

Valeriya Klementyeva

## Globalisation and its discontents

The good life according to Andean populations

Master's thesis in Globalisation and Sustainable Development

Supervisor: Hans Martin Thomassen

May 2020

NTNU  
Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences  
Department of Social Anthropology



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Kunnskap for en bedre verden



## **Abstract**

The following thesis, written as a part of the MSc in Globalisation and Sustainable Development, is directed at studying the concept of Buen Vivir in the frames of globalisation. Due to practical limitations, the research was conducted as a desktop study with the literature review as the main method. The story of globalisation does not always conform to the fairytale of growth and convergence, rather, it is characterised by uneven development: for a few, rich countries and people, it has led to prosperity, but for the many, poor countries and people, it has led to marginalisation or even exclusion. Further to this, according to Arturo Escobar (2004), the ability to provide solutions to modern problems in the modern world has been increasingly compromised. Therefore, there is a need to find new alternatives that are breaking away from the cultural and ideological bases of development, bringing other imaginaries, goals and practices the fore (Escobar, 2015). One of those alternatives might be Buen Vivir, which, translated to English, approximately means good life or good living, and takes its roots in the Andean indigenous thinking. To provide an example of how Buen Vivir is applied, a case of watershed management system in the province of Tungurahua, Ecuador was chosen. It highlights how indigenous populations design their environmental governance by working with and sometimes against the competing visions of international NGOs, as well as how their work escalates and brings local norms of environmental management to the forefront of the global arena confronting the prevalent international norms. The reform of the watershed involved the linking of indigenous and local knowledge and political action in civic initiatives, which by the definition provided in the theoretical part of the thesis, can be described as globalisation-from-below. Therefore, Tungurahua's watershed reform comprises a concrete example of how Buen Vivir can be manifested in reality. It showed to the world that it is possible to pursue development that does not stem from the Western ideals of individualism, humankind and nature dualism, and linear concept of progress rooted in material growth.

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## Introduction

The twentieth century, especially the second half of it, was a period of unprecedented economic growth. In fact, economic growth became the zeitgeist of the century: new regulations, deregulations and interventions aiming at higher economic growth were introduced, as well as redistributive systems (Berend, 2006). David Harvey (2005) states that since the 1970s there has also been a turn towards neoliberalism in political-economic practices and thinking, and that “neoliberalism has become a hegemonic discourse with pervasive effects on ways of thought ... to the point where it is now part of the commonsense way we interpret, live in, and understand the world” (Harvey, 2007, p.22).

*Neoliberalism* can be defined as a theory of political economic practices proposing that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximisation of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterised by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and free trade (Harvey, 2007, p. 22). Neoliberalism can be considered as the main driver of globalisation and globalisation itself can be seen as both the effect of, and the move towards, global neoliberalism (Litonjua, 2008). *Globalisation*, in turn, refers to the multidimensional expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space (Steger & Wahlrab, 2017, p. 57), but it can also be described more narrowly as an expansion of economic activities across national boundaries (Nayyar, 2006).

The word globalisation can be used either to describe a process of integration into the world economy or to prescribe a strategy of development based on integration with the world economy (Nayyar, 2006). What is important to keep in mind is that globalisation is highly uneven. According to Angus Maddison (as cited in Findlay & O’Rourke, 2009, p. 515), the world GDP per capita rose by 185 per cent between 1950 and 2000 despite a 140 per cent increase in the world’s population. While globalisation, without doubt, contributed to the prosperity of Western Europe, the advantages of it for the rest of the world are questionable:

“Inequality among states matters... Simply put, globalisation affects regions of the world in different ways... For less powerful states in a region... globalisation is a process, which is happening to them and to which they must respond. To some degree, they must choose either to accept the rules of the more powerful or not...” (Hurrell & Woods, 2000, p. 528–31).

Globalisation is still expanding: it is facilitated by a decrease in the cost of transportation, elimination of trade barriers and restrictions, development of communications, increasing capital flows and population migration, but these achievements also have a lot of downsides, such as

increased consumerism, climate change, etc. which spill out to many problems for the modern world.

Moreover, according to Arturo Escobar (2004), the ability to provide solutions to modern problems in the modern world has been increasingly compromised. It is compromised to such extent that it is possible to say that there are, in fact, no modern solutions to many of nowadays problems, which seems to be the case, for example, with massive displacement of people and environmental degradation, but also with development's inability to fulfil its promise of a minimum of well-being for the world's people (de Sousa Santos, 2002). Development has reached its limits economically, environmentally, and socially. In short, the modern world is in crisis and it is a crisis in models of thought, where the available modern solutions, at least under neoliberal globalisation, only deepen the problems (Escobar, 2004).

However, the Global South, where poverty and inequalities have, for a long time, been the followers of neoliberal globalisation, became the emergence hub of new visions of development grounded in local cultural concepts, for example, *Ubuntu* in Southern Africa, Buddhist philosophies in Asia, and the notion of *Buen Vivir* originating in Latin America. These alternative concepts appear with concerns about the environment, climate change, and ecological sustainability, but also to counteract neoliberal globalisation and Western hegemony in defining development as material progress and economic growth (Ranta, 2018).

The main focus of this thesis is the notion of *Buen Vivir*, its emergence, what it means to indigenous people, as well as how they use it in Latin America. *Buen Vivir* could be loosely translated into English as 'living well' or 'well-being', although not the same kind of well-being used in the Western theories. It might have been influenced by the indigenous concept of *lo andino* (the Andean), which refers to the particular way of being and living that extends across the Andean region (Estermann, 1998). *Buen Vivir* provides a platform for "alternatives to development focused on the good life in a broad sense" (Gudynas, 2011, p. 441), built on a myriad of values – cultural, spiritual, ecological, historical – far from the ones produced by neoliberalism (Gudynas, 2011, p. 445).

The experience of Latin America, in particular Ecuador and Bolivia, is especially interesting because it went as far as to incorporate *Buen Vivir* into the new constitutions. It has been a long way, but it is a perfect example of how historically marginalised indigenous communities played a huge role in the political processes and managed to bring the indigenous norms to the regional, national and global attention, driving the globalisation from below.

Therefore, since the modern world needs to provide solutions to modern problems and find a new alternative to development, there is an urgent need to examine the emerging visions. The study of the notion of Buen Vivir in contemporary Ecuador aims to contribute to this, as well as comprises the *relevance* of this thesis. In particular, the *objective* of this thesis is to find out whether Buen Vivir can serve as an example of globalisation-from-below. To achieve this objective, the following *question* is asked: how can an indigenous population of a small province in Ecuador make an impact on the local and national development strategies as well as shift the global debate towards an alternative model of development in terms of Buen Vivir? The best answer to this question could only be provided through a real example, therefore, a case of Tungurahua watershed management system was chosen. This case highlights how indigenous populations design their own local environmental governance by working with and sometimes against the competing visions of international NGOs, as well as how their work escalates and brings local norms of environmental management to the forefront of the global arena confronting the prevalent international norms.

When it comes to existing literature about Buen Vivir, there is a lot about it as a critical cultural and ecological paradigm that has been published (Acosta, 2013; Ivonne Farah & Vasapollo, 2011; Alonso González & Vázquez, 2015; Gudynas, 2011, 2013; Lalander, 2016; Merino, 2016; Radcliffe, 2012; Ranta, 2016, 2017; Villalba, 2013; Walsh, 2010). After Buen Vivir was included into the constitutional texts it has become a truly international subject and a lot of research has been carried out in this direction (Correa, 2012; Escobar, 2010; Gudynas, 2011; Costoya, 2013; Radcliffe, 2012; Vanhulst & Beling, 2014). Some writers consider Buen Vivir an original contribution to the debate about the concept of development built on a completely new set of values and perceptions of the world (Monni & Pallotino, 2013; Gudynas & Acosta, 2011). Others point to its similarities with the notion of development, especially sustainable development, since the 1990s (Walsh, 2010), as well as some links to other alternative ideas, such as degrowth (Escobar, 2015; D'Alisa, Demaria & Kallis 2015; Thomson 2011).

The thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter dwells upon globalisation as the main theoretical framework: it presents an overview of the notion, definition and different kinds of globalisation as well as the globalisation-development nexus. Since the Andes is the main focus of the thesis, the second chapter provides a description of the region's geography and history, including colonial and post-colonial period, to show how both of these factors could leave an imprint on the development of indigenous thinking. The third chapter goes in depth to give an account of Buen Vivir, finding a definition of it, at the same time showing how vast the concept is, even with the existence of some core features. The main emphasis is placed on Bolivia and Ecuador,

since it is in these countries where Buen Vivir went the furthest being included into the constitutional texts, which is a huge progress, however, not without its own controversies. The fourth chapter presents a particular case of Buen Vivir — the watershed management system in Tungurahua, Ecuador. The thesis is summarised by a final chapter presenting the main findings and the conclusion, followed by a reference list where all the cited literature can be found.

## **1. Theoretical Framework and Method**

The first part of this chapter attempts to define what globalisation is, gives an overview of some aspects of this phenomenon, such as top-down and bottom-up globalisation, connections it has with development, which are relevant for the overall objective of this thesis.

The second part dwells upon the choice of method for this thesis, followed by a short summary of the main points of the chapter.

### **1.1. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical part of this thesis will mostly focus on defining the concept of globalisation, development, bottom-up-globalisation and how they are connected with each other.

The term 'globalisation' can mean many different things. Some believe that it is crucial for the development of the global economy, and that it is inevitable and irreversible. Others are hostile to it believing that globalisation leads to an increase in inequality between and within countries, creates the threat of rising unemployment and lower living standards, and serves as a brake on social progress. Globalisation opens up tremendous opportunities for development, but the pace of its spread is uneven: integration into the global economy is faster in some countries than in others. Countries that have been able to achieve integration might experience poverty reduction, although it is not a rule. In turn, raising the standard of living can create opportunities for the development of democracy and advancement in addressing economic issues such as protecting the environment and improving working conditions.

#### **1.1.1 Defining Globalisation**

One of the problems with defining globalisation is the fact that the concept has been used in both academic literature and press to describe a process, condition, system, force and even an age, which makes it obscure and confusing (Steger & Wahrab, 2017).

Moreover, the word globalisation can be used in two ways: in a positive sense to *describe* a process of integration into the world economy or in a normative sense to *prescribe* a strategy of development based on rapid integration with the world economy (Nayyar, 2006).

As Steger & Wahrab (2017, p. 55) suggest, a social condition characterised by extremely tight global economic, political, cultural and environmental interconnections across national borders and civilisational boundaries should rather be signified by a term *globality*. At the same time, it shouldn't be assumed that it is an endpoint, which is already here without any means to further

development, but that globality is rather a future social condition beyond the existing nation-states (Steger & Wahlrab, 2017).

A term *globalisation* according to Steger & Wahlrab (2017) denotes a multidimensional set of social processes (as opposed to a condition), which means an observable sequence of social change that gradually transforms the social condition of nationality into one of globality. It does not necessarily mean that we live in a borderless world or that the national or local are becoming extinct or irrelevant, they remain important arenas, although due to the increased global connectivity, they might change their functions and character (Steger & Wahlrab, 2017). Events and developments are not global or national or local, etc., but an intersection of global and other spatial qualities, therefore, the global is just a dimension of social geography rather than a space on its own (Scholte, 2008).

Therefore, at its core, globalisation is about shifting forms of human contact that imply three assumptions: first, that we are slowly leaving behind the condition of modern nationality that gradually unfolded from the eighteenth-century onwards; second, that we are moving toward the new condition of postmodern globality; third, that we have not yet reached it (Steger & Wahlrab, 2017).

It is important to note that conceptualising globalisation as a dynamic process puts the emphasis on the expanding significance of the social change. Globalisation is an uneven process: people living in various parts of the world are affected very differently by this structural and cultural transformation (Steger & Wahlrab, 2017). The exclusion of people and of countries, from the process, is a fact, for example, in 2000 industrialised countries accounted for 64% of world exports, while developing countries accounted for 32% and transitional economies for the remaining 4% (Nayyar, 2006, p. 156). Industrialised countries accounted for 82% of foreign direct investment inflows in the world economy, whereas developing countries accounted for 16% and transitional economies for the remaining 2% (Nayyar, 2006, p. 156).

What is more, there are some additional characteristics that distinguish globalisation from other social processes: first of all, it includes the *creation* of new social networks as well as the *multiplication* of already existing ones that spread through traditional political, economic, cultural and geographical boundaries (Steger & Wahlrab, 2017, p. 56).

The second characteristic is manifested in the *expansion* and *stretching* of social relations, activities, and connections, for instance, financial markets today stretch around the globe, and electronic trading is happening non-stop (Steger & Wahlrab, 2017, p. 56). In a way, the world has moved to transnational capitalism that integrates people world-wide in global production networks

and financial flows. As William Robinson writes “We have gone from a world economy, in which countries and regions were linked to each other via trade and financial flows in an integrated international market, to a global economy, in which nations are linked to each other more organically through the transnationalisation of the production process, of finance, and of the circuits of capital accumulation” (Robinson, 2014, p. 2).

The third characteristic states that globalisation drives the *intensification* and *acceleration* of social exchanges and activities. According to Manuel Castells (2013), the creation of a truly global society is fuelled by communication power that required a technological revolution - one that has been driven mainly by the rapid development of information and communication technologies - the innovations that have been reshaping life. Social networking through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube has become every-day activities for millions of people in the world. The intensification of social relations worldwide means that local happenings are shaped by events occurring far away and vice versa, therefore, what seems to be opposing processes of globalisation and localisation actually involve each other in the global-local nexus of ‘glocalisation’ (Steger & Wahrab, 2017, p. 57).

One more characteristic is that globalisation impacts both the macrostructures of a ‘global community’ and the microstructures of ‘global personhood’, therefore facilitating the creation of multiple individual and collective identities cultivated by the intensifying relations between the personal and the global (Steger & Wahrab, 2017).

If we bind together all of the above stated characteristics of globalisation, then the following definition can be formulated: “Globalisation refers to the multidimensional expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space” (Steger & Wahrab, 2017, p. 57).

However, globalisation can also be described as an expansion of economic activities across national boundaries, which has three economic manifestations - international trade, investment and finance (Nayyar, 2006). Although there is more to it: globalisation can also be defined as a process associated with increasing economic openness, growing economic interdependence and deepening economic integration in the world economy. (Nayyar, 2006).

Economic openness is not confined to only financial flows, it extends to flows of services, technology, information and ideas across national boundaries, although the cross-border movement of people is still regulated and highly restricted (Nayyar, 2006). Economic interdependence is asymmetrical, for example, there is a high degree of interdependence among countries in the industrialised world, a considerable dependence of developing countries on the industrialised

countries, and there is much less interdependence among countries in the developing world (Nayyar, 2006). Further to this, a situation of interdependence is one where the benefits of linking and costs of delinking are about the same for both partners; where such benefits and costs are unequal between partners, it implies a situation of dependence (Nayyar, 2006).

On the whole, the story of globalisation in the late twentieth century, in reality, does not conform to the fairytale of growth and convergence, rather, it is characterised by uneven development: for a few, rich countries and people, it has led to prosperity, but for the many, poor countries and people, it has led to marginalisation or even exclusion (Nayyar, 2006). Without doubts, globalisation has created opportunities that seemed impossible three decades ago, but it has also introduced new risks, if not threats, for many others, for instance, deepening of poverty and accentuation of inequalities (Nayyar, 2006). Globalisation created *winner*s in the industrialised world and many *loser*s both in the industrialised world and in the developing world (Nayyar, 2003).

### **1.1.2 Development and Globalisation**

The process of globalisation, which gathered momentum during the last quarter of the twentieth century, has brought profound changes in the international context together with extensive implications for development (Nayyar, 2006). The development of the world economy during the age of globalisation, from the early 1970s to the late 1990s, presents a cause for concern, particularly when it is compared with the period from the late 1940s to the early 1970s, which has been described as the golden age of capitalism (Nayyar, 2006).

As with all highly contested concepts, there is no single definition of *development*. It can be seen as a strategy for the poor countries to modernise; an imposition of the capitalist countries on the poor ones, which should be opposed; simply as a discourse invented by the West for the domination of the non-Western societies (Escobar, 2015a). Nevertheless, it can be said that development is a recent historical process that involves economic, political and cultural aspects (Escobar, 2015a).

As a matter of fact, in the 19th century, development was seen in a rather philosophical way as improving humankind through acquiring knowledge, technological change, etc. From the point of view of the political elites, however, development was seen, more practically, namely, as a way to socially engineer emerging national societies, therefore, development was regarded as both industrialisation and regulation of its disruptive social impacts (McMichael, 2017).

Yet another understanding of development came from the fact that the inhabitants of the European colonies appeared to be underdeveloped, by the European standards, of course



(McMichael, 2017). In this way, the intervention was legitimised and development took on an extended normative meaning of a “white man’s burden” as it is called in the title of the poem by Rudyard Kipling. There were a lot of different forms of colonial subordination, but they all had the same objective - to either adapt or marginalise the colonial subjects ( McMichael, 2017). Therefore, while industrialism was producing sharper inequalities within societies, colonialism was racializing international inequalities, thus, development introduced new class and racial hierarchies within and across societies (McMichael, 2017).

As an ideal concept, that has sprung from the ideas of the Enlightenment Age, development encompasses economic, social and cultural progress including finer ethical ideals and higher moral values (Peet & Hartwick, 2015).

Starting in the 1980s, a growing number of cultural critics in many parts of the world questioned the very idea of development: they analysed development as a discourse of Western origin that operated as a powerful mechanism for the cultural, social, and economic production of the Third World (Escobar, 1995).

So, some saw development, simply, in terms of economic growth, although throughout some periods of history, growth did not accelerate, but, in fact, slowed down. During the 1960s, the average rate of growth of world GDP per capita was 3.5% per annum, during the 1970s it was 2.1%, during the 1980s - 1.3%, and 1% during the 1990s (Nayyar, 2006). The growth was also unevenly distributed across countries, at the same time there was divergence, rather than convergence, in levels of income between people (Nayyar, 2006). Economic inequalities have increased in the late twentieth century as the income gap between rich and poor countries, between the rich and the poor in the world’s population, as also between rich and poor people within countries, has widened (Nayyar, 2006). In addition, income distribution within countries also worsened (Nayyar, 2006). In fact, the increase in income inequality was striking in some industrialised countries: between 1975 and 2000, the share of the richest 1% rose from 8% to 17% in the US, from 8.8% to 13.3% in Canada and from 6.1% to 13% in the UK (Atkinson, 2003).

It is possible to think of mechanisms through which globalisation may have accentuated inequalities: trade liberalisation has led to a growing wage inequality between skilled and unskilled workers; mobility of capital combined with the immobility of labour has changed the nature of the employment relationships and reduced the bargaining power of trade unions; concentration of financial assets might have contributed to a worsening of income distribution (Nayyar, 2006). In addition, the competition for export markets and foreign investment, between countries, has

intensified, in what is termed ‘a race to the bottom’, leading to an unequal distribution of gains from trade and investment (Nayyar, 2006, p. 156).

In some ways, it is the developed West against and, at the same time, the model for the rest, which is a framework that has served not only to enclose humanity in the lineal ideas of civilisation and progress, but also to entangle modernity tighter with coloniality — a matrix of global power that has hierarchically classified populations, their knowledge, and cosmologic life systems according to a Eurocentric standard (Walsh, 2010). This matrix of power, that is globally hegemonic, has legitimised relations of domination, inferiority, and established a historical structural dependence related to capital and the world market (Quijano, 2000). In this sense, ‘development’ has always signalled more than just material progress and economic growth; it has marked a western model of judgement and control over life itself (Walsh, 2010).

*The Development Dictionary*, edited by Wolfgang Sachs and published in 1992, after some critics started questioning the core assumptions of development, including growth, makes a rather controversial claim: “The last forty years can be called the age of development. This epoch is coming to an end. The time is ripe to write its obituary” (Sachs, 1992, p. 1).

He might have been right. If we look at Latin America, which is the region this thesis mainly focuses on, the long-term growth there has been disappointingly low. Between 1970 and 2006 income per capita grew at an average of a mere 1 per cent per year, compared with 2.3 per cent in the advanced countries (Edwards, 2008). Therefore, there was triggered a reactivation of the debate over development, but of a different kind. The mood was, according to Eduardo Gudynas and Alberto Acosta, “to search for alternatives in a deeper sense, that is, aiming to break away from the cultural and ideological bases of development, bringing forth other imaginaries, goals, and practices” (as cited in Escobar, 2015a). Therefore, although the wave of progressive regimes in Latin America over the past decade created a context predisposed to these debates, the main impulse behind them have still been social movements (Escobar, 2015a). The two key areas of those debates and social activism are the concepts of Buen Vivir and the Rights of Nature (Escobar, 2015a).

Although economic globalisation confidently took over and displaced the critical debates about development bringing them to the background, global movements and the deepening of poverty and environmental destruction continue to keep critical conversations alive, connecting development debates to questions of epistemic decolonisation, social and environmental justice, the defense of cultural difference, and transition to post-capitalist and post-growth frameworks (Escobar, 2015a). For most of these social movements, it is clear that development of the kind

offered by neoliberalism is not an option, consequently, the return of the alternatives to development discussions in Latin America is a beacon of hope (Escobar, 2015a).

### 1.1.3 Top-down vs. Bottom-up Globalisation

Since the economic globalisation took over, it is advancing in an atmosphere where its neoliberal thinking goes almost unchallenged, especially in the leading market economies, and the collapse of the socialist regime has encouraged more capitalism (Falk, 1997). This neoliberal opinion is reinforced by the policy focus of governments that has also grown to be more business-oriented, reflecting the decline of organised labour as a social force, which would result in the erosion of the perceived opposition threat from what Immanuel Wallerstein (1995) identified as the dangerous classes.

Moreover, the mobility of capital is increasing in a world economy that is much more shaped by financial flows and the acquisition of intellectual property rights than by manufacturing and trade in goods and services (Falk, 1997). In addition, the fiscal imperatives of debt and deficit reduction in the interests of transnational monetary stability reinforce other aspects of globalisation (Falk, 1997). This unfolding of globalisation is happening within an international order that demonstrates shocking inequalities and concentrates the benefits upon already advantaged sectors worsening the condition of those already most disadvantaged (Falk, 1997).

Therefore, these aspects of globalisation are affiliated with the way transnational market forces dominate the policy scene, including the assimilation of state power. This pattern of development is identified as '*globalisation-from-above*' — a set of forces and legitimating ideas that is located beyond the effective reach of territorial authority and that has enlisted most governments as tacit partners (Falk, 1997, p. 19).

According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, this globalisation from above, also called neoliberal, top-down globalisation or hegemonic type of globalisation is operated by two processes: the first one is called *globalised localism* — the process by which a particular phenomenon is successfully globalised, whether it is the worldwide activities of the multinational, the transformation of the English language into a lingua franca, the globalisation of American fast food or popular music, etc. (de Sousa Santos, 2006, p. 396). In this process, what is globalised is the winner of a struggle for the appropriation of resources or for the hegemonic recognition of a given cultural, racial, etc. difference, which translates into the capacity to dictate the terms of integration, competition and inclusion (de Sousa Santos, 2006). The second process is *localised globalism*, which consists of the specific impact on local conditions produced by transnational practices and

imperatives that arise from globalised localisms (de Sousa Santos, 2006, p 397). They include elimination of traditional subsistence agriculture; creation of free trade zones; deforestation and destruction of natural resources in order to pay off external debt; use of historic treasures, wildlife, etc. for the benefit of the global tourism industry; ecological dumping<sup>1</sup>; the conversion of subsistence agriculture into agriculture for export as part of ‘structural adjustment’; and ethnicization of the workplace<sup>2</sup> (de Sousa Santos, 2006).

Therefore, the sustained production of globalised localisms and localised globalisms is increasingly determining or conditioning the different hierarchies that constitute the global capitalist world (de Sousa Santos, 2006). The international division of the production of globalisation tends to assume the following pattern: core countries specialise in globalised localisms, while peripheral countries only have the choice of localised globalisms (de Sousa Santos, 2006).

In the face of this, the most effective resistance to globalisation lies in the promotion of local and community economies, the small-scale economies which are diverse, self-sustaining and linked to exterior forces although not dependent on them (de Sousa Santos, 2002a). According to this concept, in an economy, which is becoming increasingly dispossessed, the response to the evils can only be re-territorialisation, rediscovery of a sense of place and community, which implies rediscovery or invention of local productive activities (de Sousa Santos, 2002a). Indeed, globalisation has generated resistance, both of a local, grassroots variety, based on the concreteness of the specifics of time and place—e.g. the siting of a dam or nuclear power plant or the destruction of a forest—and on a transnational basis, involving the linking of knowledge and political action in civic initiatives, which is described as ‘*globalisation-from-below*’ (Falk, 1997, p. 19). This has been converted into the identification, creation and promotion of countless local initiatives throughout the world, as well as the group of proposals which, in general, can be termed *localisation*. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2002a, p. 28) defines localisation as a set of initiatives that aim to create or maintain small-scale social areas, which are community-based and operate through face-to-face relationships, oriented towards self-sustainability and maintained by a cooperative and participatory logic.

Many of such localisation initiatives or proposals are based on the idea that culture, community and the economy are rooted in concrete geographical locations that require constant protection, although they do not imply isolationism, they do imply protection measures against the

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<sup>1</sup> the purchase by Third World countries of toxic waste produced in the core capitalist countries in order to pay for foreign debt (de Sousa Santos, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> devaluing of salaries because the workers belong to an ethnic group considered inferior (de Sousa Santos, 2006).

neoliberal globalisation (de Sousa Santos, 2002a). The paradigm of localisation does not necessarily imply a rejection of global resistance either, however it stresses the promotion of local social initiatives, according to Helena Norberg-Hodge (1996), who also states that it is necessary to distinguish between strategies to stop the uncontrolled spread of globalisation and strategies which suggest real solutions for real people. The former can be managed through multilateral treaties that allow national states to protect their population and environment from the excesses of free trade (de Sousa Santos, 2002a). The latter, however, can only be managed with the help of diverse local small-scale initiatives, contexts and environments in which they take place (de Sousa Santos, 2002a).

Indeed, reversing the rush towards globalisation would have benefits on a number of levels: rural economies in both North and South would be revitalised, farmers would be growing for local rather than global markets, staying in tune with local conditions and letting agricultural diversity to revive (Norberg-Hodge, 1996). At the same time, production would be smaller in scale, and therefore less stressful for the environment, together with transport, that would be minimised, to decrease the greenhouse gas pollution and the ecological costs of energy extraction (Norberg-Hodge, 1996). In turn, ending the manic pursuit of trade would reduce the economic and hence political power of TNCs, and eliminate the need to hand power to such supranational institutions as the WTO, thereby helping to reverse the erosion of democracy (Norberg-Hodge, 1996).

## **1.2 Method**

The choice of method is an important foundation for any study. Just as there are many unexplored phenomena in the modern-day world, there is a wide array of research methods and data collection techniques available in academia, such as interviews, surveys, statistical analysis, observation, etc. However, since this thesis is a student project, there were some limitations to it due to practical considerations, namely time and resources. Therefore, the most appropriate and available methods to employ were literature review and text analysis.

Existing literature represents an important element in all kinds of research, it helps to learn more about the topic, for example, what is already known, what concepts and theories have been applied, if there are any controversies or clashes of evidence, the main contributors, etc. (Bryman, 2012). It is also a useful way to demonstrate the credibility and contribution of one's research (Bryman, 2012). Thus, literature review refers to "a critical examination of existing research relating to the phenomena of interest and of relevant theoretical ideas" (Bryman, 2012, p. 14).

Therefore, because of practicalities, the following thesis was conducted as a desktop study relying on the information from the already existing sources that form the background to the study together with some of the findings from the case study about the watershed management reform in a small province in Ecuador — Tungurahua. The data in that case study was collected from primary documents, as well as a variety of qualitative methods: personal observations and in-depth interviews (Kauffman, Martin, 2014).

## **Summary**

Globalisation through the creation of new social networks, multiplication of already existing ones, expansion and stretching of social relations, activities, and connections, as well as intensification and acceleration of social exchanges, has moved the modern world to transnational capitalism that integrates people world-wide in global production networks and financial flows.

However, globalisation can also be described solely as an expansion of economic activities across national boundaries, through three manifestations - international trade, investment and finance or as a process associated with increasing economic openness, growing economic interdependence and deepening economic integration in the world economy. (Nayyar, 2006). The most important thing we should remember about the economic expansion and openness though, is that they are asymmetrical and produce different results in different places in the world.

The mechanisms through which globalisation produces inequalities might be: trade liberalisation; mobility of capital combined with the immobility of labour; concentration of financial assets (Nayyar, 2006). In addition, the competition for export markets and foreign investment, between countries, has intensified, in what is termed ‘a race to the bottom’, leading to an unequal distribution of gains from trade and investment (Nayyar, 2006, p. 156).

Globalisation and its consequences have profound implications for development. The development experience of the world economy during the age of globalisation, for instance, presented a cause for concern (Nayyar, 2006). Indeed, in Latin America the rates of growth were quite low during this period, which became a cause for concerns among the critics, but also among the population. These concerns, combined with the historical imprints left on this region, induced the growth of some resistance to globalisation, which involving linking of knowledge and political action in civic initiatives, can be described as globalisation-from-below (Falk, 1997, p. 19).

Although economic globalisation confidently took over and displaced the critical debates about development bringing them to the background, global movements and the deepening of poverty and environmental destruction continue to keep critical conversations alive (Escobar,

2015a). For most of these social movements it is clear that development of the kind offered by neoliberalism is not an option, consequently, the return of the alternatives to development discussions in Latin America is a beacon of hope (Escobar, 2015a).

To sum up, this chapter defined globalisation, gave an overview of some of its aspects, such as top-down and bottom-up globalisation, as well as connections it has with development, which are relevant for the overall objective of this thesis. The actual modern-day case of a globalisation-from-below from Ecuador will be presented later in the thesis, following the chapters that give a deeper account of Latin America, its history, location, its indigenous peoples and their philosophies.

## **2. Indigenous Thinking and Resistance to Colonisation**

Forasmuch as, this thesis presents the notion of Buen Vivir in contemporary Ecuador and in particular, attempts to find out whether it can pose as the expression of the globalisation-from-below through mobilisation of indigenous populations, it is essential, before discussing what Buen Vivir is, to understand where it is taking its beginning from and why that beginning was possible in this particular context. Therefore, this chapter will provide an overview of this context, namely the Andes-Amazon region, from geographical, historical and cultural perspectives.

### **2.1 Description of the Andes-Amazon Region**

In a geographical sense, the Andes - or, the Cordilleras de los Andes - refers to the mountain range in South America. It is one of the biggest ranges in the world, stretching for about 7000 kilometres from near Caracas to Cape Horn (Adelaar & Muysken, 2004). The Andes are very various, with several dozen peaks above 6,000 metres, and generally very high passes, which, in turn, contributes to a great diversity of climates and ecosystems (Adelaar & Muysken, 2004).

The morphology of the Andes with its high mountains, deep valleys and vast plateaus is important because their inhospitable character is what provided haven for different indigenous peoples. These cultural havens exist both where extremely harsh conditions made colonisation difficult or unprofitable, and where the communication was made almost impossible (Adelaar & Muysken, 2004). In addition, Andes' steep slopes left a variety of ecosystems and climates to a disposal of single ethnic groups (Adelaar & Muysken, 2004).

Therefore, the diversity of native cultures and languages in the Andes is remarkable. Kaufman (1990) has calculated that there might be up to 118 language families and genetically isolated languages. Consequently, throughout the centuries of settlement in the Andean region, its inhabitants built a unique interpretation of the universe and life, articulated with the natural and cultural environment that defines the Andes.

The diversity of heights, ecosystems and climates influenced the formation of communities with their own forms of social organisation, adaptation and coexistence with nature (Adelaar & Muysken, 2004). In this context, the notion of Lo Andino (the Andean) appears, which refers to the particular way of being and living that extends throughout the mountain range to areas of the highlands, the jungle and the tropical forests of the Amazon and the Pacific. Thus, Lo Andino is also an ethnic category that refers to a person who identifies with and is rooted in the Andean geographical, social and cultural sphere. In addition, it is a way of being, a philosophy and a worldview of the inhabitants of the region (Estermann, 1998). The roots of the Andean culture are



more evident in the areas with the largest presence of indigenous population, such as the Andes, in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, or in Cauca, in Colombia (Salazar, 2016).

The above mentioned Andean countries also belong to the Amazon region (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela), and share the territory of the Amazon river basin along with four other countries: Brazil, Guyana, French Guyana, and Suriname. Although the Amazon constitutes a region with different geographical, historical and cultural characteristics with respect to the Andes, the Andean-Amazon countries are related, for example, through the transition zones between the mountains and the jungle, the Amazon River, as well as socio-economically and culturally (Salazar, 2016). In particular, relations between the peoples of these two great regions of South America intensified after the Western colonisation, which caused people to migrate from the Andes mountains to the Amazon rainforests to seek refuge (Salazar, 2016).

## **2.2 Lo Andino**

What makes Lo Andino a special concept is, according to Estermann (1998), that interpretation of it is common to all manifestations of culture of the peoples that inhabit the region, whose diversity is reflected in languages and dialects (Kichwa, Aymara, Uru, etc.); in various cultures; indigenous peoples (the civilisations of Caral, Wari, Muisca, Mapuche, Tiwanaku, Inca, etc.); and in the existence of particular forms of community organisation that was maintained both in rural communities and towns, as well as in popular neighbourhoods and urban centres. Therefore, Lo Andino, as a manifestation of a particular way of life, which is preserved in the traditions of multiple indigenous peoples of the region (Salazar, 2016).

In spite of the economic, political and cultural globalisation trends, the attempt to preserve a regional identity and the ancestral heritage is still deeply rooted in Andean communities (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). This ‘practice’ of the indigenous cultural traditions and ways of life can be seen as a reaction to the flattening tendencies of globalisation (Featherstone, 1995).

As was shown above, the cultural heritage of the Andes is incredibly manifold. Over the long course of history, numerous processes of displacement and overlay have taken place, but one can still observe an exceptional cultural resilience and a tenacious determination to preserve the ancestral traditions: “The most profound meaning of the Andes thus comes not from a physical description, but from the cultural outcome of 10 millennia of knowing, using and transforming the varied environments of western South America” (Gade, 1999, p. 34). Because of its long and rich cultural history, Gade considers the tropical central Andes as the core region of the Andean material and non-material culture: “Many autochthonous elements, practices, strategies and symbols, both

material and nonmaterial, make up the sum of lo andino,” (Gade, 1999, p. 36). It is in this part of the range, where the traditional Andean culture has best resisted the assimilation pressure of Europeans and North Americans, as well as the modernisation acculturation processes (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). There are points of view that lo andino includes all highly significant characteristics of Andean indigenous cultures, from reciprocity to verticality, as Brienen writes (2003), ‘It is not common practice for authors who invoke lo andino as a framework of reference to define precisely what they mean by it,’ but instead it invokes a perceived connection with the precolonial past (p. 187). Similarly, Painter (1991) notes the continuity between the Pre-hispanic past and modern cultural forms in traditions, cultural heritage, social structures and economic organisation as essential to lo andino (p. 95).

In economic terms, *lo andino* is based on the traditions of field cultivation and pastoralism to make the best use of the potentials of the environment, especially the spectrum of the available altitudinal zones and agricultural niches (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). This diversity of production and pastoral strategies help to minimise the risks for the support of families and community. One of the guiding principles is economic *complementarity*, which is achieved by growing a variety of crops, by different forms of crop and field rotation, and by combining field cultivation with pastoral activities (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015).

Another important aspect of lo andino is the Andean tradition of economic and social *reciprocity*, which provides for a mutual and equitable exchange and compensation of goods and services between families and regions (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). Economic reciprocity had a long tradition, especially in the form of bartering, although it has considerably weakened in recent times because of the increasing monetarisation of economies (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). In the same light, Rist (2000) is wondering whether reciprocity in the modern times has to be regarded as a relic of the past or as a successful sustainable strategy. He states that reciprocity, from the perspective of the local populations, preserves its value, not only as a cultural heritage but also as a meaningful economic and social system (Rist, 2000). In the context of the society, reciprocity entails different communal and mutual obligation forms as pillars of support for families and village communities (Rist, 2000). They include the *faena*, a service for the community (e.g., the repair of roads and bridges, or the maintenance of irrigation systems); *ayni*, as mutual help by one community member for another member for private purposes (e.g., sowing and harvesting); or *minka*, a mutual work support with major jobs for members of the community (e.g., in building or repairing of houses, or the clearing of land) (Rist, 2000, p. 310–311). These forms of work have also an important

socialising function, as the community usually supply the workers with food and sometimes also with music (Rist, 2000).

Therefore, reciprocity is a vital expression of the traditional community role as a place in which the individual is embedded in a system of assistance, obligations, solidarity, activities, rituals, etc. (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). Whereas in Western societies personal freedom, private property, or self-determination are considered to be the most important values, in an Andean *ayllú*<sup>3</sup>, the economic and social rights and obligations find their expression within the community as a whole and an exclusion from the community is seen as the worst form of punishment, since it would mean the loss of the homeland and all social networks (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015).

The Kichwa peoples in Ecuador call the indigenous concept based on dignity, solidarity, community ties and harmony with nature *sumak kawsay*. Recently, it has been even incorporated into the constitution of Ecuador in a simplified and translated to Spanish form of *Buen Vivir* (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). It is closely related to the Aymara concept of *suma qamaña*, which is referred to in the Bolivian constitution as *Vivir Bien* (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015).

Lo andino also implies a specific *cosmovisión*, where nature and the daily life of the people (*pachankiri*) are influenced and overlaid by the spiritual life (*pachaqamaq*), the social life (*pachaqamachana*) and also by material factors (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). Of particular importance and sacredness are nature and Mother Earth (*pachamama*): “As a living reality, the Earth is for the indigenous communities the essence for all individuals and the entire Indian nation(...). In it, the Andean person (*runa*) develops his individual and collective identity” (Llanque Chana, 1995 as cited in Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015, p. 139). All life is rooted in Mother Earth; by its fertility, it symbolically connects the different spheres of the universe, which is still omnipresent in the indigenous regions of the Andes, and since pachamama is an organic, living organism, all animals and plants deserve respect and care. Human beings, therefore, cannot use and dominate pachamama as they wish (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015).

Thus, the Andean cosmovision has several dimensions: ecological, societal and religious. The traditional Andean knowledge is founded in collective wisdom and experiences, accumulated and transmitted over many generations, embedded into the ethical and mythological concepts of Andean people. However, it is not, by any means, static or unchangeable, rather it has evolved throughout the time with new elements having been added and some traditions having been modified (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). Therefore, Lo andino is in a constant state of flux, integrating

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<sup>3</sup> the fundamental unit of social organisation of ancient Andean communities, based on kinship groups and communally held territory (Fabricant, 2010, p. 90).

new elements and rejecting others: tradition and modernity are not contradictory and exclusive, tradition should perform as the framework for progress, development and modernity (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015).

### **2.3 Colonisation of the New World**

In 1992 the world celebrated 500 years since the discovery of the New World. However, this world was not new, and it was not discovered by Columbus, as many of us believe. The settlements have existed there for thousands of years and the civilisations of Mesoamerica and the tropical Andes date back to the era before Christianity (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). Latin America underwent a much longer period as a colony than other parts of the world. Nearly all the countries in Latin America were colonies for about 300 years (Grabowski, Shields, & Self, 2015). With so much time, a lot of cultural heritage from those civilisations was destroyed, and the influence of the past vanished or was forgotten, however, some cultural traits were preserved, modified, or overlaid by successive cultures (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). Since colonisation was accompanied by permanent emigration from Europe, settlers coming from Spain and Portugal brought the political, economic, and cultural institutions from their homelands (Grabowski, et al., 2015).

The Spanish government, dominated by the religious and military hierarchy, was transferred to Latin America during the time of colonisation (Grabowski, et al., 2015). The primary purposes of the conquista were the exploitation of the natural and human resources, the conversion of the indigenous population to Christianity, and bringing Spain to the forefront of the world as the greatest power (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). The Spanish conquered the ancient civilisations of the Aztecs and the Incas and used the indigenous labor to mine precious metals, especially gold and silver; later to cultivate tropical agricultural products, and producing textiles (Grabowski, et al., 2015). In general, with the exception of some of the remote mining sites, the Spanish were attracted to the more densely populated areas, and as the Spanish colonial cultural and economic focus was oriented towards the cities, the rural regions were mostly neglected.(Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015).

The government structure resembled the command structure of the military, and the pioneer leaders were principally military men. The provincial government comprised men born in Spain, called *Peninsulares* (Grabowski, et al., 2015). These Spanish-born members of the government elite held the military, civil, economic control of the colonies. *Criollas*, (or creole) American-born descendants of those with “pure” Spanish blood were considered socially inferior to peninsulares, but still participated in government, although at the township level (Grabowski, et al., 2015).

The ownership of land was extremely unequal, with criollas accumulating large estates - *latifundio*. The land obtained by the criollas was sometimes given to them by the Spanish crown for their services (Grabowski, et al., 2015) The land they were getting, originally, usually, belonged to the natives, who were exterminated, forced to either leave their land, or to stay and work for the new landholders. Very small plots of land - *minifundio* - often the least desirable and suited only for subsistence, continued to be farmed by the displaced natives and *mestizos* - people of mixed Indian and European descent (Grabowski, et al., 2015).

In the 16th century, the share of the white population on the colonised territories remained modest for some time: Gade (1992, p. 464) estimates that their number in the rural areas outside the cities and mining centres amounted to some 10,000–15,000 people, while the native population was close to a million. In the course of the 17th century, though, the creole population increased rapidly, and gradually succeeded in occupying the social and economic status of the former peninsulares (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). Marriages with native women became widespread, amplifying the numbers of mestizos. As a consequence, the core settlement regions in most Andean regions were soon characterised by a mixed Indian-European population who developed their own cultural identity - *mestizaje* (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015).

It is worth noting that latifundios had no unifying philosophy of mutual obligations or rights, and the rule of these estates was mostly authoritarian (Grabowski, et al., 2015). The power of the heads of these estates depended on the strength of their rule and the size of the estate and not on the productivity, therefore they were not very responsive to market forces, limiting the development of entrepreneurship and market institutions (Grabowski, et al., 2015).

Although indigenous populations were entitled to royal protection on the basis of their “inferiority”, in reality they were exploited by the colonial rule, as they were engaged into forced labour at the mines and at large estate *haciendas* that complemented the mining structure (Postero, 2007, p. 28). Therefore, the elite did not need to attract new labor, since they had Indians working in the export industries, and where the conditions decimated the native population, they imported slaves, thus, the economy increasingly became a slave economy, highly dependent on exports (Grabowski, et al., 2015). This was partly justified through a racial discourse of purity of blood, a *sistema de castas* that originated in Spanish cultural traditions and became an institutionalised part of the colonial rule in Latin America (Ranta, 2018). The system ranked whites with pure blood at the top, followed by mixed-race people in the middle, with indigenous peoples and blacks filling the lowest echelons (Martinez-Alier, 1989).

Since the native population was often pushed back to the steep mountain slopes or to high altitude zones, outside the haciendas, the indigenous agricultural system with its small patches of land and communal *ayllú* (Fabricant, 2010, p. 90.) was able to survive, and to a certain extent maintain their traditional cultivation methods, agricultural techniques and social practices (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015).

At the end of the eighteenth century the colonial rule started to delve into a crisis, which was marked by popular movements. They attempted to define a new political community and a distinct political agenda. For example, in Peru and Bolivia, the Great Andean Civil War of 1780-2 was led by indigenous authorities who claimed to be of authentic lineages. One of them - Tupaq Amaru - predicted a return to the Incaic period while attempting to surpass the system of colonial domination. Another - Tupaj Katari prohibited the use of Spanish, and it is said that his forces did not eat bread because it was made from a European grain (Mallon, 1992). Therefore, the movements were organised from the centres of indigenous power, toward the centres of colonial power (Mallon, 1992). In other words, they were movements from the periphery of colonial domination, toward the periphery of Andean power. The ethnic repression brought on those who fought with Tupaq Amaru and Tupaq Katari recreated, once again, the dualistic division of power and identity, so eminent in the colonial Andes, deepening the cultural and spatial distances between white and Indian populations (Mallon, 1992).

Nonetheless, the popular political culture that had begun to emerge from this experience re-emerged repeatedly during the nineteenth century, even though unable to conquer state power, they movements maintained an important presence in politics offering an alternative conception of the nation (Mallon, 1992).

## **2.4 Independence of Latin America and Internal Colonialism**

Independence, a long process completed only in 1825 (although Cuba and Puerto Rico remained colonies until 1898) is definitely seen as one of the most crucial events of nineteenth-century Latin America (De la Escosura, 2009). Unfortunately, it did not lead to drastic changes in the relationships between Indians and the society. Despite the legal equality of all citizens (including indigenous people), various factors ensured the maintenance of the colonial character of these relations.

Independence brought with it the release of the colonial fiscal burden, which consisted of the taxes levied on the indigenous population, and the surpluses of the colonial administration that were previously sent to Spain (De la Escosura, 2009). Liberation from it, therefore, should have

added to Latin American GDP. However, after independence unequal access to fiscal resources and the absence of internal redistribution of tax revenues provoked a struggle for the control of fiscal resources and led to political disagreements (De la Escosura, 2009). Costs in defence and law enforcement had to be duplicated, and coordination in the provision of public goods became more difficult (De la Escosura, 2009). Therefore, most Latin American governments suffered chronic deficits during the first half of the nineteenth century as tax revenues stagnated and military expenses increased (De la Escosura, 2009).

The colonial empire provided security and justice at a reasonable cost, and although, new providers of protection emerged, they had a much lower capacity (De la Escosura, 2009). Transaction costs also increased, as political and economic institutions had to go through a period of redefinition, while continued violence between and within countries also contributed to less well-defined property rights (De la Escosura, 2009). These costs were higher for the new republics because of their fragmentation and the loss of economies of scale. On the whole, it can be conjectured that the benefits were partly canceled out by the increasing costs of establishing and maintaining their own governments (De la Escosura, 2009).

Independence also brought with it the release of the trade burden, imposed by the colonial system, which granted the new Latin American countries the entrance into the expanding world markets (De la Escosura, 2009). Independence also made it possible for the Latin American republics to trade directly with Europe and North America, and represented a reduction in transportation and commercialisation costs that should have led to an increase in the volume of trade. Nevertheless, warfare and political instability that independence ‘unleashed’ made the adjustment to the new international trade regime difficult (De la Escosura, 2009).

As a result of the trade burden release a new frontier opened up in which land expanded at a rising cost in terms of other resources (Findlay, 1993). An expected outcome would be the expansion of trade, as well as the increase in output due to better resource allocation. Terms of trade, that is, the relative price of exports in terms of imports, might decline as Latin America exported primary goods and imported manufactured products (Prebisch, 1950). At the same time, changes in income distribution should take place, with a tendency for within-country inequality to rise as the reward to land, the abundant and less evenly distributed factor, improves relative to labour (Williamson, 1999). Finally, a worsening of the Latin American position in the world economy can be predicted (Krugman & Venables, 1995).

Both the internal struggles which persisted for many decades and the economic depression during the first half of the nineteenth century contributed to marginalisation and isolation from the

outside world of Indian communities. Another reason is the tutelary laws, which were introduced in the beginning of the colonial period based on the belief in Indian inferiority (Stavenhagen, 2013). Consequently, when legal equality was declared, the Indian was effectively in a condition of inferiority to the rest of the population, in every area of economic and social life (Stavenhagen, 2013).

The first changes occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century: with the reform laws and introduction of new cash crops (principally coffee) into the Indian region (Stavenhagen, 2013). As a consequence, coffee plantations became working centres for a big number of Indians, legally or illegally recruited. At the same time, the first products of industrialisation penetrated into the more distant villages of the Indian region in the form of goods carried by traders (Stavenhagen, 2013). In this way new economic relationships were established between the indigenous peoples and the rest of the population.

Expansion of the capitalist economy during the second half of the nineteenth century, together with the ideology of economic liberalism, once again transformed the quality of ethnic relationships in Latin America. This stage can be considered as a second form of colonialism - *internal colonialism* (Stavenhagen, 2013). Most developing countries had no alternative but to resort to their own resources and the new governments were led by the same logic as their colonial predecessors: to expand the production of minerals and crops for export, however, they had less choice about what to exploit and where to exploit it (Calvert, 2001).

Indigenous peoples found themselves once again as a colonised people: they lost their lands, were forced to work for strangers, were integrated against their will to a new monetary economy and new forms of political domination (Stavenhagen, 2013). It is considered to be internal colonialism, because this time, colonial society was the national society itself, therefore, there were not only isolated Indians, but whole Indian communities, who as a group, were steadily incorporated to expanding economic systems and the relations between coloniser and colonised were converting into class relationships (Stavenhagen, 2013). Decolonisation, in that sense, merely replaced foreign owners by local ones enjoying the key advantage of direct access to the centres of political power, and, in the years following independence, provided the elites control over what that they did not before own (Calvert, 2001).

In modernity, therefore the Western European dominators and their Euro-North American descendants were still the principal beneficiaries, and the exploited and dominated of Latin America and Africa — the main victims (Quijano, 2010). Through the expansion of economic activities across national borders - globalisation - in Latin America entailed a series of structural neoliberal



reforms, also known as market reforms, intended to reduce the role of the state in the economy, assign a larger role to markets, and create macro-economic stability; among the most important measures were liberalisation of trade and capital flows, privatisation of state assets, free markets, and labor reforms (Escobar, 2010). However, the changes were costly: the growth of unemployment, weakening of the links between international trade and national production, greater structural unevenness among sectors of the economy, dreadful ecological impact, an increase in inequality (Escobar, 2010). Infamous Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and shock therapies brought with them a level of brutality by the ruling regimes that reached staggering proportions. (Escobar, 2010).

Nowadays, many of the neoliberal reforms are still in place, however, some important elements of the neoliberal project have been reversed: the state is back as the main actor in the management of the economy, particularly through redistribution and renationalisation of some of the previously privatised public companies, most notably in the field of energy resources (Escobar, 2010).

Perhaps, one of the most notable processes of the past few decades in Latin America is the forceful emergence of indigenous peoples on the political arena, for instance, the Zapatista uprising and the election of Evo Morales as President of Bolivia in 2006 did much to spread this fact among the international circles, but the phenomenon goes far beyond these examples (Escobar, 2010). Indigenous and black resurgence bring into light the arbitrary (historical) character of the dominant Euro-modernity, that universalises itself, and treats other groups as different and inferior through knowledge-power relations (coloniality) (Escobar, 2010). With that, critical conversations about modernity have become a matter of debate among indigenous and black intellectuals and movements in a number of countries, furthermore, it has seeped into the public sphere in countries like Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Guatemala, etc. (Escobar, 2010).

According to Gutiérrez and Escárzaga, indigenous peoples and movements ‘have been able to consolidate a heterogeneous and multiform pole of resistance and of social and political confrontation that places the indigenous movement as a central subject regarding the possibility of social transformation’ (as cited in Escobar, 2010, p. 10). The key elements are: first, the defense of the territory as the site of production and the place of culture; second, the right over a measure of autonomy and self-determination around the control of natural resources and ‘development’; and third, the relation to the state and the nation, most cogently articulated in the notion of plurinationality (Escobar, 2010).

The 1999-2009 decade has brought up some important challenges to the processes of neoliberal reforms in some countries at the level of the state and social movements and at their nexus (such as in the case of the Constitutional reforms in Ecuador and Bolivia); this has included important efforts to rethink the state in terms of plurinationality, societies in terms of interculturality, and economies in terms of combinations of capitalist and non-capitalist forms (Escobar, 2010).

Therefore, coloniality as a concept and a lived reality provided a foundational context for understanding the intellectual production in Latin America in general and in the Andes in particular (Quijano 2000). Although colonialism ended with independence, coloniality is a model of power that continues. Central to the establishment of this model was the codification of differences in ways that construct and establish a domination and inferiority based on race, serving as a fundamental criterion for the distribution of the population in ranks, places and roles within the social structure of power (Quijano 2000).

## **2.5 The Structure of Modern Latin American Societies**

The present socio-ethnic structure of the Andean countries is based on the Spanish colonial heritage. As mentioned in the paragraph 2.3, Creoles traditionally headed the social hierarchy. However, it did not last forever and successful mestizos succeeded in climbing the social ranks and the racial or ethnic background of the people became less relevant in determining their social status (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). Today wealth and income have become determining criteria in the social stratification of the societies, as well as ownership of land and urban real estate, education and occupation, political connections (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015).

In many instances, indigenous people, unfortunately, remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy, since the ethnic background remains seen to possess lower educational completion, inferior jobs and lower standards of living, although some indigenous people, especially in the cities, have achieved a higher status through education or economic success (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015).

While some indigenous people have assimilated in language, clothing, social norms and habits, some successful and respected native communities are proud of their heritage and manifest it in language, lifestyles and social traditions. For example, since the 1990s, the *indígenas* in Ecuador and Bolivia have been organising themselves in political and social movements (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015) In marches for dignity and territory, in road blocks and other actions, they have succeeded in drawing national and international attention to their concerns. In Bolivia, both the unions of miners

(*mineros*) and of the coca farmers (*cocaleros*) have successfully challenged the traditional political fabric of the country by forming the party Movimiento al Socialismo, which in 2005 won the national elections (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). With Evo Morales as its leader, for the first time in the history of the Republic, Bolivia had a native president.

Ethnicity and race have lost some of the former discriminatory labels with the recognition of different ethnic or racial groups in the constitutions of Andean countries. Ecuador and Bolivia are now identifying themselves as multi-ethnic and plurinational. In the Constitution of Ecuador of 2008, Article 56 states that “indigenous communities, peoples and nations, the Afro-Ecuadorian people, the back country people of the inland coastal region (*montubios*) and communes are part of the single and indivisible Ecuadorian State,” (Political Database of the Americas, 2008). Article 60 even states that “ancestral, indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian communities and *montubios* can establish territorial districts for the preservation of their culture” (Political Database of the Americas, 2008). Spanish, Quechua and Shuar were recognised as national languages. In the Andean countries, therefore, *indígenas* have gained additional political and social clout by mobilising themselves in political movements and parties.

The highest proportion of indigenous people is found in Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, although numbers are fluctuating. In general, the number of citizens with a native background has increased in recent years, most likely because more of them no longer try to hide their cultural background (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). Furthermore, statistical data in the Andean countries have a limited validity and many people, especially in remote areas, might not be reached by census (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015)

## **Summary**

As this chapter shows, the geographical diversity of the region influenced the formation of communities with particular forms of social organisation, adaptation and coexistence with nature (Adelaar & Muysken, 2004). In this context, the notion of *Lo Andino* appeared, referring to the particular way of being and living, to a person who identifies with the Andes geographically and culturally, as well as to a cosmovision of the region’s inhabitants (Estermann, 1998). What makes *Lo Andino* special is that its interpretation is common to many cultures and peoples inhabiting the region, no matter how diverse their languages and dialects and cultures are. There are core common concepts, such as community, complementarity, reciprocity, *ayllú*, which would later, together with

its ecological, societal and religious dimensions, become a foundation of the notions, first of Sumak kawsay in Ecuador and Suma Quamaña in Bolivia, and later Buen Vivir.

Ethnic stratification that is seen in the region today is the result of its history, in particular the colonial situation which has been maintained till present times in the form of internal colonisation. Independence from Spain did not bring full autonomy because when the Spanish officials were gone, European bankers, traders and settlers, brought by unraveling globalisation, stepped in. The nineteenth century was a period of more intensive exploitation of natural resources in Latin America. Nationalism appeared with the forging of new nations, and was often converted into a wish for the cultural homogeneity. Cities expanded, and urban values, brought by globalisation, were seen as signs of modernity, which meant that Indian lifestyles and traditions were threatened. Modernisation of agriculture was accompanied by the increasing mobility of rural labourers, and hence by the splitting up of traditional Indian communities as well as deterioration of nature and environmental degradation. Therefore, colonisation and later globalisation in Latin America have introduced a new dimension to the exclusion of people from development to which people have different reactions, for example, some might seek refuge in ethnic identities, which is of interest to this thesis. Such assertion of traditional or indigenous values is often the only thing that poor people can assert, for it brings an identity and meaning to their lives (Nayyar, 2006).

To sum up, this chapter attempted to depict the context where Buen Vivir was taking its beginning from, which is, perhaps, a combination of incredible geography and rich culture with some unfortunate events throughout the history. The next chapter, therefore, will provide an account of what Buen Vivir is in reality, how it builds on the indigenous concepts, the diverse definitions this concept received, emergence, and some critique.

### **3. Buen Vivir**

Development, according to Eduardo Gudynas, became a zombie concept, “dead and alive at the same time” (2011, p. 442). Although many industrialised countries are in a state of a deep multidimensional crisis, their main discussion is still at financial and instrumental levels. At the same time, while more and more socialist, progressive left governments are established in the Global South, they pose themselves as emerging economies that defend classical growth strategies: exporting cheap goods or trading natural resources (Gudynas, 2011).

This paradox that development can be declared dead and yet, at almost the same time, promoted as the only way forward is deeply rooted in modern culture (Gudynas, 2011). Since the modern world needs to provide solutions to modern problems, any alternative to development can open paths to move beyond the modern Western culture (Gudynas, 2011). Buen Vivir might be that alternative.

This chapter will, therefore, give an account of what Buen Vivir is, finding a definition of it, at the same time showing how vast the concept is, even with existence of some core features stemming from the Andean indigenous thinking. The main emphasis is placed on Bolivia and Ecuador, since it is in these countries where Buen Vivir went the furthest being included into the constitutional texts, which is a huge progress, however, not without its own controversies.

#### **3.1 What is Buen Vivir?**

Buen Vivir or sometimes referred to as Vivir Bien, which approximately means the good life or good living, are the Spanish words used in Latin America to describe alternatives to development, taking its roots from the Andean indigenous thinking. Nowadays, the term is widely used by social movements, it is also popular in some government programs, but more importantly, it has been included into two new Constitutions in Ecuador and Bolivia.

Buen Vivir is a plural concept because it is comprised of two main entry points: it includes critical reactions to classical Western development theory and it refers to alternatives to development emerging from indigenous traditions, and in this sense explores possibilities beyond the modern Eurocentric tradition (Gudynas, 2011). It is not similar to a Western understanding of well-being either, and it cannot be described as an ideology or culture (Chuji, Gudynas & Rengifo, 2019).

The richness of the term is difficult to render in English as there are many ways to describe what Buen Vivir is. It includes the classical ideas of quality of life, but with the specific notion that well-being is only possible within a community, which in most approaches understood in an

expanded sense, to include nature (Gudynas, 2011). Therefore, it embraces a deeper change in knowledge, affectivity and spirituality, an ontological opening to other forms of understanding the relation between humans and non-humans (Chuji, et al., 2019). From this point of view, Buen Vivir is also a plural concept, under construction, as there are many different interpretations depending on cultural, historical and ecological setting. It is, however, heterodox in that it fuses indigenous elements with internal critiques of modernity (Chuji, et al., 2019).

According to Eduardo Gudynas (2015), there are three uses of Buen Vivir that can be recognised:

1. *A generic use*, which refers to generic criticisms of different conventional development forms. It has been used in questioning the practice of corporations (for instance, blowing the whistle on companies that pollute), or as a slogan to characterise alternative projects by progressive South American governments (Gudynas, 2015, p. 202).
2. *A restricted use* corresponds to more complex criticisms of capitalism that call for a post-capitalist type of development. Most criticisms of this kind are linked to the socialist tradition and involve a debate about different kinds of desirable development. Although restricted use of the concept does not question economic growth or the utilitarian use of Nature, it does convey specific views on the ownership of resources and the role of the state in their allocation (Gudynas, 2015, p. 202).
3. *Substantive use* relates to a radical criticism of all forms of development at their conceptual foundations, and a consequent defence of alternatives that are both post-capitalist and post-socialist. These alternatives draw from indigenous knowledge and sensibilities, as well as critical Western strands of thought (Gudynas, 2015, p. 202).

Eduardo Gudynas (2015) underlines that substantive use is a plural and intercultural set of ideas, which are still under construction. According to him it was the original formulation of Buen Vivir, whereas the two former formulations are more recent (Gudynas, 2015).

Within Bolivia and Ecuador the ideas of Buen Vivir are declared both by contemporary intellectuals as well as in the political sphere. Therefore, according to Roger Merino (2016, p. 273) it is possible to distinguish between two groups: the statist extractive position (“republican biosocialism”, “twenty-first century socialism” or “Buen Vivir socialism”) which is represented by the governments who view natural resources as a means for achieving Buen Vivir. The second group is the one upholding the ecologist position, represented by critical political organisations and intellectuals, emphasises respect for nature and community relations as ways of maintaining Buen Vivir (Merino, 2016, p. 273).

The ecologist view is inspired by indigenous thinking and the post-development approach (Merino, 2016, p. 273). Post-development scholars such as Esteva and Prakash (1998) reject the construction of under-developed and the whole category of development by questioning its foundational paradigm of progress, its pretension of universality, and the way in which colonialism was ignored in the analysis of the richness of the developers and the poverty of the underdeveloped. The statist extractive view, however, is influenced by neo-Marxist approaches, such as, for instance, “socialism of the twenty-first century”, “communitarian socialism”, “citizens revolution”, “Bolivarian revolution”, “social and solidary economy”, “republican bio-socialism” (Merino, 2016, p. 273).

Another difference is how each approach relates to indigenous perspectives. The statist approach describes Buen Vivir as animist, accusing it of essentialising indigenous peoples as pre-modern ideal communities, at the same time, being inoffensive to the neoliberal model (Merino, 2016). The ecologist view is more disposed towards indigenous movements, although it includes socialist, feminist, anti-global and other approaches that include a postmodern combination of different ideas, which risks becoming a combination of different and even opposed concepts (Merino, 2016).

The indigenous notion of Buen Vivir is different from the statist and ecologist perspectives, which is why indigenous movements seek to reconnect it to their own demands for self-determination. It is not just an invented tradition, rather a reconstruction of traditional principles by modern indigenous and non-indigenous movements (Merino, 2016). Since Buen Vivir is a representation of ideas rooted in traditional indigenous thinking (Altmann, 2013), it, therefore, serves as a platform to express critical views of mainstream development, in order to enlarge the political dimension of current debates and foster the emergence of new conceptions, institutions and practices through collective learning (Vanhulst & Beling, 2014). That is why proponents of the ecologist perspective, post-development and critical intellectuals are inspired by the potential of Buen Vivir (Gudynas, 2011).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that there are divisions, complexities and uncertainties within the indigenous movement. For instance, De la Cadena and Starn (2007) state that indigenous activism is a complex and fragmented process; therefore, some of its elements are absorbed by

hegemonic practices and discourses and some occupy counter-hegemonic spaces<sup>4</sup> while others occupy both or move from one to the other (Merino, 2016).

According to Eduardo Gudynas (2015), Buen Vivir is not a return to the past; rather it confronts current situations with an eye to the future, it is not an academic discipline or a plan of action, but a set of ideas and sensibilities utilised on another level. This occurs in an intercultural context and might even generate mutual challenges, for example, the explorations of a transition from environmental justice, based upon third-generation human rights (quality of life or health), to ecological justice, specifically based on the rights of Nature (Gudynas, 2015). To sum up, “Vivir Bien is a space of debate and controversy in which there is no single absolute truth. There are many truths as well as countless lies that today are canonised in the name of Vivir Bien”, as Pablo Solón (2017, p.13) puts it.

### **3.2 Emergence of Buen Vivir**

The ancestors of Buen Vivir are found in the cosmovision of some Andean indigenous groups. Only three decades ago almost no one in South America was talking about this concept. What existed then was the Aymara *suma qamaña* and the Quechua *sumaq kawsay*, which express a set of ideas centred in the systems of knowledge of the native peoples as well as the living realities of the Andean communities (Solón, 2017). However, the translation of these expressions in Spanish with the term Buen Vivir is only a ‘pale metaphor’ as Medina (2011) calls it, of the original which should be interpreted with reference to complex constructs, related to culture, religion, society, and identity (as cited in Monni & Pallottino, 2015, p. 186). In reality, *suma qamaña* or *sumaq kawsay*, have a more complex set of meanings such as “plentiful life,” “sweet life,” “harmonious life,” “sublime life,” “inclusive life” or “to know how to live” (Solón, 2017, p. 15).

*Suma qamaña* and *sumaq kawsay* had arisen some centuries earlier and continued to exist in Andean communities, although withdrawing even further to the background under the pressure of modernity and developmentalism (Solón, 2017). In addition, among other indigenous peoples of Latin America there also existed similar visions, for instance, *teko kavi* and *ñandereko* of the Guaraní, *shiir waras* of the Shuar and *küme mongen* of the Mapuche (Solón, 2017). These and many more indigenous visions have existed for centuries, but only now they are being brought into the debate around development and Buen Vivir (Gudynas, 2011).

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<sup>4</sup> By hegemonic practices is meant the exercise of domination without applying direct violence; for example, the normalisation of racism in social and economic policies. Counter-hegemonic practices are the political demands of those groups affected by hegemonic practices (Merino, 2016, p. 283)



In fact, *suma qamaña*, although very popular, both inside and outside Bolivia, is not found in the every day life of Aymara communities. There is strong evidence that it was a recent creation, by the Aymara sociologist Simón Yampara (Gudynas, 2011). In his work one can find a detailed elaboration of traditional knowledge that responds to the present challenges imposed by classical development (see Yampara, 2001 as cited in Gudynas, 2011).

However, all these concepts should not be considered as mere variations of the same origin. Eduardo Gudynas (2011) points that these different visions are specific to each culture, with its own language, history, specific social and political contexts, and diverse physical environments. Hence, the Ecuadorian *sumaq kawsay* is not identical to the Guaraní *ñandereko*, and they are distinct from the others. Each of these expressions is linked to a people, territory, specific social and cultural system, and they can't be applied to other contexts (Monni & Pallottino, 2015).

During almost the whole 20th century *Buen Vivir* went unnoticed by the left and the workers' organisations, especially in urban areas, it began to emerge and be theorised toward the late 20th and early 21st century (Solón, 2017). The first references with similar meanings appeared only in the 1990s, in Peru, and later became much more significant in Bolivia and Ecuador (Gudynas, 2015).

Perhaps, *suma qamaña* and *sumaq kawsay* would have never given origin to *Buen Vivir* without the devastating impact of neoliberalism, classical development strategies and the Washington consensus (Solón, 2017). The failure of Soviet socialism, the absence of alternative paradigms, privatisation and commodification of nature, inspired a retreat to the indigenous practices (Solón, 2017).

Additionally, with the drawbacks of development projects implemented by governments and development banks in Latin America, it was clear that instrumental fixes or economic compensations were inadequate, and the classical development idea had to be abandoned (Gudynas, 2011). Such radical questioning was only possible within several indigenous traditions in South America, which do not have concepts such as development or progress in their cultures - the contribution of indigenous knowledge to *Buen Vivir*, therefore, continues to be a critical thread (Gudynas, 2011).

The indigenous struggle to defend their territories generated solidarity and awakened interest in understanding this self-managing vision of their territories (Solón, 2017). Some of the progressive intellectuals that had lost their utopias after the fall of the Berlin wall began to take a closer look at what could be learned from these indigenous cosmovisions (Solón, 2017). That is

how the concept of Buen Vivir emerged. One of the examples of such struggle is the Tungurahua watershed management system created through participatory governance based on the principles of Buen Vivir. It went furthest in institutionalising a development strategy reflecting principles of *sumak kawsay* and showed what an alternative to neoliberalism might look like in practice (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

At the same time, Buen Vivir, as a new concept, had not yet matured when suddenly, with the arrival of the governments of Evo Morales in Bolivia (2006) and Rafael Correa in Ecuador (2007), it was suddenly institutionalised by both countries in their new constitutions (Solón, 2017). This is how Buen Vivir became a central part of the official discourse with the national development plans of both countries including it as a reference.

### **3.3 Buen Vivir in the Constitutional Texts**

Although the institutionalisation of Buen Vivir has received global attention and has been viewed optimistically by intellectuals and social organisations as an alternative to capitalist development, the implementation of it has been very contentious in practice (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

It was Buen Vivir in its radical sense that influenced the drafting of the new Constitutions of Bolivia and, in particular, of Ecuador (Gudynas 2015). In both these countries, however, there have been political decisions and new laws that limited that radical development criticism fundamental to Buen Vivir (Gudynas 2015).

In the Constitution of Ecuador Buen Vivir takes the form of the rights to Buen vivir, including many social rights (nutrition, environment, water, education, housing, health, etc.) which have the same value as other sets of rights (collective indigenous rights, participation, rights of nature), as well as in the recognition of the rights of Mother Earth (Merino, 2016). The Constitution also contains a section named “Regimen of Buen vivir” which focuses on cultivating inclusion and equity, as well as preserving biodiversity and managing natural resources (Merino, 2016). Moreover, this regimen is supported by the development regimen: development is not a value in itself, it must serve to achieve Buen Vivir (Gudynas, 2011). Ecuador’s constitution and the government’s five-year development plan, called the National Plan for Buen Vivir provide one of the clearest articulations of a new development model based on Buen Vivir, demonstrating the viability of the concept as an alternative to conventional development, which might alter the terms of debate internationally (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

In Bolivia, *Buen Vivir* grants the ethical foundation of plurinationality, recognising that the state is a unity comprised by multiple nations (Merino, 2016). The Constitution of 1994 already acknowledged the multi-ethnic character of Bolivian society, giving some political rights to indigenous peoples. By that time, a law was enacted which decentralised the state by redistributing economic resources to municipalities (Merino, 2016). Areas with large numbers of indigenous groups were allowed to become indigenous municipal districts organised according to their own customs, although they were still subject to top-down state decision-making (Galindo, 2010). The new Constitution of 2009 goes beyond the previous one by recognising the plurality of Bolivian society and by providing a plurinational character to all government branches (Merino, 2016). Consequently, Bolivia moved from a multicultural state which recognises the social and political rights of indigenous peoples, towards a plurinational state in which indigenous peoples are perceived as nations (Galindo, 2010).

Although there are a lot of similarities, there are also differences in the two constitutional texts that are important to note. In Ecuador *Buen Vivir* functions at two levels: as a framework for a set of rights, as well as the mechanism of implementation of those rights (Merino, 2016). In the Constitution of Bolivia, this connection is not explicit since there is no reference to this concept in the section on fundamental rights, as well as there is no explicit recognition of the rights of nature. (Merino, 2016). Nonetheless, in the Bolivian Constitution the notion of plurinationality is strongly developed (Gudynas, 2011).

Furthermore, the two Constitutions present a rather gloomy view of the ownership of natural resources, with the possibility of exploiting indigenous land on behalf of national interests and the lack of recognition for prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples (Merino, 2016). The new constitutional design in Bolivia has not focused on the political economy which sustains resource dependence (Merino, 2016). Despite the need for industrialisation in order to break the extraction dependence and to increase the autonomy of indigenous peoples, the state dominates all of the natural resources, with no recognition of indigenous peoples' right to provide consent (Merino, 2016). This means that, in practice, the economic extractive model has not been challenged, so indigenous peoples' territories are constantly under threat (Merino, 2016).

In a similar fashion, the Ecuadorian Constitution establishes that the state dominates all natural resources and can even exploit protected areas, and there is also no recognition of indigenous peoples' right of consent (Merino, 2016). For indigenous populations this might be very problematic: since they perceive their territory as inalienable, the state shouldn't have the right to exploit it without their consent.

As was mentioned above, the maintenance of conventional views of development is problematic from the perspective of Buen Vivir. Many indigenous peoples do not agree with these views on development, which are equated with economic growth for the improvement of individual capabilities (Merino, 2016). Instead they struggle for the reinforcement of their cultures, for communal welfare and the recognition of their territorial rights (Merino, 2016).

Furthermore, there is a great distance between official announcements and actual political practices (Radcliffe, 2012), such as in the promotion of mining activities in the Amazon or national parks which are meant to be protected, despite both governments engagement with the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth in 2010 (World People's Conference on Climate Change & the Rights of Mother Earth's, 2010). Here, the problem is hidden in the fact that the programme financing is still based on conventional development ideas of the appropriation of nature and export of natural resources, therefore, increases in social spending make the governments even more dependent on exports (Merino, 2016). To sum up, Buen Vivir and conventional development are not compatible because they express different views about the political economy of extractivism (Gudynas, 2011).

### **3.4 The Core Common Ideas**

Even though the indigenous principles of Buen Vivir are peculiar to each people, there are some core common elements between them.

Buen Vivir criticises different types of conventional development, as well as its institutions and legitimising discourses (Gudynas, 2015). In particular, it rejects the idea of a predetermined historical linearity in which 'development stages' must be followed by all nations, imitating industrialised nations (Gudynas, 2015). Buen Vivir is open to multiple, parallel, non-linear, and even circular, historical processes and it questions development because of its obsession with economic growth, consumerism, commodification of nature, etc. (Chuji, et al., 2019). The alternatives are both post-capitalist and post-socialist, disengaging from growth, and focusing on the complete satisfaction of human needs from the standpoint of austerity (Chuji, et al., 2019).

In its substantive sense, Buen Vivir defends the diversity of knowledges and promotes interculturality under which Western ideas are not renounced but seen as one among many options (Gudynas, 2015). Buen Vivir rejects all forms of colonialism and keeps distance from multiculturalism, thus postulating the need to rebound politics on the basis of plurinationality (Chuji, et al., 2019). The modern separation between humanity and nature is also challenged. Buen Vivir acknowledges extended communities made up of humans and non-humans, animals, plants,

mountains, etc. in specific territories - as with the Andean concept of ayllu, mixed socio-ecological communities rooted in a specific territory (Chuji, et al., 2019). Furthermore, Buen Vivir rejects the instrumentalisation of Nature by humankind (Gudynas, 2015).

Buen Vivir bestows substantial importance upon affectivity and spirituality. Relationships in extended communities are not restricted to market exchanges or utilitarian links; instead they incorporate reciprocity, complementarity, communalism, redistribution, etc. (Chuji, et al., 2019).

The most important core common elements of Vivir Bien are the following: (1) its vision of the whole or the Pacha; (2) duality; (3) equilibrium; (4) complementarity; and (5) decolonisation (Solón, 2017, p. 17).

### **3.4.1. Pacha**

For Vivir Bien, the whole is the Pacha, which has often been translated simply as Earth (Solón, 2017). That is why we speak of Pachamama as Mother Earth, however, Pacha is a broader concept that includes the indissoluble unity of space and time, where the past, present and future, co-exist: the past is always present and is recreated by the future (Solón, 2017).

For Vivir Bien, time and space are not lineal but cyclical, and the time advances in the form of a spiral, that is why the lineal notions of growth and progress are not compatible with that vision (Solón, 2017). This spiral vision of time, therefore, questions the very essence of the notion of development. In the Pacha, there is no dichotomy between living beings and simple objects, as well as no separation between human beings and nature (Solón, 2017).

The objective of human beings, therefore, is not to control nature but to care for nature as one cares for the mother, which is the sense of the expression “Mother Earth” (Solón, 2017). Thus, *suma qamaña* and *sumaq kawsay* are Pachacentric, not anthropocentric.

### **3.4.2 Duality**

In Buen Vivir, there is a duality in everything since everything has contradictory pairs, for example, pure good does not exist; good and bad always co-exist (Solón, 2017). In the same light, the individual and the community are two poles of the same unit: an individual is a person only in as much as he or she works for the common good of his or her community because without community there is no individual and vice versa (Solón, 2017). The individual-community polarity is immersed in the humanity-nature polarity. The community is a community not only of humans but also of non-humans. Therefore, Buen Vivir involves living together in the duality as well as learning to interrelate with the other parts of the whole (Solón, 2017).

In the world there are a lot of indigenous peoples and they are very diverse from region to region. But even though they are different, they share the sense of belonging to their communities as well as the sense of responsibility towards them (Solón, 2017). The worst punishment is to be expelled from the community; it is worse than death because it is to lose your membership, your essence, your identity (Solón, 2017). Inequalities and differences always exist, so it is important to coexist with them, to prevent them from becoming more polarising, destabilising the whole (Solón, 2017).

Therefore, Buen Vivir is an attempt for redefinition of what is meant by well-being. To be rich or poor is a condition, but to be humane is an essential characteristic, thus, Buen Vivir is concerned less with well-being, and more with being well - the essence of the person (Solón, 2017).

### **3.4.3 Equilibrium**

The objective of Buen Vivir is the pursuit of equilibrium - a harmony not only between human beings but also between humans and nature, between diverse cultures and between different identities and realities, etc. (Solón, 2017). Since Buen Vivir has not embraced the notion of progress, in opposition, it pursues equilibrium, which is not similar to the stability that capitalism promises to achieve through continuous growth, rather it is always dynamic (Solón, 2017). This essential component of Vivir Bien has major implications because it challenges the paradigm of growth as well as promotes an alternative in the form of the pursuit of equilibrium: a society is vigorous not by its growth but because it contributes to equilibrium both between human beings and with nature (Solón, 2017).

### **3.4.4 Complementarity**

The above mentioned equilibrium can only be achieved through complementarity, which means seeing the differences as part of a whole. The objective is, therefore, to complement and complete the whole (Solón, 2017). Competition is seen as negative because some win and others lose, creating an imbalance. There should be rather a combination of strengths: the more people work together, the greater is the resilience of each and of all (Solón, 2017). Complementarity provides the diversity to balance the whole.

Accepting diversity also means that there exist other kinds of Buen Vivir besides the Andean version. They survive in the wisdom, knowledge and practices of peoples who are pursuing their own identity (Solón, 2017).

### **3.4.5 Decolonisation**

There is a continual struggle for decolonisation because colonisation did not end with the independence and constitution, but continued with new forms and structures of domination. Perhaps, the most difficult part of the decolonisation process is liberating the minds and souls, which have been occupied by alien concepts (Solón, 2017). To build Buen Vivir, it is important to decolonise both the territories and being (Solón, 2017). A key point here is not to return to the past but to put the past in the present, to transform memory as a historical subject. As Rafael Bautista puts it,

“The linear course of time of modern physics is no longer of use to us; that is why we need a revolution in thinking, as part of the change. The past is not what is left behind and the future is not what is coming. The more we are conscious of the past, the greater the possibility of producing the future. The real subject of history is not the past as past but the present, because the present is what always needs a future and a past.” (as cited in Solón, 2017, p. 26).

### **3.4.6. Overlaps with Other Ideas**

In its substantive use, Buen Vivir corresponds most closely to the concept of degrowth, since Buen Vivir rejects growth as the mean of development, which is especially true with regard to Buen Vivir’s criticism of consumerism (Gudynas, 2015). In a Latin American context some sectors must be downsized and consumerism rejected, but the improvement in other sectors, such as education or health, may result in economic growth (Gudynas, 2015). From this perspective it could be said that degrowth is one of the possible consequences and not an objective in itself, but unlike degrowth, Buen Vivir, because of its interculturality, follows more ambitious objectives to change modern cosmovisions. (Gudynas, 2015).

Buen Vivir is also based on critical thought within the Western tradition. The two most important sources are environmentalism, which proposes the rights of Nature, and new feminism, which questions patriarchal centralities and claims an ethic of care (Gudynas, 2015).

Thus, Buen Vivir represents the confluence of knowledge of different origins, and it cannot be restricted to be just an indigenous idea, because there is no such thing as an indigenous knowledge in the singular, as this is a colonial category (Gudynas, 2015). As a consequence, Buen Vivir includes some concepts of some indigenous groups, as each one has a specific cultural background: *suma qamaña* in Aymara communities is not the same as *sumak kawsay* of the Quechua in Ecuador (Gudynas, 2015). These are positions referring to each social and environmental context, which, furthermore have been influenced or mixed in different ways with

modern thinking, even though they have no relationship with ideas like the ‘good life’ in the Western context (Gudynas, 2011).

Other overlaps can be found between Buen Vivir and some of the socialist ideas (Gudynas, 2011). As the Buen Vivir moves in a post-capitalist direction, it is common for many people to assume that it is a new type of socialism or that there is a socialist trend towards the Buen Vivir, however, modern formulations of the 21st-century socialism are lying within the modern tradition, do not contain a strong environmental component, and are not intercultural (Gudynas, 2011).

To sum up this paragraph, there is a set of common ideas that provide unity to the perspective of Buen Vivir and help to border the concept. Buen Vivir can be interpreted as a platform where critical views of development and of modernity in general are shared (Gudynas, 2011).

### **3.5 Critique**

Buen Vivir has been the subject of heated criticism. Some critics see Buen Vivir as “a mystical return to an indigenous past, lacking any practical strategy” (Gudynas, 2011, p. 446). While others state that, in reality, it is an invention of the New Age (Chuji, et al., 2019). Intellectuals from the conventional left have maintained that the ideas of Buen Vivir are a distraction from the true objective, which is alternatives to capitalism; they also reject the intrinsic value of non-humans (Chuji, et al., 2019).

Despite these arguments, Buen Vivir ideas have achieved strong and widespread support within Andean countries; from there, they have spread rapidly throughout Latin America and the global scene (Chuji, et al., 2019). In addition, in some contexts, Buen Vivir is able to present precise proposals, such as introduction of environmental accounting, tax reforms, dematerialisation of economies and alternative regional integration within South America (Gudynas, 2011). It is also providing the basis for concrete alternatives to development, as in the constitutional recognition of the rights of Nature; moratoria on Amazon drilling; models for transitions to post-extractivism, etc. (Chuji, et al., 2019). All these proposals show that many different and even complex instruments can be handled under the framework: Buen Vivir will not stop building bridges, and will not reject the use of Western physics and engineering to build them, but it might propose for the bridges to have different sizes and materials, place them in other locations to serve local needs and not the needs of global markets (Gudynas, 2011).

Another source of criticism is found in the sharp contradiction between the original ideas of Buen Vivir and the development strategies of the Bolivian and Ecuadorian governments, who have



promoted extractivism in the forms of mega-mining or Amazonian oil extraction (Chuji, et al., 2019). These regimes have attempted to overcome these contradictions by finding new definitions of Buen Vivir, whether as a type of socialism in Ecuador, or as integral development in Bolivia, thus placing it again within modernity, which has been supported by some state agencies, intellectuals, and non-South American intellectuals (Chuji, et al., 2019).

## **Summary**

In summary, Buen Vivir is a proposal, concept, process, philosophy, movement, vision, living practice, platform, emerging discourse, system of knowledge, set of ideas, even an umbrella of different positions - there are many ways to define it, but one of the main points about it is that it is not static - it is constantly under construction, cultivated by different movements and activists, with its advances and setbacks, innovations and contradictions. It must necessarily be plural as it encompasses positions that question modernity while opening up other ways of thinking, feeling, and being rooted in specific histories, territories, cultures and ecologies (Chuji, et al., 2019). Further to this, there is a clear set of common ideas within this diversity, stemming from the Andean indigenous thinking, that distinguishes it from modernity, such as detachment from progress, the acknowledgement of extended communities and an ethics that accepts the innate values of the non-human (Chuji, et al., 2019). Buen Vivir also had its constitutional triumph in Bolivia and Ecuador, although this new stage, which initially was accompanied by great hopes, very quickly turned into profound disputes (Solón, 2017).

Nevertheless, the original ideas of Buen Vivir have been maintained and they continue to nourish social resistance to conventional development, for instance, in the case of the indigenous and citizen demonstrations in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru in defence of territory, water and Mother Earth (Chuji, et al., 2019). Therefore, Buen Vivir is not limited to only intellectuals and NGOs, but that it has gained a lot of popular support. In general, Buen Vivir can be interpreted as a platform where critical views of development and of modernity are shared. And even though the critiques that Buen Vivir lacks any strategy were widespread, it does propose alternatives which are not an instrumental fixing of current strategies, but a replacement of the very idea of development (Gudynas, 2015), which are needed in the modernity according to some scholars. A more clear example of how Global South reacts in response to globalisation will be presented in the following chapter to find out whether Buen Vivir can pose as the expression of the globalisation from below. The example is a case of a small province in Ecuador - Tungurahua and its new watershed management system.

#### **4. Scaling up Buen Vivir: the Case of Tungurahua**

In the light of the previous chapter as well as to be able to fulfil the objective of the thesis and to answer the main question posed in the introduction (How can an indigenous population of a small province in Ecuador make an impact on the local and national development strategies as well shift global debate towards an alternative model of development in terms of Buen Vivir?) it is important to look at particular cases of Buen Vivir and to consider what Buen Vivir means for the real people. One such example is a case of a small Ecuadorian province Tungurahua, which is going to be the main focus of this chapter. An attempt will be made at describing the case and main events leading to creation of the watershed management system created through Tungurahua's New Governance Model, based on the principles of Sumak kawsay or Buen Vivir. This case is particularly interesting as it became the 'prototype' of Ecuador's five-year development plan, called the National Plan for Buen Vivir. This plan, in turn, became an example of a new development strategy based on Buen Vivir, demonstrating that alternatives to conventional development do not simply exist, but that they are also possible.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: the chapter will present an account of Ecuador's water trust funds first to give an idea about the problems connected to water management, as well as the description of the system. Later in the chapter there will be a short paragraph on the Tungurahua province to paint a better picture of how it is and why Buen Vivir and water management is important to the people of this province. In the later paragraphs the description of the case will be presented, as well as how the case became global.

##### **4.1 Ecuador's Water Trust Funds**

Ecuador, like some other countries, struggles with problems of water quality and quantity and sometimes is unable to meet the demand for irrigation and human consumption, one of the problems, for example, is the destruction of water catchment areas, driven, partly, by the spread of agriculture (Kauffman, 2014).

In Ecuador, one of the collectors and regulators of water flows are páramos. Páramo is a high altitudinal wetland ecosystem in the upper Andes, which has been a reliable and constant source of high quality water and as such, the major water provider for the Andean highlands and part of the coastal plains (Buytaert, Iñiguez, Celleri, De Bièvre, Wyseure & Deckers, 2006). Páramo acts like a sponge, by absorbing moisture from the air and melting glacier (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Water is used both for consumption and production of electricity, therefore, there are a lot of benefits from watershed ecosystems for the population. Although the páramos are uninhabited,

man's influence was strong there. Human communities in the Andes have been mostly self-sufficient and reliant on subsistence agriculture, due to their isolation, coupled with access to a broad resource base (Ramsay, 1992). Nowadays, scientific evidence suggests that the quality and quantity of this water source may be at risk, due to increasing human interference in the wetland ecosystem (Buytaert, et al., 2006).

Unfortunately, due to Ecuador's unstable political and economic situation in recent decades, financing the conservation and restoration of watershed areas has been difficult (Jácome, 2004). Nevertheless, rather than turning to private markets or relying on state management, several Ecuadorian communities created their own innovative, decentralised mechanisms for financing watershed management (Kauffman, 2014). Over the last decade, they have been unfolding, which led to new developments in water financing providing important lessons to similar projects elsewhere (Kauffman, 2014).

Experience of Ecuador in financing watershed conservation is outstanding because it became home to two pioneering models for that (Wunder & Albán, 2005). In 2000, the municipality of Pimampiro launched one of the world's first voluntary, decentralised, payment for environmental services (PES) programs to protect the watershed where its water originates (Echavarría, Vogel, Albán & Meneses, 2004). That same year, the city of Quito established the Water Protection Fund (Fondo para la protección del Agua – FONAG) with a purpose of providing sustainable financing for the management and conservation of surrounding watersheds (Kauffman & Echavarría, 2012). It was innovative because it pioneered the use of trust funds in a decentralised mechanism for financing of watershed conservation (Kauffman, 2014). After these programs were created, coalitions of Ecuadorian and international organisations were formed to replicate each model through a series of campaigns, both within Ecuador and abroad (Kauffman, 2014).

Water funds are like other PES schemes in the fact that those who benefit from watershed ecosystem services are to pay to ensure these services continue. This money is used for a variety of watershed management activities, including compensation to “suppliers” (e.g., communities living in catchment areas) who work to maintain clean, consistent water supplies (Kauffman & Echavarría, 2012). Watershed management and conservation activities are financed by interest from the trust, as well as additional contributions by water users and external donors, sometimes, a portion of the trust itself is used to pay for projects (Kauffman & Echavarría, 2012).

In sum, water funds are a sustainable funding source for watershed conservation that is independently managed for long-term benefits, for example, the contracts for FONAG and FORAGUA are for 80 years (Kauffman & Echavarría, 2012). Independence, arrangement,

sustainable revenue stream, and long-term prospects provide a level of political and financial security lacking in other PES schemes. Moreover, funds managing water provide an institutional space linking a wide variety of stakeholders (e.g. local communities, public agencies, and private corporations) that facilitates decision-making and project implementation in a more collaborative environment (Kauffman & Echavarría, 2012).

#### **4.2 About the Tungurahua Province**

Tungurahua is the smallest province in Ecuador, which is located in the central highlands, with a population of approximately 500.000 people (Lauderbaugh, 2019). The capital city is called Ambato, and the province itself shares its name with one of the most active volcanoes in the world (Lauderbaugh, 2019).

The economy of Tungurahua is running on small-scale agriculture and diversified rural manufacturing, comprised of a number of small enterprises, a rural-urban network of markets that connects local producers with extraterritorial markets, and a well-developed road system that started expanding in the mid-20th century, when the province's capital Ambato became a centre for economic exchange between Ecuador's two largest cities: Quito and Guayaquil (Ospina Peralta & Hollenstein, 2015).

Tungurahua area has a big water deficit, despite the fact that 40% of its territory is traversed by the Ambato River, which is the main water source for Tungurahua Province and it is vital for its rural and urban activities, especially since agriculture is the main source of income for the indigenous and mestizos peasant communities (Herrmann, 2002). In addition, for 400 years, the Tungurahua peasants have used an indigenous irrigation channel built in the 17th century, which for a very long time, was possessed by landowners, and was returned to the peasants only in 1945 (Herrmann, 2002).

As a matter of fact, a myriad of historical, political, economic, social, cultural, human-induced and natural environmental factors were putting more and more pressure on the water resources, consequently, forcing the region to deal with erosion, pollution, overgrazing, harmful use of agrochemicals, water waste, unfair water distribution, poor management, leaky pipelines, lack of capital, lack of policies and enforcement — just to name a few (Herrmann, 2002).

#### **4.3 Watershed Management in Tungurahua**

In the 1980s, international and Ecuadorian NGOs began working with local communities to improve agricultural production in the upper Ambato River watershed, because of Tungurahua's

population density, high poverty rates, and importance for the country's food production. The main concern of NGOs was with soil erosion caused by subsistence expansion of the agricultural frontier into the páramos (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

Destruction of the páramos reduced the quality and quantity of water available to downstream users, including farmers using irrigation, urban consumers in Ambato, and hydroelectric companies, which led to unequal distribution, which, in turn, led to increasing conflicts over water, which were often ethnic in character (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Historically, wealthier mestizos living in lower areas controlled the water both for irrigation and consumption, while poorer indigenous farmers were left out from decision-making (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). One such example took place in 1962 when for taking water from an irrigation canal, 13 members of the Salasaca indigenous group were shot by the police, who were following orders of a powerful landowner claiming ownership of the water ignoring a 1960 law that made water a public good and guaranteed access to the farmers (Kauffman, 2017).

By the 1990s, a variety of organisations sought to address the water shortages and conflicts. International development agencies like GTZ (German Technical Cooperation Agency) supported projects by local development NGOs like Central Ecuatoriana de Servicios Agrícolas (CESA) and Instituto de Ecología y Desarrollo de las Comunidades Andinas (IEDECA), which had long worked with indigenous communities and water councils to improve agricultural production and water delivery systems (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). At first, they worked rather independently, but it changed in 1998 when GTZ launched its watershed management project GTZ-PROMACH (an acronym for: PROgrama de MANejo de Cuencas Hidrográficas), to unite these efforts and create a more integrated system for managing the watershed (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

Complying to the dominant international norms, GTZ promoted a market for ecosystem services to mould incentives for the water users, finance conservation of the catchment areas and canal improvements (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). In 2001 a Costa Rican team was hired to design a PES program with an idea to tax water consumption and use this money to pay landowners to conserve and restore priority areas (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). The provincial government and GTZ were sure that the idea would be popular among the people. Even the government's director of water resources, Carlos Sánchez announced: "many are prepared to cooperate and pay the Council taxes to be reinvested. If the Provincial Council makes an investment of around \$100,000 over the next two or three months, they will be willing to invest with their taxes for at least thirty years" (as cited in Kauffman & Martin, 2014, p. 47).

However, GTZ and the provincial government were shocked when the proposal was met with fierce resistance and complaints from members of farmer associations and irrigation councils, who were insisting that the plan would finance the program from the pockets of poor farmers who are not able to afford it (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Indigenous groups also shared this concern rejecting the idea out of fear that it would lead to the privatisation and commodification of nature, which would breach the indigenous principles (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Even Ecuador's National Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities, CONAIE joined the Tungurahua's indigenous movements using cultural symbols to challenge the PES, arguing that water resources belong to a sacred deity Pachamama, and claiming that "Pachamama is not for sale!" (Kauffman, 2017).

Such harsh resistance alarmed the provincial government, and this could have put a stop on the reform campaign, if it wasn't for advocates who continued pushing and organising stakeholders (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). One of those advocates was Alfredo Cruz - one of GTZ's lead technicians for PROMACH - who was promoting a more participatory approach, which resonated with Fernando Naranjo, prefect (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Naranjo also wanted to build a more participatory planning process and was impressed with the participatory watershed management systems GTZ already helped create elsewhere (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

Therefore, this was to become Tungurahua's "New Governance Model," a unique, participatory approach to development within Ecuador (Kauffman, 2017). During 2002 the provincial government and GTZ arranged workshops to determine the needs and priorities of the community and after compiling all the collected information, on April 14–15, 2003, at a provincial assembly it was agreed to create a development agenda and strategy for moving forward (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). It was proposed to construct a "new Tungurahuan provincial government" that would be "participatory and in which all actors would combine forces to achieve development in the province [and] improve the population's living conditions" (From Gobierno Provincial de Tungurahua 2009, 7–8, as cited and translated by Kauffman & Martin, 2014, p. 48).

One year later, the new provincial government was constituted through the creation of three participatory institutions identified as pillars of development or *espacios de concertación*<sup>5</sup>: water, people, and work, which later comprised "parliaments," allowing any actor to participate in working groups tasked with developing policy proposals (Kauffman, 2017). The Water Parliament consisted of four working groups dealing with the páramos, irrigation, potable water, and sanitation, for which civil society organisations demanded to be given legal powers in the same lines as the

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<sup>5</sup> spaces for negotiating social contracts

provincial council (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). This is how the Tungurahua's New Governance Model came to light.

This social approach definitely helped engage the citizens in the Water Parliament. In its first year, representatives of 187 public and private organisations participated, however, during the following years, the number of participating organisations increased and by 2009 there were already 597 participants (Kauffman, 2017). Therefore, the Water Parliament became an important mobilising link between the various stakeholders.

Nonetheless, the three most powerful indigenous movements of the province—the Indigenous Movement of Tungurahua (MIT), Indigenous Movement of Tungurahua-Atocha (MITA), and Association of Evangelical Indigenous of Tungurahua (AIET)—did not take part in the discussion, although GTZ actively promoted indigenous participation knowing that gaining indigenous support would be crucial (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

While all the indigenous movements represented Quechua peoples, each of them associated themselves with different national indigenous movements, often differed on policy and even competed against each other in elections (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). This created an obstacle in the collective action because, and even though the indigenous leaders were skeptical, they understood that their absence could isolate them from decisions on páramo and water management - issues that were of huge importance to them (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

Howbeit, a few members of MITA and AIET attended meetings of the Water Parliament, and after being disappointed that decisions were taken without their input, they convinced the movement leaders to join as well (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). MIT refused at first, accusing the others of “selling the páramos” and privatising water, but after AIET and MITA took concrete actions, MIT decided to join (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Thus, on February 15, 2004, the three indigenous movements signed a contract with GTZ to facilitate collaboration on natural resource management (Kauffman, 2017).

A real turning point came when GTZ , after changing the focus a little, directed the meetings to develop an action plan on the issues of agro-ecological production, with an emphasis on poverty reduction and wellbeing, which was gaining support and community members identified other areas of concern that they should pursue (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). In 2005, the indigenous movements, supported by their communities, came to an agreement to pursue five action items together: páramo management, agricultural production, health, education, and organisational strengthening (Kauffman, 2017).

Furthermore, indigenous leaders named their common achievement *Mushuk Yuyay*, which is Kichwa for ‘new ideas’ opposing their governance and development approach to the one conventionally pursued by the Ecuadorian state, international NGOs, and donor agencies (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Rather than focusing on individualism, economic growth, and protecting nature from human intervention, *Mushuk Yuyay* reflected ideas affiliated with *Buen Vivir* and strived for a governance process based on dialogue and interculturality<sup>6</sup> to “improve the quality of life” through “economic solidarity,” “communal interest,” “collective rights,” and “sustainable management of resources, education and health” (From Gobierno Provincial de Tungurahua 2008, 26–27, as cited in Kauffman & Martin, 2014, p. 50). In other words, following *Mushuk Yuyay* development was seen in achieving and maintaining wellbeing through a strategy that integrated the restoration of páramo ecosystems, food security, and education to create healthy communities (Kauffman, 2017).

The main purpose of *Mushuk Yuyay* was restoration and maintenance of the páramo lands, since they are not only an important water source, but also a cultural symbol for the Andean indigenous groups in Ecuador, for whom the páramo is equal to *Pachamama* and represents the historic struggle for access to land and water (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

In accordance with *Buen Vivir*, the restoration of páramo aimed at improving the wellbeing of the ecosystem by helping its inhabitants to improve their wellbeing, at the same time, remaining in harmony with nature.

To achieve that goal, plant nurseries were created to support the reforestation of degraded areas with native species, including those with medicinal qualities, which led to including reforestation into a new health program which was a fusion of Western and indigenous knowledge (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). To promote food security and reduce poverty *Mushuk Yuyay* also integrated páramo restoration with agricultural programs through creation of the Association of Agro-ecological Producers of Tungurahua (PACAT) to train farmers in ecological practices that produce healthier foods both from ecological and nutritional point of view (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). A special stress was put on return to traditional crops that were ecologically friendly and provided a healthier diet, as well as to native species, including guinea pigs and alpacas, whose padded feet do not damage páramo vegetation the way the cattle and pigs do with their cloven hooves (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). New species were introduced as well, but only the ones

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<sup>6</sup> respect for diverse ideas and cultural traditions



compatible with restoration , for example, trout farms that would provide additional protein (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

Thus, mobilisation around páramo management in the 2000s contributed to the rising number of indigenous communities endorsing voluntary agreements to limit the agricultural activities and create more páramo management plans (Kauffman, 2017).

On a different note, although indigenous communities were against a PES program, which to them meant privatisation, they opened up to the idea that downstream water users benefiting from restored catchment areas should provide a compensation to the indigenous communities for the public service of watershed restoration and maintenance (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

On June 4, 2008, to finance the activities related to protection of the páramo ecosystems, the Tungurahuan Fund for Páramo Management and Fight Against Poverty was created, also directed at the improvement of living standards for the inhabitants (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

The proposal for the fund's final design came from the indigenous peoples themselves: it was designed with regards to indigenous priorities concerning community wellbeing and their worries about the commodification and privatisation of natural resources (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Moreover, unlike a PES, their fund does not directly compensate individual landowners, rather, it finances a range of activities a designed in the best interests of the whole ecosystem, including the communities living within (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Instead of a tax, the fund is subsidised by voluntary contributions from its partners (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

The above mentioned characteristics, such as voluntary contributions and no payments to individuals, were decisive for gaining indigenous support as they highlight a community approach to wellbeing as well as the fact that natural resources belong to the people (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

#### **4.4. Scaling up Buen Vivir**

The watershed management system created through Tungurahua's New Governance Model could not go unnoticed and started gaining nation-wide attention as an outstanding example of participatory governance based on the principles of Buen Vivir — interculturality and human wellbeing. Partly, Tungurahua's experience expanded thanks to the corporatist structure of Ecuador's national indigenous movements, which had long advocated Buen Vivir as an alternative to neoliberal development strategies (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Communities in several other Andean provinces, such as Chimborazo, Cañar, Azuay, also mobilised under *Mushuk Yuyay*, nevertheless, the province of Tungurahua went furthest in institutionalising a development strategy

under the principles of Sumak kawsay and showing how an alternative to neoliberalism might look in reality (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

More importantly, Tungurahua's model was evolving just as Ecuador started a state restructuring process: as in April 2007, Ecuadorians supported a referendum for an assembly composing a new constitution (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Indigenous groups saw the referendum as a resistance to the neoliberal globalisation, which, according to them, undermined wellbeing of the majority of the population by handing out the country's wealth to corporate interests (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). In addition, neoliberalism's strategy of development through increased consumerism, led indigenous groups to erect Buen Vivir in opposition to neoliberalism and globalisation (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

For many, the new constitution was an anticipated political 'window' to pursue an alternative development path based on indigenous goals and values. That is why believing they would be most influential by working within the government of newly elected President Correa, many indigenous activists and leaders joined his movement to ensure that Buen Vivir had a central place in the new constitution (Becker, 2011).

The new constitution was approved in 2008 and laid Buen Vivir into the foundation of a new development model (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). The preamble of it states: We decided to construct a new form of citizen coexistence, in diversity and harmony with nature, to reach 'el buen vivir, el sumak kawsay' (as cited in Walsh, 2010, p.18). After that, the Ministry of Planning and Development was entrusted with creating a five-year plan for reaching Buen Vivir. As a matter of fact, according to Diego Martínez, Ecuador's undersecretary for planning and development, it was the experience from Tungurahua that presented an important model for designing the future plan (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). Furthermore, this influence is indicated by the similarities between institutions and approach of Tungurahua and the ones of Ecuador's national government, which is reflected in the constitution and development plan (Kauffman & Martin, 2014). To sum up, explicitly rejecting neoliberalism and globalisation, constitution and development plan of Ecuador conceive a type of development anchored in respect for local wisdom, cultural values, fair access to natural resources like land and water, local agricultural production to achieve food security, education, health, and the rights of nature.

## Summary

In the case of Tungurahua, water (or its shortage) was the main divide that spilled into multiple conflicts, and, at the same time, later functioned as a link that produced important coalitions.

The Tungurahua's watershed management reform really brought the spotlight to the issue of how cooperation at the local level could influence the implementation of truly global and, meaningful at the local level, policies. The indigenous peoples of Tungurahua did not welcome international policies for watershed management because of the concerns they had about what it would mean to the local populations, however, they did not reject the proposals coming from NGOs completely. Instead, the local population, including local government and indigenous organisations leaders, tried and managed to convince their international associates to construct the programs in accordance with the local 'standards' of *sumak kawsay*.

Therefore, Tungurahua's watershed reform comprises a concrete example of how *Buen Vivir* can be manifested in reality. Other communities and especially Ecuador's well-organised indigenous movements, could not help but notice the institutionalisation of *Buen Vivir* through the model and further organised themselves to bring *Buen Vivir* into the foundation of Ecuador's new constitution and national development plan. In turn, institutionalisation of *Buen Vivir* in Ecuador oscillated with a global impact by introducing a possible option in the form of *Buen Vivir*, simultaneously challenging the dominant approach to development — a clear example of the globalisation from below. It showed to the world that it is possible to seek and find development that does not stem from the Western ideals of individualism, a humankind and nature dualism, and a linear concept of progress rooted in material growth (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

## Conclusion

Globalisation is an uneven process and its consequences have profound implications for development. In Latin America the rates of growth were quite low during this period, which became a cause for concerns among the critics, but also among the population. These concerns, combined with the historical imprints left on this region, induced the growth of some resistance to globalisation, which involving linking of knowledge and political action in civic initiatives, can be described as globalisation-from-below (Falk, 1997, p. 19). For most, it was clear that development of the kind offered by neoliberalism is not an option and the ability to provide solutions to modern problems in the modern world has been increasingly compromised.

Indeed, colonisation and later globalisation in Latin America have introduced a new dimension to the exclusion of people from development to which people have different reactions, for example, some might seek refuge in ethnic identities, which is of interest to this thesis, because through the geographical diversity of the region there exist a myriad of different indigenous cultures. What was common to those cultures is the interpretation of some core concepts of Lo Andino, such as community, complementarity, reciprocity, ayllú, just to name a few, which would later, together with its ecological, societal and religious dimensions, become a foundation of the notions, first of Sumak kawsay in Ecuador and Suma Quamaña in Bolivia, and later Buen Vivir.

Buen Vivir is a proposal under constant construction, enhanced by different movements and activists, with its advances and setbacks, innovations and contradictions. It is plural since it encompasses positions that question modernity while opening up other ways of thinking, feeling, and being rooted in specific histories, territories, cultures and ecologies (Chuji, et al., 2019). Further to this, there is a clear set of common ideas within this diversity, stemming from the Andean indigenous thinking, that distinguishes it from modernity, such as detachment from progress, the acknowledgement of extended communities and an ethics that accepts the innate values of the non-human (Chuji, et al., 2019).

The original ideas of Buen Vivir continue sustaining social resistance to conventional development, it is not limited to only intellectuals, but that it has gained a lot of support among the population. In general, Buen Vivir can be interpreted as a platform where critical views of development and of modernity are shared. And even though the critiques that Buen Vivir lacks any strategy were widespread, it does propose alternatives which are not an instrumental fixing of current strategies, but a replacement of the very idea of development (Gudynas, 2015).

To fulfil the objective of the thesis and to find out whether Buen Vivir can serve as an example of globalisation-from-below, it was essential to look at particular cases of Buen Vivir and to consider what Buen Vivir means for the real people. One of such examples is a case of a small Ecuadorian province Tungurahua, and its New Governance Model.

So, how can an indigenous population of a small province in Ecuador make an impact on the national development strategies and shift the global debate toward an alternative model of development in the terms of Buen Vivir?

In the case of Tungurahua, water, and its shortage, in particular, was the main divide that spilled into multiple conflicts, and, at the same time, later functioned as a link that produced important coalitions. The watershed management reform really brought the spotlight to the issue of how cooperation at the local level could influence the implementation of truly global and, meaningful at the local level, policies. The indigenous peoples of Tungurahua did not welcome international policies for watershed management because of the concerns they had about what it would mean to the local populations, however, they did not reject the proposals coming from NGOs completely. Instead, the local population, including local government and indigenous organisations leaders, tried and managed to convince their international associates to construct the programs in accordance with the local 'standards' of *sumak kawsay*.

Therefore, the reform of the watershed involved the linking of indigenous and local knowledge and political action in civic initiatives, which by the definition provided in the theoretical part of the thesis, can be described as globalisation-from-below. Moreover, Tungurahua's watershed reform comprises a concrete example of how Buen Vivir can be manifested in reality and pose as the expression of globalisation-from-below, which fulfils the objective of the thesis. Since other communities and especially Ecuador's well-organised indigenous movements took a notice of the institutionalisation of Buen Vivir through the model, they further organised themselves to bring Buen Vivir into the foundation of Ecuador's new constitution and national development plan. In turn, constitutionalisation of Buen Vivir in Ecuador oscillated with a global impact by introducing a possible option in the form of Buen Vivir, simultaneously challenging the dominant approach to development. It showed to the world that it is possible to seek and find development that does not stem from the Western ideals of individualism, a humankind and nature dualism, and a linear concept of progress rooted in material growth (Kauffman & Martin, 2014).

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