



*The COOK Report on
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Technology, Economics, and Policy*



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FLOK in Ecuador is Not What Was Promised

Time to Conduct an Autopsy on a One-Time Utopian Dream



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Executive Summary

In September 2013 the “government” of Ecuador engaged Michel Bauwens and a team of researchers from the the P2P Foundation to come to Ecuador. They were to design a process to put before Ecuadorian politicians and citizens that, if it were adopted, would fundamentally change the organization of the economy of the country – a “reimagining” in the words of the press release -- to enable the citizens of Ecuador to live more decent and fulfilling lives. The FLOK project, it was said, would create a national, open, commons-based knowledge society.

It turns out that this was largely propaganda, and I publish this issue of the **COOK Report** with great regret. Over the last eight months I have devoted several hundred hours of my time to writing a policy paper requested by Michel Bauwens, Research Director of the FLOK project. I undertook this assignment on the basis of information that came from people I trusted, including Michel – a person I admire and have up to now felt aligned with – who, I’m sorry to say, also had not done enough due diligence to investigate the real record of the Ecuadoran government and the people like [Rene Ramirez](#) the Minister of Higher Education, Science Technology and Innovation (Senescyt) and [Carlos Prieto](#), Rector at IAEN, the National Institute for Advanced Studies making day-to-day decisions.

The reason I have compiled this report is that, when I finally withdrew my connectivity policy paper on May 4th, I realized how little I knew about the origins and roots of this project. Consequently, I set out to do my own research since it was painfully obvious that the full picture was not coming from the statements made by P2P and FLOK. There is another reality that those who came to Ecuador to participate in a well meaning project have chosen to sidestep. This is a compilation of what I wish I had known. On the level of grand strategy the course chosen by Michel has been one of “finishing, and augmenting the P2P policy proposals so that they become part of the global dialogue around commons transition, independently of whether or not they will be applied in Ecuador.”

Those who don’t like what I have compiled will paint what I have done here as “simple revenge.” They can use whatever language they choose. For my part doing what was done with FLOK in Ecuador was misguided in the extreme. I wish to inform and to do so as factually as I possible can. I have always sought to understand and describe complex situations (although I would rather not find myself in the middle of one) because as Michel himself writes: ***Integrity and reputation is something that is hard to build, and quick to be lost.***

My Assessment of Ecuadoran Reality

While the government wears a public face clothed with feel-good statements of reassurance that President Rafael Correa really wants to create a humane and decent post-capitalist society, I have come to realize that the Correa government has engaged in all manner of deceptive tactics: ranging from laws criminalizing much dissent, to not well publicized deals with its own oil company, to billions in loans from the People's Republic of China. Several billion dollars of these "loans" are marked as prepayment for the delivery of oil from Petro Ecuador - oil that analysts show can only come from exploitation of all the reserves in the Yasuni National Park.

My initial view of Ecuador reminded me of the Depression-era United States under Franklin Roosevelt. Correa's government had provided two long and detailed National Plans to ensure the citizens of the country that they would be provided with the education and health care necessary to live decent and productive lives. And here was a country that was the first in the world's to write into its own Constitutional protection of the rights of Nature. If Chevron, for example, polluted parts of the Amazon basin, it could be sued in Ecuador in court for violating those rights.

Particularly relevant to the goals of the project, it seemed that Ecuador wished to develop an economy based on knowledge rather than extracting oil and other natural resources. It wanted a social knowledge economy based on cooperative participation in a series of commons. It even proposed developing its own intellectual property laws to become independent of the exploitive North. The P2P policy papers were all crafted to fit neatly in with the ideology expressed in Renee Ramirez's "Toward Intellectual Independence," an essay published in January 2014. To anyone disillusioned with 21st-century corporate capitalism, all this was truly a siren song.

Unfortunately the reality turned out to be very different. As far as I know I am the only one who was commissioned to write a policy paper while living somewhere else than Ecuador. By January strains between the two major sponsoring agencies, clearly visible before the project's start in September, had mushroomed into full fledge bureaucratic warfare. All this meant that the P2P Foundation team was being paid three months late and that feedback on my research was almost non existent. Funding for the entire project was cancelled - to become effective on April 1. Carlos Prieto, Rector at IAEN was axed. And then, when on March 5 Michel publicity threatened to pack his bags and leave for home on March 31, funding from April 1 to June 30 under a new Rector was reinstated.

My assignment was simple.... To show how the nation could, put its substantial fiber networks to public rather than private use, by inter-connecting its existing universities, and

the three new ones planned by Ramirez and then connecting them all to the Global Lambda Integrated Facility , a global scientific research network. Doing this would enable Ecuadorian scientists to participate in gleaning open global scientific knowledge. By building open, peer-to-peer, mesh-based, wireless networks in all cities and towns, citizens could interconnect their wireless networks to government owned fiber infrastructure. Doing this would bring to fruition "guifi.net-like" citizen-built and commons-owned connectivity throughout the nation, making internet available to everyone at a fraction of the current extractive cost.

I have been a participant and reader of the FLOK project's public mail list since it began in the month of October. By 1 April I knew that there were many problems but in my previous issue, as Michel was telling me that he still had hopes for a successful conclusion of the project, I tried to avoid highlighting the most damaging information that I was finding.

Researching and drafting the connectivity policy paper was extremely frustrating and difficult because of a general lack of communication and guidance. I privately announced several times that I was ready to quit but each time I received encouragement from Michel and Daniel Vazquez to carry on and not give up. (Daniel is the self described "hacktivist" who with another Spanish hacktivist friend Xabier E. Barandiaran conceived of the FLOK project and sold it to Carlos Preito at the beginning of 2013. Daniel was also in complete administrative charge of the project with Michel Bauwens essentially reporting to him. The three founders of FLOK are all Spanish citizens – a fact that betrays a telling bias by the way the Correa government towards its own people.

By April 24 I had completed a final draft according to all requirements and specifications that I had been given. However, as most all promises made to Michel had been broken, my level of trust by April was not great and I became somewhat insistent on knowing how the obligations that they had promised me would be carried out. After some breaches of trust and signs of bad faith from Daniel, the Spanish hacktivist who was acting on behalf of the Ecuadorian government, I publicly withdrew my paper and began doing serious research on the situation.

I have endeavored to find out what happened, when it happened, and who promised what to whom under what conditions. Priority number one was the FLOK Society. By this time it was clear that it and indeed the entire project was functioning as Daniel Vazquez's "personal secretariat." Because of his position as a guest of the Ecuadoran government, Michel found it necessary not to publicly question what Daniel was saying. Meanwhile I started serious use of Google and of contacts that I had built up -- doing finally and rather too late, my own due diligence.

This issue is a compilation of what I found out.

FLOK was never an officially Ecuadoran government sponsored project, although monies

in support of it were paid by three different government ministries. These people -- from the Spanish hacktivists who sold the FLOK project to the Rector of IAEN and **by inference** to other ministers of the government and supposedly (but not in fact) to Correa himself -- speak of grandiose yet human-friendly goals. But in reality they act in ways that betray what they say they are for. Furthermore, Vazquez has himself been given complete control over the project's budget. By early May, as revealed in disputes on the public FLOK mail list, content was up for grabs as Vazquez decided to bury Michel's 24,000 word transition plan - the most critical content of the entire project. In reality it was Vazquez who was making all the decisions, and he had taken over all the details of the Summit scheduled to begin on May 27.

Michel had made it very clear to me in communication during the months of March and April that what he calls [the transition document or "research plan,"](#) as it is called on the wiki, was, in his opinion, the most important document of the entire project. It is this document that explained the political, philosophical, and economic rationale of how a transition of the Ecuadoran state to the kind of commons based society ostensibly desired by Rafael Correa and René Ramirez could be achieved. It was in effect a grand synthesis of all the ideas encompassed by the P2P foundation, positing an outcome in which civil society would work with government and business to achieve a partner state based on the commons that would nurture a sustainable world for humanity in the 21st century.

As I write this (May 20), it appears that Vazquez is burying the most significant research by not investing project funds in the Spanish translation; by removing the document from the agenda of pre Summit meetings; and by ensuring that the 24,000 word document be removed from the agenda of the Summit itself. Truly bizarre behavior. But, as readers will see, Vazquez is not afraid to lie and when confronted in public with evidence of his lies, state that his accuser had defective hearing. **Editor's Note:** as of May 26 while the transition plan does not get a "table" Michel is given an hour to present its findings.

Whatever happens at this "Summit," it is an event that in my mind at this point is nothing more than a Stalinist show trial, everything sanitized and carefully scripted in advance. But it is also clear that in the peer-to-peer community worldwide there is enormous interest in doing other FLOK-like approaches in many other places in the world. In theory I still think this is a good idea. But in my opinion any moral and ethical approach to such future attempts at reform demands careful, deliberate and thorough planning. It demands both transparency and a completely open process. I believe Michel would agree that this operation has been in salvage mode almost from its beginning because the promises of the three Spanish citizens who were representing themselves as acting on the authority of the Ecuadoran government were not investigated with sufficient initial vigor.

At this point I bear what I feel is a the burden of possessing knowledge that is so far not generally public. Is this knowledge something that the participants will make public? I have no way of knowing. Nevertheless I do have it and in honoring what remains of the

openness of the Internet I feel obligated to gather in this issue the less than happy side of things in Ecuador -- a state seemingly run by personal whim and decree. A state that preaches adherence to green values while selling out its portion of the Amazon rain forest to the destruction oil and mining companies. A state that in theory protects the rights of nature but with rights that a mere Presidential request can subvert. This is also a Constitution that contains language protecting the rights of its indigenous people while it puts in place policies that are causing the indigenous people's destruction. It is a state whose executive leaders are determined to remain in power by taking evermore loans from China to enable domestic spending that will buy them political support. Sadly it is likely also a state whose ability to pay the interest on these loans will very likely fail.

At the very end, it became clear that the FLOK process suffered from the all too common pattern throughout the history of social movements in the last few centuries. ***Again and again movements for social change have been designed by a class of intellectuals and imposed onto a society that is not ready for them, does not understand them, does not trust their own leaders, and hence is not willing to embrace them.*** Certainly Michel has thought long and hard about how to introduce these kinds of changes in Ecuador. As outlined in my previous issue he introduced and held numerous workshops throughout the country trying to reach groups from civil society. But the only problem is that you don't do this overnight, and not in six months; and very likely not even in six years.

What could they have possibly been thinking? It's a question that sadly deserves to be asked. Let's hope that never again will the hacking of an entire nation state by a group consisting primarily of foreign experts. (Why does this remind me of the teams sent by the World Bank?) Let's hope we will never again see a project undertaken by means of conversation over the Internet followed up by a few day long meetings in person and the grand announcement that here is a project sponsored by the government of Ecuador -- when in reality all this means is that three different government departments contributed some money for what was a highly theoretical outside enterprise that in reality likely had no backing at all at the highest levels of the Ecuadoran government.

From a utilitarian point of view I believe it can be argued that it would have been much more honest to express the FLOK project as a thought experiment and not something into which the Ecuadoran government was prepared to invest its political capital, especially not when the seemingly homegrown elements of the plan, although Spanish-speaking, were not Ecuadoran at all. Who were they? Three displaced Spanish intellectuals on loan to Quito due to the financial exigencies of the austerity imposed on the government of Spain by the real estate and banking collapse of 2008. To explain the seemingly strange situation, the Correa administration has engaged in a form of financial arbitrage where through a program it calls Prometheo (Prometheus), it invites foreigner scholars to live and work in Ecuador paying them salaries roughly equivalent to what they could earn at home if they could find employment there -- wages substantially above those paid to Ecuadoran

counterparts.

Daniel said to me during our conversation of March 5 that he had come to Latin America and then to Ecuador from a Spanish commune where he occupied himself in throwing rocks at the capitalist class and governing politicians there of. Now he informed me he had an effort aimed at hacking an entire nation state – the very meaning of which action would be to change the manner in which it governed people. He saw this as a bold and noble experiment that might or might not succeed. At the end of the winter of 2013-14 he had more than a dozen people working full-time on the redesign of the Ecuadoran political environment. Quite an accomplishment. Hopefully it would succeed but, if it did not, he very calmly said that he would go back to his commune and pick up where he left off throwing rocks at the heartless capitalists.

Unfortunately in any other situation, due to the availability of the Internet, the FLOK movement, which could have and should have been built very thoroughly from the bottom up on a much more broadly accepted basis, was set up in a very ad hoc manner that flew right in the face of overt signs of warfare between IAEN and Senescyt without whose unified support the project would not have stood a chance.

Consequently, as it came down to its very last days in May 2014 and Daniel was preparing the "show trial" of the "Summit," it should be no surprise to anyone when Janice Figueredo, Director of Research Stream 5, admitted that FLOK was established in the arms of a repressive government without any real popular support and that Daniel – having arrogated the power of the purse -- decided to throw out the grand strategic document that Michel had believed could help create a unique, commons-based national economy and culture.

All very true and hopefully history will look kindly on Michel's efforts. But in the immediate present they certainly are not what they have been publicly alleged to be and I find it laughable to imagine for a moment that Ecuadorian citizens living with a very harsh reality of the repressive nature of the Correa government would put much stake in these highflying words. Rather they would see it as yet another government-sponsored program designed to mislead them.

The bottom line? Easy. The summit is a charade. It is play acting...including a staged social media campaign. Why? Because the FLOK is yet another government program designed to distract the Ecuadoran people from the day-to-day destruction of their nation by of the current administration.

FLOK reminds me of the Movement to the People of the 1860s in Russia where university students came to the peasant communes with a mission to enlighten the lives of these hapless former serfs. The peasants, quite horrified, immediately turned the local students over to the police.

To those of us who are trying to facilitate new ways of solving problems in increasingly repressive times, it is important that we not embarrass ourselves by embracing warm and fuzzy political propaganda when the cold reality is something very very different. Consequently, I have written and published this issue with a heavy heart but also with the firm belief that the truth must be told, despite Michel's refusal so far to admit publicly the tenuous threads on which the entire operation was hung. Because many other FLOK efforts are now being contemplated, it is important for those who are moving in that direction to understand the very haphazard basis of this first effort. There will be future efforts. I do this autopsy in the hope that future efforts can build upon what went wrong here.

Views from Latin America on FLOK

As the conference countdown to the conference unwound, I had some highly relevant insights from conversations with people from Argentina and Ecuador who last November were on hand and for a while considered and then rejected active assistance to the FLOK project. Here is what I learned.

The key question that in their view was never asked: When you do a project like this in a way that places it in the context of the general westernized "empire" of global capitalism, what are you trying to do? Reform global capitalism absent ties to a country's people its history and its culture? In my opinion, in the future, this must be made absolutely clear. It seems to me it was hugely foolish to take Ecuador and try to place it in a milieu of cosmopolitanized global capitalism where your policy guidelines [at least those of Daniel Vazquez] assume that the citizens of the nation in which you are working are nothing more than farmers and fishermen and have no unique cultural traditions worthy of preservation. This may seem surprising, but read on. These nuances apparently were never considered in Michel's rush into the FLOK Engagement.

Indigenous cultures and ancestral traditions were mentioned but apparently only to give lip service. This kind of thinking helped to create an environment where someone like a Daniel Vazquez can be taken from his commune in Spain, and inserted into Ecuador where he ran roughshod over the entire process. In my opinion if there is only one lesson learned, it is that in the future when the P2P Foundation considers a FLOK engagement it must go very slow and be very open and make it very clear to everyone before things officially get started what the terms of engagement and acceptance really are. This was not done in Ecuador the most obvious outcome being that in this case it was Daniel Vazquez and not Michel Bauwens who was the boss.

But in Ecuador the project in effect was presented to the world as a "virgin birth" and there has never been an adequate amount of transparency about what support the project really had. Given the hatred by Ecuadoran scholars of Carlos Prieto's tactics at IAEN, all

these issues should have been rather clear had anyone on the P2P Foundation side of things done any kind of adequate due diligence on the situation in Ecuador. Namely the issue of the three Spaniards (Carlos, Daniel and Xabier) calling in outside contractors to redesign the Ecuadoran economy were similar to the worst excesses of the modus operandi of the World Bank and International Monetary fund. The project appears to have been founded on the conclusion there were no Ecuadoran citizens with the intellectual ability to do the job. To make an informed decision about participation in this project people should have been given access to original material from September 2013 to even understand who the original six members of the FLOK were, and that only one of the six was an Ecuadorian citizen.

As far as I can tell the mind set of the original six was that here was an opportunity to "hack" a nation state for the so-called greater good and that the immediate alluring nature of the opportunity would excuse not answering the questions I have just raised. So any due diligence that was done was, as far as I can tell, not made public. In my opinion, it was the action taken within a situation where an amazing opportunity that had to be grabbed to achieve such a wonderful end justifying most any means, that has delivered to us the current farce. Finally if you are going to "hack" something it implies that you are doing it behind the scenes and in stealth. It would appear to justify a lack of transparency as to the people and power structures involved.

On the weekend of May 24-25 I communicated via email with the Hellekin O. Wolf, generalist and "Earthling" and with Argentine human rights activist Cristina Derazinski – as well as with Quiliro Ordóñez Baca a major figure in Ecuador's free software movement.

Here is **Hellekin's Introduction**: "I wear a few hats. One is hacker at the Dyne Foundation where I'm working on the development of the Dowse Internet appliance; another is the GNU consensus project to coordinate development of social free software at the GNU project; another is hackerspaces staff; my current hat is co-founder of the Foike transdisciplinary collective for digital literacy and critical thinking about technology and towards a cooperative civilization."

On May 24: **Hellekin**: If you look at it closely, there's a recurring pattern all over Latin America: extractivism rules, countries are sucked dry and left without any benefit from the huge market of pillaging their underground, and in return for which receive cultural destruction, drinkable water table poisoning, rural exodus because of dead and contaminated lands, and indigenous displacement, murder, or silent genocide for the benefit of agro-business and the fracking or mining industry.

COOK Report: One of my problems has been a lack of knowledge about Latin America. Ecuador offered asylum to Assange: therefore Ecuador is good. Oh and Ecuador asked Michel Bauwens to come show it how to change its economy. Therefore that effort was good and to be trusted.

Hellekin: That is a well documented, well oiled reality, and the main reason for me to move from indifference to the FLOK project to opposition: **as the Yasuni park is being sold to the oil industry, and the local communities silenced, there was not a single position taken by the FLOK Project against this, although their official mandate is to help transition from extractivism (now 50% of EC exports) to a knowledge society. They simply ignore what should be their point of dissension with the government that would make them credible, and probably grant them popular support.** But instead, they chose to ignore that obvious attack on bio-diversity, ethno-diversity, and democracy for the sole benefit of foreign extractors (note the slight difference with contractors) who are the eternal repetition of the colonialist arm of imperialism, whatever its political color.

COOK Report: It seems that Janice Figueredo picked up on the moral ambiguity of FLOK being overtly "good" but trying to help a BAD government and in the end not accomplishing much.

Hellekin: I don't think it's that simple. Under Correa, Ecuador gained one of the most acclaimed Constitutions ever written, and poverty regressed a lot in only 5 years. The price he paid for this is indeed tremendous, and that a single man in any country can pay such a price on the behalf of "his" people seems to pose the limits of central government, and mark it as an obsolete way of solving human issues.

Let's look at the situation in its historical context. The colonizers of the new world fled Europe and their traditions, but as they were planting their brand new flag, born straight out of the Enlightenment, they also practiced "Tabula Rasa", claiming the territory as theirs by removing the existing native cultures--read: genocide. The USA, like the Taliban they so loathe, seem to have an issue with things older than them, and they like to cure the old with one-size-fits-all solutions, and Dynamite. What Latin America has been living is the natural evolution of this pattern born from the Occidental tradition, Enlightenment, and carved into stone by so-called Modernity: a view that puts science in the place of religion, and before life itself.

But Modernity is a child of the Industrial Revolution, and it missed all the explosion of scientific knowledge of the late 19th Century with hyperbolic geometry, and early 20th Century, with the dual nature of light, the Theory of General Relativity, all what gave birth to the sciences of complexity. Modernity is stuck into the 19th Century, and currently dominates the world. And although FLOK claims to come from the 21st Century, it failed to realize that the objective world of science belongs to the past.

The 21st Century belongs to complexity, and the marriage of contemporary science with ancestral tradition is key to understanding this change. Nation-states, education, corporations, and global capitalism completely fail to understand why they don't work anymore. This is why. You can't apply an exclusionary, discontinuous logic taking into account an

infinite world, and expect an integral, continuous result in a finite world. Stream 5.1 gives the key to the FLOK, and that team seems unable to understand it, because all they can see with all the bright light they're holding, are the sharp and complex shadows it draws on the desert of their PhD-sanctioned ignorance.

Choosing Ecuador not to change it from within, not to anchor the evolution from its own path and not to impose an integral vision was a deadly stroke to the FLOK Society project. ***As its English name indicates, it could have been done anywhere else in the world: some, like me, were hoping that it would generate specific changes rooted into the local environment, but not a set of principles devoid of substance; the age of objectivity has passed, and the General Relativity made it clear that the observer's role isn't passive. You can't convince a people to change their ways by chastising them and make them believe they were wrong, and that you are Prometheus [come to free them from their ignorance.]***

COOK Report: Again my lack of knowledge about Latin America is coming home to roost But I am learning.

Hellekin: That is a normal situation for a U.S. citizen. The mining industry and the CIA have been very good at hiding the truth from the people. Noam Chomsky is a great source for information about Latin America. You may also want to refer to Pino Solanas, the Argentine film director and State senator, and many others. Especially the systematic destruction of ancestral knowledge and culture, and biodiversity, are a strong concern: the North does not have any respect for the time of the biosphere and that's the main threat on our survival; they think in millions of ounces, not in millions of years. Cristina adds Eduardo Galeano, [EN] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eduardo_Galeano and Adolfo Perez Esquivel [EN] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolfo_P%C3%A9rez_Esquivel

COOK Report: Michel says; "we are a guest of the government and therefore cannot criticize their position."

Hellekin: My position would be the opposite: if I were invited by a government to help shape policy, I would be very critical indeed, as that is a unique (and temporary) position for that. Sucking on the powerfult's toes never made them better.

COOK Report: But Michel see's his now censored transition plan a being of global importance as being the first ever document that shows how civil society could function with a partner state to achieve an economy based on the commons.

Hellekin: I don't think that will affect the document itself. But it certainly says a lot about the reach of this approach. You can claim that the FLOK-Ecuador attempt was a failure and blame it on SOMEONE, but you won't convince me that P2P policies can be achieved from the top-down. Evangelism is not the correct way for the 21st Century, It

belongs to the broadcast era of military propaganda. People organize themselves from the bottom up, and transversally across the strata of the old society. For a "partner state" to exist, we should first get rid of corruption. Unlikely to happen.

COOK Report: I think he has been dishonest with many people about what is going on in Quito.

Hellekin: I really think Rafael Correa is in a similar position: you want to do good, you try, and given the hostile surroundings, you choose the least evil, but then, you can't really speak freely, or you don't want to appear in trouble, and you hope things will work. But they don't [work]. And you're caught into some nasty situation with high-probabilities of damaging interpretations. I'm not saying Correa or Bauwens are innocent of their bad choices, but acknowledging the complexity of issues is necessary. I still believe that people try to do what they think is best before falling into traps.

COOK Report: I have had damning accusations of Microsoft's role in Yachay but haven't been able to source them well.

Hellekin: Microsoft is very effective in taking over educational branches of Latin American governments. They recently signed a deal with the Argentine government. A scandal, if you want my opinion, given the official policy in favor of technological sovereignty. I would love such material myself. I'm convinced there's a lot of corruption going on with these Microsoft deals. After all, we're talking about the future digital domestication of the South, and Microsoft is a privileged partner of the NSA.

A Return to the Issue of Social and National Culture

COOK Report: Cristina Derazenski was part of the same mail thread. I asked her for permission to use her material and for an introduction. She responded: "I'm Argentine. I'm a student of Law and I'm especially interested in Human Rights for some 20 years, and also in defending them in relation with IT interactions. I'm a religious person, and I have been studying during the same time, ancestral science and cosmologies from the only Master who is alive outside the Monte Athos, Greece, with focus on Mapuche tradition, compared with other traditional visions such as Sufism, or first-century Christians."

Cristina: I tried to help the FLOK project but then became disillusioned by it. I have been involved in Free-software platforms for social networks, open for everybody but with focus on activists, and managed by their own users-volunteers. In that context I knew Quiliro, and he invited me to join to FLOK process. In one hand I knew about Correa and his reform, and in the other hand I know what Indians guard, and how they are suffering, then I wanted to help. But I decided not to do it because I have come to see the FLOK project as treason to the people."

Cristina: When in October 2013, in a virtual communication with the organizational team, via Mumble, Hellekin and I touched that very point, we were pejoratively reminded by Daniel that "until recently the Ecuadoreans were 10 millions of people living from hunting and fishing".

Hellekin: Indeed, I could see this position from the official discourse in presence of the President Correa at the Yachay university (it was transmitted over the net) where the clear message was that "Ecuador leaves mediocrity behind". I suppose that's a kind of Stockholm Syndrome for Latin American people to feel inferior after 500 years of Occidental domination. So instead of finding pride and power in their own ancestry, they simply reject their past as archaic and out of fashion. Dismissing one's past opens for the embrace of a rootless future such as the Empire reclaims. Tabula Rasa. The Enlightenment of the 21st Century comes from a light so bright it burns forests and raze smountains.

COOK Report: I asked Hellekin about his use of the word `empire`.

Hellekin: When I wrote that word, I was thinking about the United States of America, and its allies from the "Five Eyes". But "the Empire" is not reducible to a single group, and is more of the Star Wars type of evil: its members became so used to impunity that they recognize themselves by their wallets, not by their passports anymore.

Cristina: At this point it became clear that the entire discourse about "saving the ancestral knowledge" was but a lie, from the start of the "project". Hellekin and I exited from the project, and explained our reasons extensively.

I'm a person who justifies other people's actions by their ignorance or a cultural difference: the fact that these people from the organizing team had such an attitude of contempt towards other human beings, and would only value them if they served their objectives, that they showed zero tolerance for dissent, and became aggressive towards those who did point at discrepancies, made me think about two alternatives: either the FLOK team was suffering from serious cognitive issues, or they were staging a double discourse with a premeditated hidden plan.

But earlier **COOK Report** asked: Given this, why should an Ecuadoran citizen give this the time of day? Why should anyone give it any credibility ?

Cristina responded: In Latin America there is still under the camouflage of pseudo – trained humanist, a spirit of admiration for all things foreign: especially anything from the Europe and the USA. It is shameful that even vindictive anti-colonialists, are more valued by some Ecuadorians, individuals with PhD or any degree of Western culture, than a shaman or a community leader. **FLOK was a conversation between "experts " and "researchers" without any room for the integration of indigenous views.**

On the one hand, FLOK has never sought acceptance let alone commitment of the Ecuadorian people. In the FLOK project the only thing that was really Ecuadorian was the seduction of the powerful. You can read emails on the growing preoccupation of the team with the lack of funding from the government, the resignation of the FLOK graphic designer after who tired of working for free with the promise that was never fulfilled - that someday they would pay (a deplorable attitude that was repeated systematically with all the collaborators of FLOK, except for the core team of 6 who are paid).

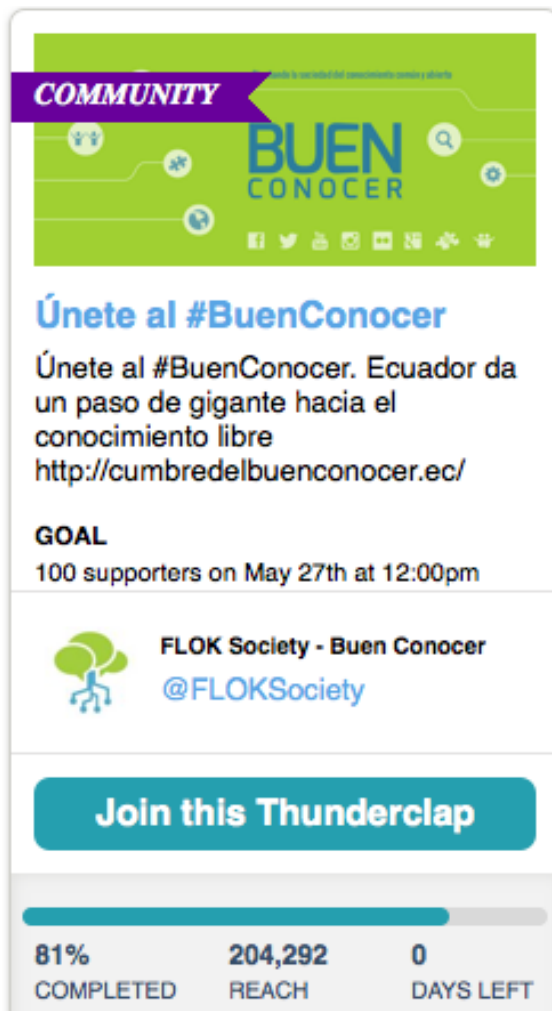
The team since the beginning continually pursued international media attention as the primary objective, before they would reach the people, and hence before they could know the people towards which--supposedly--were directed the "developments for change". They also invested to this end the funds they were granted, to pay costly travel fares to international personalities so they would speak at an event: the MINGA ("potlatch"), in December 2013. Funds that could have been used to organize fraternal meetings between the natives and the occidentals (I consider as occidentals the intellectually colonized, including the Ecuadoreans with formal instruction in conventional educational systems, and thus, disconnected from their heritage and cultural roots).

They have done 25 workshops across the country as a way of having an alibi for these questions. They proposed citizen participation via "wiki" hangouts , etc ... when even the newbies know that the "ordinary citizen" (or large percentage of citizens, especially the poor) have no idea what a wiki is. To restrict participation to that which can be performed by digital means leaves participation out of the question for the vast majority of the population.

Still what do I read? I read how "educated" Ecuadorians have followed with dazzled eyes each initiative taken with the vulgar marketing style that emerged from the FLOK team. Nobody with an ounce of critical thought will follow that. But instead, they contemplate those six P2P team members as if they were "Dalai Lamas" of knowledge.



COOK Report: And now we come to that Marketing. From the Flok list: May 20, 2014 at 11:18 AM, **Bernardo Gutiérrez** wrote: We just launched the global campaign to support #BuenConocer in ThunderClap platform. <http://thndr.it/1lgxofi>



Who supports it, choose whether reports on Twitter, Facebook or Tumblr the 27th (first day of the Summit of the Good Meet) at 12.00 pm from Quito. A strategy for viral communication and getting the global impact. Here is the message to be disclosed in the profiles of the people who support. "Join the #BuenConocer. Ecuador today takes a giant step towards free knowledge <http://cumbredelbuenconocer.ec/> <http://thndr.it/1k2FHwm> "

COOK Report: Given the actual reality, what an utterly superficial slogan.

And finally in order to proclaim success and have a "thunderclap" at one PM on May 27 we find that they have changed the rules. No longer 500 supporters but only 100 are required. Why do the people in the final "poster" stand with their backs to the audience?



Cumbre del Buen Conocer

Hacia una sociedad del conocimiento común y abierto

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CUÁNDO
27-30 mayo 2014
Empieza a las 18h00

DÓNDE
Quito - Ecuador
Centro Convenciones Eugenio Espejo