Chapter 6 summary

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This chapter covers the downfall of the mainstream ecodependant sector and the popularization of the lesser known ecoresistant sector. The ecoresistant groups were the smaller and independently funded groups that had more freedom in terms of agenda. They were not directed on what to do at the whim of a donator thousands of miles away. The downfall of ecodependants first began in the early 2000s when 9/11 occurred along with dollarization. Dollarization being the process of phasing out the Ecuadorian currency for U.S. dollars. This all at once caused a sharp decline in funding for ecodepndant groups. Another reason was the creation of a pipeline that threatened the biodiversity and environmental health of Ecuador. The pipeline had started to grow and was being built through a national park and that money made from petroleum was used to pay park rangers and fund environmental projects. This created a relationship that ensured business for oil would continue while also satisfying some of the proponents of environmentalism. One major downfall during the OCP pipeline was the lack of unification between environmental groups. Everyone just sat around and watched as the pipeline grew. It wasn’t until three years later and after many indigenous groups marched and protested that the pipeline was withdrawn. Essentially, the locals and smaller ecoresistant groups were left to fight for their environment. Ecodependant groups tried to hang on and survive but many were forced to shut down due to lack of outside funding. Others that remained would shift their agendas at the will of their international donors in order to keep funding. This created a lack of independence in what environmental projects were to be done. These groups had lost nearly all control over what impact they had. Other groups had a more positive way of handling the decline; they would for instance, manage the waste of cities in return for a sum of money. This kept the cities clean and provided the groups with money.

It was at this time in Ecuador that people were starting to question whether or not there was an environmental movement at all. Many believed that there were because of the many different groups working to better the environment, but other did not see this. Many believed that the lack of a common agenda and the lack of teamwork meant that there was not really a movement at all. At this time the real environmentalist leading the movement were not the large internationally known groups, but the locals and small groups that actually fought and put forth the effort to stop pipelines and work together to protect their ecosystems. The grassroots organizations were the ones getting things done, resisting petroleum production and economic growth over environmental protection.

As Lewis writes about how the citizens and local groups were the ones to really have an impact and protest mining; it reminds of what goes on here in America. I believe that here in the U.S. we need to come together as citizens and fight for the health of not only our local areas but for the planet as well. Reading about Ecuador’s environmental revolutions inspires me to believe that we need our own here in the U.S. Certainly, it seems that people are environmentally aware more than ever in the U.S. but I believe we may need a more urgent push for rules and regulations that would shift our paradigm towards a more sustainable way of living. As one the leading countries in the world, I believe that we would be able to set a great example for many other parts of the world.

It seems that every few months a new report comes out saying that there will be drastic environmental disasters coming sooner in the future. Even if these predictions are off by fifty or one hundred years, I believe we need more politicians and voters on board with making drastic societal changes in order to avoid furthering our country’s and planet’s environmental issues. We can look at Ecuador and how their many groups that failed to work together was not the most successful and learn from that. We can also look to Ecuador and see how a grassroots, ecoresistant method of pushing for ecological synthesis may be the way to successfully change what is now the norm.