

Preface

Throughout the book, the speech of community members is provided in its original form, in either Quichua or Spanish, and is accompanied by its English translation. Quichua excerpts are transcribed into Ecuadorian Unified Quichua, and the Spanish excerpts into standard Castilian. An exception to this is the spellings of the schools and communities, which follow local conventions and were not changed to Unified Quichua. Community members' speech was not altered for grammatical correctness or for clarity. As a result, the Quichua and Spanish reader might notice the local, non-standard aspects of the Saraguro varieties of Quichua and Spanish. The translations into English are my own and are based on my understanding of the local meaning of words and expressions. Each quotation is designated as either Quichua (/Q/) or Spanish (/S/), and is accompanied by its tape number (T #), or its field note number (FN #) and date.

In describing her decision to use the past tense in her ethnographic description of literacy and schooling practices in a Mexican community of southern California, Concha Delgado-Gaitan (1990: 3) notes that because people and 'their conditions changed so rapidly', she felt it would be 'an injustice to use the present tense for fear that the audience would interpret it [and them] in a static way'. Thus, in order 'to depict the essence of the cultural process and change', she opts for the use of the past tense throughout the text. Initially, I had intended to follow Delgado-Gaitan's lead and to do the same. However, as I wrote, revised, and edited the text, I came to feel that consistent use of the past tense tended to portray the Saraguros, their language, culture and communities as obsolete. The invariable use of the past tense seemed to suggest that the unequal relations between the town whites and indigenous Saraguros, or the struggles to maintain Quichua in communities, for instance, had ceased to exist. Thus, in the effort to present the Saraguro communities as continuing to negotiate the remnants of their colonial past, yet at the same time, constantly changing, I employ both present and past tenses. I use the past tense when referring to specific actions and events that took place during my year of investigation in Saraguro, the present tense for general descriptions of the

communities, the schools, the general patterns of interactions between whites and Saraguros, etc.

Lastly, in accordance with the desires of study participants, some of their names have been altered to ensure their anonymity. The majority of participants, however, opted to have their names appear in the text. Their full names, as well as the names of communities, schools, and events are real.