

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

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Case Study Name:	Common Property among Indigenous Peoples of the Ecuadorian Amazon		
Author:	Bremner, J. and Lu, F.		
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Region:	Latin America and the Caribbean		
Country:	Ecuador		
Ecosystem Type:	Forest		
Social Characteristics:	Indigenous community, other (traditional community)		
Scale of Study:	Community, household		
Resource Type:	Biodiversity conservation		
Type of Initiative:	Research-driven project		
Community Based Work:	Resource management		
Keywords:	common property, indigenous peoples, conservation, Amazon, Ecuador		

Summary:

Policies promoting conservation of indigenous lands in the Amazon would benefit greatly from a closer examination of the local common property institutions that influence resource use. The goals of this paper are to summarise findings from past research related to common property institutions among indigenous and traditional peoples of the Amazon, and to examine with empirical data, the complex patterns of communal resource management exhibited in a cross-cultural study population in the Ecuadorian Amazon. We find that: (1) the diverse common property institutions functioning among indigenous populations of the Ecuadorian Amazon can be loosely grouped into individual and communal arrangements; (2) conceptions of ownership and rights vary both inter- and intraethnically and; (3) within communities, institutions and the rights they grant vary greatly between different types of resources. Evidence from the literature suggests that indigenous institutions are effective at securing exclusive access and withdrawal rights for community members, but that these institutions are less effective at further managing resources. Our results suggest, however, the existence of diverse management arrangements for a multitude of resources. The growing number of indigenous land conservation strategies demands further research on these complex social institutions to ensure that strategies are both locally appropriate and effective, and thus we suggest several important areas for future research.