

# The Power of Buen Vivir

## Scaling up Ecuadorian environmental governance

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*“We hereby decide to build a new form of public coexistence, in diversity and in harmony with nature, to achieve the good way of living (el Buen Vivir)”*

Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador of 2008



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28.05.2015, Den Haag  
Word count: 10.687  
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This paper will use the MLA citation style.

## List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

CAD	Administrative Leadership Council
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CONAIE	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador
COP	Conference of the Parties
EU ETS	European Union Emissions Trading Scheme
GCF	Green Climate Fund
ITT	Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputi
JI	Joint implementation
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## Introduction

Scientists have shown that climate change is a complex process, which is to a large extent caused by humans, but also to some extent reversible by humans. The global community already started its joint work on this issue in 1990 through the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the development of concrete climate mitigation mechanisms in the Kyoto Protocol<sup>1</sup>. However, according to Hare, global warming will still reach between 4-6 degrees Celsius at the end of this century, based on the CO<sub>2</sub> emission rate from 2009 (Hare, 2009: 13). This will have far-reaching environmental consequences such as rising sea levels and more frequent and intense floods, droughts and hurricanes (Stern, 2007: viii). So far the biggest per capita contributors of carbon emissions are found in the highly developed, industrialized countries. This can be seen in the case of the United States, which holds only 4.6 percent of the world's population but accounts for 20 percent of fossil-fuel CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Flavin and Engelman, 2009: 7). However, the most significant contributor to the recent sharp rise of global carbon are emerging countries. As an example, China's emissions arose between 1990 and 2007 by 150 percent, from 2.3 billion to 5.9 billion tons (Flavin and Engelman, 2009: 7). It became clear that climate change cannot be blamed on certain countries, but is the result of the current prevailing form of development, built on economic growth. This led to a decisive turn towards sustainable development and the focus on sustainable environmental governance by national and international policy-maker in order to find solutions to counter climate change. Especially on an international level, policy-maker tried to pin down sustainable environmental governance and to come up with its practical implementation, as seen in meetings like the 1992 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development or the Conference of the Parties (COP)<sup>2</sup> to the UNFCCC. Despite various international meetings like the yearly climate conference, few governance mechanisms to ensure global sustainable development have yet agreed upon, and the voices of developing countries in the debate on sustainable environmental governance have been heard to a very limited extend, even though these countries are the worst effected by climate change and have the fewest resources to counter it themselves. Latin America is a region that has

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<sup>1</sup> The Kyoto Protocol is the outcome of the 21<sup>st</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting, held in Kyoto in 1992. The protocol is an international treaty that is based on the participation of 195 countries and for the first time sets international norms in environmental governance. More information will be given in chapter 1.

<sup>2</sup> The COP is an annual meeting of numerous countries that try to develop the UNFCCC, first held in 1995.

despite its limited power in international institutions, shown significant initiative in shaping global environmental governance.

Within this context, this paper will provide a closer look at Ecuadorian environmental governance, investigating how the local indigenous concept of Buen Vivir scaled up to its incorporation in national environmental governance and what impact it had on global environmental governance. This process will be tracked by using theory on network governance and Risse and Sikkink's model of norm socialization. Within the norm socialization process, two crucial cases will be embedded. Firstly, it will be look at Ecuador's most recent constitution as a national reference for its current environmental governance, and secondly the case of the Yasuni-ITT proposal will serve as a case that connects Ecuadorian environmental governance to a global level. It will be argued that Buen Vivir proves to be a viable new form of environmental governance in Ecuador, which has undergone a significant process of norms socialization and shaped environmental governance on a national and global level.

Within this thesis, a constructivist transnational approach will be taken through the focus on transnational networks. A transnational approach highlights socio-historical factors, which is useful for a study on environmental governance, as environmental governance is according to Baude et al. based on interactions among different stakeholders that crosses spatial and institutional borders, acting on multiple levels (Baude et al., 2011: 10). This approach has proven to be useful in Hochstetler and Keck's (2007) study of Brazil's environmental politics, as it showed that the domestic and international spheres are strongly interwoven, and that a focus on networks in multi-level governance helps to explain the process of governance and the behavior of its actors.

The political scientists Betsill and Bulkley (2004) point out three crucial transnational network concepts in environmental governance, which are epistemic communities, global civil society and transnational advocacy networks. An epistemic community is a network of scientific or political experts on a certain topic, who share "consensual knowledge" and a "common interpretive framework" (Haas, 1990: 55). The global civil society refers to a stronger and wider transnational network, which focuses on governance on a global scale and sees the governance process as "spheres of authority" in which territorial and non-territorial networks compete for formal and informal authority and decision making (Rosenau, 2000: 172). A transnational

advocacy network is a wide community of people that is “bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchange of information” (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 2). The approach in this thesis will include all formerly mentioned forms of transnational networks and equally include formal and informal networks. Despite the focus on transnational networks, this approach does not break with the nation-state as the primary unit of governance authority, but looks at it as the political space in which transnational ties influence the nation-state (Rosenau, 2000: 170).

## **Norm socialization and network governance**

In order to construct a useful theoretical framework for the normative process in environmental governance, it is necessary to build on the theory of network governance and use the model of the norm socialization process by Risse and Sikkink (1999), which can be seen in Figure 1 below<sup>3</sup>.

The norm socialization model by Risse and Sikkink (1999) describes the process of how norms and ideas become international norms, as norms follow a relatively structured socialization and-diffusion process and do not ‘float freely’(Risse-Kappen, 1994). Norms can be broughtly defined as “collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity” (Katzenstein, 1996: 54). In the field of norm diffusion there has been extensive work in political science and social science, such as early literature by Kay (1967) and Jacobson (1962). However, most early theories lack a clear causal mechanism and distinction between national and international norms (Checkel, 1998). The socialization and diffusion of norms is a very complex process that can take the form of a top-down process, which involves norms cascading from international to national and local level, or a bottom-up process, in which norms are scaled up from a local level to a national and international level. In either direction multiple scales and levels are involve. Risse and Sikkink’s norm socialization model was originally used in the case of human rights, which is however very similar to the socialization process of environmental norms and can very well be related to the process that led to the current form of Ecuadorian environmental governance and how its underpinning norms are scaled up to a global level. Risse and Sikkink’s model illustrates the process of norm socialization in the following way. Firstly, the process contains an argumentative discourse about the validity of information or the moral discourse on the norm itself, which

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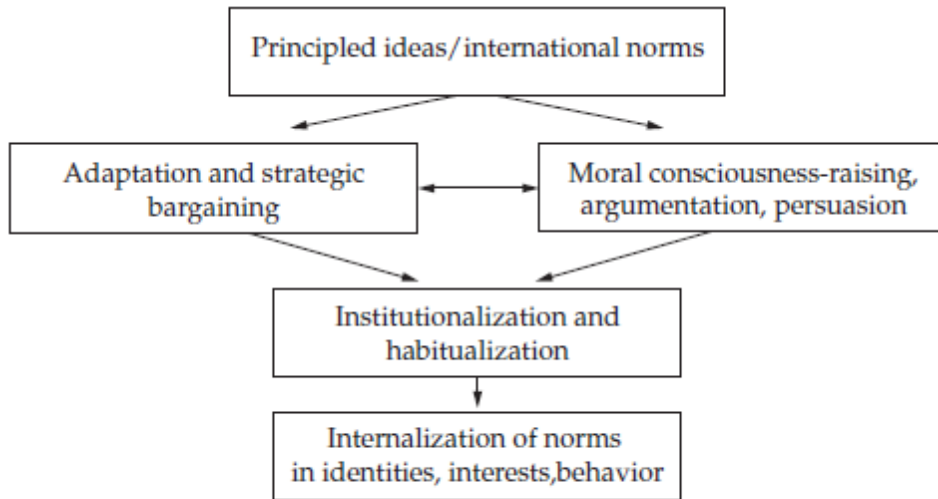
<sup>3</sup> Despite the arrangement of the model in a vertical way, it is not intended to suggest that governance is a vertical process. The model resembles a chronological rather than a scalar process, therefore network governance and the norm socialization model are not irreconcilable.

builds on identity-related arguments (Risse and Sikkink, 1999; 13). This can involve moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, dialogue, persuasion, instrumental adaptation and strategic bargaining with international or local actors. The outcome of the discourse and the persuasion is then very much influenced by networking and coalitions (Risse and Sikkink, 1999; 14). Secondly, the socialization process leads to norm habitualization and institutionalization (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). Over time norms then become internalized, which can be seen in changes in identity, interests and behavior (Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 11). Ultimately, the norm can be diffused and undergo another norms socialization process on a different level or dimension.

The model shows that the normative socialization process is very dynamic and based on interactions on various levels, where people and networks strongly influence the process. This highlights the importance of people and networks in the governance process, which links in with theory on network governance. Network governance emphasizes the importance of social interactions in the political decision making process. As pointed out by Adler (1997); Checkel (1998); Kratochwil (1990); Schaber and Ulbert (1994), on an international level, governance is largely determined by various scales of networks. Similarly, Bulkeley argues that “environmental governance must be sensitive to both the politics of scale and the politics of networks” (Bulkeley, 2005: 875). The importance of networks in environmental governance can be seen in studies by Betsill and Bulkeley (2004) and Bulkeley et al. (2003), who found out the significance contribution of transnational networks for achieving environmental sustainability. International and transnational networks can support domestic groups by providing access, leverage, resources and information, as well as amplifying their demands to a national or international level.

The real life process of norm socialization and diffusion is of course more complex than the model shows, as it involves more actors and networks and is a more power- and self-interest-based process (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Furthermore, parts of the process often take place simultaneously and are overlapping. Despite these limitations, environmental governance and the model of norm socialization will be a useful framework in order to analyze the process and steps that Buen Vivir took in shaping Ecuadorian and global environmental governance. The theoretical framework will demonstrate what a significant process Buen Vivir has gone through, not only to a national level but also to a global level. By showing the process and the outcome of the norm socialization of Buen Vivir in environmental governance, it will become visible how

powerful and applicable Buen Vivir already is in current environmental Governance and show its future potential.



**Figure 1.** The process of norm socialization

*Source:* Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 12

## The shifting role of nature in development and governance

Within the last few decades, there have been wide debates around the concept of sustainable development and environmental governance in the academia, which is more recently accompanied by a Latin American specific debate on Buen Vivir. It is crucial to get an insight into all three discourses in order to lay the academic basis before analyzing current Ecuadorian environmental governance.

Before exploring the discourse on sustainable development, environmental governance and Buen Vivir, it is inevitable to touch on the underlying century old discourse on development. Development was throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century mostly seen as a linear vector of progress towards modernity, which was rooted in western ideals of individualism and separation of humankind and nature (Kaufmann and Martin, 2014: 42.). Various discourse analysis on development, like the ones by Cooper and Packard (1997) or Escobar (1995), have shown that historically the development paradigm has been widely shaped by the United States and Europe, which aimed at a modern western society and left little room for alternative forms of



development. Over time, the western dominated development discourse-evoked criticism and led to the large-scale deconstruction of the development discourse, and to the emergence of various substitute discourses, like the ones about Human Scale Development (Schumacher, 1973), De-growth (Georgescu-Roegen, 1971), Maldevelopment (Tortosa, 2001), Post-development (Sachs, 1992), Human development (UNDP, 1993), and most recently Sustainable Development (UN, 1993).

Sustainable development is an academic debate that is interpreted in so many different ways that O’Riordan even calls it a “contradiction in terms” (1985). Therefore, the epistemic communities play a crucial role in the debate on sustainable development, as they define and shape the entire discourse on sustainable development (Forsyth, 2003). Sustainable development allows different concerns and interests to meet, but interpretations vary in their emphasis (Bull and Aguilar-Støen, 2014: 7). On one hand, emphasis can be put on sustainability by seeing sustainable development as an “ecologically sustainable or environmentally sound development” (Singh, 2013: 26). This interpretation puts a strong environmental or social connotation on sustainable development (Barbier, 1987). On the other hand, emphasize within sustainable development can be put on development, which mostly puts a strong economic connotation on sustainable development and strongly builds on the traditional discourse on development. The latter definition resembles the most common interpretation of sustainable development by scholars and especially policy makers in the early stage of the discourse. This emphasis can best be seen in the 1987 UN-commission report “Our Common Future”, in which it meant to be the way to be “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, 1987; 41). Within this common interpretation, similar to the traditional development discourse, economic growth again played a dominant role by becoming the key element of the solution for socio-economic and environmental problems (UN, 1992: 3; Brundtland, 1987: 7). This way there was hardly a break between the old development discourse and the new one on sustainable development, but old values became part of a new solution, as “no longer seen as an environmental threat or cause of global inequality, development became the route to sustainability” (Mansfield, 2009: 39).

Another crucial debate centers on environmental governance, which is a concept that has received attention from a wide field of scholars and plays an increasing role in the politics of sustainable development (Bridge and Perreault, 2009). Unlike the traditional literature on

development, which gave little importance to the environment as a livelihood of people (Escobar, 1995), under sustainable development, environmental governance has become a key themes in global politics (Paterson et al., 2003: 1). However, the concept of environmental governance is very diverse in its meanings, as the environment can be defined more strictly or broadly, and governance can either be seen as a new form of governance or as the government's resolution of environmental problems (Paterson et al., 2003; Adger et al., 2003). This variety in definition can lead to different interpretation. From a realist point of view, the nation-state is the primary power that shapes environmental governance and non-state actors take the role of a supporter or facilitator (Paterson et al., 2003: 2). Scholars with this view push for solutions to fight environmental issues on a state- and interstate level, considering the establishment of international institutions for global environmental governance, which would set solutions and norms that would cascade down from a global level to national and subnational levels of governance (Bulkeley and Betsill 2003: 15-16). Thus, decision making in environmental governance is within this rationality seen as being bound by space and scale, as pointed out by various scholars like Adger et al. (2003: 1101), Cowell (2003) and Gibbs and Jonas (2001). From a constructivist point of view, environmental governance is seen as non-hierarchical, multi-level and multi-scale governance. This form of environmental governance focuses on networks, which consist of state and non-state actors that operate simultaneously on multiple scales (Litfin, 1993; Newell, 2000; O'Brien et al., 2000; Smith et al., 1997). This way the field of power is seen as not being limited to the nation-state and the state as an authority, but by seeing power as social boundary in which a wide variety of national and transnational actors can participate (Hayward, 1998). This approach breaks with the traditional perception that governance is a top-down government-centric process.

A third discourse emerged in the late 1980s in Latin American, where indigenous peoples started to claim the right to live and develop according to their own cultural identities, the "good living" or 'Buen Vivir' in Spanish (Stavenhagen, 1986: 65). The discourse around Buen Vivir was driven by three factors: Latin American social movements, globalization as it converged social movements and the ideologies of other global movements like anti-globalization or environmental movement, coupled with the disenchantment of past development (Vanhuylst and Beling, 2014: 56). The discourse on Buen Vivir is on one hand a critique of universal western modernity and on the other hand a call for a new form of development with a distinct social,

cultural, ecological and political stance (Houtart, 2011). Buen Vivir received wide attention of international scholars, but are divided about the role of Buen Vivir in the development debate, as some characterize it as post-development (Unceta, 2013) or sustainable development (Fatheur, 2011; Vanhulst and Beling, 2014; Monni and Pallottino, 2013). However, this positioning might never come to an end, as Buen Vivir is according to Gudynas “not a static idea but an idea that is continually created” (2011: 443). Depending on the context and the holder’s identity, a different meaning is attached to the concept Buen Vivir in most Latin American countries, like Bolivia and Ecuador Chile, Argentina and Colombia (Huanacuni Mamani, 2010: 21-31). Nevertheless, in all cases the concept of Buen Vivir has at its core the “coexistence of human beings in their diversity and in harmony with nature” (Gudynas and Acosta, 2011: 103). Based on this notion of natural plurality, Buen Vivir opens up a way of thinking about different approaches on fields like development, governance and environment by breaking with the concept of individual rights and responsibilities, as well as the nation-state as a boundary.

All three discussions, the ones on sustainable development, environmental governance and Buen Vivir, build on each other and are important when analyzing the environmental norm socialization processes in Ecuador. The discussion on sustainable development led to the inclusion of ecological aspects in the development debate, sparking the discussion around more sustainable forms of environmental governance on a national and international level. Building on that, this paper will analyze the potential of Buen Vivir within the discourse on sustainable development and sustainable environmental governance. The case of Ecuadorian environmental governance is a case that connects all three discourses, which have formerly been only loosely linked and especially received a marginalized importance in its transnational and international importance. In the case of Ecuador, the focus will be on the analysis of Buen Vivir as a form of sustainable environmental governance of natural resources in the Amazon region. Special attention will be given to the aspect of governance, which will be approached from a constructivist perspective by focusing on the political and normative process of governing the nature and natural resources, focusing on the role of national and transnational state and non-state actors in environmental policy making. This way the debates on environmental governance, sustainable development and Buen Vivir will be a useful academic framework to explore the transnational, multi-level and multi-scalar process of normative environmental decision making that Buen Vivir has gone through.

The paper is organized in the following structure. Chapter I will focus on relevant background information on environmental governance in Latin American and on an international level. Based on this, chapter 2 will explore the case of Ecuadorian Environmental governance, by analyzing the norm socialization process that brought the indigenous concept of Buen Vivir from a local level to its incorporation in environmental governance on a national level. Chapter 3 will analyze one specific case of Ecuadorian environmental governance, the Yasuni-ITT project, which illustrates the norm socialization process that took place from a national to an international level, connecting Ecuadorian environmental governance to global environmental governance. This will be followed by a conclusion, which will sum up and combine the previous findings.

## Chapter I. Background on environmental governance

In December 2009, various Latin American countries took a very distancing role in the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, criticizing the current mechanism against climate change as being unjust and referring to the “ecological debt of northern countries towards the South” (Baut et al., 2011: 79). Bolivia’s president Evo Morales even went as far as calling the Copenhagen Accord illegitimate and announcing an alternative event, the ‘World’s People Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth’, which took place in April 2010 in Cochabamba (Baut et al., 2011: 79). Climate change has this way been a catalyst for discussions on sustainable development and sustainable environmental governance, as well as by linking local actions with global outcomes (UNEP, 2010; Escobar, 2008). Latin America is a fruitful place for discussions on development and environmental governance based on historical factors, which set the foundation for new forms of governance as seen in countries like Ecuador and Bolivia, where indigenous norms on politics, social life and economics deeply entered the country’s form of governance and led to new forms of governance, built on indigenous concepts. Within this context, this chapter will give brief relevant background information on of the socio-historical factors that shaped current environmental governance both at an international level and in Latin America. Thereby, the transnational and multiscalar nature of environmental governance will be pointed out, which will set the stage for exploring Ecuadorian environmental governance in chapter 2.

Global environmental governance has been under discussion since the establishment of the UNFCCC in 1992 and has on a global level led to the creation of basic environmental governance norms, which were formalized and ratified by a large number of countries in the 1997 Kyoto- protocol, which is an international treaty. Even though these in the UNFCCC established international norms are not binding, various countries already implemented them, such as the Joint Implementation (JI), Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS). These environmental governance norms are however largely based on market mechanisms as a tool to counter climate change, which is based on liberal economic thinking that the ‘invisible hand’<sup>4</sup> of the market knows best how to distribute costs of countering climate change. This has been supported by academic models such as the

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<sup>4</sup> The concept of the ‘invisible hand’ is derived from Adam Smith’s book “The Wealth of Nations” (Smith and Skinner, 2003).

Environmental Kuznets Curve, which claims that a country solves its environmental problems after a certain level of GDP is reached (Dinda, 2005). However, there has also been considerable opposition to further expansion of market based mechanisms, especially in countries like Bolivia, Ecuador and Costa Rica, which have been favoring non-market based mechanisms to conserve the environment (Lawrence, 2012: 156). Existing non-market based mechanisms in environmental governance have led to the creation of UN programs like the REDD+ programme<sup>5</sup> and the Green Climate Fund<sup>6</sup>. Norms in global environmental governance have been established since the early 1990s, and are mostly dominated by western countries and their understanding of governance, which builds on the financial market as a mechanism.

“In recent years, Latin American countries have come to occupy a key role in global debates on causes and solutions to environmental problems and climate change” (Baut et al 2011: 79). On one hand this has its root in Latin America’s as a holder of rich physical natural assets like “nearly half of the world’s tropical forests, one quarter of the world’s potential arable land, one third of freshwater reserves, and a range of important mineral reserves, including hydrocarbons”, but also as a significant emitter of greenhouse gases. (Baut et al., 2011: 80). On the other hand, historical and ideological reasons are factors that shaped Latin America’s push towards sustainable development that is not based on traditional western development, therefore opposing the ‘marketization of emissions’. Bull and Aguilar-Støen (2014: 1) point out that local political and economic elites have been controlling most of the natural resources since the colonial times of Latin America. These elites often had significant influence on the government, as can be seen in Coronil’s study on the importance of oil control in the case of Venezuela (Coronil, 1997). Besides the resource control of domestic elites, Latin America’s historic position in the global political economy has been largely dependent on the export of primary products (Quijano, 2000). Following this rationale, Escobar (1995) concludes that socio-environmental conflicts in Latin America have a lot more to say than the mere control of natural resources, but are about the power relation and representation of local interests in the political system. Latin America is due to current and historical reasons strongly connected to the field of environmental governance, as governance of resources represented the control of political and economic power.

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<sup>5</sup> REDD+ stands for **R**educing **E**missions from **D**eforestation and Forest **D**egradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

<sup>6</sup> The Green Climate Fund is a UN fund with the purpose of financing climate mitigation and climate adaptation projects worldwide.

The 1980s brought due to the neoliberal perception of governance a significant change in environmental governance in most Latin America countries, which was seen in the moved from centralized state-based governance towards decentralization and self-governance, increasingly including civil society and private enterprises in the governance process (Baut et al, 2011: 80). This paradigm shift led to the privatization of natural resource like water, forest and land, causing not only political but also socio-environmental conflicts throughout the continent (Liverman and Villas, 2006). Meanwhile, social movements and networks emerged within civil society, as the neoliberal reforms challenged indigenous local autonomy, politicized ethnic identity and catalyzed existing indigenous movements (Yashar, 1999: 89). This led the indigenous movements not only to demand more political rights, but also to seek more direct participation in the governance process. As a consequence, various indigenous based national organizations like CONAIE<sup>7</sup> in Ecuador, EZLN in Mexico, CSUTCB in Bolivia and AIDSESEP in Peru emerged (Yashar, 1999: 89). Their influence on the government can be seen in constitutional reforms that took place in Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Brazi, which recognizing the multiethnic and plurinational composition of their countries, which was highly demanded by indigenous organizations (Yashar, 1999: 89). Another example is the relatively successful lobbying in many states to ratify the Indigenouse and Tribal Peoples Convention (International Labour Organization Convention 169), which states rights to indigenous peoples and responsibilities of the states toward them (Becker, 2012: 48). It can be concluded that “indigenous organizations play a crucial role in mediating processes of resource access and use, economic development, and social integration” (Perreault, 2003: 62), as will be seen in chapter 2 in the case of Ecuadorian environmental governance. It was seen that the 1980s showed a shift of the dominant form of the norm socialization process in environmental governance process, as it increasingly took the shape of a bottom-up process based on the active involvement of indigenous networks and organizations in the governance process.

The era after the early 1990s brought another paradigmatic shift, as most Latin American countries decisively moved away from the neoliberalism paradigm and into a ‘Postneoliberal era’ (Peck et al., 2010). This shift can be seen in the rise of left-leaning governments and non-elite-

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<sup>7</sup> CONAIE is the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, and is well-known for its national and transnational networking played an important role in the emergence of Ecuador’s constitutional reform in 2008, as will be seen in chapter 2.

parties, which were mostly built on indigenous movements and organizations, and showed a strong interest in environmental justice and sustainable use of natural resources (Bull and Aguiar-Støen, 2014: 2). This era was according to Grugel and Ruggirozzi characterized by the return of the state in development and as a regulator in the economy, coupled with a focus on local politics and social inclusion and welfare (Grugel and Ruggirozzi, 2012: 15). This development favored sustainable and equitable national policies, based on the needs of the local population and indigenous people, rather than previously dominant policy norms given by local elites or the global community (Bull, 2015: 19-33). After intense conflict with civil society groups during the era of neoliberalism, many nation-states underwent a significant shift in their form of governance by including more people and networks in the governance process.

However, by closer looking at this new form of environmental governance in ‘post-neoliberal’ countries, it becomes clear that many policies actually show an underlying continuation of the old system of governance and environmental norms, which in some ways even lead to contradictions with the proclaimed post-neoliberal norms. In the case of Bolivia, the indigenous President Evo Morales announced plans for the construction of a highway through a protected area and indigenous lands despite the propagated policies on ‘life in harmony’ with the environment (“Pachamama”) through politics of ‘Vivir Bien’ (Morales, 2013). In Brazil, environmental protection plays a large role in national policies and is often presented as a showcase for international environmental protection, as Brazil set itself ambitious voluntary commitments in saving its biodiversity and in reducing CO2 emissions and deforestation rates (Duchelle et al., 2014:0 54). However, biodiversity and indigenous lands are threatened in projects like the extension of hydroelectric dams in the Amazon region, as can most prominently be seen in the case of the Belo Monte Dam (Cabral de Sousa Junior and Reid, 2010). These paradoxes led scholars like Gudynas (2010) to criticize the propagated sustainable developments strategies of many countries of the pink tied<sup>8</sup>, which only halfheartedly put them into practice. Economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability still seem to be contradictory in many supposedly post-neoliberal Latin American countries (Bull and Aguilar-Støen, 2014: 8). Propagated deep changes in environmental governance should be seen critically, or even as an instrumental or strategic adaptation, as economic growth still seems to be the motor of countries’ development and the financial backbone of most policies (Villalba, 2013: 1428).

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<sup>8</sup> Pink tied refers to the increase of center-left governments in Latin America since the 2000s.



In this chapter, it was shown that through the UNFCCC various norms in global environmental governance have been established, which are however notorious for their link to western forms of development, based on a neoliberal forms of governance and market-based mechanisms. However, these norms have received a considerable amount of criticism by various Latin American countries due to socio-historical and ideological factors, which can be seen in their strong involvement in sustainable development and environmental governance from a post-neoliberal perspective, which resulted in a highly critical stance towards market-driven environmental governance approaches and favored local alternatives, opening up the political opportunity structure for the emergence of new local environmental and development norms.

## Chapter II. Buen Vivir in Ecuadorian environmental governance

Out of the so called post-neoliberal countries, Ecuador underwent a significant paradigm shift in environmental governance by including the indigenous concept of Buen Vivir as a core of its governance. This change in environmental governance is crucial for a country like Ecuador, characterized by Karl (1997) as a ‘Petro-state’, which has despite 40 years of oil extractions and its position as the fifth largest oil exporter in Latin America remained among the poorest countries in Latin America (Valdivia, 2008: 457; Warnars, 2010: 55). Despite the economic dependence on oil, Ecuador has shown a special affinity to nature, as can be seen in Ecuador’s environmental governance since 2008, documented in its constitution from 2008 and its National Development Plan, which show a new form of environmental governance that is based on the indigenous concept of Buen Vivir<sup>9</sup>. This chapter will demonstrate the successful norm socialization process of Buen Vivir from the local level to its institutionalization on the state level, which was largely based on the involvement of various networks and movements. This will set the basis for the analysis of a specific project in Ecuadorian environmental governance in chapter 3.

Since the 1990s, Latin American indigenous peoples demanded the right to live and develop according to their own cultural identities, which during the last decade led to the incorporation of indigenous concepts and norms in governance of various Latin American countries. As seen in chapter 1, this can be attributed to the increased networking among indigenous organizations, as well as their increased direct participation in politics. Examples for some of the most significant cases of indigenous politics in Latin America can be seen in Ecuador and Bolivia. In both countries indigenous movements and indigenous believes (*cosmovisión*) had a direct impact on governance. Both countries can be seen as Latin American post-neoliberal governments that began in the late 1990s and early 2000s to strongly turned away from neoliberal development strategies and started to include the formerly marginalized indigenous groups in discourse around development, opening up to local indigenous knowledge, culture and tradition (Gudynas, 2011: 442). Many Latin American countries share a similar politically history and a high indigenous population, which led to the emergence of similar indigenous networks in

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<sup>9</sup> I am fully aware that Buen Vivir as it is used in the Ecuadorian Government is ultimately a creation of the Ecuadorian government, similar to the political concept of ‘Vivir Bien’ in Bolivia. However, Buen Vivir does build on the indigenous *cosmovisión* (worldview) and strongly builds on the Kichwa concept Sumak Kawsay (Gudynas, 2011: 442).

various countries. Especially Bolivia and Ecuador experienced the emergence of various indigenous networks with similar ethnic and ideological characteristics that would be the basis for strong transnational ties that will only play a marginal role in this chapter, but will prove to be an indispensable part for the norm socialization to a global level, as will be analyzed in chapter 3.

Ecuador's national indigenous movements and local communities had long pushed towards the incorporation of an indigenous concepts of 'good living'<sup>10</sup> in politics in order to replace neoliberal development strategies (Kauffmann and Martin, 2014: 53). In various Ecuadorian provinces, indigenous movements mobilized under the banner "Mushuk Yuya" to express the concept of new development ideas (Kauffmann and Martin 2014: 53). CONAIE, the largest indigenous organization in Ecuador and "one of the country's best organized and most militant social movements" (Becker, 2013: 44), promoted a similar concept of 'good living' under the name 'Integral Humanism' in 1994, which aimed at a harmonious socio-environmental relation, encapsulated in communitarianism and plurality (CONAIE, 1994: 11). The concept of Integral Humanism highlighted the importance of guaranteeing the livelihood of indigenous people and the rights of nature (CONAIE, 1994: 11). Even though CONAIE is a non-governmental organization that receives most of its funds from international organizations, its influence on national and regional politics is significant, as seen in the successful ousting of former Ecuadorian President Jamil Mahuad in 2000 or the large-scale protests against the Free Trade of the Americas agreement and International Monetary Fund loans (Martin and Wilmer, 2008: 592). Through the hosting of various Indigenous Continental Congresses, CONAIE reinforced its strong ties and position within the web of transnational networks that are specialized in environmental and indigenous issues. As one of Ecuador's strongest and most influential indigenous organization, CONAIE has strongly shaped national politics and promoted a concept that had a distinct view on socio-ecological relations. Indigenous networks and their ideas and norms set the foundation and the direction for the upcoming norm socialization process that will bring Buen Vivir in Ecuadorian environmental governance.

The election of the former minister of finance, Rafael Correa, in Ecuador's presidential elections in 2006, had far a reaching impact on the country's development path and its environmental and indigenous politics. Firstly, through the election of Correa, another 'leftist

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<sup>10</sup> The use of 'good living' is meant to highlight the similarity to the later concept of Buen Vivir, but intends to elucidate that it is not entirely the same concept.

government' joined other the group of countries like Bolivia under Morales or Venezuela under Chavez (Villalba, 2013: 1434). Even though their funding still relies heavily on conventional development models and natural resource exports, these governments have announced a decisive move away from the traditional development path, as already seen in chapter 1 (Vallejo, 2010). Secondly, the election of Rafael Correa was a significant point for environmental and indigenous politics. The new government's environmental affinity can be seen in the fact that many members of his cabinet and supporters were part of the anti-oil extraction community. Another exemplary connection to indigenous and environmental politics can be seen in the election of his First Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, who was a Senior Advisor on Biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples and worked as a regional director of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (Espinosa Garcés and Pazmiño, 2006: 82). Furthermore, Correa's winning of the 2007 presidential elections was significantly influenced by large support from indigenous organizations like Ecuador's CONAIE, as well as the Ecuadorian indigenous political party 'Pachakutik' (Becker, 2014: 272). The elections represent a crucial time in Ecuador's environmental norm socialization process, as a political opportunity structure opens up on a national level, which allows people and networks like indigenous organizations to directly influence Ecuador's governance. Early coalitions and networking between indigenous organizations and the presidential candidate Correa granted indigenous organizations some influence on the future national governance process.

In April 2007, Ecuadorians approved a referendum to establish an assembly in order to write a new constitution, which led to significant changes in governance. The constituent assembly of 2007 was according to the former president of CONAIE Humberto Cholango, a long-awaited political opening that indigenous groups hoped for in order to strongly break with neoliberalism and institutionalize indigenous values and norms (Cholango, 2007:3-6). Various indigenous organizations were represented in the Constitutional Assembly and played an active role, like Monica Chuji from CONAIE or Pedro de la Cruz from FENONCIN (National Confederation of Peasants, Indigenous , and Black Organizations) (Becker, 2014: 269). It was only in the constitutional assembly that the currently used political concept of Buen Vivir was incorporated in Ecuador's constitution, which symbolized according to the indigenous organization Ecuarrunari the "decades of resistance and struggle of social movements, the Indigenous movement, and diverse sectors of the Ecuadorian people" (Becker, 2014: 282). The

assembly showed how the indigenous concept of Buen Vivir was despite some discussion and thanks to some political networking and coalition building successfully able to incorporate it in the Ecuadorian governance through the active engagement of indigenous organizations. Thereby, indigenous networks fundamentally shaped Ecuadorian governance and set the start of Buen Vivir in Ecuadorian governance.

In September 2008, an overwhelming percentage of Ecuadorians voted for the adoption of the new constitution (Treminio, 2014: 66). One crucial change, compared to the old constitution from 1998, is the enshrining of Buen Vivir or ‘sumak kawsay’ as its foundation. Throughout the constitution, Buen Vivir plays a dominant governing role, as seen in the preamble, the section on ‘Rights of Buen Vivir’ and ‘The Buen Vivir System’ (“Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador 2008”). In the preamble, Buen Vivir is being based on the Kichwa<sup>11</sup> concept ‘sumak kawsay’ and portrayed as the way towards “a new form of civil society, in diversity and harmony with nature” (“Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador 2008”). In the section on ‘Rights of Buen Vivir’, the constitution frames Buen Vivir similarly so western concepts of rights, like freedom, participation and protection (Gudynas, 2011: 443). Within the rights section, people’s socio-ecological right to live in Buen Vivir is guaranteed, which is defined as “the right [...] to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment that guarantees sustainability and Buen Vivir” (“Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador 2008”). After various chapters on rights of people, there is also one chapter that states the rights for nature, which is not only a normative underpinning but can be enforced by the state, as defined in Articles 71 to 74 of the constitution. Besides the section on “Rights of Buen Vivir”, the constitution also dedicates a whole chapter on the practical application of Buen Vivir through the ‘The Buen Vivir System’, and frames Buen Vivir as a ‘Development Regime’ (Gudynas, 2011: 433). Title 7, Chapter 2, highlights the role of biodiversity and natural resources in development by obliging the state to “guarantee a sustainable model of development, one that is environmentally balanced and respectful of cultural diversity, conserves biodiversity and the natural regeneration capacity of ecosystems, and ensures meeting the needs of present and future generations” (“Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador 2008”). The new constitution shown the institutionalization of the indigenous concept of Buen Vivir and takes a definite shape and definition as an ecologically sustainable development. Thereby, Buen Vivir takes a clear position within the debates on sustainable development and

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<sup>11</sup> Kichwa communities are among the Ecuador’s largest indigenous groups.

environmental governance by taking a leading governing role and emphasizing the ecological aspect of sustainable development. Through its institutionalization, Buen Vivir took another step within the norm socialization process. Its governing role and its enshrining in the constitution strongly shaped Ecuador's new form of environmental governance.

Buen Vivir became deeply entrenched in Ecuadorian governance and was presented to the national and international community as a way of sustainable development. Article 280 in the constitution includes the creation of a National Development Plan, the 'National Plan for Buen Vivir' (*Plan Nacional Para El Buen Vivir*"), in order to make the national transition to the 'Buen Vivir system' ("Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador 2008"). This plan was formulated in 2009 by Ecuador's Ministry of Planning and Development, and calls for a shift from hegemonic, monocultural development towards an alternative form of development that focuses on plurality and human needs (SENPLADES, 2009: 17). The development plan for the period from 2013 until 2017 even goes further by calling for a global application of Buen Vivir, the "Buen Vivir mundial", which would be characterized by peace and ecological-, social- and political security. (SENPLADES, 2013: 25). Through the National Plan for Buen Vivir, Ecuador institutionalized its form of sustainable development, based on the concept of Buen Vivir. Besides the institutionalization of Buen Vivir, the two national development plans from 2009-13 and 2013-2017 also set the steps for the long term process of habitualization and internalization of Buen Vivir. The Ecuadorian government even showed ambition to scale up Buen Vivir to a global governance level, which can be seen as the start of another socialization process of Buen Vivir from the national to the global level and will be the subject of chapter 3.

In this chapter, the bottom-up norm socialization process of Buen Vivir from a local to a national level was shown. Buen Vivir emerged as indigenous concepts of 'good living' and was during the opportune political structure of the Ecuadorian elections in 2008 able to influence national governance. Based on the powerful indigenous movements and networks and their coalition with the winning presidential candidate, they were able to significantly shape national governance process, which allowed them to push forward and institutionalize Buen Vivir on a national level. The National Development Plan for Buen Vivir then set the track for its national habitualization and internalization. Through the integration of Buen Vivir, Ecuador formally established a new socio-environmental relation in respect of nature and with the aim for harmonious life. This way Ecuador set new norms in national environmental governance, among

which especially the newly established rights of nature had an impact on national and international environmental governance, as will be seen in chapter 3.

## **Chapter III. Yasuni-ITT: Local struggle between national and global**

The newly written Ecuadorian constitution with the incorporation of Buen Vivir not only led to international discussion, but also led to its implementation in specific local projects. One significant project is the Yasuni-ITT proposal, which directly connected the global community to Ecuadorian environment governance and is strongly based on the concept of Buen Vivir and is placed within the international debate around climate change and sustainable development. Even though the proposal turned out to be unsuccessful, it still illustrates a limited but successful norm socialization process from national environmental governance to a global level, challenging current international norms. Taken together, the evidence explored in this chapter will firstly show the connection between the Yasuni-ITT proposal and Ecuadorian environmental governance, secondly point out the various networks that were involved in the Yasuni-proposal, and thirdly analyze the outcomes of the international norm socialization process, which will demonstrate both limited influence on international norms but also limited capability of challenging dominant international norms.

### **Ecuadorian environmental governance in action**

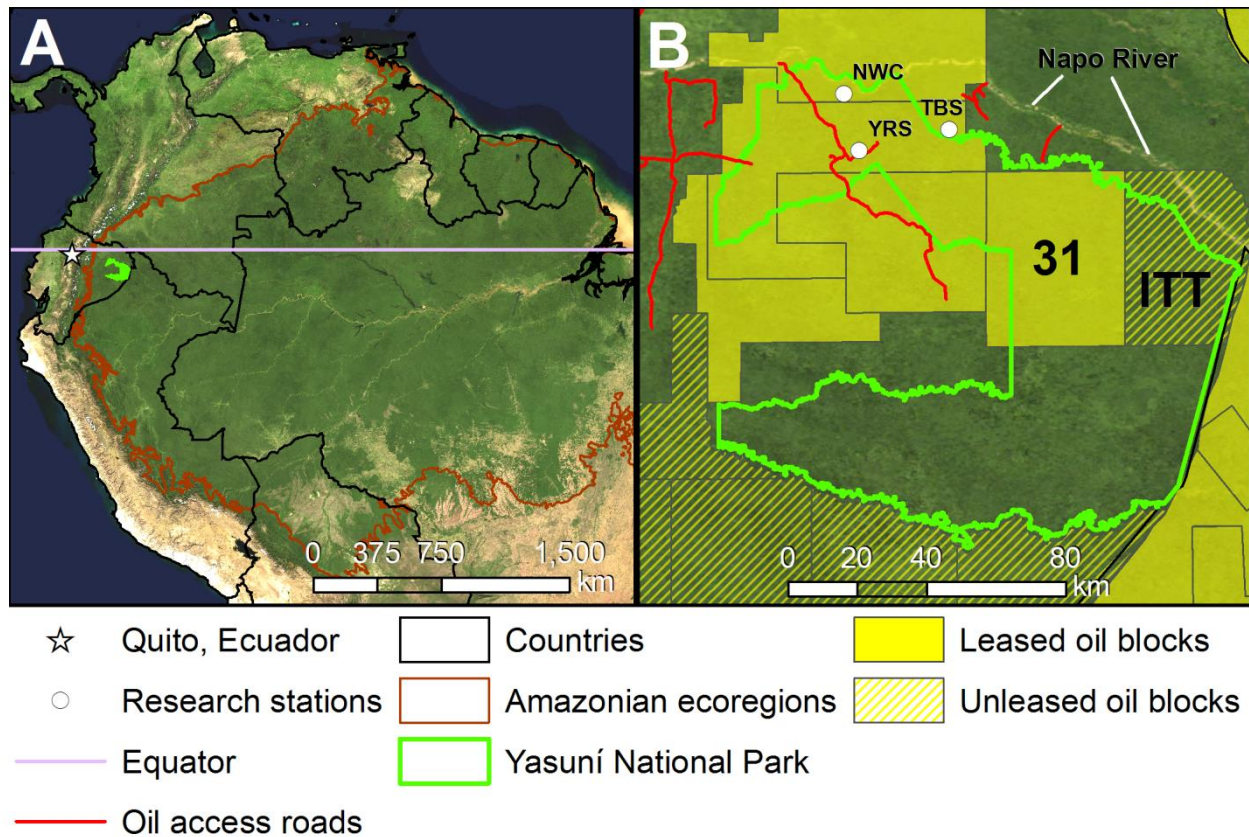
For three decades, the Yasuni National Park, located in Ecuador's western Amazon, has been a thriving example of Ecuadorian environmental governance (see Figure 2 below). According to Fontaine, the Yasuni Park is a crucial case, as it "resisted the invasions and looting, converting itself into a theater of a dramatic fight between good and bad" (Fontaine, 2011: 1). The Yasuni park is one of the most biodiverse hotspots in the world and houses various contacted and uncontacted indigenous Waori tribes (Martin, 2011a: 3). The 1989 inaugurated park was declared a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve and covers around 982 000 hectares of the Ecuadorian Amazon, representing according to Fontaine "a milestone for global environmental governance" (Fontaine, 2011: 1). The Yasuni region arouses intense discussions, as it is on one hand Ecuador's most biodiverse area, but on the other hand holds the country's largest underground oil reserves<sup>12</sup> (UNDP). This led historically to large disputes, as economic and ecological interests over the oil rich Amazon region collided. One example is the decades lasting law suit by Ecuadorians against Chevron Texaco due to their environmental pollutions during oil extraction

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<sup>12</sup> According to Larrea et al. (2009), Yasuni hold around 20% of Ecuador's oil reserves.



in the 1970s and 1980s, which is still a prominent memory by many Ecuadorian (Pigrau, 2014: 4-5). The Yasuni region is a representative case of Ecuadorian environmental governance, which is strongly connected to Ecuador's identity, as a country that holds great biodiversity and a significant indigenous population. Despite its national significance, the park is also a case of international significance, worthy of protection



**Figure 2.** Location of Yasuni National Park (A) and its leased and unleased oil blocks, including the ITT block (B)

*Source:* Bass et al., 2010: 2

Building on the national and international value of the Yasuni Park and the global discussions on climate change and sustainable development, the Ecuadorian government took an active role in global environmental governance by developing the Yasuni-ITT proposal. With the aim of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, preserving biodiversity and uncontacted inhabitants, as well as reducing poverty in the region, the Ecuadorian president proposed to forgo oil extraction in the Yasuni-ITT region (Larrea, 2009: 6). Hence, in September 2007, the President of the Republic of

Ecuador, Rafael Correa delivered the proposal to the general assembly of the United Nations (Correa, 2007). This proposal became later known as the Yasuni-ITT proposal, as it is about the Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputi region (ITT) in the Yasuni National Park. This called for shared responsibility of the economic burden of conserving nature by asking the global community for half of the crude oil's foregone revenue, which would have been around 3.6 billion USD (Warnars, 2010: 55-57). The money would be placed in a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Trust Fund, which would disburse the money over a period of 10 years and invest in Ecuador's sustainable development, as outlined in the National Development Plan (Larrea, 2009: 5). However, in December 2009, the proposal was officially ended, with Correa refusing to sign the UNDP Trust Fund agreement at the UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen. Reasons therefore were according to Correa the insufficient amount of money raised by the international community. Through the global discourse on sustainable development and sustainable environmental governance in the light of climate change, it was made possible to successfully position Ecuadorian environmental governance with its indigenous norms of Buen Vivir as an alternative to current forms of global sustainable development and environmental governance. The Yasuni-ITT proposal decisively set the start of a new norm socialization process of Ecuadorian environmental governance to a global level, which led to a wide and long international argumentative discourse, lasting over three years and building on a wide range of validity and identity-related arguments, which are worth analyzing in more detail.

The Yasuni-ITT proposal emerged from its new normative underpinnings of Ecuadorian environmental governance and became itself an official part of Ecuadorian environmental governance. The proposal's normative basis can be found in the 2008 Ecuadorian constitution and the National Development Plan for Buen Vivir, in which rights for nature are granted, as seen in chapter 2. The proposal's objective was framed around the nationally institutionalized politics of Buen Vivir, as being "the driving elements in keeping oil underground and pursuing alternative energy policies in this resource-rich developing country" (Martin, 2011a: 2). Crucial parts of the Constitution regarding the Yasuni proposal are Article 403, which states Ecuador's obligation to conservation of biodiversity, human health and securing the rights of nature. Furthermore, Article 407 says that "activities for the extraction of nonrenewable natural resources are forbidden in protected areas and in areas declared intangible assets, including forestry production" ("Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador 2008"). Besides its constitutional

normative basis, the Yasuni-ITT initiative itself has been institutionalized in the Ecuadorian government through the creation of the Administrative Leadership Council (CAD) as the government coordinating entity of the Yasuni-ITT initiative. Furthermore, the Yasuni-ITT initiative was included as part of Ecuador's environmental and foreign policy through the Executive Decree Number 1572 in February 2009 (Espinosa Garcés and Correa, 2010: 1). The Yasuni –ITT project show to be deeply rooted in Ecuadorian environmental governance and can be seen as a result of the previous analyzed successful norm socialization process from a local to a national level, which led to the internalization of Buen Vivir in Ecuadorian environmental governance.

### **Involved transnational networks**

Despite the economic importance of natural resources for the Ecuador's economy, Ecuadorian environmental governance has shown to be heavily influenced by social movements and networks. Their involvement significantly shaped national governance and played a significant role in the Yasuni-ITT initiative (Martin, 2011a: 19). The Yasuni-ITT initiative should be seen as a 'place-based struggle' that is based on "multi-scale, network-oriented subaltern strategies of localization" (Escobar, 2001: 139). Hence Yasuni is a place based proposal in the global context of sustainable development and environmental governance, which shows reworks this globalizing development through a local project that bring together development, culture and environment (Bebbington, 2001: 416). When looking at Yasuni-ITT, the epistemic community, the global civil society and the transnational advocacy network all play a role and therefore also shaped the environmental norm socialization process.

Firstly, the epistemic community plays a crucial role in the case of the Yasuni-ITT, as a group of international scientists pointed out the significant value of biodiversity in the park and wrote a letter in November 2005 to the Ecuadorian president, pleading him to reject the planed road from Napo River to the Yasuni National Park, which would facilitated further oil extraction and tremendous environmental damages ("Proposed Petrobras road into Yasuní National Park", 2004: 2). According to their work, the park shows to be home to more tree species than in the USA and Canada combined, and inhabits 44% of the total bird species of the Amazon basin (2). Their studies set the empirical basis for further discussion on the tremendous biodiversity of the park and spurred further research by scientists like by Finer et al. (2009) and Beckerman et al. (2009). The scientific community set the framework for the following national and international

political discussion around Yasuni-ITT and their findings strongly influenced many validity related argument in the later discourse on the global level.

Secondly, the global civil society and transnational advocacy networks were an important part that evolved quickly around the Yasuni proposal, pushing through their transnational structure towards change of existing global environmental governance norms. Based on the transnational networks and organizations that emerged during the 1990s as part of the indigenous movements, as well as the international campaign and long-lasting lawsuit against environmental damages caused by Chevron-Texaco's oil extraction in the Ecuadorian Amazon, an underlying transnational network structure based on indigenous and environmental organization and sensibility of parts of the global civil society already existed. In addition to that, new networks emerged through the wide attention that Yasuni received based on the delivery of the proposal to the UN assembly, its presentation during the 2007 Live Earth Concert and most notably the Ecuadorian president's active promulgation of the proposal during numerous occasions, such as the Fifth Latin American and Caribbean-European Union Summit ("Rafael Correa Expondrá en la Cumbre ALC-UE su plan [...]", 2008) or to the OPEC Secretary General in 2007 ("Secretario General de la OPEP Visita Ecuador [...]", 2008). This led to the involvement of a variety of international networks, including governments, private sectors and NGOs. These international connections and networks have been building up for years through global conferences and related researches, and have been intensified through new information sharing technology (Martin, 2011a: 18). This led to transnational flows of knowledge, interactions, debates and support. Among state actors, the German Government played a crucial role, as it was among the first nations to pledge funding for the initiative and offering financial support for consultation on studies and workshops (Deutscher Bundestag, 2014: 2; Bülow, 2013: 170). The UNDP was another important international network partner, providing funding and research in key areas. Various international and national NGOs like Acción Ecológica, Oil Watch, Amazon Watch, Pachamama Alliance, CONAIE and the Rainforest Foundation supported the initiative through campaigns and actions. Many of these NGOs not only spread information but also played a crucial role in providing scientific information and technical support to the network, as in the case of the Pachamana Alliance, Finding Species and Save America's forests (Martin, 2011a: 94). Civil society advocacy networks played an important role in supporting the Yasuni-initiative

within the morality-related global argumentation discourse by raising global consciousness about the park's biodiversity and its threatened indigenous inhabitants.

In the Yasuni case, a wide range of network were involved and significantly shaped the validity and morality based argumentation discourse on a global level. This underlines Khagram and Ali's findings that transnational actors are increasingly involved in norm-, rule- and decision-making processes (Khagram and Ali, 2008: 158-9). People and networks strongly influence the process of norm socialization. Various scales and dimensions of networks exist, but transnational networks are crucial in Yasuni's international norm socialization process.

### **Breaking or shifting norms in global environmental governance?**

The Yasuni case shows a case where the global community is directly confronted with a new set of norms for environmental governance. As pointed out by Martin (2011a: 19), the involved networks around the Yasuni proposal are built on the proposal's normative underpinning, namely the Ecuadorian-specific concepts of Buen Vivir. In the case of Yasuni, Buen Vivir is incorporated in the way that the initiative is framed as a struggle for 'good life' by placing people and nature over petroleum and the market, proposing a new environmental governance norm of avoided carbon emissions. The initiative is unique, as it weaves indigenous worldview (*cosmovisión*) with global norms of environmental governance within the global debate on climate change and sustainable development. However, this new norm can either be seen as a total break with the norms created in the Kyoto protocol ('Kyoto to Quito'), or as an addition to the current Kyoto scheme ('Kyoto II'). Actors involved in the initiative differ widely in their opinion on how much Yasuni-ITT breaks with international environmental governance norms, as seen in the different views of the former president of the Constituent Assembly Acosta (2000) and the CAD member Larrea (2009: 6). One of the reasons for these different views can be found in the difficulty of defining Buen Vivir, as seen in chapter 2. In addition to that, even sustainable development lacks a common specific definition, as seen in the literature review. Both concepts leave sufficient room for interpretation and can in combination lead to different interpretations. The transported norms in Yasuni's international norm socialization are can adapt during the socialization process as a result of the argumentative discourse.

Despite the successful national institutionalization and global positioning-as an alternative or addition to the current international governance, Ecuadorian environmental governance norms

still showed difficulties in challenging the dominant role of neoliberalism in global environmental governance (Radcliffe, 2012: 243). These strong and dominant global norms led to some adaptation of the Yasuni-ITT proposal, which despite the progressive element of avoided future carbon emissions made the Yasuni-proposal in the end not look too different from existing environmental governance mechanisms. This change of the Yasuni-ITT proposal towards an alignment with existing international norms can be seen in the adaptation of the original Yasuni proposal from financial compensation towards an adopted version that includes debt relief rather than international donations for foregone oil revenue (Bernier, 2012). Another consideration during the adaptation process led the Ecuadorian government even to look for solutions in the carbon market, which would have aligned the Yasuni proposal deeply with the dominant global environmental governance norms of the Kyoto protocol (Martin, 2011b: 24). The outcome of the norm socialization process that Yasuni-ITT started shows that due to the dominant neoliberal norms in global environmental governance, Buen Vivir's underlying critical stance towards neoliberal values sparked criticism and rejection from the international community. Therefore one can conclude that there is a certain limit until which international norms can be challenged. The on Buen Vivir based Ecuadorian environmental governance was seen as a strong and direct challenge of international norms, which might have led to its rejection.

Despite the limited direct effect that Yasuni-ITT had on international environmental governance, it still led to a wide underlying influence on environmental governance norms on a global and regional level. On a global level, the Kyoto protocol norms of JI, CDM and EU ETCs are still dominating and only slight changes are visible, like the inclusion of foregone deforestation as seen in the REDD+ programme, which is based on payments for foregone deforestation (Brown et al., 2008). A long-term future change toward a payment for avoided emissions is therefore possible and the Yasuni proposal can be seen as a next step to its institutionalization. Yasuni's proposed avoided carbon emissions mechanism as part of the Buen Vivir based Ecuadorian environmental governance undoubtedly brought some dynamics in the international discussion on sustainable development and environmental governance. This can be seen in the inclusion of 'harmony with nature', 'rights of nature' and the concept of 'Pachamama' in the RIO 20+ conference in June 2012. In Article 39 of the RIO+20 final document, the conference members acknowledge that "in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote

harmony with nature” (UN general assembly, 2012: 6). In addition to that, they recognize that “planet Earth and its ecosystems are our home and that ‘Mother Earth’ is a common expression in a number of countries and regions, and [we] note that some countries recognize rights for nature in the context of the promotion of sustainable development” (8). Further articles, like Article 40 and Article 41, link sustainable development with core concepts of Buen Vivir, such as harmony in plurality and harmony between nature and society (8). The push towards harmony with nature and constitutional rights for nature even prompted the UN to established a website called “harmony with nature”, which includes the Ecuadorian constitution as an exemplary legal framework (UN, 2015). In Latin America, the new Ecuadorian environmental norms even found bigger resonance. This can be seen in the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, which was initiated by Bolivia and held there in April 2010, resulting in the *Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth* (Munson, 2010: 66). Another outcome was the foundation of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature in 2010, which is based on Ecuador’s constitutional experience of the ‘Rights for Nature’ and includes various NGO activists and indigenous organizations from all over the world (Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, 2015). By looking at the global and regional discussions on environmental governance, one can see that various environmental norms that are part of the Ecuadorian environmental governance found their way to regional and a global level, despite the negative outcome of the Yasuni-ITT proposal.

This chapter showed the Yasuni case as a practical implementation of Ecuador’s turn towards Buen Vivir in its environmental governance, which also started a norm socialization process to a global level, in which Ecuadorian environmental governance norms were seeking international institutionalization. The involved transnational networks in the Yasuni initiative played a crucial role in the international norm socialization process by framing and shaping the argumentative discourse. The outcome of the norm socialization process shows that existing international environmental governance norms can only be challenged to a certain extent, which was the reason why Ecuadorian environmental governance norms experienced a long and difficult process of debate, adaption and rejection. However, the proposal ultimately showed some underlying influence on environmental governance on a regional and international level.



## Conclusion

All in all, it was shown that environmental governance is a very dynamic field, which has through increasing discussions on climate change and sustainable development opened up an opportunity structure for local solutions to scale up in order to solve complex problems.

One such solution came from Ecuador, where through the significant institutional change in 2008, a new concept of governance was brought up, which was based on the indigenous believes of Buen Vivir. However, the incorporation of the concept in the constitution was no random development, but rather built on socio-historical factors of resource governance since the colonial times in Latin America, as well as the indigenous and environmentalist networks that have become increasingly entangled in governance processes and have been strengthening since the neoliberal height in the 1990s in Latin America. These factors led to the emergence of post-neoliberal countries like Ecuador and their quest for a different development path, away from traditional neoliberal grounding, towards development that is beneficial for the majority of the population and is ecologically sustainable. This brought countries like Bolivia and Ecuador towards the incorporation of indigenous concepts like the one of Buen Vivir, which on one hand reflects their identity and on the other hand offers a viable development path. .

This new development path showed especially within the global discussion on sustainable development and quest for new climate change mitigation to be a viable solution, as can be seen in the case of environmental governance. In Ecuador's post-neoliberal 2008 constitution, the concept of Buen Vivir became the backbone of the constitution and the country's development plans. The close link that Buen Vivir has with the environment, as seen in the aim for harmonious live between society and nature, took a very concrete form, as the constitution grants nature rights, just like it does human beings. Based on the institutionalization of Buen Vivir, the Yasuni-proposal began to shape and turned out to be a crucial case in the process of scaling up Ecuadorian environmental governance to the global level. The Yasuni case is historic, in the way that it was a normative struggle between the factors of nature, society and economy, confronting the international community directly with Ecuador's new environmental governance norms. Despite the negative outcome of the proposal, it showed the strong and wide support of national and transnational networks involvement based on the proposal's normative foundation. Not only did these networks bring the proposal nearly to its success, but more importantly are continuing



their work and will certainly play a role in upcoming discussions on (regional and global) environmental governance.

Ecuadorian environmental governance norms have shown various cases of influence on international policy makers and left its marks in the international debates around sustainable development and environmental governance. It cannot be ruled out that the underlying norms of the Yasuni-proposal, which is governance based on the Buen Vivir concept, will lead to further diffusion and international institutionalization. The international process of norm socialization might take longer than expected, but can still lead to similar changes, as seen in Ecuador. This might underline President Correa's statement that "the path to Buen Vivir is long-term societal and global change"("El Buen Vivir [...]", 2009).

While this paper showed the effective implementation of Buen Vivir in Ecuadorian environmental governance, further studies need to be conducted on how it can be implemented on a global scale and what consequences that would have.

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