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CRUDE, CASH AND CONSERVATION: a trade-off for protecting isolated tribes in the Ecuadorian Amazon
Statement of originality

I hereby declare that this dissertation has been composed by me and is based on my own work.

Signed: Andrea Defaz Herrera

Word count: 14,899
Abstract

Ecuador’s high dependence on oil as a source of revenue for economic growth, has fostered a clash between oil extraction, and the conservation of isolated indigenous people. This dissertation analyses how dependence on oil revenues has influenced the political economy of Ecuador and consequently changed the environmental discourse of the National Government in the last years. The study brings attention to the isolated indigenous people in the Ecuadorian Amazon - Tagaeri and Taromenani- whose existence has been threatened by oil extraction in their territory. The analysis of the State’s discourses and actions show why the Government itself is jeopardizing the public strategies for isolated tribes’ protection and goes against what is stated in policies and plans. Alternatives proposed in this dissertation, as part of a trade-off, could complement the national strategies related with the diversification of the economy and the implementation of renewable energy which go according to existing conservation policies. In order to protect isolated tribes and environment, these alternatives could promote economic growth and, at the same time, could protect indigenous people in voluntary isolation as a primary step to moving towards a less dependent oil economy.
Acknowledgements

This dissertation has been an insight journey to strengthen my Ecuadorian roots and to commit even more with their prevalence in globalised times. During this research process, I received invaluable mentorship from Dr. Julie Cupples, her knowledge and guidance have been essential for completing this dissertation. I also would like to thank the National Government of Ecuador for gave me the opportunity to further my studies and for the experience of been an Ecuadorian representative in this country.

I would like to thank my parents and brothers for their continue love and support during this year and for motivate me to keep cultivating my soul. Finally, thanks to all the friends that became family.
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## Abbreviations

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALADI</td>
<td>Latin American Integration Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATPDEA</td>
<td>Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>Andean Community of Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDM</td>
<td>Clean Development Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IACHR</td>
<td>Interamerican Commission of Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPV</td>
<td>Indigenous People in Voluntary Isolation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAE</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJHRC</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Cults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDD</td>
<td>Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHRC</td>
<td>United Nations – Humans Right Council</td>
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<td>YNP</td>
<td>Yasuní National Park</td>
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Chapter I: Introduction

Ecuador, a multi-ethnic and multicultural country, hosts one of the most biodiverse regions of the world, fourteen different indigenous nationalities and is a land rich in oil and natural resources. Within its territory, two tribes of people who live in voluntary isolation have been identified: Tagaeri and Taromenanani. Generally, indigenous people represent to society a real testimony of culture, traditions and history; which makes their protection fundamental. Given the natural resource richness of the Amazon, indigenous tribes have historically been seen as a problem, since their presence is an obstacle to extraction; not just for the Government, but also for multinationals and illegal merchants (Chávez, 2011).

Since Ecuador is highly dependent on oil for its economy, the State has reinforced its control over oil extraction making even harder for indigenous people and activists to fight what is an uneven battle, given that national discourse and policies are pro-natural resource extraction. Thus, the fate of the Amazon region and its indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation (IPVI) are under serious and immediate threat. Hence, the State’s role with respect to the effectiveness in resolving conflicts that directly affect the well-being of indigenous tribes is taken into account for analysing how priorities have change over the years. Also, the power and influence of China as an unlimited financial channel has also drawn attention since future oil production is already committed to pay China’s loans (Schneyer and Medina, 2013).

The economic system has pre-established how world development should be, condemning Southern countries to remain in the role of suppliers. This showed the power that rich countries have to decide and to limit access to technology, making difficult for countries seeking new alternatives of development. As part of this research, emphasis is placed on post-development theory as a base for promoting new options that create a model combining environment protection while proposing a sustainable way of life. As a country seeking diversification of its economy, Ecuador needs to leave dependence on oil and to strengthen its commitment to IPVI and environment protection.
Given the paradoxical relation between conservation and development, the possibilities to achieve both without compromising the other are limited. While governments debate between protecting their citizens’ welfare over the environment, policy-makers look for win-win solutions that can mitigate environmental contamination; unfortunately these are not always successful. For instance, the question I would like to pose here is: Is it possible to propose a trade-off between resource extraction and conservation of voluntary isolated indigenous people who live in the Ecuadorian Amazon? A trade-off is a situation where there is one winner and one loser; it is a balance between two desirable but incompatible features (Feiock and Stream, 2001).

In addition, three specific objectives have been established for this study:

1. To analyse how the state’s discourses have changed in recent years, going from a conservationism and nature protection discourse to a pro-extractivism discourse, especially regarding oil extraction in the Yasuní National Park (YNP) and the incidents around indigenous people in voluntary isolation (IPVI).

2. To present the different environmental and social implications for IPVI and how oil activities can jeopardise their wellbeing.

3. To determinate if a trade-off between extractivism and protection could be possible or not; suggesting alternatives that could be taken by the state in order to protect isolated tribes and continue with the extractive activities.

In order to logically present the findings, this research is divided in six chapters: the first chapter offers a brief introduction, second and third chapters present the literature review and the methodology used in this research respectively. The fourth chapter introduces Tagaeri and Taromenani tribes and the different implications for their welfare caused by oil activities. The next chapter is divided in two subchapters: the first section discusses the conflict around oil drilling in YNP and its controversy regarding the State’s role and discourses. The next section analyses the trade-off and alternatives that the State could implement in order to protect IPVI whilst continuing with an
extractive economy; as well as the future challenges for the State. The final chapter is for recommendations and conclusions.

Even though this research is focused in Tagaeri and Taromenani tribes, the implications and consequences are not limited to them as isolated tribes, but also has connotations for indigenous populations in the Amazon region of Ecuador, since they have already ensured the adversities of drilling. The intention of this research is to show how the permanent position of Ecuador on the European/Western path to development has brought a form of replacement for local history, knowledge and modes of development. The idea of modernity has imposed in Latin America a perceived ideal of development which has ultimately positioned Ecuador in a trilemma between conservation, extraction and development, where uncontacted tribes have been threatened and in some cases, murdered.

For these reasons, Ecuador presents a special case that follows a decolonial approach and presents a new way of development, but at the same time follows an extractive development. That is why it is important to analyse, present and discuss the relevance of the facts as events have transpired over recent years in favour of extractive activities. Additionally, society’s role as a contender in the fight for defending uncontacted tribes has been key and how they have been participating in voluntary demonstrations, activities and research in order to defend and to protect them. Furthermore, it will be important to discuss the role of public actors that have the power to decide and control how oil extraction should be conducted; in some cases this influences directly the Government’s decisions to start new extracting projects, including new policies and laws in favour of extraction.
Chapter II: Literature review

The theoretical framework used in this research is based on the need to advance to a new era of development. For Ecuador, this has been represented by a bind to permanent colonial times, where traditional approaches have somehow led to the country’s unfavourable current circumstances. In this aspect, the idea of post-development provides new ways of thinking and leaving behind of what has been established as “underdeveloped”. Together with the political economy, a decolonial approach is used to describe how the new extractive tendencies can be assumed as a new colonisation process for indigenous peoples fighting for their rights and land recognition.

A key feature in Ecuador’s politics is that the country has been governed by presidents, who have shaped their discourse according to ideological beliefs. Since the presidential discourse nowadays is following an anti-capitalist tendency, the political economy of the country is based on an extractivism path. The discourse highlights the need to leave behind transnational power and disseminate ideas of poverty alleviation, integration of historically excluded people and enforce the populist discourse to gain acceptance among the citizens. What is not being said, but is mentioned by post-development academics, is that the State power and control increase at the same time.

2.1 Political economy of extractive economies

Political economy of extractive economies critically analyses the influence of the economy and welfare of a nation in the establishment of policies, in order to obtain the maximum revenue possible regarding natural resource extraction and its resale. Hence, development in Latin America has been defined according to Eurocentric and Western stipulations and paradigms (Cuppes, 2013) and, has marked the path for a high dependence on natural resource extraction and raw material exports, transforming these countries, according to Veltmeyer (2013), into extractive economies. For instance, Latin America can be considered as a terminal economy because of the high dependency on non-renewable resources. In other words, the pursuit of natural resources and raw materials which
continues to support a capitalism system and industrialised production of the richest countries (Veltmeyer, 2013).

The role of power in the colonisation process of Latin America included a complete domination of governments and people, leading to an inevitable exploitation of natural resources surrounded by high levels of poverty and environmental contamination. According to Smith (1999), the struggle that indigenous people suffered was related to the oppression and possession of resources, imposing new beliefs and the rendering of traditional culture as worthless. This increased dependency on exports has clearly meant that within the colonisation process, there were also forced labour, environmental destruction and transnational companies’ power consolidating the economic dependency on natural resources (Smith, 1999).

The gap between conservation and extractivism is huge, involving human rights, aboriginal and nature rights, which have given Ecuador the opportunity to be one of the first countries that promotes nature conservation and indigenous people’s protection. Nevertheless, in recent years the discourse has changed and natural extraction has increased, similarly to oil dependency, for the survival of the economy. For instance, Ecuador is a terminal economy since it depends largely on non-renewable assets, and has not developed an alternative industrial system to replace or compliment the current system (Omeje, 2008). From this perspective, the power of economy in the establishment of policies or maintenance of pre-established ones is huge due to the contribution that natural resources extraction represents for economic development. Also, the increasing number of countries allowing natural resource extraction and the investment in highly mechanised means of exploitation is predetermining a new commodity boom, irrespective of policies and laws designed for nature protection (Veltmeyer, 2013).

The new world order and Ecuador’s inclusion in the global oil market was the starting point for the dependent economy that Ecuador has today. The primary commodities boom has expanded investment by rich multinationals trying to take advantage of the economic profit that natural resources represent for primary countries. Additionally, a permanent concern about the economic,
environmental, political and social impact that extraction could bring to the communities that live near the areas exists. Especially, since indigenous tribes often live next to places rich in natural resources.

Indigenous people in general, have been fundamental in the fight for nature conservation and enforcement of their rights; Ecuador is no exception. At the beginning of the oil boom in the 1970s, the country opened to the global market and facilitated the incorporation of oil multinationals into the process, liberating them from environmental responsibilities and practices. These companies have spilled oil and toxic contaminants into the natural environment with direct effects on the welfare, health and natural resources which they rely on. (Acosta, 2013).

Finally, it is history’s role to show how natural resource extraction has shaped the path to development and economic welfare of the country. For instance, new extractivism is a new model of development for Latin America in general; setting a new form of imperialism or dependency but in this case, one that is not linked to USA or Europe, but to Asia, especially to China. Further, the State’s role and its link with multinational corporations has been a determinant of indigenous and nature rights violations, because this alliance influences the pro-extractivism and economic welfare tendency (Acosta, 2013). The political economy in this case is key for the establishment of new policies that the State could implement in order to protect their indigenous communities and to continue with an extractive patron.

2.2 Post-development theory

“The last forty years can be called the age of development. This epoch is coming to an end. The time is ripe to write its obituary” (Sachs, 2010:15).

In 1992, Wolfgang Sachs edited The Development Dictionary; with this phrase he starts a narrative about development; but if the conventionally accepted meaning of development was coming to an end, what was coming next? This is when academics and scholars started to think differently heralding the advent of a post-development movement. As mentioned in the Post-
Development Reader (1997), the former colonial masters were in search of a new system of domination that allowed them to maintain their presence in their ex-colonies, having access to their natural resources, markets and freedom according to their geopolitical interests (Bawtree and Rahnema, 1997). This leaded to a new way of colonising countries, tending towards economic power and access to the international monetary system, that imposes conditions and rules in exchange of monetary resources.

Post-development theory criticises classical development theory, which began to fail in the global South. Different academics such as Escobar, Esteva, and Sachs debated the effectiveness of these approaches since opportunities for economic growth and development were different and variable across the globe. According to Sachs, development stood in a ruin of the intellectual landscape, which brought disappointment, disillusion and poverty: in brief, Eurocentric and Western models did not work and were not equally applicable when applied to different realities and societies (Sachs, 2010).

From the 1990s, the post-development concept has emerged from debates on how alternative methods of development can be achieved. One of the main proponents of post-development is Arturo Escobar, who defines development as: “a highly technocratic approach adopted by the World Bank, US Government and other Northern institutions in the post-Second World War” (Willis, 2011). His concepts states that imposing external norms, codes and expectations settled by western thinkers as development do not mean lacking of development, it mean a formal way of exercising power over weak countries reflected by the importance of international aid agencies, loans and technical assistance. Post-development is not only about economic power, it is underlain by decision-making, hierarchy, governance structures and is founded mainly on resources. Hence, talking about development does not mean accepting a dependence relationship with another country or institution, nor does it relate to the acceptance of how the world should be or that the same model of development, according to the Western vision, should necessarily be followed. In the case of Latin America and Ecuador in particular, the development process has left people in poverty, a lack of basic
services, education, jobs, and environmental destruction. This shows how the imposed development model has not improved the quality of life of the eternally supplier countries (Cupples, 2013).

Academics express that, development in Southern countries is based on powerful Northern countries and their economic and politic domination in order to increase the dependence of southern countries for business and agreements. In Escobar’s (1997) perspective, development is based on the idea that capital investment is essential for economic growth and population wellbeing. The big question is: where should all the investment come from? This is where Northern countries and international organisations started to intervene with a system based on loans, money, primary production and high dependence on international markets (Escobar, 1997).

The main point in the development discourse was the relation between institutions, socio-economic processes and technological factors. In the middle of these relations, it was normal to use definitions such as underdeveloped, malnourished, illiteracy, and poverty. The concept of development has been constructed around institutions, which can now be thought of as prisons. For example factories, newsmedia, schools, governments and products now build our concept of the world and how it has to be understood (Illich, 1997). Therefore, post-development sees development as a tool used by capitalism for expansion and power over others.

According with Escobar (1995), the former US president, Harry Truman, defined the world’s reality emphasising the miserable conditions of life and hunger. For him, the world was already divided into two halves, developed and underdeveloped, and it was the developed countries which were to command and help the underdeveloped ones because they possessed the technology and the means to do so (Escobar 1995, Cupples 2013). This discourse showed how poor countries’ destinies were already oriented towards a new system of colonial power, subordination and lack of financial dependence. The underdevelopment discourse was based on the lack of technology, money and the hope that countries would follow and attain the global North’s development reality and well-being. This fact also prompted the establishment of international help, donor agencies, multi-lateral organizations and the interchange of technical aid such as geographers, agronomists and sociologists,
among others. All based on the experts of Western ideologies making indigenous knowledge unimportant for development, leaving people behind; their concepts were seen as wrong or not applicable (Cupples, 2013).

According to Leonard Frank (1997), development was broadly structured under the Marshall Plan, led by the World Bank. Hence, the power to give scarce money to third world countries allowed them to invest beyond their means. These loans came together with a cohort of experts working for international development agencies and banks, under the command of the World Bank. It could be viewed as positive, but in fact, these institutions were ruthlessly opportunistic, since the money for loans was directly related to industrialisation for the Western development trail (Frank, 1997).

In conclusion, post-development theory is based on a different point of view from Western/Eurocentric ideological thinking, which has obviously ignored or overlooked indigenous people’s knowledge, practices and enforcement. As Cupples (2013) states, theorists and scholars that promote post-development have marked a correlation between modernity, dependency and decolonisation approaches which are key to better understand the importance of indigenous people in Latin American society and, in direct relation to this research case, the conservation and protection IPVI.

2.3 Decolonial approach

“Go to the people. Live among them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what you know. Build on what they have. But of the best leaders when their task is done, the people will remark: “We have done it ourselves””. (Unknown author, Chinese poem cited in Bawtree and Rahnema, 1997).

Decolonial approach was stated concurrently with post-development theory, since Northern countries colonised and “conquered” southern countries. Indigenous and mestizo people were forced to adopt the “correct” values, layered on from an outsider’s point of view. This forced them to leave behind their tradition, knowledge and values. In Ecuador, since oil fields were discovered, the

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1 *Mestizo*: Spanish word to refer a person of mixed background: indigenous American and Spanish.
Colonisation process was carried out by foreigners dressed as evangelical missionaries in the deepest areas of the rainforest, where voluntary isolated tribes were forced to leave their traditions behind and be part of wider society (Colleoni and Proaño, 2010).

Colonialism is associated with capitalist expansion, which led to the revelation of decolonisation discourses and different forms of colonial domination; even after the independence process, societies automatically inherited a colonial heritage. Anibal Quijano’s (2005) conceptualisation was that Latin America has been through a process of political liberation without a social revolution; in this way the conservation of colonial power is still present (Quijano, 2005) showing the continuous hegemonic power of the north over the south with regard to resources, money and politics. In fact, the decolonial approach is based in the modernity/coloniality perspective which is related to the population, especially in the global South, where people were colonised, subjugated and imposed upon to adopt a Western/Eurocentric development paradigm. As a show of power, indigenous communities and tribes were subjected to genocide and slavery cases, as far as concerns forced Christianisation, civilisation and primary contact (Rivas, 2001). All these atrocities inflicted upon indigenous populations were covered up by greedy governments who gave the green light to forces perpetrating these actions.

This approach mainly criticises development as an economic process, leaving behind the cultural and social aspects, which is a driver for an uneven reality between the industrialized and the primary economies around the world. Culture is disappearing with the advance of modernization and technology because of the impact of targeting goods and products, which impulse the consumerist desire (Willis, 2011). For instance, it is no surprise that the development concept was aimed to improve people’s well-being, but instead it has been destructive not just for people, but also for the natural environment and traditional culture (Bawtree and Rahnema, 1997).

“Development is not policy to be implemented, but domination to be resisted” (Mosse, 2004:643). These words reflect the reality that mestizo and indigenous people around the world have been subjected to in the name of development and economic growth. The steps to a new development
process should be inclusive, collaborative and about commitment, not imposition. According to Willis (2011), people should be free to choose the way they want to live and grow, because development is not about imposing, it is about progress. In general, a feeling of inferiority and pressure to follow a route that has been adopted elsewhere before has always been presented in colonised countries (Willis, 2011).

Furthermore, the decolonial approach is not about power, domination and conflict, which influences the world order. As Quijano (2000:1) mentioned, this power has its basis in four main drivers: 1) coloniality which is the base for social classification and ethnicity, 2) capitalism as universal patron of exploitation, 3) State which constitutes the centrepiece for universal control and, 4) Eurocentrism as a hegemonic means of control. With this classification, the emphasis is on the decolonisation process that is necessary to happen around control and power, but now including the rising role of indigenous groups in democratic processes. Because it is not only about liberation, but also includes the empowerment of indigenous representatives as decision makers.

All that has been stated above led this research to focus also on the right to self-determination, inasmuch as it is focused on the conservation and protection of voluntary isolated tribes. The colonization process in Ecuador was about diverse indigenous communities who were forced to make contact with the outside world, which constituted a clear violation of their rights, especially their self-determination right. According to the United Nations – Human Rights Council (2009), the right to self-determination represents a decision to remain isolated and it has to be understood as the respect of their human rights (UNHRC, 2009). The principal driver was an idea of race and classification of people, a division between conquered and dominants; since self-determination is about people’s own determination to economic, social and cultural development.

Additionally, for Young (2006), the self-determination right for indigenous people has less influence unless it can limit, transform or even block the rights and powers of existing nations and States in the search of economic wealth or development (Young, 2006). Hence injustices, lack of opportunities and right to choose a way of live are part of the hegemonic power imposed a hundred
years ago, which established the need for help and development. Using Foucault’s discourse analysis, the colonial ways of imposition and development have been accepted as a general truth, making people and society believe that following an imposed model is correct. However, this has been a clear way of hiding options and new modes of development and understanding. Additionally, the importance of self-determination is linked to the effect of belonging to a place, in this case keeping access to traditional lands where indigenous peoples can continue with their traditional ways of life.

As a general conclusion, the Western/Eurocentric idea of development that was imposed historically has been the main driver for problems that countries in the global South continue to face. All the injustice, poverty, financial dependency and other limitations have been caused by the influence and power of nations in search of their perpetual control and economic benefit. Hence, it is important that new ways of thinking can be shared within society, without limiting access to information as part of a new wave of non-Western scholarship. It inspires us to look for more accurate answers, defying the geopolitical order and looking for new options, because now is the time to change from global to local, to the enforcement of grassroots and embracing the identity that has been taken away. As Gustavo Esteva (2009) stated, development is a dying myth that is just focused on selling toxic products and toxic ways. Additionally, he mentions that development is a matter that brings together all the poverty and all the governments’ dreams to help their population to leave poverty. But instead, everything has made Northern countries richer while poverty in the South has increased (Gudynas 2011; Esteva 2009).
Chapter III: Methodology

This section presents the methodology that guided this research process, as well as a description of how the data was obtained through desk-based research and analysis. Political economy on extractive economies, post-development and decolonial approach are used as the study’s theoretical basis. First, the research focuses on indigenous peoples in the Amazon region of Ecuador, with emphasis in the isolated tribes, Tagaeri and Taromenani, and describes different social and environmental implications that extractive activities have on them. In this aspect, the research follows reports, ethnographies and documentaries for presenting the events that have happened and what will happen if the pursuit for oil continues without adequate environmental protection practices in this sensitive part of the country. The base for these assumptions is the Chevron case and the studies around this huge contamination case in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

The data for this dissertation comprises information derived from documentaries, papers, ethnographies, policies and articles, among other sources. Since it is difficult to carry out field work with isolated tribes, this research uses available information, including interviews with academics and independent researchers. The methods of this dissertation are based on different academic literature, including data studies, policy reports, and Ecuador’s government official documents, National Constitution, international agreements on indigenous people, and NGOs’ reports and studies. Additionally, secondary research will also include newspapers, press reports, peer reviewed articles, internet websites and magazines reports.

Important sources of data for this dissertation were the different independent documentaries about the isolated tribes in Ecuador, since these show different perspectives about the way of life, the conflict around oil drilling while supporting diverse points of view from experts in Ecuadorian Law, Indigenous rights and anthropology, among disciplines. Additionally, the use of these videos was useful in understanding isolated tribes’ way of living (in a way that was accessible and feasible), as they live in a voluntarily isolated way. Anthropologists describe that it is hard to explain and make accurate assumptions about their behavioural facts and how they move in the Amazon.
Michael Foucault’s discourse analysis was the base to present how the influence of power can be essential when talking about knowledge and the expansion of information in the society. It is also important for expressing the use of ideas of power and domination linked with the colonial experience. The control over thinking, knowledge and rights associated with being indigenous have caused an exclusion and marginalisation of indigenous peoples in general.
Chapter IV: Isolated peoples in the Amazon: an insight

“For these peoples, isolation is not a voluntary option but a survival strategy”. (UNHRC, 2009:2)

This section will introduce the indigenous tribes’ history with emphasis in two isolated peoples who live within YNP and the implications for their welfare caused by oil activities. But who are they? Do they live entirely isolated? According to the Interamerican Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) “they are indigenous peoples or segments of indigenous people who do reject any type of contact with people who are not part of their own people” (IACHR, 2013:1). In this case, the meaning of voluntary isolation can be related to the influence or pressures of society, economy and globalisation, which can prevent the free exercise of their will. It also jeopardises their right to self-determination and their autonomy as free people.

4.1 History of the first contact

The indigenous people of the Amazon lived through the first colonisation/domination period during the 20th century. For Ecuadorian society, it was normal to label them as “wilds, cannibals, savages”, among other pejorative terms; this harboured cultural stigmatisation and social prejudices towards indigenous peoples. The main tribe, the Waorani, were an isolated group scattered through a territory inside the Amazon rainforest; within the region, they were feared since the killing of outsiders that broke into their territory was a common defensive action (Cabodevilla, 1994).

The first outsiders or cowode² brought natural destruction instead of progress. In the 1950s, a group of evangelical churches prepared a plan to contact the remaining groups of indigenous tribes in South America; as the evangelisation process started, voluntary missionaries were killed, but at the end of the 1960s, missionaries and oil interests achieved the division of the Waorani clan, who extended their territory throughout Pastaza, Orellana and Napo provinces (Cabodevilla, 1994). This

² People from the outside in Waorani language (Wao Tededo)
marked the *cowode*’s victory and the first contact happened. However, two indigenous groups belonging to the Waorani first nation live in voluntary isolation: the Tagaeri and Taromenani. These two tribes are differentiated from the Waorani since they refused to be in contact with the outside world during the 1950s and 1960s. During this time period, various Waorani families were forcibly contacted, while others ran away into the rainforest, remaining isolated until the present day (Colleoni and Proaño, 2010).

According to Colleoni and Proaño (2010), their social organisation is based on community approaches, small semi-nomadic groups who live from hunting, horticulture practices and fishing, their political organisation is based on kinship ties. As stated by Rival (2004), the longhouse is the basic social unit composed of an older couple, daughters with husbands and children, and unmarried sons; altogether can reach thirty–five members. The food is individually produced, but this does not necessarily mean that it is reciprocally shared within the longhouse. Their political organisation is autarkic and egalitarian; contact, trade and exchange with outsiders is completely avoided, since the aim is to be a self-sufficient autonomy (Rival, 2004).

In Waorani language, Tagaeri means “Tagae people”; Tagea was a Waorani leader, who decided to run deeper in the rainforest to avoid initial contact. Tagaeri refers to groups organised in communal houses or *nanicaboin*³ led by direct descendants of Tagae. They were part of the Waorani tribe until the colonisation process resulted in fragmentation of the clan. Taromenani means “other but equal”, defined by the Waorani people; they are culturally and linguistically related, featuring cultural aspects such as facial aspects, spears, blowguns and language. According to Cabodevilla (2004), it is also believed that they migrated into the Yasuní region from the Peruvian border, but this theory is less-known and remains unproven (Cabodevilla, 2004). Their history dates since the beginning of the 20th century when, a large proportion of the Waorani people left their territory (near Peru’s border) to follow the Yasuní and Tiputini rivers; in this way they became the “others”. Thus, Taromenani are

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³ Houses in Tagae language
not considered Waorani’s immediate family, but neither are they considered outsiders (Colleoni and Proaño, 2010).

Although this introduction gives the idea of being lost and hidden in the forest, these peoples are not lost, they can be called free people since autonomy has prevailed over colonisation and Westernisation processes. The decision to be “voluntarily isolated” has been a clear response to oil frontier expansion and the reduction of their ancestral lands. However, their voluntary isolation has spurred them to look for “refuge zones” deeper in the rainforest due to violent and traumatic events that have marked the oil exploration and exploitation processes (See map 1) (Colleoni and Proaño, 2010).

**Map 1: Geographical distribution of Tagaeri and Taromenani people**

*Adapted from: Ministry of Environment, 2013*
4.2 What happens when indigenous tribes meet extractive activities? Looking beyond health implications

The beginning of oil activities promotes territorial displacement (direct or indirect) because of the need to establish systems for exploration, extraction, transportation and so on. Also, it involves the building of roads and other infrastructure, which leads to ecosystem destruction and fragmentation. Land appropriation often occurs during indigenous population displacements and, in the case of isolated tribes, it provides impetus for them to keep moving and look for further isolated, deeper parts of the rainforest. This is not only a process relevant to land appropriation, it also has to do with indigenous rights and the non-recognition of their ancestral lands (Kimerling, 2013).

As Rosemary Kingsland (1980) expressed in A saint among savages: “The northern [oil] strike was enormous... Nothing would stop them from going in [to Waorani territory] now and there was talk of using guns, bombs, flame-throwers. Most of the talk was wild, but the result will be the same: a war between the oil men and the Aucas; a handful of naked savages standing squarely in the middle of fields of black gold, blocking the progress of the machine age. If it was to be a question of no oil or no Aucas, there was only one answer” (Kingsland in Kimerling, 2013:51). This testimony illustrates how cruel the battle for conquering indigenous territories was; the outsiders’ power was asserted by guns, arms and murder. In Decolonizing Methodologies, Smith (1999) expressed that the colonisation process often involved the collision of two different unequal forces leading to unfair battles and to an imposition regime (Smith, 1999).

Without precedent, an axis between government-missionaries-oil companies existed with single purpose of forcing Waorani to move out from the designated oil exploration areas. This is when their population started to decrease, leading to approximately 80% of the population fleeing from their ancestral land and being subsequently confined within a small, restricted area (Finer et al., 2009). In fact, the permanent presence of people linked to extractive activities and the increase of the colonisation frontier have decreased the space and territory of isolated tribes; this has created
situations of permanent conflict for defending land and spaces. Now, they move around the rainforest which has brought them to live near oil blocks and camps (Colleoni and Proaño, 2010).

In addition, among the consequences of oil extraction are transformation of natural and social environments, reduction of ancestral territory, destruction of homelands and degradation of natural resources and systems. As stated by Quijano (2010), colonial repression marginalised local knowledge systems and the expression of traditions. Thus, the Waorani culture was denigrated and in some cases abandoned because their knowledge was devalued during colonisation when traditional practices were viewed as wrong or worthless (Quijano, 2010). Furthermore, contact heralded the introduction of a cash economy and started a phase of racism and discrimination between indigenous communities, given that Ecuadorian society as a whole is racist against its own indigenous peoples (Sawyer, 2004).

Moreover, oil extraction activities are associated with noise which keeps animals away, hence making the hunting routine more difficult. Another key implication is the incursion of illegal loggers, who have been invading territory, bringing diseases, deforestation and deaths. However, the highest impact results from road construction because it has facilitated the entry of outsiders and large-scale deforestation to a places where biodiversity was previously untouched. The construction of roads entails subsequent secondary roads and enhanced access to the deepest forest (Finer et al., 2009). It has also contributed to substantial soil erosion, alteration of rivers’ flows, noise, and sadly direct collision between wildlife and vehicles. The external presence disturbs the natural relationships with the environment on which the tribes depend for subsistence.

Finally, the word genocide has been associated with these two tribes due to inter-tribe battles, which is directly influenced by reduced access to land and resources. Reports from Cabodevilla and Berraondo (2005), mention that outsiders’ presence has led to an internal battle for territory, since oil expansion is limiting their land access and reducing their traditional spaces. The conflict over land between these tribes has brought a clear reduction in their population. According to Vera (2012), in his documentary Taromenani, it is believed that both clans now have limited population, not just because of the battles but also due to outbreaks of diseases and uncontrolled epidemics.
Chapter V: The paradox and the alternative

5.1 Genocide and murders in the Amazon: Business as usual

This chapter is divided in two sections: first section presents the different events that happened around the controversial governmental decision to drill for oil in the YNP, analyses the State’s role, discourses and arguments, and discusses why the State is supporting development based in natural resource extraction. Also, it presents how the discourse change affects the conservation and survival of IPVI. In the second part, the possibility of a trade-off is debated; suggesting alternatives for the enforcement of a new development model.

Indigenous people have developed their lives around nature; thus it has been vital for consolidating their knowledge and how they have developed their culture and life around the environment. Unfortunately, indigenous societies that inhabit places richer in natural resources are, in some cases, seen as impediments to development and progress to a more modern, Western society; at the same time they have been resilient to economic booms and busts (Colleoni and Proaño, 2010). Indigenous peoples have been subject to threats, humiliation, and in some cases, extermination in the name of progress (Berraondo, 2000).

As it has been stated throughout this dissertation, Ecuador is now in a sensitive position regarding oil and natural resource extraction in the Amazon region. Hence, the protection of IPVI and indigenous tribes is uncertain. The connection between murders, oil and the National Government is controversial due to the State’s power and its lack of effectiveness in response to past events related to inter-tribal conflicts, murders and the expansion of oil activities in indigenous territory (Cabodevilla, 2013).

The urgent pursuit for oil extraction from YNP is heading for more violent times in the Amazon; it will not be the first nor the last time that conflicts, violent confrontations and killing between Tagaeri and Taromenani, Waorani and outsiders happen. The event that triggered the last massacre happened on March 5th, 2013, when two elderly Waorani, Ompure and Buganey, were killed, speared by a group
of Taromenani. By the end of the month their relatives travelled deep into the forest seeking revenge. Until today, it is uncertain the number of Taromenani that were killed as revenge, but according to Amazon Watch (2013), an entire family of eighteen people may have been murdered. (Amazon Watch, 2013).

As is detailed his book *Una Tragedia Ocultada* (A Hidden Tragedy) (2013), Cabodevilla narrates the killings of Ompure and Buganey, as a reaction of Taromenani’s claims that Waorani did nothing to protect their land from being appropriated for new infrastructure, outsiders, and oil platforms. One year earlier, they demanded the Waorani stop any outsiders’ activity (Cabodevilla, 2013) because isolated groups see Waorani as intermediaries between the outside world and them; that is why they felt that Waorani should have been doing more to protect their land (Bennet and Koenig, 2013).

The narrative of the events mentioned above intends to highlight the State action (or inaction) towards indigenous and isolated tribes’ protection. According to Walsh (2008), the coloniality process named social hierarchies where indigenous people where attributed status lower than everyone else’s, making them less valuable or important, which embedded a social power of one over the others. Further, the distribution of economic resources was unfairly influenced by such social fixations. This shows the way that past Ecuadorian governments addressed indigenous population wellbeing until the present day (Walsh 2008); when Rafael Correa’s government in 2007, prioritise the protection of its nature and its indigenous people. For the presidential election, Correa promised to defend the rights of indigenous peoples and to run a green government based on policies of environmental protection with renewable energy sources. According to Gudynas (2011), Ecuador is in need of new industries and diversification of the economy and, Correa’s first year of Government promoted a new Constitution which came into force with the *Buen Vivir* (Living Well) as a new development model for a sustainable society (Gudynas, 2011).

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4 My translation  
5 My translation
The dynamic between the *Buen Vivir* and extractive capital is not complimentary, since extraction foments an imperialism, as Ecuador has shaped its political economy based on oil and raw materials exports (ProEcuador, 2014), moving towards becoming a neo-extractive country at the expense of environment protection in sensitive areas. This tendency, as stated by Veltemeyer (2013), is merely a variation that extractive activities during imperialism have adopted regarding their time in history; now instead of natural resources for supporting capitalist tendencies, there exists the new-extractivism supported by neo-socialist countries (Veltemeyer, 2013). In fact, the political economy classifies natural resource extraction as a regressive form of capitalism with different adverse eventualities associated with undesirable outcomes that a nation could experience as a result of it, regardless of the economic profit that it might represent (Gudynas 2011, Veltemeyer, 2013).

However, Ecuador’s National Constitution was elaborated in order to follow a path of sustainable development towards the recognition of Nature as a subject of law; in this way, Nature is important as indigenous knowledge and its effects of the *Pachama*.\(^6\) It is recognised for its intrinsic values, which means that its value is important besides its usefulness or profitability (Gudynas, 2010). For instance, nature is important for securing a good and healthy quality of life, which constitutes part of the *Buen Vivir* objectives. In countries like Ecuador, natural resource extraction is valid only if it is used to fund the State’s public investments for reducing poverty and promoting development. Therefore, the national political economy is divided according a revenue redistribution based in extractive/exporting primary raw materials and natural resource extraction such as oil exploitation and mining (Gudynas, 2011). According to Menaldo (2015), countries that are highly dependent on extractive activities are characterised as being revenue-starved, which promotes concessions and promotes natural resource extraction legislation and reforms; for instance contracts and natural explorations are granted without adequate terms and conditions. (Menaldo, 2015).

In search of leaving colonial times behind, Walsh (2014), comments that Ecuador has enforced the multi-ethnicity and multicultural aspect of its society as a new strategy of domination, targeting a

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\(^6\) Nature in Kichwa language
new form of control. Actually, the national discourse highlights the importance of including historically excluded ethnic groups - in this case, indigenous groups of the Amazon who have not received any oil revenue (Walsh, 2014). As part of this strategy, the National Government changed the levels of compensation and participation in royalties for oil revenue; this showed Ecuadorians how the State is trying to change the old paradigms, where now the State is a bigger winner, leaving behind corporate control. However, this new tendency caused internal divisions within indigenous groups that were for and against oil extraction, since bigger revenue distribution was designated for the cities in the Amazon region (Ibid, 2014).

5.1.2 State’s double discourse and paradox: a discussion

The commitment to protect isolated tribes is stated in the National Constitution and policies, as well as in international laws and agreements. Ecuador’s National Constitution presents two important innovations: 1) recognition of the rights of Nature, 2) the Buen Vivir (Sumak Kawsay⁷) as a new model of development. In the first case, Buen Vivir presents the Pachamama⁸ as the base of life; in the second, a new way of coexistence between nature and humans. Additionally, IPVI protection is based in the right to life, which is the baseline for the right to self-determination, right to land and health. The legal framework is based in the National constitution art. 57, art. 72, the Plan of Precautionary Measures, the National Policy Plan for IPVI Protection (National Constitution, 2008). Regarding international policies, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention N. 169 states the right of indigenous peoples to own and control without limits their lands and territories. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People details, in international law and policy, the recognition, protection and promotion of their rights, as well as guides for best addressing their demands. It has to be mentioned that, as indigenous people, their right to be collectively recognised is implicit (UNHR, 2013).

⁷ Living well in Kichwa language
⁸ Mother earth in Kichwa language
Ecuador’s National Constitution, Art. 57, num. 21 states: “The territories of peoples in voluntary isolation are ancestral, irreducible and intangible, and they shall be closed to all extractive activity. The State shall adopt measures to guarantee their lives, enforce their determination, wish to remain in isolation, and safeguard the enforcement of their rights. The violation of these rights will constitute the crime of ethnocide, and will be dealt with by law” (National Constitution, 2008). As detailed above, the State is responsible for the safeguard and protection of people in voluntary isolation; however, Correa’s first argument discussed that all Ecuadorian citizens have fundamental rights and the role of the State is to warrant their well-being too, not only to protect 300 indigenous people hidden in the Amazon. For instance, the President asked himself to what extent should the State protect the isolated indigenous while poverty and misery are still prevalent within the wider Ecuadorian population? Should the State sacrifice their well-being to protect 300 hundred people ‘lost’ in the Amazon?

Public actions started in 1999, when a protected area called Intangible Zone Tagaerí-Taromenani (ZITT) was established as a consequence of the oil frontier expansion; this territory was supposed to be free of any extractive activity and future oil explorations. The ZITT was located in the southern part of the YNP, encompassing an area of 758,051 hectares, located in Cononaco and Nuevo Rocafuerte parishes, Orellana province; and in the Curaray parish, Pastaza province. There is also a designated area of 10 km around the ZITT, known as the buffer zone. ITT is an abbreviation for Ishpingo, Tambococha and Tiputini oil fields (Finner et al, 2009). But the important question here is why has the Government managed a double discourse? On one hand, the effort of trying to convince the world and Ecuadorian society that the best decision was to keep the oil underground thought the Yasuní-ITT initiative. On the other hand, the spread of discourses supporting oil exploitation in protected indigenous land because this is correct for the well-being of Ecuador (Vera, 2013). The first and most important thing was to make everybody believe, especially Ecuadorians, that the Yasuní ITT initiative was planned to save the YNP and isolated tribes. The park has five oil wells (See Figure 2): 14, 16, 17, 9

\[9\text{My translation}\]
\[10\text{Yasuni-ITT Initiative: proposal to keep oil underground through a fund to finance renewable energy activities, which had to be supported by international donors with up to 50% of the expected oil revenue.}\]
31, and ITT block; in fact Petroamazonas, the national oil company, started drilling block 31 in January 2012 and, in 2013, started to drill the ITT block (Warnars, 2010). Incredibly, the proposal focused on saving the ITT block, not the park as a conservation site.

**Map 2: Oil and gas blocks in Ecuador**

![Map of oil and gas blocks in Ecuador](image)

*Adapted from: Vera, 2012*

The second paradox was to announce the success of the initiative. According to El Telégrafo, (State owned newspaper) by December 22nd, 2011, the initiative had collected $116 million; and in 2013, the same newspaper stated that out of $116 million, only $13 million was available for the initiative, the rest were unrelated commitments (Telégrafo, 2011, 2013). In August 2013, the President announced that the initiative was cancelled and ITT block drilling was official, he also said that less than one thousandth of the park territory would be affected (Telégrafo, 2013). Additionally, in Correa’s announcement, he promised to use high technology to drill the area extremely carefully,
and stated that: “we need our natural resources to overcome our poverty problems in the fastest way for sovereign development; if someone says the contrary that person is lying” (Jaramillo, 2015:1).

In fact, the failure of the initiative was known by December 2012, but the Government waited until August the following year to make it official. In the name of development and poverty reduction, the State gave the green light to proceed with ITT drilling and omitted to acknowledge the existence of isolated tribes within the park boundaries. The Minister of Oil and Mines in 2011 accepted their existence, but in 2013 the same public institution denied saying that uncontacted tribes are nomadic with an uncertain space in which they live; that is that they do not live inside the YNP area (Vera, 2013).

On the contrary, according to an article published in the Guardian (2014), the Ecuadorian Government was pursuing an oil deal with China while pledging to protect YNP; this information was carefully hidden by the national authorities. The report mentioned that, the secret deal was valued at USD $1bn; the proposal was so serious, that the China Development Bank Credit, elaborated a document in collaboration with Ecuador’s Ministry of Economic Policy. The negotiation took place from May 13-23, 2009 and, with the guarantee to help PetroChina and Andes Petroleum to drill. (Hill, 2014). Regarding this matter, once again the Government used its power to control the way of spreading information towards Ecuadorian society.

According to the Report of Macroeconomic Impact of Oil Exploitation in the 0.1% of YNP (2013), different social investments have permitted the current administration to address social issues in a way that they have not been addressed before. Poverty reduction and increased equality are just two of the results that oil revenue has brought. Since the failure of the ITT initiative, Ecuador still needs to cover social investment in health, education and renewable energy (10.3% Public Investment/GDP) (MCPE, 2013). As Svampa (2008) points out, if a government uses a discourse acknowledging the existence of regions or places historically immersed in poverty due to inequalities or lack of investment, it is already addressing a productive and exclusive discourse. Generally, these regions are full of natural spaces rich in non-renewable materials, low in population and with high probabilities of extractive activities (Svampa, 2008).
In fact, the President requested to the General Assembly to authorise oil extraction; the request was presented together with four reports, prepared by Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Non-Renewable Resources, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Cults\(^\text{11}\) (MJHRC) and the Ministry of Political Economy. The purpose of these reports was to substantiate the legality of extractive activities inside the ZITT and the YNP. The report, Plan of Preventive Measures for the Protection of Indigenous Peoples in Isolation Tagaeri-Taromenani (2013), elaborated by the MJHRC, it is stated that, since the 1990s the northern part of YNP has been drilled and that, after the analysis of maps, settlements and orthophotographic studies, among others, it can be confirmed that there is no evidence of isolated tribes in zones where oil activities have been developing and will be developed (MJDHC, 2013). The contradiction between public institutions started because concurrently, the Ministry of Environment (MAE) (2013), recorded footprints and aerial photographs obtained by flyovers inside the YNP providing evidence of communal houses, showing that, isolated people leave near the oil blocks (MAE, 2013). Unfortunately, all the evidence has been denied by the same Ministry since none of the evidence mentioned before was included in the report presented to the National Assembly.

However, the four reports were written in record time, with no coherent connection between them, even though similar aspects such as policies, environment, economic impact, location and others are analysed in each of them. After analysing all reports, it can be said that due to the urgency of approving extractive activities, the arguments, studies and the lack of information is replicated in all of them. There exists a clear inconsistency between facts, maps, figures and internal policies. The contradiction between the official governmental discourse and the National Constitution and policies related to the protection of isolated peoples exists because it is the State’s duty to respect collective and self-determination rights. The legal framework stipulates the prohibition of extractive activities in ancestral lands; for instance part of these policies will obstruct the development of extractive activities in areas where isolated tribes live. This is the reason why the State used different strategies, reports and economic figures to support its extractive ideal and proceed in contravention of the national

\(^{11}\) Cults relates to religious groups.
framework. The Government’s intentions regarding the protection of isolated people can be summarised in this phrase by the head of Petroamazonas12 (2010): “the development of the country cannot be compromised due to the presence of a handful of indigenous whose existence cannot even be proved”, thus showing a careless discourse which fails to take into account, people’s livelihoods, human rights or environment (Colleoni and Proaño, 2010).

While the government was busy trying to prove the legality of engaging in extractive activities inside the YNP, an internal conflict was occurring. The investigation of murders mentioned at the begging of this section where put on hold, excuses and the minimum level of media attention possible were part of the Government’s actions. After the deaths on March 5th, 2013, different NGOs and activists asked the national authorities to investigate what was happening in order to prevent further violent encounters between clans (Cabodevilla, 2013). The response was silence. By this time, it was well-know that oil was being drilled in the Yasuní area, but for political and economic reasons, the government went silent; it has even provided military security to oil installations in zones were attacks had happened. The map presented below (See Figure 2) shows the presence of isolated tribes inside the disputed land (ancestral lands) and the quantity of oil wells around them. It also shows the large roads built in the park, which are usually located next to the wells. Additionally, this map presents the change between April and August 2013 when the Government disclaimed isolated tribes’ presence in the area.

In contrast, another strategy promoted by the government is the worldwide campaign “La mano sucia de Chevron” (Dirty hand of Chevron13), and at the same time, the decision to drill the Yasuní was approved. The situation is contradictory and paradoxical because the President is accusing Chevron of destroying Ecuador’s rainforest with its destructive environmental practices while simultaneously approving oil extraction in the most biodiverse place in the world. In fact, the claim against Chevron states that Texaco (now Chevron) failed to use proper environmental practices and

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12 State owned oil company
13 My translation
technology in order to save on the cost per barrel produced and maximise the company’s profit (Burch, 2015). Both cases happened at different times but will have the same end result: biodiversity destruction, extermination of indigenous people, oil frontier expansion and traditional territory reduction. In the end, as is expressed by Chávez (2011), the encounters and conflicts between tribes, oil workers, military forces and illegal merchants will lead to the possible extinction of isolated people (Chávez, 2011).

Map 3: Area variation in according to Governmental reports

Additionally, since Correa took office in January 2007, he made public his rivalry with the traditional financial institutions saying that Ecuador is not going to let them shape the political economy anymore: now these institutions will have to respect Ecuador’s demands and conditions.
Conversely, Ecuador has transitioned by turning to China as a new financial actor for the country’s loans which, in the end, jeopardizes the financial independence of a country where oil multinationals, especially Chinese companies, have increased their power over natural resources. In fact, negotiations around oil have been constant over recent years, since the government relies on China’s loans to financing public expenditure, which includes paying back with millions of barrels until at least 2020, approximately 90% of oil shipments belong to China (Gudynas, 2010). This shows a new pattern of dependency, since the country had never previously committed future oil production to a lender. Over USD $11 billion have been borrowed from China, by the end of 2014, Ecuador owed China USD $6,589.9 million (See table 1), which are translated into loans with high interest rates, unfair contract terms for Ecuador and placing PetroChina as the firm that also controls oil fields, pipelines, reservoirs and wells. Nowadays, Ecuador relies on China for financing the national budget (Medina and Schneyer, 2013).

Table 1: Debt to China in US Dollars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production in USD</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$848.00</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,151.30</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,172.20</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,303.90</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6,331.30</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6,589.90</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: El Universo and Central Bank of Ecuador, 2014
5.2 The search for a trade-off: deciding what to save

Ecuador had marked its way as a leader on new alternatives for development, since it was the first country to propose keeping oil in the ground. However, the Yasuní-ITT proposal was unsuccessful, so the State decided to deepen extractive activities to finance public investment and encourage economic growth. Inside the ITT proposal, the Government presented win-win solutions such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), thus aiming to attract donors and contributions. But, as McShane et al., (2011) explain, these methods do not show the complexity of the dynamics between conservation and development and usually show an optimistic scenario in order to satisfy different interests, thus rendering these options less attractive to potential donors (McShane et al., 2011).

Together with the Yasuní-ITT proposal, a renewable energy strategy was presented which included the development of hydro, geothermal, solar, wind, biomass, and tidal energy projects. The shift from an extractive economy based on oil extraction was part of governmental plans which included reforestation, natural regeneration and management of watersheds and forested areas. Yet, the country does not have sufficient economic resources to fund the proposed sustainable model of development and, as such, current social expenditure of the Government is high (Acosta, 2013). Furthermore, the need for health services, education and water access in the Amazon region is greater than for any other part of the country. Hence, as part of the government’s investment plans, the President promoted new housing projects financed by oil revenues; as strategy to persuade indigenous people to accept a new era of extractive activities in their territory (Los Andes, 2013).

Additionally, the Buen Vivir ideology, as a driver for creating a more sustainable society, is also an important part of a new development model that takes into account the role of indigenous knowledge and a decolonial approach. The implementation of this paradigm is key, since it respects indigenous peoples’ rights and has opened the road to promote and establish policy in favour of the rights of nature. Therefore, the possibility of a decolonial vision based on an ethical coexistence between humans and nature focused on the acceptance of historic-ancestral knowledge could enforce
culture conservation. This refers not only to indigenous groups in voluntary isolation but also comprises communities that inhabit not just the Amazon region, but Ecuador as a whole, as a multicultural country (Walsh, 2010).

5.2.1 The trade-off

The objective of defining a trade-off is to protect indigenous communities and isolated tribes and to halt environmental destruction and degradation in the Amazon, but at the same time, to promote economic growth and enhanced public service provision. According to McShane et al. (2011), trade-offs are balanced between different conservation objectives; in this case indigenous and environment protection and economic development for poverty reduction (McShane, 2011).

However, an idea that has not been adequately considered by the examined literature is to achieve an alternative that could protect IPVI and the environment and, at the same time, impulse the economy. According to Feiock and Stream (2001:314), States that do the most to protect their environment also have the strongest economies; in this way the following alternatives designed to gradually move from oil dependence, are related to economic development alternatives. Oil drilling is happening in Ecuador, thus protecting indigenous isolated tribes is mandatory, not only for the State but also for the society. These proposals are connected to isolated tribes’ protection because they focus on regulating industries and activities not related to the oil drilling industry. For instance, the implementation of these alternatives will help progressively to decrease oil activities in IPVI’s land that jeopardize their well-being and their ecosystem, and they will help to support the national economy.

First, the participation of small and medium enterprises in the national economy is important for job creation and for reinforcing businesses such as construction, agriculture, trade, transport and services in general. Given all the strengths that the country has, the next step is to bolster pre-existing industries. Besides oil production, Ecuador exports bananas, cacao, tuna, shrimps, fish and flowers; thence, it is essential to set clear and realistic goals of production, which will be benefited by different trade agreements that Ecuador has reached such as the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug
Eradication Act (ATPDEA) and the General System of Preference (GSP Plus). Additionally, Ecuador is part of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) and the Preferred Tariffs Structure (Pro-Ecuador, 2014).

Although a change in the energy matrix is essential as a development alternative, Ecuador has the potential to boost medium and small enterprises towards the international markets. For instance, the Government could implement a system that offers information about exports, technology, policies or even tips for production improvement. With the focus on renewable energy, Ecuador could offer economic incentives towards the efficient use of energy. At the same time, the enhancement of national production can strengthen the “Made in Ecuador” brand by promoting it in international markets while incentivising the internal consumption of national products.

Second, the implementation of an oil extraction tax for the companies that have oil concessions in the Amazon. The purpose would be to demand oil multinationals to pay a tax per barrel; this was proposed by Correa at the Protect the Earth, Dignify Humanity: the Moral Dimensions of Climate Change and Sustainable Humanity summit, organised in the Vatican City. His argument is based in the Daly Tax, an ad valorem tax on oil price per barrel, which could be applied to fuel exports according to their environmental impacts. The result will be a decline in the demand for oil, mitigation of deleterious environmental impacts and a reduction in CO₂ emissions, and to give affected countries additional income for financing activities to mitigate climate change impacts (Correa, 2015). The main objective will be to allocate the raised money into the communities affected by oil activities, financing research into technological development and to invest in mitigation plans for climate change consequences in the communities affected by oil extraction.

Subsequently, under the extractivism model, the State has based the renegotiation of oil contracts on increasing its participation in the revenues, aiming to obtain more money. As Gudynas (2010) explained, progressive governments under extractive economies assure more State participation in profits; for instance, the renegotiation of an amended contract modality from participation to rated provision of services (Gudynas, 2010). This represents a one billion USD
extraordinary profits per year, which has been distributed amongst Amazonian communities as a formal public investment (Andes, 2013).

Thirdly, the intensification of renewable energy use across society is essential for decreasing the internal consumption of oil for energy; thus the National Government has already initiated a plan which includes the commercialization of electric cookers; in this way the consumption of gas for domestic purposes will decrease (El Comercio, 2015). The benefits of renewable energy will start to emerge after different projects, which are still under construction, come into operation. The idea is to promote the use of renewable energy for industrial, commercial and domestic applications.

It is essential to remark on the importance of engaging indigenous people in natural resource governance and decisions regarding natural resource extraction in their territory. As reported by Sobrevila (2008), to engage indigenous people helps them to use their traditional knowledge in environmental conservation plans and to empower their active participation as leaders of their communities and lands. Their knowledge will help to prepare for future scenarios and offer possible solutions from their point of view (Sobrevila, 2008). As is stated by the decolonial approach, leaving behind a colonial matrix it is not about intercultural integration, it is about embracing, as a country, the traditional knowledge, the social practices and ways of living that have been left behind. In spite of that, the State has embraced decolonial ideas as a new way of domination, for controlling the social movements against new ideologies, which perpetuate the promotion of capitalist practices, but now with the integration of the historically excluded (Walsh, 2012). The integration of indigenous people, especially Waorani people, in management is key to the protection of Tagaeri and Taromenani since they are the intermediaries between isolated tribes and the outside world.

5.2.2 Challenges ahead

In terms what challenges the State is now facing, political implications are of primary importance, as indigenous people have been crucial actors in Ecuadorian politics. In the past, indigenous movements were part of demonstrations capable of deciding Ecuador’s politics. In recent
years, since the approval for oil extraction in the YNP, different organisations, NGOs and society itself have supported and walked together with indigenous people in solidarity for the defence of nature and isolated tribes. For example, the March for Life, Water, and the Dignity of People demanded the cessation of natural resource extraction activities, especially open-air mining and oil concessions; this demonstration gathered thousands of people who travelled 400 miles in 15 days (Picq, 2014).

Furthermore, Ecuador is going through a phase of centralisation of power managed by the President regarding the politics of the State, the General Assembly and National Justice System; especially decisions related to extractive process and policies. The centralised system in Ecuador cannot guarantee the protection of indigenous, IPVI and nature; which has brought criticism from independent groups and environmental activists. For example, after announcing the YNP as an area of national interest for resource drilling, the National Constitution establishes the option of a referendum to consult the citizens on whether or not they agree with a presidential decision. The option was considered for activists and NGOs, who collected over 756,000 signatures from all over Ecuador in favour of the referendum regarding the oil-drilling decision. The petition was cancelled by the State; this represented an unconstitutional act of refusing the referendum option to its citizens. Furthermore, the National Electoral Council alleged that the collected signatures presented irregularities and they did not cover the required quantity to proceed with the referendum, when in fact it covered 30% more than it was required (Alvaro, 2014).

When talking about environmental challenges, all extractive activities bring consequences to biodiversity and people who live inside the territory. First and most important are isolated tribes’ displacement, since the expansion of the oil frontier is affecting their land access (Cabodevilla, 2013). For the State, this represents a challenge because more citizens, activists, indigenous people and NGOs are claiming actions to prevent and halt not just the extractive activities, but also the massacre in indigenous territory. Additionally, the direct impact of oil drilling on the ecosystem is a debated topic since the Government has presented mitigation and preventive plans to avoid natural damage,
but its actual efficiency in responding is being questioned due to the contamination of past oil wells and pools, which are still present and have not been adequately remediated (Kimerling, 2013).

Furthermore, Mosquera (2008) established that Ecuador’s oil reserves show a downward trend linked to the intensification of drilling because of the high price per barrel witnessed in recent years. As far it is known, the proven reserves could last 25 more years, which will increase the need to find oil camps located deeper inside untouched natural zones or could lead to the intensification of open air mining, which Ecuador is now trying to promote. Due to the oil production committed to China, the reserves guarantee to cover the demand; after this period of time there will be no more proven oil resources and the State will have to invest in new explorations in even more remote areas (Mosquera, 2008). Since the first oil boom, the construction of wells and pipelines was characterised by poor environmental practices, which brings the most important challenge for the Government; that is to prove its effectiveness when it comes to use high technology drilling equipment in order to respect the environment, to use effective environmental practices and to present realistic mitigation plans in case of oil spills and contamination.

Consequently, the State is facing economic dependence on China for financing its public investment; since the decrease in oil prices in 2014, the relationship with the Asian country is based on more than money. The demands and conditions for new loans are higher and require less Ecuadorian governmental intervention and more Chinese State participation. It is well-known that China has been part of hydro, gas and mining projects in the country as part of the new energy diversification strategy (Schneyer and Medina, 2013). This affirmation goes against what is stated by Gudynas (2011), that extractive governments look for new and increased participation and political power, higher participation in revenue and decision-making power in extractive activities. In Ecuador’s case, China is the one that has blinded the national economy due to the financial availability towards the country and future oil commitments.

As a consequence, the State is targeting environmentalists, politicians, indigenous people and citizens as “enemies of the State” for being opposed to the new model of development and refusing
to adopt the same political ideology. The lack of independence of the justice system can be seen in how the President can sue, jail, expel and declare as enemies every person that is against extractive projects. In fact, in recent years there have been cases of indigenous leaders’ murders for showing their discontent with the government while trying to protect their lands (Watts and Collyns, 2014).

Hence, it is essential to achieve economic diversification as it was planned, since the limits of natural resources and especially oil reserves will be exhausted in the medium-term, if Ecuador continues to increase the levels of extraction. Regarding renewable energy, Ecuador could base its energy production in renewables and, at the same time, this will allow for a reduction in carbon emissions related to oil extraction and consumption. Thus, the government has invested in the construction of eight hydropower plants, seven geothermal and one wind energy park (Albornoz, 2012). The production of new energy models is the best option for Ecuador, even if this means continuing to extract oil to fund not just social investment, but also to promote diversification in the energy sector. The issue arises when the funding for all of these projects comes from China and the advance sale of oil, as well as the further environmental implications that imply the construction of new dams and the intensification of mining (Escribano, 2013).

After the analysis that has been presented in this section, it has to be mentioned that Ecuador’s development path is enforcing extractive activities, not only for oil, but also for mining and gas activities. As part of this ideology, there is no relation with post-development but with the idea of leaving behind the traditional capitalist economic model and the power of Northern countries. The current model is dictated by socialist ideas, focused on relationships within the global South and it is looking for progress based on new development beliefs. Even though policies in sustainable development have been established, the country still enforces the production of raw material and natural resource trading. As its political ideology, the government is enforcing South-South relations, bringing together regionalist groups and signing trade alliances with new markets, such as China, Iran, Russia and India. This fact also shows how the country is targeting different international markets;
however what has not been changed is the dependence on the USA and European costumers as bigger buyers of Ecuador’s production.

In fact, the decolonial approach strongly disagrees with the idea of following the Eurocentric/Western model of development, and Ecuador’s ideology follows the same thinking, but the country is in a trilemma between extractivism, conservation and development that makes it even more difficult to leave behind the Western ideas. In the long run, it has made it difficult to suggest a viable trade-off, since this implies to lose or to leave behind one of these points and makes it even more challenging to set a group of interrelated policies that could satisfy the three goals at the same time. Since indigenous land is being illegally and legally exploited, the best option, in my opinion, is that the Government could focus its extractive plans in other regions of the country. This could be a place where there is no proven presence of isolated people; however this implies once again that biodiversity and the ecosystem will suffer adverse consequences; in this case the ideal scenario would be to employ high environmental protection standards. It is essential to have a strong governmental commitment to protect nature and isolated people, especially from extractive activities.
Chapter VI: Conclusions and Recommendations

This research finds that a trade-off between extractivism and protection of IPVI could be possible and proposes options based on the identification of viable economic alternatives. However, this option has a disadvantage because it implies to sacrifice one thing in order to save another more important; in this case, isolated indigenous people. In other words, a trade-off means to move from Tagaeri and Taromenani territory, to another Amazon zone, another fragile ecosystem. For instance, determining trade-off alternatives has been difficult; since Ecuador needs economic resources, the proposed options could help to rely progressively less on the extractive path, but this does not mean that the model established by the State does not work since the suggestions here are based on and complemented by governmental strategies. Additionally, it has to be mention that ecotourism was not consider as an option because it means to motivate more visitors into the area of IPVI, which will imply a violation of their self-determination right.

In addition, the official State discourse has been defined as paradoxical because it establishes policies and programs for protection, but at the same time promoting extractive activities through the creation or enforcement of laws and projects. Notably, the State has failed in effectively upholding the law that protects IPVI, given that the real practice and application of laws have been irregular. For example, the lack of recognition and legalisation of indigenous land near or in extractive areas, where the State argues its position as legal owner of all national territories which are not legally owned. The pronounced influence of economic interests and oil, makes it difficult to guarantee the recognition and protection of ancestral indigenous land.

At this point, there are two aspects that need to be enforced. First, the intangible value that IPVI represent for Ecuador and its society as part of its indigenous spirit and identity; taking into account that increasing oil activities in their territory could be defined as a new colonisation process. For instance, the national government needs to truly commit their actions not just to develop and to enforce national industry and the economy, but also to protect IPVI. It is important to stop assuming because killing of isolated indigenous has already started and their population has decreased as time
passes. Tagaeri and Taromenani have reacted to invasions and attacks from people outside their tribes as a result of their fear and sense of survival. Second, land recognition and respect of indigenous territories is important, hence the State needs to legalise and delimit the territory, because IPVI depend on it for their daily life and, the intervention of oil activities affects the traditional development of their activities. Land access is also important for the establishment of longhouses, which are the core for social and reproductive interactions.

This research has consistently referred to the lack of effectiveness from the State regarding policies and the permanent need to grant fundamental human rights to IPVI and indigenous people. The proposed alternatives could grant economic development and, at the same time, could focus on extractive activities in other regions of the country, aiming to ban extraction in the Tagaeri and Taromenani territory regardless of the economic value that oil could represent for the country. Moreover, the government has stated that IPVI are a minority group of Ecuadorians that do not have an idea of reality; the fact that they live in voluntary isolation does not mean that they are not aware of what is happening in their territory. This is the reason why both tribes have demanded the Waorani to act as their interlocutors with the outside world, demanding the protection of their land from all destructive activities. Unfortunately, cultural changes have occurred and the Waorani vision of protecting their environment is underestimated; they use their indigenous knowledge about the forest and nature as a tool to demand oil companies for material goods and money. Waorani now have been seduced by the power of money and have been linked with illegal loggers and oil multinationals in order to force isolated people to move out from oil blocks and the rainforest in order to proceed with drilling, illegal trade of trees and animals (Colleoni and Proaño, 2010).

The government should work on the preparation of a back-up plan in case of forced contact, taking into account future health issues based on indigenous people’s rights to self-determination and to integrate communities who leave near the ZITT and buffer zone as preventive measure. Further research needs to be done regarding Ecuador’s renewable energy matrix, since the construction of new renewable energy plants and the intensification of agriculture and monocultures could bring
more environmental effects. The problems that surround this expansion could bring more land expropriation, change in rivers’ natural flow, animal and other biodiversity losses, fragmentation of communities and ecosystems, restriction to traditional homelands, to name just a few.

Finally, the real challenge for the Government is to put into practice and to respect what is stated in the Constitution and national policies, which has proven to be more difficult as expected. As asserted previously, legal frameworks and public policies already exist, yet the effective integration and implementation of all policies need to be done in order to grant protection over economic revenue. It also implies that oil companies should be transparent regarding their activities and mitigation plans in case of spills or contamination.
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