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## Chapter 5 reflection

Chapter 5 of the book considered the switch in ideology and driving forces from the origins era. From 1987- 2000 the author identifies this time period as the Neoliberal boom. The period opened up with a struggling state that was weakened as they continued to follow extractive development techniques and furthered that by opening up the country for foreign investors to take opportunities within Ecuador. This then opened the door to multiple environmentalist organizations to arise, hence the “boom”. Prior to this time there were two major environmentalist organizations being Natura and AE, transitioning over to this period they stayed at the forefront of the transition being models for other startups to base themselves off of. As new organizations started to arise diversification of organizational focuses arose. For example, instead of a broad organizational objective of biodiversity conservation that Natura holds a new organization such as Fundación Ecológica Rescate Jmaeli which focuses on animal rescue and endangered species, based out of Guayaquil. With the founding of these organizations and the start of the “boom” in 1992 the United Nations established the United Nations Conference on Environmental development (UNCED or the Earth Summit). The conference was held in Brazil and attracted representatives from 172 countries and 108 head of states. At this Earth summit over 150 nations signed the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Climate Convention. This was a key moment in Ecuador environmental progression. The overall outcome of the summit had mixed reviews from many, “Governments and business have declared the meeting a success, while charities lined up to declare it the worst political sell-out in decades. The environment secretary, Margaret Beckett, called it a “victory for everyone”, but Oxfam said the outcome fell far short of what was needed to address global problems.” (Oliver). An example of a problem that was not addressed at the meeting that was brought to notice was the topic of renewable energy, “But despite pressure from the EU, no targets were set for the use of renewable energy and, to the disappointment of developing nations hoping to break into export markets,...” (Oliver) Personally, I think that if renewable energy was actually discussed in depth at this point on a big stage with everyone listening efforts may have developed quicker and we may even be further than we are now had those conversations happened. Following the Earth Summit, the then President of Ecuador appointed a new position that would be his environmental advisor and would be the head decision maker in terms of development, the position was call the President’s Environmental Advisory Commission (CAAM). The development of the organization was done with the help of transnational funder USAID and others further showing the weakness of the state and the need for these international organization’s presence within the country to ensure that things get done. Within the first couple years of this position to be effect the first position holder was replaced due to his plan of “sustainable development” within the country which included “sustainable petroleum extraction”. Moving forward the country spend time conserving land and creating new national parks to ensure the continuous conservation of the given land. Although action was taken to make this happen by the government if it wasn’t for USAID or other transnational funders the initiative would not have been taken. This further proves that ecoimperialist come into countries and enforce their agenda on the weak state in order to satisfy their overall organizational goals. Within this time period the environmentalist sector was dominated by Ecodependent organizations which received a substantial amount of funding from transnational funders to carry out large scale project to conserve and protect biodiversity.

As more funds became available and as more organizations arose a sense of professionalism needed to be established by the funders to ensure that the money that they were investing was going to the right places. Just because there was an abundance and a boom in the amount of environmental

organizations does not mean that all of them are quality organizations in terms of structure, efficiency, etc. To be held accountable organizations that received funding were required to fill out paperwork, prepare reports and do financial audits. Large donors were very strict with their guidelines and enforce professionalism upon the organizations that they funded. The outlook on this strategy was varied and ultimately separated the organizations to show who were the top-notch leaders of the sector and those who may not be as accountable. Some organizations stated that they are glad that these standards are enforced because in turn it keeps them as organized as possible and they believe that organization is one of the major keys to success and efficiency. Other find the work as discriminatory in the sense that they think the funder makes organizations do it because they know they can successfully complete it therefore the funder are not obligated to provide funds allowing them to hold on to more of their money. For example, one NGO worker stated "I hate USAID. They are degrading and horrific. I hate the Germans even more. But we never embezzled. I don't blame them because there have been abuses. When you go into it they assume you are wrong, a criminal. They are surprised if you do a good job". In my opinion, I think that it is necessary for these funders to be strict in terms of professionalism. Some organizations such as USAID are dumping millions of dollars into funding these organizations, they need to ensure that that money is being used properly and is being used for a purpose and is making an overall impact. As stated earlier there are organizations that receive funding for projects and fail to carry out the project or they use the funds prematurely and run out of operating funds to successfully complete the project. These transnational funders are putting their name and reputation on the line the least that they deserve is periodic reports and audits. Within establishing a strict professional environment, the Ecoimperialists pushed out the lower end/unstable Ecodependent organizations and only left room for the ones that were successful in carrying out their projects which shared the same organizational goals and values as the funders. It can be said that without the transnational funders nothing like this would have ever happened and the country would not be even close to where it was environmentally at the time.

However, at the time these ecoimperialist organizations were pushing mostly conservation type projects followed by environmental policy projects, while both these issues were important, citizens felt that the ecoimperialist were missing out on a core group of issues related to human quality of life. The group of issues being called "brown issues" were problems that effect Ecuadorians immediate quality of life, such as air, land, and water pollution especially in the air and water is a serious problem. Along with these brown issues not being considered or funded ecoresisters that pushed against extractive development (favors US in terms of imports considering a large portion of the USs oil came from Ecuador at the time) were not funded by the ecoimperialist organizations, again because it did not fall under their narrow scope of biodiversity conservation.

Transnational funders eventually identified this issue and concern and addressed it in the sense that they began to attempt to integrate people in and around the national parks and protected areas into the economy of those areas through ecotourism development and sustainable agriculture. For example, large amounts of bamboo were harvested to build a building within one of the parks. Another example is shown in the sense that large amounts of sugar cane are processed into alcohol to serve to tourist within the areas. With this shift in ideology ecoimperialist and ecodependents addressed the issue of glaring neglect of human needs and factors within the environment. Which can further reason why these kinds of organizations can be good for the area even if they seem to "impose" their will on the state and people of the country, in the end it is for the overall good and betterment of the surrounding environment. Many of the ecodependents and ecoimperialist have great intentions and look to further the education and environmental needs of the country of Ecuador as a whole. However, since they put so much money into these projects and educational services these organizations must be

much more structured, professional, and organized to ensure that the overall objectives of the organization and the greater good of the area are satisfied.

The most significant issues with these ecodependent organizations during this time period is that the funds made available through the debt for nature swaps that started occurring and that made a large portion of funds available for environmental projects in exchange for a relief of a large portion of debt. The primary organization that received these kinds of funds was Natura. Various other professionalized ecodependent organizations felt that they deserved a portion of the money that was made available. These organizations largely believed that Natura was unable to handle such large sums of money efficiently. This was the beginning of the period's decline, it created friction among organizations and resulted in competition that was not productive towards the overall goal of all the environmental organizations. The animosity created among organizations drive them further and further away from unity in which they could all work together to accomplish bigger issues

#### Works Cited:

Oliver, M., & Jeffery, S. (2002, September 04). Earth summit. Retrieved September 28, 2017, from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2002/sep/04/theissuesexplained.greenpolitics>