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Chapter 7 Reflection

In this chapter, the author takes an in depth look at the era following the bust, the citizens revolution (2006-2015). These new words of hope came from newly elected president Rafael Correa. Correa was a new wave and brought a different mentality to the country of Ecuador, he effectively made the state strong and reliable once again. This time period since Correa is elected as president has become the ultimate downfall of the INGOs and NGOs in Ecuador. With the legitimization of the government and the shown ability to carry out its own operations, as opposed to conveniently conforming to the thoughts of the ecoimperialist organizations such as USAID to make major policy and governmental decisions, INGOs no longer have to work with various NGOs on projects to conserve the environment because the government now does that on their own. In some cases, certain INGOs will still be involved within the country but instead of dealing with the ecodependents they focus on working *with* the state instead of running the show *for* the state. The ecoentrepreneurial organizations saw a decline at this time as well as the state took control of those services that were once carried out by these organizations, such as water treatment, waste management, etc. The major groups that come to the forefront at this time are the ecoresisters. At first these groups supported Correa and were looking forward to working with him due to his inclusion of giving rights to the environment into the new constitution. However, the ecoresisters soon found out that just because it is included in the constitution doesn't mean it's carried out. The Ecuadorian government lead massive state funded drilling operations for petroleum exports in order to produce an income that can foster societal growth through dumping money into efforts to build up the struggling infrastructure. While the government was doing it "for the people" they were taking these actions at the cost of the environment and that is what directly shifted the outlook that the ecoresister organizations had on Correa and his administration. The focus and continuation of extractive development set the stage for ecoresister organizations to do what they do best.

As stated earlier Correa established a sense of stability in Ecuador, from 1984-2005 the country has gone through 10 different presidents, Correa is in his third term. Correa promised a socialist society, in this new era the state has taken the responsibility of social welfare while using economic gains to further advance health care and education. Correa is an advocate for participatory democracy, he is a man that fights and does everything for the people but to do this he destroys the environment. Initiatives such as the Yasuni-ITT have been introduced in an effort to cease extractive development however the movement never really gained the traction that was expected and ultimately failed which enabled the continuation of extractive development within the country. Within this new era Correa takes several measures to cut ties with major influence that used to play a major part in Ecuadorian governmental decision making. The administration wants to be sure that everyone knows that the state is now back to being the main actor in the management of the economy and of the country as a whole. For example, in 2009 Ecuador did not renew a treaty with the United States that allowed the State to have an air base in Manta, later in 2011 the US ambassador was expelled from the country as a whole. Additionally in 2014 Correa sent a letter to USAID explaining to them to not initiate any new activity within the country. Correa wanted to eliminate any opportunity for outside influence and wanted to make the state strong once again by taking an active role in government and ensuring that operations

are carried out in a professional and efficient manner, "Correa, a U.S.-trained economist, has often been at odds with Washington since winning power in 2007. He accuses the U.S. government of trying to undermine him and this year Ecuador renounced U.S. trade benefits dating from the early 1990s."(Valencia). While USAID has provided over \$32 million in support to Ecuador Correa is taking measures to ensure a new outlook by the rest of the world in regards to the country and further proving that they can take care of themselves and prosper without any outside help or influence.

When it came to welfare programs Correa supported an innovative ideology of redistribution called the non-aggregation of wealth, in other words, shortly after taking office Correa doubled the amount of money paid to the poor per month (bono) to \$30 a month as well as subsidizing electric for those people. Others may see this as redistribution but Correa refers to it as non-aggregation of wealth because this approach distributes wealth to the people who create it rather than aggregating to the elites at the top unjustly. When Correa was elected president in 2006 Ecuador's poverty rate was at 37% and by 2011 it had declined to 29%.

While reading through the various socialist actions President Correa took in order to build his country up again I found a passage quite interesting and I feel it shows the kind of person that he is, always looking out for the better of his people and does everything that he can to preserve that image. In 2012 Correa was campaigning to be elected for his third term as the president of the country. His challenger was a banker that made a hefty promise, he vowed to increase the bono to \$50 a month. This would have people very intrigued as there is a substantial amount of people affected by this statement. However as soon as Correa got word that he mentioned that within his campaign Correa enacted it in the present government. The bono was now raised to \$50 dollars a month and Correa stated that the increase would be funded by the increase of taxes on banking transactions. So, in essence Correa beat his opponent to the punch while then adding insult to injury by essentially making his opponent pay for the overall increase. It like when they tell you at the Stockton book store if you can find a better price for a book somewhere else show them and they will lower the price to the best listed price. Correa heard that he didn't have the best value for the bono so he took it into consideration and took action to ensure that the people were taken care of and happy.

As aforementioned the era was headlined by heavy resource extraction and dependence in order to continue the country's recent operational success. Resource extraction was a common theme in the surrounding areas at the time. Latin America was home to various countries looking to export any kind of natural resource they can find in order to build their nations up out of poverty. "between 2000 and 2008 the volume of regional exports rose by a remarkable 42.4%". Bolivia was increasing tin extraction and Venezuela was extracting large amounts of oil, while both of these countries have beautiful environments they prioritize poverty reduction through exports over the environment. Ecuador at this point is on the same boat however it is a little more difficult for the state to take this kind of stance especially after adding rights to the environment in the latest constitution. Ecuador carried out extraction efforts anyway. This disappointed the social activist and indigenous people who had hope that Correa would drive the country away from this strategy.

With the new governmental independence that has been created the notion and existence of NGOs and INGOs has almost disappeared completely. In this era the long time great and first NGO to appear on the environmental scene, Fundación Natura, ceases operations. These NGO were not only getting defeated by the lack of transnational funding but the government was also picking out the best

and most innovative employees from various organizations once the NGO decline took a turn for the worst. In a sense this was a good move by the government in that they can now work with and collaborate with people that have a rich experience in dealing with and further progressing the environmental movement within the country. Another factor that played a part in the sharp decline of these NGO organizations is that the remaining INGOs that are around are working with the state to develop efforts such as Socio Bosque (forest Planter) which was established in 2008 with the help of Conservation International (CI). The program promotes agreements with land owners to conserve their land in exchange for financial incentive. Conservation of land includes that the land cannot be logged or burned however subsistence hunting and nontimber forest techniques and production is permitted. Once in a contract the individual is bound to it for 20 years. The majority of the program is operated by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment and a small portion of the project is taken care of by CI. CI assist with the technical advice and strategic funding for special topics such as a trainer session on how to create a community plan. In 2014 it was estimated that the country had 2,748 agreements, protecting 1,434,061 hectares of land which equals about 5% of the national territory. It cost the government \$10,011,899 to sufficiently provide incentives to all beneficiaries. Again there are not many other areas that the government could have gotten that money from other than resource extraction. While the effort looks to conserve and preserve the surrounding environment, it demands a large portion of payments for a small portion of overall conservation. It may hurt the environment more to payout the incentives to all the agreements than the agreements help the environment.

While this Era is headlined as a Citizen's Revolution, and that it was, in terms of the environmental sector, steps were taken in the right direction such as the incentive program for forest conservation, the inclusion of environmental rights into the constitution are two examples among other, however it is hard to see and appreciate those small steps forward when the country continuously takes large steps back each day with the continuation of widespread resource extraction in order to fund the ongoing "revolution". There is no ideal outcome to this situation, with the absence of transnational funders and the strengthening of the state the only option to continue moving forward is to further develop natural resources for exportation until there is no more environment for us to appreciate, or let the people suffer and take on transnational funding by giving up governmental independence and conserving the environment through INGO and NGO efforts.

Work Cited:

Valencia, A. (2013, December 15). United States cancels aid programs to Ecuador -officials. Retrieved September 28, 2017, from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ecuador-usa/united-states-cancels-aid-programs-to-ecuador-officials-idUSBRE9BE0HV20131215>