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The spirit of communitarianism and the cultural background of the Limoncocha community
in the context of sustainable development
and environmental protection

Abstract

The aim of this article is to present the results of ethnographical studies of the Amazonian community Limoncocha (Sucumbíos, Ecuador), considering its cultural background in the context of environmental protection. Our scientific purposes were to examine connections between Limoncochans' values, lifestyle and objectives in the context of their business goals, which are important for maintaining biodiversity and nature protection in the region.

In our research we were interested in the historical, social, economic and cultural conditions that underlie the development of this community. We discuss contemporary attitudes of its inhabitants toward civilizational progress, environmental protection and ways of social organization, as significantly influenced by a unique way of settling down this community – formed by American missionaries from the Summer Institute of Linguistics (*Instituto Lingüístico de Verano*) in the 1950s.

The grounded theory methodology was used as an analytical tool for the elaboration of data, and we also implemented triangulation presumptions. We used several techniques of data collection: representative survey among Limoncocha parish inhabitants, over 30 in-depth interviews, photo elicitation interviews, documents' analyses, and numerous quasi-participant observations. During our research we obtained strong evidence for a connection between the visible spirit of communitarianism and the entrepreneurship activities of locals, both of which affect regional development. Inhabitants represent strong egalitarian tendencies that have a visible impact on their business activities and the economic prospects of Limoncocha. The first representative survey and our observations in this area gave us the possibility to formulate some recommendations for the Ecuadorian government and local authorities for implementation of cooperation with the local community to achieve sustainable economic development protecting the natural environment.

Key words: ethnography, local community, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, grounded theory, environmental protection, sustainable development, Ecuador, Limoncocha, SIL

Introduction

This paper is based on our research following the concept of sustainable development as it is applied to the analysis of the socio-economic changes of the investigated village Limoncocha,¹ Following the idea of “a steady state economy” we wanted to take the assumptions about the constant future growth of the village and region without breaking the balance between the actual human resources, consumption, natural supplies and the environment (Daly, 1991). Our research concerned the problem of social awareness of the issue of protection of nature and sustainable development in the small community, and also dealt with the cultural conditions of this awareness. We try to identify the dense and complex socio-economical context of real practices, decisions and activities held in Limoncocha, taking into consideration the protection of the natural environment. There are many stakeholders involved in the problem of development of this area. Government, oil companies, reserve management, local authorities, inhabitants, and community members vary in their general views and definitions of economic progress and development strategy. We are interested in the arena (Strauss, 1978, 1993, Clarke 1991, 2005, Kacperczyk 2012) of the dispute over developmental conceptions, which fundamentally differed among the involved entities.

Geographical localization of the project

Limoncocha is a small village located in the North-East of Ecuador (the Shushufindi Canton, Sucumbios Province). The village lies on the broader of Limoncocha Biological Reserve (Reserva Biologica Limoncocha, RBL)² on the lake Limoncocha (named also by locals *Laguna de Limoncocha*).

The RBL is considered as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention because it meets a set of criteria which include accommodating biological species that are threatened or endangered and is habitat for a species belonging to a particular biogeographic

¹ This paper is based on the interdisciplinary research: “Desarrollo Sustentable de la Comunidad de Limoncocha: La relación entre los recursos naturales de la Laguna de Limoncocha (Integridad ecosistémica para actividades turísticas y pesquerías) y el desarrollo socio-económico de la comunidad local.” The director of the international interdisciplinary project was Marco Albarracín (responsible for whole project and particularly for the biological part), and the coordinator was Krzysztof T. Konecki (responsible for sociological part of research); other main participants of the project were: Roberto Madera, Anna Kacperczyk and Piotr Chomczyński. The project was financed by SEK Universidad, Quito, Ecuador, and co-financed by the Dean of Faculty of Economics and Sociology of the University of Lodz (Poland), year 2011/12. Here we would like to express our gratitude to SEK University for providing us as a team with the resources and the tools for field research. We are deeply grateful to our colleague Roberto Madera for his incessant enthusiasm to share efforts in the research process and for his brilliant activity in the field. We deeply appreciate the assistance of our coworkers Carolina Carrillo, Alejandra Díaz, Michelle Flor, Lorena Mafla, Felipe Ventimilla and other wonderful students from Universidad SEK International in Quito, who generously and with great commitment worked in the research process, and supporting us in gathering, translating and transcribing materials, and assisting in interviews. Special gratitude should be given to the students who assisted in the most difficult part of field work – during our survey research being held in the backwoods of Limoncocha parish, and in forgotten and difficult to access places in the jungle. Without their help, gathering these materials wouldn't have been possible.

² Limoncocha Biological Reserve (RBL) was created in September 1985 in order to preserve the flora and fauna that exist in it, to channel tourism, and improve the social and economic communities of the area. The RBL has 4613.25 acres, dominated by tropical rainforest. Located within it is the Limoncocha Lake, with a water surface of 370 hectares and an average depth of 2.3 meters. RBL's climate, due to the conditions of a tropical rainforest, presents an annual rainfall of 3065 mm and an average temperature of 24.9 ° C (Neira, et. al. 2006).

region (Frazier 1999).

The Limoncocha lagoon is the focal pressure to the entire ecosystem. The great number of animal species depends on the richness of the flora and ichthyofauna of this lagoon, including the black caiman (*Melanosuchus niger*) and white alligator (*Caiman crocodilus*), whose presence may be perceived as an indicator of the health of this particular ecosystem.

Our study was focused on the Limoncocha village community, which performs various livelihood activities in the area of the reserve (RBL) and the lake. Their everyday practices include fishing in the lagoon and hunting in the forest. For this reason their activities constitute an important factor in maintaining natural resources for future generations in this area.

But the lagoon and its surroundings are an important object not only for the local community. Another entity, which is willing to control the Limoncocha Lake and the forest around it, is the Ministry of Environment (*Ministerio del Ambiente*), which represents the authority of the Ecuadorian Government and supervises the Reserve. Another organized activity in this area is conducted by an oil company settled on the border of the Reserve. The interests and views of these subjects on the protection of natural resources protection are quite different.

We assume that human practices in the Amazonian forest may constitute a source of nature protection and improvement, but are also the reason for irreversible damage in the ecosystem. Humans, with their expansiveness and technology, are able to influence and devastate any natural habitat. Thus the study of human behaviors, practices, and attitudes is an indispensable part of studying any ecosystem, which the human race forms a part of.

We stayed in the Amazonian Research Station of the International University SEK (*Estacion Amazonica Universidad Interancional SEK*) in Limoncocha, which is located near the entrance of the Limoncocha Biological Reserve, having free access to the village and to the lagoon alike.

1. Bio- and cultural diversity and sustainable development

Sustainable development was a leading concept that we tried to use during the construction of our research questions, tools, and procedures for data gathering and analysis. The concept of sustainable development consists of three essential aspects: economic, social and environmental, which interrelate and affect each other (Barbier, 1987; Kronenberg and Bergier 2010). “Sustainable development requires that economy–society–environment interactions are shaped in a way that does not affect the ecosystems’ capacity to provide their services in the future” (Kronenberg, Bergier 2010: 13). This means that economic, social and environmental development must not impair future generations’ ability to fulfill their needs.

The importance of the stabilizing function of the Amazonian forest for the future generations is well known. It saves biodiversity and provides oxygen not only for the particular area, but for the ecosystem of the entire Earth. If lost it will be almost impossible to restore. Meanwhile, the deforestation processes in Amazonian forest progress and are causing far-reaching changes. The development of crude oil extraction induces extension of the road network as supply routes for the oil companies. As a consequence, western civilization has an easier path to come into the natural forest and wild areas, and to introduce new threats to natural ecosystem. The oil business often does not take into consideration the depletion of

natural resources. There is probably a lack of sufficient communication and awareness of how the influence of oil business activities on natural resources.

We assert also that cultural diversity could be an important dimension of sustainable development, in addition to the economic, social and environmental factors. We think that the environment consists of both nature and culture. According to Article 1 of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity by UNESCO, cultural diversity is as important for the survival of humankind as biodiversity is for the ecosystems. However, culture could be also an obstacle to the sustainable development in those communities that have been disrupted and disorganized by external interventions.

Biodiversity has become a very important issue in modern times. The protection of biodiversity requires collaboration with communities to co-manage the conservation of nature (Mbaiwa, Stronza, Kreuter, 2011: 401). These collaborative efforts could be organized according to the paradigms of sustainable development. This strategy means “people centered approaches to conserving biodiversity”. Very often indigenous peoples are excluded from the efforts to conserve nature and are treated as perpetrators of environmental degradation (ibid.). In some countries, like Botswana, Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programs (CBNRM) have been prepared, which coordinate the collaboration of government authorities and local communities: “It assumes that decentralizing natural resource management to local communities will strengthen local institutions while also improving residents’ attitudes toward conservation (Mbaiwa, Stronza, Kreuter, 2011: 403). Co-managing could lessen illegal hunting and the overharvesting of wildlife, increase employment by promoting tourism, and increase the number of community-based organizations, as happened in Botswana (Mbaiwa, Stronza, Kreuter, 2011: 405 – 407, see also Mbaiwa, 2011a :260). This means that ‘park models’ that exclude local and indigenous peoples could be less effective for wildlife conservation. Biodiversity conservation should go hand in hand with the development of local communities.³

Not all projects are as effective in the conservation of wildlife. However, each individual case should be taken into account and carefully analyzed. The sustainable development of tourism can lessen the poverty in a terrain where the indigenous people live together with endangered species (Mbaiwa, 2011a.: 270, see also Mbaiwa, Stronza, 2010: 645 - 646). Moreover, we should also remember that tourism is a modernization tool that is changing the traditional setting and customs, spreading the consumption of western products, and changing traditional food and drinks to modern ones. It can transform a traditional economy to a cash economy, but this does not mean that it is a total rejection of traditional culture:

“Young people that shy away from their parents’ culture to embrace western lifestyles might simply be an expression of how local culture is a barrier to that western civilization they wish to enjoy. Conversely, the rejection of some traditional cultural issues and changes in traditional livelihood activities and life styles maybe an indication that culture is not static but dynamic. As such, shying away from some cultural issues by young people and changes in livelihood activities may not

³ In our research we were interested in actions taken by government representatives and the practices of local community members with respect to the protection of nature and conservation of biodiversity. The mutual perception of both sides is the base for more or less satisfactory resolutions of disputes in Limoncocha and their results, which affect the policy of natural environment protection.

necessarily be a rejection of local culture, but an indication of the need to accept the reality of cultural dynamism in the Okavango Delta” (Mbaiwa 2011b: 1059).

It should be noted that there can be a remarkable change in attitudes towards tourism and nature conservation when the collective management of wildlife environment is introduced and local people obtain some benefits from the introduction of conservation programs (Mbaiwa, Stronza, 2011).

The natural system of the Limoncocha community meets the contemporary economic demands for compromise and adjustment at the local level. The biodiversity of the ecological system is under the pressure of economic forces that have appeared in recent years. The industrialization of the area with crude oil production can significantly influence the “Limoncocha Biological Reserve”, which is rich in tropical forest reserves. The attitudes and behaviors of the inhabitants could also influence the biodiversity of the system. For example, the giant turtle *charapa* is in danger of extinction because the species’ eggs are collected by the inhabitants of the region. The business community and local government also have an impact on local activities in every sphere of life. Traditional culture as well can influence the attitudes towards nature. The existing biodiversity is located in a specific social, economic and cultural context. In this paper we concentrate on the social and cultural dimensions of environmental protection.

In order to do so, we need to diagnose the community activities that make the village develop in the economic and social spheres. Hence we also present the researched problem of biological and cultural diversity and the ways of maintaining it for future generations. We are also interested in the influence of cultural assumptions of the community on its attitudes towards the environment. We examine the problem from the **interdisciplinary perspective**, using the economy, ecology, biology, sociology and cultural anthropology as the disciplines that could best help us to organize the ethnographic and statistical data that we gathered in this particular community of Limoncocha.

2. Research problems and methods

The problem of sustainability is always associated with economic development and business activity. Usually these are examined using national, international and global analyses. However we can also analyze the problem at the local level. How does the economy develop in the small towns and regions? What do the business activities of local community members look like?

A very important aspect of sustainability that business should take into consideration is **eco-efficiency**: "Eco-efficiency is achieved by the delivery of competitively priced goods and services that satisfy human needs and bring quality of life, while progressively reducing ecological impacts and resource intensity throughout the life-cycle to a level at least in line with the earth’s carrying capacity." (DeSimone and Popoff, 1997: 47; c.f Stivers, 1976).

Eco-efficiency is connected also with so-called **socio-efficiency**, which could have a positive impact on the community, for example by creating employment and infrastructure for the community, or could have a negative impact, for example, accidents, mobbing at work, breaking down family relations, etc. (Dyllick, Hockerts, 2002). We should also keep in mind

social networks and relations when we analyze socio-efficiency.

Cultural diversity can be the source for another concept, i.e. **cultural efficiency**. The measure of the cultural efficiency, in this context, could be the extent to which the traditional values, norms and customs during the economic and social changes taking place are preserved for future generations. We can check this by observing which elements of traditional culture have been incorporated into the educational system and into the local cultural activities which help to transmit the traditions. We can also check the efficiency of the process via questions in questionnaire surveys and interviews. Researchers must always keep in mind the historical development of the village. However, such an understanding of cultural efficiency could also be problematic. Some norms and values could be used as justifications of activities that are harmful to the environment at this time, even though in the past they were not so destructive to nature (e.g. fishing and hunting).

We formulated the following research problems:

1. **The issue of environmental development** – this concerns the questions about:
 - a) The changes in biodiversity of the ecosystem (biological research on the diversity of species in the natural environment);
 - b) The activities at the village level and governmental level to protect the biodiversity,
 - c) The ecological consciousness of the inhabitants, interactions with nature (What does the nature mean to inhabitants; are there **rules** concerning protection of biodiversity in Limoncocha in general and with respect to outsiders?).
2. **Maintaining cultural diversity.**
 - a) How do the indigenous people react to the economic changes?
 - b) What kinds of behaviors have changed under influence of the economic changes and immigration? (attitudes to strangers, tourists, etc.);
 - c) What languages and folk customs have disappeared during the last 20 years in the region? (legends, myths, stories about family past, etc.);
 - d) How do incoming people influence the behaviors and values of native communities? (predictions of the future).
3. **Development of the economy at the village and direct surroundings.**
 - a) **Entrepreneurial activities of the inhabitants** (Who develops the firms at the village, and how?; What kinds of activities, cooperation and coordination among inhabitants are present in the entrepreneurial activity? What is the role of family relations as a factor influencing the motivation to create a company? To what extent are family relations a factor influencing the resources to create a company?);
 - b) **Ecological and social equity awareness among entrepreneurs** of the Limoncocha village (the problem of sustainable enterprise, forms of employment, social protection for workers, payment level in comparison to the average national wage);
 - c) **Development of the tourist industry** (How are the entrepreneurial activities organized? Who carries them out? Where do offers come from? Predictions for the future, etc.).
4. **Social development** – this concerns the question of development of following spheres:
 - a) Education (illiteracy rate, schooling rate, the values of education to inhabitants, the role of the school in the reproduction of the traditional values);
 - b) Social and cultural activities (What is their role? Who organizes them? Where? Who

- participates in them?);
- c) Voluntary work (if there is such activity);
 - d) Changes in the social structure of the community (social positions/prestige);
 - e) Changes in social relations in the community (restructuring the social capital, networking);
 - f) Participation of the local community in the deliberations and decision making about the village's development (influence of the inhabitants of the village);
 - g) Ownership system in the village (inheritance lineage);
 - h) How are the indigenous communities able to transfer their customs, values and folk knowledge to future generations (awareness of the activities, what they do, how, when, where, who, what, why? What are the predictions for the future)?

Methodology of the research

We used the methodology of social sciences that helps us to collect and analyze empirical data. The techniques of data collection that we applied were: unstructured interview, participant observation, questionnaire interview, and analysis of documents. We combined methods of ethnography with methods of survey research.

The diversity of methods was used according to the triangulation procedure, which helps to check the data (data triangulation) and methods (methodological triangulation; c.f. Denzin, 1970; Konecki, 2008, 2000: 77-95). All the techniques in the social, economic and culture components of our research are used under the cover of the ethnographic method (Prus, 1996; Gobo, 2008; Angrosino, 2007). We used the Chicago School interactionist ethnography of doing social research in cities and communities (Prus, 1996; c.f. Gobo, 2008, Konecki 2012: 77-82). Sociological ethnography was the methodological inspiration for our ways of doing research on the Limoncocha village (Kleinknecht, 2007). This means that we entered the field and made observations of the people's activities and talked with them to get them to describe the everyday life of the community, the customs, norms, values, social networking and so on.

The basic techniques of research at the first phase of our research project were participant observation, unstructured interviews, and analysis of documents. In our research we were trying to meet the criteria of ethics standards⁴ that are obligatory in social sciences (see Chomczyński 2006).

Observations

We visited the churches, schools, kindergarten, office of the local authority, houses of inhabitants and companies that have settled down in Limoncocha. Our observations took place in the following situations: as guests of a local community hotel; participating in the local fiestas; as customers in the local market in Pompeya; as visitors of the Kichwa museum in Pompeya; participating in the English learning classes in the Pedagogical Institute; as visitors in primary school and kindergarten.

⁴ All the interviewees were informed about our intentions, the goals of our research and the fact that conversations were being registered. During participant observations we stayed visible for the observed people, but tried not to interfere with their daily activities.

Interviews with experts

We chose the representatives of the local government, city council, and politicians coming from the village and region to interview as experts. The sample was randomized based on data encompassing official statistics, scientific articles referring to Limoncocha, and information delivered by important community members (Community Chief, priest, etc.).

The unstructured interviews gave us information about the plans for village development, about behaviors of the inhabitants, and significant persons in the village concerning our research problems relating to sustainable development. We found the most important persons for the village life and development. These experts gave us very valuable information. We completed 20 unstructured interviews with people who had been regarded as both locals and experts possessing extensive knowledge about some specific issues of the Limoncocha community life.

Small survey

Later, on the basis of qualitative analysis of data from the ethnographic part of our research, we prepared a questionnaire to carry out survey research on the attitudes of inhabitants of the village. The questionnaire developed our ideas generated from the qualitative data gathered in the previous stage of our research.

Survey research

We made also used a random statistical sampling from the population of the parish Limoncocha inhabitants' census data (Babbie, 2008: 223; Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 2007). The sampling was needed in order to generalize about the situation of the Limoncocha village. The main survey (preceded by pilotage) was based on a representative sample (121 interviewees) and carried out in April 2012. This quantitative research encompassed 65 males and 56 females of age 16-75 (mean 35, std. dev. 13,5), differentiated in terms of education, earnings, profession, marital status, living conditions, etc.

The systematic sampling of 10% of the population gave us the possibility to generalize our results to the local community of the Limoncocha parish.⁵ The sampling frame consisted of 1274 adult inhabitants of the Limoncocha parish with active voting rights.

The last phase was statistical elaboration of the data from questionnaire interviews. We did the correlations and cross tabulations between the social and economic status of respondents and their attitudes and political, economic, and ecological awareness (Babbie, 2008: 100-101; Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 2007).

Questionnaire in the class

⁵ To reach the random sampling it was necessary to find respondents who sometimes lived in hard-to-access places in the jungle, up the river etc. It was the first survey based on random sampling representatives for the community under study.

Additionally we collected written documents (field study reports) from students of the Pedagogical Institute during an auditorium survey (40), 20 short interviews with inhabitants about their life and expectations for the future, and 17 photo-interviews with families in Limoncocha.

The total period of our sociological field study encompassed two months. The first stage took place at the turn of December 2011 and January 2012, and the second in April 2012.

3. The beginnings of Limoncocha – the role of *Instituto Lingüístico de Verano*

Limoncocha has no ancient history, only a modern one. Fifty years ago the terrain of the present village was uninhabited. The village was created by *Instituto Lingüístico de Verano* (Summer Institute of Linguistics, SIL)⁶ in order to realize their own official linguistic and less-official evangelizing mission, which was: to describe and to protect the non-described languages and to translate the Bible into these languages. Their publicly stated goals were to conduct research into Amazonian languages and to study folklore, flora and traditional medicine. Another reason was to establish the autonomous Limoncocha Service Center (*Centro de Servicio en Limoncocha*) ensuring the independence of SIL and enabling missionaries free translocations in Ecuador and abroad. Therefore, the history of Limoncocha began in 1957 when the airplane of *Instituto Lingüístico de Verano* landed on the lagoon. Institute representatives brought the Kichwa people from city of Tena (located 263 km from Limoncocha) to the shore of the Limoncocha lagoon in order to create a research station. Many older people that we asked in Limoncocha were able to recollect these events pretty well. They seem to be an important element of widespread public knowledge. 108 interviewees (out of 121, i.e. 89,3%) declared themselves to be interested in the history of Limoncocha, and 78 (64,5%) know what SIL was. In the stories rooted in local common knowledge, at the beginning the area was surrounded by wild dense jungle, inhabited by plenty of anacondas, caimans, birds and other wild creatures. Our informants referred to the beginnings as very difficult, when dangerous animals roamed the jungle and threatening sounds of the jungle could be heard everywhere:

“You know the story of five missionaries killed in Operation Auca. The story is that five missionaries of various denominations died there trying to evangelize Huaorani. They made aircraft over-flights and discovered the lagoon. That was the beginning, landing in the lagoon. There are still grandparents who know the story exactly, and who told how it was, this first crossing, the first arrival, where they settled, and all of that. There are stories to tell. My grandfather was one of the first who came to build

⁶ The Summer Institute of Linguistics (*Instituto Lingüístico de Verano*) was founded in 1934 by the Presbyterian preacher Cameron Townsend, and chartered in the State of California in 1942. The name of the Institute described the cyclic form of its activities: every summer it convened training courses of linguistic description in different countries. Calvet (1998) reports that in 1942 the founder of SIL “created a twin organization, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, such that the pair SIL-WBT was devoted to the conversion and education of indigenous peoples throughout the whole world.” In 1978 the world presence of the SIL embraced “3,700 persons working on 675 languages across 29 countries of Africa, Latin America, Asia and Oceania”. They were “installed in some globally strategic spots” to realize their goals. In Ecuador they started their mission in 1952 with 100 persons working in SIL. Louis-Jean Calvet (1998) *Language Wars & Linguistic Politics*, Oxford University Press (trans. by M. Petheram); see also David Stoll (1985) *¿Pescadores de hombres o fundadores de Imperio? El Instituto Lingüístico de Verano en América Latina*, Quito.

the huts where the missionaries slept the first time they came. It was a savage, pure jungle, very dangerous, full of weird insects and everything else, including anacondas, which were easy to see and very aggressive. The crocodiles and caimans were aggressive too. They attacked the plane, the canoes, everything they saw. But they found the lagoon, this was the reason why the missionaries settled here.” (interview 3, with the Limoncochan priest).

“First, we came, 30 people from Tena searching for jobs, but at this time, the lagoon was in the middle of the jungle, no one could get in here, no one could enter here, through the jungle, because there were a lot of animals, trees, and even worse in the water, in the lagoon, so on the banks of the Rio Napo there were no people, the people just live in Quitaya, 18 kilometers below, so we, people from Tena flew in a small plane, and we landed in Primavera, there was a little airfield, very short, so the missionaries had a little plane that lands in an airfield not more than 150 meters, so we landed there and then we enter into a plane that could land on the lagoon... the first flight landed here so we were 5 people, and we landed here, so when the plane landed in the water, the water was moving a lot, and into the water, in both sides of the jungle something was screaming like people (grrwwwuuuaa)... Many big tigers, pumas and jaguars, so we were scared and we went to the camp on the bank, we fall asleep, but we could not sleep, because in the night the sounds were worse.” (interview 19, with an ex-shaman, still living in the jungle, close to the village of Limoncocha).

The name of the lagoon and the village, Limoncocha, was created because of the color of the lake water; it is green like a lime. Since the first people who came to the shore of the lagoon found lime trees, and the name supposedly comes from them.

The Institute was established “in the regional hub of Limoncocha on 1,287 hectares granted by the state of Ecuador for a period of 50 years. On this land the Institute built housing, a library, offices, a clinic, an airport and repair shops, a radio station and a weather observation post, a golf course, and a private school for children of staff members. It created a real base for living in the jungle, importing food supplies directly from the USA in its own airplanes. The contract signed with the government of Ecuador granted considerable privileges to SIL.”⁷ These privileges included: “unrestricted entry into the national territory for SIL members”; “full tax exemption for all present and future materiel imported from abroad”; “permission to resell all vehicles in-country after four years of use”; “permission for SIL airplanes to overfly Ecuadoran territory”; “full tax exemption for all SIL property.”⁸

The Institute built the village, and step-by-step created the local community. The entire infrastructure: roads, airport, school and public utility buildings were built by indigenous hands, but with the logistical and planning assistance of the specialists from the Institute, and under their supervision. The official goal of the Institute was to conduct research into the indigenous languages and to translate the Bible into them in order to fulfill their missionary

⁷ Source: *Registro Oficial, organo del gobierno del Ecuador*, 19 May 1971, treaty signed by J.-M. Velasco Ibarra, then president of the Republic in: Calvet (1998)

⁸ Source: *Registro Oficial, organo del gobierno del Ecuador*, 19 May 1971, treaty signed by J.-M. Velasco Ibarra, then president of the Republic in: Calvet (1998)

aims. As the result of their missionary activity they converted all the inhabitants to Protestantism.

The image of the Institute among the inhabitants is very positive so far. In the local perception the Institute seems to have been the agent of positive change for the Limoncocha people. As was mentioned, the majority of interviewees (64,5%) know what SIL was, and 67,9% of those who know it assessed its activities positively. They had created conditions for work, making it possible to earn a living, learn and develop personally - they could also receive proper education and become teachers. The Institute gave them the example how to educate teachers in a small village far away from major urban centers. This idea was followed later (after the expulsion of the Institute from Ecuador) by the state policy that created a secondary school for teachers.

The Institute gave the land to the people (50 hectares per each family) and taught them how to cultivate it. In the interviewees opinion' everything in Limoncocha was started because of the Institute, which introduced many new skills and knowledge to the indigenous people: carpentry, woodworking, nursing, baking, engineering, agriculture, mechanical skills, and so on.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics was formally expelled from Ecuador in 1980.⁹ Some Institute critics say that along with translating the Bible to indigenous people the Institute suppressed the local cultures. The evangelization and conversion to Protestantism also created political tensions, because the converted indigenous people opposed the Catholic government's policy. The changes in the culture of the inhabitants provided by the Institute were part of preparing them to exploit the natural resources (crude oil, timber) in the jungle. The Institute, by its cultural and educational activity, either intentionally or unintentionally prepared the social and cultural conditions for the future United States oil companies. To make oil companies settlement in Amazonia possible, SIL had to change indigenous attitudes and habits. It was necessary to educate them, to teach them language (English) for future cooperation, and to create the new work habits.

There were even accusations that the people from Institute performed sterilizations on the indigenous inhabitants to lower the birthrate. However, all this information didn't impair the Institute's image among the inhabitants of the Limoncocha village. They still retain a positive perception of the Institute and claim that all the accusations were only rumors.¹⁰ The attachment to the Institute is illustrated in the following citation from interview:

⁹ Alison Brysk, *From Civil Society to Collective Action. The Politics of Religion in Ecuador* [in:] Edward L. Cleary, Timothy J. Steigenga (eds.) *Resurgent voices in Latin America: indigenous peoples, political mobilization, and religious change*, Rutgers University Press, 2004, p. 37. According to Deborah Yashar (2005), the SIL's agreement with Ecuadorian government was officially terminated in 1980, but they were still active in the country. (Deborah J. Yashar (2005) *Contesting Citizenship In Latin America. The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge*, Cambridge University Press 2005, p. 118). Louis-Jean Calvet fixes the date 1982 as the time of expelling the SIL, probably because of the complexity of the situation and multidimensional presence of the Institute in Amazonian area (Amalia Pallares, *From peasant struggles to Indian resistance: the Ecuadorian Andes in the late twentieth century*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2002, p. 176).

¹⁰ We can read about these accusations in the book by Louis-Jean Calvet (1998, chapter 14). Calvet (1998) reports that "in February 1976 the Anthropology Department of the Catholic University of Quito published a document of some ten pages "What is the Summer Institute of Linguistics?" denouncing the role played by SIL in Ecuador, especially in its Amazonian base of Limoncocha." In four or five years in the countries of Central and South America it started a campaign for expulsion of the SIL on the basis of several accusations. The

“When the people from the institute leave, we felt as orphans because they were like our parents.” (Interview 19 with the ex-shaman).

4. Other external influences

The process of deep changes in Limoncocha village runs parallel to implementation of the government policy of internal colonization of the Amazon.

“Government policies in the 1970s and 1980s aggressively promoted internal colonization of the Amazon. [...] Government officials pledged to “civilize” native peoples and integrate them into the dominant national culture. Not surprisingly, most indigenous peoples did not want to be “civilized” by outsiders. To them, “civilization” and assimilation meant rejecting their beliefs and way of life, lowering their standard of living, and entering the lowest social and economic levels of Ecuadorian society. It meant new diseases that shamans could not cure; the erosion of food security and self-reliance in meeting basic needs; and a loss of sovereignty and deepening spiral of dependency on outsiders and the cash economy. The loss of ancestral lands threatened their very survival. From the perspective of the native peoples, the government’s national integration policy meant national expansion and ethnocide.” (Kimerling 2006: 427, Whitten, Jr. 1976: 24)

After the Institute left Limoncocha, the government tried to reconstruct its influence on the community and replace the SIL by another institution. They introduced INIAP from Quito (Instituto Nacional Autónomo De Investigaciones Agropecuarias) to the village. However the inhabitants did not accept it. They were missing the people they knew from the Institute and weren’t ready to trust in any other institution.

The Biological Reserve was created in 1985 from the land that was formerly entrusted to the Institute and traditionally belonged to the indigenous people inhabiting the village area (according to one of the respondents). Only Kichwa men that are members of the community are allowed to inherit the land.

The land resources are diminishing in Limoncocha because of population growth and the system of inheritance of the land:

“For example, the community had approximately 12,000 hectares. So the first partners were 20 people, they shared out 50 hectares for each one and there was land considered as a reserve. When the young people get married, the community gives them some hectares from this reserve. At the beginning, they gave 50 hectares, after they gave 40 hectares, then 30 hectares and nowadays they give 5 hectares. Young people, 20 years old, when they get married they currently receive 5 hectares because there is not enough land for them. The last time a young man got married, the

severest ones were: having links with the CIA, organizing anti-guerilla training camps, trafficking in gold, uranium, emeralds and narcotics; practicing the forced sterilization of indigenous Indians, having links U.S. oil exploration companies. The Institute introduced American petroleum companies to explore the East of Ecuadorian jungle. Texaco Gulf used the SIL infrastructure, such as airplanes and radio). There could also be the interpretation that it was policy-by-proxy, which means that it was done for the interest of the Ecuadorian government.

community gave him the last 5 hectares from the reserve, there are no more reserves. For the other young people, their fathers have to share the land out with them. But only with men, daughters don't have the right to receive land.” (interview 14, with an expert doing business outside of Limoncocha).

At the same time the Oxy Company (Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation - OXY), appointed by Institute, started to work in the area of the Limoncocha in ‘Block 15’, causing social and economic changes in the village and ecological problems in the direct environment of the lake. OXY, in consultation with the Limoncocha inhabitants, asked them for the right to use their land and offered some material durable goods, communal buildings, and houses for the community in exchange for the possibility of oil extraction, drilling rigs and pipeline construction. This agreement changed the view and the architecture of the village. The higher standard of living has been achieved at the expense of leasing the land.

Table 1. Important dates in Limoncocha history – summary

1957	— Hydroplanes of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (<i>Instituto Linguistico de Verano</i>) landed on the Lagoon
1958	— The Institute hired indigenous people from Tena for cleaning the ground and preparing space for the station. At the beginning the indigenous people and Americans were separated, because Americans were afraid of infections and asked the indigenous people to pass through disinfection fluid. — The Institute built the airport and the station, prepared infrastructure, and taught the indigenous people carpentry, aircraft mechanics, and other crafts
1980	— <i>Instituto Linguistico de Verano</i> is expelled by the government – leaving behind all the area and infrastructure around the Lagoon — Ownership reform – land ownership for Limoncocha inhabitants is granted by representatives of the Ministry
1985	— In order to manage the area left by the Institute, the Ministry of Environment (<i>Ministerio del Ambiente</i>) creates the Natural Reserve in Limoncocha (<i>Reserva Biologica Limoncocha</i>) and takes power over the area — the Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation (OXY) the largest US-based crude oil producer – acquires ‘Block 15’ in Amazonia and starts work in Limoncocha.
1969	— Foundation of the parish Limoncocha
1991	— Contamination of the lake with heavy metal pollution (as a consequence of OXY activities) is discovered after the Laguna Spill

1992	— OXY still does not inform residents about contamination and does not accept responsibility for it
1995	— OXY modifies its service contract (signed in 1985 with Ecuador's state oil company Petroecuador)
1999	— OXY signs a new production sharing agreement (with Petroecuador) covering the Limoncocha and Eden-Yuturi fields.
2002	— the OXY gives the building in the center of the village for use by the community
2005	— the Province Government introduces electricity in Limoncocha OXY is exchanged for by Petro-Amazonas (state company Petro Ecuador)
2006	— Municipio de Shushufindi starts to build a sewage system
2008	— The sewage system is finished but does not work (till 2012, when it is put in the annual budget) – houses have their own sewage pits for natural sewage recycling
2009	— The asphalt road to Pompeya is open and ready to use
2010	— A medical center built by Petroamazonas in agreement with the community is ready to use

Source: own

In summary, the community of Limoncocha, in its short history, has many times benefited from external help and been afflicted with some external demands. Created by strangers who become their patrons and supervisors, uprooted from their own socio-cultural context (in Tena), subject to regulations imposed by the government and Ministry of Environment – Limoncocha people might reasonably maintain some expectations of the necessity of having their own activities structured by some external entity.

Our survey research confirmed this hypothesis. On the question “Do you think that Limoncocha needs any external help or can the village solve all its own problems by oneself?” 107 interviewee (88,4%) answered that external help is needed. In terms of the most sufficient form of support, most respondents chose the answer: “Someone should provide us knowledge and teach us how to solve our problems.” (see Table 2).

Table 2. Indicated forms of the support for Limoncocha village

“What kind of help would be sufficient for the village?”	The number and percentage of people who indicate a given form of support needed for Limoncocha as most important (N=85)	
Someone should provide us the knowledge and teach us how to solve our problems	46	38,0%
Someone should prompt the way for us how to solve the problems	16	13,2%
Someone should provide us material and subsistence aid .	14	11,6%
Someone should solve the problems instead of us	6	5,0%
Someone should just give us money and we would know how to use it to solve our problems.	3	2,5%

Source: survey results

5. The household economy in Limoncocha

The parish of Limoncocha consists of three communities: Río Jivino, Santa Elena and a small percentage of the Itaya community. The Indigenous Association of Limoncocha (AIL, Asociación de Indígenas de Limoncocha, now called ASOKAIL) also gathers two communities: Río Jivino and Santa Elena.

The whole parish of Limoncocha encompasses 6700 inhabitants and the village of Limoncocha about 1500 inhabitants. Approximately 80% of inhabitants of Limoncocha are teachers (after their work at schools they work on their farms in agriculture), 10% work in the petroleum company, and the remaining 5%, subsist on their agriculture. Some of them used to fish and hunt, but these activities are only an additional source of food. Ninety percent of the income of Limoncocha inhabitants comes from the state (from work in schools and in the state-owned petroleum company).

The income structure of the Limoncocha was estimated based on the information obtained during the quantitative part of our research (Table 3). As we can see, the earnings and household incomes are very diverse. The highest income earners were teachers with a long period of service, i.e. more than 20 years. But 32 interviewees claimed they had no earnings and no household income (which yields a huge standard deviation).

Table 3. Earnings and household incomes per month (in \$)

	Earnings per month	Household incomes per month
Mean	279	342
Std. Dev.	329	400
Max.	1500	2000
Min.	0	0
Mode	0	0

Source: survey results

This information is of great importance when we consider that people without any income have to fish, hunt and make use of forest resources just to survive. For them this is the only way of existence. For this reason, imposing on their activities considerations of devastation of the natural environment is, at the very least, inappropriate. This problem indicates the importance of poverty issues as a factor in the extensive hunting and fishing in natural areas.

6. Everyday life and ecological attitudes

Generally the inhabitants live off agriculture. Ninety-five interviewees (78,5%) declared working on a farm as the source of income of the household, and almost half of them (58 answers, e.g. 47,8% of all choices) declared that this is the main income for household. Agriculture is mainly the women's domain of work. They grow maize, yucca, rice and coffee. Because of this they rather do not have time for education. Some men (and women) fish in the lagoon (71 answers, e.g. 58,7%), even though law forbids it. Fishing can decrease the population of caimans, and many of the inhabitants understand the connection between fishing and size of the caimans' population, but declared that this knowledge has no influence on their fishing activities (see Table 4).

Table 4. Cross-tabulation of variable fishing in the Limoncocha lagoon and declarations about the importance of caimans (in numbers)

		Are caimans important for you personally?		
		Yes	No	Total
Do you fish in Limoncocha lagoon?	Yes	48	23	71
	No	36	14	50
	Total	84	37	121

Source: survey results

However, the scarcity of other sources of income and old habits cause people to continue to catch fish. Some of them also catch turtles (*charapa*) and small caimans (*caiman blanco*). These species remain part of the diet of the indigenous people (especially living in a jungle, away from more crowded places), and are also sold to the tourists along the Napo River.

Table 5. Wild animals' consumption by the local community

“Do you eat wild animals now?”	The number and percentage of people who declared they eat wild animals (N=121)	
Fish from lakes or rivers	106	87,6%
Worms from the palms trees	91	75,2%
Wild birds	55	45,5%
Monkeys	46	38%
Charapa turtles	29	24%
Caimans	19	15,7%

Source: survey results

Eating wild animals is rooted in the culture of Kichwa. According to one of the interviewees, banning the consumption of wild animals would be a denial of respect for their culture. Keeping their own values and nutrition habits is as important for them as using their own language, using medical herbs and other folk customs.

Eating and drinking customs include drinking *chicha* – a local traditional low-proof alcohol prepared from fermented yucca, which is still popular in comparison to western drinks (see Table 6). However, we can also observe changes in drinking preferences. Nowadays *chichi*, although still popular, especially in deep jungle spots, is gradually being displaced by the growing popularity of the other drinks originating from western culture.

The Kichwa culture might be perceived as an intervening condition that influences the possibility of nature protection in Limoncocha nowadays. The more intensively people declare to take part in *minga*, the more criticism they express toward the contemporary protection of the natural environment in Limoncocha. Spearman's rank correlation is visible ($\rho=0,208$, $p=0,05$). It would suggest that collective meetings and deliberations serve a useful purpose in community's ecological awareness development, but at the same time they create an atmosphere of helplessness and dissatisfaction. Certainly this situation contains a strong

potential for changing communal attitudes and practices towards the protection of natural resources. Dissatisfaction may increase motivation to introduce some changes. One way could be deliberation workshops involving community members in actions, concluded with noticeable, constructive outcomes, positively evaluated by the participants.

Table 6. Drinking customs of interviewees

“What do you like to drink?”	The number and percentage of people who declared drinking the indicated liquids (N=121)	
Chicha	110	90.9%
Juice	85	70,2%
Water	82	67,8
Orangeade	65	53,7%
Coca-Cola	64	52,%
Beer	46	38%
Tea	40	33,1%

Source: survey results

On the other hand we can observe a different tendency: the less the respondents declare that they speak Kichwa, the more they perceive insufficiencies in protection of the natural environment ($\rho=0,283$, $p=0,01$). This would suggest that people having an external point of view and not identifying themselves with Kichwa culture tend to severely assess the local authority and government’s fulfillment of its duties and commitments to the protection of natural resources. Such attitudes may well serve the cause of environmental protection by creating the pressure on authorities. The dissatisfaction expressed can be turned into engagement in environmentally friendly operations, on the condition that they start to feel responsible and willing to actively work for a cause.

To return to the issue of caimans, residents eat the caimans in small amounts, which gives hope for sustaining the reproduction of these reptiles in good condition.

According to one of the expert-interviewee persons, those who give thought to the future of biodiversity are those who want to attract tourists. Nearly 1/3 (28,1%) find keeping culture and tradition for tourist attraction purposes very important, which can suggest that tourism seems to be treated as an opportunity for the local community. The majority of interviewees –

71 (61,2%) perceive the caimans' importance in terms of a tourist industry attraction - Limoncocha is famous for these wild animals and they attract tourists. While this way of thinking may be viewed as very instrumental, it keeps the nature of the lagoon and its biodiversity for future generation. A programme of ecological education at the schools exists in Limoncocha, but there is also some evidence that it is not sufficient for the preservation of local nature. There is a lot of waste lying on the lawns and streets, and people are used to burning plastic wastes, etc.

Since the beginning of this community the ecological approach, oriented on nature preservation, was represented by the missionaries that influenced the residents of Limoncocha.. They did not want to kill wild animals for food. Nonetheless, some experts are worried that people do not think much about the future of caimans in the lagoon and other wild animals:

“In ancient times people used to hunt caimans, there used to be different types of caimans, ones that are able to be hunted and others that not – like black caimans, we don't have that habit of hunting them. But people used to do it before, so nowadays a lot of animals have disappeared to make way for the growth in population. Nowadays a lot of those animals are being hunted, there has been not as much respect for caimans, I mean, a lot of people, when it is time to hunt they are already hunting and don't respect, so we should talk to the community because almost all animals are going to disappear at some point, and people should stop hunting.” (Interview the president of ASOKLC)

Moreover, inhabitants consider themselves the owners of the Reserve and in their opinion the restrictions introduced by the Ministry of Environment (Ministerio del Medio Ambiente) were not consulted with them. They consider this lack of consultation as offensive, and demand more respect for themselves:

“A few days ago, there was a meeting between the Community and the Ministry of Environment, but it wasn't a meeting that finished in good terms, because it doesn't end with an agreement. Some people of the community consider as very offensive the fact that authorities stop their common activities, like hunting and fishing, just like that, offhand. And they feel that this prohibition treats them unjustly. Because free access to the lagoon is forbidden for them even when they are owners of the land as an indigenous people. They feel uncomfortable because they cannot move freely on their own land and have to be registered and wait till the authorities find out if they really are or are not community members.” (interview 3, with the priest in Limoncocha).

The inhabitants express a conditional willingness to cooperate with the Ministry, however they expect to be consulted. The lagoon has become the focal object of the dispute between the Ministry and the inhabitants of Limoncocha:

“That's why I think there is a positive part and a negative part. We always take care of the reserve and then suddenly the minister took this decision, that we should respect 200 meters around the lagoon and we have stop all kind of activities there, but we were here before Limoncocha was consider a reserve and also the Linguistic summer Institute was here...” (interview with President of Santa Elena community).

The representative of the Ministry of Environment, who used to reside in the Reserve, protects the Reserve of Limoncocha. The Ministry is actually trying to build an entrance to

the Reserve, which according to some interviewees' opinion is going to be only a "decoration door". From another point of view (of the inhabitants) it is a new boundary that isolates the inhabitants and the owners of the Reserve land from the lake. The inhabitants do not like the idea of the new entrance to the Reserve. The new entrance has become another focal point and boundary line in the old dispute over the ownership of the Reserve land and the problems of cooperation in order to protect the lagoon. However, the Ministry employs only six guards in the park (Yasuni Park) and Reserve, and they are not able to control the large amount of territory that is supposed to be protected.

Generally we did not notice any interventions carried by the guards when the inhabitants from the local villages were fishing in the lagoon. Some of them are afraid of negative consequences as the result of direct contact with fishermen and are afraid to forbid the inhabitants to fish. One of the guards said, in an informal talk, that he was the victim of black magic initiated by the shaman and inspired by the offended local people. Because of this, this guard limps to this day. It was "the punishment" for his reaction toward those locals who were fishing, disobeying the law established by the government.

Inhabitants generally say that they want to develop the **tourism** in the village. The majority (74,3%) of interviewees perceive tourism as an opportunity for Limoncocha development. Additionally 25,6% definitely and 43,8% 'rather' estimate that tourism is currently developing in Limoncocha. Moreover a large number predict that tourism (40,2%) and ecotourism (7,2%) will develop Limoncocha in the future. However, they expect to get some help from government for this goal. One hundred and seven respondents (88,4%) expressed the opinion that Limoncocha needs some external help to deal with its internal problems, while 108 (89,3%) declare that this help should come from the government. Some of them feel abandoned by the government, but among another group there is a dominant feeling of fear of the government rather than a feeling of abandonment. Twenty-three interviewees (19%) declare that help from government is rather insufficient, but 58 (47,9%) think that is definitely insufficient. This means that 2/3 of the interviewees negatively assess help from the government and want to receive much more. Generally the financial influence of the government on the development of the community is not mentioned. There is also no agreement among the community members about the cooperation aimed at protection of the reserve, which can become a source of conflict.

The environment is very important to inhabitants, because it can give them incomes from tourism (watching caimans and birds, excursions on the Limoncocha lagoon, walks in

the forest). However, some of the statements indicate also the *autotelic* value of nature (keeping the biodiversity of the lake).

However, when it comes to the problem of lagoon biodiversity, the opinions are pretty much divided. Fifty-three respondents (43,8%) think *that only Limoncocha citizens can fish there* and 50 (41,3%) express the opinion that *people from Limoncocha and other areas can fish but under some restrictions*. Children at school also declare that protection of nature is very important.

Table 7. Perception of responsibility for degradation of the natural environment in Limoncocha (in numbers)

"Who is responsible for degradation of the natural environment in Limoncocha parish?" (open question)	The number of people who indicate responsibility of a given subject
Community members	40
Petroleum companies	35
Authorities (local and national)	6
Ministry of Environment (<i>Ministro del Ambiente</i>)	4
Agriculture (<i>Fincas</i>)	1

Source: survey results

Inhabitants perceive the changes that have happened to the environment during recent years and see that they have reduced the population of caimans and birds. Fifty-two respondents (43%) expressed the opinion that *there is less fish than 5 years ago*. According to inhabitants and some experts the changes in the environment are caused mainly by the petroleum industry that is established on the skirts of the Reserve. According to 71,1% of interviewees oil companies are responsible for pollution of the natural environment. This is probably the reason why people expect from them greater help and more activity in helping people from Limoncocha (86%). However respondents also tend to point at themselves (next to the oil company) as being responsible for pollution (Table 7).

There are also some demands toward government concerning the protection of nature. If the residents are going to protect their forest and lagoon the government should give them other possibilities to earn and provide resources for living.

7. The communitarian spirit

Communitarianism is a way of social organization which emphasizes the community as the basic social entity to which individuals should refer themselves. It creates a deep connection between the individual and the community. Any cultural and economic issue is focused and

considered with reference to the community – not to the individual. Community becomes the real space of activity and carries out the essential role in defining and shaping its members' identities. By the term of “communitarian spirit” we mean a specific atmosphere which may be observed in public space, in decision-making situations, and in everyday activities – a spirit that indicates an emotional attachment to one's own community and placing the community in the foreground.



Image 1. Sport activity in Limoncocha

Above: women playing basketball (center of Limoncocha, January 2012) below: men playing football (center of Limoncocha, April 2012)

The Limoncocha community has many features of a communitarian society. People express their willingness to be together. They gather in the village center to spend time, to play and practice team sports and other leisure activities. They associate and work together. They collectively discuss urgent matters. They share joyfulness and do not feel alienated.

Additionally, when residents spend leisure on sport, this activity unites them even more, allows them to be together and to feel the sense of community. The majority of interviewees (93, which is 76,9%) declare that they play sports. They have their own league in the village (both women and men). They play Ecuadorian volleyball (for three persons), soccer, and basketball (see Table 8).

Table 8. Sport preferences (in numbers)

"What kind of sport do you play?"	The number and percentage of people who indicates given sport activity	
Football	65	53,7%
Basketball	39	32,2%
Volleyball	33	27,3%
Ecuadorian volleyball	13	10,7%
Other	25	20,7%

Source: survey results

The primary school also helps to cultivate the spirit of communitarianism. It organizes contests, dances during the holidays (for example, Christmas, New Year's Eve, Mother's Day). Also, the data from the school survey indicates that pupils in the future want to help the community.

A very important factor in keeping the communitarian spirit is *minga*, which is the collective work done both for the individual farm and for the community infrastructure. All community members are invited for *minga*. After they complete their daily activities they usually participate in a party that seems to be a very sociable activity, integrating the members of the village (75,2% take part in every *minga*, 22,3% in some *mingas*).

A consequence of the communitarian way of thinking is the approval of wealth inequality in the community. Some of its members (especially local authorities or chief of the community and his family) use expensive cars or other luxury equipment received by the community as a gift from the oil company. Inhabitants do not see this as inequitable distribution, because they know that this is property that belongs to the community as a whole not to a particular member.



Image 2. **Community meeting discussing the issue of Limoncocha's future** (considering the development plan of Shushufindi, the issue of project preparations, and the ministerial ban forbidding fishing in the Lagoon) with representatives from the Municipality of Shushufindi Parish (the Centre of Limoncocha, 9 December 2011)

Another indicator of communitarian attitude could be the opinion expressed by community members about the scholarships for the best students. In Limoncocha only a few students have received grants or scholarships financed by the government. However, many other students would like to study but they have no chance to receive money for it. In the opinion of Limoncocha inhabitants the money should be distributed for all the candidates who want to study. Moreover, if somebody graduates from the University he or she should thank community for the chance for receiving the diploma. If graduates do not do this they are accused of ingratitude.

The issue of Limoncocha development is of great importance for community members, who have a vested interest in local issues (see image 2 above).



Image 3. **Community meeting on local authority elections**
(the Centre of Limoncocha, 17 December 2011)

The new policy of government is diminishing the traditional sense of ownership and communitarian spirit. There is a legalization of the land ownership, and people receive property deeds. This is in contrast to the communitarian culture, where a common feeling dominates that the land belongs to everybody. Formalizing the ownership and giving the land to an individual is a foreign custom dictated on the people of Limoncocha:

“Researcher: In another interview we did, someone said that in the future of Limoncocha there would be a lot of fights between families from the same community to get more land?

Interviewee: Of course, the population is growing 100% faster, the land is owned by the community so it's not owned just by one - it is owned by everybody, all of us have a little piece of land, but it is not designed just for one, since the land is global.” (interview 5, with the President of ASOKILC – Asociación Kichwa de Limoncocha).

We could call this process the **occidentalisation of ownership** of the indigenous people.¹¹
The opinion of government representative below presents another dimension of

¹¹ The process of occidentalisation probably has a broader scope. and it encompasses the everyday life customs, religious beliefs, work habits, resigning from use of the Kichwa language in numerous families, and so on.

communitarianism. It can be disturbing to the development process of the community because of the equality norm that is pervasive in the community:

“This is a serious problem of this community. They are not constant, they have a lot of funds, but for example the local authority cannot access this money because they don’t have capacity to formulate projects, to access them. We are going to organize a training for the leaders of the community on project development in order to access these funds. I think that this is important for the community to raise their level of education, they should get a professional degree. An important thing here is that the registry should be better prepared for the community development. For example, in business, four months ago there was a high economic activity, the reason was that one person was engaged in commerce and was managing the hotel "California". But some people were envious and had him removed from managing this hotel. And it is not the only case, so that’s why the community is not growing. And we think the solution is to educate the people about development issues (ethics, morals, values). We will give them some talks of leadership for tourism development.” (interview 4, with the representative of Environment Ministry)

The equality norm, which is the indicator of communitarianism, is stronger than real economic inequality. People used to treat themselves as equal individuals in every situation:

“Well, of course there are differences, we have an Institute that brings out professionals in teaching, they earn more money because they have a better job, and education, but all of us ended up being equal; we are all friends and we share the same outcomes, regardless of the economy.” (interview 16, with the director of primary school).

The members of the community expect to receive money for the protection of nature. If they stop exploitation of the forest or they stop fishing they expect to get some money to have another source to survive. They expect money from the government if they resign from the immediate profits. They expect some vindication for restrictions imposed by the government:

“Researcher: How is the nature conservation law applied by the government, when it’s easy to see that people still fish, even at night?

Interviewee: The conservation and fishing are worrying topics. Twenty years ago my grandfathers used to have 100 hectares of land, and I used to ask the conservationist which benefits he could have for taking care of this land for so long? Nowadays, there’s a problem, we try to maintain the nature but if we don’t receive any payment from the government in such a globalized world and a capitalistic country, how can I carry on this natural heritage, if I don’t receive anything for it? I don’t have a salary. Once I caught 10 fish, but just to share with my family. But there are people that make business on it, and this is where government should do something to help this people who have no jobs and also destroy the nature. The only thing they can do is to sit at the canoe and wait till the fish get trapped in the nets. The state should give employment to these people to prevent them from continuing fishing. Limoncocha is the only parish that still conserves the jungle. The Shuar territory is a Colons community, where it’s hard to find a piece of land with jungle. The Municipality promotes to maintain, preserve, take care of nature, but what would we receive for it? If I will not cut a tree, how much would I be paid for that? So, there is no compensation. Usually a woodcutter offers us an amount of money for each tree. If for 20 years I never have a payment for taking care of the trees, what is economically better for me? To sell my trees. But this activity is becoming more common, which is not good for nature and it should be stopped. This is a very worrying concern for the community.” (interview 6, with a member of the Community).

8. Cultural customs – protecting cultural diversity

Some cultural customs are still popular and some are in the process of disappearing. And some customs are changing, for example: eating some foods, drinking *chicha*, belief in

shamanism. Shamanism as a practice is disappearing, but the beliefs in shamanism, witchcraft and black magic remains very strong:

“Researcher: How many children do you have?

Interviewee: I have, with dead one, 14 in all.

R: Do all your children go to school?

I: All the men were graduated from the same college, but unfortunately one son died when he was 20 years old. He was graduated and passed away.

R: Why?

I: It was no disease. It was Christmas, he was working and got sick. His leg became bent and he started to come out. Taking him to the hospital brings nothing. I did medical tests and there was nothing. I believe the witchcraft seized him. He was calm, but there was nothing to help, he died.

It was 11 years ago.” (interview 12, with the inhabitant of Limoncocha, manager of the hotel).

For some people in Limoncocha it is very important to use the Kichwa language. According to the results of our survey, most people are bilingual. 108 respondents (89,3%) speak *Kichwa* at home, 100 also chose the answer *Spanish*. We decided to also ask about their children’s speaking habits. Thirty-nine (32,2%) declared that their children speak *Kichwa* willingly and 24 (19,8%), rather willingly. On the other hand 31 respondents (25,6%) pointed out that their children reluctantly, and five (4,1%) very reluctantly speak *Kichwa*.

The problem of the lessening popularity of the original language among Kichwa people in Ecuador was also mentioned by others researchers (Koturbasz, 2011: 38). Craftsmanship is also decreasing in Limoncocha. There was only one sculptor that has made some souvenirs to sell to tourists and workers of the petrol platforms. However, there was not a single souvenir shop in Limoncocha.

The art of craftsmanship is also vanishing in Napo Quichua, not far from Limoncocha in the same region. Ceramics used to be the main craft of Quichua people in the Napo river region (Piotrkowska, 2011: 22-28). However, no one makes ceramics in Limoncocha now.

According to the opinion of the experts, shamanism is considered to be a part of Kichwa culture. Seventy-two (59,5%) interviewees pointed out that people still believe in shamanism and visit a shaman if they have a need (77 answers, 63,6%). On the other hand 52 (43%) of respondents declared that they don’t not to visit shaman at all, and 23 (19%) only once. Only 6 (5%) admit to visiting a shaman many times, and 40 (33,1%) sometimes.¹²

Very important also is the transmission of knowledge about natural medicines to the children, so the cultural knowledge can endure.

Some shamans used to train the adepts in shamanism. What does a shaman do? The shamans can get real knowledge about the world (*yachay*). *Yachay* comes from the contact with nature.

¹² According to Polish anthropologist Aleksandra Wierucka (2011: 65- 66), maintaining the tradition of shamanism in the region of the Napo River (Ecuador, Sucumbíos) could be difficult. There are not enough pupils who want to follow the tradition of shamanism. To be effective, a shaman should have common background with people under the treatment.

The shamans have the knowledge (*yachay*), they can see something more than ordinary people in the surrounding environment. For example, if ordinary people look at the lagoon of Limoncocha, they see nothing more than water, while people with “*yachay*” can see cities, buildings in the lagoon etc. They can spend their some time traveling around this underwater world like creatures living under the water. A shaman can also cure people from many diseases or make witchcraft against them if somebody asks him to do it. Very helpful in achieving “*yachay*” is the drink “*yaje*” (a psychoactive drink prepared from some mixed plants in Ecuador). The ex-shaman that we interviewed expressed the opinion that not all the shamans are real ones. A real shaman must undergo a special training and be accepted by the animals from another world. The transformation from man to animal and in the opposite order is an example of the widely spread belief of shamanism. According to the ex-shaman, for six years he was going during the nights to the lagoon as an anaconda. He communicated with animals and was accepted by them. He travelled underwater, even to the ocean, where he was crowned as a real shaman. Animals populate the underwater world. They look like anacondas to outsiders. There are cities, airplanes, cars; everything is just like in human world. The only way to get to the lagoon to be called by the anacondas living there. Men are called by female anacondas and woman by male anacondas. This explicitly shows that the attitude to nature is obviously rooted in the culture. Shamanism seems to be a very important “philosophical” base of the culture of indigenous people and their relations to nature:

“Interviewee: Three or two years ago an Australian girl arrived here, she said she was practicing to become a shaman.

Researcher: From Australia?

I: Yes, in all countries these powers are given, they are asking for energy, so the girl arrived here, she came to me because I have the big tree, the powerful, so she slept in the tree two nights to get its power

R: In the tree?

I: Yeah, alone, and then she told me that she wanted to get into the water, at midnight, she wanted to get into it to get its energy, but I told her that I was afraid because caimans are there at night, so I said no, but she said to me that she wanted to get into the water, she wanted the energy from the lagoon, so she insisted a lot, and I said ok, so I came with her to the middle of the lagoon. When we were there she took off her clothes, but I told her just 5 minutes, and she said that she wanted to be in the water about 15 minutes, but I said her that I was afraid for the caimans, so, she was walking around, and at the end I took her to her house.

R: So what happened? Did she get into the water?

I: No

R: Why?

I: Because you can get into yourself.

R: Do you need a kind of invitation?

I: Boy anacondas invite girls, and girl anacondas invite boys, so the girls flirt with boys, when they do that you can get into, for that reason she could not enter, even you want, if an anaconda did not flirt with you, you cannot get into the water.

R: You need to be called.

I: I told this to the girl, but she wanted to get into the water, but if no body calls you, you cannot get into the lagoon

R: so, why do you think the girl anacondas called you?

I: Because I like them, it's like when a boy or a girl like someone, so this person flirts with the other. It is the same way in this world, when an animal likes someone, it is very similar, they flirt with you.” (interview 19, with the ex-shaman).

The beliefs in spirits and dreams seem to be still strong among Limoncochans. The inhabitants predict the future (58,7%) from dreams, especially before going to hunt. They believe also in spirits that can hunt a person walking in the jungle. Even the Catholic *mestizos* ('colons'; the inhabitants of Ecuador that are descendants of the Spanish colonizers and indigenous people of Ecuador) were of the opinion that spirits of the jungle hunted some people from the Quito that came to Limoncocha.

Keeping the customs of the wedding ceremony is very important for the community. The ceremony is associated with inviting the whole family and most of the community to the *fiesta*. All of them bring presents. Traditionally the presents were food, especially from the wild animals: turtles, birds, fish, even caimans, etc. Nowadays these kinds of presents have changed, people bring rather livestock, if any. Presents are also bought in the shops and can be as follows: TV set, washing machine, utensils for the kitchen, etc. Also, the custom of arranged marriages has changed. A long time ago parents arranged the marriages, now the young people can decide about choosing partners by themselves.

Many Limoncochans want to protect these traditional customs, however some of them prefer to choose other customs that came to the village with the colons, especially as concerns the Spanish language and the new style of consumption that has a Western flavor (*mestizos* that came with oil companies and missionaries).

Cultural customs are also connected with the ways of getting food. The two traditional ways are fishing and hunting. Today it is difficult to maintain these traditions because of the legal limitations introduced in the surrounding of the lagoon. Officially fishing in the lagoon is prohibited, as is hunting for animals in the Reserve. So the one of the main cultural customs is legally not possible to maintain.

However, for the representative of the Ministry of Environment it is very important to keep the community working together for the Reserve. A census of the birds is planned. According to the representative, the community should be included in it can organized a *minga* directed toward counting birds:

“Researcher: What is the role of the Community in conservation?

Interviewee: It is really important, the community is in charge of leading the management of the reserve, if we don't sensitize the community and if we don't include them in the management, or let them to participate, I think the objectives of conservation will not be able to bring good results. In the Christmas season we wanted to include the community in counting the migratory birds in the reserve, counting that began in January. And the community is really important in this. What I refer to the counting of migratory birds, it means that the birds in the lagoon are indicators of habitat status. Then it

involves the community as a kind of *Minga* to do it, and also as a tourist attraction to come on these dates to make the bird count. Everyone will wake up at 6 am to record the birds they find. We should divide the area into several areas following a methodology already provided. There is a small study of birds and with this you can know the state of conservation for the long term, that is, next year, with the support of international organizations of bird conservation.” (interview 4, with the representative of the Environment Ministry serving as Reserve manager).

Some of the experts express local patriotic attitudes concerning maintenance of the cultural customs and heritage, which gives them a sense of safety. To these people, the bad things come from outside:

Interviewee: “...and they [outsiders] start to damage our culture, our daughters, they start to damage us totally

Researcher: So you want to stay Kichwas?

I: That's what we want, to strengthen it [Kichwa culture]. I have lived here 43 years in excellent conditions, I walk without any problem [referring to safety]. When you [SEK people] come here, nothing happens. We all need that peace, that harmony. I hope that after 10 years it will be the same situation. So thanks for visiting us my friends, feel welcome in our primary school.” (interview 17, with a teacher from primary school).

Table 9. Interviewees’ nationality (in numbers)

“What is your nationality?”	The number of people who declare a given nationality
Kichwa	100
Ecuadorian	10
Shuar	4
Limoncocha	2
Yamanunca	1
Indigenous	1
Hispano	1
No data	3

Source: survey results

The inhabitants generally say that they do not celebrate the official national festivals, such as February 12th (Anniversary of the Discovery of the Amazon River), May 24th (Battle of Pichincha). They prefer to celebrate their own events, for example weddings. Even if there are no special Kichwa festivals it does not mean that the culture is not cultivated. The official and national calendar of the holidays seems to be extraneous to them, and the concentration on the present seems dominant. The most important events are everyday life events connected with the family and community life. From the Western perspective, wedding ceremonies would not be seen as national–cultural festivities. The questions asked by researchers about the national customs and festivals could be misleading if we impose our cognitive perspectives and linear

temporal scheme of the history and turning points in history on other cultures. Culture can last without such history. Omnipotent presence can be another kind of “history”.

Colonizers made the situation complicated for Kichwa, especially in nearby villages such as Pompeya. According to one interviewee, Kichwas possess mixed feelings toward their own culture (although according to the survey they want to preserve it). If this is true, a fundamental question arises: **How is sustainable development and protection of cultural diversity possible if the indigenous people do not fully support their own culture?**

Destroying the indigenous cultural needs and customs is very advanced in some villages around Limoncocha (72,7% possess a TV set). The workers of the CICAME (Cultural and Religious Center in Pompeya Village) are very dedicated to protect, save and revitalize the culture of the indigenous people. However, **a large paradox of cultural diversity protection exists** if ‘strangers’ must persuade the indigenous population to save its culture. Moreover, these strangers are generally a part of the colonization system that took part in destroying the original culture. Twenty-three percent of respondents (28 answers) declared that the traditional customs are ‘rather’ or ‘definitely’ not maintained by Limoncochans.

Sometimes the indigenous people do not want to identify with their tribe; in the census they identified themselves as ‘mestizos’ or farmers/colons. More than ¼ (25,6%) of our interviewees work for oil company, and 47,9% claimed that agriculture was the main income in their household. However, in answer to the open question about their nationality, they generally called themselves *Kichwa* (see Table 8), suggesting that ethnic identification still remains strong.

The inhabitants consider that they have not lost their cultural and national identity. They are proud of it and want to keep it, and not leave the village in the future (80,2%):

“The population of Limoncocha is struggling to generate a [better] economy. We don’t want our village to be part of Lago Agrio, El Puyo, El Tena or El Coca, because they were always indigenous like Limoncocha. But they lost their culture. We don’t want people to leave Limoncocha, we want to keep indigenous people to maintain our culture. We just need resources to improve the village infrastructure.” (interview 6, with the Community member).

9. Culture – spiritual life, beliefs and religion.

Limoncochans are Protestants. They were converted to Protestantism in the seventies and eighties of the 20th century by the missionaries from Instituto Linguistico de Verano. The Institute played a very important role in the creation of the Limoncochans’ identity and the residents of Limoncocha still have very positive memories of it, as has been mentioned. They

consider the Institute to have been an agent of positive changes and an important factor in the development of the community, created from scratch in the middle of the jungle. According to the Protestant priest residing in the parish of Limoncocha, **times were better for Limoncocha when the Institute was present.** When the Institute left, the social disorganization of the community began. People fell under the influence of the oil companies and of the foreigners who came with them. According to the priest, they started drinking beer, opening bars instead of traditional small shops with other goods to sell. The drinking of alcohol started, and according to the opinion of other interviewees it is the main social problem in Limoncocha today. However, it should be mentioned that we generally did not encounter drunken people on the streets.

Limoncochans currently have their own pastor and the Protestant parish with a church. The inhabitants are very dedicated and attached to their faith. The Protestant church is a very important factor in keeping the communitarian spirit. The inhabitants support the church and its pastor. They always respond to his request to help the community or work for the Protestant shrine. They willingly participate in the celebrations, joint singing and praying etc. The inhabitants of Limoncocha rejected the Catholic priests that came to the village to teach them. The Catholics, fearing the expansion of Protestantism among the Catholics and the Catholic Church, decided to install a Catholic mission in Pompeya, not far from Limococha. It must be kept in mind that The Instituto Linguistico de Verano operated in the region in the 1950s. There is an unwritten social norm that other religions cannot enter the village. Another informal norm is that the members of the Parish choose and change their pastor every two years.

The inhabitants of Limoncocha also believe in black magic, as was pointed out previously. Some of the illnesses of the inhabitants are ascribed to witchcraft, and some inhabitants visit the shamans to get help with their health and lives. Despite the fact that the role of shamanism is significantly smaller than thirty years ago, there are still strong beliefs in the fact that dreams help to predict the future (58,7%). Dreams are especially interpreted prior to a hunt. According to some stories, there is a bird called *madre luna* that comes to the households to announce an incoming death.

There is also a belief in transforming humans into animals and animals into humans. Some other combinations are also possible. Limoncochans believe in half-human and half-animal creatures, for example *yachutigre*, which is half tiger and half man.

Conclusions

The residents of Limoncocha want to live in their village, not leave it. They declare that they want to keep their culture (language, beliefs, religion and customs) and also protect the nature that gives them and can give them resources for living and be the basis for their identity. The natural environment is a very important part of community life. Limoncocha inhabitants perceive their future as linked with the village and use of the surrounding environment in a sustainable fashion and developing the community in a sustainable way.

Nonetheless, they need jobs and incomes to protect the integrity of their community. They believe that tourism is the future for the village, but they still do not have sufficient skills and training to compete with professional tourist agencies and hotels.

Limoncocha is a village established by the Americans who landed on the lagoon in a very picturesque way. The beginnings were very hard for newcomers, who found only wild jungle with plenty of dangerous animals. Americans taught the Kichwa people crafts and trades. They also become their supervisors and patrons, and instilled Protestantism in their religious practices. Limoncochans longed for the Americans when the *Instituto Lingüístico de Verano* was expelled from Ecuador. Thus the village has an extraordinary and extremely interesting history, which could be both the object of identity crystallization for the inhabitants and as well as a tourist attraction for foreigners, but inhabitants seem to be either uninterested in using their history in this way, or even unaware of this potentiality.

Theoretically speaking, taking advantage of the absolutely unique history of Limoncocha is possible in tourism marketing. This would seem especially to be the case while there are still original village residents are still alive and accessible, when people still remember the airplanes landing on the lagoon, and when there are still artifacts left by the missionaries from SIL. But Limoncocha inhabitants are not undertaking any actions to preserve the memory of Limoncocha from 60s and 70s. It seems they are not going to use this very peculiar and interesting collective story as a part of the Limoncocha tales, even though it could combine several purposes: increasing the income of community members, inserting interesting and authentic events into Limoncocha's history, and create a living memory which could be both cultural and a tourist attraction.

On the other hand, taking into account SIL's ambiguous role in the conservation of indigenous culture, perhaps to some extent cherishing the memory of SIL stands in opposition to the maintenance of deeper connections with their own roots in Kichwa culture, which still constitutes the core of their identity construction.

The Limoncochans do not deny their sense of national identity; on the contrary they claim to be proud of it. But they still want to protect their indigenous identity and develop their own

community as Kichwas in the globalizing world. The problem is how to resist the modernization process.

Modernization is always connected with the economic stratification of communities and transformation of the sources of income from agriculture or hunting to industrial production and merchandizing, as happened in the Otavalo community (Ecuador) with indigenous people. The modernization process also changes life styles, relations between men and woman, and multilingual abilities become commonplace (Śniadecka-Kotarska, 1997: 22-27).

The Kichwa want to keep their language and cultural customs. Some of them are associated with traditional way of obtaining food, i.e. hunting and fishing. These two kinds of activities unfortunately impinge on natural resources that are protected by law. This is the source of tensions between the official representatives, defending the regulations created by national legislature, and members of the Limoncocha communities, who still see themselves as owners of the land.

The communitarian spirit remains pervasive among Limoncochans. People want to decide about their life and village collectively, they want to work and play together, earn the same amount of money, and share together the gifts and services received from the state and petroleum companies. Thus all the changes and new regulations should be consulted with the whole community. The state regulations should take into consideration the traditional and communitarian view on land ownership, and also the community view on the ownership of the natural resources in the Reserve. Without taking into consideration the communitarian spirit of Limoncocha it will be difficult to introduce any changes in the mentality of its inhabitants or their daily practices. Also, the material infrastructure of the village and entrepreneurial activities depend on the view of community as a meaningful and fundamental entity.

Otherwise, what's left for the agents (government and external businesses) is to change the culture, which will mean a total change of the customs and worldviews of Limoncochans and forced adaptation to the dominant culture. It seems that the general culture of Ecuador is different than the culture of the indigenous Kichwa in Sucumbíos, where **the norm of equality** is a very important value.

In Ecuador people treat inequalities amongst people as simply a fact of life.¹³ But what may be true with respect to the Ecuadorian society as a whole may not be true of the small

¹³ The research of Geert Hofstede (1993, 1997) shows that in the whole of Ecuador, inequality is readily accepted: "At 78 (points of Power Distance Index) Ecuador sits in the higher rankings of PDI – i.e. a society that believes that inequalities amongst people are simply a fact of life. This inequality is accepted in all layers of

community. The indigenous people in Limoncocha prefer rather the equality norm and do not accept the socio-economic differences. Almost half of interviewees (46,3%) expressed the opinion that (definitely or ‘rather’) “people should have an equal amount of money”. In this aspect there could be a cultural discrepancy and possible grounds for conflict. If the oil company wants to reward individual inhabitants of the community, it could be negatively perceived by the others.

The communitarian spirit is connected with the **collectivistic attitudes** (playing group sports – see Table 8), taking part in *mingas* – (75,2% participation in every *minga*, and 22,3% in some *mingas*). The Limonochans agree on this point with the pervading Ecuadorian culture, which is highly collectivistic (see: Hofstede 1997).¹⁴

Being together, leading a community life, seeking equal treatment and wealth for all the members of community – when no one can exceed the limits or cross the standards - might have a consequence of arresting or delaying their own development. If one presumes the Limonochans’ own ineffectiveness in leverage, fund gaining and improvement projects, it becomes easy to understand their demanding attitude, expressed as follows: “We need some professional external support; someone should come and support us; someone should teach us how to solve our problems” (see Table 2). This shows the Limonochans’ awareness of own limitations in the clash with the government and ministerial orders.

There is a palpable and large tension between the two entities: the Kichwa community and the Ecuadorian state. These are two clashing forces: internal community rules and customs vs. and external law regulations. Limoncocha people, from the very beginning, have experienced these two realities.

However, the common collectivistic attitudes can connect the two nationalities: Kichwa and Ecuadorian. Cooperative efforts occur often in both societies. Cooperation between the

society, and often linked to race and social class. People of European extraction often feel themselves as “superior” to those of local Indian extraction, and this is largely accepted by society as a whole. The military, as power holders, are also considered an elite group *per se*. They play an important role in political life. No political leader in Ecuador will get very far without their support. ‘Coups d’etat’ have been frequent throughout Ecuador’s history, reflecting this aspect.” (G. Hofstede, <http://geert-hofstede.com/ecuador.html>, obtained 26.02.2012)

¹⁴ “On a scale of 8 (of Individualism Index) Ecuador is among the lowest in individualistic scores; in other words, it lies amongst the most collectivistic cultures in the world, surpassed only by Guatemala... Relationships are prioritized over tasks and groups can quickly enlarge their numbers. This may result in a task being completed quickly through cooperative effort, or it may be abandoned (if that is the opinion of the group). Of course, this is also linked to Power Distance Index, so power holders determine the outcome. Ecuadorians can show a lot of solidarity towards members of their in-groups. Those perceived as “outsiders” can easily be excluded or considered as “enemies”; foreigners can easily be found in that position, unless they cultivate relationships and gain access to in-groups. The preferred communication style is context-rich, so people will often speak profusely and write in an elaborate fashion.” (G. Hofstede, <http://geert-hofstede.com/ecuador.html>, obtained 26.02.2012; see also Hofstede, 1997).

Kichwas and the Ecuadorian state will require much effort and frequent contacts between the two groups. Mutual acceptance is not easy. It is necessary to live and be together with Limoncochans, to get to know their situation, life circumstances, and culture in order to communicate and understand each other's point of view. So introducing external institutions (governmental) or regulations could be difficult if the people who introduce them are not members of the community or involved in its group relations.

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