

## **A Cultural Model of Nature in Andean Ecuador.**

The hypothesized cultural model or mental organization of knowledge relies on organizing the results into the most important approximations of Nature held in the minds of the villagers. The propositions presented below are the primary cultural truths to the people of the village, at least from what can be evinced from the way they talk about their daily lives and the food production that their daily life entails. Again, these are my interpretations of their statements, and future research will involve the extent to which each of these statements is shared in the community.

1. Humans depend on nature, but specifically humans are given everything by Mother Nature and/or God;
2. Mother Nature responds positively to care of the earth, but specifically soil must be recharged and cared for and respected;
3. God responds to care of the earth and right living;
4. Sometimes Mother Nature and God are the same, sometimes they are not;
5. Taking care of family is the most important reason for living;
6. This specific region is protected by Mother Mt. Cotacachi and Father Mt. Imbabura;
7. Agricultural production is untenable, unlike in the past;
8. We are to blame for the situation with agriculture and nature.

The cultural model suggests not only causality, but it also indicates some potential overarching dimensions of importance.

One dimension is that of 'give and take.' People take from Mother Nature, the soil, and God, and they give back through respect, ritual and soil-enriching practices.

Another potential dimension of the model is that of 'wet and dry.' Seasons are categorized by wet and dry, and great attention is paid to the timing of the rains, the shift in their timing, and the amount of rain that falls.