

Cross-Cultural Attitudes about Colonization and Traditional Ecological Knowledge: From Coastal Prairies of CA to Rainforests of Ecuador

Introductory Narrative:

Though the period of contact differs by almost 200 years, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and Waorani share similar histories of colonization and the effects that dispossession of land has had on their traditional ecological knowledge. Both communities were first contacted by Christians and European/Western nations, with the Amah Mutsun first contacted by the Spanish Portola Expedition in 1769 and the Waorani by Evangelical Christians in 1956. Since contact, both have experienced a loss of access to their traditional territories and resources. For the Amah Mutsun this came in the form of privatizing the land and changes in land use patterns, mainly to agriculture and ranchland. For the Waorani the oil complex has changed access to the traditional resources on which they rely. These shifts have led to a change in the way they interact with their traditional ecological knowledge. What is dramatically different about these two groups are that they represent two ends of a spectrum, with the Amah Mutsun trying to relearn ethnoecological knowledge that has been largely lost, and the Waorani still possessing vibrant traditional ecological knowledge that is becoming eroded among youth. The interviews in this video were conducted in 2015 and aimed to seek how each community views the effects of colonization, identity, and traditional ecological knowledge. We also asked each community to offer some words to the other group.