

The beginning chapter of this book delved into different key components that makes Ecuador so unique. Since Ecuador has an abundance of petroleum, this makes the situation so much more complex. This is due to the fact that it is such a controversial topic. On one hand, fracking for oil which would provide a copious amount of revenue for the country which would then allow for the country to excel in its development. On the other hand, the oil in the ground allows for a greater level of biodiversity, and the practice of extracting the oil can be very detrimental for the environment as well as those living in close proximity to the location of said petroleum. The country had decided to export the petroleum to boost their economy. This decision would also allow for the one third of the population that lives below the poverty level to be able to sustain themselves. Although this seems to be beneficial for the country, there are also the negative impacts that come with the drilling. Many individuals were very against the decision to begin drilling for petroleum, which lead to them forming protests in the streets of Quito, the country's capital.

Since there seemed to be so much disapproval of the decisions made about the environment, the individuals took it upon themselves to change the minds of the government. There were multiple groups formed that were made in order to keep the balance between the government and the environment. These groups are labelled in the book as Social Movement Activists (SMA), Non-Profit Organizations (NGO), and citizen workers. The book also provides information that in 2008, the constant pressure from these groups convinced the government to grant the environment more rights than any other Constitution thus far. The citizens of Ecuador are very focused on living sustainably which has a lot to do with the triple bottom line. The triple bottom line is a theory that encompasses social, financial, and environmental being. It is a framework that one can adopt in the business world that focuses just as much on the social and environmental aspects as the financial. This related to Sumak kawsay because it is focusing on having a good life. This “good living” or “Buen vivir” focuses on the social aspect more so than the financial and the environmental.

In the article, “Buen Vivir: A New Era of Great Social Change,” the author discusses the concept of buen vivir. With this concept, the good of the community remains more important than the good of the individual. This concept began to develop in the 2000s in Latin America because of climate change, the amount of depleted natural resources, and the indigenous community. This concept rejects the anthropocentric perspective of modern cultures so that it puts more emphasis on preserving, protecting, and respecting the natural world. Since Ecuador was a developing country, the different projects to aid in its development had depleted the amount of natural resources that they had and increased the poverty levels. Ecuador’s government had taken notice of how the indigenous groups were living in both a peaceful and sustainable matter, and wanted to incorporate this into their own culture. In 2008 when Ecuador had rewrote its constitution, it made a point to incorporate this concept of “buen vivir.” The constitution had set buen vivir as a set of rights that included health, education, freedom, participation, and also gave rights to the natural world. Since now the concept of Buen Vivir had a firm legal framework, it made it easier for the Ecuadorians to utilize these practices.

After discussing the concept of “buen vivir,” Tammy L. Lewis goes into detail about the Treadmill of Production (TOP). TOP has three main components which are the state, citizen workers, and corporations. The state needs to accumulate and legitimize its roles by providing protection for its citizens. The state has three main dimensions: the strength, ideology, and the openness. These components will dictate how effective the state is functioning. If the state has a

higher strength, it will be more capable of accomplishing goals and pushing its ideals. In brief, these three parts of the state can be large factors in the developmental trajectory. The state answers to the citizen workers who are thought to be the “civil society.” These workers are able to be the leaders for change because of the state’s and the corporation’s need to appease the workers. The corporations try to limit actions that will prevent maximum profit from being made.

NGOs are private organizations that are recognized by the state to act on behalf of a sector (also called nonprofit organizations). SMAs are social movement activists. These two groups play very important role in the TOP theory. For example, NGOs are often reform oriented subsectors of the citizen workers group in the original TOP model. This group focuses a lot on formal documents. On the other hand, SMAs are groups of individuals or groups of activists that work toward a common goal. This group of citizen workers are focused more on enacting change and are mission driven. This group could be considered to be an NGO, but in most cases, it is not due to the fact that SMAs are typically volunteers whereas NGOs are paid.

The chapter also discusses the Yasuni-ITT proposal, which seemed to be ineffective for Ecuadorians. The Yasuni ITT initiative was a project that revolves around trying to keep oil in the ground under Yasuni National Park. The project consisted of getting payment from the international community which was actually less than half of the appraised value of the oil. Ecuador did not get nearly as much money as they agreed to, so they started drilling a few years after the project was set into motion. From what I concluded through my readings, I believe that the project failed because it did not reach its financial goal that was supposed to help them keep the oil in the ground. If Ecuador did have more support or if it were more developed, I would say that I would have supported this project. Since that was not the case, I would have wanted the project to be terminated since it was not financially beneficial and was actually financially detrimental.

In the article, “The Discursive Paradox of Environmental Conflict: Between Ecologism and Economism in Ecuador,” written by Rickard Lanlard and Maija Merimaa, the authors discuss the balance between ecologism and economism. Environmentalism seeks a more managerial approach when it comes to environmental problems in order to secure the belief that these problems can be solved without having to fundamentally change current values or current patterns of production and consumption. On the other hand, ecologism believes that a sustainable and fulfilling state of being has to come from radical changes between the nonhuman natural world and an individual’s social and political life. Relating back to the topics discussed in the first chapter of this book, the authors of this article claim that because of the Yasuni-ITT initiative, the ecological profile of Ecuador increased globally during the year 2007. This was due to the fact that the initiative had protected the integrity of a part of the Amazonia.

In 2013, the Yasuni ITT initiative was ended by Ecuador’s President Rafael Correa. The article, “The world failed Ecuador on its Yasuni initiative,” written by Juan Falconi Puig discussed the more political reasons for ending this initiative. The origin of this initiative came from the fact that it was conceptualized based on the principle of co-responsibility in order to combat global climate change. Under this, Ecuador would claim responsibility to the planet and other countries were supposed to also share in this responsibility. Since oil is one of the biggest exports of Ecuador, the economic gain that would occur from exiting the Yasuni ITT initiative. Ecuador was in need of the revenue that this would provide, and with these extra funds the state was able to transition to a more diversified in the sense that it had wanted to educate its people.

Resources:

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- Puig, J. F. (2013, September 19). The world failed Ecuador on its Yasuní initiative | Juan Falconi Puig. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2013/sep/19/world-failed-ecuador-yasuni-initiative>