

Condition of Social Change at El Dornajo, Southwestern Ecuador

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Sarah Ruth Taylor, 2010, *Condition of Social Change at El Dornajo, Southwestern Ecuador*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh.

Abstract:

This dissertation explores the role of internal and external conditions of social change at the site of El Dornajo in the El Oro-Tumbes region of southern Ecuador / northern Peru. The El Oro-Tumbes region lies on the boundary between the central and northern Andean culture areas. Consequently, the developmental trajectory of this region has often been seen as closely tied to that of its more complex neighbors. Indeed, as inter-regional interaction between these areas increased through time, the potential for such interactions to affect the intermediate region also increased. However, the El Oro-Tumbes region is also the epicenter of El Niño activity along the South American coast making environmental hazards an equally plausible condition for social change. The possible role of these conditions, inter-regional interaction and environmental hazards, were examined at the site of El Dornajo, a central place in the Zarumilla River Valley during the Regional Development Period. Results indicate that neither condition was a catalyst for social change, although each played a role in the developmental trajectory of the site in ways not originally anticipated. Existing data suggest that social inequality at El Dornajo was most directly associated with land rights and regional interaction between elites that were manifest at the site in clambakes and the display of prestige goods.

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