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Ecuador Field experience

Chapter 3

Title: Ideal Types of Environmentalism

The goal of this chapter is to discuss and present a typology of environmentalisms in Ecuador. There will be four ideal types being discussed in this chapter that later on we will get into further detail about. These ideal types that will be discussed are not of concrete reality. They are subject to change as such there will be no group that fit neatly into each other. The four categories that are going to be discussed are Eco Imperialism, Ecodependents, Ecoresisters and Eco Entrepreneur organizations. This chapter is to provide knowledge about these groups and how they make Ecuador function.

In Ecuador there are ecoimperialist organizations that fund the Ecuadorian environmental organizations from abroad. The second is ecodependent national funding. Three is ecoresisters, which are national regional or local levels actors that receive little to no resources from abroad and lastly ecoentrepreneur organizations, also national regional or local level groups that receive little to no environmental resources from abroad and are distinctive for their innovative approaches to obtaining resources. Ecoimperialist and ecodependents are tied to each other by funding relationships. Ecoimperalist organizations provide funding to ecodependent organizations. To be more in depth about all of this information I will go ahead and explain them thoroughly.

Ecoimperialist Organizations: foundations are based in countries outside of Ecuador, and have offices in Ecuador, usually the capital which is Quito. These organizations bring resources to focus primarily on biodiversity conservation with a second goal of supporting sustainable economic development. Many people have established them as ecoimperialist because many ecuadorians call them such because they established themselves in Ecuador with their own funds to do what they want. Outspoken leaders don’t seem to like this group as much because they seem to make their own policies and do as they please. Some of these organizations that are categorized in this group are the nature conservancy, the wildlife conservation society, the united states agency for international development. There have been four main criticisms: first they impose their own agenda, they bypass ecuadorian organizations the third comes from indigenious groups and ecoresistent organizations. They believe that these organizations are trying to purchase land to control water sources and create private reserves. The nature conservancy is the main target of this claim since their main focus in their home country. Talking about the United states, it is to protect biodiversity through land purchase. This is not a strategy they use in Ecuador.

National-level organizations that are primarily funded by ecoimperialist organizations and whose agendas match up with those transnational funders are classified as ecodependant organizations. More than 50 percent of their focus is not necessarily on a narrow geographical area. Their budgets vary quite a bit from year to year. They became very successful in some organizations of their own in Ecuador. Some Ecuadorians view them with envy and skepticism, calling them part of the non profit mafia. An example of an ecodependent organization is Fundacion natura. The ecoimperialist and the ecodependant groups come together and have roughly the same mission to get things done so for these groups it is a win win. The three main issues with the ecoimperalist-ecodependent relationships. First is the inconsistency is which results in the boom and bust of staffing within these organizations. The second is the organizations lack of goal setting autonomy which is about people in the organization changing into ecoimperalist moving toward “sustainable development”. The last problem is the ecodependant group must compete for funds. The ecoimperalist have plenty of money to help out but they only care about themselves and not others. This divides these groups which could be working to find a solution to problems but it is limiting their interest in creating an environmental movement.

Ecoresisters: This organization does not normally receive funding from ecoimperialist organizations. When they do request funding for a local project that they have going on that they will need funds for. Ecodependants respond to request for proposals put out by the ecoimperialism. Ecoresisters most often work at the local or regional level in response to a specific grievance, such as the threat of mining and its consequent habitat destruction. They create their agenda: funders do not. The teach communities how to monitor their environment, grab media attention and they also pressure the government. They stand up and fight for their territories and rights. They have developed many natural organizations and even have developed a women's group that supports handcrafted items. This group deals with a lot of issues that takes place in the Ecuadorian country involving their biodiversity and what needs to be saved and what may need to be stopped. Due to resistance in the country and having people not support their ideas as a group is hard. Being self funded can also have stipulations in being a well known group.

Ecoentrepreneur organizations are funded locally through service fees as a means of ensuring “sustainable” funding. These groups are characterized by their pragmatic and innovative approaches to gaining resources. They focus on issues relevant to their communities quality such as clean water, access to green spaces and human health. Since Ecuadorians either pay for these services or receive some form of payment, there is a higher level of awareness regarding these activities and a generally more positive outlook. A group that focuses on these matters is FONAG is a public private organization that was founded in cooperation between The Nature Conservancy and the city of Quito. There is a goal of protecting watersheds in order to protect the city’s drinking water. Since Ecudorians pay for these kind of services they do get some kind of recognition for and they bring more awareness to these problems. This model has been successful that it has replicated into other LAC countries.

This chapter was honestly really hard to understand because all the groups seem to tie in together with one group after another. This chapter was very informative about what these groups do and how they are accomplished and have become known in the Ecuadorian country. I personally can find myself falling into the last group the Ecoentrepreneur organization because I am a people person and I am always looking for a way to change things. I want there to be better drinking water for the people of Ecuador and better resources for health. I don’t care if there is payment or if people donate, you still want to fix the problem. I noticed throughout the chapter reading about these groups some Ecuadorians didn’t like the idea so much of someone coming in and saying what needed to be done and they still don’t seem to be liked. Although the information was very informative and a lot I really have a good understanding of these groups and why they need to exist. The goal of the chapter was to explain these groups thorough and what they meant and represent.

*Lewis, T. L. (2016). Ecuador's environmental revolutions: ecoimperialists, ecodependents, and ecoresisters. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.*

*The Nature Conservancy in Ecuador. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/latin-america/ecuador/.*