product of unfair privilege. This reflects a critical question of citizenship politics – how do you make citizenship substantive, a status that empowers civil rights and channels these benefits to help build a better life; while not reducing it to a formalized modality of inequality that disempowers the public (Holston 2008: 16-22)? Petroleros believed their quality of life was an earned characteristic of their state relationship, but the new discourse of living well challenges this view, asserting that the quality of life provided to public labor was inappropriate. As petroleros became a target

of restructuring, their understanding of citizenship and quality of life came into direct confrontation with the government's articulation of living well. While both conceptualizations promise a more substantive citizenship, the state's relationship to the everyday lives of citizens is markedly different in each. I will argue state conceptualizations of quality of life and living well are lateral logics (Maurer 2005: 76) that both push for substantive citizenship, but which constitute the relationship between workers lives and the state in radically different ways.

What then is "life" changing about these formations of citizenship? How does a process intended to create a more substantive relationship leave public workers bleeding in the street? What do the means of constitutional change signify for its ends? To illustrate how these lateral connotations of life are made meaningful, we must examine what the discursive shifts in the new constitution mean for everyday practices of governmentality within the industrial complex. Governmentality highlights the interacting forms of power that govern the relationship between people and things, bringing attention to the calculations that a variety of actors and institutions bring to bear as they regulate how life should be conducted (Foucault 2007, Rose 1998: 3). As people acquiesce to techniques of governmentality they also evaluate them, take advantage of them, and at times reject or resist them (Postero 2006: 187-188). Since 1977 the petroleros' sense of self as laborer and citizen was shaped through quotidian work regimes and management tactics that created links not just with the employee, but also with their families. As the constitution redefines the quality of life benefits of public labor as a privilege, it reframes the techniques of industrial governmentality. As

PetroEcuador employed new disciplinary practices inside the refinery, labor experienced a period of intense reflection. The bleeding protest in particular was a spectacular response to changes that provoked insecurity. It marked a key moment where "laboring for the state" assumed new significance, as the labor debate moved from internal discipline to public forum. Petroleros and PetroEcuador employed spectacles to illustrate the substance, or lack there of, of the new formulation of citizenship. Drawing on Goldstein (2005), I will argue that this represents a spectacular citizenship, where spectacles are employed to contest the meaning of citizenship. The remainder of this chapter will follow how the entanglement of life, labor, and rights changed for public workers as the industrial governmentality pushes them from "laboring for the state" and a distinct understanding of quality of life to living well and a spectacular mode of citizenship. I show that while restructuring was proposed to curb the deleterious effects of neoliberalism and as a way to generate substantive citizenship, it actually represented an intensification of neoliberal logics within the workplace that were experienced as a threat to workers' sense of self.

Recently there have been a number of criticisms of anthropology's usage of neoliberalism as a concept; scholars have asserted that the wide spread use of the term has resulted in its vulgarization (Collier 2009, Shever 2012). Rather than there being one neoliberalism, there are arrays of situated, and heterodox practices that produce multiple neoliberalisms (Shever 2012: 10-11). However in Ecuador, the discourse of "neoliberalism" is repeated as a singularity and citizens have particular understandings of how it shapes their lives. The refinery is contradictory in regards to neoliberalism; the oil

industry represents a fundamental insertion of the global economy into Ecuador, but the refinery is also a bulwark of the state that has promoted a strong labor politic. As all exported crude and refined petroleum products in Ecuador pass through the refinery, the complex is an ideal location to track how labor practices are changing and how they are understood as "neoliberal."

From February 2009 and June 2010 and June 2011 to August 2011 I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Esmeraldas as the Correa administration moved to implement *Buen Vivir*. As new policies were applied, the relationship between the refinery's naval managers and the industrial workforce became progressively more strained, creating opportunities for me to develop relationships with laborers from a variety backgrounds. Over the term of this project I conducted structured interviews with 30 current and former petroleros and observed social gatherings, meetings, and public protests by the PetroEcuador workforce.

Laboring for the State and the Maintenance of Quality of Life

In 1972 Esmeraldas was reeling from the end of the banana boom. As Ecuador's principal banana port, it had been a vibrant, growing city, but as production shifted to other provinces, the urban population contracted by more than 50% (Cuero-Caicedo 2000: 112). Ecuador's military dictatorship tried to reorient the city economy and targeted the promise of petroleum. To maximize profits, Ecuador needed a large capacity refinery and Esmeraldas was ideal due to its proximity to Quito, the northern Amazonian oil fields, and the Panama Canal (Cuero-Caicedo 2000: 60). The military junta vowed

that petroleum would create a golden age for Esmeraldas and its largely afro-descendant community, asserting that the modern plant would not only employ 10,000 residents, it would become a "pole of development" by drawing other industries (Estupinan 2004: 88, Cuero-Caicedo 2000: 112).

Forty years later the refinery's promise has not been met; as of 2009 no other large-scale industrial project had ever been established there and the combined rate of underemployment and unemployment in the city, now with roughly 200,000 residents, exceeds 62% (INEC 2012).[2] While refinery employment has been limited, those who secured positions have enjoyed access to housing, well-paying jobs, and education for themselves and their children —a quality of life that most residents of Esmeraldas cannot hope to achieve. PetroEcuador workers experience what Aihwa Ong has called a positive exception to neoliberalism due to their status as public labor. While neoliberal practices often erode citizenship, there are also positive exceptions to neoliberalism where opportunities are created for segments of a community (2006: 101). For petroleros a high quality of life is the opportunity they earn by acquiescing to industrial discipline and laboring for the state, but what "quality of life" means has constantly evolved over the life of the refinery. Quality of life, like other cultural ideals, is "shaped by shifting meanings and practices generated in webs of agency and power (Ong 1987: 3)." At its core, quality of life emphasizes not just class, but maintenance of class status. Through their labor, workers provide for their household today, while their relationship to PetroEcuador reproduces class status by creating opportunities for the future. Such

[2] INEC places the urban coastal combined unemployment and underemployment rate at 62% Local media commonly asserts that the combined rate in Esmeraldas exceeds 70%.

strategies of maintenance represent a form of pastoral power as workers govern their household and manage capital accumulation through these benefits (Ong 2006: 6, Foucault 2007: 150-151).

Like other industrial contexts, capitalist discipline altered the work patterns, consumption, and identity of petroleros as they have adjusted to the rhythm of advanced capitalism (Ong 1987: 1-4). Laboring at the refinery is semi-skilled, but highly specialized work. Most positions do not require a college education, nor do most workers have an opportunity to obtain higher education until after they have started working. The refinery is essentially a giant chemical plant, and to maintain its integrity, a host of maintenance and operation specialists are required. The work is semi-skilled in that anyone can operate the machinery, but specialist in that they need to be trained on the job how to handle volatile situations. In this environment, capitalist discipline is both repressive and productive as it restructures workers' lives through efficiency and the maintenance of plant operability while also shaping their sense of quality of life and collective sociality.

Historically these disciplinary techniques are located in the most foundational practices of the refinery. For example, the refinery depends on a series of shifts to keep it running non-stop. The shift structure has multiple effects; it maintains efficiency and ensures a minimum number of workers at the plant, but it also separates workers from the normal rhythm of Esmeraldas. Shifts happen on a staggered schedule over ten days. Every other day for six days the workers move to a later shift and then they have four days off. Thus, every week the workers have a different pattern of work, a disjunction

between them and the vast majority of the city that makes contact with their extended family irregular and forces them to forge bonds across the workforce.

The corporation reinforced this separation by employing regulatory mechanisms that structured employees' access to the workplace. For example, the state constructed the CEPE[3] Villas, a gated community for workers that was outside of the city center. While not all workers reside there, the Villas are the center of their family lives. [4] They feature a free elementary school, a subsidized commissary, and an array of sports fields. While providing a secure place to live, the company created a community near the refinery that had fast access to the industrial facility in the event of an accident. However, it also physically separated workers from the rest of the city. A wage, subsidized and free housing, and access to education for their children constitute how workers understood quality of life. While petroleros reorganized their lives to the needs of PetroEcuador, they also were the beneficiaries of a positive exception.

Nonetheless, as the industrial facility entered into operability the inherent volatility of petroleum production became apparent. Interviewing workers often felt as if they were leading me through a menagerie of workplace injuries, as they illustrated stories of accidents, falls, and fires, by showing off limps, missing digits, and severe burns. Since the construction of the refinery, 40 workers have died in industrial accidents and events such as the 1998 trans-Andean pipeline explosion, which consumed part of the Villas, burning the family members of petroleros and killing 10-20 residents,

[3] CEPE is earliest incarnation of PetroEcuador that existed until 1989.
[4] The Villas provide housing for 400 families, 25% of the workforce

psychologically scarred the city at large (Estupinan 2004).[5] Additionally, workers face more insidious dangers, such as cancer, renal issues, and respiratory illnesses from working around air contamination and heavy metals.

As petroleros acquiesced to some forms of discipline, they pushed to broaden their positive exception. Through the 1970s workers' were prohibited from organizing by the military but they lived with the novelty of having comparatively well-paying jobs. As they settled into routine, workers pushed for more quality of life benefits. The refinery's earliest labor organizations were social clubs that workers formed in order to arrange family and athletic activities. These organizations were allowed to exist because company executives effectively controlled them. While the social clubs did not push for better working conditions, they organized injury funds that would support workers families in the event of an accident, proving instrumental as they developed a worker support structure that eventually morphed into unions (Cuero-Caicedo 2000: 155-160).

In 1979 the military junta was forced from power, opening the way to official labor organizations. Locally, two leftist political parties, FADI and the MPD, pushed unionization.[6] The first democratic governments did not want organized labor and engaged in union-busting strategies. At first workers tried demonstrations and plant shutdowns, but the government ordered the military to break up the blockades. Workers started using small-scale tactics like "turtling" the plant, a process where workers

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[5] The reckoning of casualties of the fire has proven flexible. The official tally of the dead varies as residents and PetroEcuador contest the figures.

[6] (FADI) the Broad Leftist Democratic Front; (MPD) Movimiento Popular Democratico. The MPD is strongly connected to pan-Ecuadorian labor movements. FADI itself no longer exists.

intentionally reduce production to minimal levels, forcing negotiations with the state. In 1979 the Union of Operators of the Refinery of Esmeraldas (SORE) achieved official recognition by the government. For the workers, state recognition proved to be groundbreaking, as it showed they could assert their agency and see results from their efforts. Their early demands largely focused on better wages and the institutionalization of social safety nets. Building off of the social clubs, petroleros sought better healthcare, state contributions to their pensions, and mechanisms to protect worker families in the event of an accident.

In 1989 CEPE became PetroEcuador, marking the sedimentation of workers' expectations of the state. From 1989 until the rewriting of the constitution, workers layered on benefits. They did more than just secure safe working conditions; they deepened the company's responsibility for creating the conditions needed to reproduce class status. Fundamentally, a good wage is the core benefit of working at the refinery. In Esmeraldas most residents are unable to even make minimum wage, making them dependent on informal labor and family networks to survive. In 2009 the national minimum wage was $242 a month; the lowest level and most inexperienced of petroleum workers in the refinery make six times that. A wage in itself does not reproduce class and the workers have developed distinct strategies to maximize their wage using their state company connections. Access to credit is emblematic of this. Esmeraldas's non-petrolero middle class—made up primarily by teachers, doctors, and bureaucrats—face extreme delays and excessive hurdles in acquiring credit, preventing or delaying them from being property owners, opening a business, or buying a car. The refinery created a path around

this by underwriting loans for its employees allowing them to prepare earlier for retirement and giving them access to commodities that are "visible markers of social status (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000)." Workers make the credit productive; they use it to buy taxis, open small shops, and pay for higher quality education for the children, creating opportunities for the entire household. This articulates with more established benefits. For example, workers who have a home in the Villas will often live there for a time for free while they build and buy homes and apartments in the city. If they live in the Villas they can rent these out creating a stream of income and then when they retire they have a place to settle. Some have carried out this strategy since the refinery was built, creating a healthy parallel income to their official one, maintaining class benefits and quality of life. It is important to note that these employees are generally not wealthy people; what they have is a relatively better quality of life than those around them. They have more support structures and a little more flexibility.

Ironically these support structures were built during a period of intensifying national neoliberal policies. While the refinery became the critical link between Ecuador and the world oil trade, the internal labor politics of PetroEcuador fashioned a strong link between the company, the state, and their workers that defied the typical erosion of rights that neoliberal policies spur. As petroleros united under an ideal of "laboring for the state" and benefited from a positive exception, distance was created between them and Esmeraldas, producing two images of labor. When petroleros reflected on the recent firings, they would lament that the government was treating them as if their *vida util,* or use life, had passed. Their "usefulness" to PetroEcuador was defined in this period, as

petroleros were willing to labor in within the inherent volatility of the petroleum complex and they were justly compensated for it. Their labor acts as a fetishized commodity that is consumed over time by the company (Marx 1976: 126). They saw their relationship with the state as a reciprocal one where "they feed the state as it feeds them," which maintained their utility to the state. However, while workers represent their profession as a site of patriotic duty, other Esmeraldeños felt reforms were needed due to workers' persistent moral failings. In the words of one petrolero "the city holds them at arms length." Some identify petroleros as *gente chatarra,* scrap or trashy people, focusing on workers' history of excesses – the conspicuous consumption, industrial disasters, and decaying morals that locals believe are engendered by the petroleum industry. Following Baitaille's logic of unproductive expenditure, conspicuous consumption, not family life, has become the driving force for some workers (Bataille 1985: 118). The conceptualizations of use life and scrap people invoke deeply intertwined senses of "utility" and "excess" that link the economic and moral values of labor. The value of a petrolero is discursively shaped by representations of labor both as useful bodies and as burdens due to their personal excesses.

Housing is one interesting example of this entanglement. Workers build what I call "flexible homes." As I stated earlier, many petroleros live in the Villas as the build houses and apartments. The buildings themselves are flexible, as one family can occupy a house or it can be subdivided into stores and apartments. In the center of Esmeraldas most buildings feature a storefront or two on the ground level and then have a central stairway with each floor above the ground level as a respective apartment. This can be

maximized in a number of ways. First worker's can either create their own businesses or rent out the spaces generating a healthy base income. If they do not live there, each space can produce an income stream. If they have adult children often an apartment will be given to them, saving the family the expense and giving their children the opportunity to have much more disposable income. Eventually petroleros leave the Villas as they prepare for retirement and they can move into the house and still rent out the other floors as needed. As this creates a secondary stream of income it allows workers to build a larger family economy. However, petroleros have also been known to use their paychecks to fund excess.

Taussig, drawing on Bataille has said, "the big flameout, the passion within the gift, going for broke, living in the fast lane, burning your bridges….excessive wanting, excessive spending, excessive consuming…" can become an aesthetic force that propels consumption (2012: 7). At the end of a normal workday, a line of light pickup trucks and SUVs makes it way from the refinery to a stretch of bars that lines the beach. It was a once daily routine for workers to finish a shift and then go to blow off steam. Their pay could support their family but it could be used to drink excessively and womanize. While the almost entirely male workforce are known for maximizing their income through flexible housing, one of the problems with this is that some of their excess income can be transferred into "flexible families." Traditionally in the province of Esmeraldas women were considered the heads of household, but compensation from the refinery has reversed this giving male workers unusual power in family relations. An outgrowth of this is that as petroleros build up their family economy they are able to support mistresses or even

second families by providing an apartment or house for them to live in. In interviews with thirty workers fifteen of them had at least one child out of wedlock or from a previous relationship. Workers publicly display their homes, automobiles, and relationships as signs of success; but community members read these signs very differently. Other Esmeraldeños focus on this phenomena as the materialization of the corrupting influence of the refinery and it is one of the first complaints that non-petroleros identify with PetroEcuador's employees – that they consume everything around them regardless of the effect - making them little more than garbage.

An issue that contextualizes the morality play is that even after the refinery was established and entered into operation, few locals managed to acquire permanent positions. Of the original group of workers that were trained at the Colombian refinery Barrancabermeja and established operations in Esmeraldas, only twenty were from the province. In 2009 SORE estimated that less than twenty percent of the 1500 workers were native. This makes a space like the Villas de CEPE a largely mestizo enclave in a broadly afro-descendant community. The refinery has a racialized hierarchy of labor common in the global petroleum industry (Vitalis 2007, Appel 2012: 696). A majority of workers, especially those in technical positions come from other provinces, a policy that came from the military junta who feared that the socialist and communist political leanings of the Esmeraldeño community would create labor problems. Secondly while the petroleros articulate their subject position as shepherd of the national economy their presence actually had a widely negative impact on the city as a whole as the disparity

between their incomes and a more typical middle class income generated massive local inflation in the early years of the refinery.

For many community members, PetroEcuador and its employees are corrupt and parasitical, draining the life of the state and weakening the body politic. However, petroleros contend they have a symbiotic relationship to the state, a self-image that marks the petroleros not just as citizens, but as a special group of citizen-workers. While the industrial discipline of the corporation has forged a strong sense of self and ideal of citizenship, PetroEcuador did not curtail worker attempts to layer on more quality of life benefits, which workers now expect as their due for supporting Ecuador's most critical and volatile industry. Laboring for the state, struggling for their rights, and risking their lives all shape the web of meanings that workers employ when talking about quality of life and contextualize the play between state power and citizen agency. For petroleros quality of life is the realization of citizenship, its substance. Their role as citizens and the state's responsibility to their home lives are fused, as the state creates the mechanisms that ensure that the household can survive and be productive in the future. For petroleros their labor justifies the state's investment, even though it may produce unequal social relations in the city. Petroleros assert that their positive exception is earned.

Spectacular Citizenship and the Re-Constitution of Labor

In 2006 Rafael Correa was elected to fanfare, as Ecuador's constitutional project promised to end decades of political instability and neoliberal economic policies. Prior to the election Ecuadorian citizenship had acquired a phantom quality, as it seemed

to largely lack substance (Sawyer 2001: 160). A constituent assembly rewrote the constitution and the public approved it in September 2008. The document's overarching theme is the concept of *Buen Vivir* or "living well," which is a principal rooted in cultural ideals of respect, harmony, and dialogue that critiques neoliberalism by asserting that it is the state's responsibility to fully realize citizenship rights by redistributing resources, eliminating privilege, and making institutions answerable to the community. It proposes a radical reconstitution of citizenship as the old Ecuadorian state legitimized differences rather than creating equality reflecting the distinction between entrenched and insurgent citizenships. Historically entrenched conceptualizations of citizenship manage differences by legalizing them in ways that legitimate and reproduce inequality. This is a differentiated citizenship that generates a gradation of rights in which most rights are available to particular classes of people (Holston 2008: 3-8). Benefits petroleum workers receive fall into this gradation of citizenship as they have largely experienced a positive exception to the economy. Ecuador's new constitution promotes an insurgent citizenship that seeks to destabilize entrenched benefits (Holston 2008: 7-10).

Living well is a lateral logic of quality of life: It promises the same end, but through different means. The goal of living well was to disrupt the gradation of citizenship by redistributing wealth to those who had been excluded from the state. This section will follow how refinery workers experienced the implementation of the new labor politic, which was critical to rearticulating labor and citizenship in terms of living well. As Correa promoted living well, an ideal central to shifting the national economy away from a neoliberal model, PetroEcuador adjusted their practices of governmentality,

ironically adopting neoliberal logics to labor and abandoning the model that had been embraced by workers as "laboring for the state."

Forty years of petroleum exploitation had marked the entire industry in a negative light. Historically at the whim of foreign corporations, the oil has been a perpetual source of conflict in Ecuador as companies like Shell, Chevron, and Occidental have employed controversial business and environmental practices (Sawyer 2004, Zeigler-Otero 2004). Under the Correa administration, however, private corporations have left Ecuador en masse and PetroEcuador has filled the void becoming the nation's largest oil producer. Most would not consider the company "modern," as it is top-heavy with administration and its infrastructure is crumbling. Correa insisted that PetroEcuador was in a critical state and declared a state of exception for the company.

Legally a state of exception in Ecuador is to be used in times of war, natural disaster, or "national clamor." It gives the president the authority to use the military to resolve a disaster within a limited time frame. Correa argued that rampant corruption and inefficiency in PetroEcuador represented a threat to the state and ordered the Navy to assume managerial control of the company. Nonetheless, a state of exception can be problematic. Conceptually, it is not a law but a constitutional suspension of the juridical order. It defines the threshold of where law ends (Agamben 2005: 4). In the case of PetroEcuador, the state of exception was designed to allow the navy to restructure the company, streamline contracting processes to avoid environmental and business audits, and dismiss workers at will. Effectively Correa used an extra-constitutional tool that

suspends legal rights to impose the new constitutional ideals, mocking the principles of dialogue and respect.

Seventy managers from the Navy were given control of the administrative functions of the refinery and the mandate to make the plant efficient and root out corruption. Inside the complex, reforms primarily manifested in practices that guided the conduct of workers. Petroleros experienced a new labor politic where citizenship was redefined through public interactions with the state. This spectacular citizenship, where spectacles are employed to contest the meaning of citizenship, challenged their understanding of "laboring for the state" as it was no longer a privileged position. Citizenship informs the visual spectacles performed by petroleros and PetroEcuador as they attempt to shape the public's attention and citizenship status has become a key calculation for the state as they alter industrial practice and perform changes through everyday encounters. The increasing usage of spectacles and the shifts in quotidian industrial practices represented a neoliberalization of labor governmentality that stripped benefits and rights in the name of efficiency.

Under the state of exception, the refinery of Esmeraldas became the focus of a spectacle of militarization by the Navy and a counter spectacle centered on labor rights by petroleros. For the state, spectacles became a mechanism to reorder the positioning of people and things and to reimagine communal identities and social systems as the new constitution was enacted (Anderson 1983, Taylor 1997: 73, Handleman 1990: 15-16). The constitutional changes necessitated visible acts to show that Correa's project was different from prior governments. Starting the day that management was taken from

corporate executives, spectacles were employed to publicize change; petroleros experienced their first taste of this as they were forced to line up and watch as naval personnel, clad in immaculate white uniforms, marched into the refinery to assume control of a corrupt appendage of the state. As champions of Correa's revolution, the navy was publicly tasked with rooting out the evil of an entrenched oligarchy. For Petroleros, spectacles became a tool to communicate the erosion of their citizenship, as "laboring for the state" was no longer a privileged position. Protests were an attempt to reaffirm their position as members of the public with visual displays (Goldstein 2005: 18-19). Both performances referenced changes that the public could not readily see. By being socially and spatially separated from the community, the "real" changes in the refinery were expressed in the media by the state and on the streets by the workers.

The state spectacle began with a national media campaign that promised PetroEcuador would be "changed from the root," as restructuring would make it efficient, cleaner, and more socially responsible. Correa asserted that PetroEcuador's managers and employees, a group already unpopular because they contributed to industrial contamination and had access to a higher quality of life, were stealing from the state and benefiting at the expense of the community. Corruption, and arguably inefficiency, are not inherent in an action itself but depend on the social position and group identification of the accuser (Herzfeld 1992, Gupta1995: 338, Goldstein 2005: 195). The social processes that Correa identified as corrupt were seen by petroleros as the natural benefits of laboring for the state. What the president identified as inefficiencies, workers understood to be the result of decades of government neglect. Excess contextualized their

utility to the state. Inefficiency became the first target of the Navy and the first site of a spectacular conflict as PetroEcuador severed the "bleeding" Mandate 8 workers from PetroEcuador.

As I described earlier, these workers, most of whom had worked in the refinery for 15 to 20 years, had been promised permanent positions, but were instead severed from the corporation in the name of efficiency. During the prior year the state had contracted the American consultant group Wood Mackenzie to make recommendations on how to improve PetroEcuador. Their most immediate suggestion was to shed 20-30% of the workforce. As the Mandate 8 workers' were considered redundant, the naval managers chose to not offer them a new contract. The petroleros' protest to being laid off solidified the discourse of citizenship in all the subsequent protests, as they attempted to demonstrate how the constitutional project victimized them, rather than improving quality of life. In these protests, which mirrored other citizenship protests in Ecuador (Garces 2010: 419, Valdivia 2008), the workers tried to publicly externalize the cruelties that they faced from the government and make visible the hidden politics of capitalist practices. As workers lied down in the street with a caretaker and a doctor watching over them, they displayed their experience of citizenship. Their unmoving, bleeding bodies visibly referenced the state's power. In a Foucauldian sense, protestors argued the state had the ability to make them live or let them die (2003: 241). Workers experienced the loss of their job not just as a loss of livelihood but as an existential betrayal, as the state withheld its power to act and their years of service were paid back with dismissal. These protests continued for five days, each day receiving more local media coverage as the

recurring spectacle was broadcast. On that Friday a judge, who already had ruled that the dismissals were illegal, declared that the vice-president of PetroEcuador would be jailed and fined $533,000 if the company did not reinstate them. Facing legal repercussions and a public captivated by media reports of the bloody display, the Navy relented. The workers believed they had been vindicated as their performance cast doubt on the veracity of the reforms in PetroEcuador. Instead of being seen as an inefficiency, they had displayed their humanity on the street and won their citizenship back.

Nevertheless, this spectacle spawned further controversy. In July the Mandate 8 workers were restored to their jobs, but the corporation refused to compensate them for their lost wages arguing they were not owed remuneration since they were between contracts. Traditionally workers would engage in a work stoppage but the new constitution had stripped public employees of their right to strike. The affected workers held sit-ins inside of the refinery as union leaders pushed for compensation. As these actions took place there was a noticeable slowdown in production and the union was accused of turtling the industrial facility. In an industrial complex like the refinery there are numerous production choke points and if one critical machine fails, the entire plant could be brought to a standstill. In a factory past its use life, slow downs and shut downs were common, making it difficult to prove that curtailed production was caused by employees rather than equipment. After months of lowered production PetroEcuador initiated a series of highly publicized firings in October as they claimed workers were shirking their responsibilities.

The first firing expelled the three highest ranking local union leaders. The Navy argued that the loss of production was an act of sabotage. They then used these firings to intensify the reforms and to make a statement to Ecuadorian society. In November the news was littered with stories of a group of 45 high-ranking, "corrupt" petroleros who were fired en masse. The media disseminated accounts of workers jumping out of windows and fleeing across the field of oil tanks, threatening to set off explosions if police followed. Rather than targeting the union, the navy targeted popular plant bosses and shift leaders, accusing them of having "suspicious" amounts of money in their bank accounts.

What constitutes corruption is debatable. The navy had identified "corrupt" workers by examining their bank accounts, looking for quantities of money beyond the income of their refinery job. This approach was deeply flawed, as one of the primary benefits of being a petrolero was access to resources that could help them create secondary economies for their family. In the most flagrant case, one accused worker was cited as having more that $600,000 in an account. The navy ignored the fact that he had won a $750,000 settlement a decade earlier when a pipeline fire consumed part of the company villas, burning his daughter and killing his wife. The company pushed for prosecution but the district attorney refused, arguing that the navy's methodology of identifying corruption was inadequate and that there was no evidence that the money was illicitly acquired. As of December 2012, no worker fired in this incident was convicted of corruption, but all were separated from PetroEcuador.

In effect, the firings were not a serious attempt to eliminate corruption, but a public demonstration of Correa's sovereign will, as this spectacle reinforced his right to rule by publicly illustrating his power (Foucault 1977: 48-49, Taylor 1997: 215-216). As a technique of governmentality, it had three effects. First, as a mediated spectacle it shaped the public's knowledge about the affected group and constructed a broad audience of witnesses (Chavez 2008: 190, Krupa 2009: 21). It illustrated that the government was attacking the "corrupt oligarchies," promoting constitutional promises. Secondly, as a spectacle it was a moment in which the communal identity of the nation was articulated (Taylor 1997: ix). It questioned the loyalty of these workers to the state, attempting to justify their separation by construing them as a corrupted element to be cut off from the national body. Lastly, it acted as a disciplinary technique for the workers. Where in the past workers might be able to get their job back after a labor dispute, PetroEcuador had created a zero sum game where dissent was not tolerated. PetroEcuador's intent was to create a compliant workforce.

The Navy paired this spectacular governmentality with changes in discipline on the factory floor. A significant target were the benefits workers had won through labor struggles. Government contributions to pensions, wage scales, and credit were declared inappropriate and the Navy invoked the state of exception to disentangle the connections between the company and the workers' quotidian existence.

A manifestation of the simultaneous disentangling and disciplining is evident in the life of Alberto. When I first met Alberto he had all the trappings of a successful petrolero. A tall, athletic man still dressed in his denim work uniform, he picked me up in

an immaculate four-door truck and drove us down dusty urban streets to his home. Located in a middle-class neighborhood safe from insecurity and the refinery's contamination, his two-story house had a small store and plenty of room for his family. Inside, his kids, who were just arriving home for lunch, wore uniforms from top local schools. Despite all of the signs of a secure middle-class life, Alberto was miserable. Stooped over, disheveled, and with red-rimmed eyes, Alberto looked like he had the weight of the world on his shoulders. For weeks he had been doing extra shifts, sometimes spending sixteen hours a day at the industrial complex. The elements of his job that had made it a source of pride for two decades were now crushing Alberto's resolve. Being a petrolero had meant a path to the middle class in a community suffering from endemic poverty. The extra time Alberto spent in the plant was to make up for a labor shortage created by the firings and to free himself from debt. Under naval management, benefits that had linked workers to the state and maintained quality of life became tools to mange their conduct. Wages were "restructured" across PetroEcuador ensuring all people with the same position were paid equally, ignoring cost of living differences across the nation. The loss of as much as 25% of their income was hard on middle class workers, but the Navy intensified their reforms by calling in all outstanding loans at once. Rather than organizing repayment plans, all petroleros were subjected to the same policy. Alberto, who had home and car loans, had made in excess of $1,500 a month but under this plan he only was allowed to take home $240 a month until the loans were repaid.[7] Between long hours, lost benefits, and debt, Alberto was stuck. Despite

[7] They received national minimum wage or $80 for every 10-day work period, until the debt was repaid.

hating the conditions he was experiencing he could not simply quit or look for another job. Alberto and any other indebted workers were subjects of the corporation until all debts were repaid. Credit extended by PetroEcuador had once maintained a middle-class existence, but now it generated wide-ranging insecurity, as petroleros were tied to the company without a living wage.

The repressive discipline of workers intensified as the Navy stayed in power. Workers argue that they faced increased surveillance in their day-to-day labor as the Navy imposed a militaristic work regime. Several workers cited a recurring issue where naval managers did not understand the everyday duties of some positions. For example, two workers I interviewed had positions with substantial downtime. In the event of a gas leak, fire, or other disaster they were supposed to available to offer emergency services. Much of their day was spent either sitting or inspecting equipment. The Navy personnel believed that they should act like soldiers and find tasks to do, potentially leaving them in a position where they might not be able to respond as quickly in an emergency. The workers cited an incident just days before when a naval officer had lined up a group of petroleros in public and berated them for being unproductive and lazy despite them being in exactly the position they were supposed to be. A common quip among workers went, "If I wanted to know how to swim, I would talk to a sailor; if I want to know how to make petroleum, I would talk to a *petrolero*." They were identifying a threatening situation where they felt the Navy was not cognizant of the condition of the industrial complex. While the refinery is a critical piece of state infrastructure, it is also past its use life and in need of comprehensive repairs. After decades of neglect, its machinery could

not run at peak production and is prone to leaks and overheating. Workers experienced with the refinery know when to slow production to maintain the integrity of the industrial complex. One of my regular informants, Victor, commented on this almost every time we met. He felt that his plant was being pushed beyond its limits and that something was bound happen if it was not cooled down. Management was afraid of a shut down, as it would close the complex for hours, threatening the Navy's efficiency mandate. Petroleros asserted that the Navy's disciplinary strategy focused solely on production but not on the processes that maintain the plant and workers as a functional group. They were expected to do what they were told ignoring the inherent volatility of working in a petroleum refinery. Whereas the loss of benefits threatened their quality of life, as they knew it, the new tactics of discipline threatened their health and bodily integrity.

After months of reforms, workers took to the streets employing traditional marches to draw attention to their struggle. The Navy instituted new rules prohibiting protests on refinery grounds, forcing the petroleros displays of discontent to the streets. Union leaders would hold public gatherings every afternoon. On days they planned a march, 250-300 workers would walk a loop through the city chanting slogans, passing by the office of the president's representative, and through each major urban plaza, before returning to their headquarters. At the time, the government's implementation of other constitutional provisions, especially those in regards to education, was highly unpopular and Esmeraldas experienced multiple daily protests. The movements supported and fed off of one another. The local teachers union had adopted a peculiar mascot for their marches. Each day they would parade around a giant placard of Correa, wrapped in a

noose made from a teacher's union flag, with the slogan "Respect the Constitution" underneath (Figure 2). Refinery workers borrowed the cutout, adding a blue band to the noose to represent their union. Both groups asserted Correa was the true villain, suggesting that he did not respect the constitution he sponsored. As petroleros demonstrated, they collectively performed homophobic chants targeting the president, employing a dual-sense of corruption that accused Correa of "playing" with the fatherland. The marches illustrated a critical disjunction of the constitution by laying bare the contradiction between the principal of living well, with its connotations of harmony and equality, and the methods of its implementation. As their rights were stripped they

Figure 2. Protest Caricature of President Rafael Correa Delgado

lived a negative exception to neoliberalism where efficiency recrafted governmentality and citizenship.

Mission Accomplished: Spectacular Citizenship and Neoliberal Governmentality

In March 2010 the state of exception lifted and the Navy initiated a self-congratulatory media campaign declaring "Mission Accomplished," before transferring control of PetroEcuador to carefully selected managers. In advertisements, smiling citizens clad in company hardhats, exclaimed that petroleum was "now for all Ecuadorians." But what had they really accomplished? What Correa's Citizen's Revolution had started was the creative destruction of public labor in the name of redistributing wealth. This illustrates a key distinction in the lateral relationship between living well and quality of life. While both promised better lives they model the social relationships between state and public labor very differently. Laboring for the state promised a quality of life for the privileged few where citizenship, labor, and the lives of the workers were deeply entangled. This new spectacular citizenship promised a stronger relationship to a broader public but savaged the deep bonds to a privileged group. They promised a lateral end to quality of life but living well follows a very different path to get there.

The principal problem for petroleros is that their relationship to the state is being publicly recrafted, creating insecurities of its own. By the end of this process the petroleros embodied a generalized *malestar*, or sense of unease or dread. While they initially drew the public's attention, the Mandate 8 protest was their last collective

success. The Navy intensified the modalities of discipline in the company using the entanglements between the lives of public workers and the state to limit resistance. Prior to the takeover, workers had largely acquiesced to the demands of capitalist discipline as public labor distinguished them from normal citizens. At first they resisted the naval management but the zero-sum attitude of the state required workers to submit or be severed from the corporation. Eventually worker conduct fell into line. In the context of living well the new strategies of governmentality were life changing as they stripped the workers' sense of self and corroded their quality of life. For anthropology this highlights the recent debates over neoliberalism. This case shows how even in a capitalist context, social policies permeated the company. What the neoliberal intensification of governmentality did was rearticulate the practices that promoted well being as an inefficiency, highlighting how neoliberalism can shape citizenship.

The manner in which living well was implemented, the play between neoliberal governmentality and spectacular citizenship, disempowers citizenship rather than empowering it. It represents an inversion of citizenship privileges as a class of people was denied rights due to their public relationship to the state. As workers were subject to new political logics, they are forced to ask themselves a fundamental question: If the state does not follow the law to implement the constitution or treat workers with respect, what can citizenship really mean? For petroleros, the whole process was tainted as the state attacked them as a class of people while simultaneously failing to demonstrate the existence of rampant corruption. I am not asserting that there was no corruption in the refinery; instead I am arguing that the Navy's methodology was inadequate, targeting

workers that had used their wage, access to credit, and other benefits to build a high quality of life. Correa invoked the public secret that petroleros were a corrupt oligarchy, an inefficiency whose utility was questioned due to a few workers' excesses, allowing the navy to shift the techniques of industrial governmentality. The Navy's final act engenders doubt about whether their goal was to reform a company or punish a class of workers. Even as official data suggested a fall in production under the naval regime, managers rewarded themselves for running PetroEcuador. As they left, the Navy invoked the workers' collective contract, the same rights they placed in abeyance, to give themselves bonuses. Arguing that they had done the work of petroleros, the government allowed them to increase their military wages to the wage scale of petroleros, resulting in bonuses of $9,000 to $22,000, effectively granting them a new privilege for public labor.

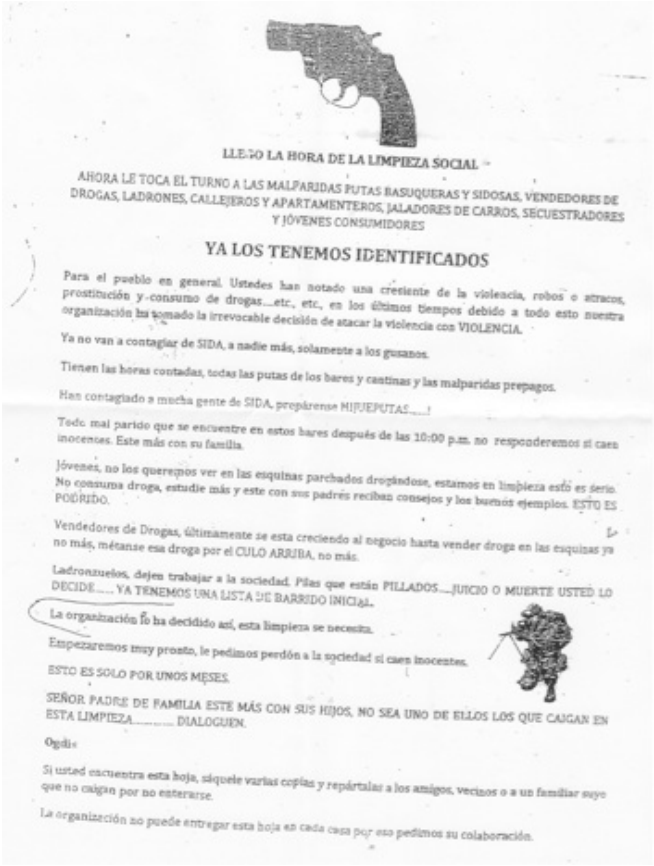
As the national labor politic shifted, Ecuador employed practices that could be used to reconfigure all public labor, a key issue for the state as teachers, utility workers, and the police are targeted with reforms that threaten long held benefits. September 30th, 2010 marked a critical moment as police protesting similar reforms briefly detained Correa. While Correa asserts it was an attempted coup, police say the uprising was in response to the government's lack of dialogue as they attempted to publicly recraft another state apparatus in a way that generated uncertainty.

Chapter 4

Adjusting Accounts: Impunity and Free-Floating Insecurity

The Red Pages

On any day of the week you can flip to the back pages of the newspaper *La Hora* and read sensational accounts of the quotidian insecurity the Ecuadorian public faces. The *paginas rojas* or "red pages" use graphic depictions of horrible accidents, brutal muggings, and grisly murders to draw an audience to the more mundane news of the day. Typically, such crime stories eschew in-depth analyses for the lurid details of individual events or commentaries on how incidents are illustrative of the decaying state of the nation. However, in 2009 a very different sort of crime story occupied the red pages in the coastal province of Esmeraldas. On July 13th the headline read "Anxiety in La Concordia – La Concordia, A Violent Land." The accompanying article told the story of two men in the county of La Concordia who had been murdered under identical circumstances. Late at night, half an hour apart, and on different sides of town, each man had been shot by unknown assailants from the back of moving motorcycles. Yet rather than positing the murders as isolated incidents, as *adjustamientos de cuentas* – an "adjustment of accounts" or the settlement of a personal feud, *La Hora* instead asserted that the crimes could be connected to a larger conspiracy against the security of the province.



LLEGO LA HORA DE LA LIMPIEZA SOCIAL

AHORA LE TOCA EL TURNO A LAS MALPARIDAS PUTAS BASUQUERAS Y SIDOSAS, VENDEDORES DE DROGAS, LADRONES, CALLEJEROS Y APARTAMENTEROS, JALADORES DE CARROS, SECUESTRADORES Y JÓVENES CONSUMIDORES

YA LOS TENEMOS IDENTIFICADOS

Para el pueblo en general. Ustedes han notado una creciente de la violencia, robos o atracos, prostitución y consumo de drogas....etc., etc., en los últimos tiempos debido a todo esto nuestra organización ha tomado la irrevocable decisión de atacar la violencia con VIOLENCIA.

Ya no van a contagiar de SIDA, a nadie más, solamente a los gusanos.

Tienen las horas contadas, todas las putas de los bares y cantinas y las malparidas prepagos.

Han contagiado a mucha gente de SIDA, prepárense MIFUEPUTAS.....!

Todo mal parido que se encuentre en estos bares después de las 10:00 p.m. no responderemos si caen inocentes. Este más con su familia.

Jóvenes, no los queremos ver en las esquinas parchados drogándose, estamos en limpieza esto es serio. No consuma droga, estudie más y este con sus padres reciban consejos y los buenos ejemplos. ESTO ES PODRIDO.

Vendedores de Drogas, últimamente se esta creciendo al negocio hasta vender droga en las esquinas ya no más, métanse esa droga por el CULO ARRIBA, no más.

Ladronzuelos, dejen trabajar a la sociedad. Pilas que están PILLADOS....JUICIO O MUERTE USTED LO DECIDE..... YA TENEMOS UNA LISTA DE BARRIDO INICIAL.

La organización lo ha decidido así, esta limpieza se necesita.

Empezaremos muy pronto, le pedimos perdón a la sociedad si caen inocentes.

ESTO ES SOLO POR UNOS MESES.

SEÑOR PADRE DE FAMILIA ESTE MÁS CON SUS HIJOS, NO SEA UNO DE ELLOS LOS QUE CAIGAN EN ESTA LIMPIEZA..... DIALOGUEN.

Ogdi«

Si usted encuentra esta hoja, sáquele varias copias y repártalas a los amigos, vecinos o a un familiar suyo que no caigan por no enterarse.

La organización no puede entregar esta hoja en cada casa por eso pedimos su colaboración.

Figure 3. The Social Limpieza Flyer, Esmeraldas, EC

Over the previous month, anonymous flyers threatening a *limpieza social*, a "social cleansing," had circulated throughout Esmeraldas sowing fear in a moment of spectacular violence (Figure 3). Written as a warning to the general public the flyers claimed that a group of concerned citizens planned to eliminate drug dealers, prostitutes, criminals and other undesirables from the community. *La Hora* suggested that these murders could signal that a violent group was really operating in Esmeraldas and even claimed that as many as 30 homicides in a recent wave of violent crime could be connected to the flyer. Yet, over the following months both the narrative account of the murders and the reckoning of victims changed. A pattern in the police response emerged;

every couple of weeks there would be an announcement in the newspaper saying that the police were investigating the murders, that they had identified suspects for the flyers, and that arrests would be made, but then the authorities would reduce the number of possible victims from 30, to fourteen, to four, eventually asserting that there was no relationship between the flyers and the murders at all, granting them the status of isolated incidents in a violent province. No one was ever arrested or charged with a crime for the flyers.

The incident in Esmeraldas marked a political crossroads for both province and nation, as Ecuador was moving to enact provisions from its newly rewritten constitution. The impetus of constitutional reforms was two fold; proposed neoliberal structural reforms and endemic corruption and mismanagement within critical national institutions had sapped the public's faith in governance, which was amplified for indigenous and afro-Ecuadorian communities as cultural difference was used to blame them for their own marginalization within institutional processes. The previous constitution from 1998 had sought to promote a multicultural or plurinational vision of the state, but failed to provoke substantive institutional reform as they reproduced a mestizo-indigenous cultural binary. [1] The new constitution pledged to not only value difference, it promised to eliminate racialized social discourses and institutional racism for all communities. Drawing from liberal, indigenous, and socialist beliefs President Rafael Correa Delgado argued that his movement, the Citizens Revolution, would reform and restructure key national institutions to eliminate privilege and to create a fair, impartial political, legal,

[1] Plurinationality is the notion that Ecuador is a nation of nations. It is a view built off of multiculturalism, but it had the potential to recognize the right of indigenous communities to maintain their culture, customs, and laws. It was established in the 1998 constitution.

and economic system. Correa went as far as asserting that his movement could be encapsulated in one word: Justice (Cabiesas Martinez 2012). The reconceptualization of citizenship within the discourse of *Buen Vivir* promised to institutionalize the principles of respect, harmony, and dialogue. The state targeted a wide range of political bodies for reform, but with justice as a keyword of the revolution, policing, the judicial system, and prisons were targeted for changes that could make meaningful differences in the lives of all Ecuadorians.

However, a United Nations report illustrated the daunting task ahead, showing that only one of every one hundred homicides in Ecuador ever results in a conviction as the slow pace of investigations and trials often left fugitives on the streets (Alston 2010: 17). As the state moved to turn constitutional ideals into institutional practice, a national wave of violent crime challenged the spirit of the reforms, eroding the public's confidence in the process of change. The wave is an apt metaphor, as everyday residents felt they were caught between multiple forces, the state and insecurity itself, where they were subject to the power of others even as they tried to find their own agency to make change. While discussions of insecurity dominated the news, the events in Esmeraldas highlighted that insecurity goes hand in hand with impunity as crime stories and the accounting of victims have proven to be flexible, provoking doubt as insecurity persists and the perpetrators of crimes never meet justice. The iterations of violent crime in Esmeraldas proved doubly problematic as the media coverage of insecurity articulated with representations of the province as inherently violent because of the afro-Ecuadorian community. In a location with multiple social pressures, the entire population is

bracketed into a racialized discourse that challenges the values of the 2008 constitution. Rather than illustrating harmonious change, these accounts produced what Ellen Moodie has called a discourse of decline and dread as they rearticulate political changes meant to do good, as the new impetus of violence and insecurity (2010: 12).

In what follows I will trace how residents of the largely afro-descendant province of Esmeraldas understand their relationship to the state, as they experience the intersecting processes of national political change and civil insecurity. This chapter will ask, how do insecurity and its reiterations as spectacles and "crime stories" shape local understandings of political change? I would like to explore how the flexible accounting of victims, the retelling of crime stories, and changes residents make to cope with perceived crime – what I will call *adjustments* - contribute to a broader environment of impunity and insecurity in Ecuador. Following Goldstein "to be insecure is to occupy a habitus of fear and uncertainty that is at once social, psychological, and material." Insecurity colors the public's worldview, affecting how people can relate to neighbors, strangers, and the state (2012: 4). While crime stories often focus on the gruesome details of horrible acts, their repeated circulation also speaks to the quality of law enforcement and the judicial system as a whole. As insecurity has persisted, Ecuadorian citizens have increasingly questioned the veracity of the new constitution as state actions racialize perceptions of crime.

Anthropological approaches to violence in Latin America have illustrated that crime stories operate as contagious vehicles for symbolically reordering a society disrupted by the collapse of meaning and coherence. Crime stories may reorder the world

they also try to reestablish a static picture of it – often reproducing and normalizing violence and fear (Caldeira 2000: 20). In Esmeraldas this often reverts to a vision of the province as a violent place, bracketing the community within a limited representation of provincial history and ignoring recent changes that shape modern insecurity, thus hiding the state's role in creating impunity and reifying difference. Esmeraldeños not only live with quotidian insecurity but also a history of violence that circulates as narratives independent of concrete events. Esmeraldas represents a convergence of the geographic and figurative margins of the state; extreme unemployment and other forms of precarity produce a dangerous mix of desperation and fear in local communities, a threat compounded by the presence of the Colombian border and the traces of the drug trade that seep over it. Within the Ecuadorian racial-spatial order, Esmeraldas is a province that is known for being home to Ecuador's largest afro-descendant population, a community represented as being Ecuador's "the ultimate other," and often only rendered legible through limited representations that emphasize insecurity (Rahier 1998: 422). Residents counter that insecurity represents a failure of the state to assert authority and create a holistic plan to address the causes of social ills. Perceptions of cultural difference shape the interpretation of insecurity as official and unofficial narratives apprehend insecurity through divergent interpretations.

As "crime stories" circulate, they pass through communicable cartographies "a small set of shared and predictable circuits, creating subject positions, arranging them in spatial, moral, and legal terms, and making a very limited number of responses thinkable (Briggs 2007: 326)." Within these circuits community members, the police, and the

media can each interpret and articulate their own version of an event as they tailor it to their needs. As "crime stories" are flexible and retellable, the social meanings that they embody can be understood in multiple ways (Moodie 2010: 9). The disjunction in these events creates power for violent narratives by creating difference and deferral as stories are retold (Taussig 1987). In this case, however, there is a disjunction between the conditions of insecurity and its representation, which provokes greater uncertainty, as violent events seem to never come to an adequate resolution. In this chapter I will argue that this disjunction represents a *free-floating insecurity* where insecurity is shaped through both the embodied experience of crime and its mediation through the news, rumor, and gossip. These disjunctions contribute to wide ranging impunity for violent crime reproducing disaffective relationships with the state as insecurity seems random and unmoored.

In the remainder of this chapter I will follow the interplay between how adjustments are made by both authorities and the public, producing a free-floating insecurity that erodes confidence in governance. This chapter will be oriented around two key questions: How do adjustments – changes in interpretation and behavior – contribute to the proliferation of insecurity? and How does insecurity move from being a quality of a place, a quasi-event, to being an event that must be engaged with by the state? To explore the articulations of free-floating insecurity, I will trace the movement of insecurity from quasi-event to event and back by exploring the routine understandings of crime, their apprehension as an event, and the changes everyday residents make to cope with their new expectations of insecurity. In particular I will attend to the relationship

between two cities in Esmeraldas province – the provincial seat Esmeraldas and a county seat, La Concordia. I would first like to draw on my experience with insecurity in the city of Esmeraldas to illustrate trends in how violence is experienced in everyday life. While national narratives may identify the province as a violent place, local narratives argue that the insecurity that residents fear is actually a new phenomenon. The first section of this chapter will follow how media and rumor, the changing nature of insecurity, and the changing spatiality of insecurity are understood on the ground and in regards to particular understandings of culture in the province. Residents feel that as the cities of the province have grown, they have become sites of anonymity, breeding distrust, as neighbors do not have the strong relationships of the past. In the second section I would like to illustrate how the disjunction between narratives of violence and their referent events can shape the broader discourse of political change, as insecurity becomes an event. I will explore an incident in La Concordia that illustrate how a free-floating insecurity mediates the tensions between the embodied experience of insecurity and the circulation of violent narratives. In the incident thousands of flyers promising a social cleansing were circulated through the province just as they experienced a precipitous increase in homicides. While my experience in La Concordia itself is limited, the communicable cartographies of the province consistently bring these issues back to the city of Esmeraldas, as accusations of racism and violence must be addressed through the local centers of political power and the media. In the final section I will attend to how residents both become accustomed to some forms of violence and make adjustments in their own lives to cope with a sense of insecurity where no one is sure who might or

might not be a criminal. While petroleum is not the primary emphasis of this chapter, I will argue that the petroleum industry both creates the conditions for insecurity as well as granting some residents the ability to adapt to both the real and perceived violence of the province. The materialities of oil create a diverse array of possibilities contributing to security and its other. I will demonstrate how petroleum both offers agency and provokes new pressures on the public.

Adjusting Accounts: Racialization, Impunity, and the Zombie Facts of Violence

What social processes structure the experience of insecurity in Esmeraldas? This is a complicated question and its interpretation shapes the everyday politics of policing in the province. When violent events happen it is easy for authorities to fall back on explanations that naturalize violence instead of addressing the complex of issues that provoke insecurity. The process of interpreting insecurity articulates with several tactics of bracketing cultural difference and several different ways of understanding place. In this section I would like to draw attention to how narratives and experiences of violence can be "adjusted" or reinterpreted in ways that make apprehending and understanding insecurity more difficult. In particular I will highlight the relationship between four critical social processes that shape insecurity: 1) the everyday practices of "bracketing" cultural difference, 2) the circulation of media and rumor, 3) the changing nature of crime, and 4) the changing spatiality of crime. Each of these processes intersects with the questions of how do we interpret the relationship between insecurity and cultural difference, and how do we understand insecurity when it is in a state of flux?

For some, Esmeraldas has always been a violent province. The manner in which cultural difference has been recognized by the state and wider society structures the racialization of insecurity and how we apprehend the other (Povenelli 2011: 78-79) As the historic center of Afro-Ecuadorian culture, the communities of Esmeraldas are often represented as outside of the indigenous-mestizo binary that the nation uses to imagine the national community; marking them as the "ultimate other" and marking the province as distinct within Ecuador's racial-spatial order (Rahier 1998: 422, Anderson 1983). In the 1500s, multiple groups of shipwrecked and runaway slaves settled Esmeraldas, largely maintaining independence from Quito. Expeditions resulted in gross failures as the landscape and sickness took their toll, feeding racial stereotypes of afro-descendant communities, as they were able to survive and flourish where Europeans did not. From 1913-1916 these views were exacerbated as Esmeraldeños rebelled against the government after the assassination of liberal president Eloy Alfaro. In the war, many conservatives from the Sierra died fighting liberal insurgents in Esmeraldas, who were immortalized as "Negros Macheteros" or machete wielding blacks, an image that continues to wind its way into media representations of the province (Walmsley 2004: 206). Whenever there is an incident of unrest or violence in Esmeraldas, the media broadcast images that accentuate anarchy, highlighting people setting fires or brandishing machetes, even when no violent act has occurred.

After the banana boom of the 1960s and the construction of the national petroleum refinery in the 1970s, the Afro-Ecuadorian community gravitated towards cities despite the lack of employment opportunities. Together the history of afro-

Ecuadorian marginalization and racist stereotypes structure how the state renders the community legible. In reality the communities of Esmeraldas are heterogeneous, although with strong connections to an afro-identity, as the province is also home to afro-Colombian refugees and *montubios*, who each have their own naturalized discourses of violence and their own connection to discourses of blackness.[2] [3] The combination of identities makes Esmeraldas a representational quagmire as all residents can easily be bracketed within the savage slot (Trouillot 2003). Ecuador's 2008 constitution sought to neutralize negative interpretations of cultural difference by drawing a "red line of toleration" that recognized all of these communities as productive segments of the state (Povenelli 2011: 97). In Ecuador's larger process of governmentality there is supposed to be a clear demarcation between the pre-constitutional and post-constitutional recognition of cultural difference. However the particularities of place in drawing such distinctions provide interpretive maneuverability that allows racialized discourses to persist (Povenelli 2011: 67-68).

For Esmeraldeños, violence is not an inherent quality of the province but is instead produced through the articulation of several social processes. While narratives of violence have marked Esmeraldas since the 1500s, locals assert that insecurity is just now becoming an event that cannot be ignored. Violence exists as a potentiality in Esmeraldas due to the province being at the convergence of the literal and figurative margins of the

[2] The majority of local Colombian refugees in Esmeraldas are afro-descendant and come from southwestern Colombia.
[3] *Montubio* – A rural, coastal Ecuadorian identity that is generally seen as mestizo but with a healthy mix of African ancestry. In Esmeraldas there are both local *montubio* communities and refugee communities from the province of Manabi (*manabitas*) who relocated to Esmeraldas due to recurrent droughts. Locally known for gender violence.

state (Das and Poole 2004). Insecurity is typically a quasi-event, only becoming an event when its excesses make it impossible to ignore. In Esmeraldas extreme rates of unemployment and underemployment coupled with a lack of government projects; a large concentration of Colombian refugees; the presence of the drug trade; and internal migration within the province, contextualize a skyrocketing rise in violent crime between 2008 and 2010. Statistically the homicide rate is the most alarming change. From 2008 to 2009 murder rates rose by 50% and by 2010 the province was the murder capital of Ecuador with a homicide rate three times the national average (El Comercio 2011).[4] As the public grew concerned with rampant insecurity, officials such as Interior Minister Gustavo Jalkh wrote off violence as due to the "characteristics of the people" and "cultural factors;" an ambiguous claim that naturalizes violence to Afro-Ecuadorians rather than identifying the larger structural issues that engender violence. At the time Ecuador's three largest cities, Guayaquil, Quito, and Manta, were each facing an astronomical rise in violent crime, but Esmeraldas was the only city where it was written off as a fundamental characteristic to the community.

Residents feel as if they no longer know their cities, as the population explosion and rise of crime articulate together to produce a larger sense of dysplacement. Following Davis-Jackson dysplacement describes the subjective experience of the community as they live in an uneasy coexistence with processes that alienate them from a space (2011: 607-608). The replacement of the root *dis* with *dys* emphasizes that people do not abandon these communities in the face of insecurity, rather the cope with an impaired

[4] The National Homicide Rate in 2010 was .2 out of 100,000 residents, in Esmeraldas Province it is .6 (El Comercio 2011).

environment and hope for a productive intervention. The cities that had a small town sociality a decade ago are now spaces of fear and anonymity, as residents do not necessarily know their neighbors anymore. Insecurity here "colors the public's worldview, affecting how people can relate to neighbors, strangers, and the state (Goldstein 2012: 4)." The challenge for Esmeraldeños and national authorities comes from identifying the relationship between concrete acts and the proliferation of stories of violence that circulate through the media, rumor, and gossip. In this vein understanding how locals see insecurity changing across the city is critical to denaturalizing violence. While insecurity sows fear, the lack of an adequate state or police response also provokes distrust, generating a disaffective relationship between Esmeraldeños and the entire justice system.

For Esmeraldeños the violence of recent years is unlike anything they have seen before, but it is a phenomenon that is not just experienced, but one which circulates as narrative. There is a constant articulation between rumor and news on the one hand, and the concrete experiences of insecurity on the other. In Esmeraldas rumor structures the experience of urbanity, "fracturing and reshaping the composite anatomy of public and private space (De Boeck 2004: 50-51)." Rumor contributes to the province's outsized reputation for violence, acting as a space where a variety of experiences are espoused, edited, and redirected. While rumor and gossip travel through interpersonal relationships, they can also be fodder for the news, a process that draws attention to the spectacularization of violence in the tabloids and the mainstream media. In Esmeraldas radio stations and newspapers are known for broadcasting facts about violence that are

difficult to trace back to a discrete source. For example the newspaper *La Hora* once featured a weekly section called *se dice* – "it is said," which collects and republished unattributed commentaries.[5] Sometimes about politics, sometimes about violence, the short comments often make critical accusations about the condition of the community. One week they can feature a piece on the spread of *secuestro express* – "express kidnappings" from Guayaquil to other cities, exposing critical sites of risk to the public. In other incidents they have announced local problems such as the rise of *vacuñas,* - "vaccinations" or threats against transport cooperatives that are extorted for protection money, which are often not provable or are denied by the police.[6] [7] Radio stations are even more unpredictable in this regard as they can broadcast without a record of what is said being left behind. In turn, these facts are picked up by the community and recirculate as rumor and gossip.

In Esmeraldas most people spend the evenings socializing near home, as the risk of being robbed grows exponentially after dark due to the lack of safe public spaces and working streetlights. I would typically spend these hours chatting with other men in their early thirties on the stoop of a small store bordering the Children's Park. Three or four of us would pass the time watching college students congregate at a busy bus stop for one of the local universities. With so many students passing through, the stop was noteworthy for minor robberies. At any moment there was a chance that you could witness a young

[5] This section was discontinued as *La Hora* entered into several public disagreements with the state over unattributed accusations.
[6] Express kidnappings were once isolated to Guayaquil but have recently become common in Quito.
[7] *Vacuñas* are often not made public because of the nature of the crime – an anonymous criminal essentially threatens to hurt customers, employees, or family members of transport cooperative members unless they make an "injection" of cash.

man nonchalantly walk up to the crowd, snatch a purse or a cellphone, and run. The problem grew so common that the national police installed a mobile field base with a periscopic "eagle eye" camera to monitor the park, a tactic that had little return in stemming the steady stream of robberies. Due to the prevalence of such minor crimes, conversations on the stoop often turned to the daily narratives of insecurity.

One day after seeing a cell phone theft an acquaintance named Julio, a young afro-Ecuadorian businessman, turned to me and asked, "Did you know that in Esmeraldas a car gets stolen every 30 minutes during Carnival?" This was not the first time I had heard this figure cited as it was often repeated around beach holidays to illustrate the travails that tourists from the Sierra would face as they visit the coast. The statistic, while commonly espoused, was problematic as it suggested that there were more automobile thefts in Esmeraldas in that week then there were for the entire year. In this case I turned back to Julio and asked him how he knew it and he waved me off claiming that it "was just known by everyone about Esmeraldas." The car theft statistic acts as a sort of zombie fact; no matter how often it is shot down with concrete information, it continues to move, passing from conversation to conversation, maintaining a life of its own as rumor and gossip propel it into continuous circulation. It becomes a piece of lore that reaffirms what is "known" about the province reifying and publicly proliferating the possible types of insecurity one might experience on the ground. Rumor and the media contextualize the changing nature of insecurity.

In the spectrum of "delinquency" in Esmeraldas, a term that Taussig has noted can mean anything from pickpocketing to murder in Latin America most incidents in

Esmeraldas are closer to the former (2003: 9). Residents argue that until recently most of the crimes that they face in their daily lives were petty thefts of cell phones, purse snatching, or occasionally a mugging by intimidation. Most crime was understood to be non-violent and in the rare event of a homicide, it was generally believed to be an "adjustment of accounts" or a revenge killing for a personal debt or a slight. Often involving alcohol, largely taking place out of sight, and rarely using a firearm, most considered such killings to be the result of personal disputes. Today's issue is not the threat of being murdered by someone you know but the threat of being violently robbed or killed anonymously on the street. Quotidian crime has become violent, which has been accentuated in moments of spectacular violence.

Arriving in the field for follow-up research in the summer of 2011 I was surprised to learn of a very public murder a block from my residence. Assailants had shot a Colombian resident from the back of a motorcycle, a modality of assassination more commonly associated with Colombia than Ecuador. My neighbors were stunned but their reactions articulated two different interpretations of why the crime produced uncertainty. For most, the glaring issue was that despite the execution happening in broad daylight, in the city center, no suspect was ever identified or caught. In the center, the site with the highest density of police patrols, the police were incapable of responding, illustrating the growth of impunity. Beyond the visceral fear this incident provoked it also highlighted local fears of the Colombian community. Esmeraldas is well known both as a drug transshipment point for Colombian cartels and as a receiver of Colombian refugees. The ports, rivers, and mangrove swamps of Esmeraldas, and the dollarization of the

Ecuadorian economy facilitate the drug industry and under Correa, Ecuador eased restrictions on the entry of refugees. The idea of being a transshipment point can be misleading as it focuses on money, drugs and people passing through rather than highlighting how the drug trade, locally known as the *vida facil* or "easy life," leaves behind traces in the community. In cities where the chances of finding steady work are so stark many young people turn to the drug industry, which draws the children of Esmeraldeños, especially male teens, either as small time dealers or smugglers. Rather than smuggling drugs themselves, locals are more commonly associated with the transportation of gasoline and diesel back into Colombia. Gasoline is critical for drug production and sales are heavily regulated in Colombia but not Ecuador. With Ecuador's National Petroleum Refinery occupying the city crossroads, Esmeraldas enables the drug trade, crystalizing a relationship between insecurity and petroleum.

After this incident my friend Silvia isolated the tensions that Esmeraldeños feel in this situation,

> "The problem with insecurity is because of the Colombians. Its not all Colombians, look at my neighbors right here. They are great, hardworking people, professionals. But not all of them are like that. Some are refugees, some just say they are and they are the ones who brought the drug trade here. The problem is *we do not know*."

As the drug network takes root it becomes difficult to trust people, especially outsiders, making it difficult to distinguish between the innocent, the culpable, and the complicit, sowing widespread distrust. Locally the threat of insecurity is not interpreted through race but age, gender, and nationality with young men always being considered suspect.

The problem is that this produces new tactics of bracketing, rather than disrupting the employment of cultural difference in the old.

The shift in violent crime isolates another critical problem for the province: policing. Faith in the police has faltered and the concept of "adjusting accounts" acts as one face of this. In 2010 a United Nations report illustrated that one of every one hundred murders in Ecuador ever results in a conviction (Alston 2011: 17). How the police categorizes a murder, viewing it as an adjustment or otherwise, impacts how it is investigated. When investigating a homicide that is considered an "adjustment" the crime is interpreted through personal relations detaching it from social relations. In this view because it's a personal issue the police do not have to investigate the crime unless the victims family requests it; but as families are often afraid of being victimized themselves they rarely ask for an investigation. Effectively what happens is that if the police believe it is an adjustment they only do a cursory investigation, leaving the case unsolved and creating a broad pattern of impunity. By reinterpreting a homicide as a personal or cultural failure, the police reduce theirs and the state's responsibility while leaving criminals on the streets. The UN Special Rapporteur asserted that there was a broad abuse of this classification as the police purposely misclassified cases to limit their responsibility, allowing them to redirect resources to other cases. Together the changing modes of violence and crime in Esmeraldas erode confidence in the government as violent crime became ubiquitous and as the police are implicated in acts that potentially deny justice to victims (Alston 2011:10-11).

The changing nature of local violence is reflected in the changing spatiality of insecurity. Esmeraldas is crosscut with invisible lines that demark the areas considered safe for locals and those that are not. The lines are invisible as there is often no discernable change in class as you pass them, they are lines learned through living in the city. Some neighborhoods are known as *zonas rojas* or "red zones" due to the presence of brothels, bars, gangs, or shopping centers. However the naturalized red zones were in a state of flux and many felt that it no longer mattered where you were, there was always the possibility of being victimized. For outsiders this is doubly disconcerting as you are constantly reminded that nowhere is safe. One colleague, a scholar based in the United States who was considering a project in Esmeraldas, had this to say upon her return:

> "I had never been in Esmeraldas before. Wow. My impressions are mostly related to my position as a mestizo, petite woman. It seemed that everybody thought I was unsafe in whatever space I was in. I understand this but it also replicates some larger national attitudes towards who is safe in Esmeraldas and how this shapes social relations. This, combined with the political warfare….made me feel like I was some sort of Alice in Wonderland, where contradictions become heightened with the expectation of change."

In Esmeraldas if you walk to close to the riverside neighborhoods or to the hills towering over the center, someone will warn you. If you pull a camera out to snap a photograph, someone will warn you. If you leave a backpack or purse on a table at a restaurant, someone will warn you. In my first month in Esmeraldas I saw a piece of graffiti that I wanted to photograph but it was just off of the most dangerous road in the city, where the center descends into the urban shantytowns collectively known as the Ribera, the Riverside. Walking home on a parallel street, I decided to try to take a photo, but before I took my third step an oil worker acquaintance who was driving by slammed on his breaks

and yelled at me for going that direction. Residents constantly remark on the generalized state of insecurity reproducing the national narrative of Esmeraldas as an insecure place.

As part of my research I attempted a mapping project to identify where residents felt they were the most at risk for insecurity. I quickly learned that my approach was misguided. One afternoon I sat with a nurse named Alicia and started to do the mapping portion of my interview when she stopped me and said,

> "It's not the neighborhood that matters – crime is like pollution from the refinery, it *migrates* across Esmeraldas. Pollution comes from the refinery but you breath it in the center and around the refinery, it moves with the wind. Insecurity is worse, it mostly comes from San Rafael or the Ribera but you can be the victim of insecurity anywhere. Your neighborhood, on a bus, at home, it does not matter where you are!"

Alicia clearly located the sources of violence and the sites of violence as very different places. While criminals might come from particular neighborhoods the threat could be experienced anywhere. In particular it shapes how community members represent their own neighborhoods, transportation systems, and homes as being in a state of flux.

When I first conducted research in Esmeraldas I lived in a neighborhood near the city's hospital that was considered to be borderline red zone. The sociality of the neighborhoods was noticeably affected by the situation. In the heart of Esmeraldas most people spend the evenings chatting in the general vicinity of their homes and parents feel safe enough to let their children play in the street. Homes are largely secure, featuring heavy doors and bars on ground story windows. People actively engage with their neighbors and there is always someone around. My first neighborhood, Parada 10, was very different. Each home was a self-contained fortress and the sociality of the neighborhood reflected this. Neighbors did not sit on porches talking; rather they sat in

interior courtyards barred off from the streets. During the day this neighborhood is a ghost town as few residents hang around. When I returned to Esmeraldas in 2011, Parada 10, had changed wildly becoming the site of open street violence. As I did interviews people expressed deep seated frustration with the changes, going as far as forcing me to take taxis back home as it was no longer safe to wander the neighborhood at all. I was doubtful at first but over the following weeks I witnessed multiple robberies in locations that had been considered generally safe two years before. The neighborhood had undergone one important shift; a massive shopping centered had opened behind the city hospital, which attracted groups of armed young men, whose presence pushed residents inside.

A common feature of other cities in Latin America in similar situations is the proliferation of gated communities (Caldiera 2000). However in Esmeraldas these are considered suspect, as they often exist in a state of being perpetually unfinished and are located a great distance from the city center. Gated communities here are structured by their exclusivity. While they try to create a guarded community they must be selective in who they admit. Yet if they are too selective, many lots will go unoccupied, stalling the construction of the project. Many "gated" communities in Esmeraldas have been delayed by a lack of interested buyers and in a number of instances the communities are not surrounded on all sides by walls. Additionally there are limits on limiting access to the facilities. Generally, gated enclaves in Esmeraldas only have one entrance and manned security post. The security post effectively keeps out foot and motorcycle traffic but taxis are generally waved in without so much as a cursory inspection. Outside of the

PetroEcuador Villas and a barrio known as *los Judiciales,* most gated communities are considered no safer than living in an urban neighborhood. [8]

This condition often leaves Esmeraldeños searching for ways to fortify their homes, which does not protect from the most egregious break-in attempts. The worst example I encountered of this came from a city worker named Ruben. Ruben had saved through his career to build a two-story house on the edge of the Ribera. His family and a number of others bought plots of land abutting one another. Ruben's house would one day be sandwiched by others on all sides but at the time the east face was open to a vacant lot. Normally Ruben and his wife left for work together in the morning but he was suffering from the flu and stayed home to rest. An hour after his wife left he was asleep on his couch when he heard a deep repetitive thud coming from his bedroom. He went to investigate and as he entered his bedroom the head of a sledgehammer come through the exterior wall of the house. I did not believe him at first but he took me back to see the damage they had done. The attempted invasion had left a scar that had been filled with blocks but never repainted. More commonly thieves will try to slip into a business or home when a door is left unattended, hiding until all are gone or asleep.

A final element to the shifting spatiality of insecurity is the growth of transportation as a site of robberies. Rather than spreading from a "center" Esmeraldas has an unusual urban geography as it more closely resembles an archipelago with population centers connected by one main highway. The restricted transportation network means that while the city is home to more than 200,000 residents, it is also fairly easy to

[8] Employees of the justice system and the police settled *Los Judiciales* and unlike most gated communities it is located in the city proper.

traverse making transportation lines a key site in local insecurity. Buses in Esmeraldas are loud, crowded, and largely free of a police or security presence. Women in particular noted that the buses are an insecure space due to snatch and grab robberies. As the bus approaches or leaves one of the population islands its common for a thief to grab a phone or jewelry, jump from the moving bus's rear exit, and disappear down to the river or into a neighborhood. This was the most normalized type of crime story I encountered but it too was in a state of flux.

One day I was wandering the Central Park when I found the adult daughter of a close friend crying. Someone had tried to rob her on the bus as she traveled from her home in Parada 10. Ericka had been sitting near the bus exit when a young man sat behind her and pressed a gun to her back. He whispered in her ear that he would kill her if she moved and ordered her to give him her money and phone. However, the bus pulled up to a stop and in the confusion Ericka ran off and straight to the park, where she found me. Variations of this were repeated over and over, most commonly a thief would walk behind a women standing on the bus and put one arm around them like they were hugging and with the other they would press a weapon to their back. Other passengers often would not realize anything had happened until after the thief leapt from the rear entrance of the bus. Residents of the Isla Vargas Torres, an island adjacent to the city center would say they had the worst of this as thieves often chose to run into their community because of the lack of a police presence on the island. Police would be called for a bus robbery and take potshots at fleeing thieves, shooting in to marginal neighborhoods provoking even more distrust.

Collectively these experiences highlight the relationship between the quotidian experiences of insecurity and the proliferation of violent narratives that characterize what I call a free-floating insecurity. At times insecurity is all too real and personal and the collapsing lines of the city and the inadequate police response make it feel as if there is no way to escape it creating a larger sense of urban dysplacement. Rumor, gossip, and the media can feed this, as knowledge about violence circulates through the community taking on a life of its own. With insecurity in a state of flux, cultural difference becomes an easy way of framing violence by bracketing the community within in a specific set of relationships, even when these frames might conceal more than they reveal. It hides how the practices of insecurity change. Bracketing can project outward dissonance that obscures the processes within bracketed community. In Esmeraldas there has been a notable decomposition of security. The questions that remain are, will this decomposition be recognized and how will it be recognized? As the qualities of insecurity exist in a state of change, the idea of the "adjustment" is a useful notion for thinking through the challenges that insecurity produces. An adjustment highlights the ability of some actors to fundamentally shape the narrative of violence. The facticity of insecurity is subject to interpretation and reinterpretation, which can challenge the ways violence is understood, but which also has the ability to materialize and substantiate ways of bracketing and recognizing difference. The way that insecurity is interpreted to a community and the way that adjustments are made by the community because of insecurity, reveal the structures that constrain collective agency as the community attempts to confront violence. In the following section I will follow how these structures expand as violence

moves from routine or a quasi-event, to an event that cannot be ignored. I will show that the process of making adjustments has wider ranging consequences for policing during a violent spectacle.

Discordia: Free-Floating Insecurity in a "Violent Land"

La Concordia is the easternmost county of Esmeraldas and it has been a site of routine political conflict for more than a decade. Oriented around a small ramshackle city, the county is home to hundreds of palmaculture plantations, a rural setting with a minimal police presence. Often dubbed "Dischordia" by locals, the community has an outsized reputation for violence, insecurity, and protest in a province already made legible as such. It is a cultural borderland where multiple communities meet, as plantations attract migrants from Ecuador and abroad. La Concordia was part of the neighboring county of Quininde, but was promoted to the status of county in its own right when the new province of Santo Domingo de Tsachilas was created from the western half of Pichincha in 2007.[9] Seeking to expand their influence, Santo Domingueño businessman with interests in La Concordia pushed for the new county to be transferred to the new province. However, Ecuador's constitutional court rejected this proposal, reaffirming that La Concordia was part of Esmeraldas, leaving a festering and racialized territorial issue.

In mid-2009, a period where the sentiment of uncertainty was already heightened due to national political changes, La Concordia became the epicenter of an incident that

[9] Pichincha is the province where Quito, the national capital, is located.

turned everyday insecurity from a quasi-event that could be ignored or blamed on "culture" alone, to an event that the state had to address to ensure the security of the entire province. In this section I will explore how these incidents contributed to the growth of a *free-floating insecurity*. Drawing from the following examples, I will argue that a free-floating insecurity attends to how the public understands insecurity through both the embodied experience of crime and through the consumption of news, rumor, and gossip. A free-floating insecurity creates new anxieties for the public at large, as the possibilities and extent of violence is understood as constantly moving and changing. The intersection of these processes with the power structures of politics, the police apparatus, and media creates a field of power relations where making an adjustment, interpreting the roots of insecurity in regards to different frames of reference, can have wide ranging consequences. The bracketing of violence as a culture issue reveals tensions between community and police, state and society, and within a variety of social institutions.

By July 2009 the province of Esmeraldas was on edge. In the previous months there was both a racialized political incident and a noticeable upswing in violent crime. A racist campaign song had been released, supporting a move by La Concordia from Santo Domingo, drawing accusations of racism and political chicanery, and heightening tensions through the entire province. At the same time several cities had violent crimes or homicides that occupied the red pages, they did not draw attention as a *provincial* concern until thousands of flyers promising a *limpieza social*, or "social cleansing," were anonymously released across the province, possibly linking them together as a singular event. Originally distributed in the border community of San Lorenzo, these were largely

ignored until they were also distributed in La Concordia, just as the county became the site of several public killings. La Concordia, which despite being the smallest county in the province, had more homicides than the other seven counties combined in June and July 2009.

The day that two *montubio* men were killed under identical circumstances in La Concordia marks the point when the flyers and the wave of insecurity went from independent incidents to possibly intersecting processes; insecurity became a "wave" that had to be confronted. The intersecting incidents illustrate how the connections between the communicable cartographies of insecurity (Briggs 2007: 326) and the creation of difference and deferral (Taussig 1987) work together to produce a larger sentiment of insecurity. The "crime story" that trailed the violent spectacle of the flyers was notable due to the open question of whether the events were connected. Coverage of violent events is often incomplete making it difficult to grasp the complexities of such occurrences (Goldstein and Williams Castro 2006: 394). Typically a story plays out over a number of days, as victims generally move from being anonymous bodies to people with their own histories. Yet in the local market of the red pages, events often move out of the news once there are fewer sensational details to relay to the public. Follow-up stories are rare unless there is a trial, making the news always partial and incomplete.

This incomplete character of the news is the grey area where interpretation through fields of power relations can have wide ranging effects. As the media, the police, and the public interpret the story they draw on frames of reference that implicate different segments of the community. The incompleteness of these stories does not just mark

communities as possible perpetrators, but opens questions of who is the victim. While the police started by saying as many as 30 homicides might be related, they did not try to publicly illustrate how the events might be directly connected, nor where they always clear whom these victims were. Who was being killed? Was it innocent people or violent criminals? Were these people complicit in insecurity? The twin homicides of July illustrate this tension. Two days following the murders, the red pages featured multiple articles on the incidents with gruesome photos of the men. However, each man was treated differently. One had a backstory; he was a family man that worked in Santo Domingo despite his family living in La Concordia. He had been home for the weekend and was drinking with friends. He was shot while he walked home in the early morning hours. The other was completely anonymous. Beyond being shot in the night the only information the media relayed was an image of his swollen, bloodied face. In following editions no new information came to light. In this environment of incomplete facts people begin to fill in information for themselves. They look to the flyers as an explanation, but the flyers can be connected to multiple narratives of insecurity through short conspiratorial leaps of imagination. The flyer embodies conspiratorial logics, but rather than presenting conspiracy as originating in some far off place (Stewart 1998, Briggs 2004: 175), it draws connections to the local.

The flyers are a violent, mediated spectacle that attempted to construct a broad audience of witnesses (Chavez 2008: 190, Krupa 2009: 21). However unlike other violent spectacles in Latin America, such as lynchings or bodily protests, which are commonly viewed as messages to the state, the targets of the flyer are much less clear (Goldstein

2004, Garces 2010: 479). In this situation residents themselves began to view insecurity as free floating. Like the process of anonymously releasing the flyers to float through the community, these spectacles and the subsequent retelling of the events, highlighted that as there were many interpretations of what happened, violence seemed unmoored, creating a sense of unknowing and uncertainty.

Like most crime stories, the narrative that trailed the social cleansing flyer proved highly flexible. While Michael Taussig and Charles Briggs have very different ideas of how violent narratives circulate and operate in the community their conceptualizations of "crime stories" are both useful for analyzing this issue. Taussig argues that narratives of violence gain their power by creating difference and deferral through disjunctions (1987). In his view "crime stories" circulate absent of their referent events gaining life as they move and change through retelling. Briggs however argues though that "crime stories" travel communicable cartographies " a small set of shared and predictable circuits, creating subject positions arranging them in spatial, moral, and legal terms, and making only a very limited number of responses thinkable (Briggs 2007: 326). Within these circuits community members, the police, and the media can each interpret and articulate their own version of an event as they tailor it to their needs. For the community the key issue is that as the media and police reported the events in the province, both about the flyers and insecurity in general, they created possible links between crime stories and perpetrators by incorporating elements of the flyer's message and the province's sociological reality, to broadly implicate a swath of the community in the crime. In this case I would argue that rather than the crime stories circulating absent their referents that

instead there are multiple possible referent events that shape how the community identifies the perpetrator. By following where the flyer physically passed by and how it was interpreted through communicable cartographies of the media, the police, and the community I will illustrate how a multiplicity of referent events create a terrain of impunity as shifting interpretations implicate multiple sectors of the community. The community's interpretations of flyer were notable as they each grabbed a characteristic of the artifact's "story" and implicated a different segment of the community allowing for new leaps of conspiratorial logics. In the remainder of this section I will illustrate five interpretations of who could be implicated in these events; each creates difference and deferral as it moves through the communicable cartography of the province. Each of these plays with different forms of bracketing culture, but always against the larger, extant understanding of Esmeraldas as already black and violent.

If you take the flyer at face value, it illustrates a wide spread frustration with the conditions of the community. It could actually be from community members who are exhausted by the rise of low-level crime and everyday insecurity. The flyer proclaims that due to the rise of crime, "violence must be fought with more violence." It rails against prostitutes, drug consumers, drug dealers, and thieves; who are collectively denoted *mal-parido*, a phrase that designates them as lives that were not worth living.[10] The flyer asserts that anyone out after 10pm will be shot, and says that parents must speak to their children, lest they be responsible for their family members death. It then tells people to make their own copies of the flyer and distribute them, since the authors of the letter are

[10] Mal-Parido literally means the remains of an aborted birth, locally it is a nuclear insult that implies that someone's life is not worth living.

unable to circulate them to everyone's house. In many ways these are commonly held sentiments as insecurity interferes with and shapes everyday life in the province. In La Concordia, the media reported that the center of the city would be vacant after dark, which was placing stress on businesses. People used taxis more often and walked less. The immediate affect of the flyer was real embodied fear as La Concordia was the epicenter of the flyers and local homicides. While the media asserted thirty total murders might be associated with the flyer, the first time that they adjusted the figures down to fourteen, they suggested that of those twelve were in La Concordia and two were in Quininde. This interpretation highlights the issue as both a failure of the community for embracing social ills and a failure of governance as no local or national authorities can curb the violence.

A second interpretation references a regional history of violence associated with the ongoing civil insurrection in Colombia and the links that Colombian paramilitary groups maintain with Ecuador. While the flyer was distributed widely in Esmeraldas traveling from San Lorenzo on the Colombian border, then to La Concordia and Quininde, and eventually making their way to the provincial capital Esmeraldas, the flyer actually originated the previous year in Colombia before traveling to a Venezuelan border province, and then the Ecuadorian province of Sucumbíos in Amazon. The limpieza flyer is a common strategy that paramilitary groups in Colombia have used to sow fear while claiming to protect the community. Like gang manifestos in Brazil, it apes rights speech and asserts the government is not doing its job so the community is being forced to take justice into their own hands (Holston 2008: 300). The province of Esmeraldas has a

distinct relationship to the Colombian conflict due to the shared border. Periodically through my fieldwork, arrests of suspected paramilitaries would be made in the province, as groups such as the *Aguilas Negras* "Black Eagles" frequently cross the border for health care and use the ports and rivers of Esmeraldas to ship drugs. Some residents used this to infer that a group might be trying to set up shop in La Concordia and that they were most likely afro-Colombian.[11]

A third interpretation argued that it could be local gangs attempting to control the area. For almost two decades there had been an ongoing conflict between two gangs in the province. Originating in La Concordia a criminal gang and second group that originally self-identified as being *justicieros* or "peacekeepers," were in open conflict. Being on the border and between Quito and the ports of Esmeraldas, San Lorenzo, and Manta, La Concordia was becoming known as a critical site for the drug trade. In a previous release of flyers, police had managed to arrest gang members who were using the flyers in an attempt to intimidate their rivals and cover up the business motives of distributing the flyer. The police differentiated the most recent flyer event from that incident by arguing the previous flyer had had so many spelling errors to be almost unintelligible. In the most recent case, while occasionally using slang, as a whole the flyer was well written and probably not done by the average criminal in Ecuador. [12]

Fourth was the idea that these could actually just be "adjustments" – revenge killings – that were happening completely separate from a "prank" flyer. As the police

[11] The *Aguilas* are a paramilitary group known for recruiting afro-Colombians.
[12] Examples of slang in the flyer; terms such as *prepagos*, prepaids, i.e. prostitutes; or *busqueras*, crackheads)

shifted their story of the events they eventually argued that all of these were separate unconnected events that were happening in a province known for insecurity. As the province was in a surge of violent crime this interpretation was especially dangerous as it naturalized violence to Afro-Ecuadorians by saying it was normal community members doing this to themselves. Yet, as I noted in the first section, the concept of "adjustments" is flexible and police and prosecutors have systematically abused it to justify not investigating criminal acts. An issue that supports this view is that the flyer never actually became a national story. The local media in Esmeraldas grabbed the story and replayed it for months but the national media, with the exception of a report three months after the original flyer release, never picked it up marking it as of little public concern. Official state media never reported on any of this. On a local level, the view that these were adjustments framed this as in issue for Esmeraldas and between neighbors.

Lastly some residents, after months of "adjusted" accounts, began to argue that it might be the police themselves that were releasing these flyers. Esmeraldas in general, and La Concordia specifically, were sites where multiple modes of violence intersected. Historically, the province has been marginalized and has been starved for police resources. In an environment where the media is reporting these events as "unstoppable violence," many residents argued that it could actually be the police who were releasing the flyers in a bid to force the national government to give them more resources. Each time that a newspaper account by the police was released it followed a similar pattern. It would feature a police spokesman who would say that the investigation was happening, suspects had been identified, and arrests would be made – and then they would adjust the

count of victims. This was invariably followed by statements from anonymous community members who pleaded in the media for the government to send "elite" squads of police or the military to the province to stem the tide of violence. This interpretation of the events was reified as the government acquiesced to demands from the province and declared a state of exception in three cities allowing for 300 additional military and police to be added to the province as well as new equipment such as trucks and motorcycles and the construction of a new police base in La Concordia. The reaction of community members to the actual flyer itself was illustrative of this connection. The flyer was considered a dangerous object that people did not want to be caught possessing. When the story first broke I could find people on the streets talking about the flyers, I saw news reports on them, but the flyer itself eluded me. The flyers were distributed on random days in Esmeraldas city via bus routes, but usually by mid morning people had actively tried to destroy them. There were two processes at play here. First residents did not want to see symbolic violence in their community. People were personally offended that someone would dare to distribute these in the province. Secondly they did not want to get caught with flyers and then be accused of distributing them by the police who could use normal people as scapegoats. The flyers reappeared multiple times, floating freely through the community until people collected or destroyed them. The insinuations of this view are corrosive to the nation, as it either implicates the police as the purveyors of violence or at the very least argues that they are taking advantage of violent acts, sowing discord, and eroding citizen confidence in the state as a free-floating insecurity takes hold.

As the story fizzled out and no one was actually arrested, all of these theories became plausible accounts of what had happened. As an incident of spectacular violence the flyer both created the widest possible audience and implicated broad segments of society as both possible suspects and possible victims. Through flexible interpretations of insecurity everyone from family to neighbors to the police could be involved. In this view, an "adjusted" interpretation of free-floating security plays with the possibilities of uncertainty. The sense of crisis comes not from the winnowing of choices, but from a proliferation of concrete possibilities as the processes of insecurity crystalize and undergo sedimentation. Rather than being a hyper-real situation, of infinite interpretations and possibilities (Baudrillard 1995), the interpretations here are fundamentally grounded in the experience of marginalization, failed policing, impunity, and quotidian insecurity and are shaped by the back and forth movement of rumor, media, and embodied experience. With the exception of the final interpretation all of the others effectively isolate communities tied to an afro-descendant identity as suspect. The new generalized insecurity and the presence of the social cleansing flyers highlight that as the story and reckoning of victims change, the real issue is impunity. Here the discourse of decline and dread is born, as each issue is never resolved while the feeling of anxiety and insecurity grows. The state, segments of the community, and the larger provincial public are articulated as both subjects to and possibly the purveyors of violence, perpetuating the belief that little had changed with the new constitution. As such violent narratives and crime stories circulate, attaching to a diverse array of possibilities, the quality of citizenship can be questioned. They speak around the problem, rather than speaking to

residents' experience and the processes that provoke doubt about the promises of well-being, respect, and harmony, which are embedded in the constitution.

Dread, Decline, and Dysplacement

Eventually the story of the flyers disappeared and insecurity moved from being a spectacular event to being a quasi-event once again. In this environment where insecurity is seen as being unmoored, where the experiences and narratives of violence offer an ever-widening range of possibilities, what can people do to make themselves feel more secure? What adjustments can they make? With crime and afro culture bracketed together how does the community distinguish the roots of violence in the process of developing their own tactics of generating security? Insecurity is critical to a larger sentiment of dysplacement. Phenomena like pollution and insecurity fundamentally alter people's relationships to place. In coastal Ecuador most people have to find ways to live with crime and violence. With insecurity operating like a force of nature, where people feel they have little agency, they try to make the most of what agency they do have.

When I arrived in the field for follow up research in 2011, I witnessed an incident that revealed many of the larger tensions that residents experience as they tried to make changes for themselves. One afternoon I sat outside a public coffee house with a close friend and local scholar named Pedro. The coffee shop is at an intersection meters away from three local courts and has a generally heavy police presence. Pedro and I sat on a terrace surrounded by local legal professionals catching up. As the café was full we were at a marginal table and my white plastic chair hung slightly onto the street. Down the

road we heard the metal shutters of multiple shops slam shut and as people started screaming. Four teens dressed in the bright white fashion knock offs that locals associate with criminals came running through. One went directly towards me and I thought he was reaching for my courier bag, but as he approached I noticed he was clutching his forearm, as it bled profusely. I got up but he collided with my chair, stumbling into traffic. Another group of teens, these in baby blue school uniforms, came running after them. All of the café's customers dove from the terrace to the restaurant's interior trying to put concrete between them and the combatants due to the fear of gunfire. For five minutes there was a running street battle as new kids arrived, joining the fight and retreating, until a police truck approached and the teens collectively dispersed. After it all settled down, the café customers sat back at their tables. It was not as if there had been no disruption, instead people shifted their possessions, rearranging themselves so they could watch the street. They went back to their conversations but with a new anxiety in the air as they tried to continue on despite insecurity.

The incident revealed a number of the central tensions that insecurity provokes. First it highlights the latency of insecurity, it can erupt at any moment. It shows that even while sitting among the most privileged residents of the city, insecurity remains a possibility. It shows that even in the most active part of the city, in broad daylight, that the police may be unable to intervene. It illustrated that in the moment it can be nearly impossible to discern who may be suspect, or what is going on. But most importantly it shows that even in the face of violence residents seek a return to normalcy. Residents fight back against the sense of dysplacement, as they attempt to make their urban space

livable. It is a simple act that tries to reclaim the city. I would argue that this reveals the play between the constraints they face and the possible agency that they have. In this final section I will explore how residents actively engage with dysplacement, a process of unknowing their cities, to find security once again. I will discuss different tactics people employ to try to create normalcy; the politics of seeing, their engagement with policing, the protection offered by special state relationships, and their everyday attempts to confront insecurity.

Sometimes these are simple acts, the most common of which try to find ways of "seeing" the suspect or ways of displaying security. The politics of bracketing produces a politics of visibility and legibility. As free-floating insecurity spreads to include everyone in the province the Esmeraldeño public has sought ways to identify or contend with the "camouflaged" purveyors of violence among them (Povenelli 2011: 97). For example as rumors of insecurity spread and as more people experience insecurity themselves, daily behaviors shift. I would routinely ask residents how they would identify a suspect person. In a community with endemic poverty and consumed with racialized discourses of insecurity, the most suspect of people were not identified by race or class but by how they dressed. Those who were considered compromised were young male teens, which wore knock off but immaculate sports clothing or excessive amounts of jewelry. The clothing was considered to be off, designating them as neither the laboring poor nor the children of middle class professionals, making them stand out and marking them as groups that should be avoided. Small shops would play with seeing in their own way. Most family shops cannot afford their own guard and the government greatly restricted

the availability of private firearms in an attempt to curb insecurity, so many shop owners create some sort of display that implies that an employee might be armed. For example cell phone stores often have lots of small bills and change around making them tempting targets for a robbery. Some claim to have security cameras but many others create makeshift displays, such as lining their sales window with shotgun shells creating an oblique threat. They try to create an image of security in anticipation of a problem.

While many consider the police suspect, state security forces have also changed their strategies, some of which grant greater agency to the community. The primary tactic of policing in Esmeraldas is a force of presence. The police try to stay visible through a dense patrolling network and small stations in nearly every neighborhood, but they have proven unable to turn the tide of insecurity with policing alone. While they are a visible presence, the police are not necessarily a reassuring one. The first tactic the state invoked in 2009 was the declaration of multiple states of exception across the nation. Quito, Guayaquil, Manta, and Esmeraldas have been repeatedly declared special policing zones. The state of exception grants the state broad authority to deal with insecurity. When it was first declared in Esmeraldas the only noticeable change was in the police uniforms; they went from the tan and olive dress uniform that is used in daily practice, to their more militaristic gray and black camouflage. They employed the counter-logic of wearing camouflage to become more visible. In later states of exception they moved from dressing militaristically to including the military as part of police patrols. The first iteration of this was a widely acknowledged failure as army personnel are not trained for policing and their attempts devolved into small patrols of soldiers in full combat gear

standing around public parks glaring balefully at passersby. The state altered this tactic, taking the military off of the streets and making them responsible for specific operations targeting gangs. The tactic largely fails; while the police are more visible, these tactics do not make criminals any less covert.

The state then found ways to incorporate the community in policing through technology, projects that offered ways to distinguish criminals from community members. In the past the police had attempted joint patrols with community members but these faced two problems. After a month or two most members of the public lost their enthusiasm of going out at night with the police. It was a massive disruption to their lives. Beyond this, those who were known to collaborate with the police became potential targets. In 2009 the police, with the assistance of residents, adopted two new tactics, installing both community alarms and stationary "eagle eye" cameras that could make residents active participants in their security. The alarms, subsidized by the state, are placed in one or two houses on a block. Rather than being a passive element like a home alarm, these alarms, usually located in a bedroom in case an intruder is present, are supposed to be used if someone hears a break-in. They send a signal to the police, while broadcasting a high-pitched siren to draw neighbors. The eagle eye cameras are a surveillance system whereby the police can monitor key public sites like street corners and plazas. An operator can monitor dozens of locations across the city at once; however the systems are expensive and their installation has been sluggish. These are small tactics, but they offer both a connection between the public and the police and a way to alert people of crimes in progress. The police have also restrained community agency in other

respects. For example there is no such thing in Ecuador as a citizens arrest. Even if caught in the act, with witnesses, a member of the public has to wait for a police, unless they are being directly threatened.

Other modalities of insecurity are much harder to contend with. People fortify their homes or move into gated communities when able, but most people have limited resources to invest. Working for PetroEcuador, or in a few other privileged occupations, offers a buffer from the generalized state of insecurity. They have access to secure housing or the ability to fortify what they already own. As I have already stated though, security is a concern even within gated communities as most only offer cursory inspections of those entering the premise. If someone wants to enter, they need only dress in the appropriate manner. Much more important on a daily basis is that the acquisition of cars by petroleros allows them to bypass the worst sites of insecurity. While interviewing workers and their family members, it was a near universal experience for them to have been robbed while on a bus or waiting for one. Because of the unusual geography of the city, there is little variation in bus routes, meaning that all Esmeraldeños effectively ride the bus together. The ubiquity of bus robberies pushed petroleros not only to buy cars for themselves, but also to buy them for their families as soon as possible. When this was not possible, families often had arrangements for sharing rides so that they would not be placed at risk. Children of petroleros were generally shielded from the insecurity of public transportation as well. Those whose young children went to school on the refinery Villas gated community had a largely safe environment, while those whose high school age children often had access to vans. Many residents maligned workers

ownership of cars because they seem to leave them inactive in a parking lot for most of the day, but one of the largest quality of life benefits of the refinery was a cocoon of security that the official state relationship provided. Their spouses and children are separated from the most routinized environment of insecurity, public transportation.

For most Esmeraldeños there is no easy way to avoid insecurity. It is something that has the potential to happen anywhere. The most common strategy designed to promote security is to harness their social relationships. Where people choose to live is illustrative of this. In many ways Esmeraldas is a city of serial migrators. People tend to live in multiple neighborhoods through their lifetime. For some their old neighborhood's conditions push them away and they seek brighter horizons by moving through the city. But as there is little relative class distinction between most neighborhoods, moving does not imply a significant change in regards to security as almost all housing options have been compromised. I found that most people tend to come back to where they had the strongest social connections, even if it was a neighborhood that was considered widely compromised. One afternoon I speaking with a group of young women from the Isla Vargas Torres, an island generally considered one of the more insecure places in the city. The island had been inhabited for decades, but due to a lack of roads to the city, it was always considered a burden to reside there. There was a minimal police presence, it was prone to severe floods, and there was virtually no infrastructure. While I was conducting fieldwork, the island communities changed wildly, as the state built a series of bridges connecting them to the city center, causing a flood of new arrivals, who were speculating on the value of land there. The women I was talking with expressed frustration that just

the week before police had indiscriminately fired bullets at their houses as they attempted to apprehend an armed robber fleeing from a bus and I asked why they stayed. Linda, a thirty-year-old seamstress, replied,

> "This is our neighborhood, this is where our people are. My friends here, I have known both since we were children; we take care of each other's families. When I lived behind the IESS Hospital I was robbed and no one did anything. I saw a municipal police officer stab someone another time. I did not know anyone so I felt more insecure. Here I know people, It is not perfect, but this is my barrio."[13]

In the wider sentiment of dysplacement, residents' neighborhood of origin represents a site of safety as the city becomes strange. Since there is no easy way to identify the suspect, the surest way to provoke safety is by living with those that you have known since birth. The problem for these women was that while their home neighborhood provided security, that neighborhood was also under a state of flux.

Esmeraldeños are constantly trying to adapt to insecurity and create a sense of normalcy. This does not mean the find insecurity normal, rather they are trying to maintain regularity and live despite the threats they face. The problem is that there is no easy framework that they can employ to identify the camouflaged, unless they have some network that they can tap into. The adjustments that they can make are dependent on the networks of sociality that they are part of. Petroleum workers look to the corporation and those relationships to find strategies to curb their exposure. Everyday residents do something similar, but with little state intervention. They find the only way to counteract insecurity is to rely on those they know best, which limits the broader sociality of the

[13] Municipal police are very different from the national police force. They are forbidden from using firearms and in Esmeraldas they are primarily responsible for policing street commerce. Instead of guns they carry large knives.

city, creating disjunctions between the old and the new. As official tactics of policing are suspect, a discourse of dread and decline is created (Moodie 2010:12). The adjustments people can make do not attend to the larger causes of insecurity, rather they seek to create an anchor within a broader environment of free-floating insecurity, generating a buffer to contend with unknown. Dysplacement feeds the larger sense of dread and decline producing a disaffective relationship between the city and the state.

Conclusion

As insecurity moves from quasi-event to event and back, the problems with apprehending it as phenomenon become apparent. The most critical problem with knowledge production here is that the bracketing of culture and violence together conceals more than it reveals. As state institutions invoke shallow understandings of the problem, they do not create new paths of intervention, they create more frames of interpretation. The problem is that they way these frames are invoked, actually reaffirms the larger cultural bracket that has been used to characterize the province, effectively implicating everyone, rather than identifying the actual purveyors of insecurity. In this environment of insecurity, the adjustment is a critical act, as actions based on misinterpretations misdirect resources. The adjustment plays with both agency and constraint. Here both the public and the state possess an agency during the acts of adjustment, but they do it in the face of structures that are often seen as being insurmountable. As policing relies on problematic frames of reference, there is little change in the actual relationship between police and the community. Events like the

flyer illustrate how all groups can be seen as compromised or suspect, a situation that makes finding a resolution to the problem much more difficult. When insecurity exists as a quasi-event, little direct action needs to be taken, but when it morphs into an event it compels attention, forcing the state to take some sort of visible action. But if the problem is misapprehended, then their intervention often ends up having little effect and possibly strips agency.

The bracketing of culture is problematic because it employs a shallow understanding of the community, hiding how other processes have wide-ranging effects on insecurity. In the state's framework insecurity becomes a characteristic of the people or the result of something like the drug trade. The actual issues have much deeper connections. The drug trade for example, should be locally understood as having a strong connection to energy production. In the broader assemblage of the drug trade, Esmeraldas is critical because it provides fuel for both production and transportation. When they understand the issue of the drug trade through just drugs themselves, the authorities miss critical processes that they can intervene in. Due to this misrecognition they also lose sight of how the community relates to one another and how sociality can be used to build new bonds, how it can be made agentive to protect against insecurity. Most people must depend on just their neighbors, but these kinds of events also highlight the power of state-relationships to create a buffer, a process that the state could capture and tweak. Instead the state seems to be deconstructing these relationships.

Due to the misrecognition of the problem, order seems to decompose as the endurance of the public is tested. In reality insecurity should always be seen as an event,

when it is seen as a quality of place, it encourages the government to misrecognize it, they are not forced to care for or invest in places where it is the status quo, creating a challenge when insecurity becomes an event. The incident with the flyers is revealing as the larger process seemed to be oriented at limiting the state's responsibility, not on limiting the reach of insecurity. In this situation I find the concept of a free-floating insecurity useful to think with for two key reasons. One, it models a tactic for tracking the interplay between the mediation of risk and its embodiment. It can show how embodied experience can be connected to a number of possibilities of risk and how residents engage with both frames of reference. Second it speaks to a more generalized process of mediation and negotiation that people undergo as they learn about different modalities of risk. In this view free-floating insecurity captures the potential of both agency and structure as adjustments are made. It highlights how insecurity is in fact a complicated field where the public and the state can make changes, but it also highlights how culture talk can be used to misrecognize a problem, perpetuating it. The dysplacement that free-floating security represents corrodes the citizen-state relationship producing a feeling of dread and decline as impunity reigns and the community becomes more and more uncertain about whom they can trust.

Chapter 5

The Smell of Petroleum: Indexing Pollution and the Particularities of Health

The Smell Event

Early in my fieldwork, just days before the 2009 Ecuadorian presidential election, I was laying in bed reading, when a peculiar odor began to permeate my home. It was almost midnight and I was the only person awake in the apartment. The smell, a mixture of rotten eggs, gasoline, and decay, just felt wrong, it felt toxic. It had an intensity that was alarming in and of it self, but the fact that the scent was spreading forced me to go hunting for its source. Behind my house, outside my bedroom window, there was a small auto repair center, but it did not seem like that was the point of origin; the shop was closed and all of the cars were neatly parked. I went to the kitchen, but it was not coming from there either; the stove was off and it was not emanating from any other appliance. As I roamed the house, I discovered that the smell was wafting in through a dozen open windows. Going down three flights of stairs and stepping out into the street, I realized that my entire neighborhood was inundated with the odor. In the moment, numerous questions went through my mind. What's that smell? Is it dangerous? Where is it coming from? Do I need to be worried for my health? Did a fire in the city, or maybe a gas leak provoke it? What's going on? While walking along the street I quickly recognized it for what it was, the smell of petroleum. In the southern half of Esmeraldas the presence of gases is not unusual. The day-to-day processes of the refinery articulate with the

landscape and the climate to generate what I call an industrial miasma; the presence of toxic smells is a fact of life in the southern barrios. However, in the city center, this sort of odor was an oddity. It was much stronger than normal, concentrated to the point that it compelled your attention. Hearing no signs of alarm and having no clue what else to do, I went back inside and waited while the smell eventually dissipated over a period of hours.

The next morning my landlady Elisa arrived from Quito, where she worked, and as I sat eating breakfast with her family, our conversation turned to the events of the night before. I told her what happened and we joked as her brother professed to being completely unaware of the event. However, her daughter Joanna, a teenage student who lived in the apartment below mine, had been frightened by the odor as well. In a futile effort, Joanna and her cousin Maya had been gathering fans from throughout their apartment, trying to angle them so that their collective force would blow the smell away from their beds. It was no use and the odor hung in the air where they slept. Following that discussion, the mid-day news was consumed with stories of a toxic release from the refinery. According to local television channels, a cloud of invisible gas had enveloped the city center, extending from the refinery seven kilometers north to the Pacific shore of the city. Everyone waited for an announcement from PetroEcuador. The city wanted to know what happened and they wanted to now if they should be worried for their health and well-being, but no information from the company would be forthcoming. It became a sort of test to see if the refinery was operating in a different manner under the Citizens Revolution than it had under previous regimes. But the state's lack of response showed that the facility was working under the status quo.

Such extreme incidents in Esmeraldas are not common but they also are not unheard of. Several times a year a similar event will provoke panic in the community. Most of the time the air clears in an hour or two, but occasionally a release will fill the area with insidious and dangerous substances like caustic soda, sulfur, or benzene.[1] When such events happen, Esmeraldeños look for a sign from the refinery, a cloud of smoke over the hills or a rush of fire trucks from the Center, but more often than not, there is no visible indication of a problem. What residents are trying to do is index the presence of danger; they are following a cue to indicate the presence of matter out-of-place (Davis-Jackson 2011, Douglas 1966: 36). There are many practices of indexing pollution, yet individuals and institutions value them in very different ways. Residents may be convinced of the presence of pollution because they can smell and see it, but how do they know it is dangerous? Epidemiology and environmental monitoring respond by indexing and determining the quality of air, but how does the public know these are based on accurate assumptions about people, their health, the locality, and the material considered out of place? The moral economy of knowledge can greatly complicate how we think about something as ubiquitous as air, creating toxic confusion or frustration, as we consider the particularities of pollution from endless angles (Auyero and Swinstun 2009: 6, Singer 2011: 158). These epistemologies rely on the coproduction of trust.

In this chapter I will explore how residents make meaning out of air quality. In the first chapter I discussed how the refinery's waste articulates with the landscape and environment to produce an industrial miasma that corrodes material structures,

[1] Caustic Soda – Sodium Hydroxide, also known as lye. It is a corrosive substance used in industrial reactors to provoke chemical reactions. It corrodes metal.

accelerating decay, and creating the potential for disaster. Here I will again focus on petroleum waste, but I would like to illustrate how people connect exposure to dangerous substances to their health. In what follows I will take up Tim Choy's call to think with air, to explore the interplay between different tactics of indexing the environment and determining risk. I am interested in how the particularities of pollution, people, and place, play out through the universal experience of air. Choy argues that air enables us to think through the tensions of the particular and the universal that underlie the ways in which we compare different objects and processes (2011: 162). Air is useful to think with because in the absence of vacuum, it encompasses the social making it a universal element of life. However, as we breakdown air into its constituent parts, we also highlight its particularities. Air shifts and flows, indexing a wide range of natural, cultural, economic, and political processes. It has substance, but one that is always under circulation. Choy's request for a less literal materialism, unites well with the work of Jane Bennet who asks for a vital materialism, where we think more widely about how objects interact within an assemblage (2010:viii). Air is in fact an assemblage of particles that operate together (Bennet 2010: 18-21). Inside of this assemblage, particular particles can have wide ranging effects, calling attention to many ways of seeing air and indexing a problem. Oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide, compose the critical substance of air but it is the problems with the particularities of sulfur, hydrocarbons, ozone, and lead that can make air dangerous.[2] Air and its particles illustrate the movement of knowledge through personal experience, epidemiological sciences, the law,

[2] That is in the context of the refinery.

and the media. I will ask how do the particularities of air both reveal and obscure the impact of pollution? I am not interested just in the particles themselves, but how these speak to the particularities of place, people, and industry within this cultural and political environment. As laypeople and scientists debate the impact of petroleum it reveals critical issues between how the state represents the production of well-being for its citizens and the actual practices that are supposed to ensure it.

This chapter will attend to the multiplicity of practices of indexing that laypeople, PetroEcuador, and the state employ to determine the presence of pollution and its impact. Smell, sight, the epidemiological sciences, and personal health experiences are all ways of indexing a problem, each with their own potential to reveal and obscure. The challenge is that each of these indexing practices carries a different weight and urgency dependent upon the context and the value given to different epistemological practices. Smell and sight can reveal immediate dangers, while narratives and science can reveal the lasting impacts of exposure. Between these tactics of indexing there is ample interpretation, where claims made by lay people and scientists can create toxic uncertainty, obscuring processes as different claims are accepted or disregarded as they move through law, media, and science (Auyero and Swinstun 2009: 91). Here knowledge is a form of power that is exercised to many different ends (Foucault 1978). Such processes grant a biological quality to citizenship, as the practices that shape health represent an intersection of processes that articulate imaginaries of belonging between citizen and state (Petryna 2002: 5-6). Even as residents feel the wrongness of their environment, corporate and state sanctioned epidemiology negates personal experiences or makes

claims on the particularities of place, which challenge sentiments of equality and belonging embodied in the constitution. The community is often represented as unhealthy subjects, that need to have correct behaviors dictated to them, rather than healthy citizens, who are responsible enough to make agentive choices to maintain their well being (Briggs and Mantini-Briggs 2003: 10). Official medical studies either deny a health impact or assert that more information is needed, leading to an endless cycle of accusation and denial, as science never comes up with a substantive conclusion or an adequate intervention, while community members suffer, sicken, and die. The critical tension between science and experience highlights a moral economy of knowledge. On one side, official knowledge is seen as being formed through scientific and objective observation. They understand residents' experience as biased and misinformed. Residents reply that in fact it is epidemiological science that is biased, as it comes from parties that have a financial stake in seeing that the refinery runs uninterrupted, continuously contributing to the state economy. Residents attempt to show contamination's affects on their bodies, but the structures of science often cloud the truth as much as they reveal. Different parties then see the other's process of knowledge production as being contaminated. In an environment where the community is promised well-being as a fundamental right of citizenship, these disputes about health raise questions about the quality of social relations within the nation as Esmeraldeños feel they take on the burden for processes whose benefits are enjoyed by the rest of the state. I would like to unite approaches to structural violence (Briggs and Mantini-Briggs 2003, Petryna 2002) and biopolitics (Foucault 1978) to explore how knowledge of air pollution

structures risk in the community, shaping their conceptualizations of health, well-being, and citizenship. Biopolitics is one face of governmentality; as states try to control the interaction between people and things, they must produce knowledge of life to shape interventions (Rose 1999: 6, Foucault 2007: 127). Epidemiological science is a critical site of intervention, but one that tends to devalue local experience.

In this economy of knowledge, the results of toxic confusion can be highly damaging as no adequate intervention is ever designed. Residents are largely seeking to shape or end the processes of dysplacement, which create an uneasy relationship between them and the spaces where they live. The replacement of the root *dis* with *dys* emphasizes that people do not abandon these communities in the face of pollution, rather the cope with an impaired environment and hope for a productive intervention (Davis-Jackson 2011: 607-608). Spectacular responses are one way that the community can challenge official knowledge production and make claims for a healthier environment. Instead of battling science on science's terms they highlight what they see and feel in the environment. In the national historical moment, this is a process that challenges core assertions by the state that they are promoting well-being through a new more substantive citizenship. The spectacular responses actually act as a form of counter-conduct, resisting dominant power dynamics and knowledge formations (Gordon 1991: 5, Foucault 2007: 201). Esmeraldeños seek to challenge the economy of knowledge by indexing pollution in different ways, in attempts to translate their experience to others. I will follow the play between how people know there is a problem with their environment and how they show it, passing on knowledge to others. I will ask how do people see themselves interacting

with air? How do people draw comparisons between different types of knowledge? How does trust shape this economy of knowledge? What effects do exposures to contaminated air have on the body? How do discussions of the particularities of air engender doubt in the veracity of new citizenship claims?

Esmeraldeños connect a range of health issues to a variety of different pollutions. With gas leaks and fires also come oil spills and waste pit overflows. Water pollution is a second critical register here. In this chapter I will pay special attention to air pollution, but I will consider water pollution as a point of comparison. I would like to give each equal treatment but this desire was curbed by events in Esmeraldas. Through my primary fieldwork period, water pollution was a concern for many, but at the same time the community generally emphasized that in recent years, use of the rivers for washing and drinking water has diminished due to the installation of communal water taps and the generally worsening condition of the Teaone and Esmeraldas Rivers. As the city has expanded, the Teaone not only faces industrial contamination, but has also turned into an open-air sewer, pushing even more people away from a feature that was once a treasured recreation spot. A second and more critical issue is that just days after I left Esmeraldas at the conclusion of my primary fieldwork visit in 2010, there was a massive oil spill from the refinery. Rather than a crude product overflowing from a waste tank, this spill was a combination of human error and mechanical failure, and 1,300 barrels, or 54,600 gallons, of a partially refined product was released into the Teaone. In my return visit the river was universally avoided, even after the state had remediated the site. As this situation

overdetermined most community members' experience, I feel that air pollution can capture the particularities of how people think of waste more accurately.

In what remains of this chapter I will address how indexing shapes three critical processes of knowledge production in Esmeraldas, to show how the particularities of pollution draw attention and fashions interpretation. In the first section I would like to attend to the issue of sensuous indexicallity (Davis-Jackson 2010 and Stoller 1997). How do people index environmental harm through sight, feel, and smell and how do they display this to others? This section will take up the issue of how experience is indexed and transferred into visual registers to inform through the media. In the second section I would like to highlight the tension in corporate sponsored epidemiology to illustrate the problems of scientific indexicallity (Fortun 2001). How is corporate epidemiology compromised? Here I will illustrate how the presence of researchers, does not necessarily index the presence of objective science. This section will draw forward the how science confuses problems rather than solving them. In the final section I would like to turn back to resident experiences to highlight how specific conditions and situations, cancer and the politics of blood, becomes a tactic of indexing through illness. Ill-health designates the presence of other substances. Taken together each of these situations frames the economy of knowledge production, extending structural violence throughout the community and creating dysplacement through toxic confusion. Through this chapter I will draw on both the experiences of petroleum workers and community members to try to draw together as complete of a representation as possible.

Running through these examples will be a discussion of citizenship. There is a constant tension between the Esmeraldeño public being identified as healthy citizens or unhealthy subjects within these larger biopolitical processes (Briggs and Mantini-Briggs 2003: 10). Through the examples I will draw together the interplay between legal, biological, and spectacular modalities of citizenship. As the community fights for a livable environment their practices of indexing are channeled through different frames where citizenship becomes meaningful. In this chapter I will explore how residents move between these frames as they attempt to have their experiences legitimized.

Picturing Smell: Indexicallity and Waste

In the first chapter I referenced a number of bodily ways of knowing contamination. I see petroleum waste as a sort of vibrant matter that interacts with both people and other things. In the assemblage of waste, certain substances have more profound affects than others, charging the broader assemblage with particular meanings (Bennet 2010:viii). Their collective interaction with the landscape and the local climate produces a larger affect, the industrial miasma. But inside the miasma, sub-affects are critical for shaping local experience. The burning sensation in your eyes when you walk through the zone around the refinery, the feel of dust on your skin and in your throat, the sight of smoke in the air, and the strange and repulsive odors of chemicals, are all understood as the material affects of exposure to waste. These are all forms of sensuous indexicallity (Stoller 1997). Epidemiology seeks to separate these particular iterations of pollution into their constituent parts, leaving behind and hiding their collective

interaction, while residents instead focus on the actions of the collective assemblage of the air. Davis-Jackson has argued that smell in particular is a register of knowing that is unmediated. Drawing from a Peircian semiotic framework, Davis-Jackson asserts that when experiencing smell, the material connection between object and sign connects self and surroundings in profound ways (2011: 607). This process is marked by a direct indexicallity, which instills a larger sense of dysplacement as the smells of the city are over powered by the smells of industry.

Walking through Esmeraldas, the smells of petroleum dominate the other senses. In reality you can experience the entire commodity chain of petroleum through just this sense. Near the refinery, the smell of crude oil and substances in the process of being refined shape your experience. Gas leaks are effectively the smell of petroleum in the process of becoming oil products. Along the road to the refinery, you can smell the remainder of industrial process as open-air pits sit slowly oxidizing, expelling vapors. Around petrol stations the smell of gasoline inundates the air; in the city's artisanal fishing port, the smell of petroleum is so overpowering that it actually obscures the odor of three decades of dead fish and bird guano. Along any street, especially those with bus lines, choking exhaust in the concrete milieu marks your location. Smell is an incredibly powerful register of personal knowing. However the problem with smell is that while we can test for its associated substances, we do not necessarily have the resources to do so. An important issue in Esmeraldas is that while the refinery denies its accumulated affects have any deleterious consequences, there is little to no monitoring to back this up. For example the refinery primarily relies on sensors at the top of its principal smokestack to

track the departure of materials. However, they do not confirm this with other monitoring sites, they employ models to show where they think air pollution should go. A recent multi-year investigation by the European Union illustrated that gases and particulate matter traveled much shorter distances than the refinery's models suggest (Jurado 2005). The refinery claims pollution rises to the stratosphere travelling miles away before falling. The EU study disagrees, asserting that more and larger particulate matter actually falls across the city. Most collects in the southern barrios but the path of the wind often takes smoke and dust through the city center. Dangerous gases tend to hug the ground, not traveling far from the refinery at all unless the propelled forward by the wind or industrial pressure. The multiple smells of the refinery have the potential to confuse the community's experience, but when tracking particulate matter it is possible to tell whether it came from the refinery or from another process like exhaust, by looking at its chemical composition to see what hydrocarbons are present. The process of refining removes some substances, creating distinct chemical makeups for petroleum in different material states.

The problem with smell though is that it is difficult to capture beyond the moment. We can test the air, but Esmeraldas does not have static monitoring. Smog is a visible sign of a problem, but other substances, ozone for example, are dangerous while being invisible. The evidence of experience is fleeting (Scott 1991). Absent the support of the state or an external patron, Esmeraldeños must seek alternative ways to show that there is a problem, and quite often this comes through the creative incorporation of bodily experience into spectacles. I would like to draw attention to two photographs from the

local newspaper La Hora that highlight the productive tensions sensuous indexicallity engenders.

Photo 1. On November 17th 2009 there is a story of a small oil spill in the Teaone River featured in La Hora. The spill of an undisclosed quantity of crude was noticed by neighborhoods to the southwest of the refinery. A black stain crept over the water, originating from one of the two waste pipelines of the refinery. In order to prove there is a problem a representative of the national environmental ministry holds a cookie jar full of a "viscous black liquid," floating in water, in one hand, while point at it with his other hand as evidence of the presence of pollution.

Photo 2. On February 5th 2010 there is a photo on the front page of La Hora, with a caption that says, "Gas Causes Alarm." The day before, a smell had permeated the center, but there was no larger news story connected to the image. The photograph is from the La Hora offices, one of the tallest buildings in the center. It features an image of the hill between the Center and the refinery. There is no smoke or other sign of a problem. There is not even a cloud in the sky. There is no indication of what the photo is actually of, except for the presence of a blurry man in the foreground, holding his nose closed in an attempt to block off a smell.

Taken together the photographs represent a spectacular attempt to draw the public's attention to the issue of contamination. The first photo, the "viscous liquid" is priceless for its overt indexicallity. How do show you that there is water pollution? You point at it. Holding the material in one hand while indicating the presence of black globules with the other makes it undeniable. To officially be reclassified from

unidentified substance to petroleum waste, all that is needed is chemical confirmation that it contains the correct mix of hydrocarbons to identify it as crude or fuel oil. The Environment Ministry confirms that it is preprocess crude, meaning the refinery must pay a fine of around twenty minimum wages, around $50,000, and they must send industrial safety crews to set boons to collect the free-floating material.

The second photo is very different. It raises the question of, how, in the absence of monitoring, do you show the presence of an invisible gas? The day before the photo appeared in the paper I had been sitting with two friends outside one of their homes in the center. One of the men, Joselingo, was a newly fashioned petrolero, working on his first contract. He had just left the refinery and was still wearing his work uniform, when he arrived to socialize. The smell became a presence right after Joselingo appeared, and Eduardo, my other companion that afternoon, began to joke that Joselingo was contaminating our presence by not showering before socializing. While they went back and forth, the smell of petroleum grew, permeating the neighborhood. Joselingo took off, but Eduardo and I decided to wander down the street to see if we could identify the problem. The very first thing we did, was the same kind of action the photograph chronicled, we looked up at the hillside for the presence of a cloud of smoke, the most obvious sign of a problem at the refinery. Our instinct was that of community members, knowing the past of the refinery, it becomes the site that draws your attention first. That day the smell dissipated after a few hours and with the lack of another presence to index the smell, a cloud, billowing smoke, a fire; thoughts of something worse went to the back of our minds. This is what makes the photo so interesting; it was literally an image of an

invisible gas, a presence that could not be captured in film. What is captured is the human reaction to the presence of gas, the photograph does not index something itself, it is an image of an indexing act. While blurry, the real focus has to be the man in the foreground holding his nose to stave off the smell. With a liquid material you can point to show its presence, with a gaseous material what options do you have to show its affect? The larger impact of this image is critical though. Seeing as the city is unable to monitor the refinery, and measure such events, the image really acts as a way of intersubjectively reaffirming what happened to the Esmeraldeño collective. It tells the community that you were not just imagining an event, something was actually happening to draw your attention.

This is an interesting counter-process to what Davis-Jackson identifies. She seeks to show how smell shapes our understanding of place. She is trying to offer an alternative to the "visualism" of anthropology and humanity in general. For many people, seeing is believing. Seeing offers a quickly identifiable index, but it subsumes the other senses, hiding how they shape experience as well (2011: 607). Esmeraldeños have adopted a strategy of resistance by trying to turn other senses into visual registers. It is a strategic synesthesia, converting smell into sight in an attempt to catalogue and share the experience. By turning smell into a mediated spectacle they are attempting to construct a broad audience of sympathizers in the face of epidemiological sciences that confuse rather than reveal. They are producing a visual record of knowledge that cannot be seen in order to tap into biopower, creating the possibility of counter-conducts that resist the dominant mode of science in the national body (Gordon 1991: 5, Foucault 2007: 201).

It's a spectacular act that seeks to neutralize the accepted. Here the particularities of air cannot be seen clearly, so they try to clear the community's view to show the universal experience of air. Anyone in the city Center that afternoon could tell you what that image referenced. To outsiders though an image of the invisible seems ridiculous, but it represents an attempt to freeze the experience of the moment, imaging the indexicallity of the sensuous. It is a moment that tries to create agency; by moving pollution into a spectacular frame, they hope that the biological and legal will become visible to the public as well. By capturing all three modalities of citizenship they hope to highlight pollution not just as a health issue, but as central concern in the production of collective well being.

Indexing Science: Hiding Pollution in Plain Sight

In the southern barrios, a milieu where the industrial miasma is visible, residents often wonder why epidemiology never seems to come to a conclusion. Their spectacular displays seek to draw out the tensions embodied by the government's employment of examples. They see themselves and their neighbors being studied endlessly, but nothing ever seems to come from it. They are made subjects, an example for science. Here I will highlight how the construction of particularities illustrates the pitfalls of scientific indexicallity. What scientists choose to investigate and how they highlight particularities versus the universal, illustrates the moral economy of knowledge produced in response to the refinery's presence. The process creates toxic uncertainty through endless investigation as misinformation, denial, shifted responsibility, and blindness

contaminates scientific process (Auyero and Swinstun 2009: 91). In this case the universality of air is denied, focusing instead on ever shrinking particulars tied to place (Choy 2011: 79-81). While space can have a positive relation in the production of health, vulgar representations of space can misinform, naturalizing problems as inherent conditions to the community (Adelson 2000, McMullin 2005). The uncertainty these claims about biology produce in the community, raise questions about the quality of citizenship (Petryna 2002). In my time in Esmeraldas, numerous officially sanctioned projects were analyzing the health impact of the refinery, but in reality these are nothing new. The refinery has been the subject of dozens of studies both looking at the health of workers and residents. The absence of an intervention raises the question of what are the results of these investments? As the state pays for investigations, residents want some kind of return. For petroleros it is even worse, they are not only studied, they often are forced to guide epidemiological tour groups around the refinery. Cuban, Australian, Spanish, Italian, and Ecuadorian researchers all conducted investigations of the refinery during my fieldwork, but workers and the community get little more than a presentation. So what is epidemiology actually doing here? In the case of Bhopal we have seen how state and corporate sponsored epidemiology can be used to hide the impact of contamination even in an extreme event (Das 1995, Fortun 2001). More often than not, the community gets blamed for the extent of a tragedy, rather than the site that produced the event. In this section I would like to highlight how evidence is hidden in plain site, as science misidentifies the designations of indexicallity.

During fieldwork one of the most common questions I would receive, was whether I thought my project would make a difference. Alberto, the petrolero from chapter 3 that was trapped in an uncomfortable position due to debt, offered one of the best challenges that I encountered in the field. Our interview that afternoon was a whirlwind that we fit into his short break between shifts. At the end of the interview he stopped and politely asked whether I thought any substantial change would come from my project? I responded honestly and said I do not know; I can only hope something more will come from it, and I emphasized that my project was really looking at how all of this other information is handled. His question was not spurred just by my presence. Over the previous year, "occupational health" had consumed the refinery, as a group of Cuban occupational psychologists had come to conduct months of observations. Their presence was a frustration. The Cuban researchers would stop petroleros in their day-to-day activities and ask seemingly stupid questions like why was a worker not wearing a mask in that moment or why they had to take their gloves off to do some tasks? For workers these came off as idiotic because the answers should have been self-evident through observation.[3] Much of the equipment the workers use is inadequate for the task at hand. They take off their gloves against proper procedure because the gloves are too bulky to actually do the work that is needed. They stop wearing masks because they are uncomfortable and offer limited protection. The equipment they have is generally made for cooler climates, and in the equatorial sun and humidity, it becomes a weight on their

[3] This critique could be leveled at anthropologists, but it would miss a critical practice. The workers were frustrated by question of "why did you take off your gloves?" when the researcher should have seen them fumbling around with an object unable to open it with their gloves on. Rather than questioning interpretation, the psychologists were ignoring what should be easily observable.

shoulders. Even in the refinery's sulfur factory, the most avoided place in the industrial complex due to the intensity of odors, the mask may have to be taken off to allow them to do their work. They had no choice but to be exposed to concentrated particulates in the air.

Workers were not interested in the medical conditions studied by traditional occupational health; issues of basic worker safety, proper work posture, proper equipment usage, etc. What they wanted to know about was the rise of new "occupational illnesses," conditions like cancer, diabetes, health disease, and blood abnormalities that were slowly killing their friends. Workers understood the multiple risks of the refinery, what they wanted to see were confirmation of their concerns. To this day I believe that one of the reasons so many current and past workers were willing to talk to me, was because of these frustrations. Their friends were dying and the petroleros were scared. A popular belief in the refinery had been that the workers acclimatize to the industrial miasma, becoming use to the presence of pollution. It becomes a point of pride; their strength can withstand the collective miasma of the refinery. They can withstand the dangerous air quality of industry. But while I was there the myth of acclimatization was unraveling due to the rising number of workers contracting cancer, facing renal failure, and suffering from strokes. Some workers went as far as claiming that now their separation from the refinery during retirement actually lead to a quicker death as their bodies were not used to being in clean air. The belief that there is acclimatization is shaped by both the denial that there is a problem and the fact that it takes years for the body to bio-accumulate enough toxins to make someone ill. Since the effects of pollution

are not made visible immediately, workers tend to be willing to write off exposure. The most severe issues take years to manifest and by the time that they do, it might already be too late. Right before I arrived in Esmeraldas, there had been a sudden wave of retirees passing away and the fear of those who remained was palpable, as people seemed to sicken and die within a few short months of their retirement.

When I had first arrived in Esmeraldas there was a possibility that workers might learn something new. A cancer screening had been conducted by the military, identifying more than thirty unknown cases of the illnesses. However union representatives claim that they were never given a notarized copy from the military, so workers were individually told about their conditions, but the union had no way to force a collective intervention. As they were being studied, they were also not being treated as humans with legitimate concerns. The military doctors effectively ignored the rights of workers in this case, they gave them the notification so they could seek treatment, but they did not do this through official channels, effectively curbing the possibility of collective agency. The union could seek an official notice, but it was unlikely to come without the court's intervention, processes that were bound to become bogged down through state bureaucracy. The process effectively put revelations of illness on the sidelines of science. The juxtaposition between "old" and "new" occupational health reveals the tension in the conversion of biopower into governmentality (Foucault 1978, 2007). By recognizing the potential of some conditions to arise, but denying others, PetroEcuador and the state exercise their ability to "make live or let die" (Foucault 2003: 248-249). The can craft

knowledge to deny an intervention as being unnecessary, even as actual work practices create risk.

This process was mirrored in the southern barrios. An Australian university was going around taking water samples from people's personal storage tanks to see if they were contaminated by petroleum waste. At the time I was just meeting some community leaders and one challenged me, again asking what I thought would be produced by my project. They were pointing out how ill conceived they thought the other project was. The project was focused on the collection of rainwater. However, by that point, these neighborhoods actually had started exclusively using communal water taps. The city had built some new water infrastructures, and if a family was willing to haul water, they no longer had to go to the river to wash, as their location before the branching of the pipeline to Atacames, a city south of Esmeraldas, meant that these neighborhoods always had water pressure. The water being tested was not rain water like the scientists presumed, it was tap water, and as such, the researchers were not looking for an invisible substance, they were looking for pollution that would just not be there. If the researchers had conducted their project a year earlier, they could have provided interesting data, but their project was behind the times. Their misunderstanding of local dynamics limited the possibility of intervention. Their focus on a large process missed critical changes in the specific location.

In both cases the foreign scholars became a presence that indexed the presence of research, if not that of pollution. Residents see themselves being studied, but there is little return. Researchers become a spectacular object, showing something being done. Over

the history of the refinery there have been major and minor investigations alike. In 1990, CEPAL, a UN associated body, claimed there was no significant impact of the refinery on community health (1991). This was the status quo of science, being reaffirmed through corporate epidemiology until after 2000 (Harari 2004). Generally health is seen as only an effect of class conditions, but spurious claims are often made as well. For example in one study on asthma, the researchers made several assertions on childhood asthma. Some such as the use of wood for cooking while indoors were definitely problematic at the time, but they also drew conclusions that were deeply problematic, ignoring the important particularities of places. One claim was that asthma was likely due to the exposure of residents to parents who smoke cigarettes rather than the collective exposure to gasses and particulate matter around the refinery. It was a claim completely out of character for the poor in Esmeraldas. Smoking is an expensive and uncommon habit. If an impoverished resident does smoke it is not in the context of a multi-pack a day habit that is going to massively contaminate their home atmosphere. Most people who smoke will have a cigarette, often shared, because they cannot afford more. In a sample of over a thousand highly impoverished families, it was a glaring assumption that denied local reality (Harari 2004).

The evidence of epidemiology changed after the release of a European Union sponsored study, which questioned all previous research. It showed much greater ranges for pollution, greater quantities, and more hazardous substances, than those that state or PetroEcuador had identified (Jurado 2004). The response in official studies after this was to qualify them. In one such study on the possible impact of petroleum waste on genetics,

the researchers identified possible mutagenic qualities of pollution within poor communities behind the refinery (Lopez et al 2006). One community near the refinery had unusual densities of severe developmental issues and deformities in children. The study said more research was needed, but during the public presentation of data, one of the many authors asserted that he felt this was really an issue "of the community," asserting that the genetic irregularities were caused by incest, not contamination. There were numerous legitimate critiques he could have made, such as what standard was a genetic abnormality judged against, but he attempted to neutralize the study by highlighting a claimed particularity to Esmeraldas (Choy 2011: 79-81). It invoked an immodest claim of causality, based on stereotype of place rather than an observation of social fact (Farmer 1999: 4). The claim was doubly compromised position as it represented the place as static, when in fact the neighborhood under question was a community settled by migrants from across the country. It was not just an ethnic enclave; it was a diverse community with many histories. Local medical professionals were furious at the assertion, but it was written off as a personal belief, not one embodied by the study itself. It reaffirmed the vision of Esmeraldas as an already compromised community, hiding the possible affects of the refinery. It invoked an imagined particularity of place as a salacious critique. It turned a perceived particularity into a biopolitical fact that bracketed health and culture together in a manner that was designed to lessen the state's responsibility.

Seemingly lost among the debates of particularities, is the constant assertion that more research is needed, but is this the case? The investigations I have highlighted are

only the publicly available conclusions of finalized projects. Beyond these there have been dozens of other investigations, seemingly lost to institutional memory. If PetroEcuador sponsors an organization, their results are translated through the corporation. For most projects the community never sees a result. That is until recently.

In April 2010, there was a startling report in *La Hora*. It cited an investigation by the national office of the Comptroller, an official body that makes sure the government completes it duty to make information public, claiming that the refinery had a much more substantial impact on the city. It brought many troubling issues into the foreground asserting that people were dealing with a much wider range of illnesses, they asserted that there were literally metric tons of lead additives missing from the refinery, and they claimed the refinery had actually been operating without an environmental license for years. Seeing an opportunity several other researchers and I searched for the document but could not identify who had done this revealing study and we grew frustrated with our inability to locate it. A year later I figured out the problem, it was hidden in plain sight. The report was actually an addendum tacked on to an innocuous study of asphalt quality. The asphalt study represented the first twenty pages of the document while the rest was a fifty page compendium of information gleamed from the executive summaries of publicly unavailable research. It was beyond revealing. First it announces that the refinery's environmental license expired in 2006. PetroEcuador attempted to renew it but was denied. The complex was wholly failing in its responsibility to monitor pollution and its remediation projects were considered unsatisfactory. By 2010 when the report was made public, the Correa administration had been allowing the refinery to operate contrary to

law. The report also suggested that there were many more forms of exposure than previously stated. It highlighted how lead could be absorbed through the skin and how hydrocarbons could contaminate food, being absorbed through the digestive tract. It asserted that in a study of retirees, 67 were found to have the presence of tetraethyllead, an organic lead compound that was once used as a gasoline additive. Use of this additive ceased in the US in the 1970s because of its ease of absorption into living organisms. Ecuador was one of the last countries to stop using in the 1990s. More than a decade later retirees were still found to have high levels of the substance, which can provoke strokes, and developmental issues later in life. Tetraethyllead is notable because it can be spread through the air. It is a free-floating particle that can attach to smoke, dust, and exhaust, becoming one of the most common contaminants in the environment. Even more interesting was that the report claimed that all of the excess lead was still on site in Esmeraldas. By international law it was supposed to be repatriated to its country of origin, Britain, but there is no record of any being sent back, meaning its all on the refinery property somewhere (Controlaria 2008). The report represented a boost to claims that the refinery universally impacted the health of the city. It showed that the problem was not that studies were not finding illness, it showed that they were hiding the fact through the manipulation of scientific process. Science was being manipulated so as to not index contamination. Research groups that study the refinery under sanctioned projects are required to get their results approved. If a claim is contested they then seek more money for a new study, whose claims are contested and so on. There is demonstrable evidence in the citations for example, that the same people are repeatedly

doing the projects. In Ecuador there are a number of private companies that do occupational health work, but medical professionals are highly doubtful of the work's quality, as thye repeatedly show the same tactics over several industries. Where once they made outright denials, now they either make claims of human error or assert the need for more money for more testing. In effect, the refinery is always under scientific observation, but the movement of that knowledge is incomplete. Rather than flowing through institutions to communities, knowledge circulation is highly uneven, and most real conclusions are translated through compromised parties. Here science focuses on particularities in order to deny universal experience, pulling workers into the broader processes of structural violence as toxic confusion creates doubt rather than solutions. If they highlight an experience as a particularity then it is less likely that they will have to intervene or redirect resources. By focusing on the particularity they constrain their possible investment. The moral economy of knowledge, the different weight given to different practices of indexing, is fashioned through a monetary economy of knowledge, compromising corporate epidemiology. Through this there are signs that scientific process is happening, but there is no guarantee that it is actually indexing real processes, rather than imagined ones.

Indexing through Illness: Stories of Blood, Stories of Cancer

In this environment of toxic confusion, how do people understand their own illnesses, when corporate science and people's own senses index countervailing knowledges? Health itself becomes a popular, but problematic, practice of indexing the

presence of contamination through the body. I will follow how pollution shapes stories of blood and cancer, after attending to a larger issue of state epidemiology. In Esmeraldas, and really Ecuador as a whole, the problems of connecting state epidemiology to the local conditions of health are a crucial issue. In this case rather than there being an intentional manipulation of data, such as what happens in corporate investigations, many of the ways that epidemiological data are structured create added confusion. Cancer and quotidian illnesses like respiratory conditions have flaws in how the data is collected and organized for public consumption. Oil companies, both public and private, will often claim that the national cancer registry does not show elevated cancer rates around sites of petroleum processing and extraction (San Sebastian and Hurtig 2004: 207). What they do not say is that because of the way the cancer registry is structured, it *cannot* in fact show these. Cancer data is only made available at the provincial scale, creating two distinct problems. The first is that this prevents investigators from identifying phenomena such as cancer clusters. Only able to show raw rates of cancer in the province, they are unable to emplace the disease in particular locales. If it could this would show where people are in relation to sites that may have carcinogenic after-effects, confirming the distance air pollution travels. Second the claim that cancer rates in Esmeraldas are normal in comparison to other provinces is problematic. Urbanity, industry, agriculture, and extractive industries, all have the potential to expose the community to dangerous substances. The refinery may be one of the largest industrial sites in the nation, but every province is going to have some intersection of these processes, meaning the refinery itself is not enough to change the statistical indices of cancer to the extent needed to show up

statistically. Respiratory illnesses offer a third issue. Data is collected and transmitted as a categorical whole. In Ecuador "respiratory illness" is a master category with no elucidation of whether said illness might be due to environmental, viral, or bacterial factors. The way the information is organized hides these. These issues do not have the intentionality of the problems with corporate epidemiology; rather they arise from the sheer amount of data that must be catalogued and published. They have to choose how to organize a surplus of information, just to make it minimally useful.

With the universal registers of health compromised, what do people do illustrate their experience of illness? What spreads are the stories of health. Conditions like cancer or contaminated blood gain special currency because they connect to specific substances, hydrocarbons and lead, respectively. These stories also reveal how land, identity, and health become meaningful together (McMullin 2005, Adelson 2000). Auyero and Swinstun have argued that these processes atomize health, as science and law desire structured knowledge. Rather than health being formed through a lifetime in a broader environment, health is understood in relation to specific elements and incidents. The movement of science into legal categorization is problematic as they want to know how people were specifically exposed, how much of *x* substance was ingested on *y* day. But residents have had continuous exposure, forcing them to draw attention through their own narratives. Cancer and blood contamination are two powerful conditions tied to the particularities of certain contaminants. Each has its own issue of interpretation.

Cancer draws attention because of the presence of polyaromatic hydrocarbons in the industrial waste of the refinery. Collectively these hydrocarbons are connected to a

host of cancers. Benzene in particular acts as a substance with resonance, as it is one of the more ubiquitous and recognizable elements of petroleum. It attaches to both liquid and particulate matter, creating many possible types of exposure. The way that air pollution is connected to the refinery is by looking for specific hydrocarbons; their presence designates air pollution's origin. Cancer is especially meaningful as it ties together dread and difference through modernity and inequality. Overexposure to contaminants and a lack of resources to identify illness both characterize cancer (McMullin and Weiner 2009).

Modernity acts as pivotal element of interpreting how people understand exposure to dangerous environments. The refinery was packaged as a national infrastructure that would grant the city of Esmeraldas the long eluded status of being modern. As the attendants of this process, workers had greater resources to build a higher quality of life, but being human they also employed these resources in personal pleasures that can have serious after-effects. Earlier I critiqued a study over asthma that claimed household cigarette consumption was one of the dominant causes of the illness. If this had been in the context of petroleros, not impoverished residents, then it might have rung true. Many retired or near retirement workers argued that the refinery had polluted their bodies, but so had the workers. They smoked, they ate poorly, and they drank heavily. The lived hard only to regret it later. Smoking in particular draws attention because they are one of the few bodies of people who have the resources needed to enjoy a significant habit. Most other smokers have a couple of cigarettes a day; workers can smoke by the pack. The state promoted modernity, but this lifestyle also represented something the state

could later use to deny service, letting them die rather than making them live. Their quality of life can shorten their quantity of life (Karakasidou 2009: 100). The problem for workers is that they work all day in the industrial miasma and then at night they would go out and continue filling their bodies with toxic substances. The overarching issue is that cancer, while it can be connected to certain particles found in the workplace, can also be framed through the daily habits of living beings.

This sort of experience also exposes social orders, an issue with resonance in Esmeraldas (McMullin and Weiner 2009: 3). If you are a sick worker versus merely being a sick citizen you have very different possibilities of care. If you are a normal citizen, unable to afford private cancer treatments, you must go through the local cancer fighting society SOLCA. SOLCA, as an organization, takes up many of the responsibilities of the state when it comes to cancer. They become a para-statal body filling in the absence of the state, privatizing state functions. They do research, run anti-smoking and other awareness campaigns, and offer treatment to the extent that they are able. It is an organization run completely through donations. The cancer survivors I talked to did say they preferred not going to the facility if possible, as it was much more depressing than being around the private cancer clinics. A vast majority of cancer patients must work through the local and generally overburdened clinic. But if they have an advanced or unusual cancer, then in all probability, they will have to go to Quito or Guayaquil for treatment, leaving their support network behind.

Petroleros have the possibility of better care, as the company will pay for a private clinic as long as they are employed. However cancer has an added intensity for

petroleros for two reasons. One, cancer makes a sick worker dependent on the company. If they want higher quality care, they must keep a relationship with PetroEcuador. Retirees, fired workers, and temporary workers did not have the same access to resources and if they criticized the company, there they could be denied access to the petroleum complex and therefore have no access to medicine or other resources. If they take a position contrary to PetroEcuador, they can be cut off. Secondly, workers complain that inside the refinery they have no privacy when it comes to care. Doctor-patient privilege is an aspirational goal, cut down by rumor and gossip. Diagnoses spread through the refinery, making people aware of a problem, before the sick person has a chance to come to terms with an illness. Workers themselves respond by attempting to not address the issue. They often suffer in silence just to maintain some modicum of privacy. Everyday knowledge of the illnesses circulates as gossip or rumor, but official knowledge is constrained as the agency of petroleros is curbed by structures produced within the corporate culture. The articulation of these two factors means petroleros often work through treatment, while trying to be quiet about it. It represents an additional stress. In this context I felt it was amazing that during a massive labor dispute where over 500 workers were fired in 2011, that workers participated in a story in the newspaper, highlighting how the refinery "was killing them." In the article the workers, all career employees, argued that under the labor dispute they were being denied treatment. They featured an image of six workers in a row, one being supported by another worker, three standing with the aid of crutches, and most looking sallow skinned and worn out. They displayed their withering bodies to draw attention to the refinery's severing of health care

for those in the worker dispute. Their bodies directly indexed the presence of cancer. In an environment where most workers do not address a cancer diagnosis at all it was a powerful way of drawing attention, although it was dependent on the viewer accepting their bodies as ill.

Cancer becomes a bodily and visual index of pollution, but it's a problematic one. The lifestyle of workers contributes to their condition. It becomes easy for the state to deny these men are being made ill by refinery work, when many are also engaging in other practices that sap their health. Lead on the other hand has much more provable and much more legendary effects on the bodies of Esmeraldeños.

Tetraethyllead is a substance with particularly noxious effects on the human body. It contributes to strokes, miscarriages, renal failure, and dozens of other conditions. Tetraethyllead is such a problem because it is a lead compound that easily attaches to organic materials. Like benzene, it is a particle that can bind to other matters, granting it unusual mobility. This engenders a further problem as it not only causes illness, but also worsens others, making it a cause of ill-health that is sometimes missed, as conditions like diabetes obscure its presence. Diabetes can cause renal failure, but it can cause it faster in a lead saturated body. Ecuador ceased the use of tetraethyllead in the 1990s, when the entire world stopped using it. Lead persists in the environment, from both petroleum waste and exhaust, but there has been no introduction of new lead since it went out of industrial practice. However, lead does persist in the environment, and as the national comptroller report revealed, there are literally metric tons of lead from the refinery unaccounted for. Is it sealed up in the old factory or buried as waste? The

comptroller's report that revealed the issue had no answer. The tetraethyllead factory is sealed shut, and access is prohibited to all.

Lead in blood has a powerful currency in the community. It becomes the substance of legends of illness, but with it being more than a decade out of use, does it persist in Esmeraldas? The Red Cross believes so. While I was doing fieldwork in Esmeraldas the Red Cross was at the center of a number of controversies. The largest was an attempt by the Citizens Revolution to take over the national blood bank because the Red Cross charged the state for storage and processing fees. Blood was expensive for the state, but because it needed to be processed and stored. The president complained that it was ridiculous that people donated blood to the Red Cross, who then went and charged others for it. They missed the costs added to ensure safety. In the local iteration of this debate in Esmeraldas, it was revealed that Esmeraldeños can donate blood in Esmeraldas, but if they seek to make a donation in Quito they will be denied, because of the presumption that there is unacceptable levels of lead in their system. The national Red Cross declared a moratorium on donations from Esmeraldeños in October 2010. With lead no longer being an additive for twelve years could, it really still be in the air, soil, and water of the city? Could it still exist in the quantities need to make it lively matter that would shape other bodies (Bennet 2010:viii)? In this moment the body again becomes a powerful index of the presence of contamination. The popular account was that the presence of the refinery means lead is present in the blood. But in the larger social order Esmeraldas is already understood as compromised. They are supposed to be

an unhealthy population in the eyes of the state. Was this a presumption of lead being in the blood or was this based on no evidence?

As this controversy was happening I had a revealing conversation with a close friend, Silvia, a local high school and college professor. A couple of years before my arrival a teacher friend of hers was in serious condition after an accident and was in dire need of a blood transfusion. He was taken to Quito for surgery, but they needed blood and each of their colleagues offered to donate. Silvia was arguing in favor of the government's action to take over the national blood bank because they were unable to supply the necessary blood in this case. They claimed the injured man had lead in his blood, creating one issue for the transfusion, they then claimed that those who wanted to donate had lead in their own blood. I pressed Silvia on whether their blood was tested, and at first she said yes, of course! But over the next few minutes she walked back her story as my questions provoked doubt. At first she said the problem was that he had been tested and they found lead, which should not have been an issue for a donation, it was not like they would be contaminating a person who already had lead present in their body. I then asked again if she and her colleagues were tested and this is when she expressed doubt. She revealed that they had all gone, but no one ever took a sample before they were prevented from making a donation. The doctors presumed they were contaminated because they were Esmeraldeño. The particularity of place, defined their health. Their afro-Ecuadorian bodies indexed the presence of lead. Here their identity, as seen through their bodies, was tied to perceptions of place, creating uncomfortable articulations of health. They were now seen as already ill.

In the cases of both lead and cancer, toxic uncertainty is created out of the particularities of bodies. Health can index the presence of substances, but as vital beings, we are constantly encountering new substances that act on our bodies in different ways. We are both creatures shaped by our environment and our own habits. Over time, as the conditions that structure health are not engaged with we experience a progressive embodiment of structural violence, with generally worsening conditions, both individually and collectively (Fassin 2007: 240). The stories become powerful registers of knowing, easily shared, and especially compelling as the body can demonstrate the effects of pollution better than all other indexes. It can also misdirect, as presumption can become evidence.

Conclusion: Air and Moral Economies of Knowledge

Through the processes of indexing, a moral economy of knowledge becomes apparent. I call it a moral economy of knowledge because so much of it is based on the issue of trust. Community and corporation do not have confidence in each other's perspective. This is fashioned through countervailing issues of immediacy; for residents they feel they need immediate support for the decades of pollution and ill health, however the company, as a representative of the state, must control overall productivity, making the continual operation of the plant their primary goal. In the alchemical processes of the state, without oil there is no money and without money there are no resources directed to help residents cope with after-effects of producing oil. The entire process is contaminated as the state unequally distributes the burden of the oil industry, without

redistributing the benefits. In this situation well-being and the new constitution take on new meanings. The economy of knowledge here shapes people's understanding of citizenship, as biological, legal, and spectacular social processes that speak to and shape citizenship are engendered through health (Briggs and Mantini Briggs 2003, Petryna 2002). How can the state assert that it is creating a better life for Ecuadorians, when the burden of payment for this life is placed on one community? How can well-being be generated by the state, when its own medical processes sow confusion, rather than finding solutions? The registers of the land and its interaction with the body are not just a biological process; they represent socialities with deep connections for people, as land, identity, and health intersect (McMullin 2005, Adelson 2000). Air is revealing in this regard because it highlights many of the assumptions the state makes about place. As particles interact with landscape, climate, and people, the interpretation of these interactions by scientists, reveals many of the general assumption that the state makes about community health. Air reveals the universal and the particular as it indexes not just quality or danger, but the host of social processes that infuse science and knowledge production with power (Choy 2011). They tell you how they imagine the source of pollution, its mobility, the "weaknesses" of the community, and the larger social order. Residents respond with acts and stories that challenge the state interpretation of such particularities, they challenge the state's attempts to guide the conduct of their conduct. They are trying to deal with processes that would worsen the dysplacement produced by the refinery. Biology effectively shapes citizenship, as processes of monitoring, indexing, cataloguing, and intervening in health represents a massive intersubjective engagement of

the community with the state. In these processes they continue to be treated as unhealthy subjects that limits the agency they have when they fight to become citizens with a right to health and well being.

Within the broader moral economy, indexing illustrates the ways that air can both reveal and obscure in the process of producing toxic uncertainty. Auyero and Swinstun and Merrill Singer have called such situations "toxic confusion" and "toxic frustration," respectively (2009 and 2011). Singer draws the difference as being communities suffering from "confusion" still resist, while communities that accept the presence of the burden, become "frustrated" (Singer 2011: 158). In Esmeraldas, the community, even after more than three decades of such processes, has continually sought to resist. The confusion prevents an adequate legal resolution, but as the state makes claims on their personhoods, they must respond in order to make the city better and ensure their well-being. Well-being promises to harness the positive relationship between health, economic possibilities, identity, and social relations (Adelson 2000, McMullin 2010), but the tactics of the state disrupt these relationships. As citizenship gets interpreted through processes that intersect with biology, health becomes a powerful critique of state promises. In the following chapter I will discuss what happens as their concerns are finally heard.

Chapter 6

The Revolution is in Neutral: Infrastructure and State Imaginaries of Care

The Revolution is Underway: Potholes and Political Power

The city of Esmeraldas is falling apart. For Esmeraldeños this is not a controversial statement, rather it captures the collective sentiment of urban residents as their infrastructure crumbles underfoot. The city's critical substructures – its water and sewage systems, streets, and power grid – have deteriorated to the margins of operability due to decades of deferred maintenance and inadequate planning. This deterioration stands in stark contrast to the promises of a golden future that the Ecuadorian state made in the 1970s when Esmeraldas was chosen to be the site of three pieces of key national infrastructure – the state's largest petroleum refinery, a thermoelectric power plant, and a commercial shipping port – industrial projects that were offered as a panacea to the historical marginalization that this provincial capital has faced. Lingering disparities between the government's pledges and the everyday conditions of public infrastructure leave many residents feeling as if they live in what Colloredo-Mansfield calls an absent-present state; one where the government makes substantial promises, raising expectations through public spectacles, yet where if a project is delivered on, it is slowed by tortuous negotiations through multiple scales of government and intrusive micromanagement, leaving the community with degraded results (2009: 19).

In 2006 *Alianza Pais* (PAIS), a newly formed national political party came to power by promising a dramatic rupture from this paternalistic mode of politics. Led by their presidential candidate Rafael Correa Delgado, PAIS argued that state resources were being badly mismanaged by a system focused on maintaining power rather than good governance. Calling for a new mode of governance and an end to the neoliberalization of the national economy, Correa promoted a new, "revolutionary" constitution that vowed to embed well being into a substantive conceptualization of citizenship by redistributing power and state resources so they are made more productive for all Ecuadorians. In 2008 the constitution was approved by a popular vote and in 2009 Correa won a second term by working with other political parties of the "revolutionary" left, such as the *Movimiento Popular Democratico* (MPD).[1] As the government moved to implement the constitution, the campaign slogan of PAIS *"La Revolución Ciudadana ya esta en Marcha!"* – "The Citizens Revolution is Now Underway!" would transform into an ubiquitous refrain of all government advertising appearing on billboards, state publications, and television commercials emphasizing that change was happening at last.

However as 2009 turned to 2010, shifts in the weather and the political climate would raise the question of whether any substantive change was in fact happening. Doubts manifested in Esmeraldas, as the region went from its driest year in history to its wettest. Problems with the distribution of water have been a persistent concern in Esmeraldas, as the city's purification plant cannot guarantee regular service. This problem intensified in October as Ecuador faced nationwide drought. Locally water flow

[1] *Movimiento Popular Democratico* – Popular Democratic Movement, the political wing of Ecuador's Leninist-Marxist party.

slowed to a trickle, making distribution outside of the city center sporadic; while nationally water shortages at hydroelectric dams became so severe that the state had little choice but to institute a nationwide system of rolling blackouts to ration electricity. In January the weather dramatically reversed, with negligible rainfall turning into torrential downpours, producing widespread flooding as rain and runoff flowed down the urban hills, covering the city in thick mud, and scoring its streets with dozens of new potholes. As each major type of infrastructure began to fail there was a groundswell of political recrimination and more incessant calls for something to be done now.

One afternoon, just after the rains had begun, I was out running errands during a lull between storms when I was nearly struck by a taxi. I was crossing a street adjacent to the city's Central Park, when the driver suddenly veered, nearly clipping me. After some choice words I noticed that the he had been avoiding a newly formed pothole. At the time it was a minor fissure in the surface of the street – neither deep enough to require that someone mark it for drivers nor wide enough to pose a serious hazard. It was a relatively innocuous object until the following day when I passed this site and saw that the pothole had grown exponentially overnight. While it had not become any deeper it had become much more expansive; spreading wide enough and long enough that it was unavoidable. The next day the pothole had morphed once again, growing to the size of small car as someone had removed all of the debris from the its interior, piling it on the sidewalk. In front of the depression someone placed a large blue and orange sign from the locally powerful *Movimiento Popular Democratico* as a traffic barrier (Figure 4). Featuring the city's mayor Ernesto Estupiñan Quintero and the provincial prefect Lucía Sosa Robinzón

Figure 4. The pothole and the sign, Esmeraldas, EC

standing together with their interlocked hands raised in the air, the text promised that the regional governments of Esmeraldas were working together to fix the city streets, reaffirming the MPD's motto of "Let the Change Continue..." Yet over subsequent days the pothole went unrepaired and the MPD sign became a testament to political inaction. After a week, the sign disappeared, but the pothole was only partially mended. Rather than being patched with asphalt, someone took the detritus of rubble, added sand, and refilled the depression – lessening the hazard but leaving an unhealed scar on the street. In the coming weeks this pothole and thousands of others across the cityscape would become the primary focus of an intense public politics of infrastructure, a surprising development as problems with the distribution of water and electricity appear much more pressing. Community groups organized massive marches and a rally to draw attention to

the cracked and decaying streets, publicly asserting that the national government owed them for the decades of industrial pollution from the refinery. An irony not lost on the community is that even as their streets deteriorate, all asphalt produced in Ecuador comes from the local petroleum complex. To the surprise of everyone, President Correa agreed with their demands, saying that he would sponsor a project to repave every street in the municipality as due compensation for the unjust burden that Esmeraldas has borne. However even as local and national governments were in agreement over what should be done, nothing seemed to move forward and the community was left waiting.

In this chapter I will ask how and why does a pothole become a political object that commands the attention of both local and national governments? What sorts of politics and sociality does infrastructure engender? To answer these questions I would like to draw together approaches from political philosophy and anthropology to highlight the practices and processes where infrastructure imbues sociality with meaning, to illustrate how imaginaries of care shape and are shaped by our relationships with the state, the city, and even our neighbors. In Ecuador the promise of *Buen Vivir*, the desire to embed well being into the conceptualization of citizenship, was that it would create a substantive relationship between citizen and state. But this begs the question, how do you demonstrate there is a more substantive relationship? Even as Ecuador tries to make citizenship something more than a formalized modality of inequality, citizenship is consistently articulated in relation to formal power structures like voting and participant democracy (Holston 2008:16-22). I believe that the spirit of the constitutional reforms asked for something more, it sought to build stronger social relationships throughout the

state, promoting well-being by harnessing the positive relationship between health, economic possibilities, identity, and social relations by granting citizens and communities greater agency to determine how their resources will be used (Adelson 2000, McMullin 2010). In this chapter I would like to use the concept imaginaries of care, the sentiments of belonging that generate bonds and imagine social relationships, to draw attention to how infrastructure engenders both affective and disaffective social relations (Schwenkel 2013: 257). Care is tied to a philosophical ideal of universal humanity, which itself is an object of governance (Feldman and Ticktin 2010: 6-7). To care for others is to make a claim on them; the act of caring embodies an argument about what the good life is and how it comes into being (Povenelli 2011: 26). Our imaginaries of care emerge from a reflection on material conditions and institutional arrangements (Povenelli 2011: 160). It emphasizes connections that people draw to one another, government, and material objects, highlighting a web governmentality that shapes the conduct of conduct (Foucault 2007 and Rose 1999: 3). The concept of citizenship identifies two such imaginaries of care, those sentiments of belonging between a citizen and a state and a citizen and a city. I would like to augment these by highlighting the imaginaries of care of neighborhood sociality and membership in an infrastructure assemblage, as other sites of belonging where affects are generated. Rather than discarding the citizenship lexicon, I would like to augment it, by highlighting the lateral movements of care created during the absence of a strong state presence. In an absent-present state, what do everyday residents, the city, and the state do to maintain infrastructure and cope with its failure? How do the articulation of different imaginaries of care with infrastructure create new forms of

agency and new constraints? Colloredo-Mansfield's conceptualization of vernacular statecraft and Krupa's state-by-proxy, both seek to illustrate how communities fill this vacuum and both emphasize the rise of community and privatized institutions in this process (Colloredo-Mansfield 2009: 17, Krupa 2010: 319-320). In this chapter I would like to offer an alternative interpretation of how the void of the absent state is filled, focusing not just on the rise of institutions, but on the multiplicity of social relationships that people invoke as part of larger imaginaries of care. Democracy, voting, and the power relationships between state and city are still critical, but this view illustrates the day-to-day changes in care that infrastructure failure can propel between people, based on nothing more than their common humanity. This lateral relationship highlights how infrastructure can inspire a sense of belonging or conflict.

This chapter will draw connections between the constitutional reform and energy networks, as I trace the affects a pothole provokes through its position in a larger assemblage of infrastructures. Following the work of Jane Bennet, I see infrastructure as a sort of vital matter that engenders its own affects, agency, and potency (2010: viii). Affect here refers not to just the emotive registers of an object, but the "manifold passions that manifest intersubjectively and collectively through actions (Schwenkel 2013: 252)." Roads, bricks, and potholes represent material objects that stimulate sentiments within the city. A road, for instance, has utilitarian value but it also represents a system of interconnectedness and modernity (Harvey 2010), a brick can inspire romantic feelings among those who laid them (Schwenkel 2013), and a pothole can instigate political protest and upheaval; each can provoke its own passions.

Vibrant matter asserts that material objects have an agency, but one qualitatively different than a human being's willful agency. Material objects exist as parts of assemblages; over the life course of an object, changes in its materiality can have wide ranging affects through the larger assemblage, granting an object a sort agency dependent on its materiality (Bennet 2010: 21-23). In this view power operates in a Foucauldian sense "constantly ebbing and flowing, collecting and dispersing in changing combinations and arrangements" (Bennet and Joyce 2010: 2). I will track these power flows through material changes in infrastructure. Even as an object decays, sublimates, or is repurposed, it maintains an affect tied to its position in a broader assemblage, allowing for us to modify it or for it to modify us. This perspective recognizes that people are a form of vital material surrounded by other vitalities that we constantly interact with. A pothole represents a physical shift in the asphalt street, changing how we interact with the road. Our interface with infrastructure shapes our experience of it (Dourish and Bell 2007: 417). Infrastructure itself is largely muted, only becoming visible upon failure (Bennet and Joyce 2010: 10). When infrastructure works, it operates without being seen, when it breaks down its failure compels our attention (Star 1999: 382). Both the materiality of failure and its visibility engender reactions that can be manipulated and engineered within imaginaries of care (Thrift 2004: 57, Larkin 2008, and De Boeck 2011). What we believe care consists of is directly related to where we believe failure resides and what it consists of (Povenelli 2011: 160). The failure of infrastructure, whether it is due deferred maintenance, neglect, or overuse, challenges the imaginary of state care, forcing normal people to find ways to repair the object or cope with its

collapse. I will argue that the link of infrastructure and energy offers a productive meeting place to show how the state can make citizenship substantive by adopting alternative imaginaries of care.

Ecuador's 2008 constitution recognized that the state had failed to maintain infrastructure, granting cities and neighborhoods new mechanisms to direct state monies to their needs. Due to the dependence of the Ecuadorian economy on energy commodities, infrastructure can be understood as one face of Ecuador's energy network. Despite Ecuador having access to abundant energy resources, this has not translated into wealth or political stability for the nation at large (Acosta 2009). Instead oil wealth is seen as anti-democratic as it is used to buy political support and selectively relieve social pressures. Recently Timothy Mitchell has challenged the resource curse narrative by arguing that it invokes a limited representation of the relationship between politics and energy networks (2009). Often attuned to national level problems the resource curse narrative asserts that an abundance of energy resources produces political instability. In particular the narrative locates "the curse" in producer states whose democracies are considered lacking from western perspectives. Building off of an STS actor-network approach Mitchell asserts that energy production can both create new possibilities for and close down democratic politics. To follow the affects of energy we must exploring how energy articulates with multiple political nodes through its many states. Oil is a commodity in and of itself but it shapes a larger network of relationships as it can be converted into other forms of energy commodities, for example oil into electricity, and into non-energy commodities, such as asphalt. Asphalt is just one of many

materializations of petroleum. Oil then not only allows for energy production, transportation, and transportation networks but also finds its value shaped as it crosses through these networks in multiple physical states that each require their own infrastructures (Mitchell 2009: 400). The energy network of Ecuador then produces multiple scales of infrastructure as national systems of exploiting petroleum – the drilling sites, pipelines, and the refineries – and local systems of infrastructure – water, electricity, and roads – are part of the same assemblage.

Ecuador's new constitution adopts a similar critique to Mitchell's in that it is trying to realign the political nodes within Ecuador's energy network in order to redirect and improve the system; aspiring to make the democratic politics of Ecuador more than just a flawed carbon copy of democracy elsewhere. This is the fundamental basis of the constitutional claim to rupture and revolution. In this view, the task of repairing something as innocuous as a pothole traverses multiple nodes of politics within these broader energy networks, but under the new system there are supposed to be many more possibilities to encountering solutions. In this chapter I seek to place community sociality among the more recognized nodes of politics, emphasizing both lateral relations between people and the vertical relation between citizen and state. The situation in Esmeraldas will show the process of distributing resources has continued to be fraught with controversy, as overused and overburdened infrastructures continue to fail, forcing residents to find ways to maintain infrastructure or deal with its failure.

In what remains of this chapter, I will explore how the city, state, and everyday citizens engage with the affective registers of infrastructure. In the first section I will

illustrate how infrastructure has been employed by both the city and state to produce a positive imagination of care. This section will highlight the broader connections between energy and infrastructure in Esmeraldas, to demonstrate the power of being cared for during the construction of the refinery in the 1970s and during infrastructure failures of the 1990s. In the second section I will turn to late 2009 and early 2010, when massive, systematic infrastructure breakdowns, fundamentally challenged these imaginaries. Even as the state promoted well-being and the development of new infrastructures, extreme drought, followed by torrential rain, overburdened the city's water system and streets, and the national electrical grid. This section will focus on how the Citizens Revolution engineered sentiments with new infrastructure projects, even as neighbors rely on community bonds to cope with the failure of the city's critical substructures. In this case the imagination of state care is replaced with neighborly sociality, which seeks to create a barrier between community members and the worst of breakdowns. I will draw attention to multiple iterations of infrastructure as vital matter. In particular I will highlight how potholes gained social traction as a community issue, even as Esmeraldas dealt with more pressing electricity and water failures. Lastly I will address how the state and city attempted to remedy the problems, creating and breaking alliances in the process. Through this, infrastructure visibly engenders affects, propelling people to take to the streets, and drawing critical critiques of the meaning of constitutional change and citizenship, even as community members employ their sociality to push for something better, a more substantive relationship with the state. Largely I am concerned with how social relationships are employed in concert with practices of formal democracy to see

whether the revolution promised in the constitution is more than just a critique of the past but an actual plan to build a better future, a movement underway.

"Yes Esmeraldas Can Change!"

In the early 1970s Esmeraldas was a shadow of itself. The city had been a bustling riverine agricultural port, but as international banana prices crashed in the 1960s, plantations closed and half of the urban population migrated south in search of work (Cuero Caicedo 2000: 93-96). At the time Esmeraldas was largely a collection of ramshackle cane and wood homes built around empty banana warehouses along the city's boardwalk. In 1970 the state decided to invest fully in its petroleum future by building the nation's first Trans-Andean petroleum pipeline (SOTE) and in 1972 the government, now controlled by a military junta after a bloodless coup, proposed a series of massive works in order to turn the city into an industrial center. The junta's proposal included the construction of Ecuador's national petroleum refinery; an oil based power plant that would become the province's primary source of electricity; and an international deep-water port. Collectively the three projects represented a new period for the city as it was incorporated into multiple national networks of infrastructure. The projects represented a new gesture of care for Esmeraldas by the state, as the city was promised modernization. Esmeraldas, a site that embodies several histories of social and economic marginalization, would become the harbinger of Ecuador's petroleum future, as the assemblage of infrastructure was installed.

The temporal reference is crucial, as the state engaged in a project to reify change and remake the city to serve industry. The production of these events represented a foray of the state into the engineering of affect (Thrift 2004: 57). With the shipping port Esmeraldas could become an important site of commerce, with the power plant it could support heavy industry, and with the refinery Esmeraldas could become an oil-processing site such as Ecuador had never had before. State infrastructure offered the potential to transform the city, creating expectations for change. Five years before construction of the refinery would begin, the junta promoted a massive display of state authority to project a better future onto Esmeraldas. In a spectacle of speculation the government introduced the Trans-Andean pipeline in 1972 as the first step towards modernity. On June 15th the "first barrel" of oil arrived to Esmeraldas where it was welcomed by hundreds of people, blessings by the catholic clergy, and military pomp and circumstance. Flags for each of the provinces adorned the pipeline facility as Ecuadorian President General Guillermo Rodriguez opened the valve. Images from El Comercio, Ecuador's newspaper of record, feature everyday citizens in rapturous poses blessing themselves with crude like it was holy water. The liquid tactility of the crude expressed a new bond between city, citizen, and state oriented around modernity. The spectacle was repeated across Ecuador as the army was charged with filling one wooden barrel of crude for the nation and one for each of the provinces, so that every Ecuadorian would have the opportunity to touch the nation's future. The day after the ceremony in Esmeraldas, the junta held an immense military parade in Quito where the denominated "first barrel" was driven through the capital's historic center on the back of a tank surrounded by soldiers to the Cima de la

Libertad, Ecuador's equivalent of the tomb of the unknown soldier, where it was to be interred for all time. This display repeated again in 1976, as the refinery was set to open and authorities tried to project the industrial complex as a sublime accomplishment. While the state projected certainty, the press expressed doubts through the creative critiques of editorial cartoons. El Comercio cut to the heart of the cynicism in one by asking, "to create a pipeline that would traverse every province" so that all Ecuadorians could make requests of the government and their new energy wealth. It asserted that all could experience the same hope engendered by oil, if only they had the same infrastructures.

Larkin, working off of Kant, has suggested that grand openings for infrastructure projects such as dams and refineries create a response beyond the public's ability to comprehend (2008: 35). The sensation of the sublime comes not from the object itself but from its apperception (Kant 1952: 91). Infrastructure here provokes feelings of the sublime not through the grandeur of nature but through the work of humankind (Larkin 2008: 36). Massive infrastructure projects compel the public's attention. Hope for the future was a common sentiment, as it was believed that the installation of national infrastructure would translate into the installation of a local infrastructure. The inauguration of the oil industry marked a milestone promise for both Esmeraldas and the state that would shape all future discussions of infrastructure in the city.

To build the refinery, water lines, power lines, and roads would be installed, attracting thousands of people with the promise of modernity. The presence of infrastructure engendered faith in the promise of the state, it materialized the promise.

Yet, while the state imagined that the refinery would create jobs and ground heavy industry, the petroleum complex never had the cathartic relationship to the city that was expected. Basic infrastructure was installed, but most roads in Esmeraldas would only be paved once, falling into disrepair over the years, and only the city center had regular water service. Community members from the areas around the refinery had to draw water from the river or collect rain. The refinery has then become a study in the production of the absent present state, as its presence never materialized its promise (Colloredo-Mansfield 2009: 19). Ecuador returned to democracy but Esmeraldas continued to be marginal despite its importance to the national energy network.

Through the 1990s, there was little reinvestment in Esmeraldas and the absence of attention by the government illustrated their lack of care. Esmeraldas moved increasingly to the left, but residents were frustrated, as political parties treated the mayoralty of Esmeraldas as a prize to be dispensed to loyal members. Political parties would move their candidate to Esmeraldas from cities such as Guayaquil and arrange posts for them that would put them at the center of solving local problems to help them generate political capital. City finances were open wallets for the mayor and their political cronies. The mundane infrastructure of Esmeraldas deteriorated, sending waves through the larger assemblage.

When locals describe this period, they would often suggest that I go to the local *Banco Pichincha*, the largest bank in the province, and examine the display in their waiting room. Rather than featuring mass-produced art, the black and white photos offer a pictographic history of disasters in Esmeraldas. Photos show a range of issues – a

flooding Esmeraldas River engulfing the center, neighborhoods erased by landslides, and ten foot piles of garbage on city streets. The turning point was 1998 when residents faced a combination of catastrophes that highlighted the liveliness of infrastructure. For months the city went without garbage service. The old city dump was full and the mayor could not identify an alternative location, leaving residents to pile garbage where they could. Then an El Nino event caused multiple landslides. First the Trans-Andean pipeline was damaged causing the disastrous La Propecia fire that bisected the city, while a second landslide destroyed homes in the heart of the Center as torrential rains at away at foundations. Rather than being dead junk, infrastructure and garbage became lively matter, drawing attention to lack of state care and engendering powerful sentiments of fear and disgust (Bennet 2010: 5). As the conditions of its existence of infrastructure changed, its affects were felt through the city.

For Esmeraldeños the combination of events captured all of their frustrations with local government creating an opportunity for political change. In 2000, after a career as a petroleum worker and union leader, Ernesto Estupiñan pursued the mayoralty with the promise of remaking Esmeraldas for Esmeraldeños. The MPD, a party built from public union support, had had a long-term presence in the city but the continuous problems of infrastructure propelled them forward. They challenged the perception of Esmeraldas as a downtrodden, ugly city under the campaign slogan "Yes Esmeraldas can Change!" defeating the entrenched *Partido Roldista Ecuatoriano* (PRE). The MPD asserted that they could make visible changes and show the city that they could manage its care responsibly. Their slogan illustrated a tension for locals as the city's problems were

deemed to be their fault by national authorities, even as projects like the refinery became mired in politics and bureaucracy. Estupiñan would be the first self-identifying Afro-Ecuadorian to hold the office of mayor in Esmeraldas (Johnson 2009: 365). The MPD instituted a plan to tackle the threat of erosion, absent garbage collection, and the lack of public spaces in the city.

The MPD demonstrated that it could govern. To prevent another landslide the city invested in a colossal project to embed concrete pipelines within hillsides. It changed the material relations of the city, making it so that rain flowed through the earth rather than over it, maintaining the integrity of the land. Huge furrows dug down the hillsides, were a demonstration of the ends MPD would go to remake infrastructure. The city targeted garbage delivery next by closing the old city dump and opening a new one, and instituting daily garbage removal, releasing the political pressure. Lastly the MPD created multiple public spaces. Despite Afro-Ecuadorian's being known for athletics and art, Esmeraldas itself had limited public venues for either. The center featured the old city market and abattoir, a site whose filthiness is still remembered with dread today. Occupying a block between two main streets the market reeked of death and decay as farm animals were slaughtered inside. The city bulldozed the structure, building a new market, while moving the abattoir to the outskirts of Esmeraldas. The old space was converted into the city's Civic Plaza where it hosts events ranging from political rallies to concerts. They invested heavily in refurbishing the Central Park and Children's Park making them into social centers, infrastructures that all residents could enjoy, generating a positive affect.

The city and state manipulation of infrastructure highlight a paternalism that infuses Ecuadorian politics. The state's approach demonstrated that the government could choose whether to invest, whether to care for a city, illustrating a destructive power relation as Esmeraldas was largely ignored before and after the construction of the refinery. The most critical display of state care did not manifest as expected. The collective experience of infrastructure prior to these events marked a liminal connection to national identities. Citizenship was reduced to a performance of voting rather an expression of belonging. The municipality showed a different sort of paternalism, stepping into the void created by the absence of state care. Through both tactics, the assemblage of infrastructure became a site of lively matter, whose neglect eventually made it impossible to ignore.

Building Bridges: From the Long Neoliberal Night to the Long Neosocialist Night

By 2009 Esmeraldas was dealing with infrastructure failure once again. The first term of the MPD is widely seen as a success, but visible demonstrations of care slowed after Estupiñan was reelected. In their push to address each problem quickly, the municipal government incurred a twelve million dollar debt, roughly the city's annual budget, preventing new infrastructure projects. MPD instead focused on consolidating its political position. The power of city bosses largely comes from their ability to designate projects and provide job opportunities. The longer they were in power, the more opportunity MPD had to place party loyalists into positions across the city, support select community groups, and develop relationships with the media. In turn, come election

time, this crystallizes their support base as the city government has thousands of workers whose at-will employment depends on their political patron being reelected. However much of this labor of politics is clandestine, happening in a "grey zone" and projecting much less visible political action as the party cares for its own, not the larger community (Auyero 2007: 5-7). The municipality faced accusations of corruption, however, this is typical for municipal governments who often have to make difficult choices over how it invests in the community. Accusations of corruption are inevitable, as attempts to render change visible, can also reveal a government's inability to change anything in the long term (Harvey 2010: 37). The difficulty with these claims is that corruption is not inherent in an action itself, but depends on the social position and group identification of the person making the accusation (Herzfeld 1992, Gupta 1995: 338). In a highly politicized environment, the charge seemed inescapable.

As city sponsored works dried up, the national political climate changed and popular protests pushed out another president. *Alianza Pais* (PAIS) rose to prominence, with Correa securing a win in 2006, due to his promise to conduct a "revolutionary" project to rewrite the constitution. The constitution was oriented around the concept of *Buen Vivir* – Living Well, both a development plan and a substantive conceptualization of citizenship. For the purpose of this chapter three promises of the constitution are relevant. The text pledged to 1) reform the political system to make Ecuador a truly representative democracy, 2) decentralize power and decision making by giving parish, county, and provincial governments more resources to direct projects, and 3) redistribute resources, the states energy income, so that all Ecuadorians would benefit. They went as

far as promising one dollar of every barrel to the province where oil was produced. Taken together, the constitution asserts a new imaginary of state care, rejecting paternalism in order to create stronger relationships between all Ecuadorians.

PAIS promoted the constitution as the end of Ecuador's "Long Neoliberal Night," the belief that the governments of the past largely supported national and international business interests over the well being of its own citizens. The magna carta is a complicated critique of neoliberalism that both reflects and diverges from anthropological critiques of the concept. It reflects Ong's assertion that neoliberalism is both a claim that the market is better at distributing resources and that it promotes a competitive pattern of individualized consumption (2006: 11). It also highlights neoliberalism as a class project, where wealth is consolidated by a few (Harvey 2005). Drawing from Heinz Dietrich's conceptualization of "socialism of the 21st century," which inspired Hugo Chavez, PAIS asserted that the text would guide a fair distribution of resources, giving workers equivalent value for their work while enshrining direct participatory democracy as a fundamental political practice (2005: 110-135).[2] PAIS the self-identifying party of the "burning hearts and clean hands" set out to do just that. In practice, this critique of neoliberalism, like many scholarly critiques of the concept, can create a muddied obscured picture of what practices constitute neoliberalism on the ground (Shever 2012: 17-23 and Mains 2012: 6). While there are scholarly critiques that emphasize that there is not just one "neoliberalism" rather a heterodox set of practices, in Ecuador neoliberalism is reified into one thing, an economic system that consumes and exploits. PAIS discourse

[2] Dietrich would later become an advisor of Chavez until he disassociated himself from Venezuela's vision of socialism after he claimed it suffered from a lack of true democracy.

promotes their interpretation of socialism of the 21st century as neoliberalism's opposite, neosocialism. A problem with this representation of neoliberalism is that posits fixity – capitalism is considered neoliberal but statist or socialist practices are not. Drawing from JK Gibson Graham (1996) and Erik Olin Wright 2010, Appel argues that in reality all states are a mixture of capitalist, statist, and socialist policies (Appel 2013: p.c.). Following this conceptualization a state can be both neoliberal and neosocialist. The challenge is that in Ecuador the lexical employment of neoliberalism often represents a vulgarization of the concept as all social ills are attributed to it, obfuscating the relations and practices that can be deemed neoliberal, a tension that permeates present statecraft.

As a revolutionary movement they needed to show that the continuum of history had exploded (Benjamin 1968: 261). Correa needed to embody this rupture with the past and show change in order to make the viewer an ally; a partner in this broader struggle of citizenship, emphasizing that change was "for everyone" and was "underway."[3] Proving to be highly image conscious, the government rolled out hundreds of "spot" commercials that were designed to show the new connections the state was fashioning between Ecuadorians as part of the rejection of neoliberalism. One from the Ministry of Industry and Productivity (MIP) in particular captures how they government was deploying infrastructure as a key trope of the Citizens Revolution's creation of new connections to its citizens. In the advertisement, a modern bullet train zips through the Andes crossing bridges from mountain valley to mountain valley, passing through the Amazon, Sierra and the Coast. As the train zooms by you see that each car has a video screen on it

[3] "Ya es de todos" is another official catch phrase saying x public institution was now for everyone.

bracketed by Ecuadorian flags. The camera focuses on one screen where you see images of the refinery and oil tankers exploiting energy wealth. It pulls back showing the train passing a bridge and focuses on a different car where doctors and nurses in medical facemasks and scrubs work on brand new medical technology. It pulls back one last time and focuses on a scene of industrial robots assembling an automobile. It finishes with an MIP message saying they are the train of progress moving the country forward and the ubiquitous tagline, "The Revolution is Now Underway." The advertisement uses the draw of infrastructure to ground their national project in the lives of all Ecuadorians. The advertisement works through the larger infrastructure assemblage connecting energy, industrial production, mobility, and technology together. They highlight a number of actants that can propel "revolutionary" change. As the spot moves from scene to scene it illustrates Ecuador's future brought to fruition by PAIS. Material infrastructure draws the viewer to the larger project showing substantive relationships between citizen and state. The train imagery in particular demonstrates that all regions and all Ecuadorians are interconnected, representing a larger sentiment of belonging. The irony of this imagery is that Ecuador's rails have been largely closed since the 1970s as Ecuador's unstable ground and lack of government maintenance led to their shutdown (Clark 2008). High-speed rail is a distant fantasy.[4]

Under this push to build infrastructure, Esmeraldas was to be the beneficiary of two state projects. While Esmeraldas is a shipping port, one of its drawbacks is that the roads between the city and Santo Domingo de Tsachilas are in horrible conditions.

[4] At the time the advertisement aired the only rail in Ecuador is a segment in Ibarra, which is used for tourism.

Narrow and pitted with potholes, the highway is often washed out during the rainy season. Correa's first vow was to turn the two-lane asphalt highway into a four-lane concrete highway allowing a greater flow of traffic from the port to Quito. Correa's second vow was to build a bridge over the Esmeraldas River, which many stated was a dream of the community. Prior to the bridge residents who wanted to go north from the city had to drive 20 kilometers downriver, cross, and then drive back to the coast. The new structure would allow vehicles to cross from the city itself so container traffic could bypass the center altogether. It was an attempt to materialize state ideology in physical form (Humphrey 2005: 39-40). The spending spree was an effort by Correa to show that money would be invested to the benefit of everyday citizens and each of these projects had the potential to do just that. Yet even as the state pledged investment, change was circumspect.

The bridge turned into a massive disruption for Esmeraldas, as it closed the primary entrance to the center. The plan had been to build the bridge in four sections connecting the city center to the island Luis Vargas Torres with short spans at the entrance to the commercial port in the east and the entrance to the city center in the west, while two longer spans would join it to the river's north shore. The construction of the eastern entrance required that the primary access to the center be closed for over a year, forcing commuters to take an alternative route into the city, doubling commutes between the center and southern sectors of the city. The highway project was delayed as government employees did not secure all of the required land needed to widen it and the government eventually changed the project, with the four-lane highway only extending to

Quininde, a local bastion of PAIS and the halfway point between Esmeraldas and Santo Domingo de Tsachilas.

While the road and bridge promised new connections between Ecuadorians, it also forces us to ask, who really benefits from these projects? The problem with both projects is that on a day-to-day basis they do little for Esmeraldeños. The bridge did move traffic to the margins of the city, but it allows commerce to completely bypass the urban area altogether. It represents a partial completion of the plan of the 1970s military junta; as it facilitates commerce by remaking Esmeraldas to fit the needs of outside business. Neither bridge nor highway generated employment for city residents as the Army Corp of Engineers built the bridge and the highway project was contracted to a private firm from the Sierra. It was socialist in that it targeted the community but capitalist in its adoption of business logics. The highway project became a sort of spectral infrastructure. It was clear where the highway was supposed to be expanded; as you traveled down the old highway there were billboards announcing the expansion, and several sectors where engineers had carved into hillsides to widen the highway. Billboards and promises create a spectral record of the government's speculative vision (De Boeck 2011: 274). The presence of infrastructure construction makes the project's absence felt all the more. In large part these projects did not illustrate a new relationship to the city because they did not address its critical needs. The projects were populist expedience, not a demonstration of care that would improve the lives of Esmeraldeños.

As the city started to have serious reservations over these projects, changes in the weather showed that residents could not rely on the state, but instead had to care for one

another. The weather revealed the connections between the larger assemblages of infrastructure showing that infrastructure can both reaffirm and stress bonds as it becomes disaffective. In an absent-present state, what do everyday residents, the city, and the state do to maintain infrastructure and cope with its failure? First a national water shortage began. Normally rains begin around October, growing progressively harder until the wet season begins in January. In 2009 the rain never arrived. The first sign that there was a problem came as the hillside communities lost all water pressure. Actual water service became interrupted for anyone not living at the ground level of the city center. When water service fails there are few options to cope. In the southern neighborhoods of Esmeraldas, this is normal and most homes have some sort of cistern to preserve a consistent supply. In the center, cisterns are much less common and when the water system fails people either have to purchase or share water. One of my neighbors, a fifty-year-old teacher named Gloria, is the perfect example of this. Fearing contamination from the refinery, she not only had a massive cistern, the size of a garage, she had multiple purification filters to make sure the water was clean. She was fearful of what would happen if there was a major break in a pipeline, and her insecurities about safe water were a boon for the neighborhood. In an emergency, neighbors could borrow what they needed. In my own home, a collection of five apartments without a cistern, residents tried to ensure that our tank would always be refilled. This was a challenge, as water primarily ran in the early morning before most people wake. I lived in fifth story apartment but by mid-November the water pressure barely pushed liquid to our first floor spigot. We would have to pray that someone would hear the arrival of water, to leave the

tap on to fill his or her supply, leaving a full tank for everyone else. Waiting for water, collecting it, and then lugging it up five flights of stairs became a nightly ritual. The failure of water infrastructure actually had the ability to reaffirm the relationship between neighbors.

However water shortages can also be incredibly destructive, with wide ranging effects on community sociality. For one, children cannot go to go to school in dirty uniforms, but families were often unable to do laundry. Schools did not make exceptions and the malaise this provoked led teens to organize actions against the local water authority. Anger grew as water meters registered false flows. If a tap was left open while people waited for the return of water, it pushed air through the system creating a false reading of water passing. If you wanted to fill a tank, you had to leave the tap open so that the arrival of water would be announced. The water company charged people despite the shortage. On the hills over Esmeraldas, residents took advantage of the limited access to the center that the bridge project created. The main entrance to the center remained closed, forcing all traffic to take an alternative route to and from the Southern Barrios. Living at one of the highest points in Esmeraldas, water service was non-existent for these neighborhoods. Residents could organize for a tanker but it was an expensive act that would force them to pay extra for a service they should have had anyways. Residents took the only access road to the Center hostage by building a barricade, extorting a donation from commuters so that residents could buy a tanker of water. Police would regularly break down the barricades and residents would erect them anew. While sharing could reaffirm relationships between neighbors, these events provoked anger that

did not abate as infrastructure breakdown revealed a failure of governance. The state could do little to change the situation due to the drought.

The drought did not only affect the delivery of potable water, it also shaped energy production, making water and energy part of the same assemblage. Water supplies at hydroelectric plants in the Sierra fell precipitously as the drought enveloped most of the country. The Citizens Revolution had employed a new energy plan, shutting down diesel power plants, favoring hydroelectric instead. When water supplies failed the national energy networks' other power plants could not match the loss. In November the Paute, the largest hydroelectric dam in Ecuador, reached a crisis point and the national government instituted nationwide rolling blackouts until the dam's water levels approached normal. Every region of the country would face a daily shut off of electricity for a predetermined amount of time. To maintain a basic livability for the most affected regions, the entire country shared the burden of blackouts. Nevertheless these blackouts were not equally distributed among cities, illustrating the unequal implementation of state care. In Quito, the seat of government and the largest concentration of PAIS supporters, the blackouts were unusually short, lasting only two hours for each region of the city. In Guayaquil, closer to the actual dam and with an outspoken opposition mayor, blackouts typically lasted five hours or more. Esmeraldas fell in the middle with official times being around three hours. In a jump of conspiratorial logic many asserted that the state was intentionally structuring the blackouts to disadvantage areas that were bastions of opposition.

Blackouts generate insecurities with the absence of power. The most telling symptom of this is the community reaction at the arrival or end of power shutdown, when it was already dark. Every third day my sector of the city would be scheduled for an evening blackout. Across the street from my apartment was a small neighborhood bar, which always had a card game. When the power was cut, it would be met with screams and shouting, as people grabbed at their money and cards in the pitch-black night. The absence of light produced a sinister air in the city. In a concrete jungle of closely built structures, the darkness was oppressive and people were largely trapped at home, huddling with neighbors and never venturing far. While walking in the streets, it was impossible to identify who passing pedestrians were. It was fitting that the community would collectively applaud when the electricity came back. Blackouts also forced many businesses to keep unusual hours, cutting incomes. Power outages are also not simply a cutting of electricity; they are preceded and trailed by power surges, as authorities turn one sector's power off and another's on. These surges are notorious for burning out televisions, computers, and other devices. Even the typical solutions to this problem, the use of generators, were challenging. Most homeowners cannot dream of affording one and their diesel engines produce clouds of exhaust and constant noise. In the mornings you could tell if there was an outage by listening for the hum of generators across the city. Blackouts were events that pushed people together, but through disaffective sentiments. Amidst a blackout, the only form of security was neighborly sociality. The state was incapable of imagining new forms of care, so Correa went on the attack against Pacha Mama

Correa proclaimed, "If nature opposes the citizen's revolution with this drought, we will fight and together will defeat her, rest assured." [5] Correa illustrated care through a promise of violence. After weeks of waiting for rain, Nature, the same entity that had been promised internationally lauded rights as a living entity in the constitution, was declared the enemy. The drought persisted and the media had a field day proclaiming that "The Long Neoliberal Night" had become the "The Long Neosocialist Night" as the Citizens Revolution could no longer guarantee electricity, the first time this had happened since 1993.

After months of drought, the weather changed with the New Year. Esmeraldas was inundated as long, pounding thunderstorms settled over the city. In the Southern Barrios soccer fields became lagoons, unable to drain standing water because of the persistent downpours. In the Center, fears over erosion grew. Despite the rain, city water service did not improve as the drought had laid bare another problem; the sedimentation of the river had greatly reduced the city's water capacity. Water flowed over urban streets but not through its substructure of pipes. Literally there was water everywhere but not a drop to drink. The rationing of electricity continued as well, as the storms bypassed the regions of the hydroelectric dams.

Under the torrential onslaught, roads began to deteriorate. Above the Center, the access road rapidly decayed becoming pitted with potholes as constant traffic took its toll. Particularly harsh storms provoked insecurity as soil, rocks, and boulders tumbled down

[5] From the November 7th, 2009 Saturday Presidential Address - "*Si la naturaleza con esta sequía se opone a la revolución ciudadana, lucharemos y juntos la venceremos, tengan la seguridad*"

the hillsides to the plain of the urban area. In neighborhoods along the hills, intersections became choked with as much as a meter of mud and stone (Figure 5) and along the river, shantytowns flooded. The negative aura of the city's past was revived with residents variously accusing city and state governments of not caring. Yet protests were sporadic even as residents universally expressed frustration with. So what turned these episodic demonstrations into a sustained challenge to authorities? Interestingly enough, in an environment where there are so many other pressing needs, the pothole becomes an object that ties local concerns together, illustrating the disaffective resonances of infrastructure.

Just as these events were happening I asked a close friend and local social scientist Pedro why so much angst is directed at potholes. Pedro responded brilliantly

Figure 5. The Streets of Esmeraldas Post-Storm, Esmeraldas, EC

saying, "Potholes are the sin qua non issue of Esmeraldas!" Not understanding I prodded him to continue,

> "Everyone feels potholes. If you have a problem with water service you might be able to borrow some from a friend or organize your neighbors to pay for a tanker. If you have a blackout, you can wait it out or buy a generator. There are ways to deal with these problems so it is hard to get lots of people protesting. With potholes everyone feels them. If you ride the bus you feel them as you go south, if you have your own car you cannot avoid them."

Pedro was absolutely correct, no matter what you did, the combination of poor driving behavior and poorer roads created a painful mix. As buses, cars, and taxis whip through the city there is nothing quite as annoying as the jolt of hitting a pothole while traveling at excessive speeds. Potholes then transcend class and other concerns as a problem that truly does affect everyone. While class may shape how you access the streets, streets act as a truly public good. Some residents have cars, some ride the bus, but all still share access to the road. Potholes inspire their own intensity of feeling (Massumi 2002: 27), shaped through interaction, regardless of class status. This does not mean the experiences are equal, it just recognizes that class inspires different iterations of disaffect. If you want to generate support for a cause the horrible condition of the roads of Esmeraldas is useful for packaging and connecting other demands as well.

The spectacle of the pothole and the sign is productive, as it illustrates the ambiguities of care provoked by infrastructure failure. Can the sign be read at face value – was it a declaration of care by the municipal government? Why highlight a pothole when there are so many more pressing issues in the city? Was this an object that was created with the intent of becoming a political spectacle or did someone capitalize on a

natural event? Was this a case where the city had intended to fix the problem and maintenance was deferred? The ambiguity of the sign allows multiple readings as it taps into these frustrations – making it not just a site of protest but one where city or state government, or even community members can be interpellated as an agent. What is interesting about the sign is that while it plays on the ambiguities of governmental care, it also represents a new iteration of a common practice of local care. Through the city, there are thousands of potholes, but there are have important variations in typology. Some are shallow crevices, formed through everyday wear. At the entrance to the Center, as the road transitions from highway to the city's street, these are common due to the meeting of different construction materials. Concrete and asphalt meet in an imperfect union, which is worn down by cars, cargo trucks, and buses. These potholes are largely accepted as unavoidable. Other potholes are so wide or so deep that they require neighborhoods to mark or repair them, to prevent a serious accident. A wide pothole for instance, is commonly filled in. If it is deep enough, residents will place a layer of bricks in it, to create a more rigid support. Along the hills of Esmeraldas, this is a common strategy, as unstable hillside shifts beneath the road, asphalt is stressed not just from above, but also from below. On the plain of the city center, impossibly deep potholes are common as cracks in the street reveal sewers and water channels. When these potholes occur, community members generally pile used tires over it, placing a stick and a small flag to draw the attention of motorists to the hazard. As an act of belonging it focuses on common humanity rather than official relationships. In both cases, neighbors demonstrate their social relationships by protecting motorists and ensuring the well being of their

associates, a practice that is expected of a decent human being. The display of the sign was a play on this tactic, but its politicization reveals the ambiguities that imaginaries of care can also produce.

In the state's reimagining of care, were they really targeting and identifying community needs (Gibson-Graham 2005: 10-11), sites that would reinforce the sentiments of belonging that infuse citizenship, or were they targeting sites that allowed them to make visible changes with limited changes? The infrastructure projects like the highway and bridge show an investment by the state, but as critical infrastructure fails, neighbors increasingly relied on each other to cope with the insecurities that infrastructure failure engenders. The actions of people in the name of common humanity create substantive relationships between them, reinforcing sociality and belonging. Such imaginaries reveal underlying tensions in multiple scales of politics, tensions that would grow as protests challenged the sentiments of belonging for neighborhoods, city and state. As different pieces of the infrastructure assemblage were challenged by the weather, becoming lively presences that cannot be ignored, it revealed the veracity of the state commitment to the community. When promises go unfulfilled the experience of quotidian failures erodes local belief in revolutionary citizenship.

"Let the Change Continue…"

Esmeraldas was a powder keg, with tensions set to explode. As residents increasingly had to do for themselves, what they expected from the state, people sought ways to generate pressure (Anand 2011: 550). In Esmeraldas, neighbors worked with one

another to cope, but systematic change required the participation of masses of people or an intervention of state governance, drawing new connections between energy networks and infrastructure, and display tensions in the imaginaries of care. Harm can provoke a response, but people do not necessarily through their weight behind change (Bennet 2010: 103). The imagination of care between city and state took precedence. A week after the spectacle of the pothole and the sign, rumors spread through Esmeraldas that a collective of neighborhood committees were going to rally and march in protest. The Federation of Urban Popular Neighborhoods of Esmeraldas (FUBPE), a body with strong ties to the city government, published a call proposing a mass march to demand the national government deal with the ongoing problems with water, electricity, and asphalt. FUBPE is a body that characterizes local "vernacular statecraft," where unofficial organizations adopt and imitate the standards and actions of statecraft (Colloredo-Mansfield 2009: 17-18). In effect they become an expression of the state by proxy (Krupa 2010: 319). Such bodies, while having no official standing, fill political voids, organize residents, and provide a voice. FUBPE is a banner organization for neighborhoods in Esmeraldas. They offer the potential for neighbors to organize their activities, institutionalizing local imaginaries of care, but they have two critical problems. First, the FUBPE and neighborhood committees have no actual legal standing in relation to the state. They represent only those who choose to participate. Neighborhood committees are points of contact for city government; FUBPE is an umbrella group of such committees. In Esmeraldas, there are 168 neighborhoods but 194 committees, as some contest the status of others as the representative of a barrio. Secondly such bodies

are largely creations of party politics, in Esmeraldas the represent a critical network of the MPD. They act as an extension of city government, raising the specter of corruption. Overall the committees can channel frustrations, illustrating collective belonging, but they are also already compromised within the political imagination.

FUBPE published a full-page advertisement in the local newspaper, which insisted that the thermoelectric plant, refinery, and water authority correct their issues. As compensation for the failure of these bodies, the notice asserted that PetroEcuador and the government owed Esmeraldas for decades of contamination, which should be paid with asphalt. They drew another link through the assemblage of infrastructure, connecting two material states of petroleum, oil and asphalt. Throughout the letter no direct mention is made of the connection between FUBPE and MPD but the notice states that "with Ernesto and Lucia the change will continue, no more threats, unite and fight for social change." MPD's present slogan, let the change continue, is embedded in the message.

As vital matter, a pothole can provoke a gestalt shift, but its iteration as a political act, must radically change what people see (Bennet 2010: 104-105). The drawing of people to the street was an attempt to draw attention to the material decay of the street. Thousands of residents participated, but the protest also engendered ambivalence, as people were desperate to have working infrastructure, but were stuck making their claims through the city government. [6] The ambivalence manifested as much of the protest was choreographed and staged. The starting point of protests in Esmeraldas is somewhat of an

[6] Officially the media said 4,000 to 8,000 people were there. The actual number is around 7,000.

oddity in the urban landscape. It features two outgoing lanes of traffic with one incoming lane between them. The outgoing lanes of traffic are raised a full story above the other lane forming a ravine that can be blockaded to organize marches. The advantage of this geography is that you can be within feet of participants but outside of the actual events. The process of staging change, of showing that something is different because of this party, was a spectacle in and of itself. How do people show that they care for the condition of the city? In the case of the municipal government, they creatively employed the media and their connections with other institutions.

I arrived that afternoon and wandered along the rim of the terrace. I settled along a bank of brightly painted stones and watched the organizers hand out signs with slogans like "Barrio Bellavista Supports the Mayor" and "Without Water, Without Light, The Fatherland is Now for Everyone!" (Figure 6) In an irony of the moment I noticed that signs were being handed to anyone who asked for one and I watched as a neighbor was handed the Bellavista sign, despite us living in another part of the city. The signs show support but they have no necessary connection to the person holding them. After this a pickup from one of the local radio stations pulled up beneath me just as the mayor arrived to the proceedings. Trailed by his personal security brigade Estupiñan walked up to the reporter and gave him a hug. The spoke quietly among themselves for a moment while the reporter's assistant ferried a truckload of students from one of the larger public schools. The kids, still in uniform, descended from the bed of the pickup and surrounded the mayor. As the reporter started the interview the students started boisterously cheering

Figure 6. "Without Light, Without Water, The Revolution is Now for Everyone" Esmeraldas, EC

and chanting behind them. They were creating an auditory illusion that masses of supporters surrounded the mayor. It was highly manipulative and largely unnecessary since the mayor was actually surrounded by masses of supporters. It represented a tactic that could manipulate the conduct of conduct and draw bodies to the street. It harnessed the affect engendered by infrastructure, as they mayor attempted to pull people into a political rally for a party they do not support, through the promise of change.

As the start of the rally approached, the multitudes of participants organized into groups led by banners. Student and teacher's unions, public workers, and so on formed ranks and marched. The mayor, prefect, and local MPD representative to the national assembly walked alongside the three officially recognized beauty queens of Esmeraldas. The city acts as a patron for each and its support was returned in this event. They were lead by two giant flags sewn together, one the orange and blue of the MPD and the second the green and white of Esmeraldas. The fused symbols claim MPD for

Esmeraldas and Esmeraldas for the MPD. Suddenly a mass of five hundred people converged on the march chanting raucously. At first it was unclear what was happening. As they approached the main group the mayor stepped out and with a beaming smile shook hands with the leader of the group and in a small ceremony the larger protest absorbed the smaller one. The new arrivals carried signs condemning a local television station for being a voice box for the president while supporting the other local television station as honest. As the march progressed it stopped in front of the governor's building where the Mayor condemned Correa's lack of action before moving on to the Civic Plaza where MPD representatives gave speeches demanding that the Citizens Revolution showed it cared for Esmeraldeños by repaying it for the burden of contamination it had borne. The community, despite many expressing ambivalence, came together to make a call on the state. The ambivalence here is produced as neighbors have little choice but to tap into the bureaucracy of the city. Where neighborly sociality was fashioned in the absence of local government, local government becomes the only option to provoke investments of state care.

The rally dispersed and to the surprise of everyone Correa's response was immediate. Correa agreed that they needed to address these concerns and he vowed that due to the refinery's history of contamination the state owed the city damages, which would be paid out in the form of a project to pave every single street in Esmeraldeños. The oil wealth would turn into asphalt, finally redistributing the benefits of petroleum towards Esmeraldas. Correa pledged that by the end of the year the project would commence. The politics of infrastructure were represented not as paternalism, but due

compensation for a debt that the nation owed the city. It appeared to be a truly social policy, as it would benefit everyone in Esmeraldas, rather than a limited subset of the community. In some neighborhoods near the refinery, state representatives began ripping out pitted streets in preparation for rebuilding them, generating the belief that the revolutionary project was more than a promise; it was actually underway in their communities. The excavated streets - the broken concrete, dust, and clumps of asphalt symbolized hope, rather than urban decay. They showed a street transitioning between material forms. Then Esmeraldas waited once again. Auyero has suggested that waiting can be used as a key strategy of domination. Waiting forces people to act as "patients of the state," docile subjects whose hope for a service or project subordinates them. The ambiguities of waiting – the possibility of completion – are used as a form of social control (Auyero 2012: 15-20). But the question remains, when is waiting too much? From the perspective of Esmeraldeños they have not just waited a few months, but decades for universally paved streets. Nothing changed, until the Ministry of Transportation (MTOP), announced that no action could be taken without Correa's direct approval. Here the state appeared not as a singular thing, but as the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities (Foucault 2008: 77). The state is really the manifestation of a transaction of powers, which are diversely located in the social, not a state, but a state effect (Mitchell 2002). The state is a clustering of bureaucracies, being constantly remade through improvisation. Correa claimed to direct its actions but as plans worked through multiple ministries nothing changed. To make the revolution appear on

the ground, they needed to grab the attention of not just one man, but a host of disparate bureaucracies, whose collected efforts would manifest state care.

After a few weeks, just as January and February were identified as the wettest months in the history of Esmeraldas, some residents raised an ominous issue; if the state just paved the streets without dealing with the water problem, the city would soon be full of new potholes.[7] One of the reasons that the streets become habitually pitted is because every time someone builds a new house or has a sewage or water connection installed they need to excavate the street. Responsible contractors will patch the hole with asphalt, most contractors just backfill them. If the state paved every street without dealing with the issues of water and sewage first then they the thoroughfares would just be excavated again. The substructures of water, were embedded in the infrastructures of transport, directly connecting them. If one actant in the assemblage changes, it has wide ranging affects on the larger system (Bennet 2010: 21). Correa had made a political promise but one that had not been rendered technical as a calculated program. The critique was the calculation; the promise was made without thought of what work was needed to realize it. Correa blamed the failing on the city. He agreed to a water project but stipulated that EAPA would need to be controlled by the national government. The project would be the intensification of the project of redistribution. EAPA had been an independent bureaucracy of the city since 1994 when the county of Esmeraldas was divided into three. To make sure no single municipal government unfairly distributed the water, EAPA had been made into an independent service company that each county would pay. However,

[7] According to local media rainfall in January and February 2010 was 400 cm, twice the annual average of the province.

EAPA was broke and under de facto MPD power. Correa assumed control, installing his own party loyalist as director, in order to give him a platform in the city. It turned into a debacle, in an attempt to force water to hillside communities EAPA, under the director's behest, increased pressure in the pipelines. The change in water flow caused the degraded concrete pipes to effectively disintegrate, taking a cluster of hillside communities entirely off of the water network. Correa responded with more promises. He added that PetroEcuador, now fully under the control of the national government, would build a hospital for the Southern Barrios and they would offer free dental work and medical checkups in the meantime as a form of social compensation. Correa had already pledged the construction of a social security hospital, a pledge that still only existed en potentia. While the city waited the already torn up streets in the south, formed little pools becoming a breeding ground for mosquitos and a public health hazard.

Residents responded to the new promises with suspicion. Jesus, a life long resident of the southern neighborhoods, captures the larger sentiment,

> "You go there and they have five dental chairs. You can get your teeth cleaned but you do not know if they will be back in a year. When you go to their doctor they look at you, check your blood pressure, and give you some pills to kill your parasites. You feel horrible for a week, better for a month, and then a few months later your parasites are back!

Social compensation was a nuanced promise, as it represented a direct intervention of state care, but to a very limited subset of the community, as medical compensation was only available for people in the southern barrios and for a limited tiem. Even in that sector not every neighborhood is served and if you cannot show you are from there you will not be attended too. Correa's advantage here was that he was able to

manage his connections to other state bodies to flesh out his promise. He could show the state working under his direction even as the actual tactics sowed doubt. For Correa the infrastructure of politics focused on taking over the institutions not directly beholden to the state. By taking control of EAPA and using the newly conquered PetroEcuador, Correa illustrated that there is a void in the power of the state where in the larger political network of Ecuador the relationship between state and local is not as top down or fixed as many imagine.

After months of deferrals, denials, and waiting Correa qualified his promise to Esmeraldas. He said that the municipality was too corrupt to give money too. The original proposal was slashed. The state would do the water project and pave the major transects of the center and the streets of neighborhoods directly around the refinery; yet because of the presence of the MPD, Esmeraldas was denied the realization of the complete proposal. Due to his issue with one key person Correa publicly disenfranchised 200,000 citizens, removing the pledge of the state, and disarticulating the imaginary of care he had been crafting over months. Residents patiently waited while the government tried to sort out the details of the project, but in the end the state pledged to do less than twenty percent of what was proposed. Claiming that money to the municipality would be misspent the new proposal had the entire construction project being done by the military, meaning it would produce no local employment. Membership as a citizen of Esmeraldas became a type of guilt by association. Belonging to the city, limited belonging to the state.

Through these events infrastructure draws together the imaginaries of care of the neighborhoods, city, and state. However, rather than drawing them into concert, the distrust of politics produces ambivalent sentiments of belonging. Belonging to a neighborhood can create links between neighbors, but the city government can still coopt these in the process of organization. Belonging in the city can show the state change must be done, but it does not ensure action. Through this, institutional politics consistently draw on the affects of infrastructure, but as the state is unable to harness its own disparate bureaucracies, the community is left waiting again.

Conclusion: The Revolution is in Neutral

So why does a pothole become a political object that commands the attention of both local and national governments? In the chapter I illustrated the complicated politics of infrastructure in order to highlight not just the diverse affects of material failure, but to show how these engender new forms of sociality. Here affect and disaffect are powerful registers that can push and pull communities apart. The pledge to restructure the relationship between Ecuador's energy networks and infrastructure is laudable and crucial to making substantive citizenship, but as I have shown, the dialectical relations between the multiplicity of imaginaries of care illustrates how the government is not strengthening social relationships, rather it seeks to collect and redistribute power at political whim. As various actants with the infrastructure assemblage transitioned between material states, there were waves of affect felt through the larger system. There is a constant movement between infrastructure and energy network and affects and politics, which make something as innocuous as a pothole an object that can collect and

disperse political powers. Potholes have wide ranging affects, uniting and dividing the community as asphalt shows the connections between energy, oil, and water. By definition infrastructure represents the critical substructures that connect and bind residents of the city as citizens. Infrastructure is an expression of citizenship. Yet in Esmeraldas problems persist not because of the values the constitution embodied but because of the values that were not embraced. The constitution represented an extension of state imaginaries of care to all Ecuadorians, but in practice the way that the "state effect" is managed, produces challenging discrepancies between the sentiments of belonging to a city and belonging to a state. People are left to rely on one another to cope with the absence of state investment.

The politics of energy and infrastructure in Esmeraldas are revealing in this regard. As so much of the labor of politics focuses on crafting the image of change through a revolutionary aesthetic, existent infrastructure decays, raising the specter that the state continues to be an absent-present one. What is crucial to understand is that the constitution creates the possibility of change; the potential for change, but it still rests on actors within the political network following the spirit of its proposals. This situation belies the claim that the state is an all-encompassing power and instead shows that it is fractured and in every locality the state is a mixture of connections and voids that actors can capitalize on, manipulate, and coopt. This is the reason that the infrastructure of politics is so interesting; by following its iterations we can see how the state, political parties, and individuals try to fashion connections through different imaginaries of care. This illustrates a point by Timothy Mitchell, the problem is not just about how the state

distributes its resources it is about how democracy works through all of these other nodes. Infrastructure creates bonds between neighbors, but institutionalization of such relationships, traps Ecuadorians in cycles of interparty political conflicts. Who gets a say, how decisions are made, are the substantive actions of democracy and battles over the infrastructure of politics identify these relationships that need to be recrafted or bolstered. This is why a pothole presents such a challenging political object; it connects several scales of politics activating multiple sites of democracy, multiple imaginaries of care, and multiple political nodes.

A key issue in Ecuador is that while the constitution has emphasized decentralization PAIS has instead emphasized the deconcentration of power. Decentralization implies that decision making over resources will be spread through more political nodes. Tactics like promising one dollar of every barrel produced in a province to the local government, a pledge written into the constitution for Amazonian provinces, promote decentralization. Sadly Esmeraldas is not considered an oil-producing province in this regard. The state emphasizes deconcentration; instead of ceding decision-making powers to local bodies the state creates more sites of contact, but contacts which are dispersed in such a way that it is difficult to draw them all together. This does nothing deepen democracy, it just creates more sites of bureaucracy. Instead the state is seeking to deepen its own infrastructure of politics letting it channel mundane infrastructures to bolster party interests.

It has now been three years since the mass rally that spurred Correa's promise. It took an entire year for the restricted project to even begin and in that period Correa

walked back his pledge to build another hospital. The Corp of Engineers ripped up the key transects one by one and EAPA began installing new lines. The city is now two years into a six-month project. Over the past two rainy seasons the trenches for new pipelines have been flooded, as massive rainstorms have arrived again. The water project is near completion but it is presently suspended as residents wait for the rains to end. On the ground such situations generate insecurity not just because projects are unfinished but also because it is a cycle that residents have become too use to. Near the end of my second trip for dissertation fieldwork, almost two years into my project I was talking with a close friend named Silvia about what it is like to live in between the polarities of a state and a city. Silvia, a strong supporter of the president and life long educator, had benefited greatly from the government's new education programs receiving a significant raise because of her dedication to becoming a better teacher. Yet she felt trapped. "We wait and we wait. They propose projects and we wait some more. But nothing changes. We are stuck between Estupiñan and Correa but because they cannot work together, nothing changes. They talk about projects but what do we have? In the center the asphalt is gone on some streets and all we have is dust. I support the president but we need something now, not promises." Silvia articulated a critical point, as waiting is used to subordinate, it also creates frustrations as waiting never seems to end. It feels like they are going nowhere.

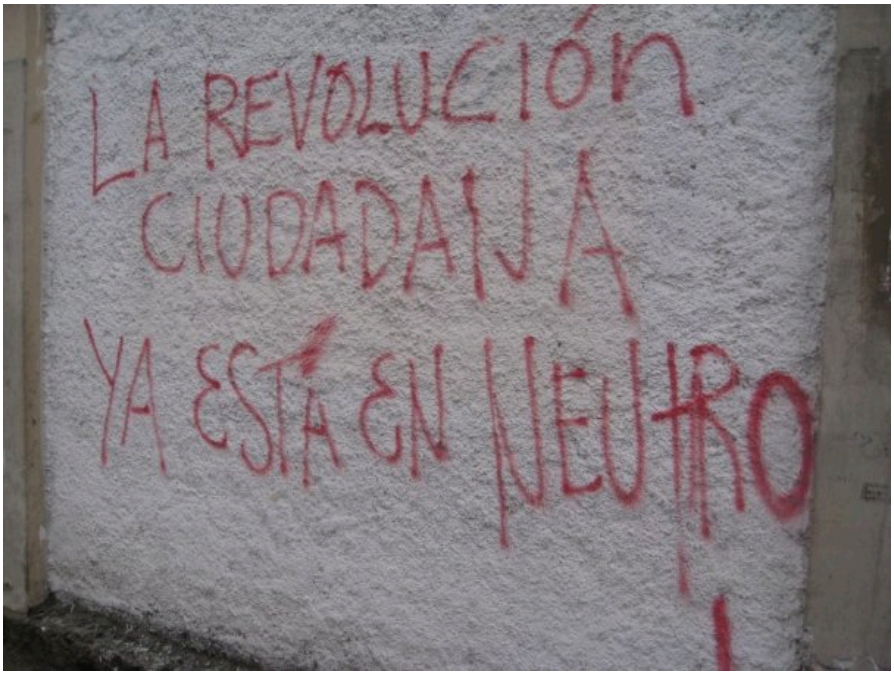


Figure 7. The Citizens Revolution is in Neutral, Quito, EC

Her comments made me think of a piece of graffiti I had just seen in Quito days earlier (Figure 7). Across from the PetroEcuador training center, on a large public school in the heart of the city, someone had emblazoned a wall with a new slogan, "The Revolution is Now in Neutral." While the Citizens Revolution had engaged in a massive media campaign, little seemed to be moving forward. The revolution still had the possibility of being something that could build new qualities of citizenship but like a parked car it was not going anywhere yet. Correa projected an image of movement, an image that there was a rupture with the past that they can never go back to. Yet this image is in the eye of the beholder and to others nothing new is underway.

Conclusion

Imprinting the Revolution: Citizenship, Care, and Well Being

Material Power and Oil

Through this text I have tried to illustrate the ways that petroleum becomes meaningful in the process of creating a "revolutionary" state. The diffuse materialities of oil are at the center of multiple, mobile regimes of governmentality that speak to the promise of citizenship to produce well-being and curtail uncertainty. Historically, petroleum has been a site of conflict in Ecuador; it flows through the nation but the wealth that it generates tends to make hops, skips, and leaps, leaving some communities with the benefits of oil and others with its burden (Ferguson 2005). Ecuador's 2008 constitution and the Citizens Revolution highlight the potential of citizenship to be made substantive, but through the transition from constitutional promise to institutional reality, the politicization of oil corrodes the substance of citizenship making it spectral or phantasmal (Sawyer 2001: 160). The challenge with petroleum comes from its inherent volatility; as oil sublimates, turning into different materialities it becomes more and more unpredictable. Labor, infrastructure, and material wealth represent the promise of petroleum. Petroleros, for example, are a group that is able to capture some of its benefits, showing how oil can generate the good life. However, workers also reveal many of the tensions inherent in oil as the production process also provokes pollution, ill health, conflict, and dissent. Esmeraldeños and petroleros are at the center of dialectical

processes that generate multiple meanings for petroleum. The leak is an apt metaphor for the tensions petroleum engenders, the process of converting oil into different states breaks it down into gaseous, liquid, and solid particles, which produce new forms of insecurity and risk. The smell of petroleum is a sensuous sign that reveals the inherent volatility of energy production. Choy's call for thinking with air is productive in this regard (2011: 162); we usually imagine oil in terms of energy, but the process of sublimation creates multiple materialities that can breach our bodies, corrode metal, and alter the environment around us. The vibrancy of the material forms of petroleum and the sheer extent of the petroleum assemblage make it something that overdetermines much of the daily life in production sites (Bennet 2010: viii). Oil has the potential to both create new possibilities and new limitations for democracy and citizenship, because we have so many contact points with it in our daily lives (Mitchell 2011: 5). In a city like Esmeraldas this is even truer as the promise of revolutionary change reveals many physical states of petroleum that are often disregarded or imagined as separate from the petroleum assemblage. Petroleum fundamentally leaves its imprint on Esmeraldas because of the tensions the refinery produces in regards to health, insecurity, pollution, protest, and infrastructure. Each of these issues reveals connections to different forms of power and different practices of knowledge construction. The discrepancies between the biopolitical practices of different state bodies, the city, and community members engender multiple modalities of politics, creating a variety of nodes of power. In Esmeraldas the problem is that the surplus possibilities and the excesses of the political system leave many traces behind producing a malaise that reflects the insecurities of revolutionary change.

Sometimes the community can capture and employ these tensions in a productive manner, in other moments, sentiments of malaise become debilitating as they reinforce the broader environment of conflict.

In the remainder of this conclusion I would like to draw attention to the concept of imprinting to illustrate the tensions engendered by the reimagining of citizenship and its articulation with petroleum in Ecuador (Caldiera 2012: 386). Imprinting is the process of leaving a trace behind that can be seen as a form of claiming the city. In Caldeira's case she highlights a how poor street youth use alternative forms of mobility and transgressive artistic practices to assert some form of ownership on urban spaces. I believe the notion of imprinting can be expanded, while the youth may claim the city with graffiti, political parties, the state, and the refinery, are known for leaving traces behind as well, challenging different imaginaries of belonging. All of the problems with health, corruption, insecurity, and malaise play out on the walls of the city, as it is one of the last places that opinions can be expressed unedited. The concept of imprinting illustrates the links produced as the state, city, and citizens try to define what well-being is. Petroleum and oil landscapes are a common trope in Ecuadorian graffiti, as they are always central to the political debate. Crossing Quito or Esmeraldas, it is not uncommon to find something like, "*Con el petroleo y cobre, Ecuador es mas pobre*" "With petroleum and copper, Ecuador is made poor" scrawled on a wall. In this view imprinting is a wide-ranging and dialectical process created as different groups leave their mark on Esmeraldas and beyond. In what follows I will try to connect key points about the revolution, politics, and protest to the contentious issues of petroleum. I will use a

mixture of graffiti and propaganda to highlight the contestations over the meaning of citizenship that occurred during the Citizens Revolution.

Revolutionary Care: Circles of Insecurity and Zombie Propaganda

One of the key issues that shapes well-being in Ecuador is the tension produced by change itself. The new forms of revolutionary care promised by the 2008 constitution asserted that the system of partiocracy would end. The state would cease to be an absent-present one and change into an active agent in people's lives, producing well-being. The public would be partners in this project as they would acquire their own form of collective agency through citizenship. When I think of the promise of citizenship, I am drawn to an innocuous piece of graffiti from a sidewalk in Quito. In my first summer of fieldwork, an anthropologist friend and I were walking in the northern part of Quito when we found a painted segment of sidewalk that can only be described as awesome. Near FLACSO, the graduate social science research center, there was a small circle sprayed onto the ground. (Figure 8) On the concrete sidewalk, in a yellow reminiscent of those used for traffic lines, the circle was empty except for seven words, "Inside of this Circle You are Safe." In the context of revolutionary politics it was a wonderful piece that captured the potential meanings and possible tensions of citizenship.

It raises a central question to the discourse of quality of life, who in Ecuador is safe? The Citizens Revolution effectively promised to promote security and create stability by harnessing the power of oil to reconfigure Ecuadorian social relations. It pledged to create substantive citizenship by reimagining care and belonging, expanding

Figure 8. "Inside of this Circle You are Safe," Quito, EC

the circle of relations in Ecuador, while also cutting down the institutionalized forms of privilege that were so corrosive in the past. The placement of the graffiti was spectacular, most people, me included, would walk over it dozens of times without registering its presence. The circle of relations might be widening but in many ways the process was difficult to make visible or legible. The state constantly publicizes what it is doing, the Correa administration is particularly notable for capturing the power of the media and distributing an excess of printed materials, but the actual changes on the ground are difficult to see. State rallies, epic weekend press conferences,[1] and righteous indignation index the process of politics if not change.

In Esmeraldas, this was the question that was constantly invoked, is the city more secure under the Citizens Revolution? In the months following Correa's second election, it became apparent that despite the pledges of harmony, respect, and equality embodied

[1] Every Saturday Correa holds the "*sabatinas*" a three to four hour, choreographed press conference where he rails against the opposition and make pledges for the future.

in the Living Well philosophy, the practices of politics were not that different than before. Most importantly the larger system of partiocracy continued to provoke many of the same insecurities. Parties, including the president's PAIS, spent as much time fighting as they did crafting laws and formulating strategies to promote well-being. PAIS, which was supposed to cross party lines to make projects happen, actually became a party defined by its inability to work with others. A majority of the packets of laws that were supposed to be approved after the constitution was accepted languished. Correa responded by dictating change and concentrating power. Politics become more vertical, with power concentrated in the executive. It became Machiavellian to the point where the opposition would respond to Correa by calling him, "your majesty." Issues with the press amplified these other problems. The press at times is suspect, but Correa made them an enemy of the state, limiting broader press freedoms and quieting his critics.

The revolutionary discourse produced expectations for change and as President Correa continuously appeared in the province, Esmeraldeños hoped that they would finally be recognized. Correa targeted the left-leaning city but the promises that were made became all too similar to those of the absent present state. In the months after the 2009 election a sign of people's frustration was the persistence of election propaganda. It was more than just propaganda from 2009, over the course of Correa's project, from his first election, to the constituent assembly for the constitution, to the approval of the constitution, and finally the second election, Esmeraldas had been repeatedly papered with political posters and sprayed with graffiti. While the state promised harmony these became a testament to government inaction as posters slowly decayed. They became

Figure 9. Zombie Propaganda, Esmeraldas, EC

zombie like; layer upon layer of paper eventually deteriorated creating strange combinations of political agents, as faces and slogans fused together, persisting long after the elections were over. (Figure 9) In other locations you would see aged graffiti. Walls would be sprayed but never fixed as locals have limited financial liquidity. It was normal to see a wall become a site of dueling paint. Throughout the city Yes and No would be crossed out and written over one another from the 2008 constitutional vote. Crossing Esmeraldas you would constantly see signs of the hope for change – but from a period of five or more years. Party murals would be interspersed with insults, and graphic images, in response to Correa's own insults. What becomes apparent is the absence of meaning in the political discourse; they are not debating proposals or ideals, but each other's constructed images. In Esmeraldas this is stark as most of the local political parties'

beliefs, were largely in line with one another. Their conflicts had to do with local and personal contexts rather than significant differences of ideology. Their inability to follow through on promises and their tendency to draw change from above produced malaise at a variety of points of contact between citizen and state. As the petroleum industry, infrastructure, insecurity, and education were each targeted with controversial programs the collective malaise of the city spread and articulated with one another to shape the larger emotional environment of the city.

When speaking of the Citizens Revolution one of the most common complaints is that there seemed to be a lot of talk and limited action. Revolutionary politics itself leaves an imprint as signs are left in the community to rot and whither as very little changes between the actual political relationships. The most consistent problem on the ground is that despite all of the signs of change, there is little movement from the old system. The imaginaries of care of the revolution are being interpreted through the oligarchies and systems of the past. People cling to their parties in the hope of something different, but it's the partiocracy itself that becomes a root of conflict. This produces both a carnivalesque quality for democracy and a larger sense of insecurity as issues like crime, repeated street protests, and institutional reforms articulate together to produce a larger sense of malaise.

The Walls Talk Back

As the larger system of partiocracy was intensified rather than curbed, proposals on the ground fundamentally shaped local experiences of revolutionary change. There

are two intersecting processes that articulate here. First while the Correa administration promised a neosocialist revival of the state, it adopted corporate logics that appear little different than those from before. The state asserts that there are more paths to fix problems that cut across scales of government and institutions of governance. However as the issues of pollution, insecurity, and infrastructure show, the state continues to be an absent present one. Second as the state limits dissent while at the same time quelling the press, what can people do to resist? Throughout this text I have shown that the history of rebellion in Esmeraldas has taken on new and productive connotations as the city resisted the contradictions of revolutionary discourse. The articulation of these factors reveals how the diffuse materialities of oil act with one another.

The neoliberal logic that was applied to PetroEcuador under the navy has only expanded in their absence. In chapter three I discuss the firing of the mandate 8 workers. This was notable for the contradictions that arose as workers bleed out in the streets. However this issue has expanded wildly over the past few years. This firing preceded a much larger incident as 628 workers were fired for holding shares in a company that contracted with the state to deliver artisanal fishing fuel. This is against the law, as public employees cannot hold a contract with an appendage of the state that they are employed by. However almost none of these workers were aware they had a stake in the corporation. Most had $20-$30 of shares that were signed over to them under a proposal from PetroEcuador more than a decade ago. The government used this as an excuse to fire workers who did not willfully agree to be participants in the company. It was a proposal from corporate heads in Quito. It took more than three years for most workers to

be readmitted it to their posts as the courts repeatedly found in their favor and the government attempted to ignore the justice system. Workers and former workers that resisted or criticized the state's and PetroEcuador's actions were often completely cut off from the corporation. If they were banned from the industrial complex, then they were also effectively severed from their healthcare. The affects engendered by labor and labor lost provokes a dangerous mix of frustration when articulating with the long-term health effects of the refinery. The state is not just firing people; it is making them unable to cope with conditions contracted through their official relationship. The severing of labor corrodes the idea of well-being promised through the philosophy of Living Well, as the state does not acknowledge their debts.

The promises of infrastructure reveal a similar tension. The state takes advantage of the situation, in this case the local political conflicts, and under delivers on a project, blaming other parties for the lack of investment. The state is playing a zero-sum game where people unaffiliated with party bases suffer because of the lack of care of the state. The condition of infrastructure has only worsened as the state has acted too slowly in a milieu where the city government has little power or resources to intercede. In some cases the imaginaries of care in the city can be expanded to cope with problems, but even these bonds have their limits. As I write this the water system of Esmeraldas has just been dealt a catastrophic failure. The slow pace of repairing streets and pipelines did not beat the pace of decay and as of April 24th, 2013 the city center's primary water tank has failed. At this moment there is no potable water in the most densely populated part of Esmeraldas. In a milieu where the industrial miasma has decayed the materiality of

infrastructure, locals believe the state owes them a debt. Potholes, power failures, and water shortages are emblematic of the impediments to creating well-being as there seems to be no cooperation between scales of government and the multiple intersecting bureaucracies. Decision-making continues to be made off of a cost-benefit analysis, rather than the belief in maintaining an equitable quality of life based on a common humanity. The benefits of oil resources continue to not be distributed to this oil town.

Lastly health and pollution continues to be the fundamental problem between Esmeraldas and the state. The state has actually decided to build a new, much larger refinery in the province of Manabi that will eventually replace this one. However the project has multiple problems. The project, a collaboration between Ecuador, Venezuela, and China has ballooned in cost, to nearly $12 billion, from an originally cost of $6 billion. The project's potential is based on the belief that Ecuador will be able to stop exporting crude, generating much more added value. But with this belief are questions of whether will even continue to be an oil producer through the life of the new facility. The total oil reserves of the nation are limited by PetroEcuador's ability to tap them and what increasingly remains is the lower quality, less profitable Oriente Crude. The State Refinery of Esmeraldas has recently begun a rehabilitation of the industrial facility. But the question remains if anything will be significantly different. The state claims that the refinery's scrubber will be made operational, preventing the release of sulfur waste, greatly limiting its release of particulate matter. The state is also refurbishing the FCC plant, basically a giant catalytic convertor, which is essential in making high value added products. In the process this plant is being overhauled, which should limit the release of

gases. Lastly they have pledged to build waste tanks to replace the refinery's waste pits, creating a self-enclosed system to handle the remains of industrial processing. The problem with all of these promises is that they have all been made before. In 1994 when the refinery expanded its capacity, the state made these same vows, but waste still freely flowed into the environment, exposing huge swaths of the community to industrial contamination as waste interacts with the environment producing a miasma, which in turn leads to more decay and the release of more waste. Locals have little faith that something will change because so much of the state economy is tied to the refinery. Nonetheless they also fear that if the Manabi facility enters into operation, then the state will abandon this refinery, letting it full into decay, becoming the white elephant of the community.

So what can people do to resist? How can they make their citizenship agentive? I have shown that they can employ protests, but the problem with such spectacles is that they are momentary. It can be difficult to keep a movement going in the face of a state that does not tolerate criticism. The most sustained protests are dependent on political parties, trapping them in the system of partiocracy and limiting their results. What remains behind is the after-affect of stymied dissent, malaise. In many ways malaise is comparable to pollution. It's the after-affect created by other processes, which becomes meaningful in its own right as it articulates with local conditions to become something new and dangerous. As the state imaginaries of care expand and retreat, malaise is generated, creating unexpected mutations of resistance. The diffuse materialities of oil capture many of the processes that articulate together. Its never just about oil, its about how oil works as an agentive force, shaping health, infrastructure, citizenship, and well-

being as the petroleum assemblage constantly shifts. Sometimes the community responds with marches and protests. In other cases they invoke creative and occasionally disturbing displays. When protests are suspended and the politics of oil creeps onto the walls. When people are cut off from the press and the release of protest, malaise builds, making the walls speak. Murals and graffiti are productive ways to display dissent. In Esmeraldas a mural of the refinery that was once alongside the city cathedral illustrates the two visions of the refinery generating wealth and decay. On one side the refinery is placed among a lush green background, but as you follow its smoke cloud the image turns into a landscape of destruction, full of industrial waste, bones, and consumer garbage. (Figure 10) The Gaspetsa case for example, represented an intensification of the "bleeding out protest." In this case, petroleros filled syringes with their own blood, and then used it to inscribe the word "justice" on a wall near the refinery. More often than not protests are preceded by more normal graffiti that tells the city how workers see political change.

Much of the political imprinting of the city represents a channeling of malaise. It is an attempt to fill in the spaces between protests. But like the issues that are protested the graffiti persists, leaving a written story across the facades of houses and businesses, even as the refinery itself continues to leave an imprint on the bodies of community members. Esmeraldeños, a community represented as already compromised due to their history and their place in the nation, cannot escape the effects of the refinery even if they move. In the eyes of the health sciences they are already sick. The images of resistance consistently comeback to the intersection of the body and the environment, and

Figure 10. Refinery Mural, Esmeraldas, EC

locals have been interpellated as unhealthy subjects rather than healthy citizens (Briggs and Mantini-Briggs 2003: 10). Their status is dictated to them. Among the petroleum assemblage, health becomes a political node that is particularly powerful as it attends to the most fundamental interpretations of well-being. As the refinery shows little improvement and little change in how it relates to Esmeraldas, how can Esmeraldeños have faith in the state? As expectations for revolutionary change have articulated with the local propensity for rebellion, the state project has taken on negative connotations despite its potential.

Neutral

I believe that the fundamental issue of the Citizens Revolution is that it is still living with the baggage of the old system. The Correa administration did not eliminate partiocracy; it fractured it, creating a multiplicity of new relationships still tied to the old practices of conducting the conduct of the state. In my view the revolution has the

potential to create change, but the question remains of whether it can move past normalized political conduct. The biggest issue here is that while the state promised to use petroleum to create substantive relationships, it continues to rely on formalism. Belonging to the right party, the right network of relationships, often trumps the imaginaries of care produced through the state and the city. As the PAIS identity has infected the national citizenship discourse, infiltrating advertising and state slogans, it illustrates how partiocracy prevents the realization of citizenship. This is why the counter-discourses of neoliberalism and neosocialism are so interesting here. While the state represents these as different, they in fact seem to do many of the same things. It is not just the logic of business that is the problem but the logic of redistribution. Both meet at an issue of control and as the state concentrates power, people feel unrepresented.

While Esmeraldas faces many problems tied to oil, oil is useful for identifying how revolutionary change could actually build substantive relationships. Infrastructure is revealing here as this debate highlights how citizens, the city, and the state actually go about doing things to make Esmeraldas better. While the state and city generally focus on grand works, everyday people work together to cope. Amidst an environment of surplus necessities, they identify locations where change is not just possible but necessary. Citizens show their needs, rather than lofty desires. They illustrate the discrepancies between seeing like a state and identifying the political nodes that need to be directed for the betterment of Ecuadorians, not because they are Ecuadorians, but because of common humanity. That is what the spirit of the constitution was. It sought to connect Ecuadorians, respecting their identities and rights, no matter what community

they belong to. But in practice, belonging to the right network or community continues to be what matters. The materialities of oil reveal the critical nodes that can improve the quality of citizenship. They show how different imaginaries of care intersect and how they can potential be engineered to work together. What is interesting about these imaginaries of care is that they identify networks of relations that the state could harness to make substantive citizenship. As people demonstrate care they make an investment in each other. The imaginaries of care act as an agentive force from below.

The critical problem of oil is that it is vibrant matter. It acts as an agent on other objects, creating wide-ranging effects and affects. As oil sublimates or breaks down, its diffuse materialities have wide ranging affects. Some materialities of oil and the relationships they engender can create stronger bonds between citizen and state. However, these same materialities can provoke the reverse as well. Each of these materialities intersects, creating meeting points that the state can, but rarely does harness. As the state fails to address the ways the petroleum leaks, both as material and as affect, sites of potential action are revealed. When I think about this work I routinely come back to the image of "The Revolution is in Neutral" graffiti. That simple line imprints the tensions of change on the city. Located on a school building across from a PetroEcuador training center it captures the resource debate through both text and context. Oil can be harnessed for the state to improve Ecuador's future, but it is hampered by the political baggage of the past. The revolution can move forward or back, it all depends on how they harness the imaginaries of care that infuse the sentiments of belonging that characterize citizenship.

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