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**TOURISM IN THE ECUADORIAN AMAZON:
POLITICAL ECOLOGY, CULTURAL COMMONS,
AND EMIC/ETIC UNDERSTANDINGS**

A Thesis in
Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management

by
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ABSTRACT

Tourism is among the largest global market forces driving social and environmental change in the Anthropocene. The particular set of challenges faced by indigenous and rural communities living among the most biodiverse areas of the planet prompts timely inquiry into the ways in which individuals and communities integrate into the global tourism market as an alternative livelihood strategy to extractive activities. A political-ecological approach to such research considers the ways that interwoven global discourses advance particular approaches to tourism at the local level. Common-pool resource theory, on the other hand, is useful in categorizing sustainable use and management of cultural and knowledge resources related to tourism. This particular case study uses ethnographic research gathered in and around the rural Amazonian town of Misahuallí, Ecuador to answer the following question: how can tourism lead to positive social and economic outcomes for indigenous and rural communities? With a consideration for both the emic and etic research paradigms, two theoretical frameworks were applied to the gathered corpus of qualitative text in order to understand both the utility of Tsing's notion of friction for identifying tourism outcomes, and the usefulness of a common pool resource framework for understanding use and management of cultural resources. Key findings indicate that tourism can influence positive outcomes including autonomous management of cultural resources, social empowerment of women, diversification of job skills, and economic empowerment. This work will be of interest to scholars working in the areas of political ecology, applied cultural anthropology, and community development.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous and rural communities living in Earth's most biodiverse landscapes face a particular set of challenges as global markets penetrate into their spheres of activity. Traditional activities, cultural practices, and livelihoods of such communities can become sidelined as new economic opportunities emerge on the global stage, many of which occur within environmentally-unsound industries such as oil drilling, logging, large-scale fishing, and monocropping (Sawyer, 2004). Although decisions to enter into these new economic opportunities are often autonomous, unforeseen and unprecedented outcomes can include loss of or damage to diverse natural resources upon which indigenous and rural communities rely, loss of traditional activities and associated traditional or locally based knowledge, and loss of political, social, and economic autonomy (Bebbington, 2011; Smith, 2014).

Tourism is among the largest global market forces currently driving social and environmental change. At present, one in eleven jobs on the planet are within the travel and tourism industry (UNWTO, 2015), with projections of notable growth over the next 10 years (WTTC, 2017). While there have long been debates over tourism's ability to achieve associated conservation and development objectives (e.g. Budowski, 1976; deKadt, 1979; Boo, 1990; Kiss, 2004; Higham, 2007; Weaver & Lawton, 2007), tourism is a market-based activity sometimes pursued by indigenous and rural communities as a sustainable alternative to often unsustainable extractive activities spearheaded by multinational corporations (Smith, 2014; Marcinek & Hunt, 2015).

Given that tourism is one of the most transformative industries on the planet, it "demands a much greater degree of theoretical and empirical interrogation than it is given at present"

(Duffy, 2016, p. xvi). The particular set of challenges faced by indigenous and rural communities living in the most biodiverse areas of the planet prompts pertinent research questions related to integration of these communities into the global tourism market; how can tourism lead to positive social and economic outcomes for indigenous and rural communities? Of particular interest are those communities *otherwise* forced to enter into unsustainable livelihood strategies within extractive industries. Amazonian Ecuador provides a setting for research wherein local communities seek out cultural and nature-based tourism as an alternative livelihood strategy. With the boom in oil surveying and extraction beginning in the 1970s, deforestation and contamination have caused negative environmental impacts throughout this ecologically diverse part of the planet (Ceballos & Elrich, 2006; Finer, Moncel, & Jenkins, 2010). Indigenous communities, which comprise much of the Amazonian population, along with non-indigenous native residents have likewise faced unfulfilled promises from oil companies, dried up croplands, contaminated water, and associated health consequences as petroleum development continues in the 21st century (Sawyer, 2004; Smith, 2014).

Livelihood strategies alternative to the petroleum industry are necessary for indigenous and non-indigenous rural Amazonian communities in Ecuador to sustain health, prosperity, and culture into the future. Tourism is one such strategy pursued by communities in the Napo Province of the Ecuadorian Amazon, where over half (56.8%) of the 100,000 residents still self-identify as *indigena* (INEC, 2017). Common livelihood strategies across these communities include wage labor for petroleum companies, cash cropping, handicraft sales, cattle, timber, hunting, and fishing (Lu & Bilsborrow, 2011). While tourism is currently a minor economic development activity for the region, the percentage of indigenous, non-indigenous native, and foreign populations working in tourism is growing in recent years (Doughty, Lu, & Sorensen,

2010), partly because some types of tourism are seen as having the potential for reconciliation between competing agendas of global market development, ecological conservation, and cultural survival (Davidov, 2013).

This particular case study uses ethnographic research gathered over two field seasons in and around the rural Amazonian town of Misahuallí. Located 22 kilometers from Tena, Napo's provincial capital, this outpost serves as a jumping off point for national and international tourists interested in both eco and cultural-based tourism activities. Two theoretical frameworks will be applied to the gathered corpus of qualitative text in order to gather a more complete understanding of tourism, conservation, development, and culture in Amazonian Ecuador.

A political-ecological approach considers the ways that interwoven global discourses, here related to biodiversity conservation and community development, are encountered, contested, and leveraged to advance particular approaches to tourism at the local level. This approach reveals juxtaposed structures and discourses throughout the country of Ecuador, and two instances in which such juxtapositions lead to positive social and economic outcomes for indigenous communities.

Common-pool resource theory, on the other hand, provides a framework useful for categorizing sustainable use and management of resources related to indigenous tourism, particularly the local cultural and knowledge resources used by providers and taken in by visitors. This framework reveals that cultural and knowledge resources align with characteristics of common pool resources, and therefore require locally tailored management regimes, which, at present, are lacking in their ability to sustain this resource upon which local tourism relies into the future.

Emic and Etic Understandings

In keeping with the anthropological tradition, this thesis will maintain a consideration for both the emic and etic research paradigms, that is, emphasizing both informant and observer viewpoints throughout (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011). The term “emic” represents an approach to research that is culturally specific, while “etic” is a comparative approach, treating all cultures (or a selected group of them) at one time (Pike, 1954). There exists a tendency among cultural researchers to dismiss insights from the other perspective based on perceived conceptual or methodological weaknesses (Martin & Frost, 1998). Likewise, arguments in favor of the “conceptual integrity” of the two approaches exist as justification for maintained separation (Martin, 1992, p. 187). Most important, though, is Pike’s (1954, p. 41) cautionary statement against the dichotomy of the emic and etic perspectives,

Through the etic ‘lens’ the analyst views the data in tacit reference to a perspective oriented to all comparable events, of all peoples, of all parts of the earth; through the other lens, the emic one, he views the same events, at the same time, in the same context, in reference to a perspective oriented to the particular function of those particular events in that particular culture, as it and it alone is structures. The result is a kind of ‘tri-dimensional understanding’ of human behavior instead of a ‘flat’ etic one.

In an effort to avoid a “flat” understanding of the presented dataset, this thesis will reveal the author’s efforts to exist simultaneously as an academic through the use of etic theoretical frameworks and ethnographic methods, *and* as a participant observer through emic quotes directly from informants and the detailing of personal experiences. Such a consideration will reveal a more nuanced, “tri-dimensional” understanding of tourism, culture, politics, and knowledge throughout Misahuallí, Ecuador.

Role of the Researcher

“Participant observer” is a crucial role played by any individual working toward a combined emic/etic approach to research, and includes reacting to and interacting with others in events and situations that unfold (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011). This section serves to describe my role as an individual and as a researcher while in the field in order to illustrate my end of interactions yielding data provided throughout this thesis.

As an individual, my physical appearance in the central Ecuadorian Amazon stands out and often inspires the term *gringa*, or white American woman. Connotations that occur alongside this term are sometimes negative and often relate to cultural incompetence. Each interaction with a new individual or future informant in the field prompted an effort on my part to overcome stereotypes of *gringas*. Spanish fluency, alongside a few basic words and sentences in the native Kichwa language, led to a solid sense of rapport among Misahuallí, especially through two separate visits to this small town over the course of four years. On the other hand, when participating in local tourism activities, my appearance worked to my advantage as I tried to garner an “authentic” tourist experience untethered by academic predispositions. Aside from traditional tourist activities, which are often attended by groups of *gringos* in this area of the Amazon, it was otherwise difficult for me to blend in and maintain a low profile. As my time in the field drew on, however, my existence in the town center became more routine and allowed for basic day-to-day interactions, very valuable to a complete picture of the town, to flourish.

As a researcher, it was necessary to be upfront about the purpose of my interview questions and presence in Misahuallí. The close proximity of the Ministry of Tourism’s office in Tena lead many to believe that I worked for the national government. Valuable questions related to “off the books” practices including unlicensed guide hiring or under-the-table business

transactions were often met with skepticism. Skillful navigation of such conversations allowed me to (justifiably) separate myself from any government inquiry and achieve openness in responses. Likewise, questions related to ancestral or cultural knowledge were not always received with complete transparency. It is difficult to overcome a recorder, a notebook, and a scribbling pencil while trying to maintain an informative and natural back-and-forth within the context of an interview. However my efforts to remain friendly, open, and aware of my existence as a “guest” in Misahuallí (Smith, 1989) allowed for the development formative and informative experiences in the field.

Structure of the Thesis

The following chapter reviews literature to provides two etic, theoretical frameworks. A third chapter outlines the methods employed in this field research. A fourth chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research findings that simultaneously accounts for the emic perspectives of local indigenous residents and expatriates involved in the tourism industry as well as the relevant etic, theoretical content that brings the most insight to these ethnographic data. This chapter is divided into two sections that correspond to the two distinct theoretically informed analyses here: the political ecology of tourism and the role of common pool resource theory to the understanding of tourism. Finally, the fifth chapter provides a conclusion and summary of the overall thesis.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews relevant literature for framing two separate analyses of the ethnographic dataset discussed in subsequent chapters. The outlining of academic theory herein represents the etic component of this thesis. The first section of the Literature Review introduces general structural and discursive approaches to political ecology theory, including a review of the foundational literature on the political ecology of tourism. In this section, an important nod is given to Tsing's (2005) writing on encounters of friction among global markets, which will later be grounded in the Ecuadorian context. The second section of this chapter outlines common pool resource theory. After an introduction to the specific characteristics of common pool natural resources, literature relating to non-natural (i.e. cultural) resource use and management is provided. This portion of the literature review also integrates common pool resource theory with writings on traditional knowledge (TK) theory in the context of tourism, specifically as related to rural or indigenous communities. The third and final section of this chapter separately outlines research questions of two interpretations of the dataset.

Part I: Political Ecology and Tourism

Dimensions of Political Ecology

Political ecology “involves a clarification of the impact of unequal power relations on the nature and direction of human-environment interactions in the Third World” (Bryant, 1997, p. 8). Brosius (1999) suggests two main approaches to political ecology. Integrating elements of human ecology and political economy, a “structuralist” approach to political ecology first emerged from the cultural ecology writings of Wolf (e.g., 1972) and later came of age with the

publication of Blaikie and Brookfield's (1987) book *Land Degradation and Society*. This hallmark book critiqued the blame levied on developing nations by asserting that environmental problems in the "Third World" are not a simply result of policy failures in less-developed countries, "but rather are a manifestation of broader political and economic forces associated notably with the spread of capitalism" (Bryant, 1997, p. 8). This structuralist approach emphasizes the persistence of poverty resulting from exhaustion of natural resources (Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987; Painter & Durham, 1995). Writings on "structural political ecology situated environmental change and resource conflicts in political and economic contexts with multi-scalar dimensions, ranging from the local to the global, and emphasized the historical processes that influence environmental change" (Campbell, Gray, & Meletis, 2008, p. 202). Accounting for such global to local dimensions, as well as the temporal background, is thus key to outlining the political ecology of tourism in a given context.

Complementing the structural approach, a post-structural (Foucault, 1980), discursive perspective emerged that pinpoints discourse as a means of legitimizing certain forms of development to the expense of others (Brosius, 1999; Campbell et al., 2008). Poststructuralist or discursive political ecologists thus focus on ways that the use of particular language and symbols privileges and empowers certain viewpoints, institutions, and forms of development over others. This perspective is perhaps best embodied in the writings of Escobar (1996, 1999) and the essays in *Liberation Ecologies* (Peet & Watts, 1996). Scholars working in this vein seek to "dethrone 'hegemonic' discourses – those stories that hold a lock on the imaginations of the public, decision-makers, planners, and scientists – so that other possibilities and realities are made possible" (Robbins, 2012, p. 70). In the Ecuadorian Amazon, both structural and discursive dimensions of political ecology are critical to unlocking the emic perspectives that local

government officials, tour operators, lodge owners, tourism employees, and other local residents hold about tourism's contributions the region's conservation and development challenges.

Political Ecology and Tourism

Stonich (1998) first brought the political ecology perspective to bear on tourism, focusing on visitation to the Bay Islands of Honduras. Adopting a structuralist perspective, Stonich (1998; 2000) demonstrated how locals have little influence on decisions related to the nature of tourism development in their own communities and how little improvement in quality of life resulted from their participation in tourism, except among previously wealthy elites. Campbell (2007) drew similar conclusions in her exploration of the conservation and tourism interface in rural Costa Rica, and additional descriptions of local resident exclusion from tourism-related decision-making have been put forth through research in Mexico (Young, 1999), Belize (Belsky, 1999), and in numerous tropical islands contexts (Gössling, 2003). Some political ecologists have focused their critiques on a particular form of tourism—ecotourism—as a neoliberal, market-based strategy that provides privileged access to biodiverse environments for affluent tourists while doing little to address the structural inequalities that maintain poverty for those residing near tropical biodiversity (e.g. Duffy, 2002; 2008; Brockington, Duffy, & Igoe, 2008; Hunt, 2011; Fletcher, 2012; Fletcher & Neves, 2012; Büsher & Davidov, 2015). Whether addressing tourism or ecotourism, an over-arching conclusion across these studies is that pre-existing tensions over structural inequalities in access to resources are frequently exacerbated by international tourism visitation to rural biodiverse areas of the lesser developed world.

Focusing more on the language, symbols, and imaginaries associated with tourism, other scholars describe an ecotourism “bubble” (Carrier & MacLeod, 2005) that places priority on

Western cultural and environmental values, practices, and worldviews (West & Carrier, 2004; Vivanco, 2007; Davidov, 2013). Such political ecology writings highlight the ways that discourse can enforce political power dynamics, promote particular conservation and development agendas, and prioritize particular scales at which tourism-related governance occurs. Such findings have been supported by numerous examples in recent collections on the political ecology of tourism (e.g. Mostafanezhad, Norum, Shelton, & Thompson-Carr, 2016; Nepal & Saarinan, 2016). Yet the global tourism industry continues to grow in spite of the ongoing scholarly critique. Tourism continues to receive investment and policy support through entities such as the World Bank (World Bank Group, 2015), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID, 2015), the International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 2017), all of which promote tourism as a joint conservation and development tool. More broadly, in 2017 the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is overseeing the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, an agenda and associated discourse that unquestionably characterizes tourism as a policy tool for promoting social and environmental wellbeing across the globe. Political ecology has clear value for framing an analysis of the ways that these abstract global discourses manifest in local realities.

Friction

Tourism is an activity that by its very nature is based on encounters between vastly different cultures, classes, and value systems. Effective ways of characterizing such global encounters is needed. To this end, the work of Tsing (2005) can provide a contribution to the political ecology of tourism. Responding to the idealized notion that in a globalized world, transnational flows of wealth, power, and governance should proceed unencumbered or without

friction, Tsing (2005) reclaims the idea of friction to describe those places of encounter where such flows come into contact and are often contested. The concept of friction recognizes the ways that local histories and environments collide with the recent arrivals of globalized structures and discourses. Tsing's (2005) ethnographic analysis of East Kalimantan, Indonesia, outlines the ways that international capital and global interconnectivity manifest for local people and forests, how global connections alter traditional livelihood practices, and how external structures and discourses are both locally contested and occasionally leveraged into new ways of being by local populations.

The notion of friction is thus particularly useful for describing both the structural and discursive intersections between newly emerging global phenomenon and long-standing local cultural and environmental practices. Despite obvious potential, the concept of friction has yet to receive attention among scholars of tourism. As an industry that accounts for 9% of global GDP, 6% of global trade, and one in every eleven jobs on the planet (UNWTO, 2015), tourism is the epitome of a globally interconnected activity. Thus, while tourism merits more attention from political ecologists (Mostafanezhad, Norum, Shelton, & Thompson-Carr, 2016), the political ecology of tourism also merits further attention to the frictions that result from tourism's global interconnectivity, to the challenges this presents for local communities, and to the ways that local residents leverage opportunities provided by tourism-related friction.

Part II: Traditional Knowledge and Tourism

In an effort to understand human-resource interaction, Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker (1994) outline four goods sharing two important attributes—the difficulty of excluding others from benefiting from the good and the subtractability of the benefits consumed by one individual

from those available to others. Private market goods, public non-market goods, toll (or club) goods, and common pool goods all exhibit varying levels of excludability and subtractability. The authors' focus on common pool resources in particular is a testament to the wide diversity of such resources in existence, and the challenge presented by understanding human behavior among them.

Common Pool Resources

Hardin's (1968) seminal writing on the "tragedy of the commons" explained the inevitable misery to be suffered by individuals who do not realize that the finite amount of "world" available to them is able to support only a finite population (p. 1243). Hardin famously illustrated his point using the example of an open pasture: each herdsman adds an animal to his herd in a rational decision to maximize his own individual benefit from the open grazing land. Each individual addition of a new animal to the pasture, however, promotes further overgrazing, which is a negative outcome shared by all herdsmen. Each rational herdsman continues to add animals to the pasture in an effort to maximize individual benefits while only experiencing a fraction of the shared negative outcomes of overgrazing, which escalate as carrying capacity is reached and exceeded, thus incurring the 'tragedy' of the commons. Pursuit of individual best interest among these rational herdsmen "brings ruin to all" within the finite open pasture (Hardin, 1968, p. 1244).

Hardin's (1968) illustration of rational users acting among a finite resource laid the groundwork for countless iterations of his original theory regarding unrestricted use of common pool resources (for excellent recent reviews of this scholarship, see Ostrom, Chang, Pennington, & Tarko, 2012; Agrawal, 2014). Consistent across these writings are two characteristics inherent

to natural or manmade resources that can be characterized as “common pool,” and are therefore subject to Hardin’s dilemma:

a) The resource is *subtractable*: use of the resource by one user reduces the resource’s availability to other potential users. Common pool resources provide a flow of resource units over time, and a unit that is withdrawn by one user is not fully available to another user (Gardner, Ostrom, & Walker, 1990). In Hardin’s (1968) example, the resource is an open pasture and the resource unit is a patch of grass, though these notions have also been explored in the context of other natural resources including water (e.g. Cleaver, 2000), lobster (e.g. Acheson, 1975) and other fisheries (e.g. Berkes, 1985), soil (e.g. Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987), communal indigenous reserves (e.g. Stronza, 2010), and tourism landscapes (e.g. Healey, 1994), to name but a few. Rivalry is often implied among users of a subtractable resource (Bromley, 1991).

b) *Exclusion* is difficult: it is costly to exclude, through institutional or physical means, potential users from accessing and using the resource. Boundaries of common pool resources are difficult to delineate; the resource is indivisible (Berkes, 1998; Braissoulis, 2002). Acheson’s (1975) lobster fisheries exhibit non-excludability; there are no formal property rights on the open ocean. Other conventional examples include the atmosphere, a global resource accessible to and utilized by all terrestrial humans (Hardin, 1968; Braissoulis, 2002), and specific types of irrigation systems (Ostrom, 2002).

Any resource that might be characterized as common pool will exhibit these three elements, and therefore any sound analysis of a common pool resource will seek evidence of the three. Effective sustainable management strategies for such resources can take many forms, but will ultimately reflect at least these specific characteristics to the resource.

Management of Common Pool Resources

Since the publication of Hardin's tragedy paper, scholars have provided evidence of situations where the long-term sustainability of common pool resources is attained, typically through effective management or governance solutions. Even Hardin acknowledged the potential for avoidance of tragedy through imposed external management of defined common pool resource. The two ways this can occur is in the form of private ownership, where individual users are allocated exclusive rights, or through government ownership, wherein rules, regulations, and/or direct control is imposed upon the resource by the state (Hardin, 1968; Ostrom et al., 2012). Ostrom's influential *Governing the Commons* (1990) provided an alternative perspective that described instances where governance systems form internally among communities of users to sustainably manage important natural resources, including situations where this occurred without the forms of complete external regulation posited by Hardin. As outlined by Chang (in Ostrom et al., 2012), certain “design principles” are present in cases where internal management solutions form. For instance, in the case of Andean farmers subject to reforms and innovations promoted by NGOs operating in the area, outcomes diverged from what Hardin predicted in that management of a common pool resource (i.e. water, land, seeds, and crop materials) was achieved outside the realm of either individual or state control. This more sustainable management of common pool resources occurred as a result of several existing conditions: a) rules governing the use of resources were adapted to local environmental and climatic conditions; b) the ability to undertake collective decision-making was evident; c) enforcement of the governance system through monitoring, conflict resolution, and sanctions took place; and d) recognition by higher authorities of local attempts at self-determination occurred. These

particular conditions are likely to be present in other situations where common pool resources are managed in ways that avoid Hardin's tragedy.

Acheson (2006) provides comparative examples of all three of these commons management structures (i.e., private property regimes, government management, and local community governance) succeeding in some instances but failing in others. Key to more favorable outcomes among a community of resource users were governance structures that are tailored to specific economic, political, ecological, and social circumstances, echoing Chang's (in Ostrom et al., 2012) work with Andean farmers. Additionally, the presence of a diverse set of institutions, meaning multiple governance structures existing simultaneously for overseeing decisions related to common pool resource use, will be more likely lead to successful management regimes. Highly contextual, specifically tailored management regimes should be "polycentric" with various entities having some role in the process; diversified, localized regimes actively avoid the "panacea" that incorrectly assumes there is a "correct" or effective solution to be applied across different contexts (Ostrom et al., 2012). These particular conditions are likely to be found among situations where common pool resources are managed effectively, i.e., in ways that avoid overuse and diminishing returns over time. Likewise, Hardin's tragedy might be present among ineffective management regimes not reflecting local circumstances.

Cultural Commons and Traditional Knowledge

Natural common pool resources such as open grazing pastures or fisheries can be managed through specific, highly contextual governance structures including private property regimes, government management, and internal community governance (Hardin, 1968; Acheson, 2006; Ostrom et al., 2012). The continued study of natural resource management has prompted

researchers, specifically in the field of intellectual property law, to examine the features and governance strategies of *non-natural* common pool resources found among cultural environments composed of intellectual, scientific, and social resources and systems (Boyle, 1997; Frischmann & Lemley, 2007; Madison, Frischmann, & Strandburg, 2009). This scholarship distinguishes cultural resources from natural resources through explaining that, unlike natural resources that are typically inherent to the physical environment, humans construct elements of a cultural environment. Of course, these two types of resources are inextricably linked as the physical environment shapes culture and humans unavoidably affect the natural environment (Madison et al., 2009).

Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) comprises the bodies of knowledge, beliefs, traditions, practices, institutions, and worldviews developed by indigenous and local communities that offer alternative perspectives, often to those of western scientific knowledge, based on locally developed practices of resource use (Berkes, Colding, & Folke, 2000; Toledo, 2002). Perception of TEK among the literature has shifted from consideration as a static knowledge resource to one that is dynamic in nature and subject to adaptation among changing global ecological and socioeconomic conditions. A focus in the natural resource scholarship on *sustained* use shifts when focusing on cultural resources. Cultural commons are distinct, and their arrangements must take into consideration innovation, growth, and how/if cultural resources are transferred outside of the community (Madison et al., 2009; Godoy et al., 2005; Lu, 2007).

Value of indigenous knowledge as a resource is reflected among international initiatives such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, initiated by the United Nations (UN) in 2001, in which the importance of traditional societies and their associated knowledge systems are stressed

as a factor necessary to “assess the scientific basis for action needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of [provisioning, regulating, supporting, and cultural] systems and their contribution to human well-being” (MEA, 2005). As was further outlined in the introduction to a 2013 special feature of *Ecology and Society* entitled “Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Global Environmental Change,” critical themes surrounding TEK literature relate to not only the way in which TEK strengthens resilience to global environmental change, but also the loss or persistence of TEK *itself* among developing and developed countries (Gómez-Baggethun, Corbera, & Reyes-García, 2013). The persistence, communication, and sustainment of indigenous and traditional knowledge systems across the planet have important consequences for international initiatives related to human wellbeing and resilience to global environmental change.

Common pool resource theory and TEK have been explored within the context of rural Amazonian communities. Becker and Ghimire (2003) demonstrate that cooperation between TEK and western knowledge among the rural farming community of Loma Alta resulted in curtailed destruction of a forest commons. Villagers leveraged the support of conservation NGOs to establish the first community-owned forest reserve in western Ecuador through shifting their existing kin-based communal tenure system historically managing the local watershed. In this case, a sustainable system was created to manage a subtractable and non-excludable resource through a combination of local TEK and scientific knowledge provided by a non-governmental organization. This resulted in a common pool resource solution tailored to the specific economic, political, ecological, and social circumstances present among Loma Alta and their forest resource.

Traditional knowledge (TK), a component of TEK not entirely focused on ecological matters, was explored in the context of intellectual property rights for Shamans among the Shuar of the Ecuadorian Amazon (Nagan, Mordujovich, Otvos, & Taylor, 2010). These authors argue that shamanic TK is secretive, sensitive, and highly valued among trainees of this profession. They therefore call for legal protection of this cultural resource from misappropriation through acts of “biopiracy” (Nagan, et al., 2010). Despite the “extraordinary medical and commercial value” of ethnobotanical knowledge among the Shuar, exclusion of outsiders from this knowledge body might be necessary in order for this indigenous group to maintain economic viability on the global market (Nagan et al., 2010, p.14). Such an argument brings to light questions related to non-excludability of not just spiritual TK but also potentially other forms of local knowledge.

Outside of the Amazon, the digital cataloguing of Aboriginal TK in Australia reveals the complicated relationship between new technologies and traditional bodies of knowledge. Questions of “what constitutes?” and “who owns?” traditional cultural knowledge are explored as the seemingly contradictory integration of digital technologies into culture-based market ventures has taken place (Christen, 2005, p. 318). In this context, interactions occurring between TK and globalizing markets via the use of technology is “negotiated within a dynamic set of cultural protocols that continually tack back and forth between innovation and preservation.” Technology and markets among traditional cultural systems are not posed as an inherently disruptive “invasion,” as was suggested by anthropologist Eric Michaels in his essays regarding Aboriginal art markets (Michaels, 1994 as cited in Christen, 2005, p. 323). Instead, there is space for compromise, negotiation, integration, and collaboration when globalizing markets enter into traditional cultural systems.

Culture and Tradition on Tour

Tourism is a global market mechanism that can lead to adaptation, transformation, and transferal of cultural resources (Smith, 1989; Stronza, 2001; Christen, 2005; Marcinek & Hunt, 2015). Tourism's tangible and intangible resources include elements of the natural environment, the built environment, and the local sociocultural context. These resources collectively form "the tourism product." They are used by tourists in common with other tourists, and by tourists in common with local residents (Briassoulis, 2012). Not coincidentally, the three main features of common pool resources characterize the use of these resources. Exploitation of the tourism product by one user reduces the amount and/or quality of that resource that remains available to other. Tourism livelihoods for local residents, and the tourist experience for visitors, can therefore be characterized as subtractable. Furthermore, it is difficult or impossible to exclude additional users, whether it is those embarking on a livelihood based on tourism or a visitor choosing a particular destination to visit. In this sense, tourism is also non-excludable (Bromley, 1991; Ostrom, 1990).

The existing literature relating common pool resource management and tourism is nascent. What does exist focuses on management and sustainable use of environmental commons (Briassoulis, 2002; Heenehan et al., 2015). Focusing on tourism as a livelihood for indigenous community residents, Stronza (2010) provides a particularly insightful description of the ways that ecotourism has influenced the management of commons in the Peruvian Amazon, including both environmental (tangible) and cultural (intangible) resources. Other authors have focused on use and overuse of tangible resources, both natural and manmade, in tourism contexts. Other authors have focused entirely on the tourist experience as a commons and associated rivalries that tend to play out (see Urry, 1990; and Healy, 1994). This scholarship continues to provide

useful iterations of resource management among a market where users (both tourists and tour facilitators) are driven to overuse and maximize individual gain.

Yet common pool resource theory, specifically among the intangible *traditional knowledge* commons, has rarely been elaborated in a tourism context. In fact, Briasoullis (2012) points this out as a necessary area for future analysis in her review of the existing literature on the tourism commons. This leaves numerous questions surrounding TK within the context of the tourism market, including those suggested by Gómez-Baggethun et al. (2013). For instance, how does TK among a rural community interact with the local tourism market? How is TK transformed, integrated, negotiated, or compromised?

In alignment with the presented natural common pool resource literature, any exploration of cultural resources and their management regimes would need to search for evidence of subtractability and non-excludability in the context of tourism, since the global tourism market influences the local use – and potential overuse – of cultural resources. It is apparent that TK *can* exhibit characteristics of common pool resources, specifically in the way that it can be difficult to exclude others from using such resources (e.g. “biopiracy” among Shamanic knowledge of the Shuar). Yet little research has been conducted on this topic. Additional evidence revealing non-excludability and subtractability would strengthen the definition of TK as a common pool resource, and it would highlight the role of TK in the sustainable management of tourism in indigenous communities.

As will be discussed below, these conditions certainly exist in the tourism market of Misahuallí, Ecuador. The following analysis of data collected over the course of two separate the field excursions will describe the use and manipulation of local indigenous knowledge within the tourism market in Misahuallí. The institutions most associated with tourism will be assessed in

terms of their effectiveness for sustainable governance or management of cultural resources, including TK. Since the long-term sustainability of common pool resources can be attained through effective management or governance solutions that reflect the specific economic, political, ecological, and social circumstances among the community of resource users (Hardin, 1968; Acheson, 2006; Ostrom et al., 2012), to the extent that these conditions are present, we would expect more sustainable use of such resources. Based on the literature, we would expect effective institutional management of cultural resources in a tourism context to exhibit diverse or “polycentric” management or governance regimes with stable, or even enhanced, market returns. Inversely, ineffective management regimes would likely contain non-diverse institutions for use monitoring and sanctioning, and would therefore be more inclined to result in diminishing market returns over time.

Research Questions Guiding This Thesis

The following section condenses the etic material presented above into six overarching research questions. In the analysis portion of this thesis, the explanatory ability of the etic theory will be assessed in relation to the emic, culturally and place-specific information in order to address each research question in a complete, “tri-dimensional” manner (Pike, 1954).

Friction

A political-ecological perspective will be used to explore the extraction-tourism nexus within Ecuador. The political ecology lens will be brought to bear on data gathered through interview, participant observation, and archival sources. Structural and discursive elements of the resulting

national, regional, and community-level data will be queried using the following guiding research questions:

1. How does language and discourse related to the development of ecotourism trickle down from global and national political entities and manifest in transformations to local social and environmental conditions in the Amazonian community of Misahuallí, Ecuador?
2. Where has this discourse encountered resistance (i.e., where does friction exist), and where has it been readily accepted, or even leveraged, into locally beneficial outcomes, if at all?
3. What advantages does the political ecology lens provide in terms of improving our understanding of the consequences of tourism in this era of unprecedented and accelerating anthropogenic change now called the Anthropocene?

Traditional Knowledge as a Common Pool Resource

A second theoretical framework related to common pool resource management will be used to analyze the same dataset yielded by interview, participant observation, and archival research. This analysis will assess the role of local traditional knowledge within the Misahuallí tourism market, characterizing this knowledge as a common pool resource shared among the local community. Evidence of common pool resource characteristics is provided to address existing management or governance regimes of the local knowledge commons, and to yield suggestions for future research into management of cultural, natural, and tourism resources. The following research questions guide this portion of the analysis:

1. How does traditional knowledge manifest as a commons in the Misahuallí tourism market? Based on the outlined definition of common pool resources, how does

traditional knowledge exhibit the qualities of resource subtractability and nonexcludability?

2. What are the existing management and governance regimes of the knowledge commons in Misahuallí?
3. How relevant are existing management and governance regimes to the local social, economic, and environmental context? How might they be better tailored to the local context?

Chapter 3

METHODS

The data presented in this thesis were gathered during ethnographic research undertaken in and around Misahuallí, Ecuador. The author's first trip to the region took place during the summer of 2013, leading to the preparation of her Penn State undergraduate honor's thesis and an associated publication in the *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology* (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015). A second fieldwork session occurred between May and June in 2016. This multi-year study provides a long-term research perspective, which is valuable across all forms of scientific inquiry but is especially important to qualitative research. The level of rapport established among local residents allowed the second stint of fieldwork in Misahuallí to commence in a productive fashion, with less time needed for initial way-finding, key actor introductions, and general familiarization with regional activities and ways of life. As such, descriptions of the study site and the data gathered for thesis research address the fieldwork carried out in both 2013 and 2016. The first trip was foundational to the second, and the latter cannot be fully assembled or explained without those prior experiences.

This chapter will provide a description of Misahuallí and surrounding areas so as to offer a complete context for discussion and analysis sections that follow. Research design, data collection, and analysis methods will then be elaborated. Focus will remain on those methods employed during the most recent 2016 fieldwork season. Elaboration on the ethnographic methods employed during the 2013 fieldwork, which overlap significantly in nature with those detailed here, are fully elaborated elsewhere (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015). This section speaks to the emic research paradigm through outlining methods employed to explore within-culture phenomena related to this thesis. Of particular importance are the following descriptions of

participant observation, which allowed the researcher to engage with local people and activities without an outward academic agenda (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011).

Study Site

Tena, Napo's provincial capital, is the region's principal urban zone. Throughout the city, tour operators provide services to national and international visitors looking for adventure activities (e.g. white-water rafting, caving, kayaking, trekking, etc.) and eco-cultural tourism (e.g. canoe sightseeing, indigenous cultural demonstrations, local cuisine, etc.) in the surrounding river and rainforest settings. Tena is home to the regional Ministry of Tourism offices where administrative and promotional activities take place for Napo's five cantons. Across from the Ministry of Tourism offices is an ecopark, *Parque Amazónico la Isla*, where school children and visitors to the urban hub can learn more about local flora and fauna.

Puerto Misahuallí (hereafter simply Misahuallí) is within the Tena canton of Napo and is located 22 kilometers, or a 25-minute taxi ride, from the center of Tena. This community sits at the intersection of the Misahuallí and Napo Rivers and contains a small naval base at the edge of town closest to the river junction. The population of Misahuallí is a mix of self-identified indigenous peoples, non-indigenous Ecuadorian natives, and a smaller expatriate population of Americans and Europeans. An entirely paved road from Tena to Misahuallí leads national and international tourists to this jungle outpost for adventure and eco-cultural tourism activities; although many such tourists link with tour operators in Tena, there are seven main operators in Misahuallí that offer comparable experience packages. Tours operating out of Misahuallí range in length from one to five days and generally include sightseeing throughout riverside communities, rainforest hikes, tubing and kayaking, and camping in rustic cabins. Several

indigenous community tourism projects dot the riverbanks between Misahuallí and Ahuano, an adjacent community located about 15 kilometers to the east. These projects also offer cultural demonstrations, traditional dance, lance throwing, cooking, and interpretation of indigenous knowledge of rainforest ecology. Nearly all tours require travel via motorized canoes that depart from Misahuallí multiple times daily.

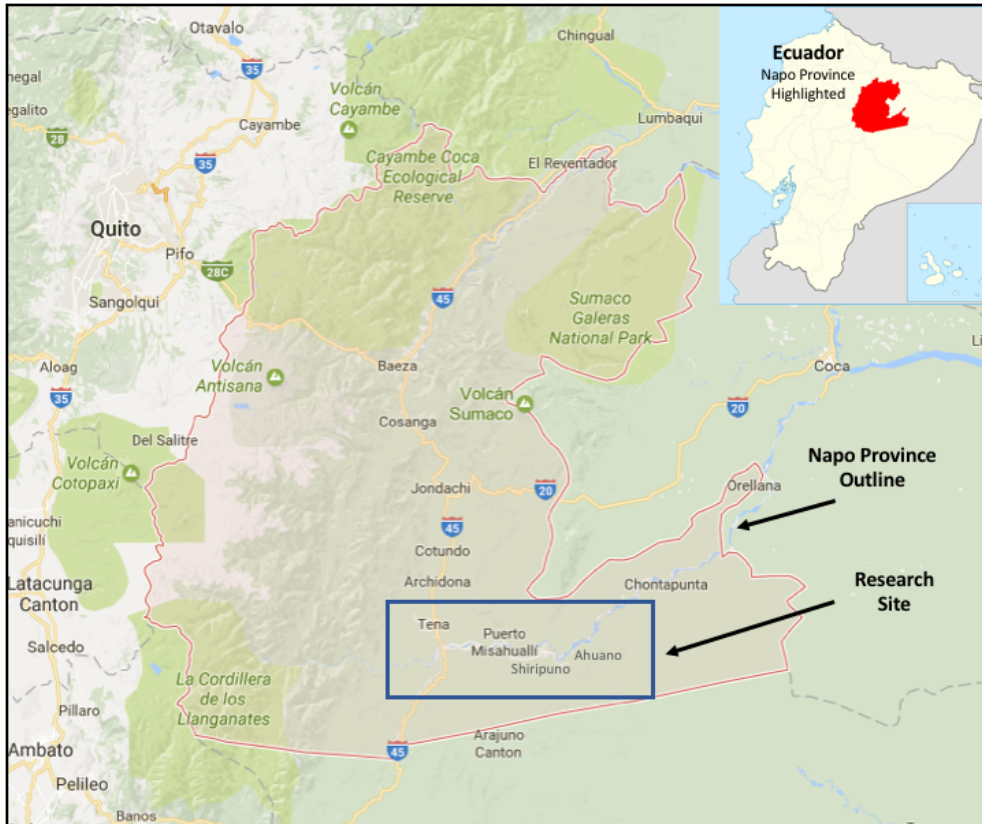


Figure 1. Map of Napo Province, Ecuador

Research Design

The original impetus for the second round of fieldwork in Misahuallí was a grant through Penn State’s Interinstitutional Center for Indigenous Knowledge, which encourages “interest in the diverse local knowledge systems that enable communities to survive in a changing world” (ICIK, 2017). Therefore, one of the original goals was set to explore *indigenous knowledge* and

involvement specifically within the Misahuallí tourism market via a qualitative, ethnographic study. Although a mixed-methods approach is often useful in social science research, there are many intellectual problems for which qualitative measurements and direct observation are required, such as the description of processes, events, or nomenclature (Bernard, 2011). Due to the lack of existing research focused on tourism and indigeneity in this area of the Ecuadorian Amazon, an exploratory approach to data collection and analysis was undertaken here, as this is where social research often begins (Babbie, 2013). In contrast to a deductive research approach, wherein key variables are laid out in advance, here an inductive approach was needed to initially identify variables of most relevance to the ways that indigenous residents engage with the Misahuallí tourism market. First, aspects of the market and its players were empirically assessed through ethnographic data collection techniques (see Data Collection), and then patterns that may point to relatively universal principles were discovered through qualitative analysis of the ethnographic data (see Analysis).

An inductive approach to this thesis research has allowed for two distinct analyses, each with its own distinct theoretical framing. Here, the term “grounded theory” is employed to describe the method of developing theories through observation, that is, inductively (Babbie, 2013). Using an interest in indigenous knowledge as a starting point for inductive exploration, the thematic analysis of resulting interview transcription data, field notes, and other archival materials was framed by these two separate theoretical perspectives *ex post facto*. The approach taken here strays from the most traditional approaches to grounded theory in that it did not produce its own, unique theory. Instead, this approach draws in the theory that best explains trends discovered in the data, and thus aligns with later interpretations of grounded theory and inductive text analysis (Bernard, Wutich, and Ryan, 2016). This nevertheless adheres to Strauss

and Corbin's (1998, as cited in Babbie, 2013) suggestion that grounded theory allows the researcher to be scientific and creative at the same time, in that the present analysis provides *unique* applications of theory related to political ecology and common property resources to the phenomenon of tourism in indigenous communities. Furthermore, the interpretation related to political ecology theory and the one related to common pool resource theory are joined by their relevance among the emic/etic continuum outlined by Pike (1954). A more detailed discussion describing the ways in which this dataset relates to both research paradigms will be offered in the Discussion, where a "tri-dimensional understanding" of the complete thesis dataset is explored.

Data Collection

Data for this study were gathered primarily through semi-structured key informant interviews, participant observation, and archival research. Semi-structured interviews targeted culturally specialized informants (Bernard, 2011) with expertise in the local tourism industry in and around Misahuallí. A diversity of resident perspectives was sought in an effort to capture a breadth of local, primarily indigenous, community stakeholder perspectives on tourism in the region. Individuals who work as employees or managers in the tourism industry were first pursued in order to better understand the daily functioning and structure of various projects and agencies with a locatable Internet presence. As research progressed in situ, employees and managers provided a starting point for chain referral toward upper-level local experts on tourism, including project/agency owners and government officials (Bernard, 2011). Such upper-level informants included an Environmental Engineer for the Ecuadorian Ministry of Tourism in Tena and the current mayor of Misahuallí. Informants were also purposively sampled based on their belonging to one of the three major local population groups.

Throughout semi-structured interviews various probing techniques were implemented, specifically “echo probes” which prove particularly useful when an informant is describing a process (e.g. how tourism employees plan and carry out a trip for a visiting group). Echoing is even *more* useful because the interviewer was not communicating in her native language; repeating processes back to the informant ensured accurate recordings of timelines and progressions (Bernard, 2011). Another effective interview technique implemented when possible was the “grand tour question” used to produce longer responses from the respondent. This technique is especially productive at the beginning of an interview to “break the ice” and build rapport, or when leading up to sensitive questions regarding, for example, the shortcomings of informants’ own tourism projects or others in town (Spradley, 2016; Bernard, 2011).

In the summer of 2016, twelve semi-structured interviews, all conducted in Spanish aside from one, used the above-described techniques to explore themes included but not limited to a) leadership and entrepreneurship in tourism; b) representation of indigenous culture in tourism; c) day-to-day operations of lodges and tour agencies; d) general characteristics of typical forms of tourism in and around Misahuallí; e) the degree of local vs. foreign ownership and management of tourism projects. In the process of pursuing these themes, informants with a higher degree of tourism-specific knowledge were able to elaborate extensively on themes of tourism policy, forms of tourism advertisement, local tourism-related institutions, notable successes and failures of tourism in the region, funding of regional development projects, local and national policies for tourism development, and future directions for tourism in the region. Additionally, themes such as guide licensing, local flora and fauna, oil extraction, and local business savvy were incorporated into interviews, as they are inherent to the Misahuallí tourism market.

As mentioned above, this thesis also draws upon data collected in the summer of 2013 when 6 semi-structured interviews were conducted in Shiripuno, a local ecotourism project near Misahuallí. As the 2013 project was largely focused on Shiripuno and its employees, interviews only took place with members of Amukishmi (Association of Kichwa Women of Shiripuno, Misahuallí), a local women's association started concurrently with the ecotourism project. Principle themes of these interviews included a) the founding of Shiripuno; b) the role of Amukishmi in the community; c) each woman's specific jobs within the ecolodge; and d) the difficulties women face both within the community and throughout Ecuador. The written statute of Amukishmi became a particularly useful piece of archival data in that it provides an outline of goals of the tourism project, alongside the roles and responsibilities of each woman involved. With the permission of the association, photographs were taken of each page of the document for future, offsite reference.

Within the overall 18 interviewees, twelve key informants were self-identified indigenous residents and four were local non-indigenous Ecuadorian natives. As is unsurprising in tourism contexts, an additional two informants were *expatriate* lodge owners hailing from outside of Ecuador. In total, qualitative data from these eighteen semi-structured interviews and one regional meeting provide the bulk of the data analyzed here. Interviews were captured on a field recorder with prior consent from informants. All interviews, aside from one with an American expat, were conducted in Spanish. Interviews ranged in length from 30 to 285 minutes. The researcher took detailed notes during interviews to supplement recorded conversations with observations of the physical environment, informant appearance or actions, and notable timestamps to revisit at a future time (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011).

Ethnographic data resulting from informal interviews that spontaneously occurred with local residents in Misahuallí on a daily basis were also documented in timely jot notes, which were periodically elaborated into a seventy-page collection of field notes. These conversations yielded additional insights into local views of Ecuadorian national and international tourists, the varying ways that tourism businesses are structured and operated, and the influence of four main business-owning families in the town.

Participant observation consisted of engagement in tourism activities that included boat trips to tourism projects, tours of lodge premises, meals with lodge owners and employees, and informal interactions with visitors to tourism projects. This allowed for understandings of how services are provided, how owners and managers interact with employees, and the general pace and content of services in the area. Additionally, frequent travel occurred to Tena to interact with regional Ministry of Tourism officials and to participate in guided excursions of the local municipal eco-park, *Parque Amazónico la Isla*. Lastly, participation took place in one regional meeting of tourism representatives from the five cantons of Napo in the Ministry of Tourism offices in Tena. The researcher was introduced as a participant in the meeting, and she was able to briefly describe her main impetus for research among the regional tourism market. The majority of the meeting focused on content for a thirty-second advertisement spot to be aired in the coming year. Participation in this meeting provided insight into general tourism priorities for each canton, along with the features of each individual location that were deemed lucrative for advertisement.

The primary interview and participant observation data were supplemented by archival resources such as websites of local tourism agencies (both of those that provided informants and those that did not), reports from locally active NGOs including Planet Heart, Jatun Sacha, and

VESA, and materials gleaned from government sources including the Ecuadorian Ministry of Tourism, the National Institute of Statistics and Census, and the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion.

Analysis

In order to address research objectives, interview recordings were uploaded into MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software package that enables advanced coding and retrieval of data. Interviews were transcribed directly from Spanish to English, with the exception of the one interview already conducted in English. Field journal entries were likewise uploaded to the program alongside archival data such as tourism agency and Ministry of Tourism webpages. These documents, PDFs, and transcriptions were first indexed on a regional basis; levels included Napo Province (“Tena”), Misahuallí government (“Misahuallí Gov”), and agencies (labeled individually, by name). Structural indexing of data on this level allowed for initial visualization of the spread of informants and archival material across three levels; the majority of informants, specifically nine out of twelve, occurred at the agency level, which contains indices of “owner,” “manager,” and “employee.” Such indices at varying levels allowed for easy retrieval of information throughout analysis (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2008, as cited in Saldaña, 2015).

A second cycle of coding entailed thematic organization of data. This inductive, open coding process identified emergent themes among the Misahuallí tourism market based on repetitions in responses, local resident categorization of phenomenon, use of metaphors and analogies to convey local perspectives, and theory-related materials (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2016). The first pass across the dataset during this second cycle incorporated more detailed

categorizing of data within the above-described indices; codes applied to interview data such as “National,” “Regional,” “Community,” and “Individual/Household” revealed when certain informants touched on various topics pertaining to each of these levels within Ecuador during semi-structured interviews. This categorization became particularly useful for analysis within the political-ecological section of analysis wherein separate ethnographic vignettes related to each level are presented in an effort to display unequal power relations throughout the tourism market across Ecuador. Categorization of questions that appeared in the majority of interviews such as “How is Kichwa culture incorporated into this project?,” “Describe the general steps taken when a tourist walks into your office for a tour,” and “What are issues that you see within the tourism market in Misahuallí?” were likewise particularly useful for the common pool section of analysis when patterns across informant responses related to subtractability and non-excludability were sought out.

Categorization of interview transcriptions eventually led to more detailed coding within the two sets of analysis presented herein. Within the political-ecological framework, Tsing’s (2005) notion of friction, explored in the literature review, was represented through codes such as “friction” where unequal power relations came to the forefront in informant responses or “emergent cultural form” where unique forms of culture, worldviews, or life experiences came about as a result of unequal power relations according to informants, especially within the Ecuadorian tourism market. Also relevant among the political-ecological framework were codes for “structure” where policy and organizational elements of tourism or the Ecuadorian government were mentioned and “discourse” where language/terminology, signage/symbols, and verbalized opinions led to particular viewpoints among individual informants. Within the common pool resource framework, codes for indigenous knowledge and traditional ecological

knowledge were separated out to identify cultural, ecological, or regionally specific knowledge expressed by just indigenous informants (“IK”) and of non-indigenous native or expat informants (“TEK”).

Throughout the open coding process, memoing served as a useful tool for recording reactions, questions, analytical ideas, and inter-connections among elements of the overall corpus of qualitative text. Inherent to ethnographic research methods is exhaustive recording of observations, and this continued throughout thematic analysis. Most useful throughout the analysis process were the code memos identifying code label meanings (e.g. “emergent cultural form”: unique forms of culture, worldviews, or life experiences stemming from unequal power relations) and operational memos which recalled interview circumstances that provided context for certain interpretations of pieces of data (Babbie, 2013).

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to present ethnographic data collected in and around Misahuallí, Ecuador between 2013-2016. This chapter contains two sections with respective interpretations of the compiled corpus of qualitative text data. At the end of the chapter, a third section will consider “Friction in the Forest” and “Traditional Knowledge and Tourism in Amazonian Ecuador” together in a general discussion. Emergent themes across the two sections will allow for concluding considerations for the ways in which this thesis makes a contribution to existing tourism literature relating to themes of conservation and development in Amazonian Ecuador. In keeping with the anthropological framework outlined in the Introduction, this section addresses research questions honed from an etic theoretical background providing descriptions of the emic, within-culture evidence. Throughout this chapter, etic theory will be compared against the emic material gathered in the field site. Together, emic and etic perspectives offer a complete picture of livelihoods and existence in Misahuallí, Ecuador through a balance of theoretically based constructs and cultural insider self-understandings.

Part I: Political Ecology and Tourism:

Friction in the Forest

This section presents places of encounter (Tsing, 2005) among the extraction-tourism nexus of Ecuador. Structural and discursive elements of national, regional, and community-level data related to tourism will be explored in accordance with this section’s guiding research questions. The use of vignettes is an effort to avoid an over-distillation of ethnographic content that might lead to a “loss of the complex richness of discourse, practice, and pragmatic multiplicity of what

is said and done by respondents” (Cepek, 2016). To that end, these vignettes were chosen on the basis of the evidence they provide of alterations and transformations into new ways of being brought about through global-local frictions that tourism generates. The first vignette centers on local indigenous residents’ interpretation—and support—of Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa’s change of policy from biodiversity conservation to petroleum extraction in the highly biodiverse Yasuní National Park. A second vignette moves toward the regional level of Tena to provide an account of the ways in which the juxtaposition of petroleum-driven development and ideas about environmental conservation have unfolded in the recent history of an interpretive eco-park.

In the third vignette, the local mayor is profiled. His perspective on social and economic development needs of his district are analyzed to reveal how shifting attitudes towards tourism are influencing development investments in Misahuallí. A fourth vignette then considers local and expatriate views on the appropriate approaches to tourism. The fifth and final vignette illustrates a transformation of traditional livelihoods and gender roles into new cultural patterns among an indigenous community near Misahuallí.

Vignette #1: Globally significant biodiversity meets a crude industry

The greater Napo River region is home to Yasuní National Park, regarded as one of the most biologically diverse places on the planet (Bass et al., 2010; Finer, Moncel, & Jenkins, 2010). The only two existing voluntarily isolated indigenous groups in Ecuador inhabit the park, along with an additional 3,000 contacted indigenous people belonging to Kichwa and Waorani groups. Yasuní is currently one of three "recommended destinations" in Amazonia promoted on the government’s official travel website (Ecuador Travel, 2017). Seemingly at odds with the

publicity of this Amazonian rainforest as an idyllic destination for adventurous nature travelers is the occurrence of petroleum extraction, which has been the major driver of social and environmental change in the Ecuadorian Amazon since the 1970s when oil speculation swept across the region (Sawyer, 2004; Buscher & Davidov, 2013). Driven by large multinational investments and generating massive revenues for the country, oil has subsequently risen to become Ecuador's primary export (Sawyer, 2008; Smith 2014).

In 2007, the year of his election, President Rafael Correa announced to the United Nations the presence of large deposits of crude oil in the Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini (ITT) field of Yasuní National Park. Correa declared that these reserves would remain underground indefinitely under the condition that the international community support the Yasuní-ITT initiative (Bass et al., 2010). Through this attempt to “put social and environmental efforts first” on an international stage, Correa offered to set up a trust to collect \$3.6 billion, or half of the revenues the state would have otherwise collected if the oil were actually extracted. This money was to then be invested in renewable energy projects throughout the country. The Yasuní-ITT initiative called upon international governments, civil society organizations, socially and environmentally responsible private sector companies, and citizens worldwide to contribute to the trust and keep the oil underground (Larrea & Warnars, 2009).

The Yasuni-ITT initiative brought Ecuador and Correa's conservation and development discourse to the global stage. At home, the president leveraged this plan into strong support among some indigenous residents of Misahuallí. In the early summer of 2013, several interviewees expressed respect for their country's elected leader. At that time, Correa had made two visits to the community since his election as president. One woman, a local community leader, believed Correa to be a savior of sorts. She recalled that during his visits to the

community, Correa made sure to describe how his administration had procured an existing private multinational petroleum company in nearby Waorani territory. Motivation behind this purchase, according to the president, was to provide communities with more than just cash payouts. Correa promised school buildings, *fútbol* fields, and potable water systems. Correa's efforts to campaign for, provide, and verbally reinforce more sustainable, lasting compensation for petroleum activities were commendable for this informant, despite the fact that contamination from extractive activities was already well documented in the region.

Another informant in her late 20s felt empowered by Correa's discursive tactics to bring global environmental issues to the local stage. His ability to speak the Kichwa language also earned admiration, and she quoted his statement made during one of these visits, "I am Kichwa, even though I don't have Kichwa blood, because we are a multicultural country." Elaborating on the influence of Correa's speeches, this respondent felt her indigenous culture mattered to the president, to the larger Ecuadorian community, and through the initial efforts to establish the Yasuní-ITT, to the world at large.

Yet in August of 2013, the Yasuní-ITT fund had raised just \$13 million in donations. Abruptly, Correa and the Ecuadorian government canceled the plan and liquidated the trust. The administration's explanation for this shift in policy was that without international support, biodiversity conservation was untenable. Oil exploration and drilling would have to move forward in the national park as an "economic obligation," that is, a means of bringing development to the country's poor. In a nationally televised speech, Correa argued:

The world has failed us...it was not charity that we sought from the international community, but co-responsibility in the face of climate change... the fundamental factor

of this failure is that the world is a grand hypocrisy. And the logic that prevails is not that of justice, but of power.

The Yasuní -ITT initiative, and especially President Correa's interpretations of it on the global stage, positioned Ecuador as a social and environmental leader among developing countries, one that had been victimized by the failure of more powerful and wealthy nations to act on behalf of the globally significant cultural and biological diversity in the country's Amazonian rainforest. As in his visits to Misahuallí, Correa situated conservation and development discourses in opposition, though this time to establish a hegemonic consensus among the Ecuadorian people that other nations' governments, companies, and individuals were to blame for the continued social and environmental disruptions in the Amazon.

The Yasuní-ITT initiative and its unrealized outcomes embody numerous frictions that result when well-meaning global discourse related to an unquestioned need to protect biodiversity encounters a strong nationalist development discourse that prioritizes economic development as a means of confronting poverty (Tsing, 2005). Initially emboldened by rhetoric about how the preservation of Yasuní National Park would "combat global warming by avoiding the production of fossil fuels in areas which are highly biologically and culturally sensitive," Correa craftily evaded political responsibility for proceeding with extractive activities in the Amazon. In a widely viewed speech, he maintained that civil and governmental entities across the globe share responsibility for the conservation, or not, of the Amazonian region; this is a similar message of Ecuadorian solidarity to that which he conveyed directly to respondents in Misahuallí during his 2013 visit.

As premiums on crude oil strengthen connections between the global markets and this rural biodiverse rainforest along the Napo River, Correa's handling of the Yasuní-ITT initiative

provides an exemplar of how the nexus of conservation and development has been handled at the national level, how an elected leader leverages conservation and development discourses for political purposes, and how the resulting national policy built upon this entwined global discourse descends down the rivers of the Amazonian region to directly affect the social and environmental wellbeing of local communities.

Vignette #2: A regional manifestation of development in the tourism-extraction nexus

The provincial branch office of the Ministry of Tourism is located in Tena. It sits across the Pano River from *Parque Amazonico la Isla*, a 25-hectare municipal park that initially served as a valuable environmental interpretation center for visitors and Ecuadorian schoolchildren upon its opening in 1995. Currently, the park is in a state of disrepair and closed to the public. According to a local environmental engineer in the regional Ministry of Tourism office, for the past 20 years, funding for the project has intermittently come from several entities. It was first established by the Ecuadorian national government using revenues from oil exploration and drilling. Initial construction included a now-faded billboard that still stands over the park's entrance, boasting "*El Petroleo impulsa el Buen Vivir!*" (Oil drives the Good Life!). This expression invokes a nationalist sentiment by referencing a movement underway in Ecuador (and across South America) at the time that called for alternatives to predominantly "Western" forms of development (e.g Gudynas, 2011).

Later in 2009, a \$50,000 grant from the US Embassy provided funding for refurbishments, including new educational equipment, chairs, desks, cabinets, and projectors for new library and lab buildings. The grant came with the rather arbitrary condition that US Civil Rights history be worked into the curriculum for Ecuadorian schoolchildren who visit the park.

Evidence of the grant manifests in the form of plaques inscribed with the US Embassy logo that embellish all signs in the municipal park. Further evidence of grant stipulations is present in the photo exhibit of US Civil Rights leaders on display in the library.

The project is valued as a community resource, yet its operation has been at the mercy of whichever institutional entity is willing to invest at a given time along with physical (billboards, signage) or curricular stipulations attached to such investments. Avoiding such stipulations entirely, Tena's mayor cut funds to the park completely between 2009-2015. Operations at *Parque Amazonico* ceased for several years. Resident animals were relocated, and small interpretive "bio-stations" dotting the trails around the park were disassembled. In 2015, with a new mayor elected into office, the park was once again reassessed and worked back into the provincial budget. Yet interviewed officials still express concerns about a continued, reliable source of funding, even as the Napo provincial branch of government works to invigorate the park and prepare it to once again receive guests.

Currently, the provincial budget provides local Ministry of Tourism officials with flexibility to organize educational programs throughout the park. Interpretive education is based primarily around native species, biodiversity, and the importance of conservation. With the US Embassy's gift expended, officials no longer feel inclined to teach US Civil Rights history, although the inscribed plaques remain in place. Relics of petroleum industry funding of development also persist. When a Ministry of Tourism official was questioned about the *Petroleo* billboard and the paradox it represents sitting in an environmental interpretation center, a friction between competing conservation and development discourses was apparent in his reaction. Although he acknowledged that oil extraction is clearly at odds with the environmental education encouraged through the park's interpretive efforts, support persists for the sign since it

represents *Ecuadorian* support for local development. Coupled with a criticism of Western forms of development that is inherent in the reference to *Buen Vivir*, the sign serves as a discursive symbol of nationalism, which is more desirable than discourse originating in the “West” about the US Civil Rights movement, as embodied in the US Embassy plaques. The competing signs themselves represent an interesting encounter of friction within this regional eco-park. Further friction may come into play when visiting tourists, both national and international, view this billboard and draw their own conclusions about the discourse it conveys regarding funding for conservation and development in the region. Such short touristic encounters are likely to overlook this nationalist explanation of the sign’s persistence and instead arrive at the conclusion that oil continues to fund the park’s existence when, ironically, it is their own presence via the Ministry of Tourism that supports the park’s operations.

Vignette #3: A discursive shift in local development priorities

About 22 kilometers down river from Tena is the smaller community of Misahuallí. Here, the Napo provincial government’s budget supports municipal projects, including maintenance and renovation to Misahuallí’s central plaza. This plaza is the epicenter of the town’s tourism activity. Not coincidentally, visitors regularly encounter a troop of 30 capuchin monkeys perched among the trees surrounding the plaza. While these wild animals are free to roam throughout the town, they know enough to congregate where the tourists do. In the plaza, they find opportunities to harass newly arrived groups of foreign and domestic visitors, often conspiring to obtain sweet snacks while visitors snap a photo. They have become Misahuallí’s accidental mascots, just as the plaza has become the accidental hub of tourism activity.

In the summer of 2016, the plaza was completely encapsulated in a light green tarp as reconstruction and remodeling were underway. The mayor of Misahuallí at that time had first been elected in 2009 and was reelected for a second 5-year term in 2014. He also owned and operated the largest convenience store in the town center. His family moved to Misahuallí when he was four months old, and he attended the local school system alongside Ministry of Tourism officials mentioned earlier. On a daily basis, the mayor could be observed inside his storefront. As he leaned on the cement ledge facing the sidewalk, residents frequently stopped by to talk throughout the day. During two separate interviews, it was noted that these visits consisted of both friendly greetings and more pressing discussions regarding town matters.

When first encountered at this daily post, the mayor was eager to discuss the plaza renovation project underway across the road from his storefront. He proclaimed the revitalization of the plaza as a victory for him and his employees. He provided a narrative about the tireless efforts of him and his staff to convince the provincial government that plaza upgrades were needed. In response to an inquiry about the problem with the plaza prior to the new construction, he replied:

No, no, no. It was just old. Remodeling. Now the park will be more open, so people can walk through (*pulls out a large, rolled-up map*) trees, walkways, (*he lays his finger over three structures dotting the center*) these are for the monkeys to climb. This is a center area here. It's very different. It's going to take two months; in August it's done. The price was very high, from the provincial government budget.

Although these changes do not seem especially crucial, his enthusiasm for the project was evident.

The mayor later listed his duties for the forty surrounding villages, all part of the Misahuallí township, stating:

Roads, electricity, we have to help them out with all of these things. Now we are doing projects to make sure there's clean water. In one or two more years, each community will have it. It's difficult, some of [the communities] are very far away. It's much easier to help the communities that are more organized and closer.

Through this recounting of typical mayoral duties, a palpable shift in the enthusiasm was evident between his discussion of basic development services needed by the region's residents and talk of the more recent renovation projects related to retaining, or even increasing, the number of tourists visiting the region. This shift reveals a renegotiation of the friction between competing development discourses. When asked if the plaza was the best place to direct provincial government funds, he emphatically prioritized the needs of tourism, stating, "yes, but more. For water fountains, things like that. It's better than nothing. Tourists that come here want to see a beautiful park. This is our picture; this is what we show the world." When prompted to reflect back on the budget for plaza refurbishment, the mayor indicated he was increasingly disinclined to direct investment toward community projects related to electricity, roads, clean water, and other common development concerns.

That shifts have occurred in priorities for development and the governance of tourism is not surprising given that the mayor, like many other residents in Misahuallí, attributes 90% of the community's employment opportunities to tourism. When there is limited money available from the provincial level government for typical development projects in Misahuallí, the mayor feels inclined to base Misahuallí's development priorities on the money he feels the local government *can* access consistently. For the time being, the consistent funding that *does* exist is

for improvements that benefit the tourism industry, such as beautification of the town plaza. For better or for worse, this politician's efforts to align his personal and financial priorities with the global tourism market in an attempt to attract additional visitors to his community have pushed enthusiasm, and potentially funding, for basic development services to the side. Here, existing frictions between competing economic and social development discourses are renegotiated so as to procure any provincial funding available.

Vignette #4: Locally contested ways of knowing and the production of tourism

Both indigenous, local non-indigenous, and expatriate residents engage in tourism around Misahuallí. Although it is difficult to explicitly separate out these groups and explore the manifestations of tourism knowledge they apply to their services, contrasting narratives emerged from informants' responses to similarly framed questions regarding views on tourism and community. Interactions among people with unequal or different ways of knowing, and who work to accommodate themselves to the global force of tourism, may lead to the emergence of new or unprecedented cultural forms and discourses (Tsing, 2005). As one such example in the tourism context, one expatriate lodge owner shares his opinion on benefits or drawbacks of foreigners owning local tourism operations, stating:

“There is no product like this one in the whole area, okay? The way we do tourism, cultural tourism, I haven't seen. There's around 27 places here, I've stayed in all of them. And the first thing that you notice is that the owners don't live there. We live here the whole year. This is my house, this is where I have breakfast” (*gestures around the guest dining area*).”

This owner espouses a sub-discourse related to tourism in which his operation prioritizes the experience for visitors and thus provides the ideal service, a service without a comparable alternative among the local counterparts.

This expatriate also espouses a particular stance towards the lifestyle choices appropriate for lodge owners. He elaborates on his lifestyle as follows,

“You see I don’t have a TV; here we don’t have TV. I am un-contacted with the world...here you are un-contacted with everything. You don’t know what is happening out there (*gestures upriver toward Misahuallí and Tena*). At least I don’t give a s**t. If Trump gets elected it’s not my problem. If Greece is in crisis, it’s f*****g their problem. If Europe is in crisis, it’s their problem.”

This informant actively sought out a particular lifestyle that allows a separation from “out there,” which seems to represent not just the United States, Greece, and Europe, but also more developed countries in general.

He later explains a personal motivation and reasoning for his marginal living, extending this personal discourse into a rationale for extensive solo trips into Waorani territory for months at a time. He feels that this authenticates the opportunities his lodge provides for guest interactions with other local Kichwa residents, their traditions, and their ecological knowledge. These web advertisements and personal reasoning seem to overlap, yet there is a notable disagreement between the owner’s own isolationist rationale for inhabiting the lodge year-round and the cultural interactions encouraged for potential lodge visitors on the website.

Even more friction is evident in comparison to the approach taken by lodge owners and managers in indigenous communities around him. In a region predominantly populated by indigenous residents, expatriate sub-discourses related to lifestyle and isolation obtain little

traction. When similar questions were posed to a Kichwa male who manages a small tour operator in the center of Misahuallí, his response openly contested foreign ownership in favor of the benefits that community-owned tourism yield. He states:

When there is a foreign owner, they don't act...For example, we are guides here. Some of those other [owners] are in Quito, in Europe, and just the administration is here. If you need the management in community [tourism], you can go right to the people. You can communicate to their face, and converse. This is the difference.

While this local Kichwa manager exhibits little disagreement with the expat's concern for good products and services, he reveals friction with a discourse that favors foreign-owned projects, emphatically situating his own project in diametric opposition.

The reason for this friction is that community owned and operated tourism is seen as contributing directly to the needs of communities that may otherwise be at risk under foreign ownership:

And these people don't know what [communities] need, while we, if I bring my group, I already know what I can do for this location. This is the difference. For example, if you are an [outside] owner, you visit the communities on trips. Sometimes you neglect to give the help that is really needed. While I'm here, I am a guide, I have more, how can I say...I have the idea to help. So a community that we solicit, we give directly to the community.

The alternative narrative offered here indicates that tourism should prioritize the obligation to local indigenous communities engaging in tourism. As a local guide and expert in Amazonian biological and cultural diversity, this informant claims an authority to providing services or

deciding where to spend group money in the communities when he arrives at a particular location with tourists.

While by no means exhaustive examples or the only contested discourses between foreign owners and local Kichwa tour operators, the contrasting perspectives presented here provide evidence of ongoing friction between different, contested ways of approaching tourism. A clear friction exists between tourism discourse that prioritizes the visitor experience and a competing discourse that prioritizes development outcomes for local communities. This friction may exacerbate the differences between these business owners and the market segments they serve. Tourists visiting these projects encounter misconceptions and misinformation embodied in particular discourses about who has the most moral authority to operate tourism projects in the region.

Vignette #5: Empowering encounters of friction

The interface between global discourses and local traditions does not always result in the exacerbation of conflict between people and environments involved in tourism. As Tsing (2005) notes, “the effects of encounters across difference can be compromising or empowering” (p. 6). As traditional subsistence lifestyles of indigenous communities across the Amazon have come into contact with globalized markets, namely natural resource extraction, small-scale tourism has occasionally proven to be a mechanism through which communities can effectively conserve both natural and cultural resources (Borman, 2008; Stronza, 2010). As such resources are renegotiated and realigned, new cultural patterns can emerge (Tsing, 2005). This is the case near Misahuallí with the Shiripuno Lodge. This operation provides a local example of how indigenous

community institutions can shift over time to bring about new systems and discourses about gender empowerment, leading to greater autonomy and sustainable income for women.

Located a few minutes from Misahuallí via river transport, Shiripuno is a traditional Kichwa community. In 2005, with assistance from a small French NGO, community members established the Association of Kichwa Women of Shiripuno, Misahuallí, or *Amukishmi*. The genesis of this local women's association corresponded to the formation of a new ecolodge just outside the community. At that time, community members submitted a legal statute to the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion to formalize both the women's association and the ecotourism project. The statute's wording details leadership roles in the association, expectations of members, and sanctions for neglecting duties. Structural engagement horizontally with a foreign NGO and vertically with the Ecuadorian Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion has facilitated Shiripuno's entrance into the tourism market.

A notable institutional outcome that emerged from these transformations is a consensus among *Amukishmi's* women about the need to confront machismo attitudes. The registered statute outlines specific steps to be taken when instances of domestic abuse are brought to the group. A member of *Amukishmi* notes that this new discourse related to gender empowerment is atypical among communities in the region and encounters friction in a region where men historically, "wanted the women to stay in their houses...they didn't want the association...there were fights, hits, mistreatment because of the project; [the men] didn't want it" (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015). As has been further elaborated elsewhere, a global connection to the NGO and the resulting increase in regional engagement for women involved in the administration of an ecotourism project has fostered an increase in social capital (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015), and thus a reduction in the friction for indigenous women to participate in local and even regional decision-

making. This has in turn supported Shiripuno's efforts to maintain tradition, conserve natural and cultural resources, and transform existing conditions into newfound structured institutions.

A notable outcome of these newfound institutions brought about through entrance into the tourism market is Shiripuno's effort to reject an oil pipeline through their land in 2012. This decision required the community to weigh the offerings of the oil contract, including water wells, food, and assorted trinkets. These considerations echo a discourse associated with petroleum leading to "the good life," mentioned in the first vignette. Yet the community president took Amukishmi's "*voz y voto*" (voice and vote) into consideration along with their verbalized encouragement to consider the benefits of refusal, notably "a different lifestyle for his children...[and] rich cultivated lands." Through this alternative discourse, their new legal recognition, and their adherence to a Kichwa value of respect and coexistence with nature, Amukishmi overcame the discursive friction and influenced the community-level decision to eschew petroleum contracts in favor of an ecotourism project aimed at conserving local natural resources (Lu, 2007; Stronza, 2010; Coria & Calfucura, 2012). In this example, engagement with existing structures and initiative of local female "*voz y voto*" provided transformative and empowering friction that led to the unmaking of machismo hegemony, which has gotten "in the way of the smooth operation of global power" of the oil industry (Tsing, 2005, p. 6; Smith, 2014).

Part II: Traditional Knowledge and Tourism:

A Common Pool Resource Framework

This section will consider the ways in which traditional knowledge is incorporated into the tourism industry in and around Misahuallí, Ecuador. Specifically, the analysis presented will

establish the importance of traditional knowledge for the sustainable management of common pool resources. This analysis involves describing the ways in which traditional knowledge manifests as a non-natural common pool resource within the tourism market. As a “sociocultural intangible,” this knowledge component of the tourism commons, representing an emic understanding of a locale, has long deserved further analysis (Briassoulis, 2012). As such, evidence of common pool characteristics within the market will first be outlined including the associated notions of *subtractability* and *non-excludability* (Hardin, 1968). This will lead to an exploration of the governance regimes that operate amidst the market pressure to manage and sustain cultural common pool resources. Finally, a reflection on the effectiveness of such regimes according to the ways in which they are tailored to specific local economic, political, ecological, and social circumstances (e.g. Ostrom et al., 2012) is provided.

Traditional Knowledge as a Commons

The “intangible” knowledge component of the tourism commons has long deserved further analysis (Briassoulis, 2012). As such, evidence of common pool characteristics within the market are outlined here including the associated notions of *subtractability* and *non-excludability* (Hardin, 1968).

Subtractability. Subtractability is defined as the use of a resource by one user reducing the resource’s availability to other potential users (Gardner, Ostrom, & Walker, 1990). Here, if we consider local knowledge within the Misahuallí tourism market as a resource, and both visitors and tourism providers as users of this resource, evidence of subtractability becomes apparent. As was discussed in the site description, visitors to Misahuallí tend to come directly

from Tena as part of an already-established agency excursion. Alternatively, they may seek out an agency or guide when they arrive in the Misahuallí town center. Misahuallí's seven main agencies dot the plaza and often post an intern or guide out front on the sidewalk to recruit wandering tourists. Based on data from employee, manager, and owner interviews among the Misahuallí market, tourists that choose an experience package with an agency or an individual guide are subject to whichever set of local or traditional knowledge that their chosen provider tends to communicate. Tourists, therefore, do not gain exposure to all providers and their associated local knowledge, but instead only encounter the knowledge of the specific provider and/or guide with which they choose to travel. In terms of subtractability, if a set of local knowledge communicated through tourism is the resource unit (similar to Hardin's (1968) patch of grass), that unit is withdrawn by one user when they engage with a particular tourism provider, and that same resource unit is not fully available to another user (Gardner, Ostrom, & Walker, 1990). Similarly, attendance to only one interpretation of local knowledge subtracts the same user's opportunity to experience an alternative.

Indigenous, native, and foreign expat individuals all engage in the local tourism market. A consideration for the ways in which informants communicate their own value and knowledge systems reveals difference across individuals, and therefore difference in what is experienced or "used" by each guest (Gardner, Ostrom, & Walker, 1990). Furthermore, when such responses are aligned with the way that tourism is structured in Misahuallí, evidence of subtractability among the local knowledge commons becomes apparent. For instance, Raul is a self-identified non-indigenous *nativo* of the Ecuadorian Amazon and has worked almost 30 years in the tourism industry. Prior to beginning his own tourism company, he worked as a freelance guide for agencies around Misahuallí. When asked about the general structure and content of his tour

packages, Raul explained, “It’s all about demonstration. So when we see someone panning for gold, we stop, and then we pay him or her for the demonstration. It’s a way to show and share money.” Here, Raul points out his efforts to demonstrate existing traditional practices around Misahuallí. He refers to traditional gold panning as “quite interesting” to his tourists, and makes an effort to expose visitors to the activity whenever possible. Raul’s articulation of his particular method for communicating local knowledge to visitors (or users) through *demonstration* is apparent.

To further elaborate upon his own style of local knowledge interpretation for his guests, Raul continues:

Also, our explanations are based on scientific and ancestral knowledge. There is a lot of ancestral knowledge [associated] with medicinal plants, but this knowledge along with scientific knowledge is really good. We can say more than ‘oh, we use this plant for this thing because my mommy told me.’ That isn’t valid for me or for the guides that work for me. We prefer scientific explanations based on something logical and real.

This informant’s stated mission to educate tourists with concurrent scientific and emic knowledge systems aligns with definitions of TK that pin local indigenous ways of knowing as alternative to western science (Berkes, Colding, & Folke, 2000; Toledo, 2002); Raul sees value in both knowledge systems together, but neither on their own. This particularly comprehensive approach to local knowledge interpretation becomes subtracted from other potential visitors to Misahuallí when Raul is leading a tour.

Along the same vein, a project owner upriver, Alfonso, who receives daily tours from Misahuallí to his cultural *museo*, touts a pedagogy wherein it is critical for visitors to understand the past history *and* the present experience of people and nature in this area of the Amazon. To

him, fake advertisements from large international tour companies tell lies to potential visitors and leave them confused when they arrive. He states:

In their packet it says they will visit ‘wild Indians.’ They come here and ask, ‘where are the wild Indians?’ It doesn’t exist. They also ask for wild animals; there aren’t any. [The animals] are domesticated now. A long time ago, maybe. But now, no. It’s a lie, it’s false.

When asked which Kichwa customs *are* incorporated into his project, he said,

We share our life, our real life...customs, at this time, there aren’t any. Few people practice them...here we work to teach. We teach medicine, what each [medicine] does; how to process it, what the illness is. The guides explain it. Also when [visitors] go into the museum, it is the same. The traps, for example, they aren’t used anymore. There are no more animals; they are extinct. We simply demonstrate.

Evidence is seen here of a tourism service provider around Misahuallí actively working to “demonstrate” traditional knowledge of the Amazon, specifically that of his ancestral Kichwa culture. Alfonso’s *museo* serves as an educational center for Ecuadorian and international tourists, wherein traditional knowledge and associated demonstrations encourage and teach visitors to, “...first love nature. Love the plants, conserve the plants, and apply the plant uses...in this way, we share.” Through his own tourism services, Alfonso works to translate his preferred set of knowledge to each visitor to his museo. As is the case with Raul, this curriculum of traditional local knowledge is subtracted from other users in the area while others use the museo.

For the knowledge commons in Misahuallí, subtractability becomes apparent when it is considered that the traditional knowledge communicated to one tourist is likely the only interpretation they will receive during their time in and around Misahuallí. Godoy et al. (2005) explain that elements of a knowledge commons might innovate, grow, and transfer outside of a

community. Traditional ecological knowledge has transferred to international ecological and socioeconomic initiatives such as the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which posed conservation and sustainable use of cultural systems as necessary for global human wellbeing (MEA, 2005). Cultural resources that are subtractable due to different interpretations and communications across tourism providers, however, inhibit innovation, growth, and transfer. The structure of tourism services in Misahuallí means that only one interpretation of traditional or local knowledge will have the chance to innovate, grow, or transfer per receiving visitor; aspects of the knowledge system that might have been left out of an individual experience will not have the chance to do so.

A second element of subtractability among the knowledge commons in the Misahuallí becomes apparent when foreign service providers and foreign tourists are considered. As noted by Christen (2005) there is space for integration and collaboration when globalizing markets enter into traditional cultural systems. International tourists by nature bring a different set of knowledge to tourism experiences in Misahuallí. And according to Lonnie, an agency manager and owner in business with his brother and sister, “Foreigners bring in foreigners. Like if you were sitting here [in the office] and a group of Americans walked by, they would come in here. They would be saying ‘oh, look. She looks American. Let’s go here.’ Also, foreigners have more capital” Lonnie here points out that foreigners are attracted to foreign service providers, and that foreigners tend to have more money to spend when they visit Misahuallí. Foreign tourists attending one tourism provider will not attend others, which means that any knowledge or capital they might have transferred to another local provider is subtracted.

Similarly, an American-Chilean expat who owns a project down the river outside of Ahuano explained:

98% of our guests are foreigners. They are from Europe, North America. That 2% is people that are *pelucones*. It's what they call the rich people...artists, writers, Ecuadorians that are into the environment. The idea is that our guests are people who don't pay tour providers. They know they are paying at least 40% more. Our guests are people that travel with book in hand.

Similar to the above argument, this foreign lodge owner reiterates that he attracts mostly foreign tourists with money to spend. The opportunity for others to engage, integrate, and collaborate with new sets of knowledge brought into Misahuallí by these foreigners is subtracted from others. In fact, this expat points out that his tourists might actively *avoid* patronizing local tour operators in Misahuallí. This is additional evidence of subtractability, wherein foreigners prefer to spend more money at a foreign-owned and operated lodge, avoiding any interpretations of local knowledge that might be offered by other local tourism providers in Misahuallí.

Furthermore, the Chilean-American expat lodge owner is quoted above as describing his national visitors as *pelucones*, or members of the Ecuadorian upper class who are “into the environment.” It is possible that such visitors to Misahuallí and the surrounding area might have more political influence or status in their respective livelihoods. Thus, their ability to transfer cultural resources outside of the community (Madison et al., 2009) to allow traditional knowledge to persist (Gómez-Baggethun, Corbera, & Reyes-García, 2013) might be greater than other visitors to the area, and will be based on demonstrations and natural interpretations only from this foreign-owned project. This opportunity is subtracted from other indigenous or non-indigenous native providers in the area who might communicate a different set of knowledge to visitors.

Likewise, the opportunity for indigenous and non-indigenous native service providers to grow and innovate their *own* knowledge as tourism enters into this existing traditional market (Christen, 2005) is only available to some, and that experience is subtracted from others who do not receive each foreign guest. Within the local tourism market, interactions with international tourists can lead to a transformation of local knowledge (Christen, 2005). One such observed transformation is foreign language development. Mateo is one of seven employees, all Kichwa, working for the American-Chilean expat in Ahuano. His main job is to take visitors to the lodge on jungle treks and lead cultural and environmental interpretation exercises. According to Mateo:

I have never learned from a book, for example, with how to lead groups of people and be a guide. I was never contracted with other agencies. I simply asked my father questions so that I learned directly what each plant was used for. I would take the plant, show him, and ask him. This is how I gained this knowledge, directly.

Through his work with largely (perhaps 98%) foreign tourists, who attend *this* project and subtract their attendance from others in the area, Mateo has honed his guiding skills and ability to communicate traditional ecological knowledge, specifically related to native species of the Amazon. Aside from his father's vast knowledge of local flora and fauna, Mateo explained another impetus for becoming a guide, which may have been an opportunity present to him but subtracted from other guides in the area who do not have either an English-speaking boss or a reliable stream of English-speaking tourists to work with:

Around here many people know our native language of Kichwa, and secondly Spanish...for me, the idea to become a guide is because I am curious about answering the questions that people have in other languages like English...so I've worked to learn other languages.

The ability to communicate with guests in their native languages is a lucrative skill in the tourism industry, and also a positive personal outcome for this individual guide. Mateo and the other six Kichwa employees at this lodge likely have *more* opportunities to transform, expand, and transfer their set of local knowledge through interactions with international (or politically influential national) visitors (Godoy et al., 2005). These opportunities for interaction with foreign guests are subtracted from other guides and service providers in the area. Exposure to foreign languages and lifestyles through tourism harkens back to Christen's (2005) exploration of collaborations among traditional knowledge and new markets and technologies. Foreign languages and worldviews among traditional cultural systems are not an inherently disruptive "invasion," but instead provide a space for compromise, negotiation, integration, and collaboration. This opportunity is not available to, or subtracted from, other tourism service providers as many wealthy international visitors literally pass by their projects on the way to Ahuano to stay with an American lodge owner with an English-speaking Kichwa guide.

Among users of a subtractable resource, rivalry is often implied (Bromley, 1991). In Misahuallí, evidence of rivalry related to use or communication of the local traditional knowledge commons appears as one tourism business owner chooses not to patronize a certain local project because of the ways in which traditional knowledge is projected through their services. Raul, the former freelance guide quoted earlier in this section, sees value in explanations to his visitors that combine scientific and ancestral knowledge. When asked about how other projects in the area incorporate these two different knowledge systems, he explained:

Truths exist here, for example that a shaman can enter into the body of someone and make something happen. This is magic. To say if this really works or not is something entirely different, but we still explain that there is magic involved. We also don't give

truth to the story that there is a 50-meter-long anaconda here. We have not seen it, it has not been measured...it is necessary to know these local beliefs as superstition, and we explain them as such.

This individual's concerted effort to use both local/traditional and scientific knowledge systems to make clear the blurred line between reality and superstition among the Misahuallí knowledge commons is apparent as he walks through his service style. His strong belief in his own style of tourism prompts rivalrous tones in this statement. He implies here that some visitors *do* receive information masked as truth related to local legends. As explored above, any visitor attending a tourism service that touts such misguided interpretations of local legends is subtracted from the pool of visitors who might patronize Raul's agency and receive, in his eyes, a more accurate depiction of local culture.

Across the river from Misahuallí, the community of Shiripuno invites both day and overnight visitors to their tourism compound. When asked about tourism experiences among this project, Raul quickly revealed a sense of rivalry towards the project, specifically related to their interpretations of the *piedra sagrada* (sacred rock) on their tourism compound:

Twenty years ago, the rock wasn't magic. But when tourism started, and they could start making money off of it, it became magic. When visitors come and are told lies like this, I feel badly. This isn't what I want in my business. We have a lot of humility to be able to say 'I don't know'... I don't go to Shiripuno. I don't like when they give information that isn't correct.

Here, Raul articulates his efforts to actively subtract the opportunity from potential guests to visit this particular project and take in an "incorrect" interpretation of local knowledge. He reiterates

his avoidance of the project and sense of rivalry toward their pedagogy by explaining how he, as a guide, would explain traditional cultural practices differently:

...they say things about being the community to discover to cook things in a leaf and call it *maito*. This just isn't true; it's a lie. They should tell people that the men who went out and lived in the forest in the rain, sun, and darkness discovered the leaf. They learned everything about the plants, and that this particular leaf was good for cooking. *That is* how the knowledge came about.

Although Raul was the only informant to touch upon the fact that he refuses to patronize a certain project with his guests, thereby subtracting the opportunity for Shiripuno's pedagogy to translate to some visitors, he clearly articulates his reasoning as disagreement with untrue projections of the local knowledge system. In his opinion, the way in which Shiripuno projects traditional knowledge devoid of any "logical" scientific or historical explanation is reason enough to refuse them business. Rivalry, in the case of this local knowledge commons, manifests when one user of the resource disagrees philosophically with another user and chooses to actively avoid supporting them with more visitors. Although success of the business model in Shiripuno has been shown to lead to positive social outcomes for the community's women (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015), there is evidence of at least one tourism provider in the area choosing to avoid the project. The mission of Shiripuno to empower women through personal income suffers, especially because it was observed that day visitors from Misahuallí solicit a large number of individual handicraft sales, the profits of which each woman keeps in their entirety.

Non-Excludability. Evidence of non-excludability among a common pool resource manifests as difficult-to-delineate boundaries and costly exclusion of potential users from

accessing and using the resource (Berkes, 1998; Briassoulis, 2002). As was noted in the site description, indigenous, native, and foreign individuals all engage in the local tourism market and associated knowledge commons in and around Misahuallí. Regarding involvement in the tourism market in Misahuallí, it is necessary to consider the ways in which service providers, particularly guides, become licensed and/or hired for work with visitors. Guides are the main source of communicated local traditional knowledge to visitors who engage in tourism activities in the area. Although licensing processes were not explicitly incorporated into interview questions, informants naturally touched on this theme because of its inherent relevance to any discussion of the local tourism market.

Misahuallí is part of the Napo Province, and therefore falls under the jurisdiction of that branch of the Ecuadorian Ministry of Tourism. According to the ministry website, one of five main services provided by the branch is “Tourism Guide Licensing.” Each level of guide (Local, National, Specialized-National) contains a specific list of requirements, and National level requires a “knowledge test.” An example of the test is provided on the site intended for use by prospective National Tourism Guide license candidates, and contains such questions as:

- a) When do lakes in the Amazon present the greatest number of species?
- b) What type of vegetation categorizes a cloud forest?
- c) What, specifically, is the backstrap loom used to weave?
- d) What is the definition of a leader?
- e) By who is Executive Power of the State is directed and controlled?
- f) What comprises good service to a client?

This selection of questions from the 100-question exam exemplifies the range of knowledge required of all National Tourism Guides throughout Ecuador. Local Guides, who are able to

work in Misahuallí, must attend a month-long training course, must have a Bachelor's degree issued by a legally recognized Ecuadorian Institution, and must pay a fee at their inception in addition to fees per renewal. They are not required to take the above-mentioned exam. In the case of Local Guides, exclusion occurs not on the basis of tested knowledge, but of education level and ability to pay fees.

According to Lonnie, an agency co-owner and manager in the Misahuallí town center, there are benefits and drawbacks to exclusively contracting licensed guides when there are visitors looking for a tour. When asked if it is difficult to find guides in Misahuallí he responded:

It's not very difficult. The problem with un-licensed guides is that they haven't taken the course. They are people with a lot of knowledge, but they don't have credentials. There are other guides here and in Tena who have the credentials, but they aren't looking for work. But there are still *other* people that want to work with us and want to get their credentials but they cannot. For us, when we can't find a licensed guide, we are logically left with no other option but to contract a guide without a license. It's a delicate situation.

Although hesitant in his explanation, Lonnie points out two interesting phenomena among the apparently non-excludable guide situation in the Misahuallí tourism market. First, there are knowledgeable individuals in Misahuallí who simply do not have the time or capital to travel to Tena for the Ministry's course; they are excluded from guide licensing. Second, it is often the case that licensed guides are all occupied, and there is logically no other choice but to contract a reliable person for the tour, despite lacking official credentials. These individuals are *not* excluded from guiding visitors to the area and interpreting local knowledge, despite not attending official courses regulated by the state.

Evidence of non-excludability among a common pool resource can manifest as difficult-to-delineate boundaries (Briassoulis, 2002). This manifests throughout the town center, where young men (locals) were frequently observed wandering common gathering places for tourists, especially young adult tourists, such as the beach, the *malecón* (promenade), and among two open-air bars and eateries. Usually through the guise of chummy adventure, these individuals would target out-of-towners who might want to explore local waterfalls, lagoons, and trails in a less-official setting. Often, small amounts of money were requested for the experience including maritime passage fees and land entrance fees. In at least one case, fees were said to be “paid” ahead of time by the individual so that the adventures could proceed unencumbered day-of. Although it was never directly asked of these young men whether or not they were licensed guides, informal interactions with townspeople, two of whom had been formally interviewed at a previous time, suggested that they were working illegally. In terms of exclusion, it is apparent that despite an official process by the Ministry of Tourism to train and prepare would-be guides, others are still able to engage in tourism services through guiding and interpreting for visitors to the area who apparently have difficulty delineating the boundary (Briassoulis, 2002) between official and unofficial local guides. Costly exclusion of potential users from accessing local guide status (Berkes, 1998) might also come into play here, as it would be expensive for the Ministry of Tourism to continually patrol the Misahuallí town center for unlicensed guides.

Management and Governance of Knowledge Commons

In order to outline traditional and local knowledge throughout Misahuallí, Ecuador, as a common pool cultural resource, it is necessary to identify existing management and governance regimes. Cultural commons arrangements take into consideration innovation, growth, and how/if

cultural resources are transferred outside of the community (Madison et al., 2009; Godoy et al., 2005). Based on presented evidence of subtractability and non-excludability among this knowledge commons, management and governance regimes would ideally promote accurate representations of local knowledge across tourism activities despite method of communication, in addition to opportunities for providers to engage in visitor interactions that might lead to positive personal outcomes such as foreign language development. Also, a general effort to manage for communication of the importance of traditional knowledge to international initiatives, human wellbeing, and resilience among global environmental change might sustain knowledge commons into the future (MEA, 2005; Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2013).

Common pool natural resources can be managed through external or internal management or governance regimes (Hardin, 1968; Acheson, 2006; Ostrom et al., 2012). Hardin (1968) lists government ownership as an external management regime, wherein rules, regulations, and/or direct control is imposed upon a resource by the state. The Ministry of Tourism office in Tena provides guide-licensing services to interested individuals who are able to invest time and money for required courses and exams. This government-sponsored program equips and controls for guides, who eventually become the main source of communicated local and traditional knowledge to visitors who engage in tourism activities in the area. The content of courses offered to prospective local guides during their month-long training course would be insightful information as this project moves forward; it would indicate exactly what form of local and traditional knowledge is communicated to guides as they are equipped to inform incoming tourists. More details of course content would bring clarity to the fact that different tourists are apparently receiving different forms of knowledge as they tour through the Misahuallí area according to providers themselves. It is clear, though, that this government-controlled program to

license and equip guides exists in the Tena branch of the Ministry of Tourism, and that the vast majority of licensed guides operating in the Misahuallí tourism market have attended the course. The national government's guide licensing program provides an example of external government control (Hardin, 1968) of the local knowledge commons operating within the Misahuallí tourism market.

Ostrom (1990) provided an alternative perspective to the complete external regulation preached by Hardin (1968). In some instances, governance systems form internally among communities of users to sustainably manage important resources. As is outlined by Chang (in Ostrom et al., 2012), certain "design principles" are present in cases where internal management solutions form; a) rules governing the use of resources are adapted to local environmental and climatic conditions; b) the ability to undertake collective decision-making is evident; c) enforcement of the governance system through monitoring, conflict resolution, and sanctions takes place; d) recognition by higher authorities of local attempts at self-determination occurs. The community of Shiripuno, located across the Napo River from Misahuallí, provides an example among the local market of an internally formed system governing local and traditional knowledge commons. Specifically, a legal statute created jointly between the local women's association, *Amukishmi*, and a small French NGO outlines elements of the tourism project and associated knowledge systems in line with Chang's (in Ostrom et al., 2012) "design principles."

In adherence with Chang's (2012) first "design principle" related to resource use, "Goal and Objectives" listed on the first page of *Amukishmi*'s statute mentions a value for such things as "the language, arts, customs, traditions, and ways of life of the Kichwa nationality which pertains to the members of the Association" in addition to "implement programs to elaborate and commercialize traditional products of the area, crafts, natural medicines, *comida típica*...in order

to appropriately meet goals.” Based on countless data presented throughout this thesis and other publications from this area (see Marcinek & Hunt, 2015), it is clear that stated goals or “rules” governing the knowledge resources incorporated into tourism services in Shiripuno are adapted to local cultural conditions (Chang, 2012).

Chang’s (2012) second design principle relates to collective decision-making. The ability within *Amukishmi* to undertake collective decision-making manifests in two ways. The existence at all of an organized and functioning association requires a level of collective action; *Amukishmi* was present “at the table” when this statute was drafted and legitimized by the national government, and continues to operate as an association and ecolodge. Secondly, the Shiripuno president’s decision to reject an oil pipeline through community land in 2012 took into consideration *Amukishmi*’s “*voz y voto*” (voice and vote). This included insistence by the association that “a different lifestyle for his children” would result from such a refusal. *Amukishmi*’s demonstrated collective decision making has been elaborated upon in the first section of this analysis, in addition to other publications from this field site (see Marcinek & Hunt, 2015), and therefore fits in with the above-outlined design principles for effective internal governance of a commons (Chang, 2012).

Monitoring, conflict resolution, and sanctions, incorporated into Chang’s third design principle, are all elements of the association outlined explicitly in their formal statute. The statute is said to be read aloud to the association every two months in order to reinforce stated rules requiring associates to, “attend meetings punctually...completely pay regular fees...complete in full the positions to which you were assigned...” among other obligations. Also explicitly outlined in the statute are sanctions for not following outlined rules including verbal reprimand, fines, and expulsion from the association. Conflict resolution is likewise outlined in the statute

under the “Sanctions” chapter wherein any sanction thought to be unjust can be brought before the General Assembly (made up of elected positions) which will itself reinforce or remove the sanction. Elements of this third “design principle” all serve to effectively manage Kichwa values and local cultural conditions stated in the “Goals and Objectives” section of the statute.

Lastly, the action of legitimizing this statute by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion is the ultimate example of recognition by a higher authority for Amukishmi and their associated lodge (Chang, 2012). Elements of self-determination throughout the statute such as electoral/voting processes, ways to join or defect, and sanctions give a sense of autonomy to this women’s association, their project, and the local and traditional knowledge system transferred through their tourism services. Recognition by higher authorities of local attempts at self-determination occurs here, and therefore fits into Chang’s fourth design principle.

Due to a presence of all four “design principles” outlined by Chang (2012), it is apparent that Amukishmi has internally formed a management regime for the indigenous local knowledge incorporated into their women’s association and associated tourism activities. This example of internal governance of a commons is exemplary among the Misahuallí tourism market as positive social outcomes related to indigenous knowledge and culture have materialized (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015)—further evidence of effective internal management of this common resource.

Discussion

The above analysis represents a convergence of etic theoretical material outlined in the Literature Review with emic quoted material gathered through ethnographic methods. The first section of literature and analysis of this thesis has examined the encounters and frictions between

ideas about conservation, development, and tourism in the Napo province of the Ecuadorian Amazon. Globally and locally interwoven assertions and manifestations of conservation and development as they are understood and negotiated by local stakeholders were pursued through three broad research questions. First, how does the language related to the role of tourism in conservation and development efforts trickle down from global and national political entities and manifest in transformations to local social and environmental conditions in the Amazonian community of Misahuallí, Ecuador? The vignettes presented in the first section of analysis provide several sharp relief examples of global conservation and community development discourses intertwining both within and outside of the context of tourism in and around Misahuallí. Second, where have these discourses encountered resistance (i.e., where does friction exist), and where are they readily accepted, or even leveraged, into locally beneficial outcomes, if at all? The vignettes provide several examples of where resistance and friction occur, with at least some evidence of discursive shifts being leveraged into locally beneficial outcomes in the last two vignettes.

Finally, a third question explores what advantages the political ecology lens provide in terms of improving an understanding of the consequences of tourism in an era of unprecedented and accelerating anthropogenic change? The political ecology of this biologically and culturally diverse region accounts for numerous instances of friction, many associated with imbalances of power, between those espousing competing discourses on the proper approaches to tourism, conservation, and development. We have shown how language related to the development of tourism embodies particular uses of biodiversity and approaches to development, and how these ideas trickle down from global and national political entities to manifest in transformations

among local social and environmental conditions in the Amazonian community of Misahuallí, Ecuador.

This work adds to the growing body of writing that brings a political ecology lens and a “community of practice” (Robbins, 2012) to bear on the phenomenon of tourism, and in the process, it provides just enough insight to confirm that the calls for further writings on the political ecology of tourism (e.g. Mostafanezhad et al., 2016) are indeed justified. Furthermore, this political ecology of tourism in the Ecuadorian rainforest centers on encounters of friction. As such, it represents a first effort to link Tsing’s influential notion of friction in the context of global encounters with the large body of scholarship on global tourism. This should pave the way for elaborate and sophisticated assessments of global connectivity and the associated frictions in the context of tourism.

The second section of literature and analysis of this thesis has described and applied a common pool resource theoretical framework to local traditional and indigenous knowledge as it is used as a resource within the tourism market in and around Misahuallí, Ecuador. Two research questions sought out patterns in informant responses and archival materials to link tourism, culture, and theory. The first question considers the ways in which traditional knowledge manifests as a common pool resource, specifically in terms of subtractability and non-excludability. Among the local tourism market, the knowledge resources communicated by indigenous, non-indigenous native, and foreign service providers and used by their visiting tourists is subtractable. First, tourists do not gain exposure to all providers and their associated local knowledge, only to that of the provider and guide with which they choose to travel. There exists a demonstrated difference in themes and purposes of communicated knowledge across providers. The structure of tourism services in Misahuallí means that only one interpretation of

traditional or local knowledge will have the chance to innovate, grow, or transfer per receiving visitor (Godoy et al., 2005). This phenomenon has implications for the ways in which individuals incorporate learned knowledge into their own lives, and also for international development initiatives that might incorporate traditional ecological knowledge as a means of promoting global human wellbeing or strengthen resilience to global environmental change (MEA, 2005; Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2013).

Likewise, the opportunity for service providers to grow and innovate their *own* knowledge along with that of foreign guests is only available to some, and that experience is subtracted from others who do not receive each foreign guest. Outcomes such as development of lucrative language skills are limited to some guides or providers and subtracted from others. Rivalry here has manifested when one user of the local knowledge resource disagrees philosophically with another user and chooses to actively avoid supporting them with more visitors. This might lead to loss of exposure and revenue for that project, despite the positive social outcomes proven to exist (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015). Nonexcludability among the knowledge commons is mainly exhibited through guide licensing (or lack thereof). Despite an official process by the Ministry of Tourism to train and prepare would-be guides, others are still able to engage in tourism services through guiding and interpreting for visitors to the area.

The second question touches on management of this local common pool resource. Management regimes should be “polycentric” with various entities having some role in the process (Ostrom et al., 2012). A review of the analysis reveals private, government, and collective governance of knowledge commons existing in and around the Misahuallí tourism market (Hardin, 1968; Ostrom et al., 2012). However, demonstrated evidence of subtractability and non-excludability among this knowledge commons suggests a level of ineffectiveness, and

as such there is a threat to sustained existence of this knowledge, especially as it is used and communicated through local eco and cultural tourism activities. Key to more favorable outcomes among a community of resource users are governance structures that are tailored to specific economic, political, ecological, and social (i.e. local) circumstances (Acheson, 2006). Ineffective management in Misahuallí could relate to a mismatch between existing regimes and contextual factors such as ecological, social, and perhaps even geographical circumstances. Most evident in the analysis are failures among the government level of management as they work to effectively equip local guides with skills and knowledge to lead groups of national and international tourists. It is apparent that others are able to engage in tour guiding despite being unlicensed, and that individuals who maintain an advanced level of local traditional knowledge are, for some reason, unlicensed.

A potential solution to this seemingly juxtaposed outcome among Misahuallí guides might be to provide guide classes in situ to increase accessibility for locals with time or travel restraints related to the required month-long training. Additionally, a removal of the education requirement (a Bachelor's degree issued by a legally recognized Ecuadorian Institution) for local guides might open up this opportunity to locals who maintain advanced level of local knowledge but remain unlicensed. Adding a locally contextualized exam related to flora, fauna, culture, and knowledge systems in and around Misahuallí would ensure that passing guides are at least equipped to provide accurate descriptions and demonstrations of the local knowledge commons. Individuals investing in such a localized certification would gain more knowledge as they continue to guide throughout the area, and might become more qualified in the eyes of business owners who report larger paydays for contracts with experienced individuals.

Another necessary change among existing regimes managing local knowledge is communication of the wide-reaching importance of traditional, indigenous, and local knowledge systems to visitors taking in cultural facts and demonstrations while traveling in and around Misahuallí. The present common pool analysis does not reveal any such “globalized” conversation of the importance of local knowledge to international initiatives, human wellbeing, and resilience among global environmental change (MEA, 2005; Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2013). Such a conversation could be promoted by the government through incorporation of this information into guide courses or exams. Communities like Shiripuno that collectively dictate the ways in which indigenous knowledge is managed and transferred to visitors might also incorporate a “globalized” conversation into their statute and tourism activities.

This second set of analysis presents the cultural and knowledge resources present in and around the Misahuallí tourism market as a commons. The application of a common pool framework to this corpus of qualitative, ethnographic text allows for a consideration of the ways that knowledge and cultural systems local to Misahuallí might be sustained, might innovate, and might grow outside of the community in order to contribute to both individual lifestyles or worldviews, in addition to global international initiatives aimed at increasing human wellbeing and increasing resilience in the face of global environmental change (MEA, 2005; Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2013). This analysis answers a call by Briasoullis (2012) to further explore intangible *traditional knowledge* commons, which have rarely been elaborated in a tourism context. Such an analysis has implications for other areas where indigenous, non-indigenous native, and foreign individuals engage in an eco and cultural-based tourism market. Although it is necessary to consider each market as individual so as to avoid a “panacea” that incorrectly assumes there is a “correct” solution to be applied across different contexts (Ostrom et al., 2012),

an analysis of existing features of the commons, existing management regimes, and local context might provide a space for development of new, more effective management strategies aimed at sustaining, innovating, and growing traditional local knowledge toward a global reach.

Together, two presented sets of analysis aim to promote a comprehensive consideration for both the emic (culturally specific) and etic (theoretical) perspectives within social science research. In an effort to avoid a “flat” understanding of the presented analyses, particular emphasis has been placed on emic, qualitative material throughout this thesis. The etic theory outlined in the Literature Review frames self-understandings articulated in quoted interview material with academically communicable vocabulary and structures. Informants themselves are best able to articulate lived realities and self-understandings associated with participation in the Misahuallí tourism market. Emic material provided by informants and structured through etic theory allows an outsider academic to more completely conceptualize cultural and market systems that are, at their foundation, made up of individual people.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis used ethnographic research gathered over two field seasons in and around the rural Amazonian town of Misahuallí to compile two analyses. The first political-ecological framework considered the extraction-tourism nexus within Ecuador through a series of ethnographic vignettes. Several resulting sharp relief examples of global conservation and community development discourses intertwining both within and outside of the context of tourism were revealed. Resistance and friction occurred throughout these vignettes, with at least some evidence of discursive shifts being leveraged into locally beneficial outcomes. The political ecology of this biologically and culturally diverse region accounts for numerous instances of friction, many associated with imbalances of power, between those espousing competing discourses on the proper approaches to tourism, conservation, and development. Language related to the development of tourism embodies particular uses of biodiversity and approaches to development, and these ideas trickle down from global and national political entities to manifest in transformations among local social and environmental conditions in the Amazonian community of Misahuallí, Ecuador.

The second analysis, focusing on a common pool resource framework, considered the ways in which local traditional knowledge among the Misahuallí tourism market manifests as a subtractable and non-excludable resource. Evidence of these characteristics revealed potential mismanagement of local knowledge resources, specifically on the government level. Suggestions for improvements aligned external management regimes with the local social, economic, and geographical context of the Misahuallí tourism market. Evidence of an internally formed governance regime of knowledge and cultural resources among the community of Shiripuno

revealed positive social outcomes, which suggests their statute model might work for other projects in the area. The application of a common pool framework to this corpus of qualitative, ethnographic text also allowed for a consideration of the ways that knowledge and cultural systems local to Misahuallí might be sustained, might innovate, and might grow outside of the community in order to contribute to both individual lifestyles or worldviews, in addition to global international initiatives aimed at increasing human wellbeing and increasing resilience in the face of global environmental change (MEA, 2005; Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2013).

The particular set of challenges faced by indigenous and rural peoples across the planet as globalizing markets enter into their spheres of activity include loss of diverse natural resources, loss of traditional or locally based knowledge, and loss of political, social, and economic autonomy (Bebbington, 2011). Extractive industries, such as the petroleum market rampant throughout the Ecuadorian Amazon, provide little or no opportunity to reconcile these challenges as land is taken and contracts are forgotten (Sawyer, 2004; Smith, 2014). Tourism is an alternative global market force currently driving social and environmental change in the Ecuadorian Amazon. With projections of notable growth of the tourism industry over the next 10 years (WTTC, 2017), and as the scale of all anthropogenic activity threatens life supporting systems of the biosphere (Steffen et al., 2015), it is compulsory that anthropological inquiry into tourism occurring among Earth's most biodiverse areas continues and permeates into relevant fields such as human geography, conservation science, community development, and human ecology.

The purpose of this thesis was to use theory and ethnographic data to answer an overarching question: how can tourism lead to positive social and economic outcomes for communities? Especially among indigenous and rural non-indigenous communities living among

the world's most biodiverse environments, tourism might offer an alternative livelihood strategy to more economically lucrative but unsustainable jobs within extractive industries. Use of the emic approach to research allowed for individual worldviews, livelihoods, opinions, and self-understandings to be highlighted throughout the thesis, which provided insight into local, place-based dimensions of this overarching research question. Etic theory framed emic insights with structure and vocabulary to communicate such locally based phenomena on an academic platform. A combined emic/etic approach reveals that individuals living in Misahuallí are constantly faced with the tourism-extraction nexus, yet positive outcomes *can* occur through involvement in the local tourism industry. Such outcomes include autonomous management of cultural resources including indigenous language, social empowerment of women, diversification of job skills, and economic empowerment.

Tourism is a powerful force for both crossing and breaking down barriers, and “demands a much greater degree of theoretical and empirical interrogation than it is given at present” (Duffy, 2015, p. xvi). Positive outcomes among Misahuallí tourism actors indicate possible similar outcomes for other communities living in biodiverse areas of the planet, especially as local markets and opportunities are tailored to specific social, economic, and geographical contexts. Anthropological inquiry among tourism studies began with Smith's (1989) *Hosts and Guests*, and it remains crucial to utilize host and guest perspectives through combined emic/etic inquiry as global connections catalyzed through tourism continue into the future.

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