AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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ABSTRACT

This research explores differences in environmental worldviews and connections to the land globally and more specifically in a case study of NGOs working in the Ecuadorian Cloud Forest. The aims of this project are to investigate different environmental worldviews expressed between western NGOs and non western local NGOs and to pose these questions 1) what environmental worldviews and ethics are at play in addressing conservation globally and specifically in the Cloud Forest of Ecuador? 2) How do these worldviews influence models for conservation? 3) How do locally-run projects differ from foreign NGOs in addressing the combined needs of the environment and the people in Ecuador?

I work to establish a framework for comparing the environmental worldviews of foreign environmental NGOs that of local NGOs, by researching environmental worldviews around the world as influenced by culture, society,
history and religion. By using research on case studies done by Jim Igoe, Carolyn Merchant, John Schelhas and Max Pfeffer, I explore the dominant Western worldview of conservation and how its introduction of the National Park model has impacted local communities globally. By comparing this Western worldview of conservation via preservation in National Parks to the nonwestern worldview of integrative models for conservation, I hope to establish a framework for how looking at conservation from the perspective of local communities may prove more beneficial to the future of conservation projects globally.

This case study centers around four main community-based conservation projects in the Ecuadorian Cloud Forest and asks how their grassroots operations differ from the Ecuadorian National Park system in their efforts to educate and support local communities. This project proposes to dissect these projects designed by local and foreign NGOs to see how they are shaped by their environmental worldviews and whether that worldview includes just the needs of the environment or takes into account the needs of the people as well. This is done through a combination of participant observation and semi-structured open-ended interviews. All data in this ethnography is qualitative and draws on three bodies of literature that serve as frames or approaches to this topic: environmental worldviews, political ecology, and environmental justice. By using these three approaches I show that the environment and ultimately efforts for conservation do not exist within a vacuum but rather lay within a broader context of beliefs, society, and history.
Protecting the Forests and The People: Exploring Alternative Conservation Models that Include the Needs of Communities: An Ecuadorian Case Study

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Melissa Laurel Gittelman, Author
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose of the Study

When addressing the current worldwide environmental issues, the approaches of environmental worldviews, political ecology, and environmental justice offer a different way of looking at conservation. We cannot just discuss the need for conservation and preservation, without also recognizing the intricate interweaving of politics, economy and society. The approach of environmental worldviews determines how cultures and communities view their place in the environment and its place in their lives. Political ecology responds to these diverse issues of conservation and community through a political lens that recognizes the importance of giving everyone a voice in the debate. Issues of social and environmental justice connect with the work of political ecology to provide a voice to the people who lack political power in societies. All three bodies of literature approach the topic of conservation from different angles. Nevertheless they do not exist independently of each other, rather they appear across interdisciplinary fields in today’s research.

Environmental degradation is a global concern as the impacts of global climate change and loss of biodiversity threaten not only the underdeveloped world but also everyone. In addition, the world now feels smaller with the growth of globalization connecting cultures that once felt worlds apart. A number of the environmental issues that exist today reflect centuries of a dominant Western worldview representing the Judeo-Christian beliefs of
dominion over the earth for human’s benefit (Dunlap 1997). Over time the recognition of a need to protect what remains of these key ecosystems led to the early environmental movements. In the United States this environmental movement helped introduce the first National Parks and the National Park Act signed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1916. This shift in consciousness toward the environment represents a new environmental worldview, still very Western in its application.

Just as the West imposed industrialization and modernization on the underdeveloped and developing world, they now wish to import their models for conservation. While the Western world industrialized in the 18th and 19th centuries, parts of the world continued to live closely to the land. Where before the majority of indigenous and local populations lived sustainably upon the land, now with the influence of globalization they yearn to increase production for export in order to enter the global economy. This shift in production has led to further degradation of precious landscapes. In reaction the United States now urges for protection of these lands from the people who once treated them sustainably before their entry into global markets. As a result, the new Western environmental worldview of preservation through National Parks and protected areas designates the majority of inhabited land to be protected in countries like Costa Rica, Tanzania, and Ecuador.

Ethnographies done of forest and biodiversity conservation projects in countries like Costa Rica, Honduras and Tanzania/Kenya have revealed that
Western models of preservation via National Parks have helped protect forests and wildlife but denied local farmers and herders the subsistence livelihoods they have depended upon for generations (Ndaskoi 2003; Pfeffer and Schelhas 2008). Although these Western models for protecting biodiversity and forests through preservation do benefit the ecosystems of these places, they do not take into account the needs of the people who once lived on this land. Thus the native and local people of these lands continue to drop further into poverty and resentment as their land is placed behind the walls of National Parks. Most research done on this topic has revealed the devastating effect of imposing western models on native cultures, but very little has presented a viable solution.

Research done by Schelhas and Pfeffer in Costa Rica offers the conclusion that models for conservation that take into account the needs of the local people would be more beneficial for the longevity of protecting people and forests (2008). That is why I endeavor to explore the recent emergence of local models for conservation in Ecuador’s Cloud Forest, in order to display how indigenous and local worldviews about nature can lead to positive projects to conserve the forests but also provide for the livelihood needs of the people. These local grassroots models for conservation could serve as a model for other local communities facing the same devastating effects of globalizing Western conservation models.
Organization of Thesis

This research attempts to shine a light on the issues of globalized conservation models from the United States used in developing countries through the lenses of environmental worldviews, political ecology and environmental justice. By doing so we can begin to address the intertwined issues of conservation, politics, inequality and the needs of societies. In order to do this I start Chapter 2 (Literature Review) by using the theories of environmental worldviews presented by Gail Wells and Carolyn Merchant to compare the differing environmental worldviews that are operating in the constructed goals of Biodiversity Conservation projects by non-profit organizations and NGOs in the Ecuadorian Cloud Forest. Then I present the worldviews of Western society and its influence on the National Park model used globally. In contrast to these Western worldviews, I present the differing worldviews of indigenous and non-Western cultures to show how they differ greatly in their relationships with the earth. Finally by comparing the worldviews at play not only in Ecuador but also worldwide between the Western worldview and more locally influenced views, I am able to analyze how the issues of Political Ecology and environmental justice appear in the application of conservation models in these countries.

I continue the Literature Review by approaching the topics of political ecology and environmental justice. Political ecology is defined by Mark Sutton as “the study of the day-to-day conflicts, alliances, and negotiations that ultimately
result in some sort of definitive behavior; how politics affects or structures resource use" (2004: 312). When applying political ecology to the issue of conservation and environmental worldviews, I looked to investigate how politics plays a role in the imposition of Western models for conservation in post-colonial countries in the form of environmental imperialism. This directly correlates to issues of environmental justice, which I use out of its original context of a struggle by minority populations in the United States to fight against issues of discriminative placement of landfills, factories, and pollution in low-income communities. Instead in the case of my research I stretched the purpose of environmental justice as I used its pleas for equal representation of all stakeholders regardless of social class, race, or ethnicity in the conversations around conservation. In the case of my research the injustice is seen more as exclusion from needed resources and a push for more local voices and grassroots projects introduced into conservation.

In the last section of my Literature Review, I offer a list of alternative conservation models that involve the needs and voices of local people. Each alternative is presented with both pros and cons and flows from the most minimal approach of buffer zones to the alternative of community-based ecotourism. This chapter sets up the frame for my analysis of data in the field and will return in chapters 5 and 6 as I present my case study on alternative conservation models in Ecuador and discuss this importance for combating the negative impacts of the National Park system.
Chapter 3 sets up the history of Ecuador and tells the background of agrarian movements that transformed the peasantry class. It also offers an overview of National Parks and local conservation in Ecuador as well as a description of the Cloud Forest ecosystem where I conducted most of my research. In Chapter 4 I describe the research methods I used for my ethnography in Ecuador and how I chose my research sites. Finally, Chapter 5 presents my research findings on the relationships between the local Ecuadorian people and their environment. Then it discusses seven prominent themes that emerged from my interviews and participant observation. Each theme is supported by quotes from my interviewees. The themes reveal changing worldviews, acknowledgement of the dependence of local people on their land, needs for alternative models that support local needs, and issues with National Park Systems. The interviewees suggest ways they incorporate the communities and how education and integration of local ecological knowledge are both integral to successful projects in conservation.

In chapter 6, I discuss how this research connects back to the literature and answers my research questions. I connect the environmental worldviews of the people interviewed to that of the non-Western worldviews and show how these connections with the earth offer different answers to the plea for conservation. Here I conclude that conservation in the form of National Parks will not serve us best into the future and we must consider the needs and beliefs of the populations living in these areas. Alternative projects like ecotourism and
community-supported conservation may pave the way to a better future between humans and nature.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Establishing Environmental Worldviews and Conservation Ethics

Gail Wells in her essay on the *Tillamook Legend and Frontier Culture* defines a worldview as a “mental lens or framework that people living in a given time and place use, mostly without thinking about it, to make sense of their world” (1996:38). Since a worldview can shape the way we view our surroundings and “present certain choices as logical and reasonable, and devalues or discounts or eliminates other choices,” people with differing worldviews may come into conflict with each other when deciding how to address certain problems (Wells 1996:38).

When worldviews are projected onto nature, people tend to differ cross culturally. Carolyn Merchant (2005) in *Radical Ecology* explains how worldviews shape our environmental ethics and she classifies these dominant and emergent ethics as a way to explain the varying lenses used to look at nature. First to define an ethic, Aldo Leopold in his essay “The Land Ethic”, defines an ethic as, “ecologically, [as] a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence” (1949:202). The first environmental ethic Merchant describes fits the dominant ethic of the Western worldview. She titles this an egocentric ethic, which is “grounded in the self” and promotes the salvation of the individual over the group (Merchant 2005:65). When the egocentric person views nature, they see it as mechanistic and instrumental to their own needs, thus permitting individuals to “extract and use natural resources to enhance
their own lives and those of other members of society” (Merchant 2005: 65).
This dominant ethic reflects the Judeo-Christian ethic spelled out in Genesis I, 28: “Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it” (Merchant 2005: 68). As a result of this dominant ethic of individual dominion over nature for one’s own instrumental needs, we experience the perpetuation of resource extraction industries like logging, mining, and oil drilling.

The second ethic that emerges out of the Western worldview and functions still alongside the dominant egocentric ethic is that of homocentric ethics (Merchant 2005). The homocentric ethic, also referred to as anthropocentric, dovetails with the utilitarian model of philosophers like Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mills who argue for the greatest good for the greatest number (Merchant 2005). Homocentric ethics are founded in the importance of supporting society not just the individual. The homocentric ethic reflects an environmental worldview that sees humans as “stewards and caretakers of the natural world,” thus assigning them the job of managing nature for the “benefit of the human species, not for the intrinsic benefit of other species” (Merchant 2005: 73). This ethic fits into the goals of Marx who wanted to “better the human condition by using science and technology to meet human needs for food, clothing, shelter and fuel and to overcome the necessities imposed by nature” (Merchant 2005: 74). Most environmental justice movements are framed around this homocentric model.
The third emergent ethic, usually fostered by environmentalists in the West, is ecocentrism. Ecocentrism views “the whole environment, including inanimate elements, rocks, and minerals along with animate plants and animals” as holding intrinsic value (Merchant 2005: 75). This ethic reflects the worldview espoused by figures like John Muir and Aldo Leopold who wrote “The Land Ethic.” For the situation occurring in the Cloud Forest, Leopold would argue that an ecological ethic is important because it acts as a “mode of guidance for meeting ecological situations so new or intricate, or involving such deferred reactions, that the path of social expediency is not discernible to the average individual” (1949:203). Without this guidance humans would destroy the forests without thinking, out of a desire to support their own needs like in egocentrism and the needs of the community in homocentrism. For the ecocentric like Leopold, it is inconceivable that an “ethical relation to the land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for the land, and a high regard for its value” (Leopold 1949:214). By value he does not mean economic value but intrinsic and philosophical value. This model took great strides away from the dominant ethics mentioned above, yet somehow it missed something along the way.

This ecocentric model couples with the constructed notion of wilderness in the American mind. According to William Cronon in “The Trouble with Wilderness,” after Americans conquered the majority of the native people’s land, what remained “came to embody the national frontier myth, standing for the wild freedom of America’s past” (1996:78). This constructed notion of
wilderness came with a price though, as in the American minds the wild existed only without human presence. Thus in order to preserve wilderness, the native people living there had to be removed. So as this model for preservation situates itself in other parts of the world, especially the Global South, it acts to remove all local and native people from their land in order to create this notion of pristine wilderness, so cherished by the frontiersmen of the north.

In contrast to these ethical models for nature, local people find themselves situated within what Merchant deems the partnership ethic. According to Merchant, the partnership ethic “holds that the greatest good for the human and nonhuman communities is in their mutual living interdependence” (2005: 83). This ethic looks out for the greatest good of the community and nature as they work together sustainably for survival. According to Merchant, a partnership ethic “entails a viable relationship between a human community and a nonhuman community in a particular place, a place in which connections to the larger world are recognized through economic and ecological exchanges” (2005: 84). The partnership ethic synthesizes the ecocentric ethic of the United States preservationists that holds consideration for all living and non-living things in nature, and the human-centered ethic of homocentrism that focuses on the greatest good for the community and their human needs. Both ethics alone tend to ignore the needs and importance of the other. Within the partnership ethic humans act to fulfill their vital needs while also supporting the needs of nature, in a reciprocal relationship (Merchant 2005). New local models for conservation sprouting out
of areas of Africa, Papua New Guinea, Ecuador and other countries offer this partnership ethic (Igoe 2004; Simpson 2009; West 1999).

In both Jim Igoe’s book *Conservation and Globalization* and the Film “Milking the Rhino,” we see prime examples of how the Maasai tribe has developed its own model for conservation based on the tenets of the partnership ethic (Igoe 2004; Simpson 2009). In the film and the book, Maasai NGOs appear as a vehicle to address the tribe’s exclusion from the parks and a solution for the needs of the people in harmony with nature. These needs coalesce in the form of locally run and supported ecotourism. This way, the local people benefit and nature is treated more sustainably. In Ecuador, similar conservation models are springing up throughout the Cloud Forest. As will be described in the history of Ecuador below, local and indigenous communities depend on the land for producing food both for profit from the market and for personal sustenance. Their dependence on the land for financial and nutritional survival runs up against the desires of Western NGOs to protect what is left of the fertile land from the destruction of produce and cattle farmers. Destruction of the land resulting from these practices is evident, but removal of local people from their land causes further poverty for already poor farmers. Thus the partnership ethic, in an effort to bring “humans and nonhuman nature into a dynamically-balanced, more nearly equal relationship with each other,” works to involve the desires of conservationists and farmers to preserve land but benefit the people at the same time (Merchant 2005: 84).
Dominant Western Worldviews and National Park Systems

In order to begin, it is important to discuss the shifting relationship between the Western people and nature as well as the changing connotations of the word and concept of wilderness. In the early days of European and American interactions with nature, most efforts were performed to conquer, tame and dominate the natural world. Reasons for this come from the earliest definitions of wilderness as described by William Cronon as “‘deserted,’ ‘savage,’ and ‘desolate,’ ‘barren’—in short, a waste” (1996: 70). These images were written in biblical stories and fables about what existed in nature. As Cronon references in Exodus it is written, “they are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in” (1996:71). Wilderness back then was where the devil dwelled and evil lurked. This image promoted a very egocentric and homocentric approach to nature. The first settlers in the United States acted quickly to destroy the wilderness and subdue it into submission to human needs.

During the Industrial Revolution and shift from frontier to city this construction of the word “wilderness” made a great paradigm shift in the minds of Americans. This separation from the land led to a shift of North Americans away from nature, moving them off the farmland and into the city’s many factories. As the 1900s approached new thoughts on nature emerged from the transcendental movement of writers like Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In 1862 Thoreau declared, “in wildness is the preservation of the world” (Cronon 1996: 69). These writers spoke of the spiritual aspects of
wilderness and its ability to bring one closer to God. As a result the first environmentalists, such as John Muir, arose to fight for the protection of what remained of untouched nature. This led to the U.S. Government, under President Theodore Roosevelt, designating the first National Park at Yellowstone in 1872 and eventually the National Park Act was instated in 1916 (Cronon 1996). This movement defined wilderness as pristine nature bereft of human presence and influence. Wilderness could not exist in their minds if humans inhabited it.

William Cronon chalks this transformation in thought up to two concepts: “the sublime and the frontier” (1996:72). For theorists like Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, William Gilpin, and others, “sublime landscapes were those rare places on earth where one had more chance than elsewhere to glimpse the face of God” (Cronon 1996:72). This romanticized vision of the sublime most specifically centered on the areas declared as wilderness for their pristine, untouched landscapes. For Americans the sublime places where God could be found describes their choices for the first National Parks—Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Rainier, Zion (Cronon 1996). Poets and writers described these landscapes with such glory and emotion, designating them as special lands separate from those inhabited by humans.

Cronon’s (1996) other reason that shaped the shift of wilderness is the concept of the frontier. Americans living in the drab cities, dirty with the pollution of factories, looked to the frontier as “the best antidote to the ills of an overly refined and civilized modern world” through “a return to simpler, more
primitive living” (Cronon 1996:73). For the restricted city person, the last frontier offered that true democratic freedom desired by all Americans. There in the wild, unsettled lands they could shed the constraints of civilization and get back in touch with their true primitive selves. Both Gail Wells and William Cronon address the historian Frederick Jackson Turner’s theory on the American Frontier. He offers, “all of American social development can be explained by the presence of a large space that offered free land and resources and the opportunity for Americans to come in and seize them—in a word, Frontier” (Wells 1996: 35). Emerging from this mindset came organizations like the Boy Scouts of America and the Sierra Club, and as mentioned above this myth of the vanishing frontier laid the “seeds of wilderness preservation in the United States, for if wild land had been so crucial in the making of the nation, then surely one must save its last remnants” in the protected areas for future generations to enjoy (Cronon 1996:75). From these two concepts developed the new vision of wilderness and ultimately the ecocentric ethic of the American environmental movement. This is not to say that other ethics are not at play in the North American worldview, but for this thesis we will focus on the American ethic of preservation of wilderness for the salvation of humans and the protection of these important landscapes.

Impact of the National Park System Through Globalization

It is important to remember that Cronon’s definition of wilderness protection excludes the needs and existence of humans, because at that point in
American history humans were so far removed from nature that their vision of protection meant the elimination of human influence. One point missed in all of this is the fact that these lands never existed without the presence of humans. Native Americans called these landscapes home for centuries before settlers arrived in America. In contrast Native Americans who lived and depended on the many areas, that were declared National Parks felt a deep separation from their sacred land. For example the Sioux who lived within the Badlands National Park area in South Dakota depended upon that land as their reservation given by the United States government. The declaration of National Parks entailed “evictions of indigenous communities from areas that were economically and spiritually important to them” (Igoe 2004: 70). In reaction to the drawn boundaries on their land, Native Americans reacted with resentment toward parks and oftentimes caused conflicts with the government over the controlled lands.

This type of conservation is referred to as “fortress conservation” by anthropologists like Jim Igoe and Dan Brockington. Dan Brockington lays out three major components of “fortress conservation;” I will mention the first two here:

the idea of ecosystems that have been threatened by human activity, but have now been restored to their original ‘pristine conditions,’ and the second, 2) building on this, discourses emerge claiming that the people evicted from a specific protected area are outsiders, not originally indigenous to the unit of land in question. (2002: 70)
As explained above this fortress model of conservation emerges out of the development of the American environmental worldview that in order to preserve the last tracts of beauty on the planet we must protect them with laws and borders restricting long-term human interaction. This ‘wilderness’ concept now steps beyond the boundaries of the United States. Going along with the “west knows best” idea of globalization, the Western world has deemed the American model for conservation the best, because according to European conservationists, “American parks were an unblemished success story” (Igoe 2004: 78). Thus worldwide Western conservationists are applying the ecocentric worldview of the United States across the globe to biodiverse and valued landscapes such as the Amazon and Serengeti Desert.

Globalization’s role in spreading the National Park System of conservation takes a one-size-fits-all model. According to Jim Igoe, “as a distinctly Western conservation model, parks are usually incompatible with indigenous conservation models, which aren’t usually premised on the total exclusion of community members over large territories” (2004: 10). In the case of globalized conservation models, the Western model frames conservation in a very preservationist way by creating parks and other protected areas, “where human habitation is forbidden” (Igoe 2004: 71). Just as Westerners view themselves as separate from the nature in their protected areas, they imagine that those in places like Africa, South America, and Papua New Guinea also live separate from the land. As globalization spreads organizations like the IMF, World Trade Organization, and World Bank encourage people of these cultures
to abandon nature and enter the global economy by entering the wage-labored work force in cities.

Some people tended to resist this transition from dependency on the land to dependency on a paycheck but as a result National Reserves and Parks impact them severely by separating them from the land they depend on. For most Westerners separation between wildlife and humans “seems like a natural arrangement: African wildlife exists in wilderness or nature, a place untouched by the ravaging effects of human activities” (Igoe 2004: 14). In the Western mind “national parks equal nature and nature does not include humans” (Igoe 2004: 14). As the spread of the National Park model continues, it hurts people who need the land for foraging, farming, herding and other practices dependent upon the land for survival in countries like Costa Rica, Honduras and my focus for this research, Ecuador.

In John Schelhas and Max Pfeffer’s book Saving Forests, Protecting People? they interviewed local farmers in Costa Rica and Honduras who are experiencing the troubles of National Parks taking over their lands and restricting their own land use (2008). In the Preface to the book the authors wrote, “it was clear that local people often resented national parks and forest conservation” (2008: xiii). In both case studies they received similar responses from local people about their lack of voice in the process of conservation and their inability to meet their needs with the strict rules placed on the amount of trees allowed per person on the outside of the parks. These experiences reflect some of the issues and
concerns felt by people forced to give up their land in the name of conservation. Schelhas and Pfeffer recognize that globalization serves as a driving force behind the spread of the National Park system as a globally used conservation model. They are also careful to not exclude the other side of globalization’s coin, which includes “natural resource extraction, forestry, agriculture and consumption” (2008: 7). It is the whole of this globalization model that impacts all local and indigenous people discussed in this thesis. For without the Western act of extraction and production in places like Africa, Costa Rica, Honduras and Ecuador, the people would not experience their original displacement from their land.

In the case presented here by Schelhas and Pfeffer, the people interviewed were not indigenous but rather recently moved mestizos forced into the forest areas so that “large-scale agricultural operations [could take] over more fertile agricultural lands” (2008: 9). As I will discuss later on in the case study I conducted in Ecuador, those I interviewed were also poor mestizo farmers moved on to less fertile land in the forests by larger agricultural operations. As Steven Yearly (1996) discusses, globalization not only spreads industrial models, economic structures, and development, it also displaces people in the process. By universalizing production and consumption patterns, Yearly (1996) recognizes, we also globalize environmental degradation and increase poverty. Through this process of globalization, the environmental concerns created by the same system become more of a universal concern as the world begins to feel smaller. Ultimately this effect leads to the spread of
Western ideals for how to protect the planet as its deterioration impacts us all. Thus Western environmentalists view it as their duty to take care of global issues because they feel issues in places like the Amazon affect people in the United States. According to Yearly, these “universalized approaches, especially in an unequal and divided world, may not be successful unless they are adapted to address specific local needs” (1996:9). In the examples below it is obvious that the ideals of the developed world and the needs of the people most impacted by their conservation models clash.

For the local people interviewed in Schelhas and Pfeffer’s book who now find themselves living along the border of National Parks, “biodiversity conservation hinders their ability to meet their livelihood needs and ambitions” (2008:1). As a result of their exclusion from resources, local people on the outskirts of parks often times break park rules by entering parks to cut trees or hunt to fulfill their subsistence needs. In response, park guards and the general Western public, view local people as a hindrance to conservation and often believe that people outside the developed world lack the ability to have environmental concern. This idea emerges from the popular belief that “environmental concern was limited primarily to residents of wealthy industrialized nations, who had what have been called postmaterialist values” (Dunlap and Mertig 1997: 2). While a grain of truth does exist for this argument, especially in these cases where people require meeting their subsistence needs before acknowledging the needs of environmental conservation, it is not fair to conjecture that they in fact do not care for the environment at all. Often the
arguments for bringing National Parks to underdeveloped countries goes along with the belief that the people lack concern for their environment and need the ideals of Western environmentalists to teach them.

When applying globalization and environmentalism to non-Western countries, environmentalists forget that “local people generally have their own environmental and conservation beliefs and values,” that differ from the dominant Western worldview (Schelhas and Pfeffer 2008: 6). Schelhas and Pfeffer argue, “global and local environmentalism may have differing content, rooted in various social, cultural, political, and economic interests” (2008: 7). In another case study done in Papua New Guinea by Paige West (2006) called Conservation is Our Government Now, we witness the conflicts of power and control between different tribes who disagree on who is in charge of conservation. This conflict emerged as environmentalist NGOs combined forces with indigenous groups to fight off oil drilling companies on the island. As a result of their alliance, the NGOs were able to encourage conservation projects among the tribes. Unfortunately each community had different views on how this should look and whom it should benefit, thus causing continual conflicts. This case again displays the issues of not recognizing differences between the interests and worldviews for people involved in conservation projects. I will discuss this in more depth when I get to political ecology and localized models of conservation, but it is important to mention here why the globalization of the National Park model butts heads with local concerns.
As the population grows exponentially, placing more pressure on the needs of those living in closer dependence upon the land, the Western world must recognize that a model for conservation that reflects our own independence from the earth will not suffice. Below I will present a wide range of different environmental worldviews that reflect the non-Western world in a hope to convey that when looking at modes of conservation we must acknowledge that despite globalization we do not all share the same worldviews and necessities.

*Global Worldviews*

Taking a look back at the first lens used for this research, we will explore the last environmental ethic brought into play by Carolyn Merchant as it applies to the global worldviews I will present now. To reiterate, the partnership ethic blends the ecocentric view of the importance of all living things on the planet and the homocentric view of utilitarianism by maximizing benefit to the earth and people. The partnership ethic is not just an invention by Merchant, but rather reflects the spiritual philosophies of many religions and indigenous cultures. For example, the Eastern religions of Hinduism, Jainism, Taoism and Buddhism all view nature and humans as interrelated, unlike Western religions that separate man from nature and usually give him dominion over it. In Hinduism we are all gods, even animals, and so there exists organic solidarity between humans and nature (Calicott 1994). By viewing humans as a part of nature, these spiritual worldviews value the needs of both the human and
nature, because they are equal. The Western worldview in contrast, takes humans out of nature, causing an evaluation of whose needs are more important. In addition to religious beliefs, many indigenous tribes believe in the position of humans within nature lending to the partnership ethic. For example, the Kalinga people of the Philippines believe in interdependence between people and nature, which relies on a give and take: “we take care of the land and the earth also takes care of us” (Reuther 2005: 101). In Bolivia, as well as Ecuador and other South American countries, there exists the belief in Pachamama, an Andean deity representative of nature (Cadena 2010). They believe that Pachamama, when treated well, brings good fortune in the form of fertile soil and rains, but when treated poorly, retaliates with droughts or natural disasters.

In South America, indigenous people have been fighting with the state for a long time to bring the voice of Pachamama to the table in debates about the environment. Recently in Bolivia their first indigenous president, Evo Morales, is now set to pass the “Law of Mother Nature,” which “makes humans equal to all other living things and establishes 11 new rights for nature, including the right to life, the right to pure water and clean air, and the right to not have cellular structure genetically modified” (Price 2011:1). This move on the part of the Bolivian government proves that a different environmental worldview exists that places humans and nature as equals and sees a path of harmony between them. In the Chapter 7 of the 2008 Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, it states “Nature or Pachamama, where life becomes real and reproduces itself, has the right to be integrally respected in its existence, and to the maintenance
and regeneration of its life cycles, structures, functions, and evolutionary processes” (Cadena 2010:3). For Ecuadorian people, especially those from one of the many indigenous tribes, nonhuman nature including mountains has a voice and a right to speak in politics. They view nature to include humans though, unlike most North American worldviews of nature. Everything is equal, so it is just as important for the peasant farmers to thrive as it is for the forest and other species. In this environmental worldview or partnership ethic, we see the most recent form of locally grown conservation efforts emerging, as these non-profit organizations look for the greatest good for humans and nonhumans alike.

As will be shown in my research, not all of the local communities surrounding the areas of the Cloud Forest that I am focusing on, are indigenous. Instead the majority of them are local mestizo who depend on the land for a means of making a living and supporting their families. The majority of the communities have lived closely with the land for generations and have a deep knowledge of their surroundings. Maintaining a close relationship with the land lends itself to a deeper connection and knowledge of the landscape and species one encounters every day. Since their livelihoods depend on these forests for survival, they are forced to seek out better ways to conserve and support their communities.

*Political Ecology*

To begin, I will present some possible definitions for Political Ecology
presented by Paul Robbins’ (2004) *Political Ecology*. Robbins lists multiple definitions by different authors on political ecology in order to convey that there is no one definition shared by all. I will present two of the definitions listed by Robbins that relate best. Robbins quotes M. J. Watts first:

> To understand the complex relations between nature and society through a careful analysis of what one might call the forms of access and control over resources and their implications for environmental health and sustainable livelihoods. (Robbins 2004: 16)

Next he quotes P. Stott and S. Sullivan:

> Identified the political circumstances that forced people into activities which caused environmental degradation in the absence of alternative possibilities...involved the query and reframing of accepted environmental narratives, particularly those directed via international environment and development discourses. (Robbins 2004:16).

Both definitions touch on the fact that the environment and issues surrounding it do not exist within a vacuum. Instead multiple narratives surround it as we approach the issues of politics, society, and necessity together. A simplified way of defining political ecology is in the definition I used earlier by Mark Sutton as “the study of the day-to-day conflicts, alliances, and negotiations that ultimately result in some sort of definitive behavior; how politics affects or structures resource use” (2004: 312). All of these definitions make it clear that politics plays a crucial role in the issues of resource distribution and control. For my purposes we will look at how politics and society determine control of the land designated in protected areas and National Parks as well as whose voice is heard in the politics of conservation.
Now that we’ve set a parameter for defining political ecology for the means of this research, I would like to draw further attention to the issues presented before in globalization of the National Park model. The reason I chose political ecology for the lens to analyze these issues is that political ecology, seeks to expose flaws in dominant approaches to the environment favored by corporate, state, and international authorities, working to demonstrate the undesirable impacts of policies and market conditions, especially from the point of view of local people, marginal groups and vulnerable populations. (Robbins 2004: 99).

Political ecology allows us to provide a voice to those less likely to be heard in the debate for conservation. Take for example the Masai Mara Game Reserve and the Amboseli National Park in Kenya, who continually experience conflict between their efforts for conservation of the endangered key species of the Serengeti and the local people who trespass on the reserves to herd cattle and hunt illegally. In this situation we would be careless to not consider the point of view of the local people who are acting in reaction to a loss of control over their land and the ability to continue their traditional livelihoods of herding cattle (Robbins 2004). Multiple authors including Jim Igoe, referenced earlier, discuss the removal of the Masai people from their traditional land in an effort to portray the ongoing commentary that states that by removing the people from the landscape, the Western authorities can “construct the Edenic ‘wilderness’ of their imagination” (Robbins 2004:178). This continues the discussion about the Western worldview of a ‘wilderness’ untouched by humans. Political ecologists such as Paul Robbins (2004) analyze this act by the Western
environmentalist to represent a form of modern colonization in the form of conservation. This issue is not unique to Kenya, as the Western world considers the resources of other countries to be just as much their own as the local people’s. They support their claims with a growing “global conservation discourse, which [clings] to a story wherein dwindling global commons (biodiversity and wildlife) demand protection from rampaging human activity” (Robbins 2004: 178). By separating humans from nature and wildlife, this Western conservation model turns the true integrated landscape into something more like a zoo, where people pay to see trees and animals. This is not to say that biodiversity conservation is not important and ultimately the final goal, but that there are other ways to situate humans in relation to the landscape. There may be ways for the human activity and interaction with nature to change to more sustainable practices without their complete removal.

As a result, the tourists and authorities do not see the trespassing of local people as a form of reclaiming what is rightfully theirs, but rather as a greedy act of uneducated locals lacking an environmental ethic. Here political ecology plays its role to speak up for the marginalized local populations. When approaching these issues over access and conflicting narratives it is important to remember that no matter how much globalization connects us, it does not change the frames within which we view our own environments. Westerners may frame nature under the terms of a non-human Edenic wilderness but “peasant farmers seek to construct nature in a way that will allow them to survive” (Vandermeer & Perfecto 1995: 155). I do not wish to say that all Western environmentalists
wish to overlook human needs in the interests of preserving nature, they just forget that their worldview is not universal and thus cannot be applied as such. Instead, according to John Schelhas and Max Pfeffer, we must consider that “references to the local, rather than the global, can more effectively confer legitimacy; for example indigenousness and long-term occupancy can be judged to give people a special voice or power in environmental disputes” (2003: 5).

The lack of interaction and consultation with local communities when designing National Parks and Western conservation models in non-Western countries speaks to the colonial attitude of the West that they know better.

Once you start to recognize the political aspects of the conservation conflict you reveal the story behind the West’s sudden move to conserve and preserve at home and globally. Robbins acknowledges outright, “territorializing conservation space and controlling surrounding communities is a central and primary goal in the history of environmental conservation” (2004: 150). This connects with the selfish ideals of globalization, where the West claims to care for the needs of non-Western countries by providing development, infrastructure, and in this case protected areas, when in contrast they solely wish to open the developing world’s borders to free trade. By protecting precious nature in these areas they are also able to defend destroying nature for resource extraction in other areas. Robbins continues,

This coding of nature as Eden is rooted more specifically in the tendency to cast the political/economic periphery (Africa, tropical Asia and America, arid Australia) in the role of a ‘natural’ world contrasted with the ‘ravaged’ human landscapes of core areas (Europe and the United States). This means that
one of the central imperatives of colonial and postcolonial governance is to protect and enclose nature ‘out there’ in the underdeveloped world. (2004: 180)

In addition, by controlling these protected areas they can profit from ecotourism that occurs in their parks. By eliminating the human communities from these environments, global environmental conservation is able to write “human communities, especially those with longstanding residence in a region, out of the environmental history of a place, leaving it to lions, tigers, and other charismatic mega-fauna that are easier to market to tourists” (Robbins 2004: 180). One of the major benefits to foreign NGOs looking to conserve in developing or underdeveloped countries is this benefit they receive from tourism within parks.

Although welcomed by local governments for the foreseen revenue benefits of income generated in the parks, the unfortunate truth is that a good majority of the profit leaks out of countries to foreign owners and businesses.

According to Brandon, the “World Bank estimates that 55% of tourist spending in developing countries leaks back to developed countries” (1993: 32). In some cases the percentages are even higher because instead of supporting local economies through directing tourists to eat, stay, and purchase souvenirs in local communities, most park tourism imports foreign goods. Thus as a result of excluding and advertising false benefit for local communities the parks witness the “backlash” mentioned before, where local people act out in anger against parks by illegally poaching animals, squatting on the land, and illegally cutting
down trees.

After recognizing that the conservation movement is not without political issues of resource control, false promises, and a new age environmental imperialism, we must take the next step to find solutions. These solutions would address the lack of local voices heard in the argument against displacement from sacred landscapes, control of resources, and the necessities of people for survival. Lisa Gezon acknowledges that “humans act upon (or refrain from action upon) their biophysical environments within shifting contexts of power and social stratification, guided by meaningful understandings of what is, what could be, and what ought to be” (2006: 10). To reiterate the main point for the following section on a need for environmental justice and alternatives to this very Western model for conservation, we must always go back to the question of who is truly benefiting from this form of conservation. Gezon starts her book early on by stating, “Western-based radical environmentalism, with its emphasis on the preservation of pristine environments, ignores the livelihood needs of people too poor not to draw resources” (2006: 33). This strong dependence upon the land is the reason behind this research. Not to mention, humans have been interacting with their landscape for a long time.

*Environmental/Social Justice and Alternative Conservation Models*

The answer to conservation struggles in non-Western countries is environmental and social justice or as Vandermeer and Perfecto put it, “political liberation is a prerequisite to nature conservation” (1995: 154). If equality between stakeholders in the environment continues to exist then there will
continue to be people who have a closer dependency on the land. While these communities find themselves struggling to make a living off of natural resources and agriculture, they struggle with a question of survival versus conservation. This is not to say people at this level do not care about the environment but they lack the means to give up their dependency upon it. Thus without taking into account the rights and voices of the local and indigenous people when pursuing conservation projects, the future of conservation will not survive because the people depending on the land will tend to fight against conservation until they see benefit. In order to ensure the success of conservation projects, it is important to have the support of all parties affected and involved. This is not possible with the current model of excluding local and indigenous voices in the process of conservation. I choose here to stretch the original purpose of the environmental justice movement that started in the United States as a struggle by minority and low-income communities to speak out against injustices forced upon them by big businesses bringing in factories and landfills while placing the weight of negative environmental and health outputs on these communities. As they struggled for a voice in politics to gain a sense of justice against these uneven environmental impacts on their communities, they produces principles for how all people should be included equally in discussions regarding their environment, health and community. In the case of my research, I stretch this movement in a way to fit the plight of unheard communities in Ecuador and globally that are not given a voice in consideration for their needs as they are impacted by conservation projects. For the purposes of my research I connect
the principles of the environmental justice movement to the communities that fight for equality in the global south. I will define some of the principles of the environmental justice movement here that best relate to my subject matter.

At the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, the principles of Environmental Justice were outlined. The first principle states, “1) environmental justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction” (1991). By making this the first principle, the delegates acknowledged a different environmental worldview than the dominant Western worldview that humans are separate from the earth. Here they offer the belief that all living species are interconnected and interdependent. The second principle is that, “2) environmental justice demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias” (1991). This principle touches upon the concept I wish to emphasize in this chapter that everyone deserves an equal voice in the process of conservation, regardless of social standing or race and ethnicity. The third principle states, “3) environmental justice mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things” (1991). Although number 3 is self-explanatory it is very important, because despite the argument against the Western model for conservation, it is not forgotten that the earth and its resources need to be treated sustainably and with respect to future generations and it helps to emphasize that the ultimate goal in all conservation
models is still the sustainable treatment of the environment. And finally the last one I believe connects to the issues in my research is number seven, “7) environmental justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation” (1991). Number 7 connects with number 2 by repeating the continual need of equality in decision making in all matters of the environment.

Now as we take environmental justice as our focus for addressing the issues presented above within the political ecology of conservation, we must answer the question of what does this look like? Schelhas and Pfefer (2008) discuss in their case of National Parks in Honduras, how the efforts put forth by NGOs to include border communities in “buffer zones” attempts to address the needs of excluded communities by providing them land outside parks and regulated use of resources. Unfortunately the farmers living in these buffer zones speak of their concerns with strict laws and restrictions on their livelihood needs and the consequences of breaking those rules (Schelhas & Pferfer 2008). Not all buffer zone efforts are the same but the majority put strict restrictions on the number of trees allowed for each family for building homes and other uses as well as strict access to other resources. Thus this is another effort to control the local populations rather than help them meet their needs.

Paul Robbins also mentions the idea of the buffer zone as a possible solution and explains, “in the new ‘buffer zone’ approach to park management, the kinds of land uses and appropriate behaviors of local residents are placed
under increasing control and scrutiny” (2004: 192). Although the buffer zone approach attempts to include the local communities, it places them in a very controlled situation. Robbins quotes R. P. Nuemann in his book about buffer zones and conservation efforts in Africa as he explains, “the approach depends on a romantic and exotic view of residents as primitives, whose use of some conservation boundary areas is tolerated as long as they uphold a socially undifferentiated and traditional pattern of behavior,” that places them as equal to the fauna of the park (2004: 192). Again these attempts at inclusion do not follow the environmental justice principles that require treating the local people as equals in all decisions and respect for the environment.

In contrast, better alternatives exist but none are perfect. That is why one of the main points of this research is to show that no one model works everywhere. Instead the most successful models are the ones that reflect the differences in cultures, beliefs and necessities of the land and people. “In all places people’s environmental beliefs, values, and practices are likely to be intimately tied to other social, economic, and political spheres” (Schelhas & Pfefer 2008: 6). One way of compensating local and indigenous communities is by providing jobs within parks as tour guides, park guards, customer service staff, and vendors. These opportunities provide some alternatives from dependency on resources for local people. In some places, local level employment from ecotourism in parks has probably served as a “deterrent to people engaging in destructive practices, both by providing them with alternate sources of income and by providing them with a direct incentive to maintain the
resource base” (Brandon 1993: 5). This opportunity to bring in local employment tends to encourage support for foreign ecotourism projects and parks. This revenue and employment can lead to the multiplier effect, which happens when money spent by tourists on services is paid to local employees who then take their paycheck and spend that money on goods from other members of the community, ultimately multiplying the effect of the original dollar spent (Brandon 1993). This solution is only a start to addressing the issues of inequality and political liberation embedded in conservation.

Despite the fact that these jobs provide alternatives to dependency on natural resources, they still place local people in menial positions with little hope of upward mobility. Normally parks contract out for employees with higher level skills, leaving local people stuck in minimum wage positions that only address basic necessities and still create inequalities between locals and foreign NGOs and tourists. In some cases like that of the Maasai, the indigenous people are employed to “perform” their culture for tourists. In these situations of employment of native populations they face issues of exploitation, loss of culture, and challenges to the concept of authenticity (Brandon 1993). I will not address this example further because it is a whole other thesis in itself, but I mention it simply to shed light on the fact that not all employment in parks allows indigenous or local people a voice.

The alternative models I wish to focus on as possible solutions, that give the most voice to local and indigenous communities, are those that evolve out of those very communities. What so many Western environmentalists ignore is the
fact that, “almost all indigenous peoples have traditional ways of using natural resources in ways that will ensure their continued availability to future generations” (Igoe 2004: 10). Although my research does not solely focus on indigenous communities, this statement can speak for local communities dependent upon the land as well, because their livelihoods depend on the resources so they must find or develop ways to use them sustainably for future generations. Whether they are projects that team up local people with foreign conservationists or 100% local grassroots projects, it is the need for inclusion of not only the needs but the voices of communities in conservation that matters. Simply compensating locals for their land through jobs or money does not change the negative impact of the Western preservationist model in parks. Instead working with or supporting the people to develop projects that reflect their needs and those of the environment prove the most beneficial for the future of conservation and generations to come.

Jim Igoe (2004) writes about this approach to conservation in his book *Conservation and Globalization* with the example of the Maasai NGO movement. He asks, “How can conservation premised on the exclusion of local people become the foundation of new approaches premised on their active participation?” (Igoe 2004: 103). Igoe (2004) talks about the end to fortress conservation and the development of the Maasai NGO that reflects the need for empowerment of the Maasai people in decisions dealing with conservation. The Maasai people in this situation concluded that “conservation was a good thing, but that Western approaches to conservation were inappropriate to Africa,”
which could be said about other countries as well (Igoe 2004: 103). In the case of the Maasai NGOs, they served to represent the voice of the people when working with the Western conservation NGOs to empower local people “by strengthening their control of land and natural resources, conserving natural resources, and bringing an end to large-scale commercial farms” (Igoe 2004: 125). Although the meetings between the Western NGOs and Maasai NGOs reflected similar objectives for both parties, agreements were difficult to reach, proving that despite good intentions partnerships between Western and native worldviews do not always work.

Igoe presents a more successful model of co-management for conservation in places like Alaska, Australia, and Nepal that create a partnership between communities and foreign conservationists. This is a system of “shared decision making between local resource claimants and formally trained resource managers on policies guiding use of protected areas” (Igoe 2004: 125). This model looks different in every country but reflects the importance of including the voice of local/indigenous communities in the development of conservation projects. In Alaska the co-management model appears in the “Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act, passed in 1980, [which] allows ‘traditional and customary’ resource users to pursue subsistence activities inside of Alaskan national parks” (Igoe 2004: 126). The picture of conservation in Alaska differs from the other 49 states of the U.S., because the native Alaskans were never separated from their native land and placed on reservations like the Native
Americans and when National Parks were created they allowed them to continue their subsistence lifestyles within the parks.

In Australia, co-management follows a similar vein as Alaska where the native people have been allowed to exist within parks. An alliance between indigenous communities and conservationists was established with the development of the Kakadu National Park (Igoe 2004). Two pieces of legislation in Australia made Australian co-management possible. The first was “the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, passed in 1974,” and the second was “the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, passed in 1976, which allowed indigenous groups to establish land trusts similar to native corporations in Alaska” (Igoe 2004: 128). These acts provide rights to indigenous communities to claim land considered traditional within parks and to be included in the management decisions and proposals of specific parks. In some cases the aborigines have gained ownership of parks and lease it out to conservationists and the government, giving the Aborigines the right to withdraw the land at any point for violation of the agreements (Igoe 2004).

In the case of Nepal, the story differs from Alaska and Australia, because it doesn’t have a history of Western colonization. Nepal’s story of conservation though does resemble that of Africa, where conservationists from New Zealand tried to set up a National Park on Mt. Everest and pass laws that no one could settle on the slopes. This caused resentment from the Sherpa people who lived along the slopes and depended upon the resources there. As a result a co-
management model was developed, in which the conservationists met with the local people and came to an agreement about where the Sherpa villages would be excluded from the parks and where their herding and farming would be regulated by authorities (Igoe 2004). In addition, the Nepal case included the Sherpas in education, training, and employment by organizing “advisory committees that included regional political and cultural leaders,” then, “the government of New Zealand provided funding for the training of Sherpas in park administration and natural resource management,” and “Sherpas graduated from a park administration and natural resource management program in New Zealand” (Igoe 2004: 130). This training led to the Sherpas going on to hold the post of warden or assistant warden at Sagamartha National Park. This co-management model also looked to strengthen and revive indigenous traditional management institutions, which utilized Traditional Ecological Knowledge of land management. All three of these examples show positive alternatives to the fortress model of conservation by pursuing the partnership ethic I spoke of much earlier. By working together to protect the environment and empower the people to have a voice and provide for their needs, the partnership ethic can make a difference for the future of conservation.

A completely different approach to conservation in parks is one offered by Thomas Knoke et al. (2009), who suggest alternative ecological-economic land-use systems as a possible solution for tropical farmers in Ecuador, living in the buffer zone of the Podocarpus National Park. Instead of telling these farmers to give up their livelihood demands, which are incompatible with tropical
conservation, Thomas Knoke et al. think that an alternative and sustainable farming methods may help to solve these conflicting efforts, “by restoring natural resources in conjunction with tropical forest conversion and product diversification” (2009: 548). In order to encourage the farmers shift to a more sustainable form of farming that focuses on reforestation and diversification of crops, Thomas Knoke et al. offer “inexpensive microcredits, the establishment of local timber markets, the transfer of experience with alternative land-use options to farmers, and the allocation of higher value to standing forests” as important preconditions for sustainable land use (2009:548). This option allows farmers to continue their practice of farming for sustaining their livelihoods but allows for a renewal of forests and a shift to more sustainable practices that will benefit farmers into the future.

In the book Communities and Conservation, Janis Alcorn’s chapter dissects the various approaches to conservation from complete Western-influenced conservation to community-supported conservation (2005). She discusses Frances Seymour’s concept of the “design mode” and “discovery mode” of conservation (Alcorn 2005: 42). The design mode represents the Western model of conservation, pinpointing a problem from the outside and developing a solution. For the case of this research and these alternative approaches to conservation, the “discovery mode,” is ideal because it “refers to situations where outsiders discover that local people have identified a problem and designed a solution, and subsequently assist local communities to legitimate that solution” (Alcorn 2005: 42). This mode fits the final alternative I will offer.
The alternative of community-based ecotourism represents the needs and voices of the communities. Most important to these ecotourism projects is the inclusion of community needs and voices, which is best represented in projects started by local people themselves. It is suggested, “eco-friendly development within villages may improve the financial status of villagers, thereby reducing their dependence on resources within protected areas” (Donnelly et al. 2000: 196). Ecotourism projects that are started at the grassroots level by local communities tend to provide a possible solution for communities seeking alternative means of subsistence and a way to conserve their environment. Without the management or middleman of foreign NGOs, community-based ecotourism projects avoid leakages of their revenue leaving the community and help provide equal opportunity and voice to community members. Donnelly et al. support this claim by stating, “by providing local communities with economic benefits, ecotourism activities are thought to lead to conservation of wildlife and other natural resources” (2000: 196). Of course as with all of the alternatives to National Park conservation offered, none are without challenges or issues.

Before I get into the challenges to the ecotourism model, it is important to establish a reliable definition of ecotourism. The first uses of the term ecotourism date back to the 1980s when the ”Mexican ecologist Hector Ceballos-Lascurain used the Spanish word ecoturismo” (Weaver 2001: 5). Of course according to Weaver (2001) the concept of ecotourism existed long before the coinage of the actual word in the 1980s. The definition originally introduced by Ceballos-Lascurain described ecotourism as:
Tourism that consists in traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas. (Weaver 2001:5)

Since so many varying definitions of ecotourism exist today it is better to simply highlight the three main components required to be considered ecotourism, as presented by Weaver, “nature-based element, and educational or learning component, and a requirement of sustainability” (2001:7). I would like to add to this list a fourth component that is discussed by authors Donnelly et al.(2002). This component is the support of local communities. It is extremely important that this component be included for the purposes of my proposed “best possible solution,” because National Parks could be included under the title of ecotourism. So by ensuring that the voices and needs of communities are included in the definition, we avoid too broad of a definition and misrepresentation of the term.

Now that we have defined ecotourism, I will mention the challenges and possibility for successful ecotourism in the conservation model I seek to support. Authors Donnelly et al. (2002) suggest that one of the main challenges of ecotourism is maintaining tourist support, because without the tourists who visit, there would be no income to make the projects viable for community members. In order to ensure the support of ecotourists, Donnelly et al. recommend an Experience-based Management model that measures for four main challenges that could also act as criteria in all ecotourism operations. The first challenge/criteria is “1) the function of ecotourism in minimizing negative
impacts to natural environments and wildlife” (Donnelly et al. 2002: 197). The second is “2) the role and importance of guides” (2002: 197). The third and most important to my research is “3) integrating the participation of local people in experience-based management planning” and “4) the importance of partnerships between local communities, governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and commercial interests” (2002: 197). When community organizations meet all four of these challenges and criteria, they ensure themselves and their environment a success story in conservation. Of course no project meets all seamlessly without challenges of funding, support, and practice, but their attempt to do so proves the ability of these projects to answer the call of the partnership ethic.

A great example of this ecotourism model can be seen in the case of the Mohoe Bay Resorts in the U.S. Virgin Islands who have “sought to encompass the philosophy of sustainability in its broadest sense, extending beyond the environmental dimension to embrace economic and social goals linked to surrounding communities” (Symko & Harris 2002: 253). Their locally run operation features support for local communities through purchasing all products locally and hiring all local people. They also educate tourists and employees about the importance of conservation and sustainability, which they display in nightly talks as well as their lodge and cabins’ completely sustainable design (Symko & Harris 2002). This is only one example among numerous others sprouting up around the globe that reflect the locally supported and locally-grown ecotourism that is offering a response to a need for a partnership
ethic.

Research has proven that for any of these alternatives to work, there needs to be a developed education program at the local level and an integration of local ecological knowledge. In many cases where the local people depend upon the land for farming and hunting, a level of conservation education must exist to provide an additional incentive for conserving over production and extraction. Conservation education for local populations, especially for children is important for sparking a change in their habits and practices in the environment. Despite a history of earlier relationships that respected the land, practices change because of livelihood needs and capitalist policies of the state. Thus “the use of various media can contribute significantly to informing the population of the benefits offered by biodiversity as food, feed, medicines and recreational goods, and the necessity of joining efforts for its preservation” (Solh et al. 2003:11-12). According to M. Solh et al. (2003), education programs are extremely effective at reaching all community members and prove more successful in changing habits among farmers when able to prove alternative benefits of conserving over unsustainable farming. Therefore it is important “to develop school curricula that inform students of the importance of biodiversity conservation and the need to respect the environment” (Solh et al 2003: 12). In all the situations I spoke of earlier in Nepal, Australia, Alaska, Kenya, and others, education played an important role in shifting the practices of local people towards conservation. When successfully implemented through media, formal, and informal programs and classes, conservation education can help to make conservation the goal of
the people not just the conservationists, because they realize the importance of their own land’s biodiversity and its continuance for future generations.

An important aspect of education to keep in mind though, is that local people and especially indigenous local people hold knowledge that outsiders do not. So when implementing educational programs at the local level, it is important to recognize the ecological knowledge of the people and integrate it within the programs for conservation. According to Fikret Berkes (1999), today’s science and conservation efforts, especially in non-Western countries, need to reflect a more integrated model combining Western science and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). This is important because there is a “need to develop a new ecological ethic in part by learning the wisdom of traditional knowledge holders” (Berkes 1999: 19). The inclusion of local knowledge and voices plays into the efforts for empowerment in conservation. People take pride in being able to offer their own expertise and observations to the conservation efforts. Although Berkes (1999) is discussing indigenous knowledge, I would like to apply this to local knowledge as well because the people I studied have lived on the land for a long time and hold a deep knowledge of their surroundings. This is not to say that the organizations I worked with did not also see the importance of including the knowledge of indigenous people in their area. I will not elaborate much further but it is important to note that TEK is an aspect of the political ecology plight to include voices in resource management. In the case of this research, providing a local voice and knowledge to conservation efforts is crucial.
I have presented several different alternative approaches in an effort to recognize the ultimate goal of this research: to investigate whether more integrative models that include the needs of communities and reflect a community-based and supported approach would be more beneficial to the future of conservation as opposed to a more one-size-fits-all model that emerges from a Western worldview on conservation. I hoped to discover if these integrative models would do a better job at covering the gamut of differences in environmental worldviews and diverse beliefs, histories, and necessities of the people and their environments. As I move on to present my case study in Ecuador, I hope to shine light on one culture’s history and their communities’ varied attempts at claiming a voice and developing their own responses to the calls for conservation.
Chapter 3: Ecuador

Geography and Environment

Ecuador is located on the Northwestern coast of South America and straddles the equator, providing it its name. Columbia borders Ecuador to the north and Peru borders to the south and east. Ecuador is 256,370 square kilometers in size and is divided into four regions: the Galapagos, the Amazon, the Highlands and the Coast (Ecuador Embassy 2012). Despite being roughly the size of Colorado, Ecuador houses some of the most biodiverse flora and fauna on the planet. This is due to its dramatic and diverse landscapes that differ by climate and topography. Ecuador is home to rain forests, islands, deserts, valleys, highlands and snowcapped peaks (Ecuador Embassy 2012). The biodiversity of Ecuador ranks number 8 among the most biodiverse countries in the world (Touch the Jungle 2009). The top 17 biodiverse countries, which include Brazil, Columbia and Indonesia, harbor 60 to 70% of the Earth’s biodiversity. So it is no surprise that environmentalists have their eye on Ecuador as a hotspot for conservation.

Figure 1.1: Map of Ecuador

www.mapsoftheworld.com/ecuador
History of Colonial and Post-Colonial Agrarian Reform

Ecuador once served as the northern part of the Incan civilization until the Spanish conquest in 1533 (CIA 2012). Quito, thirty years after the conquest, took the seat of Spanish colonial government in 1563 and was declared the capital (CIA 2012). Despite independence from Spain in 1822, the legacy of Spanish colonization left its mark on the political, economic, and social atmosphere of Ecuador.

Ecuador’s agricultural history involves several different systems beginning with that of the Spanish encomienda (Striffler 2002). The encomienda system granted Spanish elite with the rights to govern native peasantry as servants to work the land in exchange for a portion of the crops grown being paid back to the Spanish crown (Striffler 2002). By the 17th century over 500 encomiendas existed in Ecuador (Striffler 2002). This system is often times seen as a form of slavery. When the encomienda system ended, it gave way to the haciendas, which were large land estates ruled over by Spanish elites appointed by the Crown. On the hacienda a similar situation existed for the native peasantry as did on the encomiendas, only this time the Spanish elites were given private ownership of land and hired peasants to work their land. Here the land acted as a large plantation for growth and export of products like cocoa and bananas. Native peasantry lived on the land and were used as the labor force for the plantations (Striffler 2002). Haciendas lasted long past independence from Spain and hosted large corporations from the United States and Britain.
The history of land reform in Ecuador goes far back to the 1880s-1920s with the first Hacienda Tenguel that introduced large scale cacao plantations that hired *sembradores*, or subcontractors that lived on the *haciendas* and did all the planting (Striffler 2002). Tenguel’s cacao plantations collapsed, because of disease and were overtaken by United Fruit in 1934. United Fruit removed the diseased cacao trees and planted bananas. United Fruit’s large-scale production encouraged development of regional markets leading to local merchants, peasant workers, and landowners all taking advantage of opportunities provided by the growing infrastructure created by United Fruit (Striffler 2002). United Fruit kept strict rules for workers and instated a nuclear family system where men worked all day and women took care of the domestic chores. United Fruit battled with workers attempts at unionization and with squatters for whom they had to provide contracted land (Striffler 2002). The end of United Fruit came in the 1950s with the arrival of the Panama disease that led to “deteriorating work conditions, and an unstable political climate that included agrarian reform and popular organization” (Striffler 2002: 45). When workers unionized, United Fruit pulled out of Ecuador leaving people without jobs and services to provide for their families.

The next stage of agrarian history is what shapes the land today. In reaction to United Fruit leaving Ecuador, the women stepped up and formed communal kitchens, took over teaching at schools, and promoted subsistence crop plantation (Striffler 2002). Women organized committees and both men and women took to the streets striking and rallying. The people invaded
Hacienda Tenguel in 1962 not over wages and labor conflicts but in reaction to a struggle for land (Striffler 2002). This year-long invasion and occupation of the hacienda brought about the end to “enclave-style production, the beginning of agrarian reform, and the slow emergence of contract farming in Ecuador” (Striffler 2002: 95). Agrarian reform forced out foreign corporate plantations but invited capitalist interests and companies that invested in large landowners of at least 50-hectares of high-quality land (Striffler 2002). As a result, companies diversified their crops in order to combat diseases. These new crops required more specialized care, which required more skilled workers, causing the need for peasant farmers to reduce significantly.

Agrarian reform policies emerged in 1964-1968 and 1970-1976, which changed the lives of peasant farmers even further. These reforms sought political stability as well as modernization and increased production of crops. With the Land Tenure Acts of 1964 and 1973 came the end of the hacienda system and land was redistributed amongst peasant farmers and land owners, putting the larger, more fertile agricultural plots in the hands of rich capitalist landowners and the less arable land to peasant farmers (Cadena 2010; Zaldivar 2008). As a result, “domestic banana planters acquired the most fertile sections of the southern coast and contracted with foreign exporters” (Striffler 2002: 121). The new reforms led to growth of the landowning peasantry but peasant farmers were forced to farm on small plots of land in less arable areas like the Andes. Local peasant farmers of the 1960s and 1970s experienced a stratified society with “a unified elite at the national level, a new landowning class was
emerging and appropriating the best lands along the southern coast, military and police forces suppressed popular and working-class organizations” (Striffler 2002: 174). In order to make their new lands suitable for agriculture and pasture, the peasant farmers used a slash and burn practice to clear the trees and began planting and grazing cattle.

As the peasants, who once farmed in coastal areas, moved to their newly distributed plots along the slopes of the highlands, they quickly discovered that farming conditions differed greatly between these areas and the coast. Soil along the Andes in what is known as the Cloud Forest, quickly erodes when trees are removed. So with a lack of proper tools and knowledge of the delicate landscape, the peasant farmers degraded their new land at a rapid rate. The history of the peasant farmers and the continual redistribution and development of land reform does not end here. For the purposes of my research I wanted to offer some history of how the peasantry received the raw end of the deal time and again as the best land passed to the hands of capitalist farmers and the peasantry constantly found themselves left either with no land and working as labor on plantations or with small plots shared cooperatively or privately. This land and the peasant farmers’ lack of proper resources led to the current struggles of farmers living along the Andes working against nature to survive agriculturally.

The capitalist land contract structure also forces these farmers to use high amounts of chemical inputs that degrade the land faster. Also instead of
farming their plots in order to subsist, they are using monocrops like naranjillas, a tropical fruit that is popular in the markets of Ecuador. This monocropping lacks diversity and further degrades their plots. Ultimately, the newest capitalist land system of production puts pressure on peasant farmers trying to produce enough to sell and make a profit to survive (Striffler 2002). This leads to the current picture of deteriorating mountainsides that we see in Ecuador today.

*The Cloud Forest*

The main focus area for my research centered around the Cloud Forest of Ecuador. Located on the eastern side of the Andes, the Cloud Forests provide gallons of fresh, clean water to local communities (Roach 2001). Blanketing the high elevation slopes of the Andes, these fascinating evergreen forests have a unique climate, humid like the Amazon but cold and foggy as they sit amongst the clouds. In the rainy season from August until October the clouds roll in each afternoon to deliver thick rain shower to all the diverse flora and fauna. In the Cloud Forest alone exist 15-17% of the world’s plant species and 20% of the world’s bird species, not to mention a wealth of thick old growth trees (rainforestrescue.org). Unfortunately in Ecuador and around the world, Cloud Forests are disappearing as humans disrupt the rich and delicate balance of their ecosystems. In Ecuador, slash and burn practices used by peasant farmers for agriculture and cattle grazing turn these important environments into eroded mountainsides. Percy Nuñez, a research biologist in Cuzco, Peru, who studies Cloud Forests, estimates that they are disappearing at a such a rate that the "the
cloud forest will all be gone in the next ten years.” (Roach 2001: 1). For this reason, Cloud Forests now find themselves in the interests of conservationists around the globe.

The Cloud Forest in Ecuador is part of a mountain range that stretches from Panama to Northern Argentina. Cloud Forests are known as the “eyebrow of the jungle” (Roach 2001: 2). They sit 5,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level with trees of 50 to 65 feet in height at their lower elevations (Roach 2001). Due to the high elevation of the Cloud Forest, it attracts a constant cloud cover. One of their most important functions is to “strip water from windblown fog and clouds, aiding the healthy functioning of surrounding ecosystems” (Roach 2001: 2). Their ability to strip water from the clouds aids in providing water for villages and rivers below the forests and does so by capturing water that would normally not fall as rain.

In addition to its importance for providing precious water sources, it also serves as a habitat pocket for thousands of endemic species of plants and animals (Roach 2001). This means that each mountain range houses unique species that do not exist in any other region. In Ecuador species differ greatly even from one mountain to the next in the same range, proving how special Cloud Forests are as an ecosystem. As only 3% of the forests remain, it becomes increasingly important to scientists and conservationists to preserve and save what remains of these precious landscapes.
National Park System

The National Parks and protected areas of Ecuador are titled PANE and these areas cover 10% of Ecuador’s total territory (Ministry of Tourism Ecuador). This commitment to National Parks and protected areas is the largest of all countries in the world. There are 44 total protected areas (Ministry of Tourism Ecuador). Unfortunately, as mentioned in the problem statement, these National Parks and protected areas, while protecting 75-90% of the country’s flora and fauna, also disrupt the lives of indigenous and local people dependent on these resources for survival. In the highland region of Ecuador exist 14 National Parks and Reserves alone. To name a few: Sangay National Park, Podocarpus National Park, and Llanganates National Park all protect areas along the Cloud Forest. Sangay National Park contains three volcanoes within its 271,925 ha and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 (UNESCO 2012). The range of the park houses the total spectrum of ecosystems from tropical forest to glaciers. Through preserving Sangay and declaring it a National Park in 1979, the Ecuador government was able to protect endemic species like the mountain tapir and the Andean Condor (UNESCO 2012). Protecting these areas is extremely important for the future of their ecosystems, but the National Parks and protected areas ignore the fact that people lived and depended upon these landscapes.

In Ecuador, as the local people are forced from the land given to them by the Agrarian Land Reform Acts, they face an issue of conservation versus
survival. So here is where the problem arises. Local and indigenous people are seen as the culprits for degradation of the forests, when in fact their environmental worldview sees humans as part of nature but their needs for survival forced them to become overly dependent on its resources. For this reason when foreign conservationists come into Ecuador, buy land and declare it protected they face resentment from the people, mostly farmers, who used that land for agriculture and grazing cattle. This is why new integrative projects are important to the survival of Ecuador’s people and ecosystems.

*Community-supported Conservation*

It is no lie that the practices of farmers along the slopes of the highlands are detrimental to these important ecosystems. When driving along the Eastern side of the Andes the view offers nothing but sand brown slopes crumbling to the rivers. These slopes of much of what was the Cloud Forest degraded slowly as farmers slashed and burned plots until they became infertile, then they moved to the next highest plot continuing the same pattern over and over again until barely any trees or rich topsoil remained. People are not blind to this occurrence and now with more and more areas being claimed for National Parks and Protected Areas, they are forced to pursue alternatives to fulfill their necessities. In recent years, locally grown Non-profit Organizations such as Santa Lucia Foundation in Nanegal and Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes in Baños with the help of Ecominga, have emerged with the focus of biodiversity conservation via ecotourism, education, and specific species conservation.
Projects of this sort reflect a new consciousness amongst conservationists and local people: that in order to ensure the future of the Ecuadorian people and their environment, a partnership must be formed. These projects either hire local people to work and benefit from parks or started from the ground up by communities seeking a way to shift from a dependency on market based agriculture to ecotourism, which provides them financial support while they continue to produce subsistence crops in a more sustainable manner.

Thus the local worldview is arising as a possible solution to forest degradation and livelihood needs of the people. Instead of using the ecocentric ethic of the West, to preserve with fortress-style conservation, projects have evolved that include the needs of the Ecuadorian people and either work with them to provide development and education or allow them to develop their own conservation projects.
Chapter 4: Research Methods

Methodology

One of the main components of Anthropological research is that of Ethnography. Ethnography is comprised of mostly qualitative research involving participant observation, field notes, and some form of interviews (Bernard 2006). Ethnographic research requires one to enter the field site with the intent of immersing oneself within the culture. While participating in the culture it is important to learn the native language, customs, and rituals and be respectful of all while observing. The other side of Ethnography posits one outside the culture, where one can reflect on the day-to-day and pertinent occurrences connected with the research topic. This practice is called taking field notes. By recording everything privately in a notebook or computer, it helps the Anthropologist to reflect upon the experience and data received at the site (Bernard 2006). Other qualitative data can be obtained through records, interviews, and other collections such as surveys.

One of the biggest challenges for an Anthropologist doing Ethnography is objectivity. It is recognized that a good Anthropologist will remain objective in all experiences and data collection while in the field. That is why it is important to maintain separate journals for your field notes; one or two for your objective analysis and observations and another more like a diary to record your personal subjective reflections (Bernard 2006). This way you can separate your feelings from your objective notes.
For my study I did an ethnographic case study of community-supported and community run conservation projects in the Ecuadorian Cloud Forest. In order to conduct this research I used the following methods: 1) Literature review, 2) Participant-observation, 3) Semi-structured open ended interviews and informal interviews, and then I conducted data analysis based on these three components by theme coding and mapping to produce recurrent ideas. These qualitative research methods form the basis of any applied anthropological research (Bernard 2006).

*Site Selection*

In order to choose my sites for conducting my research I used purposive or judgment sampling and snowball sampling (Bernard 2006). “In Purposive Sampling, you decide the purpose you want informants (or communities) to serve, and you go out to find some” (Bernard 2006: 145). I started with a thorough internet search based on the words “conservation projects in Ecuador”, then evaluated organizations based on four criteria: 1) mention conservation, 2) located in Cloud Forest, 3) speak of work with or started by local communities and 4) offer a volunteer opportunity. Once I narrowed down the organizations that fit all four criteria, I contacted them to ask about their organizations and if I could come visit as a volunteer but also conduct interviews and observation for my research.

Of the organizations that responded, I chose Eco Volunteer UP Foundation, an organization with options to volunteer in conservation in the
Cloud Forest. Then I chose Santa Lucia, a conservation foundation started by a local farming community in the Northern Cloud Forest. I set up an interview but not a volunteer experience with *Cultura y Naturaleza* (Culture and Nature) located in Loja, Ecuador and focused on conservation around the Podocarpus National Park. Lastly, I organized an internship with Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes based on a friend’s recommendation. This last organization was started by a family and more specifically by a young Ecuadorian concerned about the environment and need for protecting endemic species like the mountain tapir.

While in the field, I also visited organizations for informal interviews based on snowball sampling or references for interviewees or organizations from other organization leaders. For these references I did not do full participant observations or interviews but contacted or met with them informally to retrieve further data.

*Site Overview*

*Eco Volunteer UP Foundation*

This organization started in 2001 by five classmates from Quito who studied Ecotourism together at University. They started the organization based on a desire to preserve and conserve the natural beauty of Ecuador, because according to the project founder, most people especially the Government don’t care enough to protect it (Marta). All funding for the organization comes from volunteer fees. They have seven projects in total located in the Cloud Forest near Tulipe, the Amazon and along the Coast. Projects in the Cloud Forest
include maintaining trails and landscaping at the Ecolodge in Las Tolas or studying Andean Bears. Interviewees from Eco Volunteer UP Foundation included Marta who is between the ages of 30 and 40 years old and is the Program Manager and Franky who is also between the ages of 30 and 40 years old and is the Spanish Volunteer Coordinator.

Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes

Founded by Juan Pablo Reyes with the inheritance and honor of his late Great Grandfather Oscar Efren Reyes, who was a famous historian who wrote many books about Baños and Ecuador. This organization is family-run and it was the wish of Oscar to leave money for an organization that would support the environment and community of Baños. Juan engages in multiple projects. He works in close relation with Ecominga at their six nature reserves around Baños, where he tracks the habits of mountain tapirs and helps maintain trails, build science stations, and study endemic orchid species. On his own he works to educate communities and especially children about the importance of the tapir, considered a keystone species in Ecuador. He also works with nearby communities to fight against the building of hydroelectric dams on the Topo river. He works with five different communities as well, teaching them about conservation and reforestation as it is important to the survival of the Cloud Forest. All funding for the organization comes from outside donations. Interviewees include Juan Pablo who is the Project and Office Manager and is
between the ages of 20 and 30, and Marcelo who is an architect and park guard for Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes and is between the ages of 50 and 60 years old.

Ecominga

Started by Luke Johns, an American who is an Ecologist and Botanist. He started the organization after moving down to Ecuador and realizing how many endemic species existed within the mountain ranges. The main purpose of the 6 reserves he owns is to protect these endemic species especially orchids. He hires all local people to work in the parks as guards and works with Juan Pablo Reyes to provide education about conservation to the local communities. All funding comes from outside sources like NGOs in the United States and Britain. Interviewees include the founder Luke Johns who is between the ages of 40 and 50 years old, and four park guards—Theo, age 30-40 years old, Sancho, age 20-30 years old, Jorge, age 30-40 years old, and Rafael, age 20-30 years old.

Santa Lucía

Twelve families started Santa Lucía as a cooperative for farming. They were all peasant farmers who were given land in the highlands after the Agrarian Reform Acts of 1960 and 1970. They cut down most of the trees in order to grow naranjilla and other fruits to bring to the market. It was tough work because the land was high in the mountains and required constant transport of products up and down the trails with mules. When the Maquipucuna Foundation declared 4,000 hectares of land in the Cloud Forest protected, the families of Nanegal lost their land and needed to find an
alternative to agriculture. In 1994 they formed a cooperative and decided to start an ecotourism project. They need something to do for money and jobs since they could no longer depend on farming. So they bought 1,000 hectares of land above Maquipucuna Reserve. Over the next few years they worked on building an ecolodge from fallen trees and named it Santa Lucía. Now they invite tourists to visit their trails, observation station, organic panela plantation and coffee farms. They also welcome volunteers to help with their projects maintaining trails, making coffee from their organic coffee beans, and building facilities. In addition, scientists and students visit to study the surrounding environment, which is extremely unique and biodiverse. Most of the workers there are children of the original proprietors. Interviewees included Eddie, one of the founding members, age 60-70 years old, Patricia the Sales and Logistics manager, age 30-40 years old, Noel the Coordinator of the Reserve, age 40-50 years old and Cisco the Administrator and Manager of Santa Lucía, age 40-50 years old.

Methods

Participant observation

The most important method used for my research was participant observation. In order to conduct these participant observations I visited Ecuador from June 2011 to September 2011. Before entering my field sites, I took a one-week intensive Spanish course in Quito, because the last time I studied Spanish was three years in High School back in 2004-2005. Although
after one week I was not speaking Spanish fluently, the lessons helped me to build up a base of knowledge about the language, which I then practiced everyday during my stay and improved greatly over the next three months. I used my Spanish to communicate with community members and those working at the projects in which I served as a volunteer. I conducted all of my interviews in Spanish.

My first field site brought me to Las Tolas, a small rural town in the Cloud Forest, north of Quito. I met with two of the Eco Volunteer Up organization heads in Quito, and then they helped me find the bus to Las Tolas, where their conservation project was situated. At the site, I stayed with the host family in charge of the Ecolodge. Alongside other volunteers, I helped dig a fishpond for the lodge, clear and make hiking trails through the forest, and I learned about native trees, birds, and plant species. I remained one week at the lodge as a volunteer, immersing myself in the conservation project while also observing the practices and beliefs of the family and local people surrounding the lodge.

The following week I took the bus to Baños where I started my month long internship with Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes. Here I stayed at the residence of Juan Pablo Reyes, great-grandchild of Oscar Efren Reyes, and helped him in the office of the foundation and out in the field. During the weeks I was there Juan took me to visit each of the reserves that he helped maintain in conjunction with an organization called Ecominga. Juan was deeply engaged with his community and educating people about the necessity for conservation
in the Cloud Forest and most importantly for the protection of the mountain tapir. The first week we helped a local man and friend of Juan Pablo’s, named Marcello, build a wall out of recycled bottles. The wall served to protect hikers that visited the El Mirador lookout point along the Ulba river. Since the trail had no fence and was dangerous to hike during rainy days, the wall would help to protect visitors from falling.

In addition, I visited three of the nature reserves run by Ecominga while working with Juan Pablo. The first reserve was Chamanapamba Reserve at the top of Chamana Mountain. I stayed there five days with Marcelo, in which time we worked on the organic garden, maintained the trails, rescued orchids from fallen trees and collected the sensor cameras placed on the high slope to track the activities of mountain tapirs and other animal species. The following week I visited the Rio Anzu reserve in the Amazon with the park guard, Jorge. Here I only acquainted myself with the trails and environment. The last reserve I stayed at was the Zunag Reserve, also on the border of the Amazon. Here I helped paint and work on the science station that they are building for scientists to come visit and do research. Although I did not have time to visit them all, there are 6 reserves in total owned by Ecominga.

My last week in Baños, I attended the Conferencia de Biodiversidad (Biodiversity Conference) with Marcelo and Juan Pablo. Here Juan Pablo and Marcelo presented a lecture about their research with Ecominga and the importance of conserving these ecosystems especially for the endemic tapir
species. I observed every talk concerning biodiversity and conservation around the globe. I did not present but gained a plethora of valuable information from all the speakers. This conference helped me to gain a global perspective on my research and to meet with local organization leaders engaged in conservation projects. I conducted several interviews with the attendees.

Following Baños, I visited an animal reserve named Zaranjuna Reserve in Puyo. Here I volunteered for one-week fixing trails and taking care of animals such as parrots, monkeys, turtles, and one tapir. Since this reserve was not on my original plan of sites, I simply observed their practices and conducted informal interviews with the family who started the reserve. After Zaranjuna, I traveled ten hours towards the border of Peru in order to meet with the head of an organization called Cultura y Naturaleza (Culture and Nature) in Loja. I did not volunteer with this organization but simply met with the head of the organization for an interview.

My last organization sat high in the Cloud Forest above the small town of Nanegal. I volunteered here for two weeks at the Santa Lucía Ecolodge. In my two weeks there I cleaned, made and maintained trails to the lodge, helped construct and collect rocks for the extension of the lodge and I helped the kitchen staff prepare meals for the 25 students visiting from Brighton, England. At this lodge I observed how a community of farmers transformed their agricultural lives to that of conservation. I took note of their deep connection and knowledge of the ecosystem in which they were situated and their love of
Santa Lucía. It was here that my Spanish reached its highest capacity and I was able to communicate with all the workers comfortably in their native language. I learned a wealth of information from every site and person that crossed my path on this trip and am thankful for every experience.

Fieldnotes

At each of my sites I had my own private residence in a separate cabin or bedroom where I could separate myself from the company of others and record my notes on the day. Every night I wrote in my two separate journals, recording my personal feelings and then my observations of the organizations, people and my project experiences. I also kept a small journal handy at all times to record new Spanish terms and to jot down quick observations and reactions in the immediate moment. This small journal proved helpful when I sat down in the evenings to record the experiences of the day, because I was able to place myself back in the moment. Every time I heard something in passing or had an unplanned conversation that related to my topic, I quickly jotted it down and then recorded the occurrence in my journal. By the end I returned with two full journals of field notes, which I analyzed for recurring themes. Keeping a thorough journal of field notes proved very helpful when sitting down to write my thesis.

Semi-structured open-ended Interviews

Before leaving the States, I developed a questionnaire that served to outline my questions for those I would interview at the sites. I created an
English and translated Spanish questionnaire in order to accommodate the language of my interviewees. I also emailed the organizations beforehand to confirm whether I could interview the head of the organization while visiting. I gained permission from all the organizations.

While at each site I met with the organization head and conducted a semi-structured open-ended interview based loosely around my questionnaire. Besides a record of their biographical information, all questions asked were open-ended in nature and provided them the space to offer their thoughts and ideas on the topic. I also did not always stick to the questionnaire in the cases where my Spanish had improved and I knew the subject well enough to add questions that pertained to them and what I had learned in my observations of their organization. Interviews lasted anywhere between 15 minutes to an hour. No compensation was given.

The majority of interviews minus two were conducted in Spanish without a translator. I interviewed the head of Eco Volunteers UP, Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes, Ecominga, Aves y Conservacion, Cultura y Naturaleza, and Santa Lucía. I also did supplementary interviews with the park guards working for Ecominga and Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes in each reserve I visited. All interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder, with the permission of the interviewee, or by hand. Then they were transcribed and translated back to English by three different translators. The first two were bilingual native
Spanish speakers and the last was a native English speaker who spoke Spanish fluently. All were compensated.

Data Analysis

Data analysis of my interviews and field notes started in the field but continued when I returned home. I kept a note of key terms used consistently by interviewees while in the field and then upon return analyzed all transcriptions for recurrent themes. Each interview was coded for these terms and themes and then a theme map was developed in order to categorize the important themes of the research. Field notes were also analyzed similarly. The analysis was then supplemented by literature that connected to and discussed the themes found in the interviews and field notes. In addition, several websites of organizations not visited were reviewed for prominent themes and histories. Case studies of other countries facing similar problems and solutions related to the research were also used to support the research questions.

Challenges

One challenge that hampered the beginning of my research in Ecuador was my limited ability to speak Spanish. Although I conducted all of my interviews in Spanish, minus the ones with English speakers, at the start I understood very little making it hard to know how interviewees responded to my questions. I would just read my interviews verbatim and continue without listening to their response. This changed as I improved my Spanish and was able to understand my interviewees better, making it easier to build upon their
responses and learn more. Also people were less open with me when I could not speak very good Spanish. By practicing every day, I improved my Spanish quickly and was able to address this original issue so that it would not burden all of my interactions and interviews. I noticed a change over time between my interviewees and me once I could understand them better.

Another challenge or conflict of interest occurred as a result of my position within the organizations as a paying volunteer or intern. Since a large portion of the funding for the first organization Eco Volunteer UP and the last Santa Lucía come from volunteer fees, they depended upon my support and aimed to please me in order to promote their organizations. This may have caused a possible conflict of interest when I interviewed them about their organizations, since they would want me to see them in the best possible light. In addition, they knew I would be writing about them for my thesis so they did their best to sound favorable to me. In order to counteract this conflict, I kept thorough field notes on my observations of their interactions with other people both tourists and volunteers to provide a more rounded picture of the project outside of my own influence.

The last challenge was maintaining objectivity on my part as I developed deeper connections with the project founders, because I also desired to represent them in the best light. It is hard to separate the friendships you make with interviewees from your objective observations and evaluations. I did my best here to separate myself when writing my journal and not let my
relationship with them interfere with my objectivity. Out of respect for all interviewees, I have given them all pseudonyms unless they provided me permission to use their name. Organization names have remained the same though.
Chapter 5: Research Findings

Results: Participant Observation and Semi-structured Interviews

The following presents the recurring themes that emerged throughout my observations in Ecuador and my interviews with those involved in the five main organizations that I participated in: Eco Volunteer UP Foundation, Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes, Ecominga, Cultura y Naturaleza, Aves y Conservación and Santa Lucía. Although numerous themes emerged, these were the most prominent throughout: stable & shifting environmental worldviews; local dependency on land; issues with the National Parks and Protected Areas model; community involvement in conservation; ecotourism serves as a possible alternative; educational outreach is crucial; and finally local ecological knowledge deserves a place in conservation. All of these themes surfaced within participant observations and the fifteen interviews I conducted. They provide insight into ways of addressing conservation in Ecuador. In contrast to the literature review, the results revealed that the complex issues of conservation are not as straightforward as the literature makes it out to be.

This data will add considerable weight to the arguments about conservation globally. By providing a voice to local people, I hope to address some of the issues and concerns that emerged in relation to global and local efforts for conservation. Direct quotes and sections from my field notes will be used in the following pages in order to show what has been said in connection with the overall themes. All quotes, except for those said by Marta and Luke
Johns, were said in Spanish and translated by bilingual translators into English for the purposes of this thesis. For demographical information about each interviewee refer to Appendix 3.

**Stable & Shifting Environmental Worldviews**

When observing and interviewing local people about their relationship with and perception of the environment in Ecuador, two sub themes appeared. The first was a love for and connection with nature from a young age. The second displayed a shift of perception from extraction activities such as hunting to appreciation and concern for the future of their environment. I will address the causes of the shift in worldview in this second theme in a moment. It is important to note that several of the interviewees were originally farmers who are now Nature Reserve park guards and fit more into the second category/theme. The other interviewees developed their connections with nature much sooner in life.

One very specific interaction stands out as significant for displaying a deep ecological worldview of the environment. While sitting around the fire on a rainy night at Chamanapamba Reserve, Marcelo, a park guard who grew up in the Tena, expressed a deep sentiment to me:

*Marcelo formed his hands into a cup and scooped the circling campfire smoke towards his face and inhaled deeply, then exhaled the word “sagrada,” with a smile. “Todos son sagrada aquí,” he said, “el bosque, la tierra, la lluvia y agua. Todo sagrada.” You could tell by the glint in his eye that he loved it up here (Chamana reserve). After inhaling the smoke he joked*
that now his whole spirit was clean—“mi espíritu es limpio!” He asked about the air and rain in the U.S. but I told him it was nowhere near as sacred as this. He nodded and grinned widely. “Sagrada,” he scooped more smoke towards him. (Excerpt from Objective Field Notes)

Marcelo spent most of his life in Tena with his family, where he learned the names of every species from a young age. He took long walks in the forest as a kid and learned respect for nature. When he moved to Ulba, at the foot of Chamana mountain he engaged his community in projects to conserve the environment. While visiting with him, I helped him build a wall of recycled bottles along the path of El Mirador, a look out point he created for visitors to see the mountains and Ulba river. Marcelo’s uncle once owned the land that is now Chamana Reserve under the jurisdiction of Ecominga. When his uncle decided to sell the land, Marcelo encouraged him to not sell it to someone who would destroy it for farming. Instead he found Ecominga and convinced them to buy the land for a reserve. Now he acts as the official park guard at the reserve, visiting four to five days a week to manage the organic garden, work on the science station, and save endemic orchids from fallen tree branches. I spent five days with him at the reserve and could sense his deep and sometimes spiritual connection with the land.

Marcelo’s relationship with nature reflects his early interactions with his ecosystem and being taught its importance from a young age:

“When I was young, I loved to roam on this mountain with the other youths to see everything that the cloud forest has to teach. It was so exciting for me to watch
the changes, and this is where I began to think like a Scientist. It was then that I began to cultivate ideas about conservation projects” (Marcelo).

The following speakers also revealed an early connection and love for nature:

“When I went to the mountain. Well, I grew up in the mountain, I liked the mountain” (Sancho).

“Yes, we learn about birds with the experience since we were children. The only things we do not know, it is the scientific names for the birds. We only know the common names” (Jorge)

“I loved dinosaurs when I was a kid and to become a Paleontologist. But since I was not able to study dinosaurs, then I chose birds. And the other, birds are very bright and colorful, and the way birds get to people. Birds impact more people than mammals and reptiles. All that made a huge visual impact in me. Then I went out to watch birds and I fell in love with birds. So I tried everything, but later I fell blindly in love with birds” (Tony).

“When I was a small boy, my father always took me with him on trips to the countryside. We slept outside and walked in the country to see the beautiful views and the rivers. I always loved that” (Juan Pablo).

“I’ve always liked being outside. I grew up in the countryside, I lived there, and I always liked it” (Noel).

All of these quotes from my interviewees reveal an early interaction with nature and the start of a love for certain species, ecosystems, and activities. In contrast to these recognitions of an early relationship with their surroundings, the second theme that I mentioned above, offers a different point of view.

For some of those interviewed, nature used to mean hunting, farming, and cutting down trees for building. Now their employment has changed leading to shifting worldviews. They make a living working to protect nature either as
guards in the parks or running their own conservation organizations and ecotourism projects. This way they can provide food, shelter, and clothing for their families with little cost to nature. Some speak about learning about the environment in university, while others changed their perceptions due to the influence of foreign organizations. These organizations like Ecominga hired local people as park guards and by offering them an alternative for survival, encouraged a newfound love for conservation. On the other hand some experienced a loss of control of their land for farming from foreign organizations, and were forced by necessity to shift their worldviews in order to survive. These instances will be made more explicit below.

The following are quotes from three park guards Sancho, Theo, and Jorge. They all grew up in El Placer and are part of the same family. They are brothers, all in their 30s to 40s with families, who started as farmers and hunters, raising their family off the land but at the expense of the environment. Then they found themselves changing their views of nature when Ecominga hired them as park guards:

“My view changed three years ago; in the past I had a way to see things. When I started working here at the Foundation, I saw it in a different way. A much better way. In the past, we even were hunters and later with this job, we realized that it is better to keep birds without killing them. It was a radical change. And that change is good” (Theo).

“Well, I am not a hunter anymore; I take care of birds and forests so that they do not get destroyed” (Sancho).
“Five years to change my point of view. I went to cut forests without knowledge, but now with knowledge we do it better” (Jorge).

“Before Ecominga, two years, my mind changed. I was a hunter. The most important factor was a monkey that changed my idea. Because I shot him and he was crying like a person, so I got sad and then I stopped doing that” (Jorge).

These quotes show how the work with Ecominga introduced them to an alternative way of looking at nature. They all mention how before they were hunters or farmers and now they see a new way of interacting with nature. Others discuss a personal shift that occurred over time as a result of their own transitions. Jorge, who is quoted above, had two shifts in his life. The first was a personal shift of perception and the second came when he approached Ecominga to offer his services as their first park guard based on his newfound knowledge and love of nature. He speaks of the first shift here:

“It was sudden. I was a farmer, and then I got the idea to plant trees and flowers for the birds” (Jorge).

Even before Ecominga, Jorge started planting trees and flowers out of a love for the birds that they attracted. This occurred in reaction to his observations in the forests around Rio Zunag near his town of Placer. For several years he worked on his project to bring the birds back by reforesting. He met Luke Johns, the Founder of Ecominga, while walking at Rio Zunag. Luke spoke fondly of how Jorge pointed out several birds and named them for him on their walk, which sparked their partnership together. Jorge’s whole family works as park guards now (all the men) and his nephew shares a similar personal sentiment towards nature beyond his influence from Ecominga:
“The fact of seeing what is in nature. Things that one
does not pay attention to. If you are going to cut
something, and well, there are so many beautiful
things in nature” (Rafael).

Another great example of personal and even spiritually guided shifts in
environmental perception is shown in this entry I wrote in my journal:

While walking around the town of Las Tolas, I
stumbled upon a unique jewelry and artisan shop
named “Artesano Ecologico.” Along the left side of the
shop grew medicinal plants and herbs. Inside the
wooden house, I found long wooden tables and
carving tools. Several shelves held thirty coconut
shells acting as bowls and filled with different colorful
seeds. Most of the seeds were found on the forest floor
and maintained their natural brown and black
shades. Some seeds naturally shone red. A woman
with long black hair and sagging arms smiled and
motioned towards two weathered papers nailed to
the wooden wall. The one on the left read in Spanish
and the one on the right in English. They told the
story of this little business.

Here is the story of the man who started this artisan jewelry shop:

Muyucunayumbo- Ecological Art History in Las Tolas, Ecuador

“No More Felling Trees”

Between the years of 1998-1999, the man that the forest talked to was a forester.
Whilst felling the biggest trees, he felt inside him a voice that asked “When this
ends for us, what will you do next?”

Then he said, if we continue to fell the forest more and more, there won’t be a forest
left or anything that exists there, so I would have to leave. However before this
happened, he said: “No more felling trees” and asked “what can we do to stop this?”

One day a friend invited him to Mindo to cut wood for a house. He went as if this
was his destiny that he should go and, whilst felling in the forest, he found a tagua
seed that he cut into the shape of an old shoe using his machete.

At this moment, he said; “we must build a small house, buy some tools and carve
some different designs.” He made a fern dog, a wooden elephant, hummingbirds
from tagua and cocoa, armadillos and faces of pumas. His enthusiasm was such
that he did not have a day to rest. Afterwards he formed a group of crafts people with the aim to fight day by day to:

“Take care of Nature”

This story presents a spiritual view of nature, as the man believed that the forest spoke to him and asked him to change his practice of felling trees. We see here a dramatic shift in environmental worldview when the man changes from the practice of logging over to jewelry making. After talking with the husband and wife who started this small eco-friendly jewelry shop, I discovered through their language that they expressed a deep spirituality in connection to nature.

In contrast, others experienced a shift in environmental worldview more formally from the influence of education at universities or from television shows. Early formal environmental education seems to not exist in schools in Ecuador, so it was not until these interviewees entered high school or university that they had high school teachers and professors who taught them about the environment. Franky, husband and former classmate of Marta, started their organization Eco Volunteer UP Foundation with four other classmates after studying ecotourism and conservation in university. He spoke about how education changed his perception at a young age, at a time when he and his girlfriend Marta cared more for the city and going to the mall. For those who were privileged enough to own a television growing up, they also learned from environmental programs and stations like the Discovery Channel.

“I did construct my perception of the natural world when I was attending college” (Franky).
“When I went to school, maybe in fifth or sixth grade. The problem here is that you do not get environmental education. And the majority of the TV shows have nothing to do with the environment. In other words, national television has nothing to do with the environment. Cable TV with Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, there it was the moment that my conservationist spirit started to appear. And then, when I studied Biology. I believe when I was 16 years old I started with this” (Tony).

“When I was younger the environment was not important to me. But, thanks to education, readings and watching TV there was a change. For the majority of people the environment is not important. We are not educated in this. We have never been educated in these topics, not at school, neither at college. For example, this area is a commercial area and people work on businesses or agriculture, therefore the last topic is conservation. Yes, there was a change” (Tony).

The last shift I want to convey is one that will relate to the next theme that is a dependency upon the land for meeting one’s necessities. Those quoted here experienced a separation from their farming land by a foreign organization that bought the rights to place the forest under Bosque Protector (Protected Forest) status. Thus the farmers were forced to find an alternative for survival and from this search emerged their shift in environmental worldviews. These men come from a farming cooperative of peasant farmers that worked on the mountain above the town of Nanegal. The government back in the 70s, due to the Agrarian Reform Acts, gave this land to them. When Maquipucuna Foundation, founded by a Swiss couple, bought the land from underneath these farmers in order to place it into a Protected Area, the families involved in the cooperative were forced to forfeit their land. As a result of losing their land to Maquipucuna, these peasant farmers had no means of survival. In reaction, they
pooled their money to buy the land above Maquipucuna Reserve, in order to
start their own Ecotourism lodge and company. This shift led to a stark change
in their environmental worldviews: from farmers to conservationists. The
quotes below discuss this event and its impact on their lives:

“It was the very important factors of seeing that the
Maquipucuna reserve was already conserving and
they declared all the area of Santa Lucía a national
forest” (Eddie).

“The organization (Santa Lucía) switched to
conservation when... as a cause of the declaration of
the national forest (being protected)” (Eddie).

“Basically it was kind of by force, because when
people who lived in Santa Lucía were farming, trying
to make projects to survive, but thinking in terms of
ranching agriculture, which was the opposite of Santa
Lucía because of course they had to cut down the
forest so they could have some type of production. So
then when they were appointing something
productive like agriculture and ranching the
government decided to declare this area a national
forest so then everyone was like, "Well, now what?
How are we going to live? We can’t cut down wood,
we can’t farm; we can’t do anything.” (Patricia)

“My point of view has changed much since 1995,
because before then I had done a lot of activities such
as deforestation for agriculture purposes and for the
wood” (Cisco).

For these speakers, they experienced a harsh switch from their activities of
farming and cutting down the forest to embracing conservation after losing their
land.

Local Dependency on Land

Almost all of those interviewed express the fact that the local people
depend upon the land in Ecuador for survival. The people either cut down trees
to sell the wood or to farm or graze cattle on the land. While a need for
conservation is recognized, people also express the necessities of local people for
making a livelihood off the land. As a result, the efforts of conservation run up
against the efforts of local people to make a living. The following quotes by
conservation project founders and workers express the challenges to their goals
for conservation on the behalf of local people:

“Some of them they don't so they have to come back to
cutting the trees because there is not enough there”
(Marta).

Marta grew up in Quito and earned a degree in Ecotourism and Environmental
Studies at University. She found herself drawn to this path by her professors and
the realization that Ecuadorians have a beautiful country that goes
unrecognized. She finds herself as an outsider from the city trying to teach
people to love what they have in the less developed areas. She is more affluent
then the communities she works with in Las Tolas and the Amazon. She talked
about local people not having an alternative so they must return to cutting trees,
because there isn’t enough money otherwise. Other interviewees express
similar challenges faced by people to survive:

“All of them are farmers. And that is the only form to
survive. There is not a different way to get
money”(Jorge).

“But I believe that not everybody is focused on
conservation. They want to destroy to make room to
cultivate. That is the way of the countryside, if you do
not cultivate, you will not have anything to eat. And it
is a bit difficult” (Jorge).
“It is a problem when people are not taken into account. People get to the point of saying: aha, so they live better there, even the plants live better. Then they (the local people) go there and cut the forests. It is hard” (Tony).

“Before we used to say ‘do not cut the forest’ and they replied ‘then, how I am supposed to have means to live’ (Tony).

“The greatest challenges for me, to have arrived at being a conservationist, have been to stop cutting down the forest, stop being a hunter and to have become a conservationist at an advanced age, those have been some of the greatest challenges I’ve been able to overcome” (Eddie).

“Being that the lands were already ours, but of that declaration (Protected Forest Act)... that is, we too, totally couldn’t work anymore” (Eddie).

“At that time everyone was sort of trying to find the alternatives so that Santa Lucía couldn’t make farming projects but they could have economic resources or at least jobs taking care of the forest, because that was the thing. We need to have a management plan and studies to keep doing something productive but we don’t have a road even now, so nothing productive...”(Patricia).

“I believe that conservation is important, but that the benefits for the people that live near here are many in the forest. In the forest, there is wood for building, fruit, medicine, and water. It’s important to view the forest as a marketplace, or a natural store” (Juan Pablo).

“In the United States, the neighbors of the national forests have all of their basic needs met. Here, people have a lot of need” (Raul).

Although conservation combats against the needs of local people to make a living, those interviewed recognize that there are other ways of facing these challenges that do not involve excluding local people. This leads to suggestions
for the need for an alternative that involves the needs of communities with the needs for conservation. Several of the interviewees discuss the necessity for an alternative for local people to survive if you want to promote conservation.

Marta, founder of Eco Volunteer Up Foundation, acknowledges that in order for her conservation project to work in Las Tolas there needs to be an alternative option for local people to not fell trees:

“We can talk with the people and give some another alternatives and they can work in other places so they can stop cutting the trees” (Marta).

She discussed how this can be challenging because alternatives that turn a bigger profit than farming and selling trees don’t always exist.

“. . . still cutting because they need like another option to work and sometimes we don’t have this option and they have to see that this option works for them if they switch. They need to (sic) have enough money for them so they can survive so this sometimes is why (sic) the people they cut trees (sic)” (Marta).

She hopes that the presence of tourists will offer an alternative for those wishing to sell their handicrafts:

“Each community they try to do like find things that attract the volunteers or tourists” (Marta).

“Well we try to talk with them and also like um help them like for example in the community tell them that volunteers can live there in that there is some way a group they do this handicrafts they collect seeds and they make different handicrafts” (Marta).

Luke Johns, founder of Ecominga, is an American from Wisconsin who came to Ecuador as a biologist and ecologist and realized how many endemic species existed within one small area of the Cloud Forest. Although he hopes to
purchase more and more land in order to protect it from destruction, he recognizes the need to incorporate local people. He speaks here of the importance of offering an alternative benefit of conservation for local people:

*Goals are “to protect the local hotspots of endemism and to make it possible for the local people to somehow gain a living from our reserves as resources for them so they don’t have to so we relieve the pressure on the environment” (Luke).*

“We understand that you can’t just put a wall around a forest and say its protected. The local people have to see some benefit from that” (Luke).

Another organization founder, Raul, who founded *Cultura y Naturaleza* (Culture and Nature) in 1996, grew up in the southern city of Loja, Ecuador. He received a formal education and started his organization in partnership with two other men. One of the men is from the United States and the other is from England. Their organization focuses on conservation in Mexico, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru. He differs from the beliefs of his partners when it comes to working with the local people. He believes that local people must see benefits in alternatives, because otherwise they will continue to destroy the forest. His organization puts strong emphasis on providing these alternatives for the local people:

*“The local people have to benefit in some way from the conservation. They don’t know the laws about conservation, and it’s not necessarily that they don’t respect the laws so much as that they don’t know the laws” (Raul).*

All of these interviewees and organization founders are careful to not ignore the importance of people’s needs in the process of conservation. Some of them
personally experience a dependence on the land and others have observed the communities working hard on the land to survive. Once this is recognized as a huge part of the equation of conservation, people start to evaluate what types of conservation work best for the communities they are situated in and the environments they are working with.

*Issues with National Parks and Protected Areas Model*

As discussed above, people living in Ecuador who survived on farming or hunting to support their families are now faced with a conflict between conservation of the forests and providing for their own needs. The interviewees above who are involved in conservation projects recognize the need to include the people, to provide for their livelihoods and to replace farming and hunting with alternatives. In contrast, the National Park system in Ecuador addresses conservation differently. A few of the interviewees speak about the difference between National Parks and a more integrative model, stating that the park conservation’s approach interferes with communities.

Tony, founder of *Aves y Conservación* (Birds and Conservation), grew up in Patate province and received a degree in Biology at a University in Quito, Ecuador. He is 29 and started this organization with classmates soon after leaving school. He spoke about the differences between the National Park approach and his own group’s approach to conservation. Here he describes these discrepancies:
“We work with the “IBAs,” with the important areas for birds’ conservation; and this is a different conservation model compared to the ones at the National Parks. As you say, national parks and cattle raising are mutually exclusive; therefore, I (National Park) would say to the owner of cattle: if you were to come into the park, I would take your cattle away. On the other hand, IBAs are a model that includes people” (Tony).

“They should understand that we need to conserve the springs, but never move people away” (Tony).

“So we have two conservation models: one with people and the other without people. Then you get to buy and then you leave, or you buy and they leave. People lose their identity. If they have money, they go to the city. Then spend the money in whatever. That is why we like our idea” (Tony).

Another interviewee, Raul of Cultura y Naturaleza (Culture and Nature), spoke about the difference between foreigners coming in and setting up conservation projects in the form of National Parks and local people introducing conservation to their neighbors. He describes the difference in reception from the people as one of resentment towards the efforts of outsiders:

“When outsiders come in and try to carry out conservation, they often fail, but when neighbors conserve, it makes more sense to people” (Raul).

Eddie Molino, co-founder of Santa Lucia, is 65 years old and originally grew up in the province of Cotopaxi in the Eastern highlands of Ecuador. His family was poor and he had to work hard at a farm to support his parents. For this reason he only attended school until he was ten years old and never received any other formal education. When he met his wife, Maria, he moved to Nanegal with her and her father. He bought land for his new wife and future
children. There he joined a farming collective with eleven other families who
were friends of Maria’s father, and who were also poor farmers. They purchased
land in the Cloud Forest. The farming was tough on this steep slope and they
had to bring in tools and carry out produce all by mules. Then they experienced
the impact of losing this land by the Protected Forest Act put in place by a
foreign organization named Maquipucuna, started by a Swiss couple. When their
land was declared protected by Maquipucuna Reserve under the Bosque
Protector Act, they were forced off their land and were without a way to make a
living. This excerpt from my field notes, about a conversation I had with one of
the workers at Santa Lucía reveals a lot of the issues faced by farmers who lose
their land to National Parks and Protected Areas:

“When the Maquipucuna Foundation declared 4,000
hectares of land in the Cloud Forest protected, the
families of Nanegal (all farmers) wondered what they
would do. They all used to farm naranjilla and other
fruits to bring to the market and make a profit.
Without their land for farming, they needed
something to do for money and jobs, since they could
no longer farm” (Field notes).

In contrast to the way local people I interviewed spoke about
conservation and communities, conversations that I had with foreigners from
Western countries reflected a superior knowledge of conservation and a need to
buy land and protect it from local people. This mentality connects with that of
the Western-influenced National Park model. The following speaker discussed
how buying land away from the farmers and protecting it was the best bet for conservation:

“Foundations spend too much on education and studies, when they should have bought the land with that money to protect it from destruction” (Man at Conference 1)

“We need to buy stuff now. It buys you time to change the people later” (Man at Conference 1).

“Deforestation here is fast, we don’t have time for education, we must protect the forest now for the future” (Man at Conference 1).

These speakers reflect different mindsets about conservation. The first realizes that the National Park model that takes land from the farmers does not work for the future. For the second person, he feels that buying land and protecting it is important, because of the lack of time for conversations and education with local people. Either way these quotes express how the National Park model excludes people from the efforts of conservation.

*Community Involvement in Conservation*

All of the speakers interviewed, in conjunction with acknowledging that local communities depend upon the land for survival and need alternatives to meet their needs, spoke about involving the communities in their projects. By including the communities and their needs within the goals of conservation, these organizations made it a priority to benefit everyone not just the environment. This model for conservation differs from the National Park model as Tony mentions above. The following quotes describe how the organizations
strive to include the needs of communities and involve them in the process of conservation.

One way in which the local people are included in the efforts of conservation is by hiring them to work as park guards or guides in the reserves or tourism projects. Workers for Ecominga discussed how their involvement as park guards for the nature reserves has helped them put food on the table and changed their perceptions of nature. Two of them speak below about enjoying their jobs and making a living at the same time:

“I started to work with Luke because Luke told me I was going to get a job because of the land I had, because I knew these mountains and he offered me the job and I stayed with Luke” (Theo).

“The best part, I live happy, working in the path, planting trees for the birds, and this is an excellent work for food” (Jorge).

In addition, other organizations involve the local communities at even higher levels by training them to do the conservation and research themselves and to conduct the tours for visiting tourists. In particular, Aves y Conservación (Birds and Conservation) discussed earlier, an organization started by a young Ecuadorian who believed that parks were not needed to protect nature, but rather a sense of love and connection with nature on the parts of community members works best to fuel conservation. His organization trains all local people about the birds of the Cloud Forest and puts them in charge of conservation projects as well as leading avi-turismo (bird watching tours) in the forests. This way they learn about the importance of conservation and benefit
from it directly. He speaks here about the empowerment of the people as an important component of conservation:

“That is always our goal, to work with people in order to conserve. We do not buy land, nothing like that. We train people so that they do that” (Tony)

“However, later we did realize that the research by itself was useless if we did not include the community people” (Tony).

“I believe that conservation is changing people’s minds. And doing this in two years is not that easy, you have to be on people’s side” (Tony).

“The community is the foundation. Our projects are done for conservation and research and always with the local people. If we want to work on research we do it where there are already local support groups and they are the people that we work with. They help us with aquatic bird census and we pay them whenever we can do so. Just like any other biologist or technician. For conservation projects they are the real foundation. We work with the local people” (Tony).

The following interviewees who work with Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes also discussed the involvement of the community in their projects:

“Yes, the community is involved in the conservation projects. They are very dedicated to the idea of conservation. They try not to use contaminants and to only use natural alternatives. They’re very intelligent, and they love this project” (Marcelo).

“I believe that it is a coordinated effort between the community, Marcelo, me, and sometimes the Ministry of the Environment... But basically, the community, volunteers, and students make the conservation possible” (Juan Pablo).

Another organization leader who spoke at the 2011 Biodiversity Conference in Baños about his research and conservation of amphibians along the coastal landscapes, speaks similarly about the people’s role in conservation:
"I would like to note that these forests are protected not through the state, but through the communities" (Leon).

Santa Lucía, a community-run ecotourism project, supports the community in several ways. The first way has to do with the story of how they started, because originally Santa Lucía was a cooperative of 12 farming families. Now those same families or their descendents all benefit directly from the Ecotourism project they started together by building the Santa Lucía Ecolodge together. Each family receives a percentage of all profits:

“Everyone in the cooperative decided that was the only alternative to have economic resources in Santa Lucía so they decided to build a lodge” (Patricia).

“I had the opportunity to work with the organization in Santa Lucia, and then they trained us to be local guides and we learned that there was a big opportunity to show the nature of the forest to outsiders, and that we could earn a lot of money that way, instead of harming the forest and the mountain. That’s how ecotourism started here” (Cisco).

The second way they benefit is that all children of the families work at the lodge and other local community members also hold positions at the lodge either as cooks, cleaning persons, construction workers, or guides. Noel, a man from the community who used to work as a guide at Maquipucuna, now works for Santa Lucía as a visitor guide and coordinator with student groups. His wife works as the housekeeper of all the cabins and main lodge. Cisco’s family was part of the original collective and he works in administration in the office in Nanegal, while his sons both work as cooks at the lodge. Patricia, daughter of Eddie, used to work at the lodge in the kitchen and doing educational programs, but now uses
her knowledge from a few years at University to do administration in the office, marketing, and accounting. They believe that training local people who may not have professional training or education is more beneficial for the future of the community than bringing in foreigners who have a different vision for the project. Sharing the same experiences and hopes for the future encourages them to continue this work:

“I think all the people working here have this same vision, this same expectation, that we don’t make a lot of money but at least we are living, we are giving work to many who work here and that’s super important” (Eddie).

“So Santa Lucía believes that training people really is important” (Patricia).

“This is the goal: that people learn to manage their resources in a way that better their lives. This way they don’t have to sell or abandon their land, or leave here for Quito, where they are completely unprepared for life in the city. This is what has motivated me. Personally, it is very encouraging that people can become educated and take control of their resources” (Cisco).

The third way they support the local community of Nanegal is by purchasing all food and supplies for the lodge directly from the local markets in town. Local people in Nanegal run these markets and all the food is grown sustainably on their family plots in town. Santa Lucía makes sure all food is local and sustainably grown. By supporting these local people they can ensure they use better practices. They also hire local men to help transport the goods to the top of the mountain for the reserve and basically involve them in any means necessary to make sure everyone gets a piece of the pie. This way all of the community members see the benefit of conservation and can survive without
farming unsustainably for the market. The following voices reflect this desire to include the community:

“Our organization with the local community. For example as for the stores, we buy everything locally, we also help a little with the transport because you have to come in by car here and so we help the carriers also by running errands and taking a shift, what else? We also help in the town with these organic trash and inorganic trash containers composting. We’ve helped in the kindergarten/daycare center, and we’ve also given opportunities to all the school kids here to come visit Santa Lucía” (Eddie).

“We, as in Santa Lucía, are always thinking that the local development is possible because many of the projects, many of the financing things are specifically given to people that are professionals but that don’t always have experience, but since Santa Lucía does have that experience and the know-how of this tourism project we have, therefore it is somewhat fundamental that the local development is the most important thing” (Patricia).

“I think that what has shaped my point of view has been the relationship and agreement between the community and their conservation efforts” (Noel).

Cultura y Naturaleza, also makes inclusion of community members an important aspect of their conservation efforts, because they believe having the support of the community is the most important factor for a successful future in conservation. Raul spoke about how being welcomed into the community and making them friends aided in his organization’s ability to gain support for their projects. By including the communities in conservation efforts, they secured themselves hands to help and voices to support them:
“We have supported many communities as they have created community reserves” (Raul).

“We have areas of conservation and development that are a lot bigger and there is a strong relationship between the community and the areas, and there is where the communities do the work of conservation” (Raul).

“First we have to gain the confidence of the community and become members of the community. We buy areas where there are neighbors, and then the neighbors become the park guards. They use the forest in a sustainable way, they use the wood and water sustainably while conserving” (Raul).

“There were people who did not understand the importance of conservation, but having local people on our teams helped a lot with that” (Raul).

“Luckily, we can count on having a lot of local people to help us, and our good relationships with them help a lot, and they often bring us family members when we need more people. The local people identify with the work.” (Raul).

“But we strive to work with only local people to minimize our problems, and we are lucky because not every non-profit has the money to do this” (Raul).

By working with the communities, making them friends of the organization and recognizing their needs to live off the land, allows Cultura y Naturaleza to gain the support of these people and minimize conflict with the community.

All of these organizations reflect this same desire to support and include communities in their efforts for conservation. One of the main reasons for this is in the theme earlier that local people depend upon this land for survival. In recognizing this reality, these organization leaders attempt to approach conservation in a way that provides alternatives for local people. These alternatives allow for local people to benefit from the conservation projects and
shift their practices or at least curb them. In the interests of the future of conservation in these areas, all of the projects acknowledge that including the people in different capacities that empower them helps to support their goals and the continuance of conservation for future generations.

*Ecotourism Serves as a Possible Alternative*

When developing alternative conservation projects that include the needs and voices of communities, ecotourism projects in Ecuador tried to serve both of these requirements. Both of the ecotourism projects that I visited worked hard to provide a benefit for local people to get involved in conservation and gain monetarily from the presence of tourists and volunteers.

Although local people in the Cloud Forest did not start the first project, Eco Volunteers UP Foundation, it was started by a group of Ecuadorian students who recognized the importance of including the community members of their project area in order to benefit everyone. A local family who started their own Ecolodge for tourism runs the specific project underneath Eco Volunteers UP Foundation. They benefit monetarily from a percentage of volunteer and tourist fees, which helps them with paying for conservation projects, upkeep, and paying those who help from the town. This excerpt from my fieldnotes talks about how the family and local people take pride in conserving their forest:

“Every morning we wake up early to go bird watching with the father. It amazes me how much he knows about the forest, as he points out every bird, plant, tree and flower and tells me its name and purpose to the forest. Today after bird watching, we were working on cleaning trails for bird watchers, hikers
and local people transporting goods by mule. Several local guys show up every day to help even though they do not officially work here. I’m told that these young guys come because they care about the forest and are friends with the family. Everyone (local people) seems to gain a little something whether its money or experience from working at the lodge” (Field notes).

A local community of 12 farming families started the second ecotourism project I worked with. I won’t go into detail about Santa Lucía since I have described them several times above. This community-based conservation project made it very clear that ecotourism has saved their lives. For Santa Lucía, ecotourism offered a much-needed alternative for these farmers who found themselves without land after the Protected Forests Act declared their land protected. Here they discuss how ecotourism has helped to support their livelihoods since the development of their Ecolodge:

“Since the year 1996 that we didn’t have projects to develop here in Santa Lucía, then it was one of the best projects to conserve and do eco-tourism” (Eddie).

“The important role that tourism plays is really that they are our livelihood. The tourist comes to stay in Santa Lucía and pays, and with that money we buy food, pay the workers, and most importantly we do this without destroying the forest. Because, truly, in order to live in the forest, you’d have to cut it down to plant a hectare of naranjilla, or to plant vegetables, you have to cut down lots of forest, but on the other hand, with the visit of the tourists, because they pay to visit Santa Lucía and get to know Santa Lucía, then automatically the forest destruction has stopped. That’s why we conserve” (Eddie).

“It’s very beneficial to conserve, that it is possible to live without destroying the forest” (Eddie).

“In respect to conservation, a long time ago people used to buy land for their families and select parts of the forest to sustain themselves. Later, as things
began to change, people realized that they could
make more money with ecotourism than agriculture”
(Cisco).

“They need to learn about ecotourism, and to know
that cutting down the forest isn’t the only way to live.
The financial income from the tourism helps” (Cisco).

Patricia, daughter of Eddie, talks about how ecotourism benefits everyone in
their community not just those involved in the project directly. She makes a
point to talk about how they do not discriminate against people with less
education, because they want everyone to be able to work with them and benefit
from ecotourism:

“Our mission is to create jobs and benefits by means of
an organized ecotourism business and respecting the
future and values of the members, so that is basically
our vision and so from that standpoint we are
thinking always that the local people really are
capable and that’s what we want to show the world
that you don’t need to have five years of a university
education in order to do something more or less
professionally” (Patricia).

Another organization started by local people in the Cloud Forest is
Yunguilla. I did not personally visit their organization but was told about them
by members of Santa Lucía. They share a similar story with the people of Santa
Lucía, because they also started as farmers who previously cleared the forest to
produce mono-crops. Then just as Santa Lucía lost their land to Maquipucuna
Reserve, so did the people of Yunguilla, who lived nearby. As a result they were
forced to find alternatives for survival. Now they share the same conservation
goals as Santa Lucía and have started their own ecotourism and sustainable
farming projects. Santa Lucía and Yunguilla support each others’ projects. I interviewed one of the founders via email to find out about some of their ecotourism projects, which they say now benefit the community. Here is some of what they wrote to me in the email:

“A little about the projects we have in our community; we have development projects for the community such as small cheese plants, yogurt, jams, organic gardens and also a small family hostel run by the community and a housing system with families in the community, so volunteers and tourists can experience community life. We also work on conservation projects such as reforestation, environmental education and we have a nursery for orchids. As I mention we have programs to visit the community for a day or more and also a volunteer program” (Email).

This woman that I corresponded with made it very clear that most people there were already environmentally aware but did not have the means to make a living. Now their development projects with the community and the benefits of selling their organic and sustainably grown products, as well as visits to the community by tourists and volunteers, all serve as an alternative to farming and clearing the forests. Yunguilla is an example of ecotourism’s benefit for local communities searching for an alternative conservation model that includes community needs and offers a move away from their previous practices.

*Aves y Conservación* (Birds and Conservation), another organization I mentioned earlier but did not work with, also offers ecotourism as an alternative for people dependent upon the land for survival. The founder, Tony, takes a different stance when it comes to moving people away from their farming or
ranching practices. He does not wish to change their practices but to offer them a beneficial alternative to pay the bills that will take the stress off their need to produce enough food or graze enough cattle for the market. This way they may lessen their impacts on the environment and work more sustainably. He sees *avi-turismo* (bird tourism) as an alternative that will get people involved in conservation and provide them the opportunity to lead ecotourism projects as an alternative to heavy extraction and production. This would act to shift their practices over to more subsistence practices rather than heavy capitalist production, because Tony recognizes that people that have been farming their whole life may not want to abandon it completely. He discusses these options for the people:

“Before we used to say “do not cut the forest” and they replied “then, how I am supposed to have means to live”. But now, they have the choice, “avi-turismo”. That is a way to progress, research, conserve... a better financial choice for people” (Tony).

“And our idea is not to change people’s mind. If they raise cattle, they will continue to do that. If they are working in agriculture, they will continue to do so. However, they will have “avi-turismo” as a financial support. Because we do not want to change the way they live because that is very difficult; but “avi-turismo” plays a huge role in Birds and Conservation” (Tony).

Despite not having a strong focus on ecotourism, Ecominga’s founder and workers also discussed the benefits of tourism for conservation efforts and the community’s needs. The founder discussed how their organization donated land to community members who lived within the forest around their reserve. By donating this land they hoped to encourage them to start a collective tourism
project that would benefit them and deter them from destroying their part of the forest. While visiting the reserve I saw the men of that community building an Ecolodge together for these purposes:

“We donated the land for them to build a tourism facility for themselves, that thing you passed as you were hiking to our station. The idea there is that this common land we gave to the association as a whole so they can use it as a common engine to fund their own lives through ecotourism, so they don’t have to cut the forest” (Luke).

In addition to encouraging ecotourism projects among communities near their reserves, Ecominga has also been asked by different communities to allow them to run ecotourism in their reserves and provide them the support needed to do so. Ecominga, which hoped to foment conservation through ecotourism amongst communities so they could see benefit from the projects, encouraged these projects. One community, El Placer, where most of the workers come from, made a proposition of this sort for ecotourism:

“El Placer have asked me about using our forests for their own tourism and I’ve said yea I’d be really glad to do that but they’d have to go with guards so they don’t do any damage” (Luke).

Here one of the guards and members of the El Placer community talks about their projects for ecotourism:

“We started with the idea to foment tourism. There were “pescadas” and we decided to plant lots of “farol chino” plants for hummingbirds and “morochillas” plants so that the “tangaras” birds come”(Jorge).

All of these people make it clear that ecotourism has helped to provide an alternative for communities once dependent upon the land for commercial
farming and other detrimental practices. Ecotourism, according to these organizations, serves as a way for integrating community skills and desires into the efforts of tourism and conservation. This way the people see the importance of protecting forests and biodiversity for the purposes of tourism, which provides monetary incentive.

Of course none of the projects existed without challenges such as dry periods when tourists and volunteers did not come. Most projects accepted volunteers who paid fees to participate in the projects in addition to visiting as a tourist. These fees supported the programs’ projects. Not all organizations accepted both tourists and volunteers. Some only allowed volunteers and did not rely on simple tourism for survival. Either way the support of both tourism and volunteer-tourism provided funding for projects at these organizations. Many interviewees spoke about a strong dependency upon tourist and volunteer dollars, which can leave organizations feeling desperate during tourist off-seasons:

“The financing for this project is solely from volunteers and tourists that visit us. We survive solely on the visits from tourists, the volunteers that pay to stay here in Santa Lucía. Just like you have to pay lots of money to interview me (haha)” (Eddie).

“We always have trouble with the financing, but we have survived without raising salaries. For example, I earn $300 a month and the others earn less. It’s not much, what we earn and that’s how we’re surviving. It’s not like this project gives the kind of money so that we could have things, but the best thing about us is that we are conserving and we’re surviving. So far it’s been at a standard level, but of course there are times
when we don’t have any visitors we suffer because we
don’t have enough to pay the people” (Eddie).

“You it (volunteer fees) helps but it’s hard because
there are times like there are months when we don’t
have any volunteers. So yea we don’t have much”
(Marta).

For that reason projects require other means of support through
donations or in the case of Yunguilla, a product to sell. Other issues involved in
ecotourism is its ironic impact on the environment, as tourists and volunteers fly
all over the world to visit these destinations causing a big carbon footprint. In
addition, since most volunteers and tourists come from Western cultures they
expect a certain level of infrastructure and amenities that require resources on
the part of organizations to build lodges, have facilities for showering and
bathrooms, and provide electricity. Santa Lucía addressed these concerns by
building a lodge from fallen trees, providing hot water for showers from solar
powered water tanks, and compost toilets that required no running water and
returned all waste to the ground. They also used candles in the evenings instead
of electricity. Sustainable designs help with the carbon footprint of ecotourism
projects and sometimes projects will even offer carbon offset bonds for those
flying to their projects. These are only examples of the many ways projects can
address this issue. These are all important issues to keep in mind in conjunction
with ecotourism’s benefits.

Educational Outreach is Crucial

As discussed earlier, education plays an integral role in shifting the
environmental worldviews and practices of local people in any country. In the
case of Ecuador, education came up time and time again as a key component to a successful conservation project. Education can be transmitted through many different mediums such as television and media, classes, hands-on training, and propaganda through posters, pamphlets, and books. Most of the people interviewed put strong emphasis on the importance of community outreach through formal and informal education. They all expressed that educating people especially young people about the importance of conservation and appreciating their environment helped to shape actions toward nature into the future. By working with people to educate them about their environments, most of the interviewees found great benefit for their conservation goals, because people were more likely to support their efforts and help. In the instances where community members were trained in the field and encouraged to get involved in conservation and ecotourism, it was found that people experienced a direct benefit from conservation.

Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes in partnership with Ecominga, focuses a lot of attention on education and outreach in local communities surrounding their reserves. While doing a month long internship with Juan Pablo Reyes, I learned of his early love for conservation and education. He grew up in Quito in an affluent family, son of two doctors, and found himself leaving University with a degree in biology and conservation but no definite direction. Since his great grandfather, a famous historian from Baños left money to start a foundation there, he decided to move to Baños and invest his time in focusing the organization on conservation and outreach with the community. While working
with him, he visited multiple communities to hang posters about his efforts to stop the building of a hydroelectric dam on the Rio Topo (Topo River). He also hosted classes in schools to teach children about the importance of protecting the mountain tapir. The organization taught a camp on conservation and nature at the Foundation office, where children learned about the mountain tapir and other important endemic species. Paintings and sculptures of the mountain tapir made at the camp now decorate the walls of the Foundation’s office. Juan Pablo also worked with other conservationists, interested in protecting the mountain tapir, to design a children’s book with stories and activities that teach kids about the mountain tapir or danta as they call her. All of these efforts show the dedication of Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes and Ecominga to educate the community and especially children about the importance of conservation:

“He (talking about Juan) goes to schools he shows them movies. He gets them to draw pictures of animals tapirs and stuff” (Luke).

The mission statement of Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes, as Juan Pablo describes it, is as follows:

“It’s to develop the local culture, and to plan programs especially for the children so that they can develop ideas about nature, conservancy, and learn about the native species” (Juan Pablo)

The mission statement makes a point to include education programs for children about nature, because it is so important to their goals. He continues by adding that:
“Our organization focuses more on research, education, and training of students and members of the community” (Juan Pablo).

“We work with Ecominga, inviting people to visit the reserves and we do a lot of environmental education in the schools” (Juan Pablo).

“It’s also important to keep the community involved in this process, and that’s why education is also important. I always try to think about both of these elements when I plan the projects. The world doesn’t seem to care much about protecting the forest; they only think about making money off of it and making everything artificial” (Juan Pablo).

Ecominga’s guards mentioned several ways that education has played an important role in the community through projects especially with children at schools. Marcelo told me about the involvement of his community in Ulba:

“Yes, we do have some programs to teach children about nature. Sometimes we have a walking tour to teach children, youth, and even some women, about the nature around them so that they can take some pride in it. That way they can also admire what the tourists come to see, and can come to value the special things that keep the tourists coming back. That way, they know not to destroy the trees” (Marcelo).

The guards from El Placer have asked Ecominga to help them with education programs, because they see the importance and benefit of educating their community. Through acquisition of environmental knowledge they believe the people will be empowered to conserve for generations to come. Otherwise, without the education programs the guards fear the biodiversity could be lost forever. Thus they spoke of wanting to implement further programs in El Placer through Ecominga:
“We (Ecominga) like in El Placer we are often asked to do some of the education programs for the schools or fix some thing or donate tools for some project the community needs” (Luke).

“There are workshops for us to communicate with the communities to keep the mountains. We were taught that if we take care of one type of species, we end up taking care of more species” (Theo).

“To have more meetings with the community, to have a workshop to explain to them the goal of conservation. Because in few years, we could destroy all. But having knowledge, we can work better” (Jorge).

“Here in Placer, everybody is a farmer. But ideas about environment, we explain to them and we hope, we tell them we need to be careful with trees so that they can feed and do not destroy them” (Jorge).

These educational programs help to gain the support of the El Placer community when implementing conservation projects.

Cultura y Naturaleza also brings educational programs to their surrounding communities in the hopes that it will encourage support among them for conservation. Thus far their programs have proven very successful, according to Raul:

“We also have education programs for environmental education. We work with many communities” (Raul).

“Yes, we have youth education programs in both rural and urban schools” (Raul).

“We’ve seen some good results from our education program – and part of that is because we invite people who are interested, we don’t target the whole community with just one campaign” (Raul).

Santa Lucía, although not completely focused on education per say, welcomes students from Ecuadorian schools and abroad to come stay at their
Ecolodge and take classes on Ecology, Biodiversity, and other studies in their unique location. When I was there as a volunteer for two weeks, a group of 25 students from a University in Brighton, England visited for their second year in a row to take a credited course through their University. Three professors and one man from the organization joined the students to learn about the plant, insect, and bird species at Santa Lucía. The members of Santa Lucía encourage these visits, because they are able to share the wonders of Santa Lucía with everyone who wants to learn about them. This is important because it encourages further support of their conservation projects from Ecuadoreans and foreigners:

“Student groups have begun to come aside from the Ecuadorian student. For example, the Ecuadorian student doesn’t have any money and pays maximum $10 per person to stay a night here in Santa Lucía, which isn’t much and doesn’t even cover our costs. But we accept them so they can see that we can survive with that small fee they pay and still conserve the forest, which is super important” (Eddie).

By inviting Ecuadorian students for a very low price, he means to show them that conservation is more important than making a profit and getting that message across is important. They want to play an important role in the community by working with the children and educating them about the importance of conservation so they will want to get involved:

“We want to be professionals in the community, and stay engaged through a variety of ways, such as sports, helping educate the children, and environmental education. We are always planting, helping the youth learn English so that they can be the future leaders of Santa Lucia” (Cisco).
By educating the people and talking to them about conservation they can secure their support far into the future, says Noel:

“I’ve given a lot of talks to people, education about conservation and the importance of the environment...It’s important to have conversation about this, because that is how I learned about the importance of conservation. When people don’t know about these topics, it’s hard to get everyone to agree on acts of conservation” (Noel).

Unfortunately, a lot of Ecuadorians, as Marta of Eco Volunteer UP puts it, don’t appreciate what they have:

“Ecuadorian we don’t like what we have” (Marta).

So it is integral to the future of conservation to show Ecuadorians and especially young students the beauty of their country and the importance of conserving it. Thus education via visits to these lodges serves a purpose to organizations like Santa Lucía, when trying to persuade Ecuadorian people about the need to conserve rather than destroy. In addition, working with kids on environmental education was described as very rewarding and enjoyable. This is why those who work with Santa Lucía love to invite students up to the lodge for classes:

“I love it when I work with environmental education with the kids. That for me is like, I love that kind of work and of course I also work a little doing training” (Patricia).

For some of those interviewed the fact that there is a lack of environmental education in the Ecuadorian school system, encouraged them to get involved in educating others about the environment. This lack of
environmental education was mentioned over and over again making it very clear that something was missing in the Ecuadorian school system, according to my interviewees. These interviewees feel that teaching about the environment outside of the formal setting of schools allows them to reach the youth and encourage their support for conserving their country’s biodiversity. Here are two of the comments about this lack of education:

“No, because regrettably in Ecuador I think it’s been about five years that they've been trying to change this way of doing, for example, environmental education with kids. When I was studying in Quito, even though I was studying in Quito, we never heard anything about environmental education, the environment, of caring for the environment, of management of trash, absolutely none of these things” (Patricia).

“For the majority of people the environment is not important. We are not educated in this. We have never been educated in these topics, not at school, neither at college” (Tony).

As a result of this lack of education in the schools, people like Patricia and Tony see the importance of educating people about the environment. By educating people about their ecosystems and conservation, these organizations are not only teaching them an alternative way of looking at and appreciating their landscapes but they are also empowering them to make more educated decisions about the environment.

Local Ecological Knowledge Deserves a Place in Conservation

As mentioned in the Literature review, inclusion of Local/Traditional Ecology Knowledge (TEK) plays an important role in providing communities a
voice in conservation. This belief was reflected in several of the interviews I conducted. It appeared from their responses that the organization leaders in Ecuador understand that local people hold a deeper relationship with their land even if they weren’t conserving it previously. So they make it clear that all projects include the knowledge and observations of local people in conjunction with studied knowledge by the organization:

“We use a constructive teaching methodology. The idea is that we base this in what people know; the ancient knowledge and we build around it and around what we know. We are not the teachers but we share information because people have lots of knowledge about birds. They are the best hunters in the world! And we use that as a conservation tool. We provide them with more information and they realize that we use all that. Also, we try to keep local names, we compile the birds’ local names, and we try to keep lists so that we can preserve all of it. That is valuable information. We use the traditional knowledge, because of the model we use. We build with the people’s knowledge and ours” (Tony).

“We use local people’s knowledge about tapirs’ habitats and plants” (Juan Pablo).

“Yes, it is the base of our work. Before there was scientific knowledge, there was traditional local knowledge. Later the scientific knowledge supplemented the local knowledge” (Raul).

These models reflect the organization leaders’ desires to include the community in their efforts for conservation. By including their knowledge of the environments, they hope to empower them with a voice.
Remember also that local people started several of the organizations so they use their knowledge and their ancestors' knowledge to the best of their ability. When growing coffee and making panela, an unrefined cake of brown sugar, Santa Lucía, looks to the knowledge of their ancestors and predecessors in the area for guidance on growing sustainably. This acceptance of past knowledge as valuable is important to their goals of maintaining their history and culture:

“Like the project of the sugar canes, the project of the coffee, of course these are not very significant, but they're very special for keeping our culture” (Eddie).

“Of course the whole process is super organic, that’s why I was mentioning to you that even the way they began the process, our ancestors, that perhaps never knew that chemicals existed... I mean it’s super organic” (Eddie).

“Of course we do (use TEK), we’re using all of our traditions. That’s why, actually, we give lots of local foods. That’s why I wanted to eat yucca” (Eddie).

In addition to people speaking about the inclusion of local, indigenous, and ancestral knowledge, I noted in my journal that all of the people I worked with, while taking me on tours of their landscapes, held a deep knowledge of the land. Consistently along hikes, the local guides pointed out birds, plants, flowers, and other species for which they explained their purpose to the overall ecosystem of the forest and what they meant to the people. This deep knowledge of their surroundings gave the impression of great love for and experience in the forests.
These seven themes represent the views and beliefs of my interviewees.

Now that I have laid them all out, I will discuss what they mean in the greater scheme of my research.
Chapter 6: Discussion and Recommendations

To begin I would like to clarify that although my literature review shows a very straightforward connection between worldviews and actions, my research revealed that the issues surrounding conservation and worldviews impact on it are quite complex and show a more multifaceted response to questions regarding humans and their relationship with nature. My research focused on three main questions or aims. The first aim of this research study was to determine what environmental worldviews exist and how they are applied to conservation models globally. The second looks at how these environmental worldviews shape models for conservation. Last, I zoomed in on Ecuador as my case study to observe how local worldviews and conservation models differ from foreign ones in their approaches to the environment and the needs of the people. In order to answer these questions, I applied the frames of environmental worldviews, political ecology, and environmental justice. Then I conducted participant observation and semi-structured open-ended interviews in Ecuador to produce data that would explore these questions.

For my first aim, I set up the dichotomy between the dominant Western worldview of the environment, which centered on what Merchant called an ecocentric ethic, and the non-Western global worldviews (2005). This ecocentric ethic revealed that Western worldviews hold the preservation of nature without man’s presence to be the answer to saving the world’s precious landscapes. In contrast, global non-Western worldviews reflected a recognition
of human’s inherit place in nature and a need for conservation models that include the position of humans in it. Although these global worldviews differ greatly between cultures, it is the history of their people that tells a similar story of human’s place in nature and his dependency upon the land for survival. My results also revealed that worldviews differ within cultures depending upon each unique person’s experience and so the arrow pointing from one worldview to a model for conservation as I speak of below is not always direct.

For the most part my research found that the Western environmental worldview shaped models for conservation that used National Parks to protect important landscapes (Igoe 2004). This is not to say that some of my interviewees did not see a value in having National Parks in Ecuador. Some of the local people thought protected areas was important for the future of their land. In addition no ethnographic research was conducted in National Parks or using interviews of those who started parks and protected areas, but I used case studies like Jim Igoe’s (2004) and John Schelhas and Max Pfeffer’s (2008) to juxtapose Western models with non-Western models making my ethnographic research only cover one side of the discussion.

My case study research done in Ecuador revealed varied environmental worldviews that reflected differences in education level, location, social class and beliefs. Those interviewees such as Juan Pablo and Marcelo who grew up in close relation to nature but without a strong dependency on its resources for survival, held a deeper, spiritual connection to nature. These respondents saw
nature as something sacred and found humans to be one with their environment. Others who lacked education, especially environmental education from parents or schools, and were in lower social classes that depended upon the land for production, saw nature as a market of resources. These people needed the land to farm or hunt and may have had environmental worldviews that reflected a deep relationship with nature but could not find means to act upon it sustainably because of their dependence upon hunting and farming for survival. Despite the differences in views between these two populations, they both reflect a belief that humans belong within nature unlike the Western worldview.

The Western worldview reflects a history of alienation away from the land. This background separates man in the industrial age away from his direct dependency upon the land. This is not to say they do not depend on the land but they are now so far removed that they do not see their close connection to it anymore. In contrast non-Western populations researched in my literature review and case study reveal a history that still puts them in close relation to the land and acknowledgement of a dependency upon it. This may be one of the reasons why we see different environmental worldviews emerging out of Western and non-Western countries. Globally, I discussed Calicott’s (1994) research on environmental worldviews that saw nature in many different relationships to humans such as sibling, parent, and friend. Places like Ecuador and Bolivia even feature rights for nature in their constitutions based on an indigenous belief that nature or Pachamama has a voice of its own. These differing worldviews appeared in my interviews, as I asked people to discuss
with me their first perceptions of nature. Many of the respondents, despite different life experiences, expressed building a relationship with nature as they hiked in the mountains, walked along its rivers, and watched its many species. This close proximity to nature as they grew up in *el campo* (rural) areas molded their worldviews.

To answer my second question of how these worldviews influence models for conservation, I looked at research about Western models of conservation and compared it with my ethnographic research in Ecuador. I found that as a result of these differences in relationship to nature, the West tends to follow the fortress model for conservation through National Parks, spread globally and non-Western approaches, where applied, tend to reflect a partnership ethic (Merchant 2005). The partnership ethic, as I defined earlier, is a worldview that combines the needs of communities with the needs of the environment (Merchant 2005). These non-Western populations tend to apply this worldview to conservation models because their close dependency upon and relationship with the land forces them to explore models that allow them to survive and conserve at the same time.

The conservation models that emerge from this worldview vary because they represent the different needs and beliefs of the people in those cultures. In Ecuador conservation models also varied between and within regions based on the different needs, histories, and skills of communities. When working with the different organizations focused on conservation in Ecuador, I found they
expressed similar worldviews but differed in the way they applied these to conservation. Their projects tended to represent one of the options I offered as an alternative to the fortress model of conservation. One of the projects, which was started by a foreigner, hired local people to work in its reserves. Another allowed collaboration between local families and Ecuadorian students from the city of Quito, by supporting conservation projects run by the local people. Two of the projects focused a lot of energy on education programs and training of community members to help and lead conservation projects and ecotourism. The last project stemmed out of a struggle for survival by local farming families who decided ecotourism could be the solution to their problems.

Ultimately the thread that wove through all of these projects was the fact that all of them discussed the importance of supporting the local people who depended upon the land for survival. This common theme relates back to the approach of political ecology, which states that “contemporary conservation not only drives traditional residents and users to the margins, it often fails even on its own terms, producing unsustainable results while perpetuating injustices and conflict” (Robbins 2004: 153). Thus in reaction to the impacts of the National Park system, discussed by interviewees as ignorant to human needs, these organizations strive to recognize these needs and include them in the conservation process. According to Robbins (2004), political ecology addresses these issues of ecological conflict between those with political power and those people who lack a voice in the fight. By using political ecology as a lens for my research, I hoped to frame the discussion by my interviewees about the
importance of the local person’s needs and voices being heard in conservation, as a multifaceted issue that is very political in nature.

Regardless of their model for conservation, each organization talked about a need for an integrative approach to conservation that includes the local communities. This fits with my argument for an alternative model for conservation that reflects the unique situations of each community. I am not offering a new thesis here about conservation; this concept appears in the work of Carolyn Merchant, Paul Robbins, Jim Igoe and others focused on the political ecology and social justice issues related to conservation in the modern world. What I have done is offer a case study on how organizations in Ecuador approach this question of how to develop an alternative conservation model that allows the local people a voice and alternative for survival. As I mentioned their approaches to this issue varied in model and effectiveness but all reflected these beliefs in a sense of justice for the local people most impacted by conservation.

*Recommendations for Projects in Ecuador*

I hope to emphasize that no one model is necessarily better than another, because the point of this research is to show that there will never be one model that fits all situations. Instead it is this shared belief that inclusion of local communities is the most important detail for any conservation project. Having said that, there appeared to be evidence that some models used in Ecuador faced more challenges than others in their approaches to integrating local people. The projects that aimed to protect the land but only hired local people to work in the
reserves, tended to face more conflict with local people entering their reserves to still hunt and cut down trees. Unfortunately, in this situation the conservation projects did not benefit the whole community, since only one or two families found an alternative in working for the organizations. The other community members in this situation may tend to resent the reserves or simply, as one interviewee mentioned, react out of dire need for the resources. Without a viable alternative, those not benefiting from the conservation projects may still be forced to continue cutting down trees. Thus, despite inclusion of some community members, without the inclusion of all, the conservation project runs into more conflicts.

In contrast, those organizations that were started at the grassroots level by community members themselves tended toward an attempt to benefit all in the community. These projects took the form of ecotourism via lodges or bird tourism. By involving the local people at all stages of development and execution of the projects, these organizations realized more communal benefits and fewer conflicts. By putting local people in control of the projects they proved to empower them and encourage them to support conservation efforts. The involvement of local people occurred at many different levels for the ecotourism projects: from splitting the profits between all families involved, to providing jobs to local people, to purchasing all goods from local stores, thus supporting their business. By recognizing that the success of the project depends upon the involvement of all community members, these organizations not only safeguarded support for their goals far into the future, but also provided
a viable alternative for community members to make a living. This is important as Merchant says, in reference to pursuing a partnership ethic, “the flourishing of human communities is intrinsically tied to the well-being of nature” and the greatest good includes the “interests of all living beings and systems” (Merchant 2005: 83). My research shows that the organizations that included the interests of everyone complained of fewer conflicts with local people entering their reserves to cut trees or hunt.

The challenges that were faced by these organizations do present minor set backs in their goals to conserve, implement further projects, and help out everyone in the community. Challenges included struggles to gain legitimacy and certification through the Ministry of the Environment, who constantly involved them in a tangle of red tape. The Government tended to cause overall problems when organizations tried to get Protected Forest certification or to purchase more land. Many interviewees expressed not wanting to deal with the government or its agencies like Ministry of the Environment, because they said it caused severe headaches. Other challenges were a result of the heavy dependence of these projects on volunteer and tourist fees as their main form of funding for projects. When depending on visitors as the only form of income, the organizations run the risk of leaving themselves with no income in off-seasons. My recommendation for those organizations that depend on tourists and volunteers to support their projects and programs, is to have better advertising on websites and brochures abroad. Most of the visitors come from abroad and since these projects do not have prominent and abundant advertising online,
they should increase their marketing campaign and offer incentives for visitors coming during off-seasons. This benefit could be in the form of a discount or option for reduced extended stay. They should also make sure to be present on all social media websites like Facebook and encourage previous visitors to spread the word, possibly through offering a discount for anyone who referred a friend. These are only some possible options for increasing visits and safeguarding from dry months.

An issue though with dry months is they tend to be during the school year for a lot of visitors or times of the year when people just don’t take vacations. So another option would be to work with foreign NGOs interested in conservation to secure donations and support. This way they would have other means of income in off-seasons. Organizations may be resistant to partnerships with foreign groups though, because they do not want to change their goals or local image. This could be remedied by also partnering with other national organizations with better presence in the country. Otherwise these organizations provide a beneficial approach to conservation that meets the goals of political ecology and environmental/social justice by including the voice of the communities and empowering them to manage the land in a way that helps conserve and pay the bills.

For those organizations that lack support from local people, two suggestions that appeared consistently within the literature and interviews, was to promote environmental education and use local/Traditional Ecological
Knowledge in conservation. Two organizations made education their main goal, hoping to not only make conservation part of their life but a life goal of everyone. By visiting schools and working with children to educate them about the importance of species in their environment, one organization hoped to make an impact beyond the conservation projects themselves. This impact was to shape the minds of children to respect and love nature far into their futures. By doing these educational programs and designing camps, festivals, activities, and children's books, this organization made conservationists out of the youth. As a result, the children and older youth worked with the organizations and taught their parents to do the same.

The other organization used education to train the local people to do the conservation projects themselves. This training empowered the people to implement programs in their communities and get others involved in conservation via bird tourism in the area. Both educational efforts show a desire to promote conservation as a life choice based on educated decision making not coercion on the part of outside organizations. Education is important to all conservation efforts and should go hand in hand with alternative community based movements.

Lastly, another form of empowerment discussed in my interviews was the integration of local and traditional ecological knowledge into mainstream science. Most respondents offered an example of how they used local knowledge of the areas to aid their conservation efforts. When educating people about their
environment and applying knowledge to conservation efforts, it is crucial, as mentioned earlier, to not just impose outside knowledge on people. As suggested by Berkes (2008) in order to provide a voice to local and indigenous people in an area, integration of local/traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) must exist. By combining science with traditional knowledge, conservation projects do better to reflect the ideas and observations of the community not just the science. This integrated approach fits with the efforts of alternative conservation projects that recognize the importance of the local voice.

Organizations tended to use traditional techniques when farming sustainably or use observations from local populations about species. Either way they integrated the knowledge of local and indigenous people and they did so with a mind towards legitimizing the knowledge of communities. This gives the message that western science, although helpful, is not the final word on conservation. People who live in an area for an extended period of time also can provide important information based on continued observation of the environment even if they lack scientific terms and research skills. Thus an integrated approach to conservation gives the communities the benefit of the doubt when they hold information the conservationists do not.

My research on how worldviews impact conservation models globally started very broadly to develop the history and framework for how the Western worldview of fortress conservation emerged and is now implemented globally. In contrast my ethnography of Ecuadorian organizations set up a picture for
what alternative models can look like it. Five main components surfaced as integral to any alternative approach to conservation. These components are 1) a recognition of the necessities of local people, 2) a need for involving local people in conservation so they have a voice and can maintain control over their land, 3) emphasis on ecotourism projects as possible models for meeting the first two components, 4) the importance of environmental education programs, and 5) integration of local and traditional knowledge within that education. In the development of any alternative model of conservation, my research shows that following these five criteria will prove more beneficial to the communities and the environment into the future. No one model will or should look the same considering the specific ecosystem, environmental worldviews, and history of the people will differ between locations, but it would benefit all projects if they consider these criteria in conjunction with their own.

Limitations of Research and Recommendations for Future Research

No research is ever complete. I experienced several limitations while doing my research on this topic. The first limitation I experienced was time constraint. I only had three months in the field to do research, which limits the amount of participant observation and interviews I could conduct, because I had to fit them into a short time period. In some cases I could only stay with an organization for one week in order to fit in visits to other organizations. Also the distance I needed to travel reduced my time and caused some of my interactions with organizations to be limited to a short meeting and interview without
participant observation. Another limitation was my lack of funding. Since I did not receive any grants or support, I had to pay out of pocket for the entire trip and often couldn’t afford to stay with organizations longer than one to two weeks, because of the high cost of volunteer fees. Also my presence as a volunteer and researcher with these organizations may have created a bias to my research because my business supported them and they may have spoken in a way to please me.

As a result of my limited time and lack of access, I did not get to interview larger organizations and those in charge of National Parks and reserves. The reason for this limitation is that larger organizations are harder to get in touch with especially if foreign run and also require more red tape if connected with the government. By not interacting with these larger, foreign and governmental organizations I was unable to provide a voice from the Western point of view or rather the Western conservation model point of view. Instead I could only provide a limited perspective on the side of the non-foreign (minus one) organizations. Since my research was so limited by time, money, and access, I recommend that further research be done that includes more interviews of people about the impact of the National Parks and people who started the parks. In addition, my research only focused on a small area of the Cloud Forest, so research could be expanded to other regions of Ecuador for better comparison. A larger sample of organizations representing alternatives in Ecuador and even in other countries could help to serve as a better body of data on the impacts on communities and environments of these projects compared to National Parks.
If I were to continue this research, I would visit Ecuador for a longer time and do interviews with community members instead of organization leaders to see what their experience has been with conservation and the organizations in their area. This way I could get a more detailed and less biased picture of how the people benefit or do not benefit from these projects, since project leaders may exaggerate their impacts. This would be worth researching because finding viable conservation models is important to the future of ecosystems and communities globally.

Chapter 7: Conclusion
In a world of rapidly degrading ecosystems and exponential population growth, the question of how we can conserve and still survive becomes extremely important. As globalization makes the world feel smaller, recognition of the impact of environmental destruction strikes closer to home. Ignoring the issues that face the planet is no longer an option, even if it’s not out your front door. For the Western world, it may seem that a lot of the environmental deterioration isn’t out their front door but on the doorsteps of their poor non-Western neighbors. This causes further disparity between the Western and non-Western world. Continuing the legacy of colonization, the Western world claims a post-materialist authority on how to protect these post-colonial landscapes (Dunlap & Mertig 1997). This authority emerges out of a long separation from direct dependency on the land and differs greatly from the continued dependence of non-Western people upon their natural resources.

My research set up this dichotomy between the Western and non-Western relationship to nature. Due to the long-running separation of the Western human from nature, we watched the development of conservation models that reflect a very ecocentric ethic that views protection of nature to exist separate from humans (Merchant 2005). The birth of the National Park model materialized from this ethic and globalization and the Western sense of authority spread it to non-Western landscapes (Igoe 2008; Robbins 2004; Yearly 1996). One of the goals of this project was to argue that the National Park model defeats its own conservation goals by enclosing local land and ignoring the needs of local communities (Igoe 2008; Robbins 2004). By stepping on the feet and
resources of local people this Western model creates conflict with local populations who lack political power to stand up for their rights to natural resources.

From a political ecology perspective, this model violates the principles of environmental and social justice, by imposing Western objectives on the unheard voices of poor farmers and communities (Robbins 2004). The central focus of this ethnography was to explore the environmental worldviews of local communities and organizations and how these impact their models for conservation. The organizations observed in Ecuador represent only a small sampling of the possibilities of what alternative conservation movements could look like, in an effort to show how conservation does not have to follow a one-size-fits all model. Instead this research aimed to determine how conservation models could work to better reflect the multifaceted issues of society, history, people, and landscapes of each unique place. Of course as I stated before, nothing is straightforward so the future of conservation requires recognition of the diverse views of all people involved.

When conservation models begin to take into account these factors and apply them to the community and environment in question, then we may see sustainable projects that protect the rights of people and the environment. All conservation should include four things: recognition of local people’s needs, involvement of local people’s voices and traditional knowledge, benefits for people to make a living, and environmental education. If every conservation
project, no matter what it looks like or where it’s located, were to include these
criteria in their mission statements the goals of conservation and human
survival could be one in the same.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: English Questionnaire
1. Where are you from? Local or foreign to this area and country?
2. When did you first construct your perception of the natural world?
3. What factors most influenced your perception of the natural world?
4. Have you always had the same viewpoint on the natural world or did they change at any point in your life?
5. If they did change, what event influenced this change?
6. What events and influences led to your focus on biodiversity conservation?
7. What led you to focus your work in the cloud forest?
8. When did you start your organization?
9. How have your views on the natural world shaped the focus of your organization’s projects?
10. What are the main goals, vision or mission statement of your organization?
11. Please describe for me the projects your organization has done in the past and is engaged in currently?
12. What is your projected time frame for conservation?
13. How does tourism play into your organizations goals and mission?
14. Who does the conservation work? Locals? Volunteers?
15. Where do you get the funding for your projects?
16. Do you use traditional ecological knowledge of local or indigenous people to better understand the landscape and needs of the environment?
17. In what ways does your organization interact with the local community?
18. Have you experienced any challenges to your conservation goals since starting your organization? Please describe.
19. In what ways did you address these challenges?

Appendix 2: Spanish Interview Question

Cuestionario de la entrevista personal en Español

1. ¿De dónde eres? Locales o extranjeros a esta zona y el país?
2. ¿Cuándo fue la primera construcción de su percepción del mundo natural?
3. ¿Qué factores influyeron en su percepción del mundo natural?
4. ¿Siempre has tenido el mismo punto de vista sobre el mundo natural o cambiaron en cualquier momento de tu vida?
5. Si lo hicieran el cambio, lo que influyó en este caso el cambio?
6. ¿Qué eventos e influencias llevó a su enfoque en la conservación de la biodiversidad?
7. ¿Qué te llevó a enfocar su trabajo en el bosque nublado?
8. ¿Cuándo comenzó su organización?
9. ¿Cuál ha sido tu opinión sobre el mundo natural en forma el enfoque de los proyectos de su organización?
10. ¿Cuáles son los principales objetivos, la visión o misión de su organización?
11. Por favor, describa para mí los proyectos de su organización ha hecho en el pasado y se dedica actualmente?
12. ¿Cuál es su marco de tiempo previsto para la conservación?
13. ¿Qué papel juega el turismo en sus objetivos y la misión de las organizaciones?
14. ¿Quién hace el trabajo de conservación? Los locales? Voluntarios?
15. ¿De dónde obtiene el financiamiento para sus proyectos?
16. ¿Utiliza los conocimientos ecológicos tradicionales de las comunidades locales o indígenas para entender mejor el paisaje y las necesidades del medio ambiente?
17. ¿De qué manera su organización interactuar con la comunidad local?
18. ¿Ha tenido algún desafíos a los objetivos de su conservación desde el inicio de su organización? Por favor, describa.
19. ¿De qué manera usted frente a estos desafíos?

Appendix 3: Interviewee Guide

Eco Volunteer UP Foundation

Management
Marta (pseudonym): Female, 30-40 years old, Program Manager with Eco Volunteer UP Foundation, Interview done in English

Franky (pseudonym): Male, 30-40 years old, Spanish Volunteer Coordinator with Eco Volunteer UP Foundation, Interview done in Spanish

Ecominga

Founder

Luke Johns (pseudonym): Male, 40-50 years old (only American interviewed) Interview done in English

Workers

Theo (pseudonym): Male, 30-40 years old, Ecominga park reserve guard, Interview in Spanish

Sancho (pseudonym): Male, 20-30 years old, Ecominga park reserve guard, Interview in Spanish

Jorge (pseudonym): Male, 30-40 years old, Park Ranger for Ecominga, Interview in Spanish

Rafael (pseudonym): Male, 20-30 years old, Park Ranger for Ecominga, Interview in Spanish

Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes (family run organization)

Project and Office Manager

Juan Pablo Reyes (real name): Male, 20-30 years old, Biologist and Manager of Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes, Interview in Spanish

Worker

Marcelo (pseudonym): Male, 50-60 years old, Architect works with Fundación Oscar Efren Reyes and as a guard at the Chamana reserve for Ecominga, Interview in Spanish

SENESCYT

Leon (pseudonym): Male, 20-30 years old, Biologist, works for SENESCYT (National Superior Education Department of Science and Technology), not interviewed but spoke at Biodiversity Conference and quoted

Aves y Conservación

Management
Tony (pseudonym): Male, 20-30 years old, Biologist and Founder of Aves y Conservación (Ecotourism and Bird tourism organization), Interview in Spanish

**Cultura y Naturaleza**

**Founder**

Raul (pseudonym): Male, 40-50 years old, Director of Cultura y Naturaleza, Interview in Spanish

**Santa Lucía**

**Administrator and one of Original Founders**

Eddie (pseudonym): Male, 60-70 years old, Interview in Spanish

**Sales and Logistics**

Patricia (pseudonym): Female, 30-40 years old, Interview in Spanish

**Coordinator of the Reserve**

Noel (pseudonym): Male, 40-50 years old, Interview in Spanish

**Manager**

Cisco: Male, 40-50 years old, Administrator or Manager of Santa Lucía, Interview in Spanish