Reflection on Tammy Lewis’ “Ecuador’s Environmental Revolutions”

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 Abstract

Tammy Lewis, the author of Ecuador’s Environmental Revolutions did an incredible job at explaining Ecuador’s economic status as well as its Environmental beauty. It can be inferred that Ecuador isn’t in the best economic standing and hasn’t been for a while, however, it was interesting to find out why. The choices they have to make as a country to benefit all groups of their people seem extremely challenging for ex-President Rafael Correa. With all the money gained from oil extraction for Ecuador and all the new discoveries of the negative impacts on the environment from that industry, Correa and the rest of Ecuador had to make a choice. Does Ecuador only care about the money? Does Ecuador want a long, lasting, healthy planet Earth? Or can the president come up with a well-thought-out plan to pull Ecuador out of the economic mess without damaging the land? Correa’s master plan was the Yasuní-ITT initiative which was meant to slow down Global Climate Change and lead, not just Ecuador, but other under-developed countries to a different route of making money and that route was renewable energy sources. The Los Angeles Health Sciences Department of the University of California states, “An examination of peer-reviewed studies published over six years on hazardous air pollutants associated with the extraction of oil and natural gas finds that measurements of hazardous air pollutant concentrations near operational sites have generally failed to capture levels above standard health benchmarks; yet, the majority of studies continue to find poor health outcomes increasing as distance from these operations decreases.” If I was Ecuadorian, this is most definitely something I would support as I would want my country to be economically successful and sustainable. Unfortunately, for those who were for this plan, the initiative did not succeed and in the following pages, it will be elucidated. President Correa has done an incredible job picking Ecuador up and out of a huge financial crisis overall even if his Yasuní-ITT initiative didn’t go all the way through.

*Keywords: Ecuador, Oil Extraction, Biodiverse*

There is a huge division within the people of Ecuador. To some, oil extraction is a job opportunity and a way to pull the country out of poverty. To others, oil is a worry. Extraction industries are known to not only have many accidents like spills, leaks and water contamination, but they are also very well known for being damaging to the lands they have plants on. This country is exceptionally biodiverse, making it detrimental to the rest of the planet to keep itself intact. This is why it was almost essential for Rafael Correa to come up with the Yasuní-ITT initiative. On Science Daily a scientist wrote, “The Ecuadorian proposal, known as the Yasuní-ITT Initiative, would protect a large area of pristine Amazon rainforest, by leaving untouched nearly one billion barrels of oil that lies beneath the Yasuní National Park in Ecuador.”

The general goals for the initiative were to start living sustainably by leaning towards renewable energy. As mentioned in the book, his hope was that the rest of the world would fund this initiative so that the indigenous people of Ecuador could get their land back and in return, there would be a significant decrease in carbon emissions which in all sense would benefit the rest of the world.

*Keywords: Accidents, Sustainably, Renewable Energy*

This plan did not get enough funding. Correa said “The world has failed us.” It is said that “Only $13 million of the anticipated $3.6 billion was deposited into the trust.”.

This forced Ecuador to go back to drilling for oil. Correa was not ready to give up. He had been working on another plan. A plan called The National Plan for Good Living, also known as, “Buen Vivir” or “Sumak Kawsay" which generally translates to “good living.” There are three pillars, also known as, “The Triple Bottom Line” Correa wanted to follow and this plan seemed to fit into all three. The pillars were Environmental Protection, Economic Development, and Social Justice. The TOP, also known as, the “Treadmill of Production” explains how economic development is commonly prioritized over environmental concerns and social justice. In this case, the citizens don’t have much visibility and the corporations drilling for oil have little, if not any, worry for the damage to the environment and the world. Some don’t believe extracting any resources from Earth has major ecological and eventually fatal effects.

*Keywords: Funding, “Good Living”, Triple Bottom Line*

NGO’s, or Non-Governmental Organizations, establish an agenda to enable social and environmental policies into the state and are overall helping change areas that are often overlooked for the better. Adem Orsdemir, an assistant professor of operations and supply chain management at UC Riverside and first author of the study, states, "NGOs can blame companies or industries.” SMA’s or Social Movement Activists, are volunteers who come together to make beneficial changes to their environment. NGO’s and SMA’s could potentially be the drive for the people in underdeveloped countries to go green and see more positive changes environmentally. This can relate to how Schnaiberg looks at TOP. He looks at it as if production was versing environmental success. He mentions three different situations where they deal with production and the environment. These situations are economic synthesis where it benefits production and poses no restrictions on environmental access, managed scarcity which poses some regulations and limits but helps to find a balance between the two and ecological synthesis which imposes much stricter regulations that would prove the hardest to achieve. Schnaiberg feels that it is essential for people, especially in underdeveloped countries, to come together and highly believes in unity and social justice.

*Keywords: NGO, SMA, Schnaiberg*

Citations

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