

## MANIFESTO IN DEFENSE OF THE YASUNI NATIONAL PARK

By: Critical Geography Collective of Ecuador

The modern hunger and scarcity are of recent origin. They result from development that, until now, is promoted as the formula to combat them. In other words, the source of the problem is still applied as the remedy and, thus, it is worsened instead of being corrected. In order to break the vicious ideological circle in which ideas and actions related to hunger and scarcity move to the rhythm of development, we must travel to the level of myths. When we come back from that trip, perhaps we would be able to see better that only if we radically halt assistance and development will we be able to conscientiously confront the current challenges (ESTEVA, 1988: 109).

Following the Ecuadorian government's decision to cancel the Yasuni-ITT Initiative and to start oil exploitation in Block 43 (ITT), and after the successful advancement of the social initiative that proposes to consult the Ecuadorian people on this decision, the Critical Geography Collective of Ecuador wants to contribute with elements for deliberation. Based on theoretical discussions related to our field, we pretend to elucidate the numberless snags that the official position seems to have forgotten, and contribute to the promotion of a truly public and democratic debate on such an essential topic for the Ecuadorian society.

The territorial stress that this decision has created is evident: oil activities inside the Yasuni National Park (YNP) clearly violate the rights of nature [1] and the rights of the indigenous peoples in situation of isolation [2] which are provided in the Constitution. The Government, nevertheless, supports its position on two core elements to legitimize such exploitation: *national interests* and *reliability on technique*. The official arguments are based on the imperious need to generate resources to overcome poverty and the guarantee that the state-of-the-art technology would generate a minimum impact on the environment with an affectation of only 1×1000 of the Park's territory.

From a geographical point of view, however, we understand that such arguments – which the official pronouncement presents as irrefutable truth – are based on myths that hinder the complexity of the matter. In a context of clear territorial stress where political, economic, ecological, and ethical issues (and interests) are entangled, the contributions that Geography can make –with its multi-scale and multifactorial view on the relation territory-nature-instituent individuals– are essential to generate a deeper view on the topic.

Our analysis is based on a Geography that has surpassed the perspective of the State as the only legitimate agent for territorial ordering, by recognizing other social actors as **legitimate ordering agents of their own spaces of life and reproduction**. Likewise, we build around a broad and politicized understanding of the concept of territory which gives it a multidimensional and multi-scale sense, never restricted to the State's exclusive space and power. Such as perspective necessarily links the symbolic and material appropriation of space in the (unequal) relations of power and, thus, questions the State's imposed territorial netting upon the other territorialities that exist in the country.

Hence, we pretend to oppose the simplistic view of territorial processes disseminated by the official discourse –which is based on the affectation of deforested areas in such a complex place as the Yasuni National Park– with a broader territorial scrutiny that takes into consideration the interrelated political, economic, historic, and ecological factors associated to the extractive project. Likewise, the Collective objects the technocratic view of the territorial conflict by making evident that this is not the only way (not even the most accurate) of understanding social processes.

In fact, we denounce the existing historic links between Geography, the State, and the capitalist apparatus (Lacoste, 1976), and question the veracity of the maps [3] and the data [4] circulated by the Government referred to the impacts and affectations of oil exploitation in the YNP. Geography was historically linked to the legitimation process of the State's as a superior form of political organization of society and of capitalism as its economic form. These links, nevertheless, started to be explicit and questioned with the rise of Critical Geography. The collective imaginaries that understood maps and statistics as faithful portraits of reality have, thus, been deconstructed from theory: **the maps and statistic data are always a representation of the real world** and, in consequence, are closely associated to the views and interests of whoever creates them.

Besides refuting the alleged veracity of official data, we are mainly interested in stimulating a critical reflection on the **myth of technique as objective data**, which ends legitimizing public policies and omitting the overlapping private interests. The use of technique as ideology (Habermas, 1994) transforms the process of decision-making into an experts-based analysis process, experts who dictate, through very controversial data, the absolute truth whereby public policies are issued. The case of block 43 (ITT) is paradigmatic regarding how the legitimization of the exercise of State's power is anchored in scientifically built myths, such as the "state-of-the-art technology" or an impact limited to the "one per thousand", disguising the production and dispossession relations underlying the oil exploitation process. In view of this, it is important to state that technique, as any knowledge, is produced from a specific perspective and, thus, is not the only way to understand reality and not an absolute truth, either. **The technical debate, hence, should never obscure the democratic debate** that needs to be stimulated in such decisive times.

We have planned, therefore, to use science in an opposite way by offering elements for analysis on the Amazon territory, its peoples, and ecosystems with the aim to stimulate critical and informed reflection on the topic by making explicit the **theoretical and technical limits** of any analysis on this topic. The Collective's proposal is to reflect in a more careful way on the arguments submitted by the Government regarding as possible "responsible extraction" in the Yasuni National Park's block ITT by putting on the table the **myths, ideologies, and political and economic interests** that cross them.

Actually, we understand that the controversy on exploiting the Yasuni Park is a historic opportunity to collectively re-think the model of society we want to build. Is oil exploitation the only possible solution to the demands of the impoverished sectors for access to health, housing, and food? Is it fair to finance the social rights of the population's marginal sectors by running over the rights of the indigenous peoples (that have also been historically marginalized)? Does economic growth really guarantee compliance with social rights? Is it worth to pollute a unique ecosystem such as the Yasuni National Park in the name of resources that can be generated otherwise? There are many questions involved and that are worth to think up with a critical and historic view, always learning from former experiences and demystifying allegedly irrefutable truths.

### **The myth of affecting only 1×1000 of the YNP**

The 1×1000 currently does not exist. On one hand, the affectation caused by the ITT Block exploitation will be a certain percentage of the Yasuni National Park **plus the amount of territories that are already being exploited by oil companies** – blocks 12, 14, 15, 16 & 31, operated by Chinese, Spanish, and Ecuadorian firms and that already have documented impacts on the indigenous peoples and the environment. In fact, in the last years contracts have been extended to oil companies that were already working in the YNP whereby the blocks' areas have expanded and are affecting the Park. Additionally, new areas are being exploited and there are new blocks inside the Park that were open while the Yasuni-ITT Initiative was being promoted throughout the world.

Furthermore, we must **add the XI Oil Round** which is aimed to exploit the Southern Ecuadorian Amazon, located to the South of the YNP and in territories that belong to seven indigenous nationalities (Kichwa, Shuar, Achuar, Waorani, Zapara, Andoas, and Shiwiar). Likewise, in a historically unparalleled national process of expanding the oil borders, the Tagaeri Taromenane Intangible Zone (ZITT) has been cut back in 2,719 hectares (De Marchi et al, 2013). Therefore, the argument that the State pretends to maintain nature and the indigenous peoples in situation of isolation without affectation is already highly questionable, regardless of the decision to drill or not the ITT Block.

The specific exploitation of the ITT Block, the affectation of 200-500 hectares included in the **myth of the "1×1000"** transmitted in the official discourse, takes into consideration only one variable: the deforested hectares to implement the infrastructure. This perspective stated by government officials is based on an **absolutely simplistic view of the Amazon ecosystem and the actual impacts of oil exploitation**. For this reason, we want to add another series of variables that allow viewing the impacts of oil exploitation in term of the direct and indirect effects on the Amazon ecosystem and its peoples.

In the first place, we must underline the YNP ecosystem's specificities and vulnerability. The Amazon tropical rainforest that covers the Yasuni National Park is one of the most biodiverse ecosystems of the planet. This means that it has a huge variety of flora and fauna species, fungi, bacteria and viruses, as well

as diversity of environments in which the species interact in a unique way. Terra firme forests have different species than those of flooded forests where the plants live in permanent contact with water. A vast number of microhabitats are formed in tree trunks and branches, in holes in the ground, in riverbeds, where numberless amphibians, insects, mosses, lichens live. Each one of these spaces connects to the others through trophic chains and nutrient flows, which are deeply affected by the installation of industrial facilities as those required by the oil industry. **The complex interaction between the different elements of the Amazon ecosystem means that the negative effects will multiply in time and space, and scatter beyond the intervention's immediate space.**

At the local level, i.e., where the oil infrastructure will be placed, the impact is imminent. Deforestation not only affects plants and the structure and dynamic between flora species, but also the microhabitats generated by plants, especially trees. There are species associated to only one tree, such as some tree frogs, thousands of insects and mosses, and even larger animals, such as the Pygmy Marmoset: if the tree that shelters it disappears, it will disappear as well. The same happens with large birds, such as the Harpy Eagle, which nests on trees that are above 30 meters high, called 'emergent'. Something similar happens with spaces such as puddles and mud walls where the species find the conditions to reproduce or eat. If these spaces disappear, the reproductive cycles of hundreds of other species are altered.

As we said above, negative impacts not only occur in the site where the oil structure is placed, but scatters beyond, e.g., noise and the loss of habitats displace individuals to other sites and generate competition with other species or individuals of their same species, altering the natural cycles and dynamics of reproduction, rest, and feeding in spaces far away from the direct impact site. In turn, habitat connectivity is altered by roads and oil extraction platforms that fraction the space. This affects the largest animals, such as jaguars, tapirs, or large monkeys that need to move throughout extensive portions of forest to find their food and resting places. The affectation to animals of those sizes can be compared to that of large trees: if they are cut, all related live beings would also be affected. In this case, animals and plants that constitutes their diet.

Later, during the oil exploitation phase there is the permanent risk of oil or toxic wastewater spills. The technicians always promise that the risk can be reduced to the minimum by applying the correct technology, but would never dare to assure there is no risk at all because the **uncertainty of an accident is inherent to this type of activities**. The problem here is the significance of the risk due to the ecosystem's complexity and the constant presence of water.

The name of the Amazon tropical rainforest is derived from the abundant rainfall and environmental humidity. In the Yasuni National Park rainfall can reach 3,000 cubic millimeters of water per year (as reference, in Quito rain does not reach 1.000). Water can carry spilt pollutants in minutes through long distances, and this magnifies the impacts. This is why it is so difficult to establish an actual area of affectation: for the uncertainty of quantifying the affectation to superficial water and underground aquifers as well (e.g., we shall remember the spill occurred in may 2013, when the more than 11,000 barrels of oil dumped into the Quijos river reached the Peruvian Amazon by the Napo River in less than 5 days).

Water pollution produces several consequences: immediate death of several species but also **bioaccumulation** when the pollutants enter the bodies of animals and plants and do not kill them but integrate to their organism. Later, when other species eat them, the consumers absorb the pollutants and then pass them to others that will eat them in turn. **The trophic chain scatters and accumulates the pollutants in several animals and at several levels.**

Thinking in terms of the specific impacts in each phase of the oil exploitation, we can state that in the first phase –3D seismic [5]– the main impact is the **noise generated by the explosions**. Noise not only affects the Tagaeri-Taromenane indigenous peoples, but also the fauna, particularly the aquatic fauna that dies by the explosion waves. In this phase, heliports are also necessary, and this means **deforestation** and tremendous noise caused by the helicopters.

Later on, during the exploration phase, deforestation takes place to build the platforms and roads for the machinery, wells thousands of meters deep, which create **huge risk of contaminating underground aquifers due to the rupture of impermeable strata**. The Tiyuyacu aquifer is located in the ITT area and is one of the most important in the country both in extension and in water volume. In this phase road

construction is consolidated, together with the **increase of hunting and illegal logging** as well as human **settlements in the surrounding areas**, a spontaneous process whose consequences in terms of deforestation and environmental impacts are unpredictable.

During the exploitation phase, oil is sucked through wells that, in the case of ITT is a cluster well. Toxic wastewater demands a large oil pipeline up to the Tiputini Station and reinjection wells. In this phase there are usually **oil spills** which, given the specific characteristics of the ITT's specific characteristics – extremely sensitive ecosystem that is floodable half of the year, with changing levels in the marshy areas– would hinder environmental restoration. On the other hand, the underground gas that comes with oil and toxic wastewater must be treated in the stations where it is burnt. This also causes **significant pollution of the air with ashes and gases emitted during combustion** that travel several kilometers away. The noise that comes out of the platforms, the engines during extraction, as well as treatment stations is harsh and also travels kilometers.

Map developed by the Collective with a moderate simulation, 2014

Because of all these impacts, to only consider the affectation caused to the built surface –as the discourse of the 1×1000 does– means to confine the vision to only **one dimension of an extremely complex and interdependent space in environmental and social terms**. As variables we are adding superficial and underground waters, air, sound waves, increased access to hunting and illegal logging, and the effects of settlement. Only some variables are discussed while looking at the territory, but many more will appear caused or accentuated by oil exploitation and interrelated to each other. Likewise, **the experience accumulated throughout 40 years of oil activities in the country allows waiving simulations**: the “accidents” and consequent environmental pollution –with its perverse impacts on the Amazon peoples’ health and quality of life– present updated examples that show that **there is no state-of-the-art oil-extraction technology that can guarantee minimum environmental affectation**.

In view of such uncertainty, we must recall article 73 of the Constitution of Ecuador that provides the **principle of precaution**, which is specifically aimed to the “destruction of ecosystem’s or the permanent alteration of natural cycles.” In other words, **in the absence of absolute certainty on the possible environmental impacts of any foreseen anthropic action, the latter shall not be performed** [\[6\]](#). Oil exploitation in the Yasuni National Park presents the following direct doubt: in such a sensitive and biodiverse ecosystem, accidents cannot be forecasted and this lack of uncertainty should be enough to stop such activities.

### **The myth of the Amazon as a demographic void**

Nonetheless, not only oil exploitation impacts must be considered regarding environmental affectation in the Yasuni National Park. Part of the Park is superimposed on the Tagaeri Taromenani Intangible Zone, which are territories of the so-called indigenous peoples in situation of isolation, which would undergo severe consequences both from the ecosystem’s pollution/alteration and from settlement.

By interfering with the local fauna and flora and with the quality of water sources, air, and cultivation soils, **extractive oil activities alter the reproduction and production capacity of the Tagaeri-Taromenani peoples**, whose material and symbolic survival is strongly linked to nature. According to anthropological literature, these Amazon cultures are hugely complex and, depending on their cyclic territorial dynamic associated to symbolic-spiritual questions and their access to resources through collection, they need a broad territory to guarantee their survival.

In this sense, the agrarian settlement –intensified with road opening– will be another factor of strong territorial impact on those peoples, because it means the **uncontrolled invasion of their territories by settlers and illegal wood companies and biopiracy**. The social and cultural impacts associated to territorial change are unquantifiable in hectares but are key to understand oil exploitation harms. It is important to emphasize that **such impacts fall in a particularly strong way upon women** who are mostly in charge of life reproductive activities, which are highly sensitive in case of pollution. Likewise, with the arrival of oil companies there has been proved increased violence against women due to alcoholism, women trafficking, and rapes, whether by the partner or settlers and employees of the oil companies.

For the above, we think it is essential to analyze one of the myths of the Amazon region's occupation history –**the myth of the demographic void**–, which has frequently obstructed the analysis of the region in more depth and with respect to their inhabitants. To this end we have used the analysis made by Porto Gonçalves (2001) regarding the images disseminated on the Brazilian Amazon to justify the State and transnational ventures as of 1960. In Ecuador, investments made in the Amazon have also been (and continue to be) justified through the spreading of **myths about the region built upon the view of settlers and never upon that of the inhabitants for which the spatial transformations have always been brutally imposed**. According to the author, the Amazon is always:

“...seen from abroad, from the center, as the future, never as the present. The region is, thus, a void. Inside this magma of meanings there is no place of the Amazonians who, since they are not part of this imaginary, do not have a present, and the future is built without them (PORTO GONÇALVES, 2003: 43; free translation)”

The myth of the Amazon as a demographic void means (meant) legitimizing investments aimed to the region and the consequent invasion of indigenous territories that, as “no man's lands,” were allegedly “available” for third-person appropriation. **The story of the low demographic density in the Amazon versus the other saturated regions of Ecuador, although statistically verifiable, ignores the diversity of territorialities that live there.**

Nevertheless, such imaginary is used to **disguise private interests** legitimized by the State discourse that justifies “taking advantage” of the “void” space on behalf of the “common welfare” (national interest.) Besides decontextualizing the concept of density since it failed to take in consideration the different peoples who live there, they are organized upon other rationalities and, thus, other territorial configurations. **The myth of demographic void is used to avoid the problems generated by an unequal social-economic structure** – such as the unfair distribution of lands in other regions of the country, which increases the pressure on allegedly void lands – and evades making real changes to the structure.

Nevertheless, in a context where the Constitution acknowledges the Ecuadorian State's multi-national capacity and the collective rights of the indigenous peoples, after a period of intense political mobilization in the 1990, keeping this mythic perspective is absurd. In spite of the successive invasions by settlers and the State, the Amazon indigenous peoples have been able to re-exist<sup>[8]</sup> – reinventing themselves in their difference after continuous de-territorialization processes imposed by the expansion of the State territorial netting – **and their re-existence can no longer be ignored by the Government and the society that passed the first multi-national constitution in the world.**

After continuous invasion processes and territorial pillage, these peoples' re-territorialization has been precarious in the so-called “interstitial spaces” (Little, 2002.) In other words, those that were left aside according to the economic interests and technological limits of each historic period, such as the case of a large part of the Amazon region until the 1970's. Nevertheless, in the current geopolitical context of re-primarization of the Latin American economies based on the exploitation of the so-called natural resources, the possibility of escaping to spaces where they can reproduce their own way of life is every day more difficult and the **risk of ethnocide is very high.**

In fact, the Constitution has acknowledged the historic debt that the Ecuadorian society has with those peoples and establishes the right to protection and self-determination of their territories. The State, thus, is liable for preventing the intromission in their life spaces:

**“The ownership of the territories of the peoples in voluntary isolation is ancestral, irreducible, and intangible, and all types of extractive activities in them are to be banned.** The State shall adopt measures to guarantee their lives, assure respect to their self-determination and will to remain in isolation, and assure compliance with their rights. **The violation of such right shall constitute an offense of ethnocide**, which shall be typified by Law.” (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2008: 47).

Additionally, the Constitution recognizes the rights of indigenous communes, communities, peoples and nationalities to **prior, free, and informed consultation** “on non-renewable resource prospecting, exploitation, and commercialization plans and programs on their lands and that may affect them on an environmental and cultural level” (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2008: 45)<sup>[9]</sup>.

Nonetheless, in view of the colonialist concept on the Amazon Region and its peoples, **such constitutional rules are explicitly violated in the case of oil exploitation in the ITT Block**. The State's territorial netting densification, brutally overlaid upon territorial indigenous territorialities, breaches the rights of nature and collective rights of indigenous peoples and nationalities, which end up by being relegated to the last place according to an alleged national development. Such constitutionally-acknowledged multi-nationality ends up by being absorbed – in a clear strategy of **ethnofagia** (Díaz-Polanco, 2006) – through the official **rhetoric on respect and/or praise of cultural differences by Government representatives and public policies, while the social-economic models that destroy non-hegemonic cultures continue prevailing**.

In that way, the lies on hegemonic liberal multiculturalism “enable each racialized group to have its own space and celebrate its identity/culture provided it keeps from questioning the white supremacy's ethno-racial hierarchy power and maintains the *status quo* intact” (Grosfogel, 2007: 44). In other words, the recognition of the difference takes place within a State that continues ignoring the rights of ethnic minorities in the name of an abstract “national interest” and some “development” that has never specifically resolved the country's poverty and inequality.

### **The myth of development as a solution to poverty**

The notions of growth, progress, and development, which are at the foundation of the unsustainable character of the current organization of the economy, continue guiding public policies. (...) not only they have not been stopped, but the model of incorporating to the world market by extracting primary goods has been accentuated with the assault of common goods of life. (...) For the first time in the history of Ecuador, a constitution recognizes the rights of nature; nevertheless, the stress between extractivist development and progress views and other ways of living keep getting in the way of those political processes, both in the opposition's policies and inside the different governments. (LANDER, 2010: 3)

We share with Esteva (1988) the view of development as a modern myth, the source of the same scarcity that is allegedly solved through assistance and cooperation policies<sup>[10]</sup>: **“the main cause of modern hunger as an expression of scarcity can be found in development – in any and all ways of development that we know of”** (Esteva, 1988: 110). In this sense, there is “reliable documentation on the development strategies' counter-productivity or their incapacity to achieve the results for which they are conceived and put into practice” (Esteva, 1988: 109) which, in the Ecuadorian case can be verified with the country's recent history. In fact, this model's adoption in other historic periods, even if they resulted in significant economic growth, has not been translated into improving the people's quality of life, and even less into reducing social-economic inequalities.

According to analyses of *Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales* (CDES), “the issue of poverty does not only depend on the State's income volume, but on how it is distributed,” in other words, in spite of the significant economic growth of the last years and the improved public health and education services, **wealth is still concentrated and the impoverished layers' living conditions have not undergone significant changes**: “this administration has received the highest amounts of oil income of the country's history; however, these resources have not significantly helped to overcome the poverty conditions because oil income was not used to change the accumulation model.” (CDES, 2013: 21).

Likewise, the recent changes in the paradigm of development – regarding the apparent overcoming of its immediate association to economic growth and its substitution with a development model linked to the problems of access – continue untouched regarding the essential topics of the unfair concentration of wealth. In other words, the strategy of the new perspective of development would seek access for all (which is guaranteed through public policies), while deep changes in the political and economic structure are achieved.

Meanwhile, **“development's essential counter-productivity”** (Esteva, 1988: 110) is confirmed by the constant violations to collective rights and by the pollution of water, soil, and air in the name of national development, **which inhibits the minimum conditions of survival and reproduction of the families that are allegedly protected and assisted by public policies**. On the other hand, structuralist measures end by expelling a large number of people from their territories (whether legally delimited or not); take over water sources and denies the communities any possibility of autonomous management of their basic (re)production resources.

This statement makes us reflect on the real purpose and intentions of such public policies since at the same time the Government implements them, it encourages projects at other scales (with much more resources), which end by affecting and disarticulating groups that are considered vulnerable. In an article on the relation between world hunger and the myth of development, Breton underlines that the policies implemented by the states play an essential role in reproducing a “world system that generates inequality, exclusion, poverty, and hunger.” (Breton, 2009: 26)

For the Amazonian indigenous peoples the imposition of productive activities and forms of occupation that are alien to the forest’s ecology (Little, 2002), both due to oil extraction and the intensified settlement resulting from the opening of roads, had a destabilizing effect. The situation was summarized by Breda:

The indigenous population that lived in the area long before the creation of Texaco or even of Ecuador has been ignored in the name of common welfare. In the 1960’s few indigenous individuals spoke Spanish in the Ecuadorian Amazon, and some groups had recently made contact with the white man. While the company penetrated deep in the forest and tossed the oil-prospecting residue to the environment, the indigenous, the indigenous peoples were displaced. They were forced to abandon their land because, obviously, they could no longer live there. (...) Approximately 40% of the income from the country’s trade balance depends on this black sticky mud that moves the world’s gears. At least in theory, the Government needs oil earnings to invest in social programs to take the Ecuadorian people out of misery. (...) Nevertheless, if we take a look at Shushufindi, the entrance hall to extraction and home of the economy’s machinery, nobody doubts which is the real source of underdevelopment” (2011: 255).

### **Final ideas**

Through the stated theoretical reflections we hope to have contributed to the critical analysis on the underlying ideas-myths on the Yasuni Park’s exploitation. Likewise, we believe it is essential to highlight that the stakes placed on extractivism in the name of “national development,” after having followed up the destruction of nature and the indigenous peoples in favor of an alleged solution to social problems, is **a deceitful strategy that has repeatedly failed in the history of our country.**

In fact, the solution to social inequality must be thought upon innovating and really revolutionary strategies – such as “increasing the tax burden on the 110 economic groups that were the “main” beneficiaries of economic growth and stability in the last years”(CDES, 2013: 21)[\[11\]](#). This, however, is one of the **possible alternatives that must be collectively proposed and discussed by the different sectors of society.**

We understand that the guarantee of diverse dignified conditions of nutrition, health, and education based on true respect to diverse cultures and nature is only possible if each cultural group is guaranteed with an autonomous life. And this does not mean total independence, isolation, or essentialization; on the contrary, it means recognizing that cultures result from a constant game between essentialization and mixture, between alternate moments of cultural exchange – that produce creative multiplicity – and essential moments of relative and strategic isolation to re-exist. Such relative autonomy necessarily needs a territorial base where each culture can reproduce materially and symbolically (Haesbaert, 2011). Therefore, we state that a **multinational State is necessarily a multi-territorial State** that guarantees the different cultural groups the right to decide autonomously on their spaces of life and reproduction.

Our intention is to mend the false idea – imposed both through (inter and inter-state) violence, academic cultures and disciplinary practices – that states that “the so-called modern society is characterized by the expression of the spontaneous and natural trends of society’s historic development” (Lander, 2005: 22). Regarding the purportedly only civilizing globalized and universal model, **we stress on the importance of critique and political practice – understood as the art of defining limits (Porto Gonçalves, 2002) – that enable opening a space to dream and build other possible diverse worlds through dialogue.**

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[1] Nature is recognized as “subject to such rights acknowledged by the Constitution”, as defined in article 71: “nature or Pacha Mama, where life is reproduced and takes place, is entitled to full respect to its existence, maintenance, and generation of its vital cycles, structure, functions, and evolving processes. Every person, community, people, or nationality will be able to demand compliance with the rights of nature from the public authorities. (...) The State shall encourage natural and juridical persons and collectives to protect nature; and shall promote respect to all elements that compose an ecosystem.” Article 73 provides that: “The State shall apply precaution measures and restrict activities that may lead to the species’ extinguishment, the destruction of ecosystems, or the permanent alteration of natural cycles.” (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2008: 55)

[2] Article 57 of the Constitution on the collective rights of the communities, peoples and nationalities provides that: “the ownership of the territories of the peoples in voluntary isolation is ancestral, irreducible, and intangible, *and all types of extractive activities in them are to be banned*. The State shall adopt measures to guarantee their lives, assure respect to their self-determination and will to remain in isolation, and assure compliance with their rights. *The violation of such right shall constitute an offense of ethnocide, which shall be typified by Law.*” (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2008: 47; the italics are ours.)

[3] Regarding the affectation to the indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation (IPVI), when the exploitation of Block 43 was just announced, the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights, and Cult published a controversial map where the IPVI’s territory was located far away from the area aimed for exploitation, that explicitly altered a map that the Ministry of Environment had published (map in the Annex.) In the first place, we must underline the inefficient methods used by government officials to locate the IPVI’s, and this has been reported by the Collective of Anthropologists of Ecuador (2013.) Besides, taking in consideration that these peoples have a specific territoriality – marked by cyclic territorial dynamics – the space they use for (re)production is impossible to delimit in such rigid and schematic way.

[4] In the official discourse, the argument of 1×1000 appears as an *irrefutable technical datum* and is presented as the *only truth* in relation to oil exploitation’s affectation of the ITT’s Amazonian space. Nevertheless, as we will show below, there are numberless other variables that should be taken in consideration to forecast possible affectations to such a fragile and biodiverse environment as the Yasuni Park, e.g., surface and underground waters, air, sound waves, increased access to hunting and illegal felling, and the effects of settlement. Likewise, in order to legitimize exploitation based on technical information, the use of state-of-the-art technology pointed out as a guarantee for low environmental impact levels. This is also another datum that is completely refutable, since most studies show that the oil industry is never free of contingencies (Harman, 2013).

[5] For this reason explosives must be placed every 50 meters in lines located every 500 meters along the entire possible oil deposit by opening routes for heavy machinery.

[6] Article 73 provides: The State shall apply precaution measures and restrict activities that may lead to the species’ extinguishment, the destruction of ecosystems, or the permanent alteration of natural cycles.” (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2008: 55)

[7] According to INEC data (2010), the Amazon region’s demographic density is 4.74 inhabitants per square meter, while the national average is 48.63.

[8]Porto Gonçalves (2006) states that, more than resistance, the native peoples have re-existed since it is not a mere reaction to an externally imposed action, but resistance based on a former existence which, in general, was organized upon rationalities that were very different to the hegemonic rationality – and, thus, have been made invisible by the official discourse.

[9]“The following collective rights shall be recognized and guaranteed to communes, communities, peoples, and nationalities, in accordance with the Constitution and international covenants, conventions, declarations, and other instruments on human rights: (...) 7. Prior, free, and informed consultation, within a reasonable term, on non-renewable resource prospecting, exploitation, and commercialization plans and programs on their lands and that may affect them on an environmental and cultural level; (...) The consultation to be made by competent authorities shall be mandatory and timely. If the consulted community does not grant its consent, the provisions of the Constitution and the law shall be observed.” (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2008: 45).

[10] Although the author refers to development and cooperation among states, we understand that the same could happen domestically in each country, in the sense used by González Casanova (2007) with the concept of colonialism, when he noticed that the same hierarchical relations established among countries were reproduced inside each country through the surrendering of sectors deemed inferior; he created the concept of *internal colonialism*.

[11] “Currently the tax burden on sales of the 110 richest groups is 2.9%. If we only increased this burden in 1.5% we could obtain at least 2 billion dollars “in addition” to what was planned to be collected in the same period (25 years) with the exploitation of the Yasuni Park” (CDES, 2013: 21.)