MARTIN, Pamela L., *Oil in the Soil. The Politics of Paying to Preserve the Amazon*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Maryland, 2011, 147 pp.

In the international climate change negotiations it has been clearly demonstrated that new post-Kyoto mechanisms would be a major issue in order to overcome the climate crisis we are going through. The necessity to protect tropical forests, which constitute a vast carbon pool, and the biodiversity they shelter, has also become a major challenge for the international community on environmental matters.

In this context Ecuador, inspired on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and looking for an alternative for the country, announced in 2007 the Yasuní-ITT (Ishpingo, Tambococha, Tiputini) Initiative, a proposal that pretends to mitigate climate change, protect biodiversity and not contacted indigenous peoples, and to reduce poverty and inequality in the country.

Pamela L. Martin examines Ecuador's unique initiative of keeping *Oil in the Soil* in this portion of the Ecuadorian Amazon, the ITT blocks within the Yasuní National Park (YNP), in exchange for contributions from the international community. This precise section of the Amazon is considered one of the world's most biodiverse places, not just compared to other places in the planet but even compared to other places in the Amazon itself. The author conducts a careful and extensive analysis involving all the relevant actors in the region with a profound study of the culture, economic aspects and ecosystems that converge as part of the Initiative.

To explain the motivation and the multiple objectives of this proposal, Martin explores six interconnecting subjects that correspond to each one of the chapters of the book: 1) the "*buen vivir*" (good life), innovative concept that appears in the Ecuadorian Constitution of 2008; 2) international relations and globalization related to the creation of new values and norms to protect the environment and the indigenous peoples; 3) the historical events and social learning that have resulted from the oil and environmental policies and negotiations; 4) the structure and technical aspects of the policy of paying to preserve; 5) the agents and norms involved in the Initiative and, finally 6) the national and international perspectives and political opportunities of the Initiative.

The “*buen vivir*” or good life is the first perspective to analyze the Initiative, since it is consistent with it and establishes the roots for such a proposal. The Ecuadorian Constitution provides rights to nature with the goal of achieving harmonious balance between nature and humankind. *Buen vivir* is a concept that aims to shift the focus from a development driven by the neoliberal ideology of markets to a new development that prioritizes equitable and sustainable living (p. 2). The Initiative adjusts to this concept since its ultimate goal is the transition of Ecuador from an economy dependent upon fossil fuels for its development to a post-petroleum society that focuses on sustainable development and lives in harmony with nature. To go further, the intention is to unite this vision of life with the global concerns of climate change and post-petroleum energy policies.

The introduction of the Initiative under this perception allows the author to continue the development of Chapter 1 studying the multiple objectives of the Initiative and pointing out several scientific facts related to tropical forests, Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions, and making reference to some preliminary data related to Ecuador’s oil exploitation and its consequences, therefore setting the basis for the further analysis in the next chapters.

Chapter 2 examines the existing nexus between local, national and global advocacy networks and the change of paradigm from North to South. The author refers to the fact that the South is the one that’s now developing alternative norms on natural resources extraction and sustainable development. In Ecuador, the State is working with NGOs on proposals of this nature taking also into account the interaction of the market and its actors. It is clear that these communities are not satisfied with the existing norms and rather than fighting them with resistance and protest, they are formulating alternative norms and mobilizing to institutionalize them (p. 25).

Martin illustrates this process through the Yasuní-ITT Initiative, given that this proposal is not precisely aligned with current international regimes and norms on oil extraction and climate change. As a matter of fact it “...pushes the limits of these structures in order to seek change, such as post-Kyoto standards for climate change governance, rather than international regulation of it” (p. 19). But, it is also this innovative aspect of the Initiative and its socio-ecological norms and conceptions of the good life, which will keep it in debate and have presented and will continue to present difficulties for its translation at national and global levels (p.22).

Martin also focuses on the role of global governance in general and specifically in the case of Yasuní. When it comes to oil extraction, the State interacts with non-state actors and sometimes at a certain point it even allows this non-state institutions to be the leaders and coordinators of the campaigns. In this particular case, there has also been a failure due to the inability to take into account the web of social interactions that created and continue to form the campaigns (p.18).

Chapter 3 examines what in words of the author are the interconnected histories of oil extraction, indigenous rights, and the governance of the YNP. Martin narrates the history of the Yasuní in relation with the global governance networks that have shaped the park itself. From its recognition as a National Park in 1979, the reduction and expansion of its limits, the recognition and studies of its extreme levels of biodiversity, the fact of it being home to several uncontacted indigenous communities, the recognition of a *zona intangible* (untouchable zone) to the implication of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR). The author proceeds to review the history of the “black gold” exploration and exploitation and the operation of hydrocarbon activities of the country (p. 34-39). To finish this chapter the author refers to how the Initiative was conceived and how it developed into an international proposal analyzing its foundations, institutionalization and approach.

Martin dedicates Chapter 4 to study what could be the largest environmental trust fund, the Yasuní-ITT UNDP Trust Fund. Beginning with the negotiations to its actual formalization on August 2010, the author explains the process and the multiple governmental mechanisms forms to collect contributions and sell avoided emission certificates, called Yasuní Guarantee Certificates (CGYs for their acronym in Spanish). To clarify the structure of the Fund, Martin describes its financial governance and the domestic institutional organizations created with special regards to this project. Other technical aspects are also revised, such as guarantees, monitoring and evaluation.

A fundamental part of this chapter is its reference to the possible replication of the Initiative (p. 73). Other megadiverse countries with the paradox of being also developing countries and rich on fossil fuel reserves in highly biologically and culturally sensitive areas may use the Yasuní-ITT Initiative as a guide. Finally, Martin highlights the fact that the Initiative points out some of the Kyoto Protocol weaknesses and seeks to improve them for the developing world through normal and structural changes (p. 74-76).

Chapter 5 of the book examines the agents, norms and structure of the proposal through the words of the actors themselves, discovering the story behind the revolutionary proposal, the actors' motivations and expectations for the Initiative, the normative underpinnings of the campaign and the structural changes. The actors from the oil companies and those of NGOs and government view the Initiative distinctly and some of them have even created alternative proposals. An important fact is that the structures that would support the implementation of this proposal do not yet exist but actors are convinced that they can create a post-Kyoto scheme and an entirely different way to view sustainable development which will also lead to a process of alternative international norm creation in the one a distinct model of development is established (p. 80-81), a model that should include post-petroleum, post-Kyoto, Human Rights and uncontacted peoples and good life considerations.

The author herself emphasizes that the most important finding of this chapter is that social learning and networks are catalysts for action and that institutionalization of norms is a complex and messy process with bargaining and debate between different interested groups and sometimes even among allied network members.

Chapter 6 could be defined as a connecting chapter since like the own author explains, it links the original arguments about the normative processes and global governance with the actors involved in the Yasuní-ITT Initiative. This chapter gives Martin the opportunity to highlight certain details of the proposal such as the lack of real dialogue between the ITT team and the Waorani communities, local peoples of the YNP, and the existence of two Yasuní-ITT plans. Plan A for receiving international funds to keep the oil underground, which will be the ideal scenario of global co-responsibility for reducing CO₂ emissions and protecting biodiversity. Plan B is for oil exploration and extraction. Having two different scenarios and these domestic fluctuations doesn't contribute with the international receptivity of the Initiative.

Another fundamental aspect raised in this chapter is the possibility of the expansion of the Initiative to the entire park, which has always been the goal of the civil society (p. 117). Martin also points out the complexity of the institutionalization and internalization of the norms of post-petroleum politics and economic and political policies towards harmony with nature and the protection of human rights (p.123) and ends up describing the post-Kyoto scenario and the possible future of the Amazon and our planet.

As the author concludes, there is vague commitment on post-Kyoto climate change agreements among industrialized nations and that's why the developing world needs to seek solutions for climate change problems that are impacting their environments, societies and that will affect future generations. She considers the Yasuní-ITT Initiative as an innovative and imaginative guide to future ways to protect areas with such a great meaning, not only for local communities but for the entire global citizenry. Martin closes with the idea that even though today the economic and environmental benefits of avoiding emissions and pursuing for energy sources beyond oil are clear, the wealth of the Amazon lies in something that has not been discovered yet. We could conclude with these sentences from Martin: "The Yasuní-ITT proposal may call the world to protect only one small plot of rainforest, but its ramifications are much larger...is also a tipping point in the natural history of the planet."

Throughout the pages of this book, Martin shows us that paradise does exist and it is located in the Western Amazon, in Ecuador, but she also demonstrates that it could be destroyed in any moment. This work is the result of several years of research that have led the author to summarize one of the world's most innovative, if not the most innovative, initiative to mitigate climate change that at the same time will allow to save the Amazon. Martin examines the global environmental governance mechanisms that have resulted from the Yasuní-ITT Initiative and explains how this may influence the future environmental negotiations on climate change, biodiversity and human rights. The book lets us envision a new alternative to save our planet taking into consideration the normative changes it will imply and the complex process of changing our resource dependency towards a new concept of real sustainable development.

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