

# Church Administration of Cooperative Labor in the Ecuadorian Highlands

Abril Pérez-Gonzaga and A.J. Faas

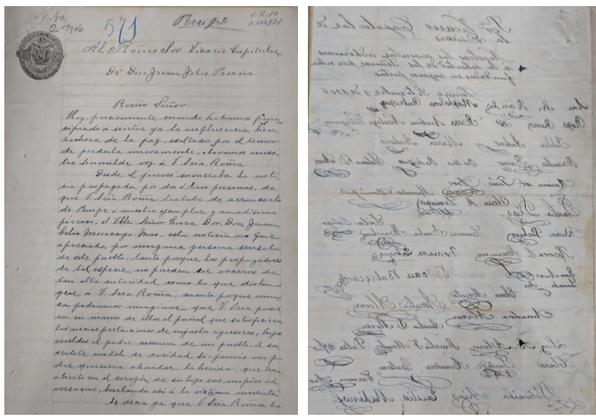
Department of Anthropology

## Abstract

This project is part of a longitudinal study of the historical production of disaster and varieties of cooperation practiced in villages around the stratovolcano Mt. Tungurahua in the Andean highlands of Ecuador. For this project, we studied 188 handwritten reports (*Vicaria Foranea*) of priests in the late Spanish colonial period (late 18th century) and early Republican period (19th century) collected by PI A.J. Faas in the archives of the Archdiocese of Riobamba.

## Research Activities

- Cataloging archival data by converting, labeling, dating, and logging each image collected from Archdiocese archives
- Qualitatively coding themes in each report (*Vicaria Foranea*) and writing summaries
- Themes focused on Church roles in producing fixed human settlements, administering cooperative labor parties (*minga*), and any emergent themes related to volcanic activity, hazards, and disaster around Mt. Tungurahua



## Research Questions

- What was the role of the Church in creating and increasing fixed human settlements around the active stratovolcano?
- What modalities of cooperative labor practice (*minga*) were practiced in the region during the late colonial and early Republican periods?

## Key Findings Thus Far

- Church authorities exercised power over the settlements surrounding Mt. Tungurahua with a detailed and strict record on population
- Church authorities dictated and enforced preventative measures for disasters
- Analysis is ongoing, but thus far we have encountered only limited information related to minga labor practices