

**Oil Transnationals and the Huaorani community of
the Amazon basin: Redefining Development in the
Ecuadorian Rainforest**

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School of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts 1998**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Professors who had enough patience to encourage and support this research: Scott Buresh, Dr. Omar Ka, Ron Schwartz and Dr. John Sinnigen.

I would also like to thank the following scholars and professors working on related projects whose writings, discussions and active support assured the completion of this thesis: Pablo Andrade, Patricio Trujillo, Richard Quintero and Guillaume Fontaine.

Without the help of Paulina Garzón from the environmental organization of Acción Ecológica; Remigio Rivera and Lucia Rivas, both members of the Oil Company Maxus-YPF, this research would never have been completed.

A todos, gracias.

I.-INTRODUCTION

1.1.-Purpose of Study

This research paper will explain the relationships of the different social groups in the Ecuadorian Rainforest. The social actors involved in the control of the natural resources are: 1) the Ecuadorian government and their policies regarding natural resources and extraction, 2) ecological organizations, both national and international 3) the oil companies 4) and the Huaorani, an indigenous community that inhabits this area. The research will consist of the mapping of these social actors.

Since Western man's first contacts with the Amazon region, his perceptions have varied over throughout the history. The myth of potential wealth lying under or in the tropical forest created a long sequence of exploitation linked to periodic economic booms. This research will focus on the deconstruction of Western man's images and perceptions of the Huaorani community. These images are used separately by different sectors of Ecuadorian society, as well as by international organizations.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the elements that define development practices in the Ecuadorian Amazon basin. For the past 30 years, the country has depended on oil production. Ninety percent of the oil production in Ecuador comes from the rainforest region. The expansion of the global economic system called for the redefinition of developmental policies in Ecuador. Indigenous communities that live in these areas have become important political actors whose images have transposed by environmental organizations for political reasons.

This analysis will help to evaluate how transnational capital affects the economic, symbolic and political aspects of society. It is important to consider the way each local community participates in this process because it allows one to understand the strategies that may be implemented to ensure their survival.

This research will prove that the image of the Huaorani community has initiated the process of redefinition of Ecuador's development policies. This image has been used by the environmental organizations, the Ecuadorian government and transnational oil corporations.

1.2. -Theoretical Framework

The first part of this paper will analyze the creation of the Huaorani's image by the West. Many theoreticians have positioned themselves in the analysis of culture and imperialism. Edward Said (1978, 1984) was the first one to trace and define the categories in which the West has categorized the Orient or non-western societies. The process of imagining the Americas and portraying them in visual images established the dialectic of the frontier. The 'other' is presented as lure (desire, profit, curiosity) and danger (death). (Franco, 1996) Images created by the West portray the passivity, poverty and ignorance of the Third World societies.

The second part of this project will focus on development. After the end of the Second World War, institutions such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) offered "economic solutions that would link the international economic relations with the less developed countries". (Preston: 181:1996) These theories promoted the inequalities between the rich

and the poor societies. Latin American countries supplied primary products and low-tech manufactures to the first World in exchange for manufactured goods. This economic dependency was later expressed in political and cultural dependency. (Preston, 195:1996) In the discourse of development, we contemplate the need for a revision of policies of transnational corporations. If development required the use of foreign investment and the incursion of transnational corporations, the question of political control, political autonomy, and government intervention becomes crucial. There is a need to revise the bilateral agreements that govern the contracts between transnational companies and the host countries. (Moran: 1996, 420. Sunkel: 80,1993). Domestic policies towards transnational corporations and the role of local economic groups in shaping these companies are key to understanding the relationship among local elite and foreign investment.

The International Monetary Fund's Structural Adjustment Policies compelled countries to maintain an export economy, forcing them to over-exploit their natural resources.¹ This situation reinforced environmental exploitation by creating excessively large development projects. They were not so much forced on the Third World by the North, as actively chosen by the local elite. (De la Court: 1996, 94) These projects which totally disregard environmental impact were conceived in the seventies and became operative in the eighties.

¹ P.W. Preston offers a review of the policies "*of the new market ideology*" for Latin America in the 1980's. Institutions such as The World Bank and the IMF pressed for economic liberalization with the elimination of market imperfections, removal of control on the private sector, liberalization of foreign investment regulations and the elimination of market-inhibitory social institutions such as trades, unions with the abolishment of subsidies. (1992,259)

Agencies such as the World Bank institutionalized poverty by creating institutions that regulated loans and investments in Latin American countries. These situations generated discourses such as developmentalism and dependency in Latin America. (Escobar: 1996, 23-27) The claim of the dependency theory was that the circumstances of the underdeveloped were to a significant extent shaped by the global structure, in particular the dominance of the West. An analysis was presented which spoke of the historical development of powerful centers (the United States, First World countries) and weak peripheries (Latin America, and other Third World countries). The overall result was the condition known as underdevelopment. (Cardoso: 1989)

The implementation of these projects that were aimed at rapid economic growth ended with the suppression of minorities and local identities. Therefore, these projects assembled a discourse of difference and segmented society. (Escobar: 1996, 219) In response to this situation, Garcia Canclini proposes the theory of "hybrid cultures"(1990). It explains that traditions in Latin America have not yielded to modernity; thus overlapping experiences were seen as a complex process of cultural hybridization. An example of this process is the rising of the indigenous communities as political actors. They offer strategies and alternatives to society's failure in macro-economic development programs. These strategies also prescribe how these subjects have to be interpreted and more important how to respond to the rising hegemony of technocratic governments and neoliberalist economic programs. (Andrade, 1997)

The final part of the research will use the theory of sustainable development. This theory proposes to stop the senseless destruction of nature by encouraging development that takes the environment into account. In 1992 the Earth summit proposed that ecology and economy were two disciplines that needed integration.² The reexamination of the environment launched the strategies of sustainable development as an alternative for the end of the century and the beginning of the next. This strategy intended to cease poverty and protect the environment inside principles of Western rationality. (Escobar: 1996:192)

NGO's, foreign aid specialists and members of the UNDP³ and the World Bank designed sustainable development projects that were known as "partnerships" among the social actors involved. (Henderson: 1996, 23) Indigenous peoples have allied with other civil groups to put pressure on governments. Aboriginal land claims, grassroots micro-enterprises, small-scale technologies that are labor and skilled intensive, are some of the examples of these projects. (Henderson: 30)

Worldwide, the new biotechnologies and the reinvention of nature are linked discourses that must incorporate the experiences of different societies. Currently, Ecuador is in the process of redefining its political understanding within the various indigenous nationalities and the country as a whole. (Muratorio: 1996 Radcliffe: 1997) Ethnic discourse then builds a social universe in

² See Agenda 21; document for Sustainable Development signed by more than 178 Governments at the United Nations of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

³ United Nations Development Plan.

which the capitalization of nature offers new economical perspectives and alternatives for developmental policies. (Escobar: 199,1996) Such discourse aims at the defense of the image of the native inhabitant of the rainforest regions. (Place: 1993) The result is a perception of complex indigenous communities with refined patterns of consumption. They are seen as mythical beings that have been able to live in the forest without having to destroy it. (Franco: 1995, 145)

The Huaorani community in their search for political recognition constitutes one of the ethnic groups that introduced new ecological, political and socioeconomic categories in Ecuador and other countries in the Amazon basin. The key factor of this process is the importance of the indigenous people and their interaction with their environment. These cultures evolved within a complex biological ecosystem that influenced their cultural formation by limiting their ability to surpass the environment's capacity. Therefore, an understanding of the inseparability of biodiversity and cultural practices in the rainforest is fundamental.

1.3. -Methodology

The methodological approach to be followed will focus on discourse analysis. The first approach will be the compilation of bibliographical sources and documents concerned with the various ethnographic accounts of the Huaorani community. Discourse analysis incorporates an awareness of subjectivity and offers the possibility to observe a particular social environment. The development of deconstructive ethnography gives new life to terms and questions the dominant understanding by re-creating awareness in conventional

consciousness. (Linstead: 25, 1993) By deconstructing the discourse, this research proposes to reveal the contradictions inherent within the perceptions of social actors, such as indigenous communities. The recognition of the existence of multiple realities as part of the phenomenology of the social world, brings into question the coherence of traditional anthropological representations of the other. (Linstead, 27) Thus, an alternative ethnographic approach will examine the social actors as produced by complex historical conditions.

The analysis will use the concept of development. It will review the strategies made by the government and transnational corporations that prescribed how the Huaorani community was viewed. The material pertinent to this section will include the documents and policies of oil corporations in regards to the environment and the Huaorani community. It will also include material produced by Ecuadorian and international environmental activists. The analysis will be completed with three different videos where the images of the Huaorani will be analyzed. Edward Said (1979) is the source from which this paper will develop the systematic representations of the other as an image created by the Western discourse.

1.3. -Overview

Chapter two will cover the geographical description of the Ecuadorian Amazon Region and the historical relationship of the Huaorani community with the space. It will conclude with the analysis of the various stages of contacts with Western man through the centuries.

Chapter three will analyze the political and economical implications of the oil industry and the relevance of the Amazon region in the Ecuadorian economy. It will conclude with an examination of the policies of Maxus Oil corporation with the Huaroani community and the environmental plan.

Chapter four will give an overview of the images of the Ecuadorian Amazon region and the Western discourse. It will include analyze the discourse of sustainable development and the discourse and will analyze the environmental movement in Third World countries. It will conclude with the analysis of the image of the Huarani as they represent the icons of the environmental movement.

Finally, chapter five will focus on the alternative economical practices that take in account Ecuador's biodiversity, the indigenous communities and natural resources.

Chapter II

2.1. - The Huaorani, the space and the Amazon region

“Comparable to nature, comparable to nature, comparable to nature, To nature,
to nature, to nature,
Comparable to a feather comforter,
Comparable to thought,
And also in certain way comparable to the Globe of the earth,
Comparable to error, to sweetness and to cruelty
To what is not true, does not stop to the head of a driven nail,
To sleep that overtakes you the more surely that you have been busy elsewhere
To a song in a foreign tongue,...

To the bustle of a nest of ants, To the wing of a condor when the other wing is
already at the opposite slope of the mountain,

Comparable to me finally,
And even more to what is not me.
By you who were my By...”

Henri Michaux, *Ecuador*, 1927 (88)

This chapter will detail the geography and the ecological configuration of the Ecuadorian Amazon region or *the Oriente*. The second section will give a description of the economical and socio-cultural characteristics of the Huaorani with the space and the history of their relationships with western man. The space is used as a referent for the historical construction of the Huaorani. The history of the contacts with Western man is subject to different levels of interpretation.

The Amazon Basin is not conformed as a unified geopolitical unit. Eight nations hold segments of Amazonian territory (Brazil, Guyana, Surinam, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.) However, none of these nations is primarily Amazonian in nature. They all are composed of heterogeneous regions, and in all cases the rainforest territories of these nations

constitute frontiers in the way that they have been the last territories to be incorporated into their national and economical infrastructures.

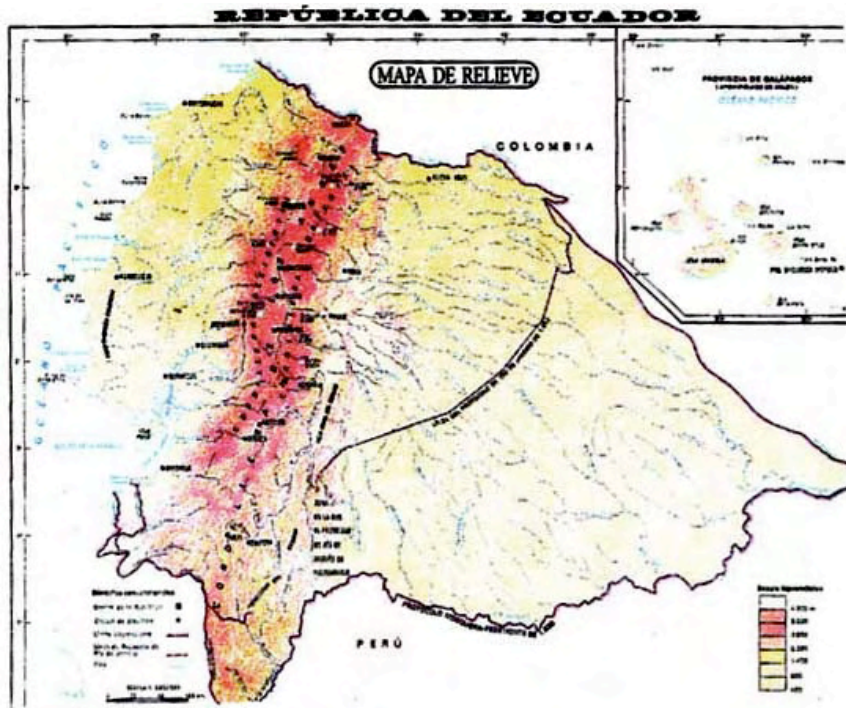
Ecuador is straddled across the Andes on the most western point of South America. The Andean mountain chain divides the country into three distinct regions: the coastal plain or *Costa*, the mountains or *Sierra* and the eastern jungle or *Oriente*. The fourth region is the Galapagos Islands, situated in the Pacific Ocean some 620 miles west of the mainland. The rainforest of the Oriente begins on the eastern slopes of the Andes. The rivers formed in the mountains of Ecuador by the melting snows of the volcanoes are the main tributaries of the Amazon, the longest of them being the Napo that runs for approximately 530 miles. (Perrotet: 25)

This republic occupies a unique geographical position, astride the Equator, where it extends approximately from one degree thirty minutes north latitude to almost 5 degrees south latitude. Within this comparatively short distance are included some of the largest Andean peaks and a multitude of mighty ranges and deep canyons. On the west coast, Ecuador holds a strategic position in regard to the cold Humboldt Current, for it is at this point that the current sheers off to westward, and its influence upon the winds and the climatic conditions of South America is weakened. The eastern boundaries of the republic lie across Amazonian drainage, and cut the Napo, the Pastaza, and the Paute, all tributaries of the world's largest river. The topography is extremely mountainous. Although there are restricted plains in western Ecuador, the greater part of the republic lies along the Andes and their foothills, so that level

areas of any great extent are seldom encountered. The drainage of the country includes a number of large rivers flowing to the eastward, as well as several important western-flowing streams. Except for the coastal strip, Ecuador receives abundant rainfall. The year is divided into two seasons-the dry season, and the wet or so called rainy season. The rains generally begin in December or January and last until May or June, in the balance of the year there is only scanty rainfall. In some localities there is a deviation from this order, and on the eastern slopes of the Andes, there are heavy rains in every month of the year. The annual rainfall in some parts of the Oriente may reach as high as 150-200 inches. (Perrotet: 28)

The striking climatic differences found in Ecuador are compared with its numerous cultural differences. The variations in altitude and physiognomy over short distances create a series of microclimates with widely differing temperatures, rainfall and distinct vegetation. (Fig. 1) The diverse ecological zones of this country also account for the broad variety of wildlife.

Figure 1 Map of Ecuador: notice the diverse geographical regions



The *Oriente* is known to be one of the richest biotic zones on the planet. Here half the rivers that form the Amazon begin to flow. For example, of the 2600 species of birds existing in the world, 1500 can be found in Ecuador. (Perrotet: 30-31) Scientists believe that much of the Amazon basin dried out in periods of heavy glaciation during the Pleistocene Ice Ages over the last million years. But isolated areas, including stretches along the Aguarico and Napo rivers remained moist, providing refuge for existing rain-forest plants and animals as well as allowing a staggering rise in new species of both.

The indigenous communities of the Amazon region have been experiencing “development” ever since Orellana’s voyage through the basin in 1541-1542.⁴ European contact with the natives of the Amazon was characterized by enslavement and extermination occasioned by genocidal warfare and the transmission of epidemic diseases.⁵ At least two million people were annihilated by diseases such as malaria, smallpox and by warfare.

The remaining communities of the rainforest have various degrees of contact with Western man. The following section will explain the social and economic conformation of the Huaorani community and the history of these contacts.

⁴Francisco de Orellana was the first Westerner who traveled from Quito to Manaus, exploring the Amazon Basin. The term “development” is used as a manifestation of the different patterns of exploitation on the region.

⁵ A study held in the last decade estimated that the population of greater Amazonia was reduced from 6.8 million to approximately 0.5 million in 1976 at the time of Western contact. This means a decline of 92.6% over four centuries.

2.2.-The Houarani and the regional space

“We came to live here many years ago,
 We came to live a good life,
 Then there was a war.
 We return downstream,
 Some stayed to live there.
 There were many wars and many Huaorani died.
 My daughter Hueya is named for an ancestor that died in the war
 I will remember my ancestors forever”

Huaorani chant. Translated by Miguel Angel Cabodevilla, *Los Huaorani y la Historia de los pueblos del Coca*. (p.49)

We find various degrees of contact among indigenous communities and westerners. Many groups have extensive histories of contact with their respective national societies such as the Quichua in Ecuador, the Cocamilla of Peru, and the Tenetehara of Brazil; whereas others have been contacted comparatively recently such as the Yanomano in Brazil and Venezuela, the Huaorani of Ecuador, and the Kreen-Akarore of Brazil. The status of Amazon Indians is, to one degree or another, threatened by the expansion of the frontier.

The Huaorani territory extends over the first southernmost parallel defined from the Napo River at the North and the Curaray River in the south. The Huaorani territory is extensive. It is located in the upper west side of the Amazon basin, at 600 ft. above sea level. At the beginning of the seventies, the Huaorani territory covered an extension of 44,000 acres, ranging from the western slopes of the Andes until the lowland territories of the frontier with Peru. It is limited in the North by the Napo River and in the south with the Curaray River, between the provinces of Napo and Pastaza. (Fig. 2) The climate is warm and humid, with temperatures oscillating in the 70 and 85 degrees

Fahrenheit. Annual precipitation is relatively high: annual rainfall in some parts of the Oriente may reach as high as 150-200 inches year long. (Rival: 14) Dry season extends in the months of December and January and the rainy season in the months of June and July.

The western slopes of their territory are filled with numerous lagoons and small rivers that run east and west and constitute the main tributaries of the Curaray River. These rivers open to dense and inaccessible forests known for their complex biodiversity. (Rival: 15) The dense vegetation that covers most of this territory makes it look uniform, although, the Huaorani have developed taxonomy to designate the different regions and soil characteristics.⁶

Usually, the soils in the Amazon basin are noted to be infertile because they are highly weathered soils that are high in clay content. Most of their vital nutrients have been leached out leaving a high content of hydrous and iron oxides and aluminum. (Nicholaides: 1983, 110) By engaging these concepts, the methods of agriculture of tropical rainforest societies are characterized by two main types of production. The first one is known as swidden horticulture, (polycultural crop production, and vegetative reproduction of root crops) as opposed to permanent, fixed-field agriculture, (monocultural crop production and seed-reproduced crop plants). (Whitten: 31; Fuentes: 201) This combination of factors may date since 6000 BC in lowland South America, so it is logical to assume that they have developed to a mature relationship with the ecosystem.

⁶ This is, for example: slopes and hills are named: *Onquingaboga*; valleys and plateaus are named *Momonumo*, and highlands are named *Anaquiri*. and cliffs, swamps and marshes *Aquinemo* and lagoons *Cahuepe*. (Presley Norton, 1994, p. 15)

The second one is the use of hunting and gathering as another system of production and a major source of protein in their diet. Swidden horticulture is shifting horticulture, where long-term fallow cultivation allows for the regeneration and maintenance of the forest itself. Forest preservation is an effective, efficient form of environmental maintenance for agriculture. Polycultural crop production refers to the planting of many different species of plants side by side in the same garden. Vegetative reproduction, or vegeticulture, refers primarily to the root crops –starch rich crops with enlarged tubers, roots or rhizomes- characteristic of the tropical New World, of which manioc (also called yuca and cassava) is probably the best known in lowland areas, and the potato in the highlands. (Whithen: 45)

When we analyze semi-nomadic communities, such as the Huaorani, the physical medium and the biological pressure establish the relationship with the forest. The patterns of settlements correspond to the influence of external migrations such as the evangelical missions and oil companies. The Huaorani structure these natural dynamics in order to cope with the biosphere. Huaorani diet is composed mainly by the harvest of yuca (Manioc), bananas, papaya and peanut. Fishery is rather important during the dry season, due to the lack of prey in the forest. (Norton:65) Huaorani's concept of economy is based on the control of resources and the occupation of space. The forest, -space- is "worked throughout" in order to ensure their physical presence. (Rival: 200) The territory is limited by constant demarcation of their territories and by planting crops inside the frontiers of their territory. Another important concept considered a

cultural value among the Huaorani is the respect for individual autonomy. The lack of labor division inside the community and the equal amount of responsibilities between men and women explain this situation.

For the Huaorani, production is related to the expansion of the social relationships. The Nanicabo is a social unit that is composed of several families. It divides the space among the numerous Huaorani families, groups or tribes. The relationship inside the community is essentially endogamic, and the members adopt the name of the oldest married member. There is a leader in the Nanicabo, who is constantly changed according to the introduction of new members inside the social group. The nanicabo is separated in smaller units. This arrangement is beneficial for everybody, since it maximizes the network of social relations inside the endogamic alliances. (Cabodevilla: 345)

Reciprocity as an economic practice is extensive among the Huaorani. The act of giving away objects as gifts is recognized as a medium for social ties among them. It is especially perceived with Western objects, such as pots, knives and clothing most: of the objects come from the capital cities of the provinces around their territory. (Rival: 242) The object of material articles is not to be consumed internally, but to be shared: the objects must circulate. As social relations get more complex, material goods circulate more; the final result is a complex network of social spaces. The principle behind the constant act of giving and taking is the kind of bonds that are created between the people. For the Huaorani, any object can be replaced, but social relations cannot.

There are two important terms in Huaorani culture that are used to distinguish themselves and from others. The first one is related to their collective identity. They refer to themselves as “the true human beings”. In Huaorani *terero*⁷, Huaorani means “real people” or human beings (*rani* indicates the plural). This conceptualization defines the group whose common identity is based on shared language and a common genealogy. (Cabodevilla: 125) The second term is “*cohouri*”, meaning non-human, foreigner, and even a cannibal. Other ethnic groups such as the Quichuas and the Zaparos, Ecuadorian colonizers, and missionaries are grouped inside this category.

The cultural values that have been highlighted among the Huaorani are their nature as warriors. Huaorani share with the Yanomami in Brazil, the highest degree of casualties due to armed conflicts between ethnic groups. Oral tradition recalls contacts of *cohouri* (foreigners) as violent and usually the Huaorani tend to defend their territory and against foreign intrusion. Violence was initiated on the outside, and therefore corrupting the internal relations in the community. The idea of the *cohouri* as cannibals, comes from the certitude that they are not quite human. Although different from spirits in the forest and animals, the *cohouri* have not yet evolved as human beings. (Rival: 73) Huaorani define themselves as killers of *cohouri*, only in the context of revenge. They kill to avenge their deaths. In their myths of origin, the Huaorani also represent themselves as independent groups created through internal violence. The Huaorani legitimize homicide in accordance to revenge/vendettas and when

⁷ *Huaorani terero* means the language of the Huaorani people. (Fuentes:24, 1996)

marriage alliances fail. The practice of war and homicide establishes a social relation with the victims, their families and finally even with the symbolic vital forces when the jaguars are involved. War and revenge are motivated by the desire to control the space and the people. It is important to highlight the value of death and murder among the Huaorani. In Huoarani language there is no synonym of the word violence, except the word "pii" that means to be upset. This is a complex mixture of rage and pride. For Huaorani, rage may cause death but death is part of everyday life. It is the social marker of spatial difference between the Huaorani group and the cohouri (savages, foreigners). (Rival: 25; Fuentes: 128) These categories are useful in order to understand the relationship of the Huoarani with other ethnic groups.

There have been several studies about the cultural changes produced by the introduction of market economy. (Rival: 37) Most of the anthropological studies about the economy of rainforest indigenous communities deal with the relationship between the production of hunters-gatherers and the incorporation of trade and commerce. Most of the research has centered their attention to the effects of dislocation on indigenous production of self-sufficiency. The first anthropological study of the Huaorani made by James Yost, a missionary who lived ten years with the Huaorani, explains the transformation of their culture and society by referring to the productive forces. His viewpoint is that Huaorani's passion for trade goods is the real motor for change. (Rival: 32, 1998) The impact of modernity and trade goods suggested that the Huaorani had become dependent on Western clothing, aluminum pots, shotguns and steel

tools. Nonetheless, recent studies have pointed out that schooling had made Huaorani conceptions of modernity change, in the sense that through the influence of formal schooling new trade goods acquire new meanings and become important. (Rival: 35, 1996) The largest transformations, such as sedentary living and the intensification of horticulture, have been taught through formal schooling.

The history of the contacts of Western man with indigenous communities of these areas is rather broad and somehow disturbing. It is characterized by long periods of violence from the country's administrators and rubber plantation owners as well as several attempts from the missionaries to indoctrinate them. The following section will detail the different descriptions of the Huaorani community in the history of the Ecuadorian Amazon region.

2.3. - Missions and first contacts. The Huaorani through History.

Yet I cannot pity the organism that does not protest.
 Tremorous branches are not a sign of rebellion that will inspire me affection.
 Why doesn't the entire jungle roar out and crush us like reptiles,
 in order to punish this vile exploitation?
 I feel no sadness-only desperation.
 I would like to have somebody with whom to conspire! I'd like to start a gigantic
 battle of the species, die in cataclysmic struggles, see the cosmic forces inverted!
 If Satan would lead this rebellion...
 I have been a rubber worker, I am a rubber worker.
 And what my hand has done to trees,
 it can also do to men.

Jose Eustasio Rivera, *La Voragine*, 1924

The Huaorani have maintained themselves isolated from having contact with other ethnic groups and with the first missionaries that occupied these areas. Historical reviews are rather confusing with the identities and the exact localization of ethnic groups.

Other ethnic groups that may or may not have been Huaorani were recognized as such due to their hostile nature. The Huaorani did not always occupy this territory, according to the first missionary journals of the sixteenth century, they were confined inside the forest. (Norton: 22) (Cabodevilla, 61- 66)

The chronicles written by missionaries tend to localize groups according to the river where they are located, even if they shared the same language. This way, and with the later indoctrination of the Quechua group, south of the Huaorani territory, a great deal of indigenous tribes became "aucas" meaning savage in Quichua. Its use became widespread for other ethnic communities with the use of Quichua and this name was adopted by the missionaries and became a

common word in Spanish. (Rival: 62) Even now, the Huaorani are still differentiated from other groups as “Aucas”.⁸

Early Jesuit chronicles from the seventeenth century that describe different ethnic groups mostly by their geographical location are the first ones to mention the Aushiri. They lived in the riverside of the Napo and Curaray rivers and they were visited several times during the 16th, 17th and 18th.

The Jesuits initiated their missionary activities with Amazon communities in 1603. In the year of 1605, Fray Rafael Ferrer directed an expedition from the Aguarico, from the Napo River to the Marañon River (also known as the upper Amazon River). He was the first one to recognize and name the Aushiri community. The second expedition was held in the year of 1658 by Raymundo Santa Cruz in order to find an alternative route between Quito and the missions in the Marañon. During this expedition, the missionaries contacted the Aushiri. Fray Sebastian Cedeno, established then a mission in the Nusino in 1665. He informed that the Aushiri and the Oas spoke the same language as the Coronado of the Pastaza River. During the same time, 1666, the mission of San Miguel was founded in the side of the Curaray River. A year later, the mission was attacked and burned by a Zaparo group. The Spanish authorities and the Jesuits then organized a penalizing expedition nine years later, in which the Aushiri were executed. (Cabodevilla: 153)

⁸ In the sixties, researchers from the Summer Institute of Linguistics established that Huaorani language was not Zaparo or Aushyri, but unclassified and unique to the region.

During the chaotic years that preceded to the conquest of America, most of the indigenous communities of the lowlands of the Amazon were dispersed in order to survive. Statistics showing the death index due to the contamination of new diseases brought by the conquerors indicate a drop of more than 80% of the population. (Cabodevilla: 77) There is little data about the process of transculturation among different ethnic groups during these years. Although the language spoken by the Huaorani is still isolated from the rest, there is information from which we can deduce that the Huaorani lived as the Omaguas and the Quijos and Canelos, major ethnic groups that eventually disappeared after the arrival of the Spanish conquerors to America. (Cabodevilla:98)

During the 18th century, dislocation of imperial power emerged with the expulsion of Jesuits in the Americas. The majority of the Missions located in the Amazon region were abandoned. Some of the missions were taken over by Dominican and Franciscan friars, although most of the population was killed due to corrupt management with the governor of the province. When the missionaries left in the 19th century, the indigenous population grew. The influence of Ecuadorian "Colonizers"⁹ coincided with the expansion of the rubber production, supported by the opening of the river ports of Manaus in Brazil and Iquitos in Peru. In the middle of that century, the Jesuit order was readmitted in the country. They took over the missions that were left to the Dominicans and decided to reorganize their missions. The ideological

⁹ The word *Colono* in Spanish is usually related to a person that is entering an abandoned territory. The government for integrating those areas as farmlands gave most of the land in the Amazon region. (Silva: 145)

foundation of Jesuit economic strategies rested on the major premise of converting the hunter-gatherers into peasants. The strategies used by the Jesuits to discipline the Indians as a labor force must be considered an integral part of the evangelization process. Supported by president Garcia Moreno, they were the defenders of the Indians against the abuses of the merchants. (Muratorio: 79) It is with the influence of the Jesuit influence, that during the nineteenth-century, the idealization of the image of the “good savage”¹⁰ among the scientific community starts filling the pages of several journals from European scientists.

By the end of the nineteenth-century, the country set their efforts in cacao production out in the western area, rather than exploiting rubber in the Amazon basin. Nonetheless, the demand of rubber increased in the early twentieth century. An immense sequence of explorers and colonizers from all parts of the country invaded the Amazon region. Roads and weapons of all kinds will increase the destruction of the forest communities. (Cabodevilla:136) Foreign interest, especially by British corporations, held the share in the majority of the profits. The sequence of legal documents made by government officials around the region, made official what were called “missions” by granting territories for the exploitation of rubber with Peruvian retailers in Iquitos. (Fuentes: 113)

The consequences of such devastating rubber extraction increased the disappearance of indigenous communities in the region. Indigenous peoples supplied the need for guides through the forest. If they refused, they were killed

¹⁰ Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa and La Condamine write their memories and reflect upon the “savages” that live in the upper Napo. Their curiosity initiated a series of travels of other explorers over the Amazon during that century. Many of their ideas founded later divisions for the ethnic groups of these areas. (Cabodevilla: 107)

and if captured sold as slaves to the rubber plantations. There are several accusations made by religious groups such as the Jesuits and the Dominicans about the atrocities committed in the Napo region where the indigenous peoples were not paid for their labor and most of the time they were forcibly taken from their lands to work the rubber plantations. (Fuentes: 120) This situation happened mostly with the Zaparos and the Quechuas, while the Huaoranis (Aucas), retracted to the inner sections of the jungle, becoming victims of murder rather than being enslaved. The policy of *reducciones*¹¹ made most of the communities develop into precarious conditions by disrupting the traditional formation of clans and tribes. (Cabodevilla: 143)

Most of the documentation written at this time, showed the major disturbances caused by the confrontations between the communities and the rubber colonos. Perhaps the most famous of them was the murder of a rubber plantation owner, that end up with the destruction of the farm. (Fuentes: 125) The conflict between the ethnic groups specially the ones known as "Aucas" or "Jibaros" created a general racist backlash amongst the general public and the government. In official documents written by the Minister of Internal Affairs the year of 1871, characterized the Aucas as "perfidious, assassins and cannibals". (Fuentes: 124) Such terms were still recognized in the XXth century to denominate the ethnic groups that refused to become "civilized" by accepting the government's presence over those territories. (Muratorio: 130)

¹¹ System in which the Indians where confined to a specific territory and obliged to work in farms and plantations by forcing them to pledge on debts. (Silva: 135)

The process of appropriation of the frontier territories—in this case the Amazon region—in the twentieth century included the building of roads, airstrips, and most important of all the introduction of institutions that will carry on the process of “civilization” of the indigenous communities. This is the case of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The following section will analyze the implications of these institution with the Huarani. They played a significant role in the incorporation of the Huaorani into the Ecuadorian State. The SIL was the first Western institution that succeeded in contacting the Huarani for the first time.

2.3.1. - The Summer Institute of Linguistics.-

Rachel Saint came to Ecuador in 1955...she had been told by the Huaorani-“by my sources in the inside” as she liked to put it-that I had been to see Quemperi. “You were lucky to get out alive,” she said. You go there at the wrong time, your life isn’t worth a plugged nickel. The only Auca you can trust is a Christian Auca. The ones in the Catholic side are all savages. Pure savages. I can’t think of any other word for people who kill their own kind” She added, “Of course, you can’t help but like them. They’re the most charming killers there ever was.”

Joe Kane, *Savages* New York: Doubleday.(87)

As part of the development strategy implanted in Latin America in the 1950’s, the policies of interaction among indigenous communities developed a strategy that included the introduction of “civilization” and literacy campaigns with the indigenous communities. ¹² Finally, in 1953 the government of Galo Plaza signed an agreement with the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The

¹² The foreign influence was assisted thirty years ago by Nelson’s Rockefeller’s policies. He was initially Roosevelt’s Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs during World War II and as then Truman’s foreign aid policies coordinator. (Colby: 3)

agreement's objective clearly stated their intention of "developing a research project with the diverse indigenous languages of the republic". (Flores: 130) Since then, the government authorized the introduction of foreign agencies such as the SIL in the Amazon region and later the Peace Corps in the highlands. In the Oriente, the agreement did not represent a serious danger with the control of the Catholic missions in the area, since the SIL had control of a relatively small and isolated ethnic community: the Huaorani.

The Ecuadorian government then solved the dilemma of approaching the Huaorani by transferring the responsibility of their contact to the evangelical missionaries of the SIL.

There was a constant omission of the political and social implications of their missionary work in the government's agreement. In the quest for legalizing their political agenda in front of the Ecuadorian government, the SIL advertised their affiliation with the University of Oklahoma as part of their academic research. The reason was primarily to avoid the impediments that the government would make due to the country's official religion, which was Catholic. (Fuentes: 134)

The official document of the SIL given to the government insisted on their independence from any political or religious organization. It also claimed that the incorporation of linguistic studies over this century had become significant in the reconstruction of the Amazon ethnographic prehistory. Their work was mostly divided into 1) Linguistic, Anthropologic and Agricultural Research Studies, and 2) Applied projects of bilingual education, aimed to teach Spanish to

communities as well as other projects of “modernized development” (such as agricultural techniques and western living infrastructure). (Fuentes: 135) Their research published in 1978, analyzed the linguistics and cultural characteristics of the Huaorani community. They also had created an education program that was published in Huaorani, Spanish and English. (135) This educational program promised bilingualism as an alternative for progress by introducing new cultural, technological, social and economical values imposed by Ecuadorian’s developmental program. The final accomplishment of the SIL was to acknowledge the Huaorani community as “human beings that speak the Huao language”. (Rival: 257) Before their incursion, they were conceived as “the Auca”, savages that lived in the boundaries of civilization. The SIL gave Ecuadorian society, the opportunity to redefine their notion of the Huaorani as a different ethnic group. The Huaorani language was recognized as unique and was known to have no relation whatsoever with the any linguistic family in America. (Cabodevilla: 29)

On January 8, 1956, five missionaries from the SIL established the first contact with the Huaorani. Some days later, the bodies of the five missionaries were found on the banks of the Curaray River, pierced by hundreds of spears. Reports of the massacre flashed around the world, turning the Huaorani into savages and homicides. The Auca operation directed by Nathaniel Saint, started in October of 1955. Their idea was to fly over Huaorani territory and throw presents from the plane and finally meet face to face with the Indians. The encounter finally happened in January of 1956, when the missionaries landed in

the beach of the Curaray River where they remained for a few days before they died, killed by the Huaorani spears. Rachel Saint, whose brother died in the event, and Betty Elliot, whose husband perished in the same calamity, decided that the accident was a call of God for the salvation of the Indian's souls. (Rival: 25) Years later, Rachel Saint, Betty Elliot and Dayuma a Huaorani girl that fled a wave of murders within her family, founded the first mission with the five Huaorani that killed the missionaries. The deaths among both members of different cultures, could have proven acceptance of the Huaorani, that value women's ties and widows as positive. Dayuma and Rachel Saint became "sisters" because both of their brothers have killed each other. Therefore, Rachel Saint was admitted in the community. According to Huaorani tradition, life is filled with cycles of war and destruction followed by periods of peace.¹³

In 1957, she brought Dayuma to the United States. They went onstage with Billy Graham; they appeared in "This is Your Life" in a campaign for fundraising. (Video: Trinkets and Beads, 1993) In October of 1958, the two women set off into the territory on foot, opening their way through the forest for four days until they found what was left of Dayuma's clan. They both established a settlement: "Rachel was the first missionary to sleep in the territory and live to tell about it." (Kane: 85) In 1969, the government's expansion in the territories put Rachel Saint ahead of a protectorate in order to relocate the other Huaorani clans out of their lands. In 1973, the SIL send James Yost, an

¹³ War destroys the family groups and those that escape from the attacks are usually women and children that have to hide for months and find refuge in other groups. Peace is re-established when the women marry and then they live with their mothers, the families grow and then war is revived with the control of land and the delimitation of the frontiers. (Cabodevilla: 346)

anthropologist to the territory. He denounced that Rachel Saint had changed Huaorani culture completely, making it a matriarchy with Dayuma as the head. The SIL asked Rachel Saint to leave, instead, she left the SIL. She moved out of the territory in 1979, but she returned two years later, where she has remained until now. (Kane: 88)

In their final report, the SIL recognized the help of the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education. They conclude their report by emphasizing the principles of “self-determination”, and “self-sufficiency” for the indigenous communities. They encouraged the possibility of the community of having external contact without disintegrating their cultural practices. The report concluded that the SIL did not affect the culture of the Huaorani in any sense. The fact is that SIL’s missionary work ensured a total alteration of traditional Huaorani cultural and religious practices. During the first decade of the presence of the SIL, they managed to relocate around 90% of the Huaorani community. The reserve now called Tihueno, changed Huaorani’s labor’s division. In ten years, they were forced to become sedentary and to live in the margins of the river. The evangelists see the introduction of market as a process of “civilization” for the Huaorani. Perhaps the most radical change was the relocation of the Huaorani into one specific settlement that proved beneficial to the oil corporations.

In 1990, the Huaorani that refused to live in Tihueno, finally organized themselves in an organization called the ONHAE¹⁴. Working with the CONFENAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nations of Ecuador), they managed

¹⁴ In Spanish: Organizacion de Nacionalidades Huaorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana. (Organization of Huaorani Nations of the Ecuadorian Amazon.)

to set a limit to their territories in 1990. The first leader was Dayuma, the first Huaorani member to be contacted by Western man. (Narvaez: 37; Iten: 18)

It is important to state the historical and political changes that happened after the country's oil boom in 1970. The military rule lasted from 1970 until 1979, with the growth of concessions to foreign petroleum companies and consortiums. In 1979, Ecuador returned to civilian rule under the rule of Jaime Roldos Aguilera.¹⁵ His policies increased the discussions over social and ethnic issues between the government and civil society. (Whitten: 36) In the beginning of 1980's, several organizations, such as Fundacion Natura, the CONFENAIE, and the Faculty of Linguistics and Literature of the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, initiated a series of protests against the SIL. Many of the organizations that endorsed the expulsion of the SIL generated the controversy about the reform of the Ecuadorian Constitution as a "pluricultural and multi-ethnic" nation. (Flores; 151) For the first time, the Ecuadorian congress approved the famous Ley de Comunas (Law of Indigenous Communities), the project of Protection of Ethnic Minorities¹⁶, and addressed the process of the Agrarian Reform and Rural Education. The movements, inspired by left-winged university activists, included media demonstrations and public outcry. They promoted the "threat of national identity" as it was being jeopardized by a foreign agency such as the SIL. (Fuentes: 154-155)

¹⁵ A figure that was translated by political scientists as "populist" (Andrade: 124) and as a "caudillo" (Whitten: 37) A year after his election, he was killed in a plane crash that was recalled as "mysterious". (38)

¹⁶ During the 1950's, the government initiated policies that included the Agrarian Reform and Rural Education. The *Ley de Comunas* as an addition of this policies, promised a revision of the land that traditionally belonged to different ethnic groups.

Finally in 1982, the government of Roldos ended the contract with the SIL. The argument was based on the alteration of the original terms and conditions. The anthropological research conducted by the University and had demonstrated that there were no serious studies and that their work consisted in mainly translating the Bible, following their own political agenda. The Catholic Church led by the Capuchin mission and the indigenous organizations of the Sierra endorsed these accusations. (Fuentes: 175) The government in cooperation with scientific commissions of the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, took over the missions and established a project of bilingual education in the area in order to confer territories to the diverse ethnic communities of the Oriente.¹⁷

The following section will analyze the history of the interaction of the oil corporations in the Huaorani territory.

2.3.2. - The Huaorani and the Ecuadorian State and the oil corporations

"I'll tell you what I think," he said. "I think it's funny how everyone in your country looks down here at rainforest destruction and they think, 'How could all those ignorant people tear up such a beautiful place and kill all those animals and make all those medically valuable plants extinct, and then have nothing but a big desert left afterward?, That's the way they think, isn't it?"

I didn't answer. Carlos didn't give me time to.

"But you see what the problem is here in Ecuador?" he went on. "It's oil. We're trying to protect this forest by using it for tours, to let it earn money without being destroyed. But oil is more valuable. Our country needs oil to pay its debt to your banks. Your country

¹⁷ The creation of the INAL (National Institute of Anthropology and Linguistics), took over the SIL's mission and their objective was to take direct action in the process of the indigenous communities of the Ecuadorian rainforest and to organize them politically. (Flores: 178)

needs oil because everyone has two cars. So my question is, who's really destroying the Cuyabeno forest, Ecuadorians or Americans?"

Mike Tidwell, Amazon Stranger: (p.8)

In 1937, the exploration phase by the Royal Dutch Shell in Araujuno (Pastaza province) south of the Napo River erupted with violent encounters between the oil workers and indigenous communities.¹⁸ The common procedure was to use the Quichua Indians as guides and contacts with the Huaorani. The Ecuadorian Army participated in the explorations, and they benefited from the rivalries among the communities. During the forties, the deaths of soldiers, oil workers and Indians were kept secret from the media. According to the interviews and transcripts of Miguel Angel Cabodevilla, (294) there were several bombings in the Huaorani territory in order to remove them from the territory. Shell Corporation leaves the territory in 1949, presumably due to failing attempts to extract oil. (Cabodevilla: 297)

In 1967, Texaco and Gulf Oil opened up the important Lago Agrio oil field. But it wasn't until 1976 when Texaco, CEPE –the Ecuadorian Oil company-- and the French company CGG (Compagnie Generale Geophysique) re-initiated the work of the field that was abandoned in the peripheries of the Araujuno. In the beginning, several oil workers were killed by Huaorani spears when the first phases of exploration began. With failing attempts to install themselves in the Huaorani territory, the oil companies set up a new strategy. Working with the

¹⁸ According to the informants of the oil companies, CEPE –the Ecuadorian Oil Company--and Shell Co., there was a considerable number of casualties that were implicitly contemplated by the managers when they reinitiated the work in the area. (Cabodevilla:292)

SIL and the Capuchin Catholic Missionaries, the undertaking of the territories were going to be set up with the negotiation of the missionaries. In a few years, a pipeline was laid across the Andes; as of 1972 Ecuador became the second largest oil exporting country of Latin America and soon joined the OPEC.

The Huorani that did not join the SIL remained scattered in their territory. Following several visits from Monsignor Labaca some of them, traveled down the Yasuni River and established the Garzacochoa¹⁹ community with the help of an already extant mission established in the town of Coca.

Under the contract of the Petroecuador --the state oil company-- the Capuchin order was sent to contact the Tagaeri, using the same methods as those employed by the Bible-translating American evangelists. Like them, Monsignor Antonio Labaca believed that contact with the outside world was inevitable and that the Huaorani would have better living conditions with the help of the Catholic Church. On July 21, 1987, a helicopter set the Spanish bishop and a nun named Ines Arango down in the clearing of the Tagaeri (a Huaorani clan not yet contacted by a Western man). The next day their bodies were sighted pierced by dozen Huaorani spears. (Iten:19) But this time, the newspapers reported a case of self-defense and evidenced the political situation of the indigenous communities against foreign oil corporations.²⁰ The press releases in 1987 tell the story of "savagery and cruelty" with some alterations from the story of the evangelical missionaries in 1956. For some, these "martyrs" were victims of the senseless oil

¹⁹ Place named by the Quechuas that means: "Lake of Herons"

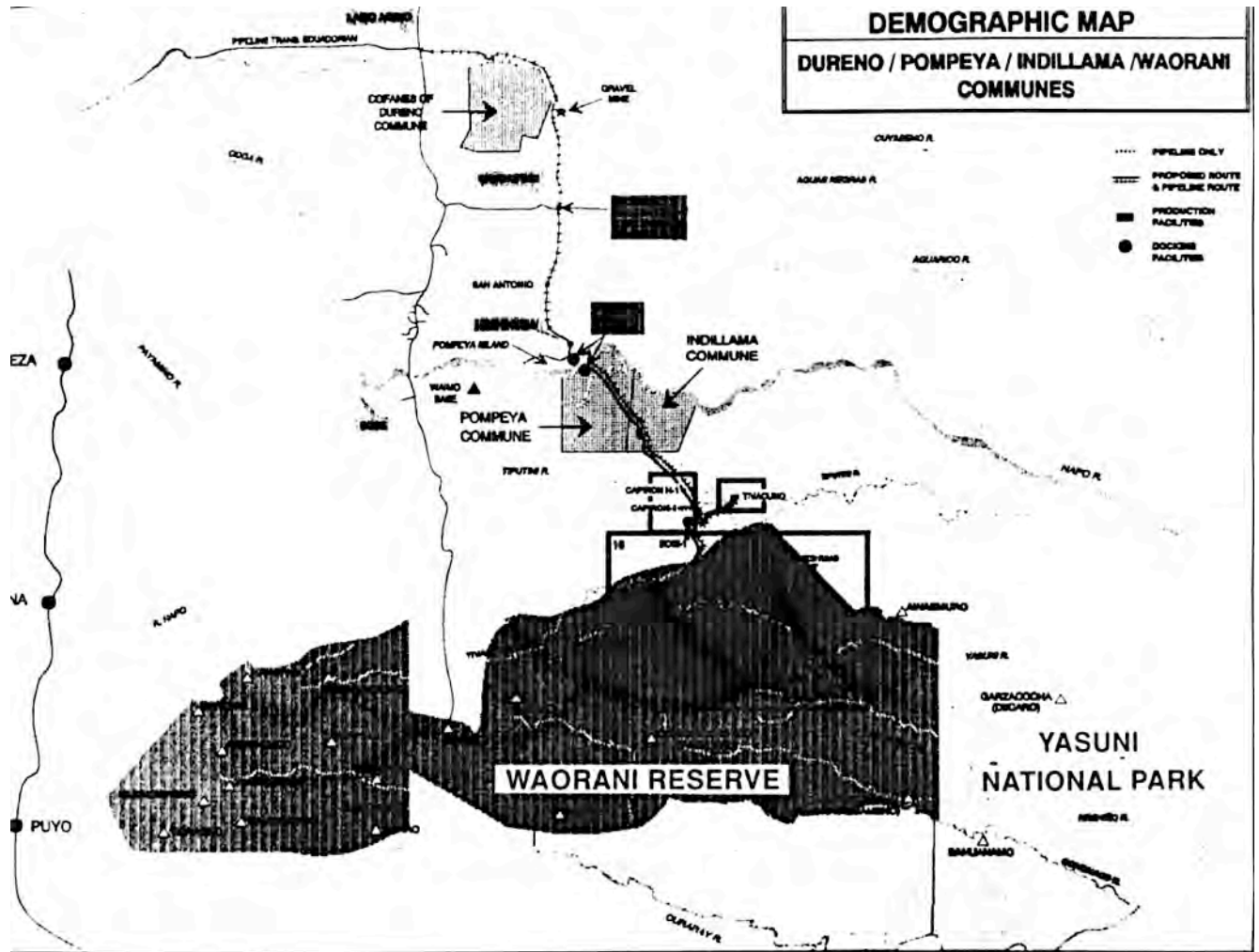
²⁰ Environmental activists and the media undertook a campaign against the destruction of the Amazon, encouraged by the lawsuit against Texaco by the Cofan community. (Rival: 257)

exploitation, rather than victims of the misunderstood Huaorani-Aucas. (Rival: 268).

In the eighties, Dayuma outlined the area that was subsequently declared a reserve. Although these territory just covered 417,000 acres. Finally, in 1990 the Ecuadorian government granted the Huaorani title to an area of some 2600 square miles. The contract gave to the Huaorani only a third of what they consider their traditional homeland, and it stipulated that they could not attempt to impede the extraction of oil or any other mineral or resource. Before the settlement was official, Petrocanada, pushed a road deep into Huoarani territory. The Ecuadorian Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform, (IERAC) subsequently legalized these appropriations. When territory was handed over to the Huaorani in 1990 as a tribal reserve, an extensive wedge of white-settled land was left out. Tihueno, at the end of the road, became the center for organization in the community.

The area located at the north of the Huoarani territory, was designated the area as the National Park Yasuni by the Ecuadorian Institute of National Parks. In 1989 UNESCO declared this area a biosphere reserve. During the year of 1986, CONCOCO signed a contract with Petroecuador -the Ecuadorian oil company-- for the exploration of a region that consisted of the Huaorani territory and the Yasuni National Park. According to Ecuadorian law, it is illegal to explore oil reserves in national parks.(Fig. 2)

Figure 2. Map of the Huaorani reserve and The Yasuni National Park (Source: Maxus-YPF)



After signing the agreement, the Ecuadorian environmental activists started a campaign to stop the advancement of the company. (Narvez: 48) In response, the Ecuadorian government, in an effort to change the legal stipulations, managed to annex the National Park to the Huaorani territory. By doing this, the indigenous community will have to permit the State to explore or exploit the reserves that are legally part of the Ecuadorian patrimony. In 1986, the CONOCO Oil Co. and the government of Ecuador finally agreed to explore the now famous Block 16.

International organizations and environmental NGO's, condemned the introduction of CONOCO in the Yasuni National Park. The company in an effort to change the outlook of their work, created an environmental program that promised new technologies in the process of exploration and exploitation of crude. Condemned by international and national organizations, human rights and the media, the public image of CONOCO declined, and finally terminated their contract after a couple of years in the area. (Narvaez: 51)

Maxus Oil Co. took over the share that belonged to CONOCO. It and initiated several original plans that promised protection to environment. The investment was immense and proposed a refined environmental plan as well as a social, economical and cultural development plan with the Huaorani community. (Narvaez: 54) They promised to keep their plan simple and ethical with the help of the Huaorani members, a team of anthropologists, biologists and ecologists. The technological infrastructure also promised to be unique by minimizing any

possible impact on the environment. The tense relationship with the community receded after the agreement. The public opinion and the media praised their efforts and finally Maxus took possession over Block 16 in 1990. (Fig. 2)

The following chapter will analyze the political and economical implications of oil industry in Ecuador and will evaluate the policies of Maxus/YPF in Ecuador.

CHAPTER III.-

3.1. - The unknown geography. The Amazon region and the Ecuadorian society

3.1.1. -Political and economical implications.

“The Oriente is a myth”

Galo Plaza, former president 1949-1953

This chapter will cover the social and political implications of oil production in Ecuador. The first part will trace the perceptions of the Amazon rainforest by Ecuadorian governments and the region's importance with other Andean countries. The second part will examine the co-dependence of the national economy on oil industry. This chapter will conclude with the analysis of the environmental policies that Maxus-Ecuador has with the Huaorani community.

The geographical unit is a defining marker of the national experience and therefore, of the cultural experience. (Radcliffe: 6) The natural ecological differences of The Sierra, Costa and Oriente are represented as distinct from each other.²¹ In Ecuador's official geography, the Oriente is shown as the untapped resource-rich region waiting to be incorporated into the country's path for development.

In 1961, Ecuador's developmental design included the opening of access to products from its two rain forests – the Northwest Coast and the Oriente – and the development of its own coastal port of San Lorenzo (Whitten: 65). The land in

²¹ Sierra: (The Highlands and valleys of the Andes) Costa: (the Western coastal lowlands) Oriente: (the Amazon rainforest).

both areas was called *baldia*²² although such land in most cases was inhabited and under swidden agricultural technology. Political divisions then could be mapped as a North-South division as well as in terms of the three regions. (Whitten: 66)

Oil production is an international commodity and the development of its resources is affected by geopolitical factors, such as the world economy and the social dynamics of the developing countries with rich natural resources. Oil brought serious structural changes to Ecuador. Stimulated by the inflow of petroleum revenues, real public sector expenditures increased at an annual rate of 12 percent, rising as a share of gross domestic product from 22% to a high of 33%. (Schodt: 215) An ambitious program of road construction knit together formerly isolated regions of the country, facilitating the internal movements of goods and people. The pace of urbanization accelerated, as the booming construction industry drawing workers into the cities. (217)

The isolation of the Rainforest region from political-administrative centers made the inter-ethnic relations of this area unique from any other. Most of the social and economical enclaves in the Ecuadorian rainforest have developed an economic autonomy. By the late 1940's, the Amazon region became a strategic space, due to social and economic factors. In the seventies, the state disclosed policies that were aimed at the integration of the territory. (Narvaez: 19) When the Ecuadorian military took power in February of 1972 and with the resulting findings of immense oil reserves, the government initiated a process of incorporation of the Amazon territories. (Andrade: 32) Ecuador began large-

²² This term was used for the land that was untouched and therefore public.

scale exports of oil in June 1972 and by 1974 the Ecuadorian Oil Minister had become President of the OPEC. (Philip: 275) The development model that was imposed in Ecuador before the 1980's searched for internal social homogeneity. Such model inhibited the political participation and endorsed the industrial growth in such a way that dependence on national economies for agricultural products decreased gradually. (Andrade: 48) By the end of the seventies, the development model ended with the process of "returning to democracy". This process happened throughout Latin America; and in Ecuador it started with the election of the President Jaime Roldos in 1978. The transformations of these administrations spurred the creation of political systems determined by the action of different social actors. In the Ecuadorian case, the indigenous movement changed the outlook of the nation-state. (Radcliffe:35) Most of the civilian regimes that emerged from military dictatorships in the eighties achieved a degree of institutional stability and democratic consolidation. They were ready to confront new economic challenges.

During the eighties, the Ecuadorian government shifted to a neoliberal economical model. The globalization process resulted in abrupt economical reforms that would bring foreign investment and changes in the oil production sector. The State would draw their attention to the Amazon region, and would promote the extraction of new oil reserves.

The national governments of most Latin American countries have gradually acquired control over their frontiers. The Amazon region was gradually incorporated into the country through the government's military,

administrators, settlers and with the aid of foreign interests as explained in the following section.

3.1.2. - The strategic space: military and foreign policies

“Ecuador is and will always be an Amazon country”

Logo of military and government official declarations.

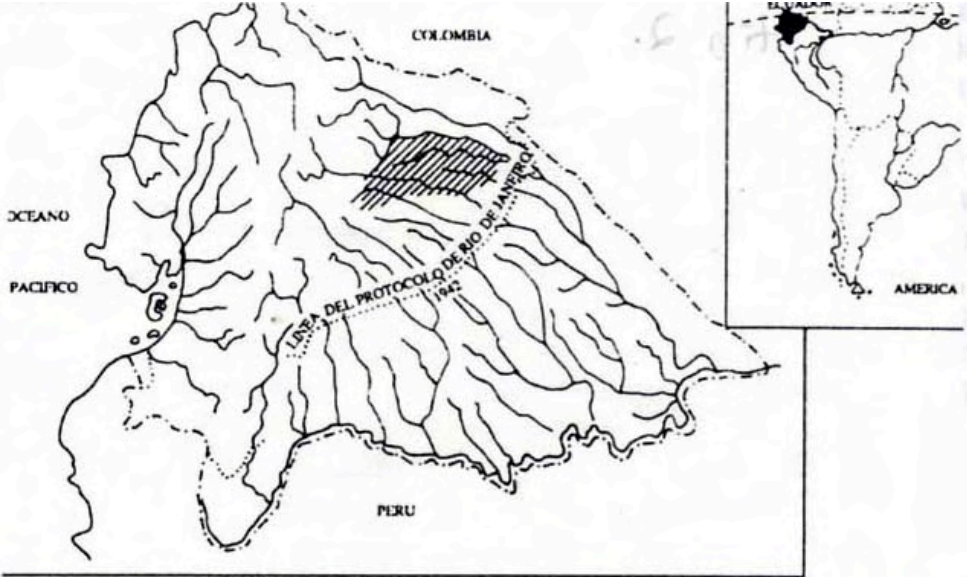
The Amazon is one of the last frontiers on Earth. Frontiers are peripheral to the centers of economic and political power. Frontiers are generally viewed as wilderness, untouched and therefore rich in resources that are unlimited and free for anyone. Latin American countries find in geography a tool for clarifying their national identity, and to demarcate their frontier boundaries. (Radcliffe: 62) The professionalization of geography emerged as a military operation under the premise of national security. In this context, the creation of a national map allowed the knowledge of the patriotic frontiers and offered an inventory of the country's natural resources.

According to Radcliffe (63), the newly Latin American independent states found in geography a “necessary tool for clarifying and fostering their national identity”. In Ecuador the teaching of the frontier history was a mandatory course until 1979. The educational maps used for such teaching show the Rio Protocol line marking the border after territory was lost to Peru in 1941. The outline of Ecuador with the Rio Protocol line became an emblem of the nation. It is a symbol that conveys more importance than the flag, shield or anthem. (Radcliffe: 65) By presenting the unfinished Protocol line, the maps were used a constant

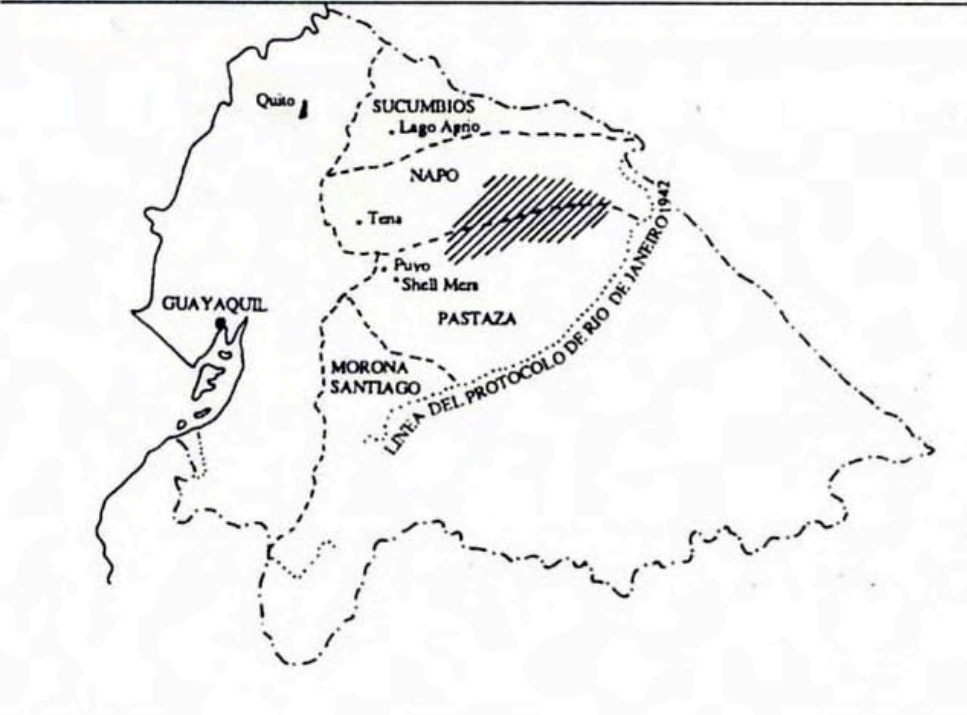
reminder of the country's loss of much the Amazon region to Peru in 1941.

(Figure 3)

Figure 3. The Ecuadorian map always portrays the unfinished line of the Protocol of Rio. (Source: Laura Rival, 218)



Mapa 1. Mapa del Ecuador  Territorio Huaorani



Due to the fact that the rainforest is an ecological unit shared by seven countries, the armed forces have increased their role in carrying out development programs. The issue of national security is constantly being questioned by the issue of transforming the Amazon region into a place for development. Since 1980's, foreign military aid primarily led by the United States, helped finance developmental programs in the rural towns of the Ecuadorian rainforest. (Radcliffe: 67) Most of these programs were used as covers for the monitoring of drug-traffic operations, situation in which the Ecuadorian Amazon region plays a decisive role. (Paez: 34)

The drug traffic between the rainforest regions of Peru and Bolivia and Colombia found a connecting port in the vast yet unknown Oriente. During the second half of the eighties and due to the process of colonization of the Amazon region, the demand for the cultivation of Coca leaves increased.²³ The major drug cartels in Colombia have strong commercial ties that assure the drug traffic in the Andean Region. In this sense, the Amazon region of these countries became the trading center for marketing and transportation of drugs. (Paez: 695)

During the eighties The United States initiated a "war against drugs", in a crusade that involved the governments of Andean countries. The United States gave the Andean countries around 142,3 million to the military, and 80 million dollars to the police forces in 1992. The Andean countries were forced to accept these aid or else economical sanctions were going to be enforced. (Paez: 709)

²³ The production of Coca is traditional to the indigenous cultures of the Andes, especially in Peru and Bolivia. (Paez:708)

The history of the Amazon region in most Latin American countries is filled with uncertainties over the territorial space. Military activity has grown in the past ten years, especially due to the 1995 Peruvian conflict in the southern part of the *Oriente*. Space has been constantly reshaped in the maps of Peru and Ecuador, without taking into account the human factor. (Paez: 809) The Amazon region has been the setting for conflicts throughout the twentieth century. Military pressure over the Amazon is still growing within the countries that share the Amazon territory. The notion of sovereignty and the presence of the state are in the process of being evaluated. Military pressure and its destructive potential is still maintained over the Amazon. Nowadays, their presence on the region is stronger than ever, with the introduction of the oil industry.

3.2. - -Transnational investment and Globalization.

3.2.1. - Oil exploration and extraction.

*“Then the Shell Oil Company came to Mera and started recruiting workers. For a Commission the Salesians began enlisting laborers from amongst the serfs working on their plantations.
All in nomine Dei.
All this in order that the savage Indian, heathen of the jungle, might be saved from eternal damnation.”*

Mirloslavic Zikmund, Amazon Headhunters, 1958 (p.74)

In global terms, the history of the oil industry in the producing countries talks about tumultuous relations between them, the multinational corporations and the political establishments of the consumer countries. For many, it is inseparable from that of colonialism, imperialism, regional, ideological and

ethnic conflicts, and the quest for a new international economic order. (Sahimi: 365)

The exploitation of oil in the *Oriente* has affected the organization of the contemporary national space. As Ecuador becomes the second largest South-American oil exporter, its model of development traditionally based on agro-exports, shifts to capitalist modernization and accelerated urbanization. (Deler: 278) Large migratory movements accompanied the development of each new economic enclave in the Oriente. The state started a policy of intervention in the domestic economy. (Deler: 278). One indication of the growing importance of the Oriente for the State is the growth of legislation affecting the region, such as the area's land use, cultural and national security policies. (World Bank Report: 35)

The Ecuadorian oil boom started when major discoveries of oil sites were made in the Oriente. Until that time, Ecuador's small-scale oil production had come entirely from the coastal area. In 1921 two North American geologists, Sinclair and Wasson, were hired by the Leonard Exploration Company, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey, to explore a 9,600 square mile area in the Oriente. This was only part of the concession awarded to Leonard by the Ecuadorian government for the purpose of identifying its oil potential. (Muratorio:164) Exploitation was undertaken, but it did not substantially affect the lives of the Napo, Tena and Archidona inhabitants at that time. It was only in the 1940's that Shell Oil exploitation became a true catalyst of early development and colonization in the Oriente. The towns of Shell, Mera and Puyo, in the Province of Pastaza, rapidly grew from nothing. In 1937, the government of

Federico Paez terminated its contract with Leonard and granted Anglo-Saxon Petroleum, a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell, exclusive rights for five years of oil exploration and forty years of oil exploitation in an area covering 10,000,000 hectares in the Oriente including the Napo region. (Muratorio:166)

By 1972, an independent survey by Rudolf Martin and Associates announced that the reserves discovered by Texas-Gulf consortium were of 3200 million barrels (proved and probable). A Trans-Andean pipeline was under construction and due for completion in June 1972 with an initial capacity of 250,000 barrels per day' expansion to 400,000 barrels per day or perhaps even more. (Philip: 275)

Table 1.-

| Ecuador's Petroleum Reserves.- | Million Barrels | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------|
| | (1988) | (1995) |
| Proven Reserves (developed) | 1,100 | 2,000 |
| Proven Reserves (not developed) | 400 | 700 |
| Probable Reserves | 700 | 2,000 |
| Total | 2,300 | 4,700 |

Source: World Bank Report, June 1988. La Actividad Petrolera en el Ecuador, 1995.

The prospect of production brought several changes. In 1995 it represented more than 50% of the nation's export earnings, and over 60% percent of the government's budget. Ecuador is now the second leading oil producer in South America, producing 400,000 barrels of oil a day. Hoping to use its oil revenues to pay back its massive foreign debt, the government became

dependent on the revenue of oil exports. The oil industry itself seemed perfect at the time for a policy of oil nationalism, even if the question of government control was not analyzed, the growth of oil reserves was concomitant with the investments of foreign companies that explored the region during these years.

In 1972, the situation of political instability coincided with periodic difficulties in the export markets but these did not lead to any major change in successive civilian governments. The military intervention during the oil boom was essential for the country's future. When oil began to flow from the Oriente in June 1972, there were important changes in Ecuador and these encouraged the military to take the power.

The military coup d'état hoped to use the oil wealth to transform the Ecuadorian economy and modernize its society. One of the most radical of the officers was General Jarrin. He shared with fellow Latin American militaries, the idea of a gradual and effective process of oil nationalization. (276) He shared the consciousness that the elite of underdeveloped countries have to gain control over their natural resources. In the contract that was originally signed, Texas-Gulf handed back much of their territory, but were allowed to keep the rest until 1992. They would invest around sixty million dollars over the next three years in order to bring the level of production up to 400,000 b/d. The state Oil Company, CEPE, was allowed to buy its share into the consortium, taking 25% over four years at a price believed to be around sixty five million dollars. Financially, the Ecuadorian government had already achieved its objectives through a complicated set of fiscal arrangements, which could be regulated according to the

changes in the tax reference price. (Philip; 280) The impact of international conditions forced Ecuador to join the OPEC in 1973. The membership was always controversial within the right wing conservative public opinion of the country. The dramatic world price developments of 1974 resulted in a change of the Ecuadorian policies. Foreign investors tailored their own strategies to the international environment, which included a temporary world surplus of oil offer in 1974 and a public anti-OPEC campaign mounted by the US government. (Philip: 282)

In 1976 there was the conflict between Gulf Oil and the Ecuadorian government. This conflict grew from differences in beliefs between the two companies. In that year, tax and pricing policy continued to be criticized by foreign companies, and Gulf Oil demanded its own nationalization. This gave CEPE a majority of national oil production by making the concessions on price to Texaco and other private companies, both financially and politically more convenient. (Philip: 294) The successful emergence of a civilian regime in Ecuador solidified the outlook of the oil industry. In 1979, the government concentrated on gradually increasing oil exploration and production through a mixture of public and private investment.

The first reform to the law of Hydrocarbons happened during the eighties. The major argument was that the country did not have enough infrastructures or resources to assume the high cost of oil exploitation, therefore the legal code had to be revised in order to attract foreign investment. In order to strengthen the State's oil corporation (then called CEPE); the introduction of foreign capital

through several contracts was implemented. With these new type of contracts, the risks would have to be assumed by the foreign company, In case of finding oil reserves, they had to give half of the revenues to the Ecuadorian Oil corporation, CEPE. (Del Castillo: 11)

Ecuador's economic performance has been disappointing since the onset of the debt crisis in 1982 when the economy suffered a series of adverse shocks, including periods of declining world oil prices. Despite several attempts of stabilization and structural reform in 1980, the inflation rose to 85 percent in 1985, saving and investment rates declined to less than 20 percent of GDP, the real per capita income fell, and Ecuador stopped fully servicing its external debt to commercial bank creditors. Failure to re-establish sustainable economic growth and the government's inability to meet the basic needs of the population has led to stagnant living standards and to deterioration in public services. (World Bank Report: 35)

The government that took office in July 1992 ran on a platform of reducing inflation, modernizing the economy, promoting private sector expansion, and renegotiating Ecuador's external debt. It took office in the midst of a rising inflation and high interest rates, limited foreign exchange reserves, and fiscal and external imbalances. Shortly thereafter, the government introduced a package of stabilization measures that included sharp increases in the domestic prices of petroleum derivatives to bring them roughly to international levels and in electricity tariffs. Public expenditures were also cut, public employment was frozen, and several public agencies were targeted for restructuring or

elimination. The *sucre*²⁴ was devalued over 30 percent to restore export competitiveness and replenish foreign exchange reserves. (World Bank Report: 1996)

The government has taken several further steps to reform and modernize the economy and has obtained congressional approval for important new laws. The cornerstone of the legal program is the Modernization of State Law. This provides the legal framework for fundamental public sector reforms, including personnel reductions, decentralization of public sector activities, and private participation (through concessions or privatization) in sectors previously reserved for the public sector. Other reforms included a comprehensive budget law, which established important instruments to control expenditures, to improve economic management and restructured the public sector. The creation of important laws changed the internal economy. The Capital Markets and Financial Institutions Laws improved financial support. The Hydrocarbons Law promoted private participation in the sector and liberalized the trade and domestic prices of oil derivatives, while the Tax Reform and Customs Law simplified procedures. (World Bank Report: 25)

The government also has reduced the public sector payroll by 10 percent and initiated a process of privatizations of public services. It has also embarked on a program of public enterprise divestiture and deregulation. Ecuador for several years has been steadily opening its economy to external competition. Ecuador recently joined the World Trade Organization and established a free

²⁴ Ecuadorian monetary unit.

trade agreement with Colombia, Venezuela, and Bolivia. The rules for foreign investment (including profit repatriation) were greatly simplified and foreign investors now enjoy equal tax treatment with domestic investors. (World Bank Report: 34)

Even with the reduction of its commercial bank debt stock, Ecuador still has one of the largest per capita external debt levels in Latin America. At the end of 1995 its medium- and long- term debt, including arrears, stood at \$13.8 billion. Under current projections, interest payments on all long-term debt over the next few years will claim less than 4.0 percent of GDP or 16 percent of exports. In June 1994 there was a Paris Club rescheduling of the country's pre-cut-off debts falling due in 1993-94. (World Bank report: 45)

Oil is Ecuador's major export product although its price has been dropping since 1994. The current account deficit widened and is now about 4.9 percent of GDP, partly also due to increased imports. Deficits in the current account have been compensated by more than enough financing by the World Bank, which allowed Ecuador to continue accumulating foreign exchange reserves. Despite the adverse shocks to exports and the magnitude of recent adjustment policies, the investment rate has remained at its recent historical level of near 20 percent of GDP, and the growth of non-traditional exports has remained strong, averaging in excess of 20 percent a year over the last four years. (World Bank report:26)

An analysis of the domestic economic changes, clearly sees the adjustment policies have had a negative impact in the income distribution, this means that

most of the revenue is invested in foreign markets, without distributing any profits inside the country. (Andrade: 124) This situation is maintained because all the revenue from oil exports is used to pay the external debt. Therefore, there is no guarantee that some macroeconomic "equilibrium" --if any-- will surpass the present recession. The following section will analyze the internal situation of the oil industry, the economical policies of neoliberalism and their relationship with the economical structure of the country. (Andrade:75)

3.2.2. - Economic reforms, agreements and contacts. -

"And now, even if the government's address is true. Who thinks that the oil reserves have been used to satisfy the needs of the majority of the population. What kind of society has Ecuador created with the extraction of oil? What country will the future generations inherit?"

Pablo Ortiz. Petroleo y Sociedad. ASPEC (Association of Workers of Petroecuador)

The World Bank and the International Monetary fund were the critical pillars of the economical situation of Latin America during the past 30 years. The Bank began tying its loans to the willingness of poor countries to make "structural adjustments" in their feeble economies. To qualify for a structural adjustment loan, governments had to agree to devalue their currencies, reduce government payrolls etc. (Barnet: 353) Due to the shortage of public development funds and the highly selective strategies of the global companies for investing in foreign countries, Latin American governments had no choice but to agree to the funds imposed by the IMF. The World Bank and the IMF acquired greatly increased influence in the early 1980's because of the debt crisis in much of the Third World. A number of poor countries had loans approaching the gross

national products, and they could not repay them. The IMF took on the task of enforcing austerity measures that would enable the banks to recuperate part of the loan money. The Fund's seal of approval became the key that opened the door to new loans to poorer nations. By using their power to promote export dependence, the World Bank and the fund played key roles in opening up the national economies for global corporations. (Barnet: 350)

The current wave of state reform does not imply merely the shrinkage of the state administrative agencies, but a redefining of the existing boundaries between politics and economics, the public vs. the private. The concentration of power in the executive branch of the government characterized by market-oriented reforms in Latin America is a consequence of the political and economic logic inherent in the transition from Keynesian modes of reproduction of consent to more "liberal" models of accumulation and political domination. (Gamarra: 84) Following the demise of military dictatorships, the debt crisis and the unfolding of sociopolitical conflicts obliged presidents of social democratic and populist inclinations to enact increasingly orthodox policies that will ensure multilateral lending agencies and private international banks.²⁵ The growing emphasis on more long-term structural adjustments was part of the new strategy of the World Bank. The academic field of development economics with institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF began incorporating the notion of "structural reform", concept that was taken from the Neoclassical economic thought. (Gamarra: 30) In 1980's, the opening for foreign investment in Latin

²⁵ Most of these policies emanated from the Reagan-Bush administration. (Gamarra:28)

America grew. Transnational investment appropriated local capital for its own use. In the years to come the policies of structural adjustment marked radical changes of political actors and the government policies. As a result, Ecuador's foreign investment increased. The transference of revenues produced by the foreign debt left in the Ecuadorian companies an amount similar to its external debt. Adding the utilities and repatriation of foreign capital from the foreign investments, the total revenue has been inferior to the original assets with the value of over 500 million dollars. (Andrade:24)

The structural adjustments implanted in Latin America during the eighties have different consequences for different countries. In the Ecuadorian case, there are five stages: the first and second under the administration of Roldos (1979-1984), and Osvaldo Hurtado (1982-1984) that included the devaluation of the Ecuadorian Sucre, the rising of the oil prices and the growing of privatizations. The third adjustment made in the presidency of Leon Febres Cordero (1984-1988) included a broad package of economical reforms between 1984 and 1986, such as the lowering of interest rates, rising of speculation over consumer goods, and fiscal austerity. The fourth stage with the "gradualist policies" of the administration of Rodrigo Borja (1982-1992); and finally the fifth adjustment, most radical of them all under the administration of Sixto Duran Ballen, were neoliberalist policies such as the radical opening to foreign investments and the privatization of the public sector.²⁶ The process of structural

²⁶ It was during this administration that the agreement with Maxus was signed. Privatization programs have become an important government tool to reward supporters in the private sector and foreign investors. But it has also given rise to massive discontent and even popular mobilization. (Andrade: 64; Gamarra: 12)

adjustment is still undermining the internal market. The country lives under an economic recession because since 1984, all the revenue of oil is used to pay the external debt. (Andrade 27)

In the summer of 1996, Dr. Alberto Acosta, a renowned economist and a consultant with the Latin American Institute of Social Research, initiated his political campaign for a position as a legislator in the Ecuadorian congress. His work for the past ten years was centered in the economical analysis of macro-economic policies. His work focused on the external and internal changes of Oil Production in Ecuador.

When he was interviewed at the edge of his political campaign, his major achievement was the study of the impact of oil production in the economy of Ecuador, as well as the corruption crisis that spawned with it. His latest accomplishment, was the participation in the International Summit of External Debt of the Latin American Parliament in Caracas, Venezuela in July of 1997.

The summit intended to reevaluate the payments of foreign debt with several arguments. The first one admitted that the foreign debt has become the most powerful mechanism to sustain the growth of the foreign financial capital. The second believed that while Latin America's population is involved in the payment of the debt through the increasing of the public service tariffs, unemployment and misery is growing. The final resolution had ten articles in which the Parliament agreed that paying the external debt is negative for Latin American countries. Finally, it was established that First World countries owed to the Latin American nations the environmental degradation caused by the

irrational exploitation of natural resources promoted by the external debt and their organizations. (Final Declaration of the Latin American Parliament: 1997)

The exchange of external debt for ecological debt was perhaps the newest reform proposed by most Latin American environmental organizations and the Latin American Parliament at the time. The claim specifies that the cost of exporting natural resources was unfair, because a barrel of oil does not incorporate the cost of negative effects in the environment as well as the relation of wages in the public sector of Latin American countries. (See Figure 4-5) The price of a barrel of oil is 20 dollars in the United States. This price only reflects the cost of producing oil (including the costs of labor and materials), and of transporting it to the consumer. Some of the costs of using fossil energy, and oil, are not directly included. These are recognized as health problems caused by air pollution resulting from using oil, gas and coal, environmental degradation caused by global warming, acid rain and water pollution. (Sahimi: 381; Martinez-Alier: 45) Dr. Acosta believed that the impact of transnational oil corporations in the Third World was harmful to the economies of these countries. The economical policies of structural adjustment didn't offer a fair deal. The indiscriminate exploitation of oil didn't take in account the nature of the exploitation: oil is a non-renewal source.²⁷

²⁷ Personal interview: August, 1997.

Figure 4-5. Trans-Ecuadorian pipeline and Texaco oil spills. (Source: Joe Kane. *Savages*. P.76)

When Dr. Acosta was asked his opinion about the protests against the oil companies in the south of the Napo River --traditional Quechua and Huaorani land-- he praised the efforts of the indigenous movements and the environmental organizations that have been able to change the policies of extraction, seismic prospecting, road construction for the past five years. The Huaorani were the first ones --he said-- that made public opinion aware of the fact that indigenous communities have survived in the rainforest without depleting its natural resources.

In his research on the Maxus and Petroecuador's agreement, Acosta proved that Maxus had made greater investments in Ecuador than any other oil company. Maxus was the only consortium to be granted such a contract. The other firms agreed to provide the Ecuadorian State with 15 % of their profits for every barrel extracted. Furthermore, he added, that the Tivacuno and Capiron fields were awarded to Maxus without any public bidding process, contrary to any of the country's legal statutes. To assure greater benefits in Block 16, Maxus managed to take advantage of the contract left by CONOCO and reduced the participation of the Ecuadorian State to the minimum. It is important to recall that any oil company has the right to declare whether the oil reserve is marketable disregarding the country's interests. (Acosta: 11-15) Originally, Petroecuador was going to obtain a profit equivalent to 16,23% of the resources; nonetheless, the original 15% profit established by CONOCO, marked a "security investment" but not a "real profit." (16) The situation was worsened, because in the government of Duran Ballen agreed on widening the Ecuadorian Pipeline:

(SOTE: Sistema de Oleoducto Transecuatoriano). According to the estimates presented by the government the widening of the pipeline was valued at 730 million dollars, that meant 417 million barrels of crude produced by the transnational corporations. Therefore, the widening of the pipeline was going to be used in the extraction of oil from the foreign companies, with no benefits for the Ecuadorian government. According to the government's report, Maxus extracted 50 million barrels that were sold for 600 million dollars, while the receipts reported over 800 million dollars in expenses - which according to the contract the State was to cover. That margin of security allowed Maxus to carry out its activities without any risk whatsoever, because the State had to compensate its losses in case the oil found was of poor quality. The cancellation of the contract with the company informed that "Maxus took advantage of the situation to inflate the value of its equipment and report monthly salaries of 40,000 dollars for its executives." The Ecuadorian Association of Engineers also pressed charges against Maxus accusing them of activities that generated irreparable damage to the Amazon ecosystem. (21)

In May of 1995, the press informed of the merging of Maxus Oil Corporation with the Argentine Company YPF. Days after the announcement, a special commission composed of oil technicians and the managers of Petroecuador, CEPE and the Minister of Energy, presented a report that stated that the financial crisis of Maxus had forced the company to sell their assets to another one. In 1995, the Argentine firm 'Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales' (YPF)

became the main shareholder of Maxus, which is still registered in the United States.

For Dr. Acosta, the option of paralyzing the oil exploration in the Amazon could not be profitable in any way. But he knew that the irrational exploitation of *the RAE*²⁸ would end up destroying the delicate ecosystems of the Amazon region. Over all, the economic and political situation of Ecuador was constantly undermined by concessions signed with international corporations. Most of the agreements proved to be unfair for the Ecuadorian State. Even more, the latest exploration conditions and the exploitation rate promised an absolute depletion of the oil resources within the next two decades. For him, the struggles of the indigenous communities have proven the importance of preserving the Amazon region for future generations. Increased oil production and higher levels of foreign investment, associated with the planned expansion of the petroleum sector, should contribute significantly to economic growth. However, the requirement of foreign investment during this expansion will lead to a rise in the current account deficit for the next few years. The only solution laid upon the redefinition of the political structures by creating awareness about the political institutions and the control of the natural resources: “all the profit that was extracted had to be reinvested on behalf of the people.”²⁹

Despite the opposition, Maxus-Ecuador was noted to be the first Oil Company in the area whose policies of extraction met the latest technological

²⁸ Region Amazonica Ecuatoriana. (Ecuadorian Amazon Region)

²⁹ Personal Interview: August, 1997.

infrastructure. They promised environmentally sound forms of oil and gas exploitation and also community relations programs that would ensure the participation of the indigenous communities in every decision. The following section will analyze the company's activities in Ecuador.

3.2.3. -Maxus environmental doctrine and the community relations program.

How to show respect to the Huaorani and to their territory

a.- We are guests:

"The Huaorani have allowed us to come into their home only for the purpose of working in the fields where oil is present. All the trees, all the fruits that grow wild of that have been planted, all the animals, belong to the Huaorani. Because you work for Maxus, you are not entitled to appropriate them."

Maxus Procedural manual for the Huaorani territory.

The company Maxus-Ecuador was part of Maxus Energy Corporation that was dedicated to the exploration, production and marketing of hydrocarbons. Their headquarters were located at Dallas, Texas. It had concessions throughout the United States and in twelve countries. (Narvaez: 69)

Maxus-Ecuador had past affiliations that were considered a stigma on their background. Maxus Oil was part of the company "Diamond Shamrock Corporation" an American Company that between 1951 and 1969, produced the famous defoliant known as "Agent Orange" which was used as a biological weapon during the Vietnam war. This company was also responsible for two million tons of toxic chromium disposed in the construction fields of a New Jersey neighborhood. Hundreds of people were affected and the company was sued in 1975. (Report of OIL Watch: 56) The Environmental organizations such as

Cordavi and Fundacion Natura used this information in their protests against them. (Enriquez y Real: 123)

The Ecuadorian constitution recognizes the existence of indigenous communities with their own cultural and social characteristics. They have the right to live according to their beliefs and thoughts. This includes the rights over traditional land, agricultural techniques, internal forms of political organization, etc. As exposed before (Chapter 1) all the mineral resources that exist under these lands are part of the Ecuadorian patrimony, therefore, the government could have the chance to decide the future of these territories. It was during the eighties that CEPE established the need for a social doctrine that had to be accomplished by the oil corporations. Due to the protests made by indigenous communities and environmental organizations, there were significant changes in the policies of the corporations. The company had to set up a different strategy because of the negative public reaction of the oil exploitation on Block 16. Notice that in the past, the opposition had banned CONOCO from entering the territory, home to the Huaorani community and Biosphere Reserve. The external pressure in the agreement of Maxus made them establish a different approach that involved an immense infrastructure in the construction of the Oil fields. (See video: "Maxus: Protect and develop").

The "Treaty of Friendship, Respect and Mutual Support between Maxus-Ecuador and the Huaorani community", affirmed they were "guests in the Huaorani ancestral lands" and that their commitment was strictly with the community and the environment. The document signed by the Huaorani that

lived in Tonampade (Rachel Saint's Mission), was considered illegal, because not all of the Huaorani agreed on signing the contract. (Video: "Trinkets and Beads") Nonetheless, Maxus policies proclaimed cutting-edge procedures in the history of oil industry in tropical rainforest regions. The treaty was going to be implemented with three major divisions: 1) Environmental Plan 2) Community Development and 3) Mutual assistance. With the help of a team of biologists and anthropologists, their goal was to set an environmentally conscious image as opposed to other oil companies in the Amazon region.

In order to shape their public image, Maxus developed a series of strategies that were thought to secure the needs of the environmental organizations and the media. The "*Plan de Desarrollo Ambiental*" (Environmental Plan) (3-35) promised innovative technologies to reduce the environmental impact with the cooperation of the indigenous communities. They assured that their project would be used as a model for future oil explorations in the Ecuadorian rainforest. (Fig 6-7) These are some of the laws and regulations:

Figure 6. The installations of Maxus-YPF in Block 16.



1. - To reduce to as little as possible the deforestation for the road construction and the preparation of the drilling platforms, production and camps. For the road, including the right of way (lying of the pipeline), the average rate of deforestation was going to be of approximately 2.5 ha/km: while for the platform, the total deforestation will surpass the 60 ha. The advantage of this engineering is that these will be worked observing the level curves and only the margin camp of the soil will be lifted in those sites where the permanent infrastructure is going to be lifted (wells, tanks, camps, etc.)

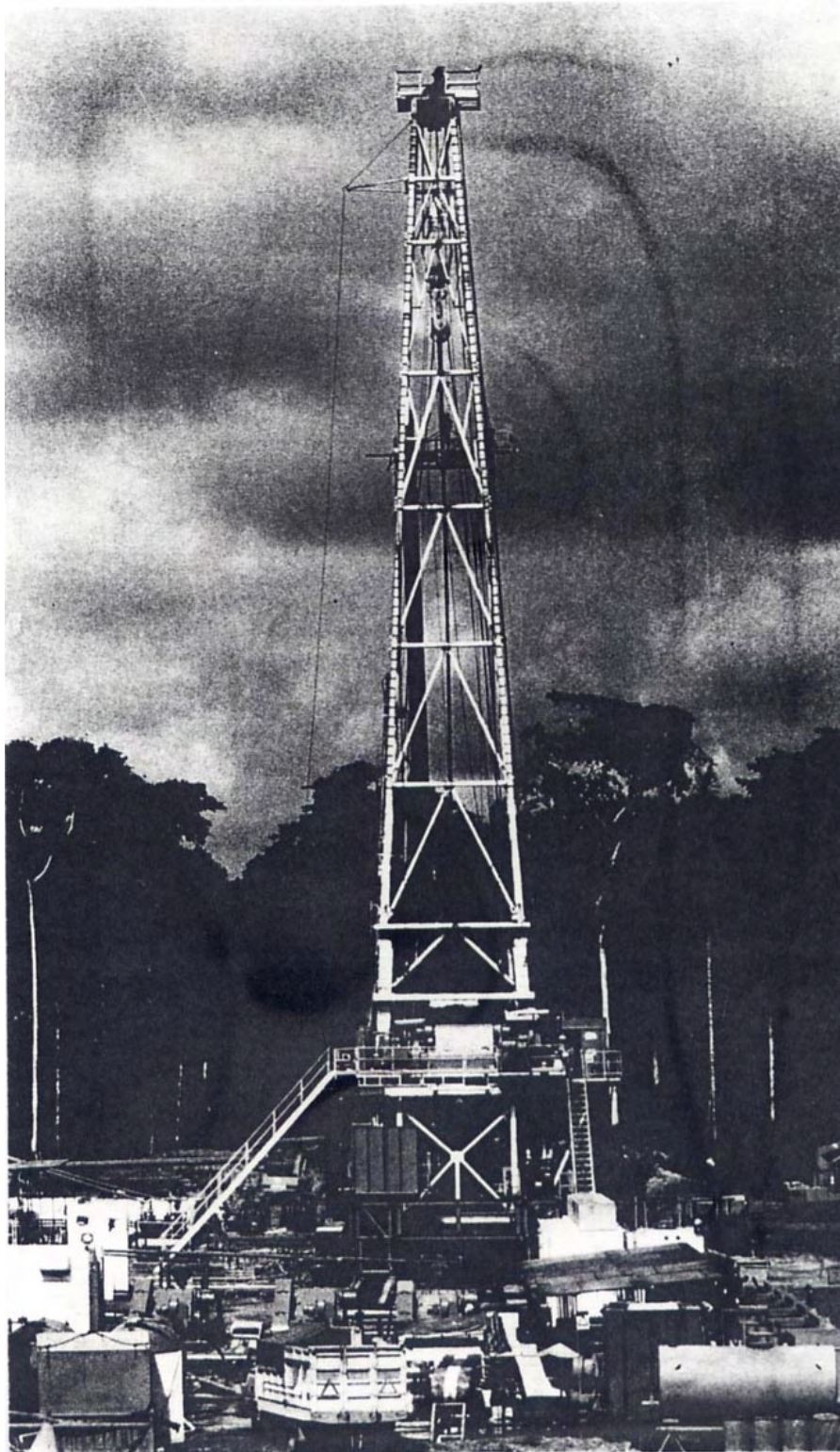
2- In coordination with the Huaorani people there was going to be a program of protection the flora and fauna of the region; especially of those threatened environments, of more ecological value; and in danger of extinction. This program will become the source for the plans of monitoring of flora and fauna of the Yasuni National Park. It was meant to be carried out with the participation of the Huaorani people, since their ancestral knowledge of the tropical rainforest is fundamental for the acquisition of the objective that the monitoring pursues. (Maxus. Plan de Desarrollo Ambiental: 25)

3. - To impel the creation of zoo-breeders with fauna of special cultural, nutritious and ecological value. The Huaorani people will manage these zoo-breeders, they will count on suitable technical assistance and will include dynamically management concepts of assets either in captivity of any other alternative that the ancestral knowledge and science and current technology advise.

The other seven points that compose the agreement of environmental protection, also take into account the newly built oil fields and the underground pipeline that was considered cutting-edge technology within the oil industry. (Video: "Maxus: Protect and Develop": Plan de Desarrollo Ambiental: 15) Along with the guidelines for environmental protection and innovative technology, Maxus implanted several scientific programs that were designed with the help of institutions such as the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador and the Smithsonian Institution. The result of this program was the creation of a Research Station. It was dedicated to explore the fauna and the flora of the Yasuni. In August of 1994, the Yasuni Scientific Station opened its doors. Maxus used this project to present a "green" image and to legitimize its presence in the Yasuni National Park.

The second strategy was the creation of the Program of Archeological Research. This program was originally promoted by CEPE in 1984. It was destined to locate and rescue archeological sites, found by the seismic prospectors during the search of oil reserves that year. The project was going to be coordinated by the Fundacion Alexander Humbolt contracted by Maxus.

Figure 6 Maxus-YPF oil field



The most important procedure was the implementation of the Program of Community Relations. Their objective was to turn Maxus into a company that in cooperation with the Huaorani, would ensure the well being of the community. Their plan included health, education, infrastructure and the “development of the commercial activities of the Huaorani”, (Narvaes :58) also included was the possibility of employment in the company. The Huaorani were going to be employed as directors of the exploration activities and as forest rangers in case of any environmental problem during the operations. Maxus ensured the protection of the Yasuni National Park by stopping the invasion of “colonos” with the closing of access to the Block 16. With no roads, the Huaorani territory and the Yasuni National Park were offered safety against the destruction of the forest. (Maxus, Plan de Desarrollo Ambiental: 34)

The program also offered infrastructure for Rachel Saint’s mission. (See Fig 7) The Huaorani criticized the unnecessary gadgets that were brought to them without their consent. (Narvaes:34) The strategy used to stabilize the ties with the Huaorani was to become a translator of the community’s needs. The company encouraged the formation of organisms such as the ONHAE, and with further agreements with them, they legitimized their presence in front of media, the government and the Ecuadorian society.

Figure 8. Doctors and anthropologists at the Tivacuno site with Huaorani elders.



The description of power relations, in what Edward Said calls “the effect of domination” is transcribed in the ethnographic, colonial process of designing and identifying the *other*. (Said:14) Such set of arrangements can be detailed in the *Maxus-Ecuador: Orientation Manual for the Huaorani Territory*. The manual was created to avoid any confrontations with the Huaorani. It established an outline of main cultural characteristics and a set of practical cases in which the company’s workers met the Hoaorani. This manual, written both in Spanish and English was designed exclusively for the company. It contained a series of photographs of Huaorani members that live next to the company’s installations so that the worker’s could be familiar with them, in case of an encounter. Inside the manual, there is a description of what it is called the “general overview of the Waorani’s warlike nature” (Manual of procedure: section 2.1.c.)³⁰

“It is important to recognize when a Wao is about to attack and when he is not. We will give you some points of reference. Please read them carefully and remember them.

Generally, the Waorani:

- Never attack when they are accompanied by their women and children.
- Are always armed for protection in the forest and for hunting. They use spears and shotguns.
- Speak loudly and make many gestures. You should not think that this is a sign of aggression of attack.
- Repeat their narratives many times.

What to do if the Waorani contacts you:

Keep calm. Don’t show fear and don’t make any gestures that might seem aggressive. Tell him you are his friend, and looking at his eyes repeat these words: Waponi, amigos Waorani, boto Maxus (Greetings, Woarani friends, I am Maxus.)”

³⁰ Notice that the manual is bilingual (English-Spanish). These words were meant to be spoken in Spanish. In English “Huaorani” is spelled “Waorani”, such name was coined by the SIL.

These admonitions resemble a description of animal behavior rather than the social characteristics of a community. The company's policies forbade any interaction of the worker's with the Huaorani, unless they belonged to the community relations department, (anthropologists and public relations members), or the immediate supervisor. Even so, this manual was made to give the worker's a clear overview of the community that lived in the territory, and particular warnings in case of an inevitable encounter.

The last section includes a profile of the Huaorani. This section will speak of them as human beings with a different culture and values than the ones shared with the company's workers. Even then, their characteristics of warriors and therefore "*dangerous*" nature is highlighted:

"IMPORTANT:

You offend a Wao if you promise something that you will not keep. A word of honor is an important commitment among the Waorani because it is based on mutual trust. Never offer something that you cannot do, and never lie just to get rid of a problem. Say simply "no" or "wait, let me ask if I can do this or that".

If you offend a Wao, he will never argue back; he will merely go away quietly. However, it could happen that he returns without your knowledge for the purpose of killing. A Wao never threatens, he takes direct action.

You must respect the Waorani culture. Your life and your work depend on that. Keep calm every time you see them. Do not offend them and do not lie to them. They and we are equals our differences are our respective cultures and history."

The manual concludes with the praising efforts of Maxus-Ecuador in the effective completion of the agreements with the Huaorani. It was a mandatory condition for the worker to read, learn basic *Huaorani Terero* and was designed to be a useful instrument for the worker in case of an eventual encounter. It also

admits that the manual was not intended to be a scientific treaty on Huaorani culture, yet it wished to be a general overview of the community.

Although the changes and alterations that the impact of the company brought to the Huaorani are not subject to measure, the work of the oil corporations is important in the sense that it created an interlocutor --the indigenous organization-- by placing the ONHAE on the center stage of the policies negotiation.

Oil industry such as Maxus believed in multi-stake holder partnerships. Their policies were based on basic principles of “sustainable development”³¹. This is achieved by the integral work of environmental technology and indigenous communities to minimize the ecological impact and to create resources for the community’s self-maintenance. (UNEP, The oil industry experience:7)

The assessment on the ecological impact and the alternations on the Huaorani culture are still yet to be determined. Nevertheless, the manual of procedures with the community is a treaty that creates paternalistic bonds with the Huaorani, as they are not the creators of policies nor free of their own development, but dependent on the company’s procedures.

The following chapter will analyze in deep and the relationships of the Amazon region and the Huaorani through the international and national environmental discourse. It will also deconstruct the image of the Huarani as the guardians of the rainforest.

³¹ The term sustainable development is understood as “development that does not destroy or undermine the ecological, economic or social basis on which continued development depends.” (Agenda 21:5)

4.1. - The travel log and the anthropological reviews.

4.1.1. - The construction of the space.

“The tragedy of this wholesale butchery is made worse, Roberto pointed out, by the fact that there is no rainforest in the world quite like Ecuador's. Indeed, for all the hymns sung to Brazil's magnificent forest, it is less well known that for sheer richness, for variety, and diversity of life in a concentrated area, the small portion of the Amazon basin in eastern Ecuador, southern Colombia, and northern Peru is the continent's true crown jewel, a Mecca of biodiversity.”

Mike Tidwell, *Amazon Stranger*, May 1996.

The narrative about the Amazon region, rich in images of exotic plants and animals as symbols of threatened biodiversity, has been coupled with images of indigenous people representing threatened lifestyles and cultures. The desire to see, experience and to document these threatened environments and their resident cultures has captured international interests and has generated a profitable industry oriented toward authentic biological and cultural experiences.

The Amazon region has always been portrayed as a space of unknown, lure and extreme danger. Scientists, explorers and artists traveled to South America with the intention of recording, acknowledging these environments. The Oriente is known as one of the greatest biodiverse area of the world.(Tidwell:24)

Many biologists and tourists come to the Ecuadorian rainforest to learn about the “savages” or to do research.

The first travelogue of the Ecuadorian Amazon became popular in the forties. Rolf Blomberg, was one of the most popular of them. He was a Swedish photographer who documented his many trips to Ecuador’s rainforest. His first book: “Aucas Desnudos” (The Naked Aucas) narrated his travel through the coast of Ecuador until he reaches the Amazon region. The goal of the expedition was to contact the fierce “Aucas”, responsible at the time for the murder of a rubber plantation owner. They survived a Huaorani attack and then Blomberg encounters the famous “Auca” girl Dayuma when she escaped to the rubber plantation of the lower Napo. (Fig 9) He talked about the Quechua Indians that accompanied him in his trip. He described them as children and praises their innocence when they face Western technology. (Fig. 10) His narration is filled with stereotypes that portrayed indigenous cultures as backward, primitive, and uncivilized. Most of this narrative has in large part to do with a devaluation of spiritual, intuitive, and non-material values and a corresponding assumption that scientific, technological achievements equal virtue and progress.

Figures 9-10. Images of Dayuma and Quechua Indians. (Source: Rolf Blomberg. Los Aucas Desnudos. P.67)



In 1950, another famous filmmaker, Miroslav Zikmund traveled through Ecuador in search for the famous "Headhunters" --known at the time as the Jivaro Indians. His travels detail the political and economical situation of Ecuador at the time. He captures the entire travel in film and still photographs. He described the tradition of shrinking heads of the Shuar with horror and curiosity, yet acknowledging their knowledge of the power of plants of the rainforest. (Zikmund: 240)

As time passed by, the growing importance of the ecological diversity of the rainforest impelled several biologists to travel there. Nowadays, there are several tours that offer a unique experience of the threatened Ecuadorian Rainforest. One of this tours promoted by the Yeja Group in coordination with an environmental organization in the United States called "*Sentinel Experientials*", offers a trip called: "Plants as Teachers, Indigenous Wisdom and Rainforest Conservation Strategies". This tour was designed as a workshop for biologists or simply nature lovers:

"It is a backpacker's dream as we trek across amazing Rainforest country and a river lover's dream as we canoe downriver on the Shiripuno River to the confluence of Cononaco River and up the Tiguino River. Amazing days spent in the richest, wildlife region in Ecuador. You will see a plethora of monkeys and birds. Unfortunately, this region is under the assault of oil companies. Because of their damaging activities, it is possible that this region will cease to exist in five to

ten years from now. This makes it a critical time to experience this area in its pristine state.”

([http: www.hookele.com/experintials](http://www.hookele.com/experintials))

There are at least 100 different web pages dedicated to the “*amazing, yet precarious situation*” of the Ecuadorian rainforest. At least 60% of them talk about the Huaorani struggle and the same amount offer “ecotourist” packages to most foreigners that wish to have an “experience with nature and to learn the ancient wisdom of the indigenous natives of the rainforest”. ([http://www.mcs.net/~soledad/ environ.html](http://www.mcs.net/~soledad/environ.html))

Mike Tidwell’s trip recreates the struggle of the Ecuadorian environmentalist/eco-tourist groups that wish to stop the oil exploration in the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve. The book tells is written through the perspective of an American tourist in his process of “rediscovering” nature, the role of multinational corporations, and his fascination with Ecuadorian society. His narrative insists on the search for utopian paradises and societies that resist the upheaval of modernization.

(Tidwell:<http://www.washingtonpost.com/style/chapter1>)

Tourism is one of the major forces of cultural contact, having grown into a multi-billion-dollar industry, and is projected to become the world’s largest industry by the turn of the twenty-fist century. (Sreberny-Mohammadi:63) Tourism follows North-South, form industrial to Third World. The search for societies and environments that are pristine and non-westernized is the main objective of most of the travel experiences. (65) This growing trend of travel has

come to be known as "Ecotourism". The term "ecotourism," often synonymous with "adventure", "nature", and "ethnic" tourism, represents a type of tourism in response to this increasing environmental consciousness. The Rainforest Action Network defines ecotourism as the trend where travelers abandon "the traditional beach vacation to visit remote, unspoiled areas all over the world." They try to avoid the fast pace and congestion of the traditional tourist centers, opting instead for more adventure, stimulation and a desire to learn while on vacation. (<http://www.ran.org/>)

One of the effects on the "Ecotourism" is that often a "traditional culture" is commodified, that is packaged for tourist consumption. The indigenous culture becomes a commodity over which tourists have rights and no longer the expression of a people's history and identity. The critics of this practice complain that tourism has "homogenized places, 'trinketed' cultures and degraded traditions". (Severighny-Mohammadi: 65)

Priority is given to natural and endangered places and people, where the educational aspect of an authentic rainforest experience is foremost. Images of the expansive and menacing beauty of the tropical forest, with its intricate inner workings and infinite diversity, are hunted and captured by the tourists cameras. Once appropriated and carried back home like trophies, these photos serve as reminders of a great journey, connecting their everyday lives to exotic worlds.

(Newman: <http://www.utexas/~ecotourism.edu>)

Guide companies which cater to the younger, more rugged adventure seekers operate with less capital investment. Normally they contract with

Quichua or Huarani families living in the more remote tributaries who serve as both caretakers for the companies' primitive cabanas as well as cultural subjects included in the tour's itinerary. This form of adventure makes up a sizable portion of the tourist's trade, and is driven by a complex motivation on the tourist's part. The sustainability of this industry in cultural and environmental terms is an important consideration that should be examined.

The next section will analyze the anthropological descriptions of the indigenous communities in terms of environmental conservation and political analysis.

4.1.2. - Anthropology and the Amazon indigenous communities.

Anthropological literature fueled the descriptions and the reports of development agencies through the past three decades. (Stone: 269) More than a century of anthropological research, publishing and teaching have had surprisingly little effect in changing the colonial relationship between "civilization and primitive peoples" in frontier regions such as the Amazon. (Sponsel: 275)

According to the Declaration of Barbados, Anthropology took form within and became an instrument of colonial domination, openly or surreptitiously; it has often rationalized and justified in scientific language the domination of some people by others." (Sponsel: 276)

The object of Anthropology in the historical process has maintained the object of study inside the realm of "others" incapable of defining their own cultural practices. Furthermore, the anthropologist, neither is a full participant in

any other culture. The case of the documentary filmmakers and directors that attempt to read the Third World as a monolithic being' usually follow their own ideological agendas. Both are subjects in a dominant culture, yet marginal to it.

Anthropological studies have failed in the recognition for self-determination of indigenous peoples and the designing of their own cultural practices when adapting to the challenges of Western society.

Since the future of the societies of the Amazon region is at stake, the ethnographic discourse of development must focus on a better understanding of the different cultural traditions in areas such as the rainforest. The next section will explain the discourse of the conservation, sustainable development and the international agreements that are generated from them.

4.2. - The Ecologist discourse.

4.2.1. - The Internationalization of the Environment. Laws and regulations

The practice of global conservation remained mired within the rigid and elitist confines that had been set at the turn of the century. Biologists, wildlife managers and other field practitioners were still largely carrying out traditional activities, self-limited to the orthodoxy of species preservation and habitat management. Major institutions began to respond to these sorts of exhortation. WWF, for example, started fund-raising to save the wetlands, then the tropical forests. Under the joint auspices of WWF, IUCN, and UNEP, painstaking work also began on a comprehensive World Conservation Strategy. (Stone: 70) The call

for radical change in the movement's mission compelled the new conservation theories to focus on the human resources. Its new goals would be not only the "maintenance of essential ecological processes and life-support systems" and the "preservation of genetic diversity", but also the "sustainable use of species and ecosystems" (70) For the conservationists, only development could break the vicious circle in which poverty caused ecological degradation, which in turn caused more poverty. It is only recently, the political and economical implications of conservationism in First World nations addressed the need for changing the consumer patterns involved with fossil energy.

Environmentalists acknowledged that hydrocarbons are severe pollutants. Its harmful effects affect all kinds of life. The emissions of carbon dioxide, which is the major heat-tapping gas and is building up in the atmosphere, has caused an unprecedented rise in the earth's temperature. Oil spills can leave waterways and their surrounding shores inhabitable and a result in loss of plant and animal life. Finally, (Sahimi: 283)

In order to deal with these dangerous situations, first-world nations such as the United States required automobile manufacturers to install pollution control devices to reduce the emissions of hydrocarbons. The polluted cities and suburbs had to meet federal air quality standards by certain deadlines as well as the chemical industries. The demand for such low-sulfur oil has increased in these countries and as local resources for such fuels is scarce, the dependence on the reserves of developing countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Latin America have increased recently. (299) The environment and the economic

growth of many countries and the human health are suffering because of the reliance on these fuels. The actions taken in the rich oil-importing countries have deep and far reaching implications and consequences for the oil-exporting countries that rely on the income from the export of their oil. It is generally believed that oil will remain the most important source of energy for many years to come, unless either technological advances can develop a viable alternative energy source, or the impact of oil and other types of fossil energy on the environment will become so severe as to render their practical use.

While these theories prevailed among global environmentalists, the development agencies-sometimes under public pressure --incorporated environmental concepts into their operations. In June 1992, the Earth Summit held at Rio created the first document that addressed the issue of environment and human development. The implementation of sustainable development for projects involved a restructuring of the productive forces and the people. The ethical implications that spawned from this Summit endorsed a revision of economic trends. Economic theories focus on competitive activities that have produced situations such as social and environmental costs and widening poverty gaps. Unless social policies are geared toward macro-policies assuring equal opportunity and allowing restructuring, growth leads to increasing centralization, resource intensity, automation and pollution while unemployment rises. (Henderson: 29). The distribution problem is even more complex. One cause is that earth's natural resources are unevenly distributed by nature. The need for petroleum is dispersed around the globe. The divisions between nation

states often compound the problem of unjust distribution. From the indigenous point of view, the earth Summit recognized for the first time their opinion about the consequences of development and the environment:

“For us, the indigenous peoples, UNCED seemed to function like a commercial market. We perceived the poor countries of the South selling their natural resources, including human beings, to the highest bidder. The rich countries of the North impose conditions of exploitation for the natural resources of these poor countries. This is occurring as the indigenous peoples are dying of hunger and misery.” (Agenda 21:85)

The notion of taking indigenous knowledge of the environmental and the ways for conserving it is opposed to the idea of conservation imposed by many environmentalist groups from First World nations. The opposition of indigenous groups held clear that conservation policies are preached on Western beliefs about nature, ignoring the perspectives of the Third World. This perspective is based on the concept that rural peoples and indigenous communities have maintained a relationship with nature, and that their views and practices in terms of both utilizing the land and caring for it must be taken into account in conservation plans.

In 1978, the Treaty of Amazon cooperation (Tratado de Cooperacion Amazonica) was signed by Bolivia, Ecuador, Surinam, Guyana, Peru, Brazil and Venezuela. Their conception and philosophy was clearly defined as one of the important attempts for unification among South American nations. They proposed several changes in the management of the region. One of the main

proposals was the agreement on economical and technological cooperation. These countries agreed on guarantee the conservation of their ecosystems plus the economic progress of the region. The program will incorporate the indigenous communities and the military presence in the territory, to “protect” the rainforest from more predatory and destructive practices. (Landazuri: 76)

According to Escobar (200), the State enters the discourse of sustainability and guarantees their policies before the international public opinion. The policies are mostly funded with the aid of International NGO’s. The existence of more visible policies of environmental conservation convey social and political struggles, since they involve indigenous organizations, environmental activists and grassroots organizations. Ethnic discourse then builds a social universe in which the capitalization of nature offers new economical perspectives and alternatives for developmental policies. (Escobar: 199,1996)

4.2.2. - The bureaucrats of nature: environmental organizations and activists.

“When we live in our land, from our land, we live in a primal forest- in primary, First World to us. It’s when our land is taken away, when it is contaminated and ruined, when our animals are scared away or die off, it’s then that we’re forced to live in the Third World, when we’re forced to occupy the lowest rungs of the social ladder of the Third World. That’s incentive enough to fuel our resistance”

Leonardo Viteri. CONFENAIE Leader, “Rainforest Crude”, Marc Cooper. (p.47)

International organizations have played a decisive role in most developing countries as targets that promote liberal democracy during the 1980's. Human rights groups, sections of the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches other interest groups such as the protection of minorities, and the promotion of women's rights in the local arena have worked with grassroots organizations in most parts of Latin America during the past years. (Vacs:83)

With the expansion of an open market policy in most Latin American governments and the growing scale of privatizations, of government institutions, the state power is shadowed by other political actors that rise with the absence of a strong representation in the political scene. (Acuna: 25)

International organizations such as the United Nations gave attention to the environmentalist's demands. The intervention of the Ecuadorian Environmental organizations is crucial, as they become the regional headquarters of the international environmental movement. (Andrade: 91) Perhaps one of the most important is Accion Ecologica, the Ecuadorian NGO similar to the American organization Rainforest Action Network and host of *OILWATCH*, an organization dedicated to the surveillance of oil companies in tropical areas of the world.

Like the indigenous organizations, the environmentalist groups appeared in the Ecuadorian political scene in the last decade. The political activities of these groups were endorsed by the international organizations that supported

them economically. The Ecuadorian government in the other hand has participated in international agreements since 1988--such as the Treaty of Amazon Cooperation. These organizations then obtained the financial support from participation in international meetings and mostly from foreign NGO's. (Andrade:93)

Accion Ecologica grew during the last decade. It started as a joint work of a group of biologists that gathered political recognition during the years. In 1988, the Ecuadorian government, Accion Ecologica and Fundacion Natura, initiated projects of assessment over the environmental impact of the oil explorations. Ecuador became the first Latin American country where the monitoring and evaluation of oil industry was held by environmental NGO's and was publicized in national and international forums. (Accion Ecologica: Documentos de Creacion, 25) The relevancy of these organizations appears in the conflict over the concession of the Yasuni National Park: Huaorani territory. Accion Ecologica, the CONFENAIE, Greenpeace, the Rain Forest Action Network, WWF and Fundacion Natura, coordinated a series of protest against the government's decision over this territory. With support of the media and the international opinion, these organizations were the first ones to force the government to change its policies of oil production.

These organizations are conformed by heterogeneous groups. Their original founders are biologists, anthropologists, intellectuals and lawyers with an volunteer crew and a base group known as the "Jovenes"(Youths)--college students that can carry on most of the protests and radical opposition as well as

the coordination of recreational services for elementary children in Environmental Education. Their campaign began in 1991. It was called “Amazonia por la vida” (*Amazon for life*), and was able to reach the media and various sectors of public opinion. It started with the struggle of the Cofan community against TEXACO, and claimed a victory when the government ended their contracts and Texaco paid part of the environmental damage. Their activities claim victories through education, grassroots organizing, and non-violent direct action. (Amazonia por la vida:3)

They also publish several books that promote the environmental struggle of the indigenous communities and biodiversity.³² (See Figure 9). They have coordinated a program with the Rainforest Action Network called: “*Protect an Acre*”, in which all the money collected goes to the monitoring of oil sites, the demarcation of forest lands to avoid the invasion of lumber companies in the West part of the country and the creation of Environmental Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of protected areas. The coalition of indigenous communities and environmental organizations ten years have managed to struggle for the legalization of territories for indigenous communities.

The history of conflicts among the Amazon indigenous communities and the oil industry in the Ecuadorian rainforest has a long tradition. (Chapter 1.1.3) The indigenous organizations of the Amazon region have responded to the

³² The latest campaign deals with the copyright law that the United States obliged Ecuador. The campaign started when an American Pharmaceutical patented *Ayahuasca*. This is a sacred plant used by the indigenous communities of the rainforest.

penetration of the oil corporations and the Ecuadorian State in their territories since 1964, even though they were only noticed in 1984, with the union of the indigenous nations of the highlands called the CONFENAIE³³ The CONFENAIE and the environmental organizations promote the use of traditional agricultural techniques and the conservation of the environment. The demands proposed by indigenous organizations such as the Cofan against Texaco were the first ones in which the coalition of national and international environmental organizations worked. (Andrade: 90)

The rainforest regions constitute the central point of most international environmental organizations. Indigenous organizations, environmental groups and grassroots development organizations have strong international networking ties and they have been working together for the past decade.

The ecological movements in Ecuador used the international public opinion in order to pressure on the government. The emblem of the indigenous warrior that defends nature is used as the slogan used in most of the campaigns. The next section will analyze the creation of this image.

4.2.3. - The virtuous savage. Deconstruction of the image of the Huaorani.-

Images of noble savages, luxuriant landscapes and fantasies of the continent's hidden wealth have fired Western imagination. The Sixteenth-century lust for gain that produced the myth of "El Dorado" has been reworked over the centuries to symbolize the hope of new markets or civilizations or new fields for

³³ Confederation of Indigenous Nations of Ecuador. (:Confederation of Indigenous Nations of Ecuador)

colonization and the search for new frontiers. The construction of the image of the “savage” is parallel with the creation of Latin American nations. These fabrications are rooted in the history of the conquest and colonization of Spanish and Portuguese America. Through history, Amazon communities were thought as “barbarian” and they held the particularity of being unable to “modernize”. (Fitzell, 26)

Films and documentary series of all kinds such as Nova, and National Geographic promote the relevance of non-Western societies against a decadent and ecologically dangerous Western progress. The ‘discovery’ of the ‘primitive’ encouraged among some members of the avant-garde a mystical, reverential attitude towards ‘otherness’. This documentaries portray the desire for those shamanistic powers that had been excluded from Western science in Latin America, and that have inspired a re-evaluation of the indigenous civilizations. (<http://www.pbs.org/nova/>)

The book Savages by Joe Kane was the first publicized work that popularized the image of the Huaorani as the guardian of the forest. The author was an environmentalist that worked for the Rainforest Action Network when the Huaorani and the environmental organizations such as Accion Ecologica started their protests against Maxus. It was at that time, when he decided to travel to Ecuador and become a witness to the struggle of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon.

The cover of Joe Kane's Savages promises the sensational story of "how one small band of Amazonian warriors defended their territory against hell-bent

oil companies, dogged missionaries, and starry-eyed environmentalists." It is dominated by a striking black and white photograph of Moi, a Huaorani leader carrying his blowgun darts, his long hair wrapping around his bare shoulders and chest--the Huaorani warrior as symbol for the environmental movement. Kane delivers a sometimes sensationalistic, sometimes activist, sometimes travelogue view of Huaorani life and their struggle to save their environment from unscrupulous oil companies. By his own admission, he "crossed the street" from being a journalist and "tried to become an activist." The result is neither journalistic, nor activist, nor academic, but rather a novelized portrayal of the Huaorani. (See fig. 12)

In September of 1993, the *New Yorker* published Kane's article "With Spears From All Sides." This hard-hitting, well-written article dealt with issues of who had the right to speak for the Huaorani. In his subsequent *New Yorker* article "Moi Goes to Washington" Kane began writing about the Huaorani as subjects, rather than actors in their quest for self-determination. A major fault of *Savages* is that Kane continues to write about the Huaorani as victims of the circumstances and dependent on the Western translator --Kane-- rather than as agents of their own destinies. Ultimately, the book winds up being about Joe Kane and his travels among the Huaorani, rather than issues of self-determination of the community as it proclaims.

Savages provides an image of the Huaorani that is almost supernatural. He admires their perseverance in remaining isolated from the Western world, and their struggles to remain true to their beliefs by rejecting Western values. (Kane:

35) Periodically, however, Kane is guilty of imposing his own North American cultural constructs on Huaorani thought.

Figure 11. Cover of *Savages*. Joe Kane. New York: Doubleday, 1996.

The film "Trinkets and Beads" falls into the same category, with astonishing images that oscillate between urban scenarios and the Amazon rainforests. It gives a paternalistic portrayal of the Huaorani as taken from a quote in the documentary:

"That's how we got Manhattan, with "trinkets and beads". They have struggled, yet failed to unmask the Machiavellian agreement of the Ecuadorian government and Maxus. Once again, the indigenous peoples are cheated because of their naivete in trusting Western world. It concludes with the Huarani as warriors defending their territories and the environment against the devastating invasion of Western civilization.

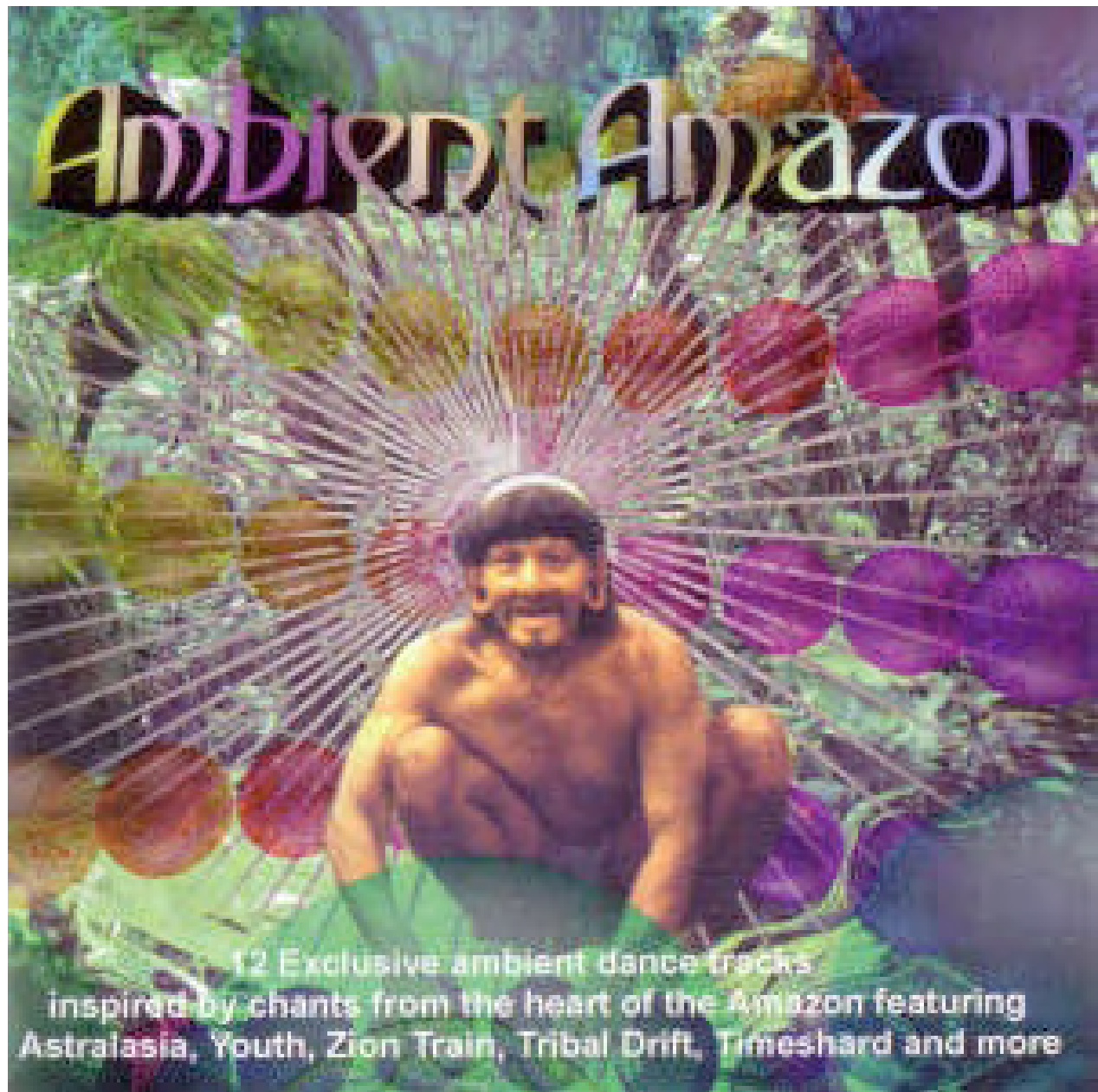
The documentary video of "Quereri onomo", (The Huarani people in everyday life) promotes the traditional way of living of the community and the fact that they have lived without any contact with Western world, for many centuries. The organization that sponsored this documentary is a NGO that promotes grassroots organizations and education to the rural sectors of Ecuador. The video intends to portray their lifestyle as something that has to be maintained against the advance of Western civilization.

The rainforest serves as a shrine to nature's intricacies and wonders, and the traveler and foreigner seeks a connection between their modern/urban lives

with the wild, pristine, and remote properties of the jungle environment. Ideas of the 'noble savage' and his primitive, untouched culture feeds the tourists' need for a frontier-like journey. The desire to go farther into the jungle, to penetrate more remote places for a more authentic experience, is part of a larger psychological journey into the unknown, a quest that entails physical challenges and discomfort necessary for a heroic return.

In England, several underground music groups of "ambient" recorded a compilation that mixed Huaorani chants with techno music. Its theme describes the struggle of the community against Western civilization. This album was meant to be a fund-raiser where all the profits of the record were going to be put in a fund to support the Huaorani's cause. (See Figure12) These narratives promote the relevance of non-Western societies against a decadent and ecologically dangerous Western progress.

Figure 12 Cover of a Record of Huaorani chants.



The object of exoticism is always a victim of a criminal, permanently threatened by destructive forces and oppressive Western acculturation. The exotic, sensual, and wild essence of a rainforest experience is emphasized through these images. The main slogan is survival: they have successfully resisted the advance of Western civilization since the sixteenth century.

Tour brochures and jungle hotels also facilitate the fantasies and myths of their Western clients, packaging the jungle experience via images and representations of local peoples. This re-valuation of the indigenous image has acquired another facet because of the global concern over the environment and the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. The tribal "other" has become a model of survival, a "natural ecologist". (Franco:82)

Chapter V

Conclusions

5.1.- Globalization, development and indigenous communities. -

Several conclusions can be derived from this research. First, in less than fifty years the Huaorani community has changed in the public opinion, national and international, from being “savages” to icons of the environmental movement.

The task of articulating alternative productive strategies, autonomous, culturally grounded and democratic, has flourished with the rise of social actors, such as the indigenous communities in their struggle to become the designers of their own destiny. A process to empower indigenous communities should recognize their values, traditional knowledge, resource management practices, and their dependence on renewable ecosystems, as in the case of the Huaorani community. Latin American countries need to change their policies of exploitation of natural resources, economical patterns and social practices, the Ecuadorian case being one of them.

In the summer of 1997, Moi Enomenga, one of the Huaorani leaders opposed to Maxus-YPF, arrived in Quito in order to help organize the annual meeting of the ONHAE (Organization of Huaorani nations). He arrived accompanied by other members of his clan: a woman and two men. He spoke about his many friends around the world, his trip to the United States to speak with the congressmen, and the time spent with people who had recognize their political activism. He also was scheduled to speak with a group of

environmentalists from Europe that were waiting for him and that have come to Ecuador just to meet him. He was aware that his community was searching for an alternative solution that implied survival without the aid of the oil company and he thought of using ecotourism to bring in a select group of environmentalists to witness the “life of the Huaorani in their struggle for survival”. An Ecuadorian anthropologist added: “They are still the same, warriors and hunters. Only now, instead of blowguns, they use automatic rifles”.

For Moi, and other members of the Huaorani community, the only long-term solution was the political activism with the members of the CONFENAIE. In the meantime, the victories of their struggle were manifested in the government’s policies: no decisions were made with oil companies, prior the intervention and approval of the indigenous communities and the environmental organizations. An example of these achievements, was the accomplishment of indigenous political party Pachakutic that managed to stop most of the government’s projects with different transnational corporations. Lately, there is a common agenda for conservation organizations, local communities, and the government’s decisions based on a common set of values composed of conservation practices and indigenous beliefs. He concluded by saying that “as long as the Huaorani exist, there will be a battle.”

Second, in the Western discourse of sustainable development and biodiversity, nature becomes a value in itself. Species of flora and fauna are recognized as having real financial value, especially for use in biotechnology research. (Escobar: 203) This is one of the reasons why ethnic communities in the

rainforest are being recognized as political actors and legitimate owners of their territories, as long as they agree to become the guardians of that capital.

The discourse of sustainable development proposed the eradication of poverty and the protection of the environment so long as it becomes part of Western rationality. The sustainable development movement is a last attempt to articulate “modernity and capitalism in the Third World” (Escobar: 200) The political economy of nature is constructed as a master narrative that ensures Western ideas in the conversion of nature and indigenous communities into objects and modes of production. (201) The common misconception among government and non-government organizations is that the local residents should have self-supporting organizations so as to be sustainable in the future. This view ignores the fundamental difference between community-based organization and the interactions between different patterns of consumption, such as the introduction of market economy in most of these communities.

Structural adjustment programs incorporate the environmental dimension into development. The present structure of international trade has a direct impact on the decline of the variety of biological species. Consequently, in the process of price formation and in determining the terms of trade, biodiversity is commonly viewed as being a free good, that is, without economic. Biodiversity is now understood that is an integral part of the natural capital of the countries in the region. (CEPAL report:126) Biodiversity is defined as a scarce resource and is consequently assigned a price which reflects its cost in both spatial and temporal terms.

Third, cultural differences in Latin America are important in the process of transforming the social and economic structure, which induce regional poverty in the region. The victory of indigenous communities lies not their potential for resisting and subverting the advance of capitalism and modernity, but in the way that these groups adapt to the changes in their local communities to ensure their existence. (Escobar:202)

The Huaorani struggle has triggered several indigenous reactions in Colombia and Peru against oil companies. Wealth depends on the extraction of non-renewable resources. The decisions and policies for the future of oil extraction in Latin American countries depend on the conscious alternatives that these communities bring to redesign the socio-economical policies.

Finally, a different type of barrier, primarily defined by discourse, exists between the First and Third worlds. Despite the terminology one might use (developers vs. developing, modern vs. primitive, or advanced vs. backward) the division of the world into these gross blocks leads to false notions of superiority and inferiority, and many other misunderstandings.

As Wallerstein points out (47), modernity is understood as a universalizing theme that gives priority to change and progress. The legitimization of new political systems is based on these principles. The very idea that Third World countries want to “develop” toward goals defined by others and that they should be provided technical or monetary assistance for the sake of progressing in a direction determined from the outside, seems to be the epitome of Western ethnocentrism.

The First World's development discourse must change its interpretations of Third World cultural differences in order to achieve better intercultural understandings between them.

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