ALTERNAUTAS

(Re)Searching Development: The Abya Yala Chapter

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Preface

In 2013, we decided to create Alternautas. A group of young scholars from different parts of the world, we came together in the context of critical discussions of development together. Our academic and personal journeys, until then unrelated, shared a unifying thread: the necessity to bring to the mainstream, contemporary discussions of development, what we thought were valuable contributions from Critical Latin American thinking. For too long, the dominance of the English language has served the reproduction of mainstream Eurocentric and Western frameworks and discourses on development ideas, concepts, and models, or –more generally- of the regulative principles steering the evolution of contemporary societies. Our motivation was, precisely, an attempt to expand such discussions to include the vast and valuable body of relevant and original thinking about such issues from Latin America, or Abya Yala, as its native population used to refer to it. And in this case, the language boundaries proved as difficult to overcome as the regional ones. Alternautas, thus, emerged from a desire to bridge such boundaries, by bringing Latin American intellectual reflections on development to larger, English-speaking, audiences. In May 2014, our academic blog was launched onto the world wide web: www.alternautas.net.

Alternautas journey and hopefully an Alternautas community have just started and 2014 has been a very gratifying year. From the emergence of this academic blog, to organizing panels and participating in conferences, as well as creating a platform to share initiatives, thoughts and discussions, Alternautas closed a 2014 with plenty of plans ahead. In light of all our plans, we thought that a good way to start our second year, 2015, would be by binding together the valuable contributions that built up the 2014 blog series of Alternautas. This PDF-edition was thus conceived as a further way to disseminate and share the first year of our journey, to provide a compilation of our writings, which invites to read or re-read them as part of a larger inter-textual landscape. This first issue serves as a logbook of the first year of our journey, recording in a journal the discussions and issues explored in our blog during 2014.

The blog series (and here, in this journal edition) starts with a reflection by Ana E. Carballo about the historical momentum that Latin-American development thinking has gathered in political and academic debates about sustainability and development at a global scale over the last decade or so. This reflection has its correlate in the "design for the pluriverse" that Arturo Escobar advocates when opening the 2015 series of Alternautas blog. There seems to be emerging an increasing recognition of the need for profound societal transformations, which Arturo Escobar has elsewhere deemed one of the "great signs of our time". This is a precondition to steer global development onto sustainable pathways that are compatible with the boundaries of our biosphere's capacity to sustain life on Earth, and simultaneously with the social boundaries beyond which a just and fruitful existence and co-existence of societies in a plural world would be gravely endangered.

This momentum for Latin-American critical development thinking is largely attributable to recent socio-political re-arrangements in the Andean countries, yielding a unique political experiment deeply rooted in cultural cross-pollination with ancient indigenous cosmologies. This has been vastly explored in different posts throughout 2014: the rise of Buen Vivir as a societal horizon is introduced by Waldmüller, and picked up again as a red thread by various authors: Adrian Beling and Julien Vanhulst approach Buen Vivir as an emergent discourse in dialogue with other radical understandings of sustainable development, and reflect on its potential to shuffle new life into what has otherwise become a rather sterile endeavor. Jorge Guardiola and Fernando Garcia-Quero, based on a sound quantitative study on the ground, focus instead on the contradictions in the real political and economic praxis of the Andean countries, which oscillate between conservationism and extractivism.

Various other authors tangentially touch upon Buen vivir while emphasizing some of its diverse facets, and alternating between theoretical reflection and empirical analysis. On this line we can understand the discussions of the rights of indigenous peoples to be treated as nations instead of minorities in search of charity in the article by Roger Merino Acuña; or the analysis of the condition of marginality as a social lab where alternatives notions of wellbeing and therefore of development can germinate, discussed in Juan Loera Gonzalez' and Eduardo Gudynas's articles. Continuing in the dialogical vein between autochthonous and European traditions, Anne Freeland inquiries into how the Latin-American left, particularly in Bolivia, has articulated its diverse ideological sources to resist shallow multiculturalism, which is functional to the interest of a predatory economic

system. But not only the Andean region has been given a space in our 2014 blog series: Lucas Melgaço takes us to Brazil, to showcase how cities in the South often develop materially alongside social exclusion lines, unlike traditional development thinking would predict based on the flawed generalization of empirical studies in the North.

One of the central questions permeating the Alternautas blog series is: are these Latin American contributions alternatives of or to development thinking? Two contrasting perspectives are offered in this journal issue by Waldmüller's analysis of the redemptive concept of 'development 2.0', on the one hand, and the introduction to Enrique Leff's book "Environmental rationality", first translated here into English, which challenges the hitherto all-pervasive Cartesian/instrumental rationality as a central feature of modern civilization.

This question will continue to fuel our reflections throughout 2015, and will hopefully help us advance in our journey to bring more critical voices to global discussions of development. In this new year of Alternautas, contributions will be organized by grouping them by issue- and thematic areas, in an effort to bring the edge of the various inter-related discussions out more clearly and sharply. It is our hope that continuing and expanding Alternautas discussions, the Abya Yala contributions to critical development thinking will continue bridging the language barriers, crossing the regional boundaries and joining the global quest for societal alternatives for a fairer, better, and sustainable future.

The Alternautas editorial team,

Ana E. Carballo, Adrian E. Beling, Julien Vanhulst and JohannesWaldmüller

From a virtual Abya Yala, December 2014.-

ANA ESTEFANÍA CARBALLO*

The Opportunity of Latin American Critical Development Thinking[1]

The calls for *Buen Vivir* that have emerged from the Andean region have prompted a revival of interest in Latin American contributions to development thinking. Policy and academic initiatives have multiplied in the last few years (See post on *Buen Vivir*), in a reinvigorated interest in alternative notions of development, as well as in the struggles of social movements from across the region and their impacts on national and regional politics. The policy initiatives from different governments in the region that appear to have tilted the political paths to the left, have attracted international headlines and a shifted attention to discussions of development that to inexperienced eyes may appear as a novelty. This renewed interest in Latin American development thinking is most welcome in a discussion that has largely prioritised a Western/Eurocentric lens in its focus. However, this new opportunity to engage with Latin American thinking should not be dissociated from the wealth of experiences, academic and otherwise, that this region has seen in the field of critical development. From the onset of global discussions of development, Latin American scholars, activists, educators, politicians, priests and theologians have engaged in the collective exercise of reflecting on the possibility of advancing development, broadly conceived (this has also included discussions and reflections on the nature of this same path, and on the possibilities of thinking alternative paths). Perhaps precisely because the region has seen contrasting political, social and economics projects being implemented in the name of development, more often than not with despairing results, discussions of ideas of

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[1] Article originally published in http://www.alternautas.net/blog/2014/5/2/on-the-opportunity-of-latin-american-thinking on May 22nd, 2014.

development hold a particular sense of urgency in Latin America, one that has given birth to particularly fertile forms of critical development thinking.

One of the most powerful contemporary ideas, the project of development has shaped human lives all over the world, with projects and strategies to achieve it implemented by national governments, international organizations and the most varied civil society organisations across regions and decades. Throughout the decades, as well as today, it has mobilized innumerable resources of every kind.[2] Yet, at the beginning of the 21st Century, ideas of *Development* remain ambiguous and controversial. For some, they represent the articulation of the hopes for progress and betterment of society, and the structured efforts to achieve it. Along these lines, ideas of development, inextricably linked to those of progress and a golden dream of universal welfare, have been in the realm of political and philosophical debates for several centuries.[3] For others, far from a view of development as a project that seeks the improvement and the 'catching up' of the developing world with the West, development represents a project that, in the words of Gustavo Esteva, 'gave global hegemony to a purely Western genealogy of history, robbing peoples of different cultures of the opportunity to define the forms of their social life'.[4] Like Gustavo Esteva, many have offered critical readings of the

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[2] A simple glance at recent statistics of international institutions working on development can give us a clear view: The Official Development Assistance from the OECD countries to developing regions stood at over 128 billion US dollars for 2010, while the United Nations Development Programme counted with over 16,000 staff working in 177 countries, and a budget for 2011/2012 of over 865 million US dollars and the World Bank with over 15,000. Of the top International Non-Governmental Organisations working in development, BRAC from Bangladesh, had an annual expenditure of 583 million US dollars, while OXFAM international an expenditure of 900 million Euro. These numbers give only a hint at the amount of resources allocated for development at an international level, showing some of the most representative institutions. This of course excludes the myriad of NGOs that work for development in national and local contexts and the national government funded implementation of projects, programs and institutions at the national and regional levels.– Data from: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2012; United Nations Environment Program 2013; United Nations 2011; OXFAM 2012; BRAC 2012

[3] In fact, in 1920 British historian J.B. Bury wrote in the opening of his book *The idea of Progress: An Inquiry Into Its Origins and Growth* that 'To the minds of most people the desirable outcome of human development would be a condition of society in which all the inhabitants of the planet would enjoy a perfectly happy existence'. Bury 2008, 5 His early systematic study of the origins of progress as the aim of humanity's transformation traces the appearance of ideas of growth back to the medieval period and argues that it was not until the Enlightenment that the possibility of the improvement of humanity became a part of the philosophical and political imaginary of the world. Robert Nisbet, in his 'The idea of Progress', goes back even further tracing the discussions of progress all the way back to ancient Greece. Even while none of these works engages development theory in itself, the analysis of the idea of progress is framed in what could presently be understood as the space of development thinking- ideas that give 'substance to the hope for a future characterized by individual freedom, equality, or justice' Nisbet 1979, 7 Both works are also clearly Eurocentric and their scope limited to an informed genealogy of the term, yet the authors clearly trace back many centuries ideas of development, intertwined with discussions of progress.

[4] Esteva 2010, 5

idea of development arguing that, in particular after the Second World War, ideas of development have served as instruments of domination from the Western world over the Third World[5]. Others, as we will see below, have questioned different aspects of the development ideal, challenging its goals, strategies or main actors.

However, the uncertainty in the definition of development has been no obstacle to the central role that it has played in articulating national governments, international organisations and activists' efforts in the second half of the twentieth century. The living conditions of billions of people around the globe have been transformed to one degree or another by strategies designed and implemented under different readings of this politically loaded term. While questions like 'What is the meaning and goal of development? How it is best achieved? Who undertakes the task of pursuing development? Is development a worthy goal?' are still unsettled today, different responses have been attempted in the last six or seven decades. The idea of development has evolved considerably, and Latin America has offered, as it does today, a fertile space for critical reflection (and for experimentation) on these ideas. Far from being an exhaustive analysis of the Latin American contributions to development thinking, this post intends to serve as a broad, general overview of some of its main trends.

The 'golden dream' of development

In the decades that followed the end of the Second World War, theories of development were mainly formulated around ideas of transfers of knowledge and resources from the developed West to the developing nations of the Southern hemisphere, to assist them in 'catching up' with the advanced standards of social and economic indicators that existed in the Global North. Modernization theories of development, emerging in the 1940s and 1950s, shared a linear, evolutionist view of development, an adamant belief in the unlimited possibilities of progress and the assumption that advanced Western societies were the standard for development strategies. As such, the vision of development linked to a modern vision of progress was a teleological one, articulated in a staged process that would take countries in the same path that North American and European countries took. This notion of development was dependent on economic growth and industrialization, and the agency of the process would lie with the national states: the international system was mainly seen as assisting the developing countries in

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[5] See, for example, Escobar 1995; Rahnema and Bawtree 1998; Sachs 2010

creating the internal conditions necessary for the 'take off' of these countries, especially focusing on the role of labour, capital and technology.[6]

However, this optimistic view of the development process was short-lived, and Latin America was the context in which the first systematic criticism to these ideas started to emerge. In the late 1950s and 1960s, the Structuralist and the *Dependencia* theories of development came to challenge the main assumptions of the Modernization school. In the work of Raúl Prebisch, Celso Furtado, Enzo Faletto, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, André Gunder Frank, Theotonio Dos Santos and others, the focus shifted from the endogenous to the exogenous conditions for development, to explain the possibilities and failure of the 'take-off' of these economies to effectively occur.[7] These theories generally pointed to the inability of the Modernization school to account for the difficulties of the colonial legacy and the unequal international structures of trade that developing countries confronted in their path towards development. The most radical version of these critiques, theorized by the *Dependencia* school, combined the structuralist approach with Marxist orthodoxy. Their analysis emphasised the path dependency that was created by the social, political and economic structures of colonization and the resulting structures of world trade which remained an unavoidable characteristic of the economic and social processes of development pursued from the core (Western developed world) to the periphery. As such, these theories pushed for different policy strategies than those of the Modernization theorists, and claimed the need to break this path dependency to effectively transit a development path.

The intellectual power and clarity of these theories had a great impact at the national and international level in policy and academic discussions of development. At the policy level, their influence prompted the implementation of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) national strategies and influenced the creation of international organizations focusing on the international economic structures for development (such as the creation of the ECLAC and the UNCTAD). In academic discussions, by the end of the 1970s, Dependencia theories and different readings of the Structuralist position were central in debates around development. Both in receiving fervent support and vehement criticism, theories of development were discussed around these ideas, and the debate was slowly leading to exhaustion. In

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[6] Some clear examples of Modernization theories of development include the works of Rosenstein-Rodan 1961; Rostow 1990; Nurkse 1961; Lewis 1954

[7] Some important examples of these theories are the works of Prebisch 1986; Cardoso and Faletto 1974; Furtado 1964; Frank 1969; Frank 1966; Dos Santos 1970

1985, David Booth published his "Marxism and Development Sociology: Interpreting the Impasse" in which he argued for the existence of an effective 'impasse' in the scholarship around development until the previous decade.[8] At a theoretical level, the early understandings of development were criticised for their pure economicism, for neglecting the role of political struggle in their developmental strategy, and for their methodological nationalism, that relied heavily on national states for the promotion of development.[9] Slowly, the limitations of mainstream understandings of development were becoming more apparent, and a plurality of frameworks for understanding development was emerging. In Latin America, reflection on these ideas evolved into a plethora of disparate notions, projects and strategies for development. Some of them, like the contemporary surge of discussions of *Buen Vivir*, made deep, long- lasting impressions in academic and policy debates. Others, remained at the periphery of such discussions.

Development thinking and its discontents

The limitations that the 'development impasse' debate[10] pointed out were not the only challenges to the linear notions of development associated to economic growth that both Modernization schools and its Structuralist and Dependencia critiques sustained. Many challenges to these ideas of development, in fact, emerged in the late 60s and 70s and were incorporated in the terms of the 'impasse debate'. Others remained at the margins of the discussions of development or were only incorporated decades later, some of which have only appeared under the mainstream development gaze only in recent years. The discontent with these early ideas of development appeared not only from academia but from committed political activists as well as from policy institutions. Critiques varied in range but focused on the agency, contents and strategies for development.

Discussions of the content and goal of development questioning the narrow understanding of development that pure economic growth could provide were common earlier criticisms. In 1971, Robert McNamara, President of the World Bank declared the war on poverty and called for the need to 'dethrone GDP' from being the main indicator of development. [11] On similar lines, the 1970s saw the

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[8] Booth 1985

[9] Munck 2010, 38

[10] See, for example, Booth 1994; Corbridge 1990; Kiely 1995; Mouzelis 1988; Schuurman 1993; Sklair 1988

[11] McNamara 1979

emergence of the concepts of *Basic Human Needs* to expand the focus on economic growth with more social considerations.[12] This economicist criticism expanded as well, shaping the idea of sustainable development andillustrating the limitations of industrialization strategies for development. In 1972, the Club of Rome published the influential report *The Limits to Growth* and in 1987, the Bruntland Commission from the United Nations published *Our Common Future,* both of which are milestones in the emergence of sustainability concerns in discussions of development.*[13]* At the same time, critiques of the need to reconsider where the main agency of the development process lay received input from two different (and more often than not, mutually reinforcing) areas: the state-centric vision of development that prevailed in the earlier theories was under fire from those who claimed the need for the individual to take a stronger stance in the development process, and from those who pointed at the suitability of the market for leading such an endeavour. In line with the Neoliberal upsurge of the 1980s and 1990s, strategies of development pointed to the necessity of restructuring the economy to give a broader space for the market, in the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) across the global south. The publication in 1987 of the UNICEF report *Adjustment with a Human Face* together with the acknowledgement of the most despairing results brought upon by the SAPs*,* brought the focus closer to the human-side of development.

The emergence of people-centred development, with a focus on the individual as 'means and ends' for development, offered the possibility to combine most of the critiques raised. As such, is not surprising that the Human Development initiative, launched in the 1990s became the new mainstream perspective on development. Framed mainly in terms of the worl of Amartya Sen, the Human Development paradigm enshrines a need for understanding it as being 'development *of* the people *by* the people, *for* the people'[14]. This has become inextricably linked to ideas of political and economic empowerment inundating mainstream contemporary discussions and policy initiatives for development. These discussions of the limitations of development are far from settled. In Latin America, scholars and activists alike have become involved in developing further these ideas or in attempting to rethink them completely. Some of these ideas entered global discussions of development and contributed to expand Latin American critical

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[12] International Labour Office 1976; Streeten et al. 1981; Stewart 1985

[13] . Meadows et al. 1972; World Comission on Environment and Development 1987

[14] United Nations Development Program 1991, 13

development thinking. One of the clearest early examples can be found in the work in Chile of Manfred Max-Neef and in the work of Enrique Leff in Mexico that was initiated in the early 1980s, but has continued to develop.[15] Both works engaged discussions of sustainability and environmental concerns, and quite successfully engaged global discussions of sustainable development from Latin America.

Other perspectives, however, remained in the periphery of development thinking, and their contributions have not traditionally been accounted for in discussions of development theory. Here, we can see the un-acknowledged contributions to development thinking from some of the radical movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America. Several social movements that foresaw a different future for the region, engaged in reflections and discussions of development far away from university classrooms greatly influenced by the dependentistas understanding of development. Two of the strongest examples, were the social movements linked to Liberation theology and Radical Pedagogy that spread across Latin America in the late 1960s and 1970s. While discussions of development were not the main or immediate focus of either of these movements, both projects led to an early emergence of reflection on the link between the role of the individual and development that was escaping the narrow visions of the Modernization school and its Latin American critics. [16] In their theological and pedagogical discussions, both projects discussed materially grounded ideas of development, in which the individual and their societies started to be seen not only as those who benefit from but as the agents of development. Working mostly from outside the structures of the state, these grassroots movements initiated in Latin America were predecessors of the ideas of individual empowerment and citizen participation as paths towards development that would only enter mainstream development discussion many years later. In these perspectives, the search for liberation and social justice is closely linked to notions of development, yet it transcends ideas of economic growth and modernization. Both Liberation Theology and Critical Pedagogy called for a process of development whose focus was the *humanization* of the individual and their communities, achieved through a process of individual empowerment. Perhaps because of their deep commitment to practice, these ideas did not attempt to participate in mainstream discussions of development. At the same time, the rise of dictatorships in most Latin American

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[15] Some of the iconic early works in these lines includes Max-neef 1986; Max-neef 1982; Leff 1986

[16] In the case of Liberation Theology, is worth mentioning the works of Gutiérrez 1975; Boff 1980; Boff and Boff 1987; Camara 1971; Quigley 1971 The case of critical pedagogy is mainly based in the work of Paulo Freire. See, for example, Freire 1972; Freire 1974; Freire 1977

countries was a major deterrent for the implementation of these projects of development, or even for their academic discussions. Yet, their contributions have not been unacknowledged in Latin American thinking and in general, have contributed to the wealth of experiences and reflections that the region has offered for critical development thinking.

Rethinking the path: alternatives to development

More recently, other projects and frameworks have given us the opportunity of rethinking entirely the purpose, scope and means of development, and even to question the necessity of speaking of development as a valid project. Post-Development critiques, very much associated to the work of Gustavo Esteva and Arturo Escobar in Latin America, presented a powerful tool to rethink the path of development altogether[17]. In arguing for the necessity to explore alternatives to development, rather than development alternatives, theorists of post-development have been joined by a myriad of scholars in one of the most fruitful periods for development thinking that Latin America has seen. In fact, the list of those who take part of the constellation of thinkers contributing to development thinking in the region in the last few decades is too long to be covered in a single article.[18]The work of these authors expands well beyond discussions of development theory, offering a wide range of possibilities for expanding the critical development thinking field. Discussions of *Buen Vivir* are only the most visible contributions that Latin America has to offer to critical development thinking. On this side of the world, more than ever, contemporary reflections on development come not only from the dynamic academic community but from impressive innovations in governmental, non-governmental and civil society projects and strategies, built on decades-long struggles of Latin American social movements. From the waters of the Rio Grande, all the way down to the Patagonic plains, the region offers an exciting opportunity for critical development thinking. Far from being an exhaustive revision of these contributions, this post wishes to present Alternautas as an open invitation to engage, explore, expand and share them.

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[17] Escobar 1995; Escobar 1992; Esteva 2010

[18] Without trying to give an exhaustive list of those who currently occupy the dynamic and growing space of critical development thinking in Latin America, it is worth mentioning the work of Walter Mignolo, Enrique Dussel, Anibal Quijano, Catherine Walsh, Eduardo Mendieta, Alberto Acosta, Eduardo Gudynas, Esperanza Martínez, Edgardo Lander, Maristella Svampa, Fernando Untoja Choque, , Santiago Castro-Gómez, Pablo Quintero, Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, Ricardo Abramovay, David Barkin, Marcel Bursztyn, José Luis Corragio, José Eli da Veiga, Pablo Dávalos, Antonio Elizalde Hevia, Libia Grueso, Carlos Walter Porto Gonçalves, Jürgen Schuldt, Osvaldo Sunkel, Fernando Huanacuni Mamani, Victor Toledo and Eduardo Viola.

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Johannes M. Waldmüller[*]

Buen Vivir, Sumak Kawsay, 'Good Living': An Introduction and Overview[1]

This short contribution (for the long version please click here) to Buen Vivir and/or Sumak Kawsay refers to the context and discussion in Ecuador. It is important to emphasize that Buen Vivir and Sumak Kawsay are not quite the same, and for each numerous sub-discourses and practices referring to both can be found. Taking up 'Andean values', Buen Vivir has been broadly defined by Catherine Walsh (who has for long been scholarly active in Ecuador and sensitive to issues of decolonialism) as:

> In its most general sense, buen vivir denotes, organizes, and constructs a system of knowledge and living based on the communion of humans and nature and on the spatial-temporal-harmonious totality of existence. That is, on the necessary interrelation of beings, knowledges, logics, and rationalities of though, action, existence, and living. This notion is part and parcel of the cosmovision, cosmology, or philosophy of the indigenous peoples of Abya Yala. (Walsh, 2010: 18).

Thanks to its eager and vivid promotion by public figures, such as the former Ecuadorian energy and mining minister and economist, Alberto Acosta, who also published and edited key conceptual works on Buen Vivir, it was soon picked up by renowned scholars of the critical Left, post-development and even the (quite mainstream) human development movement (see Escobar, 2010b; Gudynas, 2011; Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 2011; Deneulin, 2012; Radcliffe, 2012). In addition, Acosta served as chairing president of the *Asamblea Nacional Constituyente* (National Constitutional Assembly, convened to elaborate the Ecuadorian Constitution of 2008) in 2007/2008, until breaking up with the previously elected

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President Rafael Correa. According to various sources, Acosta himself is responsible for having reclaimed the notion of Buen Vivir into the Constitution (Capitán-Hidalgo et al., 2014). He did so, after the CONAIE had started a campaign in front of the assembling center, including claims such as *interculturalidad* (interculturality) and *plurinacionalidad* (plurinationality) – two main pillars of Buen Vivir and the Ecuadorian state nowadays (see CONAIE, 2007). Both concepts need to be seen in the context of the decades-long struggle around multiculturalism, neoliberalism, recognition of indigenous rights in (post-)colonial states and indigenous (self)representation in the Americas (see Sieder, 2002; Almeida Vinueza, 2005; de Souza Filho, 2007). Plurinationality (creative interweaving of cultures) opposes the Western idea of multiculturalism (cultural coexistence) on decolonial grounds. Decolonial ideas (e.g., Mignolo, 2002; Walsh, 2002, 2004), which, going back to Frantz Fanon and others, have been further developed *inter alia* in Ecuador roughly during the period between 2000 until 2008 and the beginning of a 'Buen Vivir boom' of publications. They represent the intellectual 'glue' between essentialized Andean values, represented as Sumak Kawsay, and the critical, anti-imperialist and anti-modernist rhetoric of Buen Vivir.

Toward a typology of discourses

Given recent contradictory politics in Ecuador and Bolivia with regard to preservation of nature and plurinationality, a discursive splitting of Buen Vivir and Sumak Kawsay has recently been further discussed (Oviedo, 2014a), although the same proposal was immediately criticized (Gudynas, 2014). It is thus important to look closer at the underlying conceptions of both. Hence, I also argue for more precision in general when referring to the Buen Vivir concept, 'cosmovision',[2] world view, political program, "ética cosmica" (Claros-Arispe, 1996) or "pachasophy" (Estermann, 1999, 2012, 2013). (At least) three main types of this vast field of discourses and practices have been differentiated (Hidalgo-Capitán, 2012), however they remain interlinked in several publications by scholars, governments and activist:

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[2] Note at this point that the notion "cosmovision" has its roots in German philosophy (Wilhelm Dilthey) of the 19th century and has been transported to Latin America/Abya Yala/Amaruka in colonial times (Oviedo 2014: 270). Although occasionally used by indigenous scholars ('cosmovisión'), the colonial connotation of this term – for long time neglecting the existence of non-European philosophy, knowledge or scientificalness with important implications until present (e.g., draws the constitution of Ecuador of 2008 a distinction between 'scientific knowledge', on the one side, and 'ancestral wisdom', on the other side) – should not be disregarded.

1. Buen Vivir as a political (state-led) socialism of the 21st century (Ramírez G., 2010); that is, a blending between neo-Aristotelian, Christian and Andean values (mainly protection of the environment), linked to all sorts of claims from 'do-gooders', into a political state program. It remains, however, largely within the framework of Westernocentric development, especially human development;

2. As a "utopia to be constructed" (Acosta, 2010a), in form of a post-modern collage combining viewpoints of various international movements of peasants, feminist, socialists, ecologists, pacifists, theologists of liberation, unionists, etc (A L Hidalgo-Capitán et al., 2014: 35–36). A crucial point here, is the demanded reconstruction of the national economic system toward local practices of production, transport and consumption – a common thread little discussed in Buen Vivir discourses type (1) and (3). However, here I focus less on this type of Buen Vivir, despite its importance as constant background because of overlapping ideas and values with both others. Both should be differentiated from:

3. An 'indigenist' form of living and thinking (as opposed to indigenous) that adds important spiritual, ontologically relational – or 'internal-external' – dimensions, based on individually and collectively acquiring a practice (more than a knowledge) of all-connected consciousness. This form of relational being is seen as in constant exchange and reflection with the social and natural environment (see Oviedo, 2014). In order to avoid essentialist and essentializing accounts of indigenous being and living – a discourse well-known as "lo andino" from anthropological studies on the *ayllu* in the Andean region[3] – a distinction is frequently drawn between 'pensamiento (thinking) *indigenista*' and 'pensamiento *indígena*'. The discursive assumption here is that the first supports *'indigenismo'* (or *'indianismo'*), a "political ideology that defends indigenous claims within

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[3] By 'lo andino' I refer to a "construct that assumes Andean peoples (writ large across space and time) possess a distinctive (even unique) and coherent set of interrelated cultural proclivities: a common fund of perceptions, understandings, values, symbols, and social, spatial, and material practices. This 'congealed Andean essence' is ascribed to Andean peoples whole cloth and, at the same time, deployed to explain Andean societies past and present." Included in such a view are elements such as the "organization of Andean political economies according to the socio-environmental logic of the vertical archipelago, competitive/complementary dual organization, the function and value of communal labor shaped by principles of reciprocity, personal relationships between the human and animate physical world that are expressed in kinship terms, and, not trivially, a presumption that the indigenous peoples of the Andes possess an almost preternatural capacity for resilience in the face of social and environmental trauma" (Chase and Kosiba, 2007: 1).

the framework of nation-states" (A-L Hidalgo-Capitán et al., 2014: 30, Footnote), based on a century-long endured suppression and attempts to extinction. One has not necessarily to be indigenous to support it as *indigenista,* and in turn not all indigenous people are *indigenistas* – but both refer to distinctive values, (re)presented as 'indigenous'. It is questionable if such a distinction is really able to avoid essentialist elements, especially with regard to constant emphasizing of indigenous/non-indigenous providence of authors in collected works such as Hidalgo-Capitán et al. (2014): considering 'strategic essentialism' is certainly relevant here (see Lucero, 2006; Altmann, 2014).

However, this third account described above is commonly differentiated from Buen Vivir (as state program) and called Sumak Kawsay (sometimes translated as 'to live altogether in harmony[4] and balance's, cf. ibid.: 271). Some works bear a forceful critique of the 'Buen Vivir politics' – regraded as a post-modern mixture of everything – the Ecuadorian state has co-opted:

> "El Buen Vivir en la Constitución Política del Ecuador y el Vivir Bien en la Constitución Política de Bolivia son una mezcla o un 'champús' como la que gusta actualmente a la posmodernidad para hacer un 'menjunje' de todo un poco. Es una combinación del Buen Vivir platónico, con ciertos postulados cristianos y humanistas, ciertos conceptos de los paradigmas ecologistas, socialistas, y finalmente añadiendo ciertos principios generales del Sumakawsay, a todo lo cual le llaman el 'Buen Vivir Andino', consumando su irrespeto y desvalorización a la sabia y milenaria tradición andina."[5] (ibid.: 276).

En-countering modernity

Sumak Kawsay positions itself as totally divergent, regional, local, community-related: based on the basic idea of everyone having one's vegetable patch, home, access to clean potable water, forests and adequate self-sufficiency, the *runa* (self-identification for Kichwa indigenous persons) needs to acquire and maintain inner strength *(sámai),* wisdom (*sabiduria*), well-balanced conduct (*sasi*), capacity for

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[4] Note here that the Western understanding of 'harmony' is entirely different to the 'Andean' one (which refers to animacy of all things and beings who are connected through energies by default); every translation seems to run necessarily into trans-cultural difficulties.

[5] All Spanish translations are mine: "The Buen Vivir in the political Constitution of Ecuador and Vivir Bien in the Constitution of Bolivia are merely a mixture or 'hodgepodge' as currently postmodernism likes to make a 'concoction' a bit of everything. It is a combination of the platonic Good Living, certain Christian and Humanist principles, certain concepts from environmentalist, socialist paradigms, and finally adding certain general principles of Sumakawsay. Altogether it is called the 'Buen Vivir Andino", consummating its disrespect and impairment of the wise and ancient Andean tradition." (ibid.).

comprehension (*ricsima*), the ability to envision the future *(muskui)*, perseverance (*ushai*) and compassion (*llakina*). The ethical dimension of Sumak Kawsay stresses a series of values, without which 'the good living in plenitude' is neither achieve- nor maintainable. Viteri (2003: 66-71), one of the earliest publishers on *Allí Kawsay* or *Sumak Kawsay* who lately changed sides and now promotes Buen Vivir for the Ecuadorian government, lists as such interconnected values: 'support' (*yanapana*), generosity (*kuna*), the obligation to receive (*japina*), reciprocity (*kunakuna*), advice (*kamachi*) and 'listening' (*uyana*). All that is reflected in the four principles embodied in the Andean cross – the *chakana* – reciprocity (*ranti-ranti*), oneness (*pura*), complementarity (*yananti*) and connectedness (*tinkuy*) (see Macas, 2010: 29–31 ; quoted in Hidalgo-Capitán et al. 2014: 37).

Sumak Kawsay, as social concept and normative order, draws on a fundamental distinction-correlation to 'Mal Vivir'/Llaki Kawsay (translateable as 'ill living'), which refers to an overly individualized, materialized and disenchanted way of living; of someone who has lost the connection to the right values and has replaced them by those of the modern capitalist system (cf. Viteri, 2003: 78-93). In this sense, Buen Vivir/Sumak Kawsay embodies a conservative or even traditionalist core; one that fits only uneasily to the progressive depiction of the concept by non-Andean authors at the international level.

However, the goal of Sumak Kawsay is not to 'overcome' 'ill living', since there is no perceived importance in aspiring to 'live better' – but rather to balance both always existent sides in a refined way. The key to do so, is practicing consciousness, i.e. listening, responding and correlating with mind, heart and body. In opposition to Western concepts of exclusivity, categorization, competition, subjectification, etc., Buen Vivir puts emphasis on key values such as solidarity, generosity, reciprocity and complementarity. Orthodox forms of mono-economy, based on the exploitation of natural resources are thus rejected. For Sumak Kawsay to gain political influence (cf. Hidalgo-Capitán et al., 2014: 32), it is required to build *chaka* ('bridges') to Western forms of knowledge-making (e.g., scientific one). These bridges aim at not less than generating a novel type of society, state and civilization, beyond modern divides of individual-collective, human-nature and subject-object:

> "No se trata de integrarnos al progreso científico (…) para equipararnos y continuar con el proceso civilizatorio (…), sino (…) de salir de esos presupuestos y de establecer otra 'visión y misión' de los seres humanos sobre la vida. El problema no es solamente el pos-desarrollo, el pos-capitalismo[,] sino la pos-civilización (pos-patriarcalismo, pos-materialismo, pos-economicismo, pos-historicismo, pos-antropocentrismo, pos-racionalismo, pos-politicismo, pos-cientificismo, pos-cosificación, pos-secularización,

y todos los reduccionismos y separatismos creados y sub-creados por el paradigma civilizatorio)"[6] (Oviedo, 2012: 240; quoted in Hidalgo-Capitán et al. 2014: 50).

Buen Vivir politics: the new Ecuadorian modes of governance

Beginning during the late 1990s, after the decades of structural adjustment, financial crisis, austerity and a general political-economic agenda linked to what has been called the "Washington consensus" (see Gudynas, 2013), in several Latin American countries first social struggles and indigenous mobilization, then debates, and later on institutional and governmental shifts have been triggered to question national governments, development and the role of states (cf. Parandekar et al., 2002). Many of these shifts aim at re-empowering national governments and at directing their revenues from mainly exporting natural resources toward public investment in infrastructure, health, education and security. In Ecuador, for instance:

> "voters approved by referendum in September 2008 a new constitution which commits the Ecuadorian government to establish an economic, social and political system oriented towards the realization of good living. This includes the guaranteeing of all economic, social, political and civil rights as well as the right of Nature. The Constitution is the result of long historical processes of indigenous mobilization to demand the recognition of their specific cosmovision and the inseparability of humans from nature […]." (Deneulin, 2012: 1).

The overall goal of such state-led ' economic, political and social conduct toward good living' is defined as Buen Vivir – however it's actual content, the way to bring it about, and also its often portrayed 'indigenous origin', remain, as we have seen, debatable. Ideally, the state adoption of a constitution oriented toward Buen Vivir has significant economic, social and political implications. "Under a buen vivir regime, economic exchanges are submitted not to the logic of profits but to the logic of human flourishing and respect of nature." (ibid., 3). Not accumulation of material wealth remains the basic value of the economic system, but solidarity, complementarity and reciprocity (cf. Acosta, 2010b: 23). Material goods are to be produced and exchanged in view of enabling people to live in dignity and sustaining harmonious relations between people and their environment

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[6] "This is not about integrating us into scientific progress (...) in order to equip us to continue the process of civilization (...) but instead (...) to get out of those claims and establish another 'vision and mission' of human beings about life. The problem is not only the post-development, post-capitalism [,] but the post-civilization (post-patriarchal, post-materialism, post-economism, post-historicism, post-anthropocentrism, post-rationalism, post-politicism , pos-scientism, pos-objectificationism, post-secularization, and all reductionisms and separatisms created and sub-created by the civilizing paradigm)." (ibid.).

(Deneulin 2012, 3). A "solidaristic economic system" (ibid.) supports a market economy, with a plurality of markets at the local level, but not a market society submitted to one global market (Acosta, 2010: 25). Overall, Ecuador has taken some effort to effectively improve the infrastructure, social, health, education and security sector – but it is still largely dependent on exporting natural resources.

In order to alter the national economy, Buen Vivir is spelled out in quinquennial National Buen Vivir plans, which have replaced former national development plans. These are elaborated by the supra-ministerial SENPLADES (*Secretaría Nacional de la Planificación y Desarrollo*) and aim at changing power structures and the economic system on the longer run (Ecuador will be running out of crude oil in approximately 25 years). Such, partly certainly utopian, targets require to be assessed continuously to render the high public investment accountable. For this reason, Buen Vivir plans contain up to 150 so-called 'Buen Vivir indicators'. In addition, Ecuador has become the first country in the world to work on the implementation of a national human rights indicators' system (since 2009), which should be coupled with Buen Vivir indicators one day. It should be added that the goal of Buen Vivir in the current Ecuadorian government's perspective is to shift the resources-based economy toward one of high-tech production, knowledge and services. The university project 'Yachay' ('wisdom' in Kichwa) in Northern Ecuador, to name just one example, aims at creating a sort of 'Latin American Silicon Valley' in biotechnology, the largest campus on the continent.

Overall, 'Buen Vivir politics', as they are pursued by the government, can be characterized as utterly centralized, hierarchic and technocratic. They aim at maximum control, stability through social and public management-type planning and accountability, while regarding every opposing force as threat. Accordingly, Correa (and his administration) have been described as "technopopulist" (de la Torre, 2013). The use of modern means of communication and representation[7] is widespread and intentionally employed by government members. This is also reflected in the high number of rather young, (typically abroad) well-educated, publicly employed persons, who have partly been attracted to return to their home country through governmental programs after the economic crisis-induced mass migration in the 1980s and 1990s. A large part of the recently established urban Ecuadorian middle class is directly or indirectly employed through government activities – and has been largely subsidized (fuel, domestic gas) in recent years

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[7] For instance, TV shows, social media, urban lifestyles, etc.

(Dávalos, 2013). While a reform of the national penal code has been demanded for long, the result turned out to heavily criminalize every possible threat for the state, while hardly considering the more obvious threat of the state for individuals (e.g., in cases of torture or genocide). Accordingly, and also because of criminalizing defenders of human rights and environmentalists (CEDHU et al., 2011), the number of people in prisons (themselves in very poor condition) have exploded in Ecuador in recent years (Dávalos, 2014; Garces, 2014).

Conclusion: a word of caution

Buen Vivir remains a politically elusive term, charged with programmatic aspirations of various proponents; one that is (almost) always re-framed and re-defined by justice struggles of likewise numerous social movements. Proponents, more allied with the '*indigenista*' movement tend to claim a fundamental rupture between Buen Vivir, on the one side, and Sumak Kawsay (or 'Sumakawsay', to underline the connectedness), on the other side (see Oviedo, 2014). For them, there is no direct need to seek justice and 'development', since everything proceeds in all-connected couples of polarization between beings and energies.[8] Maintaining, stabilizing, balancing, etc. are instead values put forward in Sumak Kawsay. Naively collapsing Buen Vivir (a post-modern form of 'biosocialism') with Sumak Kawsay, the ancestral way of being, would eventually equal to perpetuating the 500 years-long exploitation of the indigenous on epistemological grounds (Oviedo, 2014).

It is thus particularly important to treat all publications on and about Buen Vivir accordingly; Buen Vivir discourses have become a tricky minefield to engage with, also because actors and authors themselves shift between pro- and contra-governmental positions.[9] Leading questions for any reading of Buen Vivir/Sumak Kawsay should therefore be: who are the authors? What are their goals and political as well as academic roles? What is the purpose of their publications?

Despite manifold daily struggles in real life, the idea and discourses of Buen Vivir has gained popularity in academic and activist circles around the globe. It has been examined in the context of UNDP's human development approach (e.g., Deneulin, 2012), it has been linked to political ecology and debates around sustainability (e.g., Thomson, 2011; Vanhulst and Beling, 2013); it has been discussed in the contexts of novel forms of state-building and legal systems (Ávila

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[8] The famous '*pacha-*' meaning 'pa' – eng. 'two' – and '*cha*' – eng. 'all-permeating energy', cf. Estermann, 2013.

[9] For example, in the cases of the well-known Ecuadorian economists Pablo Dávalos and Alberto Acosta.

Santamaría, 2011a, 2011b). Practical workshops on Buen Vivir have been organized[10] and it has been broadly politicized as an alternative vision to development, to extracting natural resources, for defending indigenous rights (in particular their primordial rights to self-determination, cf. Schulte-Tenckhoff, 2012) and for supporting the essential pillars of the state doctrine of Buen Vivir, 'plurinational' rights, such as multilingual education (Acosta, 2010b; Acosta and Martínez, 2009; Agencia Lationamericana de Información (ALAI), 2008; Houtart, 2009; Maldonado, 2010; Yumbay et al., 2010).

Joining this ongoing and, under the pressure of global crises, intensifying struggle under the flag of Buen Vivir or Sumak Kawsay requires caution. According to *indigenistas*, particularly if one does not know and live according to 'cosmoconsciousness'. In essence, both Buen Vivir and Sumak Kawsay have voiced serious critiques of mainstream development – and became integrated as viable alternative visions into national political-economies. Their particular value is to point to two sides commonly neglected in development studies: (1) some more inward-related aspects of development linked to (2) their relational connectedness to other humans as well as their natural environment in a more metabolic thinking across generations.

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[10] For example, in Halle (Germany) in autumn 2013: see: http://www.buenvivir-in-halle.de/

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ADRIAN E. BELING & JULIEN VANHULST[*]

Buen Vivir: New Wine in Old Wineskins?[1]

According to the scholarly tradition in cultural sociology, which can be traced back to Durkheim and his disciples Hertz and Mauss, we people tend to make sense of the world by coding phenomena in terms of binary oppositions: good/evil; hot/cold; sun/moon… and also some more contentious ones: civilized/barbarian (relevant cleavage in anti-colonial struggles); rational/emotional (feminist struggles); society/nature (core issue in ecological thought); etc. We bring this up right at the outset because it is important in the context of this article, for the two following reasons:

First, because we will frame the two main arguments of our understanding of Buen Vivir in terms of such binary codes, namely: a) the repackaging of an indigenous cultural model into modern clothing by scholars and statesmen mainly in Ecuador and Bolivia, which I will frame as a binary opposition Sumak Kawsay (SK)/ Buen vivir (BV); and b) the binomial proposition of Buen Vivir versus sustainable development (SD) –whose oppositional character is actually our main interrogation. These two binary oppositions will also serve as the two structural pillars of this article. The second reason why binary codes are important here is that, so we will argue, the value added of BV lies, to a large extent, precisely in destabilizing (and thus opening up to change) some essentially unsustainable yet

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deeply entrenched binary codes making up the metanarratives –the basic cultural fabric– on which Western modern civilization builds.

Maybe a good starting point would be addressing the question of why BV is worth discussing in the first place. I just mentioned its destabilizing potential vis-à-vis some of the basic cultural pillars of the (European) modern project. But then other contemporary sustainability discourses also perform such critique. Think of Gaia theory (Lovelock, 2007), the global justice movement; the ecofeminist, degrowth, or commons movements, to name only a few. So is there anything distinctive to BV, anything particularly reinforcing of this destabilizing potential? We have identified two more drivers which make Buen vivir worth being taken seriously:

1. BV is not some philosophical utopia with any empirical grounding: the constitutive principles of BV inform actual social praxis of indigenous populations in the Andean-Amazonian region that has been going on for centuries. But –perhaps more interestingly- these principles have often also combined with modern worldviews thus yielding bifurcated socio-cultural trajectories, all of which could still claim to be 'modern', albeit being non-identical. Such métissages have been captured by the theories of Global modernity (Dirlik, 2007; Domígues, 2006), Entangled modernities (Arnason, 2003; Therborn, 2003), Multiples modernities (Eisenstadt, 2000; Larraín, 2005, 2007), or else Modernity as experience and interpretation (Wagner, 2008, 2010). What these theories all have in common –and in opposition to classical theories of modernity, is that they disregard the possibility of universal andgeneral theories of everything.

2. The second driver making BV appealing as a case study for cultural and societal transformation is the fact that BV, as we define it, is the dynamic product of discursive interaction among an innovative constellation of actors, what we have called –in free analogy with Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz' (1996)well-known model of innovation- a "Latin-American triple helix" of State-Academia-Indigenous movements relations. Such singular ménage, we argue, offers fresh potential for social innovation.

Now that we have made the point of why BV is worth some thought, we will, as anticipated, structure the rest of our intervention alongside the binomial codes

BV/SD and BV/SK. We will start by presenting the concepts of SD and BV and later relating them to each other.

Buen Vivir versus Sustainable Development

What is Buen vivir? According to Eduardo Gudynas and Alberto Acosta, Buen vivir can be defined as an "opportunity to build a different society sustained in the coexistence of human beings in their diversity and in harmony with nature, based on recognition of the diverse cultural values existing in each country and worldwide" (Acosta & Gudynas, 2011, p. 103). It arises out of a combination of (1) the ethical principles of ancient Andean-Amazonian cultures, (2) the contributions of contemporary critical intellectuals, and (3) from an incipient assimilation of both these sources by the political sphere. The latter is especially visible in Bolivia and Ecuador, which recently accorded the principle of Buen vivir constitutional rank. The emergence of BV as a discourse, however, can be traced back to the late 1990s, as a result of the confluence of three important factors: the Latin-American social movements of the time (particularly the indigenous movement against late 20th century rampant neoliberalism); the convergence between said movements and the ideologies of certain global movements (especially the anti-/alter-globalization and the environmental movements); and a widespread disenchantment with the idea of development, viewed as a neo-colonialist project of the world financial powers.

We emphasized earlier that the Buen vivir discourse performs a dual role as a critique of European modernity, on the one hand, and as a proposal for a cultural, social and political renewal on the other(Houtart, 2011). Let us elaborate a little further on that. BV may be said to challenge the European modern worldview in two fundamental ways: BV views society and its natural environment as interdependent and indivisible (thus challenging the modern society-nature dualism) and conceives the 'universal' as a plural reality (which calls Eurocentric universalism into question). Similarly, Buen vivir cannot be equated to the western idea of continued progress towards welfare, where the idea of 'progress' refers to an indefinite future. It is rather a way of living the present in harmony, that is, assuming and respecting differences and complementarities (among humans and between humans and non-humans) from an ecological perspective that could be described as holistic and mutualistic. Hence Buen vivir breaks away from the reductionist Cartesian worldview to adopt a systemic perspective encompassing the entire ecosphere (including abiotic components). It also breaks away from the idea of cultural and social homogeneity, assuming its logical impossibility in a diverse

world, and posits instead a path of harmony and "unity in diversity". Does this mean that BV seeks to overthrow modernity altogether? By no means. Moreover, in a controversial essay on "symmetrical anthropology", Bruno Latour (Latour, 1993) goes as far as arguing that the seminal Cartesian opposition between nature and society undermines the very possibility of realization of the modern project, namely, the emergence of self-governing societies. In that sense, one could argue, modernity (understood, with Guy Bajoit (2003), as a cultural model) would profit from an epistemic dialogue with BV to avoid its self-engendered endangerment (Beck, 1992). This said, how 'elastic' modernity will prove to be as a cultural model, and to what extent is it capable of endogenizing pluralism and the ecological imperative are open questions yet to be answered, but we argue that BV provides some hopeful perspectives to help modernity(es) emancipate from reductive Eurocentric premises.

Let us turn now to our second contestant: sustainable development (SD). Borne out of the conflicting discourses of environmentalism, on the one hand, and economic development (which is nothing else than the newest avatar of the core modern ideal of progress) on the other, the idea of a "sustainable development" appears rather as a political compromise formula than as a likely fusion of ideas. This contentious progeny has turned SD into a heavily contested concept, or rather, as we depict it, into a hybrid and diffuse global discursive field (Connelly, 2007; Dryzek, 2005; Hopwood, Mellor, & O'Brien, 2005; Sachs, 1997). While the spectrum of views on sustainability has grown increasingly diverse, a conservative trend largely supporting the political and economic status quo, advocating minor reforms, green growth, and better environmental management within the existing configuration of power and institutions gradually became dominant, supported by most states, by the international development sector and leading environmental NGOs. Yet simultaneously, out of the perception that these more conservative approaches are either essentially headed in the wrong direction, or that they are achieving "too little, too late", a whole range of more radical/transformative visions on development and sustainability have pullulated in the last decades, some with a significant impact (however not system-destabilizing) in academic, political and/or social debate. Examples include the French-borne decroissance discourse (Latouche), the commons movement, the Great Transition, or the various equal per capita emission rights proposals in the climate policy realm, among many others.

Unlikely Couple..?

Does BV fit this group of radical views within the discursive field of SD? Or is it rather fundamentally incompatible with the minimal premises of the concept of development itself? In other words, is BV better to be conceived of as an alternative form of development, or as an alternative to development? We see Buen vivir as both: on the one hand, BV does denounce the drifts of the civilizational project associated with the idea of development as irremediable, but simultaneously, on the other, it draws on the social and ecological imperatives that first gave rise to the criticism of development in the 1970s, portraying itself as an attempt to overcome the limitations of SD (generally equated with mainstream understandings of the concept). In other words, BV accepts the basic challenges proposed by SD as a legitimate battlefield, on the one hand, while at the same time it rejects mainstream understandings of SD and seeks to reshape the contours of the discursive field around it.

Our analysis suggests that while the initial impulse was to position BV as an alternative to, as an 'other' of development, over time it has gradually moved towards a more dialogical position. The question arising from this shift, which has divided waters in the social and academic debate around BV, is whether such a dialogue is to be seen as degrading the 'essence' of the BV discourse (as mostly scholars in the tradition of Decolonialism argue –Anibal Quijano, Edgardo Lander, and Catherine Walsh, among others), or rather as a potentially mutually-enhancing, cross-pollinating interaction yielding stronger transformative potential (as scholars closer to the political sphere tend to argue: Alberto Acosta, Pablo Dávalos and René Ramirez in Ecuador; and, in Bolivia, David Choquehuanca Céspedes, and Pablo Mamani Ramírez, i.a.). But even if one should endorse the second answer, as we do, the question arises about what the ontological limits of this dialogical space would be, before fruitful interaction turns into outright cooptation by the path-dependent forces of conventional development.

In order to answer these questions, let us address the second binary code proposed at the beginning of this article: Buen vivir versus the Quichua concept of Sumak Kawsay (or else those of other Andean/Amazonian indigenous people who –nuanced differences notwithstanding– share basically the same constitutive principles, such as the Suma Quamaña of the Aymaras or the Ñandereko of theGuaraníes).

Buen Vivir versus Sumak Kawsay

These two concepts, BV/SK, are normally used interchangeably as equivalents, both in the academia and in politics. We found it useful, however, to make a semantic distinction between BV and SK, which serves our core analytical purpose, namely, assessing the dialogical 'elasticity' of what we have termed 'the BV discourse'. SK, we understand (even as we reject any type of essentialist rigidization) is a regulative principle which belongs to a cultural model alien to modernity, and therefore cannot be directly extrapolated to our contemporary settings or debates (for details see Beling, Gomez Lechaptois, & Vanhulst, 2014). Unless SK is to remain confined to anti-modern islets, it necessarily requires undergoing a dialectical process of transformation whereby it is rendered amenable to dialogue with modern discourses –that is, discourses built on modern cognitive/cultural categories. The individual human subject, for example, is a non-entity in the Quichua worldview, which does not conceive of the idea of 'being' other than in relational terms. It seems safe to assume that this aspect of Sumak Kawsay could never permeate modern societies, however collectivistic they may be. Indeed, suppressing the idea of the individual human subject altogether would arguably extinguish its modern character ipso facto. This would thus speak for the need to "modernize" SK. But then there is the legitimate fear that opening up SK to dialogue with modernity will risk its 'late colonization' by Western/Northern epistemologies. This dilemma between de-naturalizing dialogue and non-dialogical isolation is, however, only apparent. In order to minimize the risk of colonization of the indigenous imaginary, one need not talk of fusion, hybridation, or even of translation of SK –in fact the Aymara cosmology upholds the principle of Ch'ixi, which could be equated with the 'third-included logic'. This means that two binary opponents can constructively engage with each other to yield a higher instance, a space of mediation where tensions can be fully developed (rather than melted into some form of unity or homogeneity). The result is thus not a synthesis, but a restless 'cultural magma', an incandescent breeding ground for cultural creativity. In other words, the Ch'ixi world seeks to embrace the tension out of which it originated instead of trying to eliminate it: a "ch'ixi grey" color, for example, would be white and would also not be white; it would be white and simultaneously be black, its opposite. The ch'ixi world thus opens the possibility of combining the indigenous principles with their opposites without hybridizing, therefore preventing the loss of energy and substance associated with the birth of a sterile mixture, the chhixi.

This way of mutual engagement could yield, so we argue, a fruitful quest for new forms of knowledge, for new forms of rationality, for an eco-solidarity culture capable of effectively permeating societal organization patterns. This, of course, implies accepting that culture can be looked at also, to an extent, as an autonomous force, as an independent variable capable of influencing the process of societal change and not merely as dependent variable, a superstructure resulting from the determination of other social forces, as the Marxist tradition, for example, upholds. Buen vivir, as we envisage it, is thus a discursive work-in-progress resulting from the cross-pollination of traditional indigenous knowledge (whose standard-bearers are the indigenous movement organizations raised to influential political players in the last two decades), and the interpretative and articulating work done by a generation of scholars and political leaders engaged with these ideas. By 'work-in-progress' we mean that the discursive boundaries and programmatic implications of BV are not well defined yet, and evolve alongside continuing ideational contributions and political negotiations (one should keep in mind that BV is not a programmatic concept in and of itself, but rather a life-philosophy with normative ascendance over the political debate). It should come as no surprise that this undetermined character, combined with the political stakes involved in the institutional/practical grounding of BV, makes this emerging discourse vulnerable to political instrumentalization. We ought then to ask ourselves the following question: how can we differentiate between natural evolution of the boundaries of discursive meaning and outright cooptation of BV? We will now turn to this question by resorting to the Ecuadorean experience as illustration.

The Buen Vivir Experiment in Ecuador

Although a detailed consideration of the many aspects and dimensions relevant to the issue under scrutiny would be impossible here, we will try to address the major cleavages by decomposing our analysis into two separate though related questions:

1. How truthful are government policy-instruments such as the Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir in Ecuador to the ethos (or, say, the minimal necessary descriptors) of BV? That is, in how far is the ethos of SK well reflected in the political appropriations/ articulations of the BV discourse?

2. How truthful is the actual socio-economic praxis of the government in Ecuador vis-à-vis both the BV "ideal principle" and its political articulations?

Let us start with the second question. Among scholars concerned with BV, there is large consensus about the fact that Ecuador and Bolivia, the breeding grounds of the Buen vivir discourse, increasingly resemble textbook illustrations of neo-extractive economic agendas. After having attained office by appealing to the larger and historically underprivileged or marginalized population strata (invoking, i.a., the indigenous heritage of Sumak kawsay and Suma Qamaña), the administrations of President Correa in Ecuador and of President Morales in Bolivia are currently rather following a pathway of economic development that reinforces well-worn (neo)extractivist practices (mainly oil exploitation but also large-scale mining). This contradiction between discourse and practice seems fairly straightforward, and is increasingly arousing the disappointment and indignation of former supporters in many civil society strands (Hollender, 2012). Arguably, the rift between principle and political implementation in Ecuador became especially visible with the recent cancellation of the emblematic Yasuní-ITT Initiative. The initiative had been officially launched in 2010 following an international agreement and the creation of the Yasuni Fund under the aegis of the UNDP. However, on August 15, 2013, President Correa announced the cancellation of the initiative, invoking arguments such as the lack of support by the international community and the need for oil revenues to fight poverty. The failure of Yasuni-ITT shows that, at least for the time being, the neo-extractivist logic of the "Commodity Consensus" –as Maristella Svampa(Svampa, 2012, 2013) has termed the current neo-extractivist wave in Latin America following the 'Washington Consensus' of the 1990s– seems to prevail in government agendas over the regulative ideal of BV.

What may seem less evident, by contrast, is that the root of such contradictions might well lie –to an extent, at least- in the indefinition of the Buen vivir discourse itself; and this leads back to the first of our questions above. As Prof. Monni & Pallotino from University Roma Tre rightly point out, "the translation of the principles of BV into the political arena (rather than simply in the 'development debate') implies a certain degree of ideologization, that may be needed in order to define a political perspective at the price of introducing a level of rigidity" (Monni & Pallottino, 2013, p. 13) –in other words, giving up part of its epistemological innovation potential. In addition, according to these Italian authors, being a conceptual work-in-progress, the "Buen vivir" label is open enough to be distinctively applied to a heterogeneous set of political and philosophical-anthropological ideas and institutions, ranging from narrow equalizations with a particular governmental agenda all the way up to an abstract cosmology, which turns the Buen vivir discourse itself into a field of struggle about its meaning and

raises the question about whether and how Buen vivir can be realistically expected to escape the evanescent fate of "sustainable development", which progressively turned into a 'catch-all' and therefore largely meaningless concept. Yet in the case of BV, we argue, hermeneutical variability is limited, in that it is necessarily constrained by its filiation with Sumak Kawsay. Indeed, as can be clearly derived from its social and academic appropriations, the ethos of the BV discourse is fundamentally critical and transformative, and thus cannot be legitimately used to justify conservative politics. So again we hit the question: where, then, does the limit lie between heterogeneity in appropriation and outright cooptation of the BV discourse? While the precise definition of such limits is a matter open to debate, the contours of BV can safely be held to be more indicative than those of SD. Indeed, no possible definition of BV could justifiably overlook, for example, the principles of complementarity and reciprocity among humans and between humans and the rest of nature, which are axial to the ethos of BV as rooted inSumak Kawsay.

This said, it would also be a mistake to view the Ecuadorean government's agenda as a coherent whole steering the country away from BV. Indeed, in the wake of the failed Yasuní-ITT project –and alongside popular mobilization to bring it back to life with renewed strength–, new initiatives are being pushed forward by the government itself, which could be read as seeking to pave new pathways for the grounding of BV, certainly in a less direct yet possibly in a more effective fashion. I am thinking here of the just-launched FLOK Society project hosted by Ecuador's post-graduate state school IAEN, whose objective is to create a legal, economic and social framework for an entire country (Ecuador) that is consistent with principles that are the basic foundations of the Internet: peer-to-peer collaboration and shared knowledge. This foundation is viewed as a way to break out of the extractivist trap and transform the Ecuadorean economic matrix –as well as societal and political culture and power relations– without relying on a classic left-wing revolution with massive nationalizations and redistribution of property (IAEN, 2014). The FLOK Society project claims to pursue Sumak Yachay ('good knowledge') as the cornerstone of a society rooted in Sumak Kawsay/ Buen vivir. With its combined technological-anarchic and transcultural-plural ethic drivers, the FLOK society project seems likely to be appealing as a model to a wider global audience. However, at the same time, the Correa administration is pursuing a FTA with the EU, which would likely impose an exogenous constraint onto the research outputs from the FLOK society project to reach the institutional and policy level. In a ch'ixi outlook, however, one could view these contradictions in the Ecuadorean government agenda as fueling the cultural change dynamics: the beauty of

complexity is that developments can hardly be controlled or even predicted with any precision. Will scattered impulses and partial approaches suffice to trigger a larger societal transition? This is an empirical question which can only be answered by sustained observation of the impacts of the project which will unfold in years to come.

Some final reflections

Whatever the short-term outcomes of this or other concrete projects; whatever the difficulties and disappointments with State-led attempts at practical implementations, making the currency of BV contingent upon these would be, we contend, a serious mistake. Although some damage in terms of discredit and suspicion should be expected as a result of the strong symbolic ties of the BV discourse with the Ecuadorean government's agenda, Buen vivir is not there through invalidated as a transformative discursive force. Indeed, the idea remains clearly not only alive with its original proponents in Ecuador and Bolivia, but keeps diffusing to new actors in the public, political and academic spheres. Moreover, Buen vivir has begun to gain resonance on a global scale and to influence various groups and social movements that are looking for viable alternatives to the discourse of development based on economic rationality and the Modern-European ideal of progress. As argued earlier, we hold the cultural destabilizing potential of BV to be its greatest asset, especially in combination with other transformative views in the global discursive field of SD. Their synergistic interaction has the potential to expanding the frontiers of what is speakable, of what is deemed desirable or even conceivable. This expansion of collectively shared cultural and cognitive templates is a necessary condition (though by any means sufficient) for enabling the realization of the ideal of harmonious plural and ecologically sustainable societies underlying the ideal of Buen vivir.

This is not meant as a comforting 'retreat into the (ideational) fortress' as a consequence of insufficient or unsatisfactory practical translations of BV. On the contrary, its incipient institutional and practical translations can be positively invoked as proof of the transformative power of ideas despite structural obstacles and the opposition of powerful vested interests: the granting of constitutional rights to "nature" in the new Montecristi Constitution, and the inclusion of historically marginalized population strata in the constitutional deliberative process cannot be emphasized strongly enough as ground-breaking steps in the direction of fundamental cultural change. Our claim is that as long as it is viewed as a nostalgic

echo from a mythical past of "noble savages" and a wholesale attack on SD, BV is likely to be a short-lived discursive enterprise. Conversely, if without giving into anthropocentric and expansionist deformations, it remains open to synergistic dialogue with other transition discourses in search for alternatives to the 'Green Economy' of Rio+20 or similar variants of mainstream views, BV holds the promise of making the wisdom of marginalized and forgotten voices amenable to political debate, engaging in the discursive struggle to endow the 'empty signifier' of SD with operational meaning in new, creative ways.

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ROGER MERINO ACUÑA[*]

Minorities or Nations? Discourses and Policies of Recognition of Indigenous Peoples' Rights[1]

The definition of Indigenous peoples as either "minorities" or as "nations" has a profound impact on public policies. After the tragedy of the so-called Baguazo, the Peruvian ex-president Alan García, stated the following:

> Those people do not have a crown, they are not first class citizens. 400.000 natives cannot tell 28 million Peruvians: you don't have the right to come here […] Whoever thinks that way wants to take us toward irrationality and primitive backwardness. (Interview, June 5th 2009).

Besides the question of a supposed "primitivism" and "irrationality" (which would require another analysis), García expresses in this interview a perspective shared by many politicians, technocrats and analysts with regard to the definition of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous people are seen as ethnic minorities and, despite enjoying special juridical protection, they cannot expect to be treated in a different way, for example as the Right to Previous Consultation suggests. As Montes has put it:

> This government and its officials do not understand that the ILO Convention No. 169 is an efficient political instrument to promote Indigenous rights to create spaces of agreements, but not to create categories of people with distinctive rights, different to the rest of Peruvians. (Montes 2014)

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In a similar way, and with regards to applying previous consultation mechanisms for Andean peoples, Santillana (2013) indicates that "the search for a different treatment stems from political interest", while peoples of the Amazon would have to "integrate themselves to the institutional political life – just as any other citizen."

In summary, the perspectives presented here put forward the idea that if special rights are granted to Indigenous peoples it is to integrate them into Peruvian society - not to grant them different treatment, which would affect the formal equality that the law grants to every citizen. These discourses stem from understanding Indigenous rights as ethnic minority rights, to ensure their inclusion within the political and economic framework of the state, 'tolerating' their cultural diversity.

Liberal Multiculturalism and the Assimilation of Indigenous Peoples

The problem with the above comments is the understanding of Indigenous peoples as minorities and not as peoples. For example, Montes (2013) states that the ILO Convention No. 169 had been designed "on the basis of recognizing protection rights of ethnic minorities."

The first problem of this understanding is the non-recognition of international law. The ILO Convention No. 169 recognizes Indigenous peoples as collectives with rights as "peoples"; an understanding which was also reinforced by the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples of 2007. This document explicitly mentions "Indigenous nations" (Art. 9). Suffice it to point out that this Declaration has been discussed for more than 20 years, and that one of the demands by Indigenous organizations has precisely been their recognition as nations (Barsh 2001, Oldham and Frank 2008, Stamatopoulou 1994, Gilbert 2007). In addition, International Law prescribes other specific juridical mechanisms for the protection of ethnic minorities, such as the United Nations Declaration on Minorities (UN Resolution 47/135 of 1992).

The problem of understanding Indigenous Rights as minority rights stems from placing the former in context of multiculturalism, without taking into account the context of the latter's production and reception. The minorities to which authors on multiculturalism refer to belong to the European and US-American context - where numerous immigrants dwell - seeking to maintain their customs and habits, while exhibiting respect and tolerance. These authors do not refer to contexts, such as in Latin America, where Indigenous nations precede existing states and demand

their recognition as those who have survived despite constant exclusion and violent inclusion into the colonial and post-colonial processes.

However, multiculturalism remains key for recognizing Indigenous rights. According to Kymlicka (1995), multiculturalism implies a sort of specific protection of "cultural minorities". Given that human rights have general scope, for Kymlicka it is necessary to establish minority rights which should be limited by individual rights and democracy, since otherwise abuses of individual rights could occur within minority groups.

In general debates within political philosophy regarding multiculturalism have been intense. One of the most interesting perspectives is provided by Parekh (2004) for the European and US-American contexts. He argues that multiculturalism would not be a question of minorities, but of adequate "negotiating" terms between different cultural communities. But the problem remains with both forms of recognition, in the case of Kymlicka's special rights and Parekh's cultural communities, that the result would simply "accommodate" Indigenous peoples within a dominant juridical, political and social system. However, the notion of "accommodation", frequently employed by authors of multiculturalism, is evocative of the ILO Convention No. 107 of 1957, in which similar terms had been used to describe the relationship between Western society and Indigenous peoples as one of integration and assimilation: Indigenous peoples should be assimilated to the logic of the state. For this reason they could be displaced from their lands in name of "national development".

The ILO Convention No. 169, which regulates mechanisms such as previous consultations, should shift this approach of "assimilation" toward "self-determination". On this line of thinking, this convention has contributed to the powerful emergence of the UN Declaration of Indigenous Peoples of 2007, which explicitly enshrines the right to self-determination of Indigenous peoples as well as the right to provide previous consent to the approbation of means and norms that would affect them, among other collective rights (Oldham and Frank 2008, Gilbert 2007, Fromherz 2008).

While the legal-normative framework for Indigenous peoples has been altered, the conceptual framework of multiculturalism continues to be incorporated in these debates without a sign of criticism. Multiculturalism assumes that there exists only one nation and within, various cultural communities to be recognized and tolerated. These communities do not have self-determination as other nations, but should only be "accommodated" by the state. For this reason, their relationship

with the state is not one of complementarity, but of subordination. Seen in this way, the idea of accommodation presupposes hierarchy and the execution of power; its fundamentals are not too far from mechanisms of integration, assimilation or incorporation developed by states in the first half of the past century.

Multiculturalism, in addition, has been criticized not only by conservatives but also by more progressive forces. The first criticize the power enacted within cultural communities which could affect individual rights in the name of culture (Beckett and Macey 2001). The second criticize the emphasis on cultural questions, while disregarding socioeconomic injustices, which would reduce all political issues to problems of cultural recognition, and not of economic redistribution (Žižek 2008).

Kymlicka responded to these critiques by indicating that multiculturalism would be integrated with liberal democracy and thus includes important re-distributional aspects, for example, recognition of the Indigenous rights to their lands. However, he has here selected an unfortunate example with which to defend multiculturalism, since it is precisely the rights of Indigenous people to their territory which have been, and still continue to be, the most violated rights by states.

Although territorial rights of Indigenous peoples are nowadays universally recognized, they are far to be universally respected (Barsh 2001). Their legal recognition has been accompanied by new forms of accumulation through aggressive means of extracting both natural resources from lands and ancestral knowledge (Sieder 2011). In this context, those rights to participation and cultural recognition, deriving from multiculturalism, which were celebrated at the moment of adoption by various Latin American constitutions in the 1990s (Van Cott 2006), seem to accommodate only a few of the claims raised by Indigenous peoples to the neoliberal institutional framework. In effect, it converts them into "indios permitidos" (permitted Indians) (Hale 2005) with the aim of renouncing their more profound demands regarding self-determination and territories.

In consequence, it is clear that legal advances in the field of Indigenous rights at the international level show that mere participation and its political-philosophical foundation, multiculturalism, is not enough to recognize the principles of self-determination and further rights deriving from it, such as the right to territory and to prior, free and informed consent.

Indigenous Peoples and Formal Equality

The critiques of the supposed privileges or special rights to be granted to Indigenous peoples ignore that Indigenous legality corresponds in itself to a proper political and juridical framework, grounded in self-determination as peoples or nations. It has juridical justification, in accordance with the international legal framework mentioned here, but primarily through historical justification.

For this reason, the argument that Indigenous rights contradict the formal equality guaranteed through the liberal democratic system (Kuper 2003) has been largely criticized by pointing out the historical factor of (non-)recognition. In effect, such an affirmation does not take into account the violent dispossession and discrimination Indigenous peoples have suffered from (Kenrick and Lewis 2004). In fact, the premise of such a position is flawed: all are seen as being equal and sharing the same history. This is not the case. In countries with a colonial past there exist different trajectories of exclusion and violent inclusion and those who maintain or claim essential characteristics as Indigenous should have the right to be recognized as such, also beyond different labels which have historically been imposed on them (Indigenous, Indios, peasants, natives, etc.).

Finally, the definition of "Indigeneity" should be relational, rather than essentializing. This way, the focus should be on questions of power and dispossession imposed on those who claim to be Indigenous and who find themselves in the position of reclaiming justice on the basis of negative impacts they have suffered through historical processes (Canessa 2012, Kenrick y Lewis 2004, Bonfil 1977).

Indigenous nationalities, therefore, correspond to a distinct logic of the idea of ethnic minorities. Minority rights imply the respect to be showed toward individuals belonging to minority groups within the majority of the society. Indigenous rights, in contrast, are based on the premise that Indigenous people have the right to preserve their societies outside the dominant society (Åhrén 2009). This does not imply the absence of interaction with other cultural groups or a rupture with national sovereignty, but simply respecting different political and social Indigenous organizations. An example for that are the institutional and constitutional frameworks of plurinationality in Ecuador and Bolivia. Likewise, the concept of interculturality, understood not merely as intercultural dialog, but also as an effective mechanism for the recognition of rights, is grounded in a conception of Indigenous peoples as nations who interrelate with the State in a dynamic process, one that is indeed respectful of diversity.

International law and Indigenous organizations have reaffirmed such a tendency everywhere in the world, and day by day, it is consolidating in more and more state policies. Therefore, the UN Declaration as well as the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality, explain much better than multiculturalism and its discourse of "tolerating minorities" the rights and aspirations of several Indigenous peoples in Latin America.

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EDUARDO GUDYNAS*

"Churcar" Alternatives to Development[1]

As ideas about development are so deeply rooted, attempts to seek alternatives are almost like swimming against the prevailing cultural current. To effectively pursue these alternatives, radical changes are necessary from the source. Instead of quoting Marx or Lenin, I consider more appropriate to draw inspiration from an old word of the Tacanas in Bolivia: "Churcar".

The concept of development continues to elicit mixed reactions. For some it is an indispensable goal, ensuring social and economic benefits; for others it expresses inequality and leads to social and environmental problems. It has been promised many times, and although it has so often failed, it continues to have broad social support. Today, ideologically disparate governments, such as the Chilean or Bolivian ones, agree to defend it: in the first case as "economic development" and the second as "integral development". Thus, to move towards alternative notions of development, means to go against the current of some of the ideas deeply rooted in our cultures. This is "churcar," the alternatives to development.

The meaning of development

In Spanish, although the word "development" has several meanings, those focused on the economy are prevalent: development is understood as the progressive evolution of an economy towards better living[i]. It is an idea that has been associated with progress, particularly in the field of economics, where some concepts were generated that later become other fields such as politics or wellbeing.

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The basic elements of these ideas were crystallized in the mid twentieth century, where the "motor" of development was considered to be economic growth. This would allow progress from situations of underdevelopment, such as those typical of rural societies, to others more advanced, such as those of industrialized societies. Similarly, positive effects would spill over the population, such as access to better jobs and poverty reduction.

Quickly, this idea of development stopped being a mere economic issue and became something much broader including, for example, models of political organization, adherence to particular ideas on welfare and even new international relations. This is how "Development" emerged from some industrialized countries as a model for all other nations to follow. By the late 1940s, the world appeared torn between "developed" and "underdeveloped" countries, where the latter had to take the former as an example to follow. This was not only an economic example, but one accompanied by a certain ideas of liberal democracy and of material consumption as the main vehicle for social welfare and the defence of cultural and political modernization. Within this ideological context, a specific institutional framework was generated (one with international banks to finance development, ministries of development, courses for the formation of an 'expertocracy', etc.) linked to trade and "international aid". This notion of development was essentially a linear one, of uninterrupted progress, where humans exploit nature. A culture linked to material consumption was enforced and national policies had to adapt to Western models of liberal democracies; modern science and technology provided the means to achieve those ends. Southern societies, regardless of their previous history or culture, had to embark on that same road. All had to follow the same steps on the path of economic growth, as defined by WW Rostow[ii].

These ideas had a profound effect in Latin America, where the Western idea of development started spreading quickly, hiding or subordinating other notions. This rapid assimilation is not surprising since development was easily connected to the desire for progress, which had been established across the continent since the nineteenth century. For an example of these historical roots, it is sufficient to recall the motto of the Brazilian flag: "Order and Progress", a phrase borrowed from Auguste Comte[iii]. No doubt that the dissemination of these ideas was not exempt from conflict, often creating strong disputes. In a broad sense, Liberal, conservative and socialist discussions - in this period were over the means to achieve development, whether the key players should be private companies or the state and the role that the market should play. However, all of them wanted to industrialize and that aspiration was replicated throughout our continent.

The most important Latin American contributions to this debate, like the early structuralism or the different versions of dependency theory, made clear several things. Perhaps the most important was that the processes of development in the countries of the north were inseparable from the underdevelopment processes inn our continent. Yet, even if at the time these ideas were very radical the discussions remained within the larger framework of a possible development, especially understood as progress towards industrialization. These discussions were, therefore, adjustments and rectifications within the same field, and not challenges to its conceptual foundations.

Rectifications and permanencies

At least from the 1960s on, a new set of critiques appeared that were increasingly radical and looking for changes in these basic ideas. Among the most well-known of these were analyses of the social effects of economic growth, the calls for a focus within growth on human needs, and the demand for a new international economic order. One of the strongest attacks against conventional ideas of development emerged in the early seventies, with the publication of a report on the ecological limits to growth[iv]. The report demonstrated that the idea of perpetual growth was impossible, either by the accumulation of environmental impacts or because the stock of various natural resources was limited. The report received strong opposition both from the conservative perspectives of those years, as from the left. Both sides were defending a belief in economic growth; the discussions were focused on how to manage it, and who would be the agents of such management.

Conventional development seemed to go backward in the face of these devastating criticisms, such as the environmental ones. But soon development reappeared, reformed and rectified, in this case as "sustainable development". The same sequence occurred over and over again throughout the following decades: new weaknesses of the idea of development appeared, criticisms and new proposals were launched -many of them against the belief in perpetual material progress- but soon the old development would come back. It would not be exactly the same as before, as it would have accepted some changes, but it would keep its essence. As a result of these dynamics, some new proposals emerged like the proposals for "human development", "local development", "integral development", "endogenous development", and so on. Development became a plural idea, but beyond this diversity, the core of its conceptual basis has been consolidated.

At this point it is necessary to distinguish two trends within development thinking: on the one hand we have the search for "alternative development" and on the other the "alternatives to development". In the first case the new arrangements are in institutions and procedures that "rectify" development; its conceptual base is not in question, but rather its implementations, mediations, etc. Its most obvious examples are "human development", "integral development", and all other types that are proposed to compensate or overcome the most diverse problems. In the second case, the orientation is seeking alternatives to the basic ideas of development. In other words, the purpose is to transcend the belief in economic growth, welfare assimilation with consumption, or the linearity of the same historical process for all cultures all over the planet. It seeks to supplant the very idea of development as a particular cultural product of Western modernity. In this area there are efforts ranging from environmental positions that recognize the rights of nature to new discussions about the Buen Vivir in the Andean countries.

Progressive developments: change and permanencies

The arrival of progressive governments in South America offers new examples of this tension between possible changes and adherence to development. Progressive agendas conquered presidencies proposing substantial reforms, particularly as alternatives to neoliberalism or market reductionism.

We must recognize that most of these governments, beyond their different styles, have introduced some reforms that broke with previous neoliberal styles. But it is also becoming more evident that many elements remain inherited from notions of conventional development, and among the most problematic is the prevalence of the idea of exporting raw materials. Indeed, all progressive governments in South America have turned to extractive activities as the base of their economy. In some cases the focus is on mining, in others on hydrocarbons, and finally there are those focused on agriculture foods. The 'primarization' of regional exports has increased, taking advantage of the high prices of raw materials, while reducing industrialization (including in Brazil). In some cases, the permanence of conventional development is celebrated praising the macroeconomic orthodoxy (it is said, for example, that the ministries of economy are "serious" to ensure fiscal stability, control inflation and comply with international debt). In other cases, it manifests as "resource nationalism" where the state tries to behave like a capitalist firm that maximizes its profits by using extractive activities as the basis of their economy (as with hydrocarbons in Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela). But this extractivism is different from the one encouraged under market reductionism, as it

is now backed by the state. In some cases, it is developed by public companies or by private/public alliances. In others, there is an increased tax burden and sometimes efforts are made to tighten the regulation of these activities.

Beyond these nuanced elements, extractive activities are conceived as a key element to ensure economic growth, and thus the classical development ideas are reinforced. The progressive state seeks to capture greater proportions of the surplus generated from exports, but also aims to ensure the permanence of these activities, the inflow of foreign investment, and the export of these resources. Thus, exports and investment are seen as the ingredients needed to maintain economic growth, which continues as the "engine" of development. In the case of progressive governments the state intervenes under different modalities and intensities, either encouraging or securing such extractive enterprises, while simultaneously redistributing part of the money collected in welfare programs (the best known are the conditional cash transfer programs benefitting the poorest sectors of the population).

However, this same extractivism generates significant environmental and social impacts. As it is increasingly carried out under more intensive procedures or with a greater territorial coverage, displacing indigenous and peasant communities in remote areas, it is not surprising that it has unleashed new forms of resistance and social protest. A recent review shows that, in mid-2012, social conflicts existed against extractivism across South American countries, from Argentina and Chile in the south to Venezuela, Guyana and Suriname in the north. Moreover, in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, citizen protests against extractivism and in defense of territories or water were launched. Thus, social unrest has ceased to be an exception, and become the norm. In the same way, the differences between Right and Left governments in terms of development has faded away, as both bet on economic growth, and for this call upon export raw materials.

The ruling progressive governments have definitely explored some options within "alternative development" (in Bolivia, Ecuador and especially in Venezuela), but failed to get actually explore "alternatives to development". Many of the government's progressive projects have been waning, actors and production dynamics have been reorganized, and, once again, conventional development has reappeared. Of course it is not the same as before, as it is certainly different from the approaches of neoliberal governments. It is an "alternative development" with a new seal, improved; more statist but still extractivist; with nationalist discourses but also dependent on global markets that buy raw materials; more focused on social welfare and also more popular yet represses and oppresses citizenship resistance

when it jeopardizes the nation's role as a supplier of raw materials. In general, this re-channelling of development has been a slow process in various governments and has had an even slower recognition of the persistence of these previous trends among social movements. However, in Peru, this happened in about three months: the government of Ollanta Humala started as a progressive one, but given the social resistance to mining mega-projects, it finally opted to defend investments and accentuate the extractivist strategy. The progressive label of the government itself obscures the distinction between "alternative development" and "alternatives to development". Left governments are presenting themselves as the extreme alternative, beyond which there is virtually nothing. In countries like Bolivia, constant radical rhetoric lined with quotations from Marx or Lenin creates the illusion of a radical change in development and allows the claim that any call for true alternatives to development ought to be labelled as a return to a neoliberal past.

Actually the mode of production (dependence on raw materials exports) has not changed, and strictly speaking we are facing a new variety of "alternative development". Alvaro García Linera, in his analysis of the "Geopolitics of the Amazon", admits that the country has changed the ownership of the means of production, of public wealth and the distribution of economic surplus, but emphatically acknowledges: 'of course essentially the mode of production has not changed'[v]. A number of justifications for this situation, ranging from historical conditions to the manoeuvring capabilities of a small country like Bolivia, are provided. Beyond the agreements or disagreements with this diagnosis, it is impressive that it has led to a situation where there are no alternatives to extractivism, which is the same as saying that there is no alternative to development. After a long list of criticisms of the role of indigenous organizations and other sectors of society (especially NGOs), García Linera makes it clear that his ideal of "development" is a society of industry and knowledge, and to reach it there is no choice but to take advantage of extractivism. In his view there is no alternative and any criticism of this is an attempt of "conservative restoration".

It might quote the classics of socialism, but these ideas of a cognitive and industrial society are common among liberal shops, and it is even a World Bank funded model. Here, the deep cultural roots that both the left and the right share on the conventional view of development appear. A dispassionate analysis would show that this extractivist program, falling back onto dependence on raw material exports, is what most resembles a "restoration" of the old Bolivian condition, while efforts to shift towards industrialization remember the promises of the 1952 revolution.

In this way, García Linera's "Geopolitics of the Amazon" has no alternative to development and only "alternative development" supported by extractivism is possible. The state should capture some of those resources to fuel economic compensation programs. The problem is not that these programs are wrong in themselves, but that they are insufficient. There is a basic mistake to assume that a country can overcome its subordination by shedding their natural heritage as long as they can keep a slice of money to assist the poorest.

"Churcar" the alternatives to development

As ideas about development are so deeply rooted, attempts to seek alternatives are almost like swimming against the prevailing cultural current. To effectively pursue these alternatives, radical changes are necessary from the source. Instead of quoting Marx or Lenin, I consider it more appropriate to draw inspiration from an old word of the Tacanas in Bolivia: "Churcar".It is an appropriate example since it originates in eastern Bolivia, where debates about the meaning of development are taking place again.

This expression appears in the diary of the Italian Luigi Balzan, when in March 1892 he needed to go up Rio Mamore. He described the effort in detail: 'going up the river by batelón is very tiring for the crew, not to mention that it is always necessary to row with paddles. Sometimes there are places where, because there is a fallen tree, it is necessary to take to the shore as you cannot cross rowing. In these cases, it is necessary to grab the trees or grass with a grappling hook ... with which the rowers hook the branches, pull and then hook another, and so on."

This is precisely the task of building alternatives to development: the attempt to go against the current. While the majority follow the current of development, the alternatives require great effort, must exploit options here and there, such as examples of innovations from local groups to "hook" on them, make them known, and from there continue their path upstream.

Such hard rowing against the stream is "churcar: "it is necessary then churcar or rowing against the current" Balzan said in his diary[vi]. Churcar is a word of the Tacanan ethnic group expressing this hard rowing, which describes perfectly the task of building alternatives to development. It is rowing against the currents of development that range from the adhesion to popular consumerism in poor neighbourhoods to the reproduction of the economy of development in university faculties.

It is necessary to face the resistance to these changes, but also the determined attacks to avoid them. Balzan says in his diary that 'to go up the rivers it is necessary to approach the shore with the danger of irritating wasps nesting in the willows or in the water; you will receive painful bites". When touching those wasps' nests "the poor Indians are avenged by vicious bites".

With those words, it is inevitable to keep in mind the long conflict for the TIPNIS, where the alternatives to development have triggered the response of the "developmental wasps" who are in the shores. That story about the Indians churcando the river seems to have been a premonition of the marches in 2011 and 2012 in defence of the forests of Isoboro Sécure, who were certainly "avenged with vicious bites" from the powerful elites in an unequal dispute.

It is the reason why churcar is a term that better expresses the indispensable contribution of social movements, especially indigenous, to the cultural change necessary for progress towards alternatives to development.

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Wellbeing in the Margins: Notes on a New Conceptual Cartography[1]

Wellbeing is becoming an emerging concept representing a new paradigm that might help orient development policies. The need to question what should be the larger aim of development and how policies should be designed and implemented is at the heart of academic and political discussions at the moment. An example of this is the one taking place in the context of the post millennium development goals debate. Aspects of this debate are diverse, some of them concerns to whether there is a need to change how we measure development and how to measure it, other issues relate to a universal application of the goals or whether is best to have locally designed ones, or importantly if there should be a greater focus on how to achieve the policies' aims rather than the aims themselves.

I believe indigenous people and social movements in Latin America are providing the case to rethink this debate in new light. As seen in recent literature concerning, for instance, the emerging concept of buen vivir (including those shown in this blog), there are new approaches to rethink development's broader issues concerning local understandings of how to live a good life and achieve a wellbeing. I am going to refer in this piece to some thoughts about understandings of wellbeing I documented while doing fieldwork among the Tarahumara people (or Rarámuri as they call themselves) in northern Mexico. Empirical findings discussed here come from my PhD research that had the objective of exploring persistent asymmetries on power relations between the Rarámuri and the non-indigenous mestizo population. I will explore how the Rarámuri people, like other

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minority groups living in the margins of nation-states and global markets, are constrained to act strategically to face political and socio-economic exclusion fluctuating between the tension of having the right to live differently and the need to be part of the larger society. Specifically, I want to explore how these wellbeing notions can be better understood if we consider the idea of the margins, as a conceptual space and as a place where notions (such as wellbeing) are created, configured and reconfigured by the articulations of forces that interact in dynamic and complex ways.

In this respect, this text advocates for a new conceptual cartography to help understand these dynamics of the understandings of wellbeing. This cartography is based on the space that takes place on the interactions between the Rarámuri political and cultural community on the one hand and the State political and cultural community on the other. I will explore further the idea of the margins on the third section of this post. In what follows, I will firstly describe very briefly the context of the region. Next, I will explore the discourses I have documented which build up the wellbeing understandings among the Tarahumara/Rarámuri. Finally, I propose to explore how the space of ´the margins´ can help give meaning to the different wellbeing discourses as broader intercultural relations between the Rarámuri and the non-Rarámuri people.

The Tarahumara people and the region.

My PhD focused on a qualitative micro-study on the Tarahumara mountain range in Northern Mexico that has an important indigenous population. Four indigenous groups live in the region, being the Rarámuri the most demographically significant. It is among the Rarámuri people where I did one year of fieldwork living, working and sharing with them and the neighboring mestizo towns in the region. The Tarahumara region, in Mexico, is an arena of ethnic interactions embedded in evident asymmetrical relations. This region has, throughout its history, been a politically contested one, in terms of both the control of natural resources and the human-land relationship among the indigenous and mestizo populations. A crucial element is the increasing effect that national and global economic neoliberal policies are having on the region. These policies have led to the exploitation of natural resources such as forestry, land for commercial use, the development of tourism, the cultivation of narcotics and the growth of the mining industry which benefits a few. Interethnic tension has been increasing. For instance, the introduction of a set of new mostly mestizo authorities driven by different political and economic incentives than the existing socio-political organization of

the Rarámuri has stirred up political tension. Additionally, this region has visible inter-ethnic disparities if we consider common socio-economic indicators (i.e. Human Development Index, life expectancy rate, poverty head count), comparing the indigenous and non-indigenous (mestizo) population at the national level and in the Tarahumara region. Yet, this region has also been characterized by a persistent indigenous way of life that has become resilient in order to maintain their ethnic identities.

To understand the formation and perpetuation of asymmetrical social, economic and political relations at the local level in the Tarahumara region, my research explores three main pillars. The first pillar focuses on what the Rarámuri consider to be "living well", or rather I am interested to document their discourses around the ideas of what and how wellbeing is achieved. The second explores how these notions of living well are hindered by interethnic power relations. The third pillar analyses how the Rarámuri engage in culturally embedded forms of resistance to those power relations. Upon these three pillars I argue that, in order to understand the formation of the asymmetries that exist between the Rarámuri and the mestizo, power relations must be taken into account from the moment in which understandings and notions of wellbeing are defined. In this post, I focus on the first research pillar: the diversity of understandings of wellbeing for the Rarámur. In the last segment of the post, I look at how these understandings are situated in the margins.

What are the emic understandings of wellbeing by the Rarámuri?

In responding to this question, it is worth noting that I am not arguing for a simple way to understand wellbeing or for a limited number of dimensions involved in the calculations of wellbeing. I am only exposing an angle of a very complex political, economic and cultural process. Having said that, I believe that there are clear discourses that Rarámuri people put forward when considering how wellbeing is expressed and lived. During fieldwork I came across with two distinctive normative discourses concerning the way Rarámuri people conceptualize living well.

The first one was prominent with traditional authorities within the indigenous political structure and men and women that enjoy certain social status within their community. It referred to an idea that appeared quite often while conducting fieldwork among the Rarámuri: the idea of living on the right path or 'Gara wachi inaropo nai gawich' in the Rarámuri language. The idea of living on the correct path relates to the ideal of how to be a Rarámuri, how one should live. It stresses

differences between the Rarámuri and the mestizos in the sense that for the former the search for living well implies maintaining living conditions that allow them to live well but not necessarily to improve conditions through material accumulation and commodities in order to live better as the mestizo population. This discourse is based on a desire and ideal of homogeneity in living conditions, and a collective ability to control own cultural practices and spaces. Crucially, this discourse is related on the persistence of an ethnic identity that contrasts with the non-indigenous wider world. Accordingly, there are two main dimensions of living well that build up this discourse; the significance of farming; and the importance of having a strong sense of community rooted in solidarity and co-operative practices. I mention the significance of farming, because it is not limited only to land access as only a physical asset: it concerns having access to good quality land, water, seeds and the holistic processes involved in the act of farming. Traditional livelihoods are based on subsistence agriculture were maize is fundamental in their diet and it is the main ingredient for doing the all-important teswuino beverage shared in ceremonial fashion in special gatherings. The second dimension is having a strong sense of community and it has to do with community cohesion and effective social ties between families and friends from which the social and political Rarámuri structures emerge. These two main dimensions build up the first discourse of wellbeing.

The second discourse is associated with young adults and teenagers that -at least some of them- engage in seasonal migration to the cities, a role expected for the -especially male- of that age. This discourse is in a way more in tune with the discourse portrayed by the mainstream development model. The narratives found in this discourse speak more of the importance of securing a family income throughout the year instead of relying on subsistence agriculture. It represents being perhaps more publically open to material assets and accumulation in the calculation of wellbeing as justified on precarious and often vulnerable livelihoods. And, crucially, it relates to the idea of improving one's quality of life instead of preserving and maintaining cultural institutions, practices and traditions.

Both discourses seek to endure and make do with what one faces in life, an aspect encountered by Jackson (2011) among the Kuranko people in Sierra Leone along with other ethnographic accounts. However, these discourses also show differentiated ways of conceiving and achieving livelihoods, aspirations and ways of relating with nature and society. They constitute, in terms of Nancy Fraser (1990), the struggle between hegemonic and subaltern understandings –in this case of wellbeing- in order to formulate oppositional interpretations of identities, interests,

and needs. This clash highlights a key difference in the sense that one implies the maintenance of living conditions that allow one to live well, while the other focus on the need to improve their condition through material accumulation in order to live better, or in a manner similar to what is currently associated to the non-indigenous population. These two discourses evidently reflect diverse ideas of living and are portrayed to a certain extent to ethnic membership.

However, these two discourses are exactly that; discourses. The dynamics of wellbeing understandings are no clear cut all the time. If we consider the full complexity of the social and political realms surrounding human relationships, I see them not necessarily in opposition to one another, but rather their relationship can be more accurately described as strategically complementary. In some moments, depending on specific political and social arenas, Rarámuri people articulate and reconfigure one discourse over the other without ruling it out completely, just in case. In a way both discourses are accepted, it is in certain moments where one, or the other or both are expressed, defended or contested.

In this sense, I argue that wellbeing among the Rarámuri can be understood as the balance of two forces: a right and a need. On the one hand, living well is harnessed by the right to maintain a livelihood based on subsistence agriculture, their distinctive set of cultural and religious beliefs, a communal rather than individual ownership of the means of production; social systems based heavily on kin relations and the practice of culturally-embedded forms of sharing and reciprocal exchange which entails collective returns rather than focusing on individual accumulation. In short, the right to have the control over those everyday mechanisms that help reinforce the Rarámuri identity and self-definition.

Conversely, on the other hand, living well for the Rarámuri does not limit itself to the right to maintain autochthonous practices of self-consumption and collective networks; it also implies the need to have equal relations with the state and the wider society which implies having income generating activities and access to the benefits from social protection programs, and to basic services. Crucially, for the Rarámuri people this need to participate within the wider non-indigenous world must be in equal circumstances, and not immersed by current conditions of exclusion and domination that build-up the persistent asymmetries between groups. It is in the fluctuation of these two forces that wellbeing is pursuit, sometimes moving to one side, sometimes emphasizing the other one. It is therefore, in the spaces between these forces that wellbeing understandings construct their meaning. If we consider traditional livelihoods in the Tarahumara, I believe they follow the same path of pursuing a balance between self-consumption agriculture and at the

same time, having the possibility of engaging with temporal migration on agricultural fields away from their communities or with other jobs in cities. In a way, having a mixed economy of self-consumption and market participation ensures them being able to adapt and brings together vulnerabilities and advantages at the same time.

It seems that the Rarámuri idea of 'living your life through the correct path', consists precisely of maintaining this balance that places the individual in harmony with the social, physical and spiritual worlds. The path that the Rarámuri follow implies that moving forward is not necessarily to be equated with moving upward, a notion that is more firmly rooted in Western values of progress.

Wellbeing in the margins

I am arguing that the tension between the right to live differently and the need to engage with the broader society and its context has many parallels with the commonplace notion that situates indigenous people in the margins of the state and global markets and how many authors conceive the margins as crucial places of interaction. On one hand, they are on the margins of a web of political relations dominated by the power of political elites and economic policies that orient themselves towards a free market and the commoditization of everyday life. On the other, they have certain self-defined spaces where cultural practices are produced strenghtening their ethnic identity. Although they have a foot in both camps, they are neither completely inside nor outside of the other. This condition of being on the margins represents, however, being economic and socially vulnerable because of a lack of proper recognition of their socio-cultural and economic rights by the national government. However, it also enables them to make strategic decisions in order to - if not to negotiate the overall terms of relations with the mestizo dominance in the region and the national state and society - at least to manage their role as an ethnically differentiated group within the state and the national society in order to secure cultural survival. Therefore, the empirical evidence described on my research, suggests that the Rarámuri people are required to adopt a strategic approach to deal with economic vulnerabilities as a result of processes of exclusion, but also to benefit from the opportunities that their position of living in the margins implies so as to reinforce their identity and self-definition. In that sense, ethnic minorities and indigenous people have the potential to adopt different cultural repertoires in order to serve their group interest. The Rarámuri discourse of living well takes place and makes sense in the context of them fluctuating on the

margins; this means fluctuating between the tension of having the right to live differently and the need to be part of the larger society.

The implications of this position in the margins require having a multi-centered approach in the dynamic relations between the State and the indigenous people, between the core of each political and cultural communities. This implies having a new cartography of how to consider the margins. All too often, being in the margins is only understood in relation to the center, a centered approach that considers just one center, of which the nation state is the most common. The state as the only political community that has the monopoly to order society and human relations and to organize, gives and denies individual rights, creates and labels subjects. However, in multicultural settings where indigenous people are involved, their own distinctive parameters are important. If we consider the literature for instance about ethnography of the state -Das and Poole (2004) to mention an example- the margins are considered as the absence or diminished influence of the State understood as the epistemic, political and economic center. In the multi centered approach I am proposing, the margins not only refer to the absence or diminished influence of the state but also of the other political community, in this case, the center of the Rarámuri community.

The margins are then the synapses of practices and relations between the zone of influence of two political communities that creates different ways to articulate wellbeing discourses and organize the human experience in a multicultural context. I believe this shift to understand the margins not only in reference to one center, is needed to account for power structures. For instance, because the notion of ´marginal groups´ reflects and reproduce the longstanding idea of colonial power that sees the modern state as the only legitimate political center exerting the monopoly of subjectivities and representations. The outside of the political community of the State is charged with all kinds of negative representations. For instance, Scott (2009) argues, people living at the margins of the state and society are abnormal and pose a threat as their subjects are not under its control, and are depicted as being fugitive, violent or uncivilized. We run the risk of considering all those living `outside´ or in the margins of what is considered to be accepted as unwanted and in the need to be changed.

In other words, I argue that a decolonial perspective lays at the heart of the need to consider a new understanding of what the margins are and what they can tell us: margins that show the irruptions of subaltern/local epistemologies.

Authors of the decolonial perspective have expressed ideas related to what I am arguing. For instance, Enrique Dussel talks about the Eurocentric myth: that all valid knowledge comes from the center of the global system from where it is unequally distributed towards the peripheries that have a passive role of being only consumers but never producers of that knowledge. Chakrabarty (2007) has proposed a compelling solution to the Eurocentric dilemma in his book *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. He mentions that we should not erase Europe and substitute its center with another one; instead we should aim to consider diverse centers by moving Europe away from its privileged place of hegemonic power and provincializing it. In that way, other epistemologies, experiences, ways of life, cultural systems of meanings, and understandings of wellbeing can be considered in an equal position, not neglecting any diversity, instead taking advantage of it. In the same way, I argue to move the hegemony of the state to a side, and equally consider it as other centers of knowledge, other ways of living. Only in the margins, is where the possibility of any anti-hegemony can happen, not entirely outside the edifice. It is here, where adaptation, re-appropriation and dynamic consolidation of knowledge and epistemologies do occur. At the same time, defined frontiers of the margins are needed in order to have clear and legitimate centers as political projects.

I believe this approach to the margins as synapsis of practices can be applied broadly to help understand the dynamics of ethnic minorities or indigenous people from other latitudes and regions across the globe that have suffered exclusion from development in the form of: effective legal frameworks to secure collective social, economic, environmental and political rights, spaces and opportunities to engage with public policy that directly affects their livelihoods and, access to quality public services such as education and health. Instead of being the subjects of progressive policies that consider their own development orientations, often these people are the least well-served when compared to dominant populations. However, they are not passive subjects of the negative effects of global neoliberal markets. Indigenous people react, contest and resist in diverse ways those interventions that they see as violent expressions of territorial dispossessions, cultural misrepresentations and structural violence.

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ANNE FREELAND[*]

Notes on René Zavaleta: 'Abigarramiento' as Condition of Constitutive Power[1]

One of the major tasks of the Latin American left, since the early twentieth century but especially over the past couple of decades, has been the negotiation or articulation of a political and intellectual tradition with Marxist roots and one of indigenous resistance. This post looks at the history and afterlife of a key term that has served to bridge this gap in the Bolivian context, René Zavaleta Mercado's concept of abigarramiento or sociedad abigarrada, "motley society." My interest in the concept is primarily as an antidote to the much-discussed slippage into a multiculturalism that is typically identified as (neo)liberal and that co-opts and neutralizes plurinational projects founded on a promise of indigenous autonomy but that can also serve a plurinationalism (and to my knowledge this connection has not received the same level of critical analysis) that operates as a discursive strategy of populist legitimation of the state.

From a very broad perspective, this can be situated within the profuse and varied tradition in Latin Americanist scholarship of production, borrowing, or refashioning of concepts that address the specificities of their objects in contrast to European or Eurocentric models with a focus on problems of identity and difference: transculturation (Fernando Ortiz, Ángel Rama), hybridity (Néstor García Canclini), heterogeneity (Antonio Cornejo Polar), subalternity (John

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Beverley, Ileana Rodríguez, Alberto Moreiras, Gareth Williams, et al). If what the discourses constructed around these terms share is an interest in making Latin American societies and cultural production legible in their difference from but also in their relation to metropolitan (post)modernity, they have been distinguished from one another according to their ultimate assimilability into the prevailing logic of the nation. <u>Bruno Bosteels</u>, for example, identifies transculturation and hybridity as homogenizing categories (and on this extreme would be the discourse of mestizaje, which retains something of its continuity with one of radical heterogeneity, as its opposite pole), in the service first of a national-popular imaginary that initially replicates the modern nation form as best it can from a position of marginality and (post)coloniality and subsequently yields to the epistemic demands of neoliberal globalization; heterogeneity and subalternity are constructed against this, as an insistence on the visibilization of an unassimilable outside of the social body as organic unity. This is the mode in which abigarramiento operates: as difference, as incommensurability.

This brings us to the problem, often acknowledged but seldom adequately addressed, of the fetishization of difference or exteriority. Gayatri Spivak's definition of subalternity as a position without identity is instructive here. The subaltern is a useful category only insofar as it names a referent that can be desubalternized; a position that can be vacated, whose content is not fixed. It is useful, therefore, insofar as it is attended by a theory that proposes to form the basis of a practice of desubalternization, what <u>Spivak</u> has called "metonymizing oneself for making oneself a synecdoche, a part of a whole," and what Zavaleta calls intersubjectivization. Abigarramiento is, in the first place, an obstacle to or absence of metonymization or intersubjectification. Of course it is less specific than subalternity in that it does not refer to a position of inferior rank "removed from all lines of social mobility" (Spivak 475), but to the simultaneous existence of multiple social worlds closed to one another. It is not necessarily or not only an undesirable condition, and can have the advantage of blocking the hegemonic operation of capitalism (I have discussed on this <u>elsewhere</u>, and will return to it below). As it is conceived in Zavaleta, abigarramiento is therefore not unequivocally a bad thing, but neither is it something to be celebrated, although it has almost always been read and used in a celebratory mode as a result of an identitarianism that privileges difference for its own sake. Rather than attempting to organize the categories of this discourse according to their susceptibility to slipping from difference into reconciliation or homogenization in terms of what they propose to describe, then, I want to focus on their utility in articulating a constructive critique of present.

While "development" does not appear in Zavaleta's lexicon by name, his work is engaged with critical alternatives to the progressive, Eurocentric, and economistic conception of history from which orthodox development thinking derives. The most obvious point of intersection between Zavaleta and Latin American discourses on development is his self-positioning in relation to dependency theory, and this is ultimately connected to abigarramiento and to his concept of intersubjectivity: against dependency theory's privileging of external constraints, Zavaleta affirms first the possibility of an intersubjective agency in the "periphery" and, on the other hand, the disruptive contingency of social and historical heterogeneity. Intersujectivity and abigarramiento, agency and contingency, together constitute the condition of possibility of politics itself. For Zavaleta, the opposition or succession here is epitomized in the opposition between a Marxian centrality of the mode of production and the Gramscian historical bloc (although he notes that it is an opposition that can also be found within Marx). Development, as a locally determined historical process, in this context, is thought in two ways: as the development of the nation-state as such, as a collectivity that recognizes itself in the state—representation as portrait and as proxy (to borrow again from Spivak), and as the development of self-determination, which, for Zavaleta, is the practical extension and realization of self-knowledge, the epistemic construction of the self and the collectivity as political subject. These two moments can be aligned with the binary structure of the constituted and the constituent.

Abigarramiento is entirely consistent in its initial formulation with a stageist model of accounting for the experience of the periphery in terms defined by the metropole: it refers to a disorganization of the linear teleology of the modes-of-production narrative, the overlapping of historical moments. It is a modification of the sequence of these moments, but not of their contents. The concept is enriched as Zavaleta puts it to work. First, it explains the need for a more historicist and less structural analysis of social relations in Bolivia and in "motley" societies in general, a category coterminous with peripheral, and even "backward" countries ("cualquier sociedad atrasada es más abigarrada que una sociedad capitalista" [50]), against the economism of dependency theory but still entirely within a logic of linear progress. As his particular style of historicism becomes focused on the twin concepts of the mediation—the mutual legibilization—between society and the state and crisis as a disruption of this mediation, the function of the category of abigarramiento as obstruction to a social-scientific analysis based on abstract principles and calculability is linked to the obstruction of the quantitative methods of liberal representative democracy and the production of hegemony. Motley societies are

illegible and therefore unrepresentable, or rather, they are legible only through and in crisis, an event that is always also a constitutive or constituent moment, an act of substitution. Every crisis in this sense is a crisis of representation that supplies the impetus for a new representation to emerge. It is as the ground of the general crisis that Zavaleta's concept of abigarramiento works against the reification of representation, against the ossification of the constituted order and in the service of collective constitutive action. It is the persistence of an incommensurability that precludes the total closure of the constituted and therefore guarantees the possibility of de- and re-constitution.

But, as Bosteels warns, such a concept is always at risk of being placed in the service of identity, of difference neutralized as "the barely disguised form of the of apparition of the law of generalized equivalence" (152), or of constituted power as the legitimation of a delimited, unified subject of national self-determination that can only constitute itself through an act of suppression or exclusion. This is what happens, for example, when Luis Tapia suggests that we regard abigarramiento as the social-scientific equivalent of Alejo Carpentier's aesthetic category of the baroque: "Considero que Zavaleta es el barroco en la ciencia social en Bolivia, o sea, la descripción, que aquí es un decir, adecuada o correspondiente al mundo que piensa y pretende explicar. En general, el pensamiento social en Bolivia ha sido siempre más simple que el tipo de realidad que se pensaba" (322). In both Carpentier's tropical Baroque aesthetic and Zavaleta's social theory, what is sought, for Tapia, is an art or a science that mimics its object in its local specificity, and that therefore serves less as an instrument of analysis or transformation than as a mirror or direct expression that validates as it affirms.

Álvaro García Linera makes an analogous argument in reference to the state-society relation, employing another major term of Zavaleta's—and one that plays an essential role in the present identitarian appropriation abigarramiento—that of the "apparent state." The apparent state is one that only nominally represents the societies that inhabit the territory over which it claims sovereignty. There is no effective relationship between the state and society, as in the case of "motley societies" that lack a totalizing intersubjectivity. This term has been picked up by Álvaro García Linera to designate the pre-Evista regime, in contrast to the present era of the Plurinational State, in which a full and transparent representation of a Bolivia's abigarramiento is supposedly achieved. Just as for Tapia in art and in social science what is privileged is accuracy of representation (as portrait more than as proxy)—realist fiction and metropolitan social theory fail to portray peripheral cultural and social realities—for García Linera the "apparent" state of the criollo

oligarchy or mestizo-criollo nationalist elite is condemned on the basis of its unlikeness to the society it presumes to represent. The state is imagined within an essentialist ontology and an ethical regime of fidelity that precludes the social innovation that is at the heart of democratic consciousness and practice.

In bringing these readings of Zavaleta by Tapia and García Linera together in the context of a discussion framed in terms of constituent and constituted power I mean to suggest a connection between an analytic distinction normally applied to the state or to the explicit power structure and modes of representation in a broader discursive sphere, in a discourse originating within the university or other areas of cultural production. The hypothesis behind such a connection is that these spheres have to do with the same epistemological ground or process of subject formation. In a context where indigenous movements have successfully reorganized the boundaries of the political sphere and occupied the state, this problem—that of (individual and collective) subject formation and self-representation—is crucial in sustaining the revolutionary impulse that produced this reorganization in the first place and opposing the internal anti-democratic reflex that Gramsci theorized in concrete, historical terms as the process of transformism.

The constituted in this sense names what must always occupy the position of the object of critique. This does not necessarily imply an anti-statist position and is of course thoroughly opposed to the idea of a direct democracy that would abolish the distinction between the constituent and the constituted, presence and representation, altogether; the distinction, however, in order to be maintained, must be methodological and not ontological since it is precisely through its reification as representable identity that the constituent is stripped of its creative force. Our critique must always target within the articulation of constituted forms the obfuscation of the constituent, of the contingent and conflictual relation to their foundings. The concept of abigarramiento, as the persistence of non-self-identity and of the unrepresentable within the constituent, is useful when it serves to elucidate this relation; it becomes unproductive and reactionary when it either assumes a constituted form in symmetrical opposition to the hegemonic power, or is claimed as perfectly identical to this power, through its transparent representation in the state.

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LUCAS MELGAÇO[*]

The Brazilian City and the Negation of the Other[1]

Historically, cities have not been equally friendly and accommodating to everybody. Indeed, they were born from the identification and consolidation of a group of "equals" who shared the aim of protecting their own interests and defending themselves from the encroachments of the "other". In the classical Greek city examples of this were strangers and prisoners of war. In the medieval European city the sick, such as lepers, and the jobless were those branded "undesirable" (Le Goff 1997). Presently, Arabs and black Africans, in Western Europe, and Latino immigrants, in the United States, are some examples of those who are frequently considered the others. Despite the extensive contributions of the English-speaking scientific community to the understanding of these classification and differentiation processes (e.g. Jenkins 2000), scholars have overlooked the reproduction of this discrimination in the so-called "global south". In this short article I will cover particular aspects of the Brazilian case and show how the negation of the other, here, is not limited to actions and discourse, but also materializes in urban forms dedicated to separating and rejecting undesirable persons.

In Brazil, those groups historically labelled as others often included indigenous people (in great part exterminated by European settlers), afro-Brazilians (enslaved for more than 300 years), nordestinos (north easterners who migrated mainly to the centre, south and southeast regions of the country), as well as disabled persons, the unemployed, homosexuals, homeless persons, prostitutes and drug users. Nonetheless, in the present period of neoliberal globalization, it is now mainly

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poverty – more than questions of race, creed, health or nationality – which defines the differentiation. The separation between "us" and "them" is more than anything a distinction between those who have and do not have the means to consume. The idea of being a citizen makes way for that of the consumer, as pointed out by Brazilian geographer Milton Santos (1987).

In his classic book Casa Grande e Senzala (1933), Gilberto Freyre, Brazilian sociologist, depicts the formation of Brazilian society through an analysis of its racial diversity and miscegenation. The title suggests how urban forms allow for differentiation: casa grande (big house) was the name used to designate the wealthy residence of sugar plantation owners (most common in the northeast of the country); senzala (slave quarters) refers to the precarious dwellings of black slaves. This image of two opposed but closely connected places illustrates how otherness can be seen as a spatial issue. Traces of such segregation can still be identified in Brazilian architecture today, as many houses and apartments still preserve extremely small maid's quarters and two separate entrances and elevators: one for the residents and another for the employees. These forms serve to delimit the "proper" spaces and circulation of personnel and to reinforce the status of the latter as others. Hence, not very different from the picture Freyre painted years before.

Architectures of exclusivity, however, are not only present in the interior of houses and buildings. In Brazil, large gated communities are being built as an answer to the desire for self-segregation (Melgaço 2002a). The main commercial appeal of these "fortified enclaves" (Caldeira 2001) stems from the sense of exclusivity they convey. Here, the ideal of happiness sold by real estate agents rests on the assumption that something is good when it can be enjoyed in an individual manner or, in the worst case, shared by a group of "equals." Many publicity campaigns, for example, emphasize the privilege of having exclusive green and leisure areas free of the uncomfortable presence of strangers. Instead of interacting with the other in a public sports centre, some people prefer having their own private football pitch, even if it remains, much of the time, underutilized because of the lack of players.

It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that Brazilian gated communities are totally intolerant of others. Some of these unwanted people can become desirable when they are useful for the performance of menial tasks, such as cleaning or gatekeeping. Without janitors, maids and porters, positions normally relegated to nordestinos, black and poor people in Brazil, the existence of gated communities in the way that they were projected would be impracticable. Nevertheless, the occurrence of a minor disturbance, such as petty theft, is often enough to return these temporarily

Picture 1. Deterrent architecture in front of a shop in downtown Campinas, 2009. Photo: Lucas Melgaço

desirable people back to the position of undesirable. When a crime is committed, the first suspects are normally those othered within the community, and rarely, for example, a young drug-addicted resident who steals from the community in order to maintain his or her habit.

The logic of the criminalization of the other can be also identified in the present strategies of urban monitoring through video surveillance in Brazil (Kanashiro 2008). The suspects flagged by these cameras generally conform to stereotypes of marginality; in other words, those with physical characteristics, ways of dressing or behaviours that are not adjusted to patterns considered "normal." Cameras can function, then, as instruments for "social sorting", as suggested by David Lyon (2003), and, consequently, for rejecting the undesirable. One example of many is the case of the cameras installed around São Paulo's Jockey Club with the goal of deterring prostitutes from operating in that area.

Surveillance technologies are also becoming more common in Brazilian schools, especially private schools (Melgaço 2002b). The flawed argument is sometimes made that they would help prevent bullying, which is a type of violence where students, either individually or in groups, promote humiliation and psychological violence against someone who does not fit normalized behavioural or aesthetic patterns. Bullying is predicated upon the non-acceptance of difference and upon the intolerance of the other. Yet, surveillance cameras, because they are instruments that tend to encourage the homogenization of behaviour, may thus have the unexpected effect of reinforcing intransigence toward the outcast.

Picture 2. Spikes installed at the stair of the Cathedral of Campinas, 2007. Photo: Tiago Macambira

The intolerance of the other is even more evident when we look at urban forms deliberately constructed to minimize the presence of the undesirable. Campinas, the Brazilian city I studied in detail during my PhD, shows several examples of the installation of sharp objects in order to impede people from sitting

or loitering in certain places. These deterrent architectures are very common in front of shops (picture 1), but they can also be found in more unusual spaces, such as the stairs of the Cathedral of Campinas (picture 2).

Even the city administration, which in principle should represent the public interest, has built its own examples of deterrent architecture. After reparations on a viaduct, sharp stones were installed on the ground underneath the road with the objective of repelling beggars and the homeless (picture 3). Obviously, these are policies that fight the presence of the poor instead of targeting the existence of poverty.

We see that there is a deliberate movement toward the adaptation of the city to the interest of the few. Beyond aesthetic concerns, these urban forms carry a deep symbolic meaning. When a municipality begins using its architecture to evict the poor, it reveals that its concerns are not collective but focus on a small wealthy class.

Finally, it is important to remember the clearest of spatial forms created to suppress and segregate the undesirable: the prison. Regardless of their location, prisons are normally populated by others, who, in most cases, are mainly the poor (Wacquant 2009). Historically, the intention of the Brazilian justice system has not been to rehabilitate, but to keep prisoners isolated for the longest possible duration

Picture 3. Deterrent architectures installed underneath a road in Campinas, 2007. Photo: Tiago Macambira.

and to perpetuate their otherness. Like the other deterrent architectures mentioned above, prisons do not solve the complex structural problems of society. They rather serve as a sort of landscape cleaner which removes the marginal from the view of the privileged.

We may conclude that the present Brazilian city denies the other the condition of citizen. As was outlined, this intransigency is not restricted to acts but is concretized in repellent and segregating urban forms. Different from more homogeneous wealthy or more homogeneous poor cities around the world, the socioeconomic disparity of Brazilian cities leads to a particularly segregated environment: the wealthy and the poor are often separated

by nothing but a wall. With such segregating urban structures the city creates the conditions for both maintaining and reproducing intolerance. This, in the end, may lead to such a great disparity between the city of the few "equals" and the majority of the "other" that the latter could try to turn the tide.

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JOHANNES WALDMÜLLER[*]

Human Rights Indicators as "Development 2.0"?[1]

Are there currently more alternative projects of and to development ongoing in the Latin American region? Others than, for example, Buen Vivir (Ecuador)/Vivir Bien (Bolivia), self-governance, participatory budgeting and a general political rupture through the appearance of, what de la Cadena has called, "Earth-beings" (2010)? In this article, I trace another legal-technical, yet humanist, approach to improve people lives in the region; one that has been termed as 'Development 2.0'. This label points at the fusion of two overlapping, yet partly contradicting businesses and movements: social and econ sciences-related development, on the one hand, and legal and technical human rights, on the other (de Béco, 2014). While for a long time both were promoted somehow separately – by different actors and through different institutions (what de Béco has characterized as rather strictly 'norm-related' in the case of human rights and more flexible 'change-related' in the case of development) – recent advances and ongoing debates regards post-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) have spurred initiatives toward mutually more integral approaches (e.g. Raza and Baxewanos, 2013).

Introducing a new idea to public management

Human rights indicators (HRI), as an appropriate measurement to monitor the gradual respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights, have been discussed since the adoption of Article 2.1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966 in 1976 (Riedel et al., 2014: 23–35).

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This article of the Covenant vaguely imposes a duty on all parties to: "take steps [...] to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures."

Accordingly, various international and national human rights organizations initiated in the past 15 years processes to homogenize national statistical systems and to elaborate methodologies for human rights indicators. The two most-encompassing ones were elaborated by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (see IACHR, 2008) and by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (UN OHCHR, 2012). An early report, produced by FIAN International together with members of the UN OHCHR Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, reveals how different approaches to HRI were previously tested on feasibility and serviceability in countries, such as Spain, Ghana and Colombia (FIAN International et al., 2009). Throughout the years, the German international law professor and temporary vice-president of the Committee, Eibe Riedel, has been particularly active and he has also proposed the so-called 'IBSA model' (Indicators, Benchmarking, Scoping and Assessments, cf. Riedel, 2002, 2014) as a general framework for HRI. According to the IBSA model, state parties should, in collaboration with the civil society, select certain benchmarks according to which human rights progress should be assessed (by national and international experts and within the Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) of the ICESCR Optional Protocol member states).

Since 2008, and in light of fostering in particular ESC rights, a series of state governments, associations and local human rights institutions have been working at different levels and with different results on the implementation of human rights indicators, aiming at thorough monitoring and assessment of, in the case of governments, all public policies in light of a continuous human rights realization. The methodology initiated in 2012 is nowadays promoted worldwide by the UN OHCHR, mainly through the mechanism of expert suggestions. These emerge from the UPR of countries' human rights progress, where recommendations frequently include the need to implement indicators-based assessment systems.

In principle (and there are some cases known), HRI could also be elaborated in conjunction with civil society organizations, such as labor unions, associations for the protection of tenants, NGOs, political parties, etc. According to the recent Mexican report on the Development of Indicators for the Economic, Social and Cultural Right to a Healthy Environment, several UN agencies have been contributing in various ways to these approaches: the World Health Organization

(WHO), UN HABITAT, the ILO, FAO, UNESCO, UNODC, but also the OECD and the World Bank as well as a few specialized international bodies dealing with statistics (UN ACNUDH 2012, 19–21). The first steps in these initiatives included trial projects and high-level meetings in Uganda and Guatemala (2006), regional workshops in Asia organized by the UNHCHR (2007), and international workshops in Chile and Brazil (2007). The collected results were further discussed in Canada, Switzerland (an important step was the "Metagora" project by the Paris 21 syndicate, devoted to streamlining international statistics, which held a conference in Montreux), and Ireland at the 9th Forum of NGOs in Europe.

This said, the three UN OHCHR standard publications on HRI are from 2006, 2008 and from 2012 (a complete guide); the latter provides the most encompassing introduction and methodology. In addition, the Mexican UN OHCHR representation, the first office to implement HRI projects worldwide, has published several detailed reports and guides, including accounts of the implementation of various HRI in the country. The report focusing on Latin America, summarizing all regional field projects, has recently been published by the UN ACNUDH (2013). Further essential texts regarding the evolution of the debate, starting with Barsh (1993), who elaborated on the basic scope and limits of measuring human rights, are: Andersen and Sano, 2006; Fröberg, 2005; Hines, 2005; Malhotra and Fasel, 2005; McInerney-Lankford and Sano, 2010; Merry, 2011, 2013a, 2013b; Rosga and Satterthwaite, 2008; Welling, 2008; Riedel et al., 2014.

Each of these authors provides valuable contributions to the topic: Rosga and Satterthwaite (2008) who have traced HRI back to audit cultures (Power, 1997; Strathern, 2000) and larger shifts within the international human rights system, as well as the anthropologist Sally Merry, have warned of an increased 'technicalization' of inherently political processes, thus producing slippages between the realm of the technical and the political' by rendering them 'objective' and 'technical' (Merry, 2011: 88). This would be enabled through the vast potential power of HRI, as they are positioned at the interface between socio-economic data and legal and political categorizations. Despite such critical arguments, also other actors have meanwhile started to think about HRI, such as the World Bank and other development agencies (see Andersen and Sano, 2006; McInerney-Lankford and Sano, 2010). Such advances have led to consider the merger of human rights assessments and development indicators (de Béco, 2014) as 'Development 2.0', the eventual overcoming of a crucial budgetary, disciplinary and ideological gap between two 'worlds' (see Uvin, 2004).

'Development 2.0' points to two crucial aspects of a seemingly more humanist development agenda, beyond the former label of 'development with a human face': First, better data collection, availability and harmonized processing should facilitate 'better' and more integral development planning. This step is crucial, since statistics are key for any development planning or criticism – and existing systems are extraordinarily weak and flawed (for Africa, see Jerven, 2013). Thus, embedding national public policies within a system of constant monitoring through human rights indicators should ideally guarantee for designing and targeting of 'better' policies. However, by prescribing the 'ingredients' or variables necessary to realize a human right, HRI also embody a specific vision of 'development' (Merry, 2013b) and how to bring it about; one, that is framed within the Western understanding of linear modernization and progress through material well-being (particularly in the case of Economic, Social and Cultural rights).

Second, this way altered processes of development planning and implementation should comply 'better' with humane and human rights-related standards. It seems that the notion 'better' is in these cases just a place holder for more coherent and compliant planning and auditing measurements at the national and international level – precisely through the implementation of inherently technological, and not necessarily humane, solutions. It is not easy to dismiss the argument that 'Development 2.0' would aim at standardization, technicalization and better administration, all valuable contributions to development processes, but at the same time partly resulting in de-politicizing inherently political value-debates, regarding priorities, rights and standards themselves (Rosga and Satterthwaite, 2008; Merry, 2011, 2013).

In Latin America, HRI begun to be elaborated and implemented by the local UN OHCHR office in Mexico City; first in collaboration with the tribunal of justice on the right to just legal procedures, followed by a series of Mexican states who started to work on assessment schemes for specific human rights.[2] Following this experience and receiving support from Mexican UN OHCHR staff, Ecuador was the first country to consider implementing HRI broadly at the national level (in 2009); a still ongoing project that in fact largely differs from how the UN OHCHR presented its case (see Waldmüller, 2014; UN OHCHR, 2012: 103). From 2009 to 2013, at least five to six countries – in chronological order: Mexico (2009), Brazil (2009), Ecuador (2009), Bolivia (2011), Paraguay (2011), and Argentina

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[2] The Mexican UN OHCHR website provides a number of reports (in Spanish) on these processes, available under 'Publicaciones' on http://www.hchr.org.mx/ [last retrieve: 04.10.14].

having expressed its interest – have initiated human rights indicators' projects, including diverging scopes and institutional actors (see UN ACNUDH, 2013, a report about ongoing projects in the region, published in Mexico). The region is currently the world's leader with regard to HRI experience, while Western governments still remain reluctant to such means of governance. The situation in Latin America, however, creates a certain 'peer-pressure' among concerned actors and encourages the comparison of successes and failures between these projects. Although in fact the initial idea of HRI was to enable cross-country comparisons, somewhat similar to Human Development Index (HDI), according to my own research (Waldmüller, 2014), such 'peer-pressure' among 'concerned stakeholders' (in UN parlance) seems to rather aim at comparisons of specific rights protections across countries or institutions. I should hasten to add that such comparisons are largely flawed and should at the very least be treated with caution. For example, Ecuador seeks to implement HRI at the state level for many (if not all) rights, while Mexican HRI monitor at the level of particular municipal administrations or federal states with regard to selected individual rights. Moreover, the question of such comparisons is not (yet) particularly virulent at all, given the very slow and conflicting processes related to HRI implementations and lack of experiences from other regions (except for a few African countries).

What are human rights indicators and what makes them particularly promising?

Human rights indicators seek to reverse or compliment the traditional logic of the international human rights system: instead of primarily (and often in vain) working through national governments, civil societies and national human rights institutions (if independent, according to the Paris principles, see UN OHCHR, 2010: 31–44) should be empowered to demand the respect and fulfillment of human rights from their governments in an informed and succinct way. For this purpose, increased transparency and availability of more and better data has been deemed necessary (e.g. UN OHCHR, 2008).

In general, HRI operate at the level of sociological categorization (for example, defining 'education', 'households', 'health', 'torture', etc. through the specific prescriptions of how to assess them): each human right, stemming from the International Covenants, is broken down into structural, process and outcome indicators. The first type should assess the national and international legal frameworks, including jurisprudence, relevant to the concerned right. Strictly and statistically speaking, structural indicators are thus not indicators at all, but rather

legal inventories that can be useful for gaining an overview over rights-related legal evolution in time.

Process indicators aim at setting and assessing multiple goals, milestones and targets for public policies and programs: "[They] reflect all measures (public programs and specific interventions) that a State is taking to realize its intention or commitment for achieving the results corresponding to the performance of a given human right. They permit [...] to evaluate the way in which a state meets its obligations and, at the same time, help directly to monitor the progressive realization of the right or, dependent on each case, the protection process of that right in order to realize the right in question " (UN ACNUDH, 2012: 36; own translation).

Outcome indicators, eventually, should assess impacts and concrete results achieved (and thus a state's obligation), based on the presupposed process indicators and mirror the coherence and progress between all three types of indicators. All three forms of indicators are relevant for the national reporting system, applied in UPR cycles in Geneva. Furthermore, they can be relevant for jurisdiction, NGOs, national human rights institutions, researchers and the civil society as such.

Data (mainly quantitative but also qualitative) for these indicators should stem from collaborating ministries, statistical authorities and national human rights institutions – but all data should be disaggregated by, what the UN calls, 'prohibited grounds of discrimination', such as sex, age, region, ethnicity (where permitted), etc., as to properly assess the situation of each sub-group of the population. In this sense HRI provide a clear advantage compared to all other main development indicators, which are typically based on household surveys (and thus tend to overlook gender, ethnicity and other relevant data).[3] As can be inferred, creating such broad inventories and assessing the,-often quite complex-implementation of public programs and policies over time would require specifically trained staff and well-collaborating institutions. This, however, is precisely a problem in several Latin American public administrations (and not only there).

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[3] In addition, HRI should be: "(a) be valid and reliable; (b) be simple, appropriate and as few as possible; (c) be based on objective information (and not perceptions, opinions, assessments or judgments expressed by experts or persons); (d) produced and disseminated in an independent, impartial and transparent way, based on solid methodology, procedures and knowledge; (e) suitable for temporal and spatial comparison, according to the standards of relevant international statistics and for disaggregation by sex, age and vulnerable groups" (UN OHCHR, 2012: 15-16).

Main challenges for HRI implementations

Since 2009, my own research has been concerned with closely following the elaboration of HRI in Ecuador (and other countries) during the years 2011-2014.[4] The results of this research enabled my research team to identify a series of complex and interlinked problems which need to be addressed in order to make the parallel implementation of indicators for several human rights (contrary to Mexican cases) potentially a success. The following presents a list of these main findings, but presents them as open questions. It is done on purpose to initiate reflection and debate for each further case. Based on the experience of a largely diverging local political and legal environment in Ecuador, when compared to the supposed universal methodology of HRI, the following key areas emerged as particularly worth considering:

1. **Conceptual:** how to adapt the general HRI methodology to local legal and political settings related to specific traditions, jurisprudence, contradictions and public policy framing? That is, to find answers to ethical questions of spatial scope (e.g. national, regional, local), duration, political willingness for accountability and cross-institutional as well as civil society participation;

2. **Methodological:** having agreed on a specific conceptual framework, making HRI work requires well-informed statisticians with a broad knowledge of legal and development issues to elaborate indicators based on data sources to be developed and adapted;

3. **Translation-related:** although HRI appear as a 'technical solution', they are involved in processes of trans-cultural translations between people, their various educational backgrounds and institutions, particularly with regard to different population groups in general national, regional and local contexts of modernity/coloniality (Escobar, 2002; Mignolo, 2011; Quijano and Ennis, 2000) – hence even more so in decidedly 'plurinational' and 'intercultural' contexts (alluding to, e.g., legal pluralism between Indigenous and ordinary law).

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[4] In 2012, Ecuadorian authorities decided to implement HRIs for the following first rights: (1) the right to life; (2) the right to liberty and personal security; (3) the right to adequate food; (4) the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; (5) the right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; (6) the right to participate in public affairs; (7) the right to education; (8) the right to adequate housing; (9) the right to work; (10) the right to social security; (11) the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and (12) the right to a fair trial. This list was, however, substantially altered in the following years – based on the decision to include so-called 'Buen Vivir rights', which would go beyond existent international human rights frameworks.

4. **Institutional**: where within given institutional settings to locate such HRI projects and under whose control? How to forge alliances across institutions to ensure ongoing data input and sharing and how to ensure long-lasting, balanced leadership without manipulation or abuse of information? In addition, should the implementation of HRI follow a rationale of delivering quick results, or a logic of gradual, long-term improvement/implementation?

5. **Human capacity-related areas:** are experts available or do they need to be trained first/simultaneously? Experts are needed for implementing and running HRI, but also for interpreting and using its outcomes properly for it to become an effective 'game changer'.

6. **Reporting, dissemination and use of information:** how will information produced by HRI be disseminated? What will be the link between HRI outcomes and public policies in a systemic way?

But besides these meta-questions of design, institution and capacity, implementations of HRI do also evidence other serious flaws. For example, by adopting a 'development business-related' perspective (aiming at the gradual improvement of each right, relative to a maximum of available resources), the relationship between various human rights among themselves remains largely unaddressed so far. This is particularly problematic in the, likewise unaddressed, case of group rights (Jordan, 2008), including collective rights, and again, their interconnectedness with various individual rights (Schulte-Tenckhoff, 2012; Stavenhagen, 1989). Despite the widespread work on HRI in the Latin American region, Indigenous concerns have almost entirely been overlooked (see Waldmüller, 2014).

'Development 2.0': good intentions, big challenges

In summary, HRI present an interesting case to view at public administration beyond the prism of being vested with almost unlimited power Latin American governments (especially populist ones) frequently tend(ed) to present themselves. In addition, HRI permit in principle to rework common ways in which public information is created, processed (between and across various institutions), rendered accessible and published. Promoting and enabling detailed knowledge about human rights, their scope, validity and realization for being widespread among civil societies in the region is certainly to be embraced as a step towards holding their governments accountable in a well-informed and more targeted way.

However, HRI are politically delicate (since at the same time they enable governments to collect more and detailed information), relatively longsome to implement and likely to bind human and financial resources that could be used for other short-term purposes. In addition, the known UNHCHR methodology tends rather to neglect crucial areas of human rights, such as their interconnectedness and theoretically well-corroborated indivisibility or the protection of group and collective rights, for which neither methodology proposals for future HRI exist yet.

This points toward a fundamental concern with HRI: so far, they remain exclusively within the Western ontology of individualism (humans as separated from 'nature' (Descola, 2005; Kohn, 2013), an assumed path toward modernity through a vaguely defined process of 'development' (see Blaser, 2009, 2013), essence-seeking and anthropocentrism[5] (see de la Cadena, 2010). For instance, neither the UN OHCHR nor the Inter-American Commission methodology of HRI mentions the protection of nature through concepts such as 'sustainability', the importance of ecosystems or any other metabolic understanding of human-nature relationships and interactions. However, it is precisely those perspectives and approaches which so strongly emerge from the Latin American region – and which have led Ecuadorian authorities to think about a diverging methodology for HRI by adopting a different, rather biocentric[6] perspective. Instead of merely assessing human rights, such a relational approach to human and natural security could provide a promising novel perspective (Waldmüller, 2014).

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[5] Anthropocentric is defined as an ethical position "that considers man as the central fact, or final aim, of the universe" and generally "conceiv[es] of everything in the universe in terms of human values." (Watson, 1983: 245).

[6] Biocentrism is strongly defined as "the position that human needs, goals, and desires should not be taken as privileged or overriding in considering the needs, desires, interests, and goals of all members of all biological species taken together, and in general that the Earth as a whole [or life as such] should not be interpreted or managed from a human standpoint. According to this position, birds, trees, and the land itself considered as the biosphere have a right to be and to live out their individual and species' potentials, and that members of the human species have no right to disturb, perturb, or destroy the ecological balance of the planet." (Watson, 1983: ibid.).

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ENRIQUE LEFF[*]

Environmental Rationality: The Social Re-Appropriation of Nature[1]

On the verge of the abyss, facing the entropic death of the planet, a question emerges about the meaning of meaning beyond all hermeneutics. The environmental crisis generated by the totalizing hegemony of a globalized world – the homogenization that results from the unity of science and the forced unification of the market – is not alien to the enigmatic place of the 'self' vis-à-vis the 'other' that Rimbaud questions when he asserts "je est un autre", giving the starting signal to the deconstruction of the being, shaking its pleasurable selfhood in the self-consciousness of the science-subject, and boosting it into the meeting with otherness; or else to the dissociation between the being and the significance of the world -the lack of correspondence between words and things- which Mallarmé refers to when he evidences the absence of any rose in the word rose.

The environmental crisis, as reification of the world, has its origins in the symbolic nature of the human being but it starts to sprout with the modern positivist project which seeks to establish an equivalence between the concept and the real. However, the environmental crisis is not only one of the lack of signification of words, the loss of references and the dissolution of the senses that postmodernism denounces: it is also the crisis of the effects of knowledge over the world.

Beyond the epistemological controversies about the truth and objectivity of knowledge; beyond the problem of real representation through theory and science,

the knowledge has turned against the world; it has interfered and dislocated it. Before emerging as a problem of knowledge in the field of epistemology, this crisis of modern rationality manifested itself in the sensitivity of poetry and philosophical thought. Yet, the critique of Enlightened reason and modernity which had been initiated by the critique of metaphysics (Nietzsche, Heidegger), critical rationalism (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse), structuralist thought (Althusser, Focault, Lacan), and by the philosophy of postmodernism (Levinas, Deleuze, Guattari, Derrida), was not enough to convey the radicalism of the limits-law of nature against the ravings of economic rationality. This had to be shown in the reality of nature, outside the symbolic order, to do justice to reason. The environmental crisis irrupts at a time when the rationality of modernity translates into an anti-natura reason. This is not a functional or operative crisis of the prevailing economic rationality, but rather one of its foundations and ways of knowing the world. Environmental rationality thus emerges out of the questioning of the economization of the world, out of the overflow of the reifying rationality of modernity, out of the excesses of objectivist and utilitarian thought.

The environmental crisis is a product of knowledge –be it true or false- about the real, about matter, about the world. It is a crisis of the ways of comprehending the world, since mankind makes its appearance as an animal inhabited by language which makes human history split from natural history, makes it a history of meaning and of the meaning assigned by the words to things, generating power strategies in theory and in knowledge that have disrupted the real to forge the modern world- system.

Cultural miscegenation throughout human history has merged genetic codes and language codes through various cultural forms of meaning-making and appropriation of nature. The economic rationalization of the world, founded in the scientific project of modernity, has managed to scrutinize the most intimate core of nature, unleashing the energy of the atom, discovering the black holes of the cosmos and penetrating the genetic code of life. Worldviews and forms of knowing the world have created and transformed the world in many different ways throughout history. But the unprecedented character of the environmental crisis of our times lies in the form and the degree to which the rationality of modernity has impacted the world, undermining the very foundations of the sustainability of life and invading the life-worlds of the different cultures that make up the human race, on a planetary scale.

Our knowledge has unstructured ecosystems, degraded the environment, de-naturalized nature. It is not only that the sciences have become power instruments,

that this power appropriates the power of nature, and that this power is used by some people against other people: the military use of the knowledge and the overexploitation of the nature. The rationality of modernity is gnawing its own guts, like Saturn devouring his progeny, undermining the foundations of life sustainability and perverting the symbolic order that accompanies its eco-destructive volition. Environmental epistemology not only poses the problem of knowing a complex world, but also how this knowledge engenders the complexity of the world. The reintegration of reality through a holistic view and complex thought is impossible because the rationality of knowledge to apprehend and change the world has invalidated the real and subverted life.

Trans-genesis and environmental complexity inaugurate a new relationship between ontology, epistemology and history.

The environmental crisis is not only the mutation of modernity to a post-modernity, an epistemic change marked by post-structuralism, environmentalism, deconstruction, the emergence of a world beyond nature and words. It is neither a cultural change capable of being absorbed into the same rationality nor of escaping reason. The environmental crisis opens a new relationship between the real and the symbolic. Beyond the loss of theoretical references, beyond the equivalence of Logos and reality, and the signification of words about reality, entropy confronts us with reality, rather than with a supreme law of matter: it places us within the limit and the potency of nature, at the opening of its relationship with the symbolic order, the production of meaning and creativity of language. Against the epic of knowledge to apprehend a concrete, objective and present totality, environmental epistemology investigates the history of what has not come to be and what has still not come to be (denied externality, subjugated possibility, repressed otherness), but which drawing on the potency of reality, the forces at play in reality, and on the creativity of cultural diversity, is still possible. It is the utopia of a sustainable future.

From the fault lines of modern thought, emerges an environmental rationality which allows to unveiling the perverse circles, the enclosures and chains that link the categories of thought and the scientific concepts to the rationality core of its strategies of domination of nature and culture. As if with a muffler, through the haze of greenhouse gases that cover the earth and blind ideas, this book unravels the effect of theoretical, economical and instrumental rationality, in the reification of the world, up to the abysmal point in which it goes into meltdown with the environmental crisis. It shows the epistemological causes of this crisis, the knowledge forms that anchored in metaphysics and in the ontology of entity, have come to un-structure the planetary ecosystemic organization and degrade the

environment. It critiques the concepts with which philosophy jealously guarded the understanding of the world -value , dialectics , law , economics , rationality- and the hope for its transcendence through the self-organization of matter, the evolution of life and culture, the reconciliation of opposites or generalized ecology. The ideology of progress and of growth without limits clashes with the law of natural limits, initiating the redefinition of the world for the construction of an alternative rationality.

The environmental rationality rebuilds the world from the arrow of time and the entropic death of the planet, but also from the potency of negentropy and the redefinition of nature by culture. The existential condition of mankind becomes more complex when the temporality of life faces the erosion of its ecological and thermodynamic conditions of sustainability, but also when it opens to the future by the power of desire, the thirst for power, the creativity of diversity, the encounter with otherness, and the fertility of difference.

The deconstruction of reason triggered by the eco-destructive forces of an unsustainable world, and the building of an environmental rationality, is not just a philosophical and theoretical enterprise. The latter is rooted in social practices and new political actors.

It is, at the same time, an emancipation process that implies the decolonization of knowledge under the domination of the globalizing and totalizing thought, to fertilize local knowledges. Building sustainability is the designing of new worlds of life, changing the meaning of the signs that have fixed meanings of things. It is not a description of the world that projects the actual reality toward an uncertain future, but rather a description of what has been written, prescribed, enrolled in the knowledge of reality, the usual knowledge that has become intertwined with the world. An environmental rationality recovers the cryptic sense of the being to unearth the buried and crystallized senses, to restore the link with life, with the life desire, to fertilize the humus of existence, meaning that the tension between Eros and Thanatos is resolved pro- life, where the entropic death of the planet is reversed by negentropic creative culture.

If the Enlightenment generated a totalitarian thought that ended up nesting a death instinct in the body, in the feelings, in the senses and in reason, the environmental rationality is a way of thinking that is rooted in life, through a policy centered in being and difference.

Environmental rationality inquires into and questions the iron core of totalitarian rationality because it desires life. It formulates new arguments that

nurture feelings to mobilize collective action, the enchantment with the world and the eroticization of life. It builds knowledges that instead of grabbing the truth of the world and subjecting it to its domination rather lead us to inhabit the riddle of existence and to coexist with the other. The ethic of otherness is not a dialectic of opposites that results in the reduction, exclusion and elimination of the adversary - the opposite other-, even in the transcendence and redemption of the world where a dominant thought imposes itself.

Environmental ethics explores the dialectic of the one and the other in the construction of a convivial and sustainable society. This involves not only the deconstruction of the Logos, but also of the unity and the one way of thinking as cornerstone of civilization building -from the monotheism of the Jewish tradition to the absolute of the Hegelian idea-, towards thinking and living otherness, towards establishing a politics of difference.

Environmental rationality thus inquires into the foundation of the one and into the ignorance of the other, which have led to the fundamentalism of a universal unit and to the conception of identities as sameness without otherness, that has been exacerbated in the process of globalization in which the terrorism and environmental crisis make their appearance as a sign of the decadence of life, of the will to become suicidal and murderer of the other, of the loss of meaning that is entailed in the reification of the world and the commoditization of the nature. Environmental rationality seeks to contain dislocations of opposites as dialectic of history to build a world of diversity and coexistence.

This book is not yet another attempt to understand, interpret and bring a new meaning to reality, to harmonize economic globalization with complexity-thinking. It is not about reshuffling the cards to predict the future in the beads assortment for sustainability. For what the environmental crisis involves is not only the limits of signs, logic, mathematics to apprehending the real word; it is not only the failure of language to speak and to decide the world. The logos that served to nominate and designate things to forge life-worlds has now become knowledge. And knowledge does not just name, describe, explain and understand reality.

Science and technology disrupt and overthrow the reality they seek to know, control, and transform. Environmental rationality deconstructs positivistic rationality to mark its limits of signification and its intrusion into being and subjectivity; to highlight the ways it has traversed the social body, intervened life-worlds of different cultures and degraded the environment on a global scale. Environmental rationality opens a new perspective on the relationship between the

real and the symbolic once that signs, language, theory, and science have become nowledge and rationalities that have reshaped the real, re-coding reality as a world-object and world economy. Environmental rationality builds new life-worlds in the re-articulation between culture and nature, beyond the pretension to force the equalization of the real and the symbolic in an ontological monism; it recognizes their duality and difference in the human constitution.

From the derangement of nature and reason as expressed in the environmental crisis, emerges a new rationality for rebuilding the world beyond the ontology and epistemology, on the basis of otherness and difference.

This book stems from pieces grossly carved on the hard stone of thought on which my first thoughts about political ecology and environmental epistemology were shaped twenty-five years ago. I have taken up some of these texts, to the extent that they inquired into some of the core and exemplary blocks of the rationality of modernity - especially those from thought and discourse critical of modernity-against which the concept of environmental rationality was gradually outlined, contrasted and built: economic value; environmentalist thought; the discourse and geopolitics of sustainable development; the entropy in the economic process; power relations in knowledge; the relationship between culture and nature; and the social movements for the re-appropriation of nature.

These texts were trapped in their original magma just as those slaves by Michelangelo, in which the form struggles to emerge from its marmoreal origin. In its theoretical syntax the category of environmental rationality loomed as an intuition barely suggested. I again wield the chisel to release these texts from their archaic form, to infuse movement to the original rock of their inquisitive thinking, to deconstruct and reconstruct them from the perspective of an emerging environmental rationality that reveals the limits of modern thinking, to think about the time-condition of sustainability.

The texts of each chapter are slaves of their respective times, of the thought forms, the language-turns, and the theoretical syntax with which they were originally articulated and structured. Time again hits the hard stone in which ideas are crystallized, to allow new sap to flow from their bowels. Like in a moving painting where the various scenes of the epistemic landscape are captured in the fluid canvas of time, the discursivities and arguments of the modern episteme are intertwined, until they gradually mute, silenced by their own contradictions and signifying limits, to give voice to that other that is environmental knowledge, which

establishes the benchmarks and demarcation lines out of where a new rationality is configured.

The environmental rationality is constituted through being contrasted with the theories, thought, and rationality of modernity. Its concept brewed in the discursive matrix of nascent environmentalism, starting to create its own universe of meaning. This book is the forging of this concept. Its theoretical construction is not a process of growing formalization and concept axiomatization to show its objective truth, but rather one of emergence of new civilizational senses that are forged within environmental knowledge, beyond all theoretical idealism and the objectification of the world through knowledge.Environmental rationality is forged from within an ethic of otherness, in an "dialogue between ways of knowing" and a politic of difference, beyond every ontology and epistemology that claim to know and encompass the world, to control nature and restrain life-worlds.

The first chapter approaches the concept of value upon which Karl Marx founded one of the cornerstones of critical thought about conventional economics. Beyond historicity of the concept of labor-value as a result of technological progress, its deconstruction acquires new perspectives when the principle of an objective value is contrasted with the principles of environmental rationality.

The second chapter questions the ecological thinking -mainly as proposed in Murray Bookchin's dialectical naturalism- and discusses the issue of ontological monism-dualism in the context of environmental complexity. Chapter 3 inquires about the dislocation of the symbolic order and of the understanding of the world by the hyper-reality generated through knowledge. The thought of Jean Baudrillard is fused with the discourse and the geopolitics of sustainable development, reformulating sustainability as a new meeting between the real and the symbolic.

Chapter 4 advances that purpose in that it confronts economic theory with the limiting entropy law, contrasting Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen's and Ilya Prigogine's contributions, and updating my proposal for the construction of a paradigm of sustainable production and negentropic productivity. Chapter 5 occupies the center of the book to develop the concept of environmental rationality from Max Weber's critique of modern rationality.

In chapter 6 I return to the issue of environmental knowledge and therein interwoven power relations drawing on Michel Foucault, opening up a critical reflection in the field of political ecology and pushing postmodern thought to a politics of being, difference, and cultural diversity.

Chapter 7 opens the construction of environmental rationality demarcating it from Jürgen Habermas' postulate of communicative rationality, and attracting Manuel Levinas ethical thought about otherness into the environmental field to frame the building of a sustainable future as a dialogue between ways of knowing.

In chapter 8 I develop the application of the concept of environmental rationality to the relationship between nature and culture as a privileged site for the reconstruction of the relationship between the Real and the Symbolic from a sustainability perspective. I start from my previous arguments about the building of a productive rationality grounded in the cultural significance of nature, updating a reflection about the relationship between ecological culture and environmental rationality, and in turn linking this with George Bataille's thought about the gift and the urge to spending.

Chapter 9 brings the reflection about the environmental rationality back to its social construction through the constitution of new political actors and through its deployment in emerging environmental movements. I return here to my thoughts on these social movements and on the relationship between poverty and environmental degradation, to look at the reinvention of identities in the current struggles for the re-appropriation of nature and the culture of indigenous peoples, peasants, and local populations.

Environmental rationality is constructed through a struggling with the theoretical rationality that inhabits Marx's materialistic view of history, Bookchin's dialectical naturalism, Baudrillard's postmodern rhetoric, Georgescu-Roegen's entropy law, Prigogine's dissipative thermodynamics, Morin's complexity thinking, Habermas' communicative rationality and Heidegger's ontology.

The book discusses the contributions and limitations of these authors and the grand narratives grounded in essentialist concepts, as well as the regulating principles that have generated a totalitarian, encompassing, realistic and objectivist worldview, out of where the environmental rationality is emerging: from labor-value; from the generative, evolutionary and dialectical self-organization of matter and the 'ecologization' of the world; from the law of entropy as the limit-law of nature and inevitable death of the planet; from symbolic organization as ordering force of the relationship between culture and nature; from power relations in knowledge; from difference as opposed to the generic ontology of the being; from an ethics of otherness beyond communicative rationality; from the invention of identities beyond all essentialism.

The book deconstructs these rationality-blocks pushing them to the limit of their meaning -where they are trapped in their own theoretical and discursive labyrinth- to discover their blind spots and find an exit door in the shadows of the unexpected and in what remains unthought-of. Knots are untied; the fabric is unraveled; concepts dissolve, vanish, but new discursive frames are woven throughout which an inquiry progresses that opens up avenues of thought in an endless exploration, where the sense of finding an understanding of the world remains that is not fixed by a paradigm and a theoretical framework forcing an equalization between the real (possible) and an established idea, where the construction of reality becomes subject to a law. It is the environmental rationality framework that the needle moves along through the fabric of the theories that have sustained and impeached the world, to weave a new reason that illuminates new civilizational pathways and constructs new realities.

From threshold to threshold, the concept of environmental rationality is contrasted with the concepts that sustain modern rationality exposing their own limits in the understanding of environmental complexity. Environmental rationality appears as a mediator between the material and the symbolic, a way of thinking that brings out both the potential of the real and the emancipatory character of creative thinking, rooted in cultural identities and existential senses, in a politics of being and of difference, in the construction of a new paradigm of sustainable production based on negentropy and human creativity principles.Environmental rationality asserts a new relationship between theory and praxis, a politics of theoretical concepts and strategies that mobilize social action towards sustainability. Beyond the totalitarian realism of the theories that have sustained modern thinking, environmental rationality seeks to rethink the relationship between the real and the symbolic in today's globalized world, the mediation between culture and nature, to confront the power strategies that span the geopolitics of sustainable development.

This book is not a collage of my previous writings on these topics. These have been grafted, amalgamated and interwoven, opening communicating vessels and reconstituting the textual corpus in which the concept of environmental rationality is built. These texts have been key pieces of this discursive tapestry; they have served as backdrop and frame in which this concept is drawn. These ideas pop out of their representative image to walk around in the world, where environmental rationality is built into the social processes re-appropriation of nature. Thus a a discourse is articulated with a set of production practices and political processes, where the concept of environmental rationality is being outlined, gaining substance and attributes, where it unfolds as it is contrasted with the cores and spheres of

theoretical rationality and with processes of modern social rationalization, and applied to the building of sustainable communities and societies.

Writing this book has required the work of a craftsman, in which I have taken my own drafts and essays to develop a bigger picture, where they have been relocated within the discursive space and the architecture of the book, setting new perspectives and illuminating the center occupied by the main character: the environmental rationality. This discursive fabric is not a Goblin tapestry, but a tapestry made of different textures; its texts are intertwined in a contextual game, with different levels and perspectives, without aiming to a definitive representation. Many of the ideas that are announced in the book have just been outlined: the relationship between culture and rationality, between being and knowledge; the assimilation of knowledge by identities, and the rooting of knowledge in 'territories of life'; the social processes and the cultural forms of re-appropriation of nature, of environmental services and of the common goods of the planet; the power strategies that can bring about a world of cultural diversity, a globalization process that articulates negentropic productivity islands and a sustainable future built out of a dialogue between ways of knowing. These are open gaps to keep thinking and building: the mediation values in an ethics of otherness, that without reducing diversity to sameness, enable autonomies to proliferate without fearing the axiological relativism generated by the cult to an insuring unity; that establish values or the coexistence of differences that contain the outbreak of violence and animosity toward the other by the confrontation of interests, senses of truth-regimes and rationality-matrixes; the social legitimation of a right to difference that rules out the dialectic of violence of opposites as an explanation of historical evolution. These are loose ends and suspension bridges, like lianas waiting for other grammatical, epistemological and political monkeys to catch them to move through the treetops and forests of wisdom. It is an open frame to be further weaved with ideas born out of environmental rationality.

Some will question the relationship I establish between the concept of environmental rationality and the spheres of sensitivity, ethics, and knowledge, which so far have remained outside the order of formal and instrumental rationality; outside of the economic, legal, and technological rationality that have formed the backbone of the project of modernity. But this rationality has begun to crack and is flooded by islands of irrationality. Meanwhile, the sphere of culture, the signification processes and the production of meaning amalgamate with reason as they are reasonable; as different cultures in their relationship with nature, when they build their meanings linking language and reality, the real and the symbolic,

construct different matrixes of rationality. Environmental rationality articulates the diverse cultural orders and spheres of knowledge, beyond the logical structures and rational paradigms of knowledge.

The concept of environmental rationality is thus being constituted in a support for critical thinking that is not intended as a scientific paradigm, as an axiomatized and systematized knowledge, which can induce a rationalization process towards the attainment of ends and means instrumentally outlined from a sustainability perspective, as a concept capable of being "completed" through theoretical thinking and social action. This book, being consistent with the status of environmental knowledge, aims at deconstructing a rationality which is oppressive of life, but just as the language in which it is expressed, it cannot speak a final word. It opens a way to make roads, to work on territories of life, to enchant the existence beyond the objectivity-fences of a reason de force majeure that nullifies the sense of history.

I write from Mexico and most of this book was written in the years I have worked for the United Nations Environmental Programme as coordinator of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean. Perhaps the content of this book could have been thought and written anywhere on the planet. But the power of environmental rationality has become manifest to me through the presence and experience of the ecological and cultural richness of this beautiful region of the world, which has led my reflection on these issues. Many notes, ideas and texts were made during ountless trips in which we have built partnerships with governments and universities; as well as solidarity-bonds with academic, social and labor groups in favor of environmental education.

The reflections of this book are intertwined with an increasingly broad social movement for Sustainability Ethics which is expressed in a Manifesto for Life; many names are already inscribed in the construction of a Latin American Environmental Thought and an Alliance for Environmental Education, where the efforts of the Confederation of Education Workers of Argentina (CTERA) are to be highlighted. In the field opened by political ecology, environmental rationality can engage in dialogue with social movements in order to build sustainable societies and for the re-appropriation of nature and of their territories of life. This book was created out of and inserts itself into the social process of building a sustainable future.

All names! How many would I have to name to leave record of my gratitude to the people who at different times have encouraged and given impetus to the thoughts reflected in this book, who have left their mark through writings,

dialogues, and debates; through their presence and through meetings; solidarity and complicity; through sharing life? Those who have more tangibly agitated my thinking and my instinct, and who attracted my passion for thinking and writing, are listed in the references throughout the book, in my alliances and demarcations vis-à-vis their thoughts. They are presences without which this book would not exist.

Because there is no thought that does not arise in the context of its time, in congruence or discord with what someone already said or wrote, from the Alef to the Omega of human culture. Other, closer presences, have accompanied my way throughout the invitations to give courses and seminars, where live-dialogue has stimulated my thoughts on these issues. How to do justice to all those who over the years, by convening me, have made me think and write; to all those colleagues and partners which by discussing these issues have made e aware of new problems that had to be thought, of positions that needed stronger foundations, and of arguments requiring further development? This thought is linked to networks in ecological economics, political ecology, and environmental education, in which I have forged alliances of ideas and life with endearing environmentalist friends; a list which, to my fortune, is extensive. Among them I must thank the students of my seminar on political ecology at UNAM, with whom we have established a space for debate and the free creation of ideas. And above all, I must thank those presences and absences that form the intimate fabric of my life: my parents , my sisters and my brother, my beloved and indispensable friends; and those in my closest universe where the light of Jacquie, Tatiana and Sergio shine, as architects and support of my existence.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my friends from Siglo XXI, my publisher and home to its authors, for allowing my obsession that this book, like its predecessors saw the light in this even year, and for their love and carefulness in the editing of the text.

JORGE GUARDIOLA & FERNANDO GARCÍA-QUERO[*]

Nature & *Buen Vivir* in Ecuador: The battle between conservation and extraction[1]

This post is based on a recent publication entitled, "*Buen Vivir* (living well) in Ecuador: Community and environmental satisfaction without household material prosperity?" written by Jorge Guardiola and Fernando García-Quero, from Universidad de Granada, España. This paper was published in *Ecological Economics* (2014, vol 107). It deals with Buen Vivir, which is a concept with academic roots from the beginning of the 21st century, when the indigenous movement became a major social and political factor in Ecuador and Bolivia (Torrez, 2001; Yampara, 2001; Viteri, 2002). The systematization of this process was in the discussions undertaken by social partners on the Bolivian and Ecuadorian Constitutional Assemblies (Bolivia 2006-2009; Ecuador 2007-2008). They were later formalized in the approval of both Constitutions[2]. Since that moment, many research projects and studies have appeared, and *Buen Vivir* is increasingly becoming an international issue at all levels (Escobar, 2010; Walsh, 2010; Farah and Vasapollo, 2011; Gudynas, 2011; Radcliffe, 2012; Correa, 2013a; Mejido Costoya, 2013; Vanhulst and Beling, 2014).

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[1] Article originally published in http://www.alternautas.net/blog/2014/12/1/nature-buen-vivir-in-ecuador-the-battle-between-conservation-and-extraction on December 1st, 2014.

2 The *Buen Vivir* is dealt with in quite different ways in these two constitutions (Ecuador approved in 2008; Bolivia approved in 2009). For further analysis see Farah and Vasapollo, 2011; Gudynas and Acosta 2011).

The common issues identified during this process emphasize that the *Buen Vivir* philosophy is based on the idea that nature, community, and individuals all share the same material and spiritual dimensions. The wellbeing of the community is considered more important than that of the individual. Communities work to develop their capacities and enrich their knowledge without doing harm to human health or to the environment. Human beings are therefore part of nature and their quality of life depends on all the living things that share this planet with them. Due to the importance of nature, environmental and local progress are two of the fundamental goals of *Buen Vivir* (see Ecuadorian Constitution, art. 13; art. 333). The indigenous economy emphasizes that all methods of working and production have to be oriented to the local livelihoods, and should not serve for capital gain, accumulation, or surplus. To achieve *Buen Vivir,* it is essential that there is active participation in community spaces and local institutions (Macas, 2010). In summary, *Buen Vivir* of the population depends on strengthening participation in the community, improving harmony with nature, and maintaining local food sovereignty.

In Ecuador there are two extremely different viewpoints or conceptions on how to guarantee *Buen Vivir*. Firstly, the extractive position, which interprets natural resources as tools for its own *Buen Vivir* conception. Second is the conservationist perspective, which promotes the respect of nature and the search of alternative strategies to maintain *Buen Vivir*. The extractive view is commonly known as "republican biosocialism" or "socialism of the 21st century," and reflects the Government's position (Coraggio, 2007; Páez, 2010; Ramírez, 2010; SENPLADES, 2010; Falconí y Muñoz, 2012). The conservationist view is prominent in the indigenous movements, opposition political parties, and intellectual circles from Ecuador and abroad. (Dávalos, 2008; Oviedo, 2011; Quijano, 2011; Acosta, 2012; Vega, 2012; Gudynas, 2013).

Extractive development strategies aiming to improve population well-being are focused on economic growth that comes from country ownership of the natural resources. The governments opted for extraction and commercialization of the natural resources in order to ensure fiscal profits for sustained poverty reduction (Correa, 2013b). According to them, economic growth and the massive exploitation of nature are necessary for sustained poverty reduction (Correa, 2012). In theory, the majority of the windfall from Ecuador´s copper exploitation royalties should go to local community projects. President Correa has repeatedly said that his government's environmental policy was necessary "for the country to emerge from underdevelopment and to attend to the poorest." He stated that they "cannot live as

beggars sitting on a sack of gold" (Correa, 2013a). Examples of these policies are the agreements with international companies to carry out the exploitation of natural resources throughout Ecuador. The most famous example is the Yasuni ITT Project, which paved the way for oil exploitation in the Ecuadorian Amazon jungle of Yasuni National Park[3].

The extractive position believes that there is no inconsistency in extraction, because the first step in reaching *Buen Vivir* is eliminating poverty and unemployment. They argue that a progressive process of endogenous development is the path towards Ecuadorian wellbeing and that it is necessary to achieve energy sovereignty, food sovereignty, and financial sovereignty within the next 16 or 20 years (SEPLANDES, 2009). Ecuador is still in an early stage build-up phase and needs to strengthen the job market in order to guarantee basic material needs, including those related to food. In this stage, royalties from foreign firms coming from the extraction of raw materials are important to substantially reduce poverty and social exclusion. (SENPLADES, 2007, 2009, 2013).

The conservationists hold a very critical position towards the extractive vision. Extractive position, also referred to as "neo-progressive extractivism" or "brown socialism", seeks *Buen Vivir* through a model of production and mass consumption (Gudynas, 2010; Escobar, 2010, Acosta, 2012). Extractivism maintains conventional emphasis on economic growth, fostering the massive extraction of natural resources as a primary means to achieve what they consider *Buen Vivir*, while leaving aside the respect for nature and indigenous communities (Acosta, 2011; Cuvi et al, 2013; Gudynas, 2013b). This confrontation is very visible in the Yasuni case. The conservationists argue that the term *Buen Vivir* is a "stolen word" from the indigenous movement and is misused by the government (Tortosa, 2012).

From the conservationist point of view, Yasuni exploitation has an adverse impact on the well-being of local communities, regardless of where the profits go. According to this view, the Ecuadorian government has to renounce the oil exploitation of Yasuni National Park. This aggression, invasion, and destruction of nature is contradictory to the *Buen Vivir* principles set out in the Constitution. From a biocentric viewpoint, *Buen Vivir* adopts a broader concept of community that includes all living things on the planet. Adverse impact on the environment has very negative implications for the individual's own welfare, as human beings belong

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[3] The national initiative undertaken by Ecuador titled "Yasuni Ishpingo Tambococha Tiputini Initiative" (ITT) had the objective to give up the extracting oil from the Yasuni biosphere reserve in exchange for international Trust Funds. See http://yasuni-itt.gob.ec/inicio.aspx

to nature, not vice-versa. To ensure the preservation and protection of the environment and to respect the inherent value of nature beyond human purpose, it is essential to be permanently connected to the *Buen Vivir* goals outlined in the Ecuadorian Constitution, that state, among others, that nature is a subject of law (see Ecuadorian Constitution, chapter 7).

Taking this political scenario into consideration in our research, we aim to quantitatively evaluate the influence of *Buen Vivir* features (particularly nature, participation, and food sovereignty) in the subjective well-being[4] of a rural sample of 1,174 rural households, representative of two cantons in Ecuador (Nabón and Pucará), built in 2012. Our goal is to use happiness measures to account for the hedonic importance that people give to *Buen Vivir* features, versus the importance of more material and individualist issues, such as household income or being employed. To do so, we use a quantitative method, the ordered logit technique, to create a balance by putting *Buen Vivir* features on one side and material issues on the other. Environment and community participation variables and domains are found to be important in explaining subjective wellbeing (SWB), as well as other material related variables and domains.

The evidence found in this paper does not suggest to completely switch the balance to the extractive or to the conservative option, but it at least allows to reduce one without the risk of mistake. The importance of *Buen Vivir* variables and domains in explaining life satisfaction disregards the extractive position, but the importance of material variables and domains does not give full support to the conservative theory alone. In other words, income, employment and the increase of financial satisfaction are necessary for Ecuadorian people to be satisfied with their lives. These results contrast with the fact that descriptive statistics indicate that people are on average quite satisfied despite living in deprivation. This apparently puzzling conclusion may be clarified by this reasoning: people in the sample are in general highly satisfied, probably due to idiosyncratic issues contemplated in the *Buen Vivir* interpretation, but material achievement plays a role in the differences between individuals.

The political implications are that policy interventions centered on raising income or *Buen Vivir* alone will be incomplete. Policies that foster *Buen Vivir* while raising income and employment would succeed; aiming to increase material

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[4] Subjective well-being research refers to the study of the reported cognitive evaluation of affective state of the individual. This is also known in the literature as the 'science of happiness'.

possibilities while preserving people's ties to the community and to the land. The results suggest that self-production dependence has a limit in its influence on SWB, and that income may be a necessary driver to diversify goods and services that permit people to satisfy their needs.

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Call for Editors for Alternautas

Alternautas is seeking to expand its current Editorial team. In May 2014, our academic blog was launched into the world wide web. Almost a year later, our virtual community is thriving. Alternautas has organised panels at international conferences, expanded its subscribers and followers in social networks, become a platform to share news and announcements, obtained its ISSN number, organised collaboration with other development-related institutions and most importantly, has brought together a consistent and steady flow of contributions on critical development thinking to its peer-reviewed academic blog. Recently, the 2014 contributions have been brought together in the first issue of a virtual journal that we expect to expand and maintain in 2015. It is our hope that continuing and expanding Alternautas discussions the Abya Yala contributions to critical development thinking will continue bridging the language barriers, crossing the regional boundaries and joining the global quest for societal alternatives for a fairer, better, and sustainable future. For this, we are looking for Alternautas Editorial Team new members. Ideally, you will:

- Be interested in bridging cultural and regional boundaries in bringing together and expanding the Latin American contributions to global discussions in critical development thinking.
- Be working in academia as an early-career scholar, either doing a PhD or working in Latin American studies, Politics, Development, Anthropology, Sociology, Cultural studies, Philosophy or a related area. We also welcome people who might be in a break from Academia.
- Be able to work in English and either Portuguese or Spanish, both to contribute in writing, translating or editing content for the blog.
- While our workload is very flexible (and we certainly understand the time pressures from modern academic life!) you should be able to commit to work in a flexible and virtual collaborative team. Normally, you should expect that

the time commitment shouldn't be more than a couple of hours a week and you should be able to join a Skype meeting once a month.

If you think that you would be interested in joining us, send us an email with a brief statement of your interest in our work and a CV to alternautasblog@gmail.com, by March 15th, 2015.