

Global Governance from the Amazon: Leaving Oil Underground in Yasuní National Park, Ecuador

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This is the saga of the campaign to save the Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini (ITT) block of the Yasuní National Park in Ecuador's Western Amazon, a story of the chaotic transnational networks and global governance mechanisms that have emerged in the post-Kyoto race to create real solutions to save the planet. This proposal turns on its head what we know about global environmental governance, the so-called natural resource 'curse', and the developing world. Rather than exploiting its largest oil reserve, Ecuador's left-leaning President Rafael Correa is spearheading an audacious international campaign to persuade the developed world to share the environmental responsibility for keeping that oil underground. In an effort to re-focus the global climate change debate away from carbon mitigation and absorption and toward conservation and an avoidance of carbon emissions, Ecuador is proposing to lead fossil fuel-dependent, megadiverse countries out of their resource curse. The desired goal is "the good life," a concept in the new 2008 Constitution that provides rights to nature and strives to achieve a harmonious balance between nature and humankind.

At the same time, the Yasuní -ITT- Initiative aims at changing the direction of the post-2012 Kyoto talks away from developed, industrialized nations and toward those developing nations most affected by global warming. While the campaign seemed headed toward success in the UN Climate Change talks of Copenhagen in December 2009, at the last minute, President Correa refused to sign the trust fund agreement with the United Nations Development Program

(UNDP) to guarantee its funding. Still President Correa has publicly stated that he supports the proposal to keep oil underground. As the option of consumption or conservation looms in the balance for this rainforest, the study of the Yasuní-ITT initiative and its global campaign is a lesson for academics and policymakers alike who are seeking innovative solutions to protect our most precious and vulnerable planetary areas.

Paradise Found

The extreme levels of biodiversity of this park have been noted by various scholars, including a group of 59 *Scientists Concerned for Yasuní* (a group of international scientists whose work was spearheaded by Save America's Forests, an international environmental NGO), who wrote a letter to then-Ecuadorian President Gutierrez, pleading with him to reject oil development that would allow road construction. Other scientists who work out of the two university-affiliated research stations, have found that the park, beyond being one of the least deforested areas of the Amazon, is home to the highest documented amount of amphibians and reptiles (150 and 121 species respectively), over 600 avian species (also one of the world's record holders), and the highest concentration in a small area of tree species of all places on the planet – more than in all of North America combined. Finally, many endangered species – vertebrate, mammal, and plant – can be found in this park, including two globally endangered mammals: the white-bellied spider monkey and the giant otter.¹

In addition to its natural biodiversity, this area is home to several uncontacted indigenous Waorani communities (primarily Tagaeri, Taromenane, and possibly, Oñamenane peoples) who

¹ Finer, Vijay, Ponce, Jenkins, and Kahn 2009, Bass *et al* 2010.

have a history of resisting outside involvement. While the population estimates vary in the hundreds for these *intangibles* (uncontacted), the contacted Waorani communities are estimated at nearly 3,000 people in total, comprising 38 Waorani communities with a growth rate of 2.2-2.5% per year.² The history of this group has been controversial, and the Waorani have used violence against missionaries, illegal timber loggers, and oil company workers. While more is known about the Tagaeri, who have been associated with the killing of oil company workers in the 1970s and the Capuchin missionary Alejandro Labaka, the Taromenane are less understood.³ The 2009 slayings of Sandra Zabala and her two children in the Los Reyes area of the Francisco de Orellana province, 10 kilometers from the delineation of the *Zona Intangible* (uncontacted zone, ZI), has brought these uncontacted groups to the forefront again. Researchers suspect that the killing was carried out by Taromenane, a group that the Waorani say went deeper into the forest to avoid contact with others.⁴ Researchers claim that these uncontacted communities also inhabit parts of oil blocks located in the park, including numbers 14, 16, 17, and 31.⁵

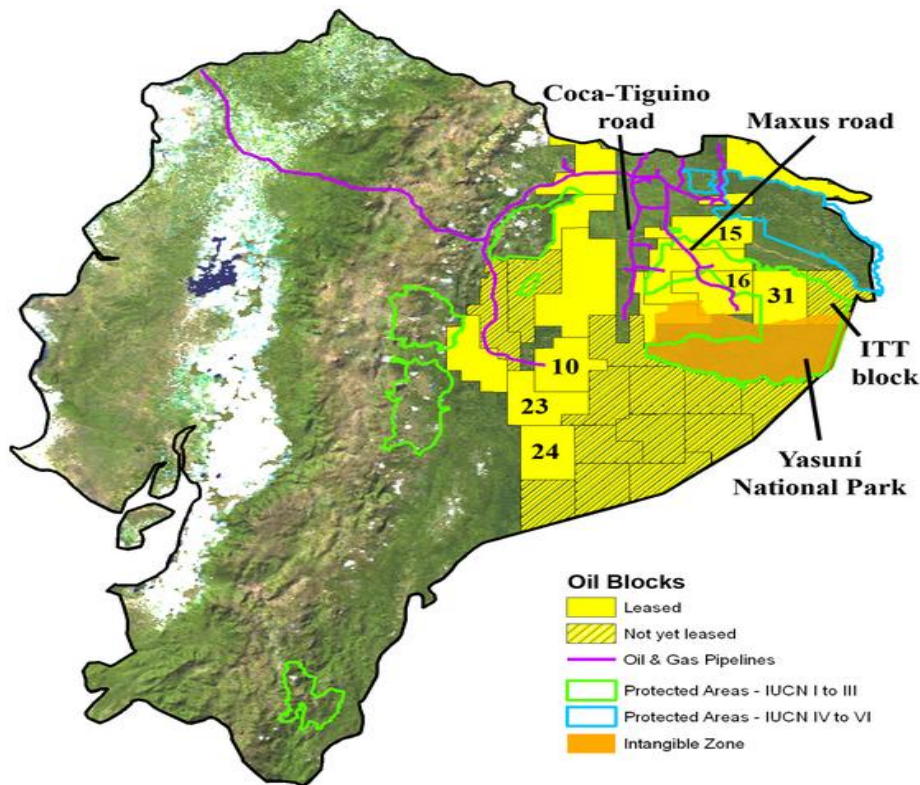
² Finer, Vijay, Ponce, Jenkins, and Kahn 2009; Becerkman et al, 2009.

³ Rival 2002.

⁴ *El Comercio*, “Los Pueblos Ocultos Siguen Acosados,” August 22, 2009.

⁵ Martínez 2008b, 69-70.

Map1: Ecuador Oil Blocks



Source: Finer M, Jenkins CN, Pimm SL, Keane B, Ross C 2008.

The Plan to Save It

As the world ponders its common threat from global climate change, Ecuador is taking action. In June 2007, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa announced that he would forgo oil profits for one of the country's largest oil reserves (20% of its proven reserves) in the Amazonian Yasuní National Park in exchange for donations for the international community to pay Ecuadorians to keep oil underground. Since his announcement, the Yasuní-ITT (Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini) Initiative has captured the world's imagination and changed in ways to accommodate our current debates about global warming. In many respects, this proposal

represents the struggles of all peoples around the globe who seek better, cleaner environments not just for themselves, but for their grandchildren.

The Yasuní-ITT proposal calls for co-responsibility with the rest of the world (common, but differentiated) in avoiding emissions that the nearly 900 million barrels of oil in the ITT block could produce. The world would pay for avoided carbon emissions in order to protect one of the most biodiverse plots of Earth. The \$350 million per year that Ecuador seeks each year for 13 years would be placed in a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Trust Fund with a board of directors that includes Ecuadorians as well as members of the global community. If successful, it would be one of the largest global environmental trust funds of its kind. The funds would be directed to protecting Yasuní National Park, improving the lives of those who live within its boundaries, and to making Ecuador the country with the largest amount of land protected as national parks – 38% of its total land mass. The ultimate goal is to transition Ecuador from an economy and society dependent upon fossil fuels for its development to a post-petroleum society that focuses on sustainable development and living in harmony with nature – the politics of the good life.

International Relations and Globalization: A View from the Rainforest Canopy

Viewing international processes from the optic of the rainforest canopy can be a useful tool. As some scholars⁶ note, the Amazon is a unique region of the world, not only for its biological diversity and carbon sequestration properties, but also for its amalgamation of global and local political, economic, and social challenges. Living within steps of one another, oil companies and indigenous communities interact, for example, within local and national political

⁶ Ortiz 1997.

structures that concomitantly promote the extraction of hydrocarbons and grant constitutional rights to nature and indigenous peoples. Economist and former Minister of Energy and Mines, Alberto Acosta,⁷ argues that the pressures on the Amazon are global, from transnational companies and international financial pressures on the national government to capitalize its natural resources and trade them on the free market. At the same time, the significance of the Amazon to abating and mitigating carbon in a global climate change policy is clear. Thus, Acosta calls for policies of *glocalization* that view the local Amazonian needs in light of global demands and solutions. When asked who is responsible for the Yasuní-ITT campaign and its development, he commented, “It is a wide-ranging collectivity. I would say that you cannot look for owners here, rather many people commented on it, gave suggestions, criticisms, etc... This is not a proposal just for Ecuadorians, but for all people on the planet. I think it is truly revolutionary.”⁸

Ken Conca also notes the role of transnational social movement actors in bringing local issues to global levels. With regard to Brazil’s Amazonian regions, he points out that the “state is in retreat” in some cases and that pressures in the Amazon have global and local causes and responses.⁹ Traditional territorial divisions among state, local, and international levels do not reflect the dynamic interaction among actors at all levels when referring to global environmental movements and policies in the Amazon. Thus, when searching for solutions to these issues, actors organize at local levels with local concerns, norms, and ideas, yet work in tandem with

⁷ Acosta 2005.

⁸ Interview with Acosta, Quito, Ecuador. 27 February 2009

⁹ Conca 2006, 45.

global partners for goals at both levels. This process is indicative of Rosenau's *framgregation*¹⁰ due to the transnational capital pressures on these resource-rich areas that create local social conflicts, as noted by Sklair.¹¹

However, the transnational networks that I outline demonstrate fluidity among the levels with more pressure from Southern NGOs and actors toward Northern NGOs and actors than we have observed in the past. Previous global social movement studies¹² emphasized networks connecting North and South, but with norms and funds flowing from the North toward the South, even if strong communication between the two was observed. This study sheds light on more recent processes that we attribute to learning¹³ and capacity building¹⁴ from the 1990s, plus increased participation of Southern activists in global processes (such as the World Social Forum), including conferences, networks, and funding sources (such as recent conversations among leaders and Southern NGO activists about a Bank of the South in South America).

Global Governance: Norms, Agency, and Structure

The agency of the actors in these global governance networks is based on their normative underpinnings and ideas. Contrary to network theories that create uni-dimensional pictures of the formations of global governance networks, I contend that these interactions are not without conflict and negotiation. Open discussion, criticism, and contested negotiation are standard mechanisms of development of the policies that these networks ultimately produce and campaign

¹⁰ Rosenau's "framgregation" from James N. Rosenau 2003.

¹¹ Sklair 2002.

¹² Keck and Sikkink 1998; Martin 2003; Brysk 2000; Martin, and Wilmer 2008.

¹³ Checkel 2001, 553-588.

¹⁴ Andonova, et al. 2009.

on. The Yasuní-ITT Initiative is not neatly aligned with current international regimes and norms on oil extraction regulation, but rather pushes the limits of these structures in order to seek change, such as post-Kyoto standards for climate change governance, rather than international regulation of it.

In their study of various global governance networks, Khagram and Ali found that "contested transnational structuration processes now more visibly involved multiple sets of actors attempting to enact novel scripts of norms, principles, rules and decision making procedures that could very well be signaling a longer-term shift away from government-centric interstate regimes."¹⁵ While the Ecuadorian government plays a key role as owner of sub-soil rights, changes in the regime toward openness to new social movements, most specifically environmental movements, have created opportunity structures for new ways of looking at economic, political, and social development in the country. Thus, I concur with Okereke that "agency is located in structure, but not determined by it."¹⁶ In fact, one of the slogans of the Ecuadorian government's Administrative and Leadership Committee (CAD) on the Yasuní-ITT Campaign is to "think outside the box" to create new options to save Yasuní and devise a post-Kyoto climate change policy; in other words, "from Kyoto to Quito."¹⁷

Norms

The normative underpinnings of campaigns are crucial to the understanding of the policy outcomes and new global governance structures that they propose. For that reason, scholarship

¹⁵Khagram, Sanjeevi and Saleem 2008, 158-159.

¹⁶ Okereke 2007, 69.

¹⁷ Martínez 2007.

on constructivist perspectives of International Relations¹⁸ best reveals mechanisms of network formation and change via normative and idea processes. These studies have focused primarily on human rights issues, but the study of energy, natural resource, and conservation issues would shed light on the implications of the constructivist approach in other issue areas.

Norms and principles in the international system are often studied through the lens of non-state actors, including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Scholars who study these actors¹⁹ have found power in their ability to leverage international norms and opinions against abusive states to reform policies on local levels. Scholars who criticize these actors often cite their market-based behavior and their dependence on the state to function and operate. Part of the equation of mobilization around the Yasuní-ITT campaign is the role of NGOs and their strategies. However, the norms that motivate their agency are built around Ecuadorian-specific concepts of *sumak kawsay* in Quichua, *buen vivir* in Spanish, or *the good life* in English. Other normative foundations around these issues are social environmentalism, ethical ecology, and already established international norms of protected areas for uncontacted indigenous peoples, as well as the protection of UNESCO Man and Biosphere sites²⁰. Thus, the ideas and norms driving this campaign weave indigenous *cosmovisión* (or worldview) with global norms from international institutions.

¹⁸ Wendt 1987, 236-370; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Khagram, Riker, Sikkink, eds. 2002; Finnemore 1996, 325-347.

¹⁹ Wapner 1996; Keck, Sikkink 1998; DeMars 2005.

²⁰ Hockstetler and Keck (2007:13) discuss the Brazilian socio-environmental movement and describe it as “an attempt to make compatible the struggles for environmental sustainability and for sustainable livelihoods. Opposed to a purely expansionist capitalism on social and ecological grounds, it argues that empowering poor people *and* responding to their demands for social equity must be an integral part of any solution to environmental problems”. Many Ecuadorian environmental NGOs and actors subscribe to these norms as well.

Ecuador's justification for this campaign is based on its new Constitution, passed in September 2008, which is the first to give rights to nature and begin to define the concept "*el buen vivir*." Former President of the Constituent Assembly, Alberto Acosta, explains that this term derives from indigenous groups and cannot be defined as a linear concept of development in Western standards, but rather as "a category that is in permanent construction and reproduction." He adds,

In it life itself is at stake. Following this holistic concept, from the diversity of elements that condition human actions that bring the Good Life, material goods are not the only determining factors. There are other values at play, such as: knowledge, social and cultural recognition, ethical and even spiritual codes of conduct in relation to society and Nature, human values, a vision of the future, among others. The Good Life constitutes a central category in the philosophy of life for indigenous societies.²¹

The good life also encompasses norms based on ethical ecology as understood by scholars such as Eduardo Gudynas who argues that politics, as conceived as the democratic mobilization and decision making of people around the planet, are central to saving our planet. For Gudynas, people should see themselves as part of Nature, rather than dominate it. This aligns with the indigenous *cosmovisión* of nature in which humans are part of the cycle of the planet, rather than an anthropocentric view of nature²².

²¹ Acosta, 2009.

²² Gudynas 2003.

The call for global political action in the name of saving the planet and global climate change has been echoed by ecological economist Herman Daly,²³ Yale professor James Gustave Speth,²⁴ and author-activists Bill McKibben²⁵ and Paul Hawken.²⁶ These works emphasize the role of social movements and global citizens in the global governance of climate change. Where the normative underpinning for anti-oil extraction movements become less clear are in the economic realm. Here, scholars differ on the value of nature. In other words, can you put a price on the good life?

While Gudynas and Acosta have both argued that there is no price to be placed on protecting nature²⁷, other scholars (Aldy and Stavins²⁸, for example) argue that strict environmental regulation, enforcement, and market-based strategies are the keys to preserving our planet. The current debate in the U.S. Congress on cap-and-trade systems illustrates the prevalence of this conversation from the North, while the story of Yasuní National Park highlights the urgency of policy solutions and a need for consideration of the norms that ground them from the South. This urgency of ideas from the South is reflected in recent scholarship on “new rights advocacy.”²⁹ New rights advocates not only challenge current global policies, such as development mechanisms or climate change, but also provide alternative ideas and policies.

²³ Daly 1993.

²⁴ Speth 2008.

²⁵ Bill McKibben 2007.

²⁶ Hawken 2007.

²⁷ Gudynas 2003; Acosta 2009.

²⁸ Aldy and Stavins 2009.

²⁹ Nelson and Dorsey 2008.

Nelson and Dorsey contend that such alternatives are increasingly taking shape from the South and moving into dialogs and negotiations in transnational networks and international negotiations³⁰.

Yet there is common ground among scholars from the North and the South on issues of the environment and development. Northern scholars such as Thomas Princen, Ken Conca, and Michael Maniates,³¹ concur with Southern scholars like Gudynas and Acosta that today's levels of consumerism in the developed world have created unsustainable impacts on the planet. Princen³² calls for policies that include "sufficiency," rather than accelerated production and consumption. While "sufficiency" is not the same as "avoided emissions," it is in line with the concept of living within our natural environment, rather than exploiting it.

From Alberto Acosta and Eduardo Gudynas's point of view, the neoliberal, market-driven economies of the North have produced "*maldesarrollo*," or bad development, that cannot be copied by the rest of the world, lest we risk losing nature altogether. For these reasons, Ecuador's new constitution, in various articles,³³ gives rights to nature and calls for an economy based on a market that responds to society's needs, rather than a society built by the market.³⁴ From the President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, to leaders inside and outside of the government, those involved in the Yasuní-ITT Initiative contend that the values and norms of the good life from indigenous peoples, the protection of the Amazon and other megadiverse areas of the

³⁰ Nelson and Dorsey 2008.

³¹ Princen 2005; Princen, Maniates and Conca, eds. 2000.

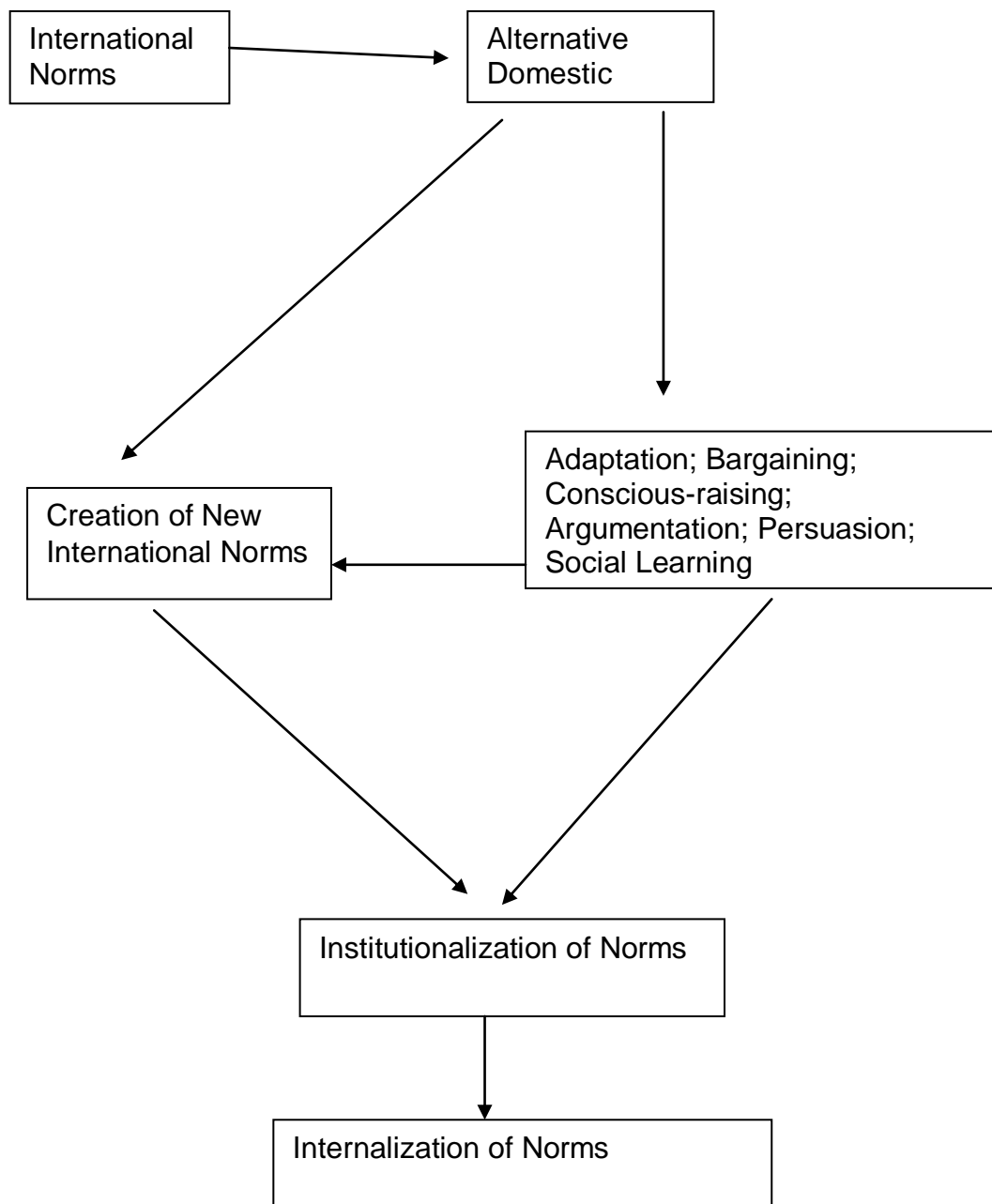
³² Princen 2005.

³³ Articles 15, 57, 72, 73, 281, 395, 313, 317, 397, 407, 413, 417 in the 2008 Constitution

³⁴ Acosta 2009.

planet, and innovative action against global warming are non-negotiable items on a future global agenda, which Ecuador would like to be part in leading and developing. As the case of Yasuní-ITT in Ecuador will demonstrate, however, these socio-ecological norms and conceptions of the good life are not without debate and difficulties in translation at the global level.

Figure 1: Dynamic Processes of Global Governance Networks



Scholars of transnational advocacy networks have emphasized the dynamics of the network processes from the international level to the domestic level, assuming that international norms will be absorbed by the domestic community or utilized by domestic opposition groups to pressure a repressive regime to change its policies.³⁵ However, a closer look at the Yasuní-ITT Initiative, aside from its innovative policy implications, points to new directions in network analysis from the South. I attribute this fury of alternative suggestions to a number of causes: 1) the emergence of developing market economies (such as China, Brazil, and India) and their political importance on the international stage; 2) the fallout from the financial crisis and global conversations to re-think post-World War II international institutions and policies; 3) social learning processes that occurred during the 1990s when many transnational networks formed. As Director of International Relations at La Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador, Carlos Espinoza commented, “This is not the globalization of the 1990s anymore.”³⁶

The intervening processes of social interaction in the 1990s through many transnational networks, coupled with challenges to Western hegemony and the economic crisis have created the perfect storm of creative invention in the South. In the first decade of this new century, we have witnessed far more interaction among Southern NGOs. Contrary to Clifford Bob’s³⁷ claim of looking for norms that “fit with international agendas,” these activists have a clear normative path and have worked with their state to seek international alliances and support, without sacrificing their original desired outcome. Like Checkel,³⁸ this dynamic process combines the

³⁵ Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999; Keck, and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 2005.

³⁶ Personal Communication with Carlos Espinoza. Quito, Ecuador March 2009.

³⁷ Bob 2005.

³⁸ Checkel 2001, 553-588.

rational bargaining for maximized utility with a serious emphasis on social interaction and learning on domestic and international levels simultaneously. In fact, Tetreault and Lipshutz's model of the "human enterprise," is the key element in understanding the emergence of this campaign³⁹. A simple analysis of NGOs and state interactions would blur the complex and synergistic interactions of those at all levels involved in this proposal. As we witness other alternative proposals to global norms and institutions, such as the REDD proposal to expand Kyoto Protocol norms and institutions, this dynamic model may be more applicable to our analysis of global governance networks and their outcomes.

While Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink's model for normative socialization processes⁴⁰ encapsulates those networks that work within the boomerang effect, this case and others from the South, do not fit. In this model, international norms are formed, such as the Kyoto Protocol and its mechanisms of Joint Initiative (JI), Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS). However, domestic communities, in this case from the South, are not satisfied with these norms and, rather than only countering them with "Battle of Seattle" resistance and protest, they formulate alternative norms and mobilize to institutionalize them. Like the Risse, *et al.* model, domestic groups work with the international community (including INGOs, IGOs, other states, and transnational corporations) to create new international norms⁴¹. This is accomplished through adaptation of their norms to suit the international community and its current structures; bargaining with key players to engage them

³⁹ Tetreault and Lipschutz 2005.

⁴⁰ Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999.

⁴¹ Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999.

in dialog and support; conscious-raising to engage civil society; argumentation and debate over details of norm implementation and institutionalization; persuasion; and social learning. The aspect of social learning is unique to this model, per Checkel's findings.⁴² It illustrates the social dimensions of interactions on domestic and international levels, such as the case of leaders for the initiative who have friendships with leaders in other countries and dialog with them about how to best frame the campaign to the international community. This information is then used to re-structure characteristics of the initiative on domestic and global levels.

The process of social interaction and norm development began in the mid-1990s. Once enough support for alternative international norms is garnered, actors seek institutionalization at domestic and international levels, as is the case in the Risse *et al.* model. Finally, the new norms become internalized via new institutional mechanisms of global governance structures and, hopefully, replication. The Yasuní-ITT initiative has received global and domestic support for its alternative norm of "avoided emissions" and protecting uncontacted indigenous peoples. These norms were institutionalized through new governmental structures in Ecuador – namely the Administrative and Leadership Council (CAD) appointed by President Correa in 2008. At the international level, Yasuní-ITT advocates are seeking its institutionalization via monetary support from the international community (including governance of the Yasuní-ITT environmental trust fund from the United Nations Development Fund) and new agreements on climate change in the post 2012 era.

This model demonstrates that international norms are not always carved in stone; they can change or be altered. It also highlights the significance of viewing international norms from

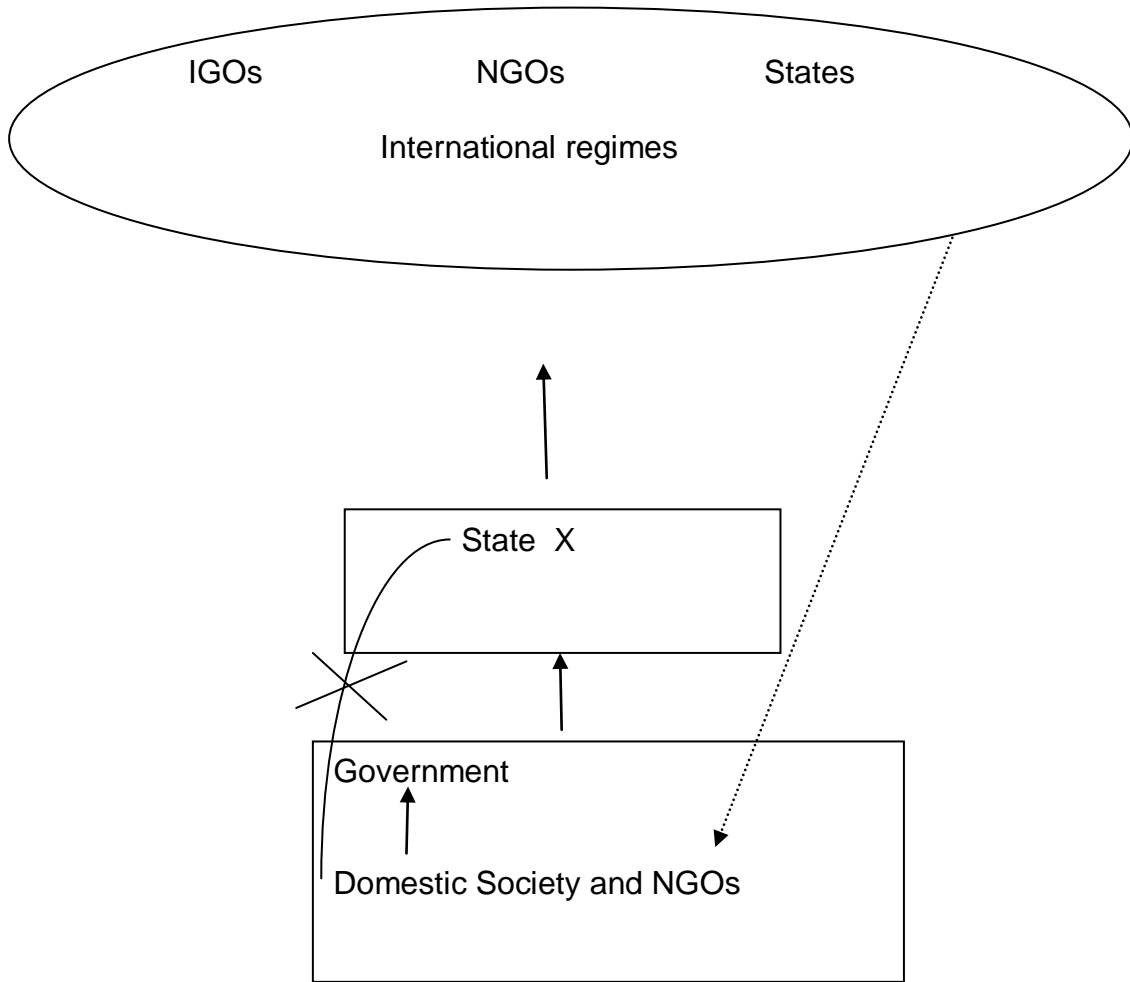
⁴² Checkel 2001, 553-588.

the South, or in this case from the rainforest. Furthermore, the model underlines the importance of people in the process and their relationships in networks at all levels; and how these relationships influence changes in the institutionalization of norms.

Another aspect of this model that is critical is political opportunity structure (POS).⁴³ Shifts in norms at all levels require good timing and openness to new concepts. While the creation of new norms does not necessitate POS, the ability to network and persuade others to accept them is dependent upon POS at domestic and global levels. This is the intricacy in trying to change norms and the behaviors that they create at domestic and global levels. The Yasuní-ITT initiative illustrates the long road of seizing POS during the Correa regime and post-Kyoto discussions on climate change. Although these are structures that have influenced the initiative, the actors involved have surely not been limited by them, as demonstrated by their innovative proposals.

⁴³ Tilly 1978.

Figure 2 The Counter Boomerang Effect



Ironically, in the counter boomerang effect, domestic actors initiate a campaign *with* the state government. Ultimately, the state becomes the representative of the normative change, institutionalizing it. During the institutionalization phase, the state may distance itself from its original civil society allies, which can cause gaps in knowledge transfer and communication among these actors. During institutionalization and the quest for acceptance at the international level, the state will represent the claim at the global level. In this case, international network collaborators often are privy to information that their domestic counterparts do not have. However, social learning is a critical component of this process. Once the state has institutionalized the norm and interacted at the international level, it then returns to work with domestic civil society to further the initiative. The Yasuní-ITT case will illustrate these dynamics.

This process may be caused by structural limitations in the international system. As states are often the actors that support and implement new international norms through international organizations and agreements, domestic civil society can be left out of the equation. Here again, social interaction is a key element of this equation. In the case of Yasuní-ITT, domestic supporters who were originally involved in the initiative re-engage and ultimately, dialog with the government and international supporters to re-fashion the initiative. Such complex global and local processes underscore the significance of people over structures and social interaction over uni-dimensional state power approaches.

Yasuní-ITT: Learning from the Past

The ITT international campaign is a jewel of an opportunity to provide a world-wide example of how to protect rare and bio-diverse areas on our planet, particularly in light of the

United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2007 report, which calls world policymakers to decrease the use of petroleum while increasing and preserving forests.⁴⁴ It also comes on the heels of an internationally well-known lawsuit filed against Chevron Texaco (formerly Texaco) beginning in 1993 in New York City and culminating in a small, courtroom in Lago Agrio, Ecuador (which ironically means ‘Sour Lake’ in English) in 2008. The case was deemed the “David and Goliath” of its time and was filed on behalf of over 30,000 indigenous and *colono* peoples who claim that the company destroyed the ecology of their northern Amazonian province and left behind grave social and health problems, reportedly including high cancer rates.⁴⁵

International and local Ecuadorian NGOs, including Oilwatch, Amazon Watch, Rainforest Action Network (RAN), Pachamama Alliance, Acción Ecológica, and Frente de la Defensa de la Amazonía, have been protesting the inadequacy of Texaco’s alleged cleanup and calling for compensation. Writing in her book *Amazon Crude*, Judith Kimerling claims that the oil spill is larger than that of the Exxon Valdez in Alaska⁴⁶. But the “Yasuní Park Depends on You” (the original name of the campaign sponsored by Acción Ecológica with other INGOs) international campaign is different, as Esperanza Martínez of Acción Ecológica argues, because the world community now knows of the destruction of the rainforest and the devastating impacts

⁴⁴ Metz, Davidson, Bosh, Dave and Meyer 2007.

⁴⁵ Langewieshce 2007.

⁴⁶ Kimerling 1991.

that oil extraction and industry can bring to, not just plant and animal life, but to the daily lives of indigenous peoples.⁴⁷

Learning from the previous campaign surrounding the Chevron Texaco case and others in the Southern Amazon, such as Sarayacu, activists, researchers, and scholars began calling for a moratorium on oil drilling in this region in the mid-1990s. In 2000, Alberto Acosta and Acción Ecológica published a book entitled, *El Ecuador Post-Petrolero*, which called for a moratorium on oil extraction in the Amazon and a move toward alternative energy sources for the country⁴⁸. This laid the groundwork for a larger plan that included opposition to global climate change, support for those portions of the developing world not included in the Kyoto Protocol, and protection for the rainforest and for those uncontacted peoples living within it.

In October 2006, an international NGO named Oilwatch and Acción Ecológica jointly sponsored a *Forum on Human Rights, Oil, and Reparation* in the Amazonian town of Coca. The forum hosted a confluence of leaders and people from all over the world in the rainforest to take a toxi-tour of its devastation and exchange their problems, strategies, and hopes for a better future. It also celebrated 10 years of Oilwatch's international mobilization on behalf of rainforests in the Southern hemisphere. The forum began with a tour of contaminated sites in the Amazon, followed by a march for human rights and dignity of the peoples who live in affected areas. It culminated in an exchange of experiences from peoples all over the global South. This event was a key element in discussing alternatives to petroleum extraction and fostered information sharing among leaders in similar situations around the globe.

⁴⁷ Martínez 2007.

⁴⁸ Acosta 2000.

Following this forum, Rafael Correa was elected president and began his term in January 2007. The election of President Correa is significant as his cabinet and supporters were members of the anti-oil extraction community. Furthermore, his first Minister of Foreign Affairs, María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, was formerly the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Regional Director for South America. She was also Senior Advisor on Biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples for IUCN. When President Correa announced his official support of leaving oil underground in the ITT block in June 2007, he designated the study of the proposal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by Minister Espinosa.

According to former Minister of Energy and Mines, Alberto Acosta, the first phase of strategizing about an official proposal began in January 2007 after President Correa's election. Before becoming minister, Acosta worked with Acción Ecológica leader, Esperanza Martínez, on a plan for leaving oil underground. Once he was appointed Minister, Acosta, worked with Martínez to refine the proposal for its eventual presentation to President Correa. Acosta remembers the time period between January and June 2007 as one of tension between the ministry and the Executive President of Petroecuador, Carlos Pareja Yannuzzi. This illustrates the push and pull between governmental institutions involved in this process. While Acosta supported the proposal to leave oil underground, Pareja sought outside contracts from *la Industria Petrolera de Venezuela* (PdVsa) of Venezuela, *Sinopec* of China, *Petrobras* of Brazil, and *Enlap* of Chile in an attempt to convince the president to drill for oil. However, during the Petroecuador Board Meeting on March 30, 2007, President Correa accepted the proposal to leave oil underground.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Martínez 2009, 1-13.

On June 5, 2007, President Correa officially announced his support of the Yasuní-ITT proposal, but with the caveat that the international community had to compensate Ecuador for its sacrifice of 20% of its reserves. He stated, “Ecuador doesn’t ask for charity, but does ask that the international community share in the sacrifice and compensates us with at least half of what our country would receive, in recognition of the environmental benefits that would be generated by keeping this oil underground.”⁵⁰ The proposal immediately caught international attention and by later that June, Amazon Watch, a San Francisco-based NGO, sponsored high publicity trips by Hollywood’s Darryl Hannah and Q’orianka Kilcher to visit the affected areas. Trudie Styler, Sting’s wife and founder of the Rainforest Foundation, also visited Yasuní and pledged her support with clips of the campaign and the park in Sting’s concerts. Footage of Yasuní narrated by Martin Sheen was even played during the July 7, 2007 Live Earth concert series, organized by former United States Vice President Al Gore.

Yet even the celebrity status of the proposal could not disguise the fact that President Correa had accepted it with a Plan A (leaving oil underground) and a Plan B (extracting oil). Thus, as oil prices soared in the summer 2007, President Correa announced an agreement for possible contracting of the ITT block with Enlap, Sinopec, and Petrobras. From this moment, the Yasuní-ITT Initiative would begin its zigzag policy approach, swaying between Plans A and B.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Correa, “El Ecuador esperará ocho meses para decidir sobre campo ITT”

⁵¹ Martínez 2009, 1-13.

However, the proposal gained international momentum and support when, on September 24, 2007, President Correa presented it before the United Nations at a meeting on global climate change. He said, “For the first time in history, an oil producing country – dependent on oil export for one third of its budget – proposes to forgo this income for the well-being of humanity...[Ecuador] invites the world to join our effort through fair compensation in order to lay the foundations for a more humane and fair civilization.”⁵² Following this talk, the president presented the plan at the Clinton Global Initiative in New York City. The plan was awarded an honorable mention.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes of these public events, transnational networks and national institutional arrangements were developing. According to Max Christian, formerly of the Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology program at the University of Maryland and former member of a US working group on the ITT Block, President Correa had worked with Ambassador Luis Gallegos and Organization of American States (OAS) Representative Gustavo Palacio in Washington, D.C. to ask international experts to study the options for revenue-substitution for the ITT project to finance the moratorium on Yasuní; effectively seeking governance options outside the sovereign state. In addition, the Wallace Global Fund (in conjunction with the Clinton Global Initiative) funded a World Resources Institute (WRI) study of the viability of revenue substitution models, such as carbon trading and debt cancellation. As Christian pointed out, “these models have implications on a global scale and they may provide new options for avoided carbon emissions from leaving oil in place in order to protect biodiversity and indigenous cultures, not a currently accepted methodology by the United

⁵² Correa, “Speech of the President of Ecuador; High Level Dialogue on Climate Change of the 62 Period of Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations”, September 24, 2007.

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).”⁵³ Researchers at this point in the initiative were looking to interject the idea of leaving the oil unexploited in order to protect biodiversity and indigenous cultures into the post-Kyoto framework discussions that were gearing up to take place in Bali in December 2007.

A web sphere analysis⁵⁴ of the two most prominent websites for the Yasuní -ITT campaign and their links in the initial stage of development of the proposal in 2007 reveals that Southern-based NGOs are not explicitly listed on the website Live Yasuní that was created by Amazon Watch, Save America’s Forests, Finding Species, and Max Christian, all NGOs and actors based in the United States. Given the prevalence of Internet use for coordination and website construction in this campaign, an examination of the sites that are officially linked to the main websites indicates network partners and the closeness of their affiliation. In the diagram below, the yellow highlighted actors are ones that are common in both of the main websites, and are all U.S.-based NGOs. While Amazonía por la Vida is directly linked to the Live Yasuní website, its Ecuadorian and Southern-based NGO partners are not, as illustrated in the right-hand diagram. Therefore, the Live Yasuní website that was developed around the Live Earth concert series of 2007 did not incorporate directly Ecuadorian and Southern-based partners. Such analysis illustrates the distances and challenges (perhaps) of organizing in global civil society.

⁵³ Interview with Max Christian with author, 21 June 2007.

⁵⁴ See also Carpenter 2007, 643-667.

Figure 3

Live Yasuní	Amazonía por la Vida (Amazon for Life)
Amazonía por la Vida	Live Yasuní
WRI	Amazon Watch
Earth Economics	Save Americas Forests
Save Americas Forests	Finding Species
Finding Species	Amazon Def. Coalition
Amazon Watch	The Pachamama Alliance
Land is Life	Centro de Derechos Económicos
Wallace Global Fund	Oilwatch
U of MD	Acción Ecológica

In a conversation with Mitchell Anderson from Amazon Watch, based in San Francisco, he admitted that some Southern-based organizations were skeptical of the need for a web site other than the Amazonía por la Vida site. While he did specify that there was communication over the two-week period that it took to develop the site from both Southern and Northern NGOs, he also stated that there were tensions between Southern and Northern partners. Ultimately, said Anderson, “more communication between the two during this time period would have been helpful.”⁵⁵

Interestingly, the sticking point of the Live Yasuní website (which had the potential to expose the campaign to over 2 billion viewers of the Live Earth concert) was whether this site would act as the recipient of monetary pledges to the campaign to pay for keeping oil

⁵⁵Interview with Mitchell Anderson with author, Telephone Interview, 10 August 2007.

underground in the park. Such a payment scheme has not developed as of yet, which some activists found frustrating. Instead, the Live Yasuní allows viewers to sign a petition of support for the campaign. The joint Skype Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) and telephone conversations about the development of the Live Yasuní site established that it would act as a portal to direct supporters to the Amazonía por la Vida website and to eventually establish a system of supporter payment on the Amazonía por la Vida site. The analysis of this web sphere information reveals that while Northern and Southern NGOs collaborated on this campaign: 1) much of the fanfare and notoriety had been directed toward Northern NGOs, 2) the technical support from the North created the Live Yasuní campaign, which expanded their viewership and potential support, and 3) tensions existed about who (Northern or Southern NGOs) should ultimately govern the monetary inflow of support for Yasuní and its implementation.

Signs of coordination among Northern and Southern NGOs during 2007 were: a) the two workshops in September and November hosted in Washington, D.C. and Quito respectively to discuss the ITT proposal and plans, b) its presentation to the Clinton Global Initiative, and c) the proposal presentation at the Bali Conference on Climate Change in December 2007. David Batker from Earth Economics in Tacoma, Washington and Carlos Larrea from La Universidad Andina Simon Bolívar in Quito coordinated the November 26-28, 2007 workshop with members of the Ecuadorian government, including Minister of Foreign Relations, María Fernanda Espinosa and Lucia Ruiz Mantilla from the Ministry of Energy and Mines, in addition to various NGO participants from the North and the South.⁵⁶ These workshops stimulated high levels of

⁵⁶ Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio e Integración, “Encuentro Taller- Iniciativa Yasuní-ITT” 2007.

coordination globally and locally for this campaign and the commitment of the actors to devise plans that meet global needs.

For the national government and for transnational network partners, 2007 was organizationally a tumultuous time period. While the government announced with fanfare its plan to keep oil underground, it did not provide institutional support for the initiative in the form of funding or a new office to handle the details and project development of such a massive undertaking. Officially, the initiative was within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the minister's advisor, Lucía Gallardo (formerly of Acción Ecológica) was in charge of developing the detailed proposal to present to the international community. Additionally, Minister of Energy and Mines, Alberto Acosta established links with the German International Cooperation Fund (GTZ). The spring 2007 included two visits to Ecuador of German Bundestag parliamentarians to discuss the initiative and Germany's possible support of it. During June 2007 at the official ceremony inaugurating the proposal, representatives from Norway, Spain, and Italy also demonstrated initial interest in the proposal.

However, as planning for the complex mechanisms of financing and guarantees began to unfold throughout the summer and fall 2007, some cracks in the organizational structure were evident. For example, many NGOs commented that they were very involved in the initial setup of the plan and launch in June 2007. Some, like Amazon Watch, were working within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs doing things like writing briefs for the president and helping manage the press at the Clinton Global Initiative in New York City in September 2007. While various INGOs accompanied President Correa to the Clinton Global Initiative, they observed a lack of coordination on the part of the Ecuadorian government to promote the proposal. One activist

commented that the Ecuadorian press secretary went out shopping, instead of attending the meeting. Others, such as Finding Species, commented that they felt very “involved in” and “informed of” the initiative. They provided photos of Yasuní National Park for the promotional materials. One NGO said that this was the “first time they had worked *with* the government on an initiative.”⁵⁷

Yet, on the national government side of the campaign, Lucía Gallardo, General Director of the Environment in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was meeting regularly with national and transnational NGOs, but not making progress on a plan. One member of this working group contended that Ms. Gallardo was “very radical” in her approach to the initiative. He maintained that Ms. Gallardo was very critical of the Kyoto Protocol and created tension between national and international actors by stating that the Yasuní-ITT proposal was “an Ecuadorian project and you will do what we say.”⁵⁸ The anti-Kyoto Protocol argument strained relations with the larger INGOs, such as The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Conservation International (CI), which were concerned with how this plan to leave oil underground would apply to Kyoto standards.

Smaller INGOs and national NGOs commented in interviews that they liked the original proposal to seek global donations to keep oil underground, even if it was not within the Kyoto guidelines. These INGOs, such as Amazon Watch, Finding Species, and Pachamama, all had people on the ground in Quito who had been working in the Amazon for many years. According to one INGO activist in this group, “Quito is very small”. How things happened in the beginning had everything to do with trust.” However, all interviewees commented that the lack of formal

⁵⁷ Interviews in Quito-Ecuador with author, Spring 2009.

⁵⁸ Interviews in Quito-Ecuador by with author, Spring 2009.

government institutionalization of the initiative within the Ecuadorian government negatively impacted the progress of the initiative and confidence in it both nationally and internationally.⁵⁹

The fall of 2007 was filled with studies and development of the proposal via transnational networks with scientists and INGOs, but by December 2007, Minister of Foreign Affairs María Fernanda Espinosa had resigned and María Isabel Salvador had replaced her. This change in leadership was also a change in institutionalization. By January 2008, an office of the Technical Secretary for the Yasuní-ITT Initiative was created and Juana Ramos, alternative assembly representative for Alberto Acosta in the Constituent Assembly, was appointed to the position. While internally this heightened a sense of government buy-in for the proposal, actors complained that this created friction between Lucía Gallardo, the Director of the Environment, who had previously led the initiative, and Juana Ramos. Furthermore, NGO actors contend that the period of Ms. Ramos' appointment from January through her resignation in June 2008 was a time of estrangement between the government and civil society.

The time period of January through June 2008 differed from the first phase of the initial proposal that was based on the ethical and environmental value of Yasuní to the planet with donations from civil society and collaborating countries. During this second phase of mobilization and institutionalization, Juana Ramos and a consultant, Roberto Salazar (who was contracted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before her tenure as Technical Secretary), began to consider market alternatives to finance the \$350 million that President Correa told them they had to raise by June 2008. Actors involved in the network claim that Ms. Ramos met with oil

⁵⁹ Interviews in Quito-Ecuador by with author, Spring 2009.

company executives and other transnational corporations regarding possible financing of the campaign. However, Ms. Ramos contends that she interpreted her most important role as saving Yasuní through raising the finances by the president's deadline of June 2008. This included creating the financial mechanisms that would support donations to the initiative. To this end, she claims to have met with holdings companies and the European Union Commission representatives, but not with oil company executives for donations to the project.⁶⁰

Secretary Ramos viewed the Yasuní-ITT Initiative as not only protecting the park's biodiversity, but as "a pilot project toward a new scheme of development for the country."⁶¹ Her goals were to develop the financial skeleton of the proposal, work with civil society and with the local communities to develop the proposal. However, Ramos noted that the June deadline forced her to focus on the financial structure more than she had originally anticipated. After working with Dr. Carlos Larrea and the technical advisors, she said that they quickly realized that the only efficient manner to raise the \$350 million goal was to sell carbon bonds. This change from donations and international compensation to carbon bond sales was a significant change in the original intent and original proposal made by Alberto Acosta in March 2007 when he was then Minister of Energy and Mines⁶².

Ramos relayed that there was great international interest in a carbon bond initiative, most specifically from Spain, Norway, Germany, and various European parliamentarians with whom

⁶⁰ Interview with Juana Ramos with author, Quito Ecuador, 6 March 2009.

⁶¹ Interview with Juana Ramos with author in, Quito, Ecuador, 6 March 2009.

⁶² Alberto Acosta became the President of the Constituent Assembly to re-write the Constitution in 2008.

she had met. She travelled to Europe in March 2008 to meet with leaders and gather their reactions to the proposal. The concept was to relate the bond value to the value of the petroleum left underground. This, she said, “was an enticing means of valuing the bond as stock prices for oil were easier to quantify than were other forms of carbon capture that were in the international markets.”⁶³ From that point, various financial companies from Europe were interested in talking with the Ecuadorian government about the proposal, which may explain the concern from various NGO actors that Ramos was meeting with transnational corporations to donate funds.

While the carbon bond concept generated international interest, on the civil society level, it stirred criticism. Ramos commented that organizations such as Oil Watch, an INGO directed then by Esperanza Martínez of Acción Ecológica, criticized the sale of carbon bonds as a means of promoting the Kyoto Protocol and allowing polluters to keep polluting. However, Ramos asserted that carbon bonds for unextracted oil are not accepted measures under the Kyoto Protocol. Furthermore, Ramos stated:

We had to make all of it work to fulfill what we called the Energy Transformation Process (Proceso de Transformación Energética). A part of the resources raised by the Yasuní ITT fund was planned to be used in this energy transition process, being conscious that, in the interim, we would stop being an oil producing country; so we must modify the economic system. [The year] 2030 cannot come without a stable process of economic substitution for Ecuadorian dependency on oil; we have to make a change. Therefore, we thought everything was going to be done as was said; besides we believed that environmental services could be an important source of income for the country. I

⁶³ Interview with Juana Ramos with author, Quito, Ecuador, 6 March 2009.

totally share the opinion that not all of the environmental services should have an economic objective, although there are environmental services that can benefit everybody, and one of those is carbon capturing.⁶⁴

Thus, the Yasuní-ITT trajectory evolved from a plan for compensation to a plan that would provide new economic bases for Ecuador and create a foundation for an *Ecuador Post-Petrolero*. The issue, however, was the economic justification for tying Yasuní's survival to market mechanisms.

When Minister of Foreign Affairs Salvador rejected a meeting with Ramos and representatives with a holding company in Spain in May 2008, Ramos resigned from the Technical Secretary position. For two weeks or so, Lucía Gallardo assumed the role, but the *Consejo Administrativo y Directivo* (CAD- Administrative and Leadership Council, in English) was created shortly thereafter with owner of Metropolitan Touring and former Mayor of Quito, Roque Sevilla, as its president. Ramos met with Sevilla and reviewed her work as Technical Secretary and said that she is “very happy” to see the CAD's development of the project.

May 2008 was a tumultuous time institutionally for the Yasuní-ITT proposal, but President Correa continued his international promotion of it. On May 12th, President Correa presented the proposal to representatives of the Fifth Latin American and Caribbean-European Union Summit.⁶⁵ On May 21, 2008, OPEC Secretary General Abdala Salem El-Badri visited

⁶⁴ Interview with Juana Ramos with author, Quito, Ecuador, 6 March 2009.

⁶⁵ *El Comercio*, “Correa Expondrá en la Cumbre ALC-UE su plan para dejar crudo en tierra,” 12 May 2008.

Ecuador and reviewed the initiative with President Correa.⁶⁶ This visit was in response to President Correa's presentation of the Yasuní-ITT Initiative at the OPEC meeting the year before where he also proposed a tax on petroleum exports from OPEC countries, later to be called the Correa-Daly tax after ecological economist Herman Daly. The conceptualization of President Correa's speech was assisted by former University of Maryland researcher, Max Christian, and other members of the NGO working group on the initiative.⁶⁷ Thus, while the institutional mechanisms of the proposal inside Ecuador were weak, the campaign continued at the global level.

In June 2008, President Correa, via Executive Decree, formed the CAD – Administrative and Leadership Council – with Roque Sevilla as the President, Francisco Carrión and Yolanda Kakabadse as Commission Members, Galo Armas as the Secretariat, and Carlos Larrea as the Technical Coordinator. With this new institution, the president also extended the deadline to collect the \$350 million for the initiative until September 2008. This deadline was later extended to December 2008, and was finally lifted in February 2009. With the February 2009 executive decree, the Ecuadorian government officially made the Yasuní-ITT Initiative part of its permanent environmental and foreign policy without a deadline for funding collection⁶⁸. The imposition of deadlines for funding was highly criticized by civil society. Outside observers, possible donors, and NGO actors viewed these arbitrary dates as a possible ploy to make it appear that Ecuador supported the proposal, leaving open the possibility of later extracting oil

⁶⁶ *El Comercio*, “Secretario General de la OPEP Visita Ecuador Interesado en el Proyecto ITT,” 20 May 2008.

⁶⁷ Interview with Max Christian with author, telephone Interview, 21 June 2007.

⁶⁸ Executive Decree Number 1572.

from the ITT block. The decision to make the initiative official policy strengthened the proposal and gave it national and international credibility.

Once the CAD was formed, their initial investigation into international feasibility and acceptance of the proposal took place on a visit to Europe during the summer 2008. During the fall through December 2008, the CAD reviewed suggestions from its international visits and presented its revised Yasuní-ITT proposal in December 2008. On a visit to Washington, D.C. on December 16, 2008, Roque Sevilla and Yolanda Kakabadse presented the new plan at the World Resources Institute with NGO representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, Save America's Forests, Amazon Alliance, Amazon Watch, World Wildlife Fund, Finding Species, among others. The funding for the initiative was still directed to the over 40 protected areas of Ecuador and to other projects as outlined in the National Development Plan of Senplades. However, the carbon bond initiative had changed. Rather than selling bonds at the price of petroleum, the government proposed to sell Certificates of Guarantee Yasuní (CGY) not at the price of oil, but at the price of non-emitted carbon. Thus, the concept of leaving oil underground, while still central to the proposal, had been transformed to the environmental benefit of avoided emissions. This shift in conceptualization left the proposal still market-driven, yet available through different market vendors. In this case, the CGYs would be traded in carbon markets, principally in the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS). Finally, the CAD also included the original funding sources of contributions from collaborating countries and members of civil society.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Sevilla 2008.

In the December 2008 meeting, Sevilla and Kakabadse fielded questions from NGO representatives about the feasibility of such funding sources, given the strict regulations of the EU ETS until 2012 and the extreme fluctuation in pricing of carbon in the voluntary markets. Others asked about the trust fund for the donations and earnings, and how it would be governed. They asked if there would be an international oversight committee and an international plan for monitoring the implementation of such funds. Furthermore, many wanted to know why Ecuador had not presented the new plan at the UNFCCC Global Climate Change talks in Poznan earlier that month. They questioned whether the Ecuadorian government truly backed this proposal.

Sevilla and Kakabadse explained that President Correa supported the proposal and was planning to announce his commitment in 2009. Until that official acceptance came, they were not at liberty to present the proposal to the UNFCCC. They further relayed their interest in NGO reaction to the plan and any suggestions to strengthen it. Clearly, this trip was one of mutual interest and feedback for the Ecuadorian government and potential donors/transnational network members. This contact with transnational network members was also one of the first opportunities that NGO actors had to hear the new proposal since Juana Ramos had resigned in June 2008.

With this new plan and a strengthened institutional anchor to the initiative, the Yasuní-ITT campaign seemed as though it would gain momentum in 2009. However, by January 2009, Minister of Mining and Petroleum, Derlis Palacios, announced future bidding for the ITT block, stating that ““If we find an immediate solution [for keeping oil underground], we will consider it. I think that we have already lost good time. We will make every necessary attempt to protect the

environment, but the country needs money.”⁷⁰ The next day, newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fander Falconí, apologized for this miscommunication and stated that this was not the government plan. President Correa, following that announcement, endorsed leaving oil underground with an executive decree that made the Yasuní-ITT proposal official foreign policy for the country without a deadline.⁷¹

The ping pong of Plan A and Plan B had drained much of the energy from the transnational networks’ actors. Many were skeptical of government plans and had disconnected from the initiative during the fall 2008. Complicating the ITT issue was block 31, which was next to the ITT block within Yasuní National Park and the Waorani Ethnic Reserve. Initially, it looked as though Petrobras would begin oil extraction in that block in 2008. However, in September 2008, Petrobras returned the block to the Ecuadorian government. During this time frame, however, the international community and transnational network actors lost their confidence in the ITT proposal if the President was disposed to drill for oil within the park just next to the ITT block.⁷²

The CAD contracted a series of studies during spring 2009 regarding the legal, financial and environmental elements of the Yasuní-ITT proposal that they presented in December 2008. Funding from the German International Cooperation Enterprise, GTZ, financed the consultations that were presented at a government workshop in Puenbo, Ecuador, March 2008 to review the findings. While one would have expected nearly two years after the initial announcement of the

⁷⁰ *Diario Hoy*, “Campo ITT irá a licitación internacional”, 9 January 2009.

⁷¹ *El Comercio*, “El Régimen Congela la Explotación en el Yasuní,” 14 February 2009

⁷² Interview with Verónica Quitiguina with author, Quito, Ecuador, 4 March 2009.

initiative a finalization of the proposal with a clear strategy to disseminate it worldwide, the Puenbo meeting demonstrated the CAD's indecision on its financial mechanisms.

International consultants from Climate Focus, Katoomba, and Silvestrum presented their findings, which all agreed that the carbon trading markets would be difficult avenues of finance for the project because the EU ETS had already established guidelines through 2012, which did not include CGYs. Some discussed US market potential with possible future US legislation on climate change. Following this discussion, participants from the technical advisory committee discussed other funding options, such as CGYs to guarantee debt forgiveness and international loans (which was quickly rejected). At the conclusion of the meeting, Roque Sevilla thanked everyone and asked if they could meet one more time to review other funding options. Still, Sevilla remained positive and asked everyone to “think outside the box” about this proposal. He understood the difficulties and challenges of it, but preferred to focus on its exciting possibilities.⁷³

Over the course of the next few weeks, the proposal was revised a final time to include CGYs as a guarantee for debt forgiveness and less of an emphasis on carbon markets. The key element of the previous proposal of avoided or non-emitted emissions remained, yet now in payment for debt forgiveness or through voluntary carbon markets, rather than the EU ETS. A renewed emphasis on collaborating country and civil society donations was also included. One transnational actor involved in the discussions commented that CAD President, Roque Sevilla, was determined to make the proposal work. Rather than listen to the negative aspects, he changed the proposal to something positive and included aspects that actors from civil society

⁷³ Participant observation.

had favored.⁷⁴ The CAD worked tirelessly on this new version, including Sunday meetings at their personal residences and evening conferences.

Part of the impetus for reform of the proposal was from international consultants. However, a significant catalyst for change came from civil society. Many transnational actors were critical of the carbon market emphasis. They preferred aspects of preserving Yasuní for environmental-ethical reasons, not just for its economic value. Former Minister of Energy and Mines, Alberto Acosta, Esperanza Martínez of Acción Ecológica, Joseph Vogel from La Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), and Uruguayan academic Eduardo Gudynas released a critique of the proposal in the spring 2009, which was later published in English in the United States as well. They emphasized alternative forms of funding and Ecuador's responsibility to protect Yasuní without market reinforcements.⁷⁵ Their close relationship with La Universidad Andina economist Carlos Larrea, the CAD Technical Coordinator, coupled with other currents from civil society supporting them, influenced the final CAD version of the Yasuní-ITT proposal.

Following the release in May 2009 of the final proposal, CAD members travelled internationally to gain support. Yolanda Kakabadse visited Joe Aldy, US Special Assistant on Energy and Climate Change in the White House in May 2009. Later that month, Alberto Acosta presented the plan to the German Committee on Economic and Development Cooperation. In June 2009, the CAD met with German officials, ending in unanimous support for the proposal by

⁷⁴ Interview with Roque Sevilla with author, telephone interview, Quito, Ecuador, February 5, 2009.

⁷⁵ Acosta, Gudynas, Martínez and Vogel 2009.

the Bundestag. Other meetings took place in Great Britain and Italy as well. By September 2009, the German government had pledged \$50 million over 13 years to the initiative and Spanish officials were considering a plan to pledge \$20 million over the same time period.⁷⁶ As of October 2009, the mechanism for individual donations via the Internet had not been established, but was anticipated. Ecuadorian Ambassador to the United Nations (former Minister of Foreign Affairs who worked on initial stages of the proposal), María Fernanda Espinoza, was working on the financial structure of the trust fund with the UNDP.

The long road to the final proposal of the Yasuní-ITT Initiative is a story of local and global interactions with dedicated civil society members. Ironically, the final version of the proposal looks very similar to its original form, yet with critical additions of CGYs and market options for funding. The process of getting to the final version included bumps along the way of lack of institutional commitment and varying degrees of communication with civil society. Still, few meetings have been held with members of the Waorani peoples and local leaders and park officials. However, the creation of the CAD and its weaving of local and international norms and mechanisms, in addition to high levels of dialog among actors, have produced an innovative policy option for Ecuadorian people and the international community.

While Ecuadorian government officials did not sign the UNDP trust fund agreement at the UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen in December 2009, President Correa affirms his continued support and enthusiasm for the proposal. Widespread criticism has been heard from civil society members, including NGOs, who had hoped the proposal would be finalized. Following the Copenhagen meetings and the president's rejection of the UNDP trust fund signing, CAD

⁷⁶ *El Universo*, "Correa aboga por carretera Manta-Manaos", 30 September 2009.

President Roque Sevilla and member Yolanda Kakabadse resigned, as well as Foreign Minister Fander Falconí. President Correa continues to travel the globe simultaneously campaigning to leave oil underground in the ITT block and still extract from other areas of the park, such as neighboring Block 31. Still the Yasuní-ITT campaign remains alive through the massive mobilization of global civil society and its ending remains untold.

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