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Field experience Ecuador

Chapter 5

Title: Neoliberal Boom, 1987 to 2000: The Rise of Ecodependence

 This chapter is going to discuss and examine international and national forces that shaped Ecuador’s environmentalism during the height of neoliberalism. This chapter will look further into how the country is sustainable and how it became sustainable. The groups that were discussed in chapter 3 will be discussed more such as the eco imperialist organizations used their transnational funding to grow organizations, which altered their structures to become more professional and conserved important habitats. This chapter will discuss how the ecoimperilist changed the approach to the environmental issues and how the ecodepedence reacted to it. Will change take place? Did they disagree or agree? What changes were made? All these questions will be discussed in this chapter.

In 1992, at the United Nations conference short for (UNCED) nicknamed the earth's summit took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil the world turned its thoughts toward trying to compete towards environmental protection and economic growth. When the earthquake hit Ecuador took a hit for the worst, the united states stopped buying goods and trading with them causing the debt that was already there to increase even more. Since they are a country in poverty trades and loans were taking place but there is only so much one person can give. Oil is the number one trade within their country as well as petroleum, if you can’t dig due to destruction then there was no need to spend money and buy. There was a convention on biological diversity and the climate convention discussing the damage of destroying habitats and species. The convention states that it is designed to prevent the destruction of biological species, habitats and ecosystems. Since the agreement was signed and people from all over such as other LAC countries saw that there needed to be change and there was a problem, read the agreement. Ecuador signed it and other radical organizations saw that this was a key movement and became optimistic to take a stand to change. This now was on their agenda and they stated “international priorities also mean resources and possibilities for action”.

Governments around the world felt pressure to respond positively to UNCED. There were also follow-up reports, including an assessment of how well ecuador was able to address “Agenda 21”, the action plan sustainable development that was adopted at the conference. The president created an institution by executive decree just one year after the UNCED the earth’s summit to advise him on how the country should proceed environmentally. Even with other groups developed there was very little process in developing environmental and sustainable actions. The Galapagos island is the most protected area. It has the most biodiversity and the most plant and animal species. Cayambe Coca Reserve which is considered one of the top ten biodiversity hotspots in the world. The agencies who are in charge of protecting this land are underfunded. Alot of laws were being created such as the one in 1998 Ley Especial de Galapagos( special law of Galapagos was passed, which was designed to improve the Galapagos islands conservation.

There was a project designed to protect biodiversity and sustainable development. The Global Environment Facility provided over 7 million in support for the biodiversity project this was implemented to protect and strengthen the protected area system from the period 1994 until 2000. This project was extensive and focused on six areas of effort the first one is policy analysis (2) organizational development, (3) natural area management, (4) ecotourism, (5) improved land use, and minority participation. It was a tremendously ambitious project that sought to integrate the environmental, social, political, and economic aspects of sustainability however the project was considered by many but became a big fail.

In the 1980’s money went to costa rica and then in the 1990’s money went to Ecuador and groups were diversifying. The organization Fundacion Natura was the dominated group of Ecuador for the first 10 years and then other groups started to form causing them to take off. The new organizations that were created focused a lot on their agendas and what needed to be fixed, they focused on location the types of problems that needed to be addressed and their methods. There was a pioneering decision in other words the USAID will have say in many of things and take over, have control of the environmental agenda and operations of Ecuador. The green agenda was primarily funded by ecoimperalist they focused on main issues such as biodiversity and conservation. Many people were in favor of this idea but what was left out of the equation were “brown problems” this affected the ecuadorians immediate quality of life. This affected their air, land and water pollution and urban issues. This was mentioned back in chapter three where we discussed the different groups and what their main goals were.

There were real environmental issues that Ecuadorians wanted to be addressed. Ecuadorians were seeing damage with their own eyes. They saw the damage of oil extraction, burning forest down to grow crops and for people. They also saw the changes in their health and how they were living. Air pollution was seriously a problem and 90% of people agreed. The main concern was for oil extraction taking place in the Amazon. In the end the two groups the Ecoimperalist and the Ecodependent groups came together to combat the decision of the state to privatize and decentralize its policy decisions. Even though the ecodependant groups did not create a self made agenda the two groups joined together to help protect the land and to slow down degradation. People in Ecuador believed that without these groups, matters would have gotten worse. Degradation would have not slowed down and the land would have degraded faster.

Now that I have read this chapter I have a different mindset on what group I would choose to work with. I like that the groups have come together to try to slow down the degradation in their ecosystems but reading this chapter and getting up to the point where I am now, there is more than just protecting your land and your species in it. The one thing to help getting your message across is to let the people have a say in how they feel and what they are for. If there are more Ecuadorians getting involved and voicing what they think, they will fund these organizations. I believe the more people know the more educated they are therefore they will help protect the conservations.

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

Ecuador. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.jica.go.jp/ecuador/english/index.html.