

GOOD LIVING OR LIVING WELL AS A CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE PREDOMINANT VISION OF DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

For over a decade now, Latin America has played a leading role in renewing the critique of the notion of western development by ascribing constitutional status to the knowledge and practices of native peoples of the continent. Thus, the Good Living or Living Well (GL/LW) have become alternatives to development as they question the conception of only economic growth, by putting forward a balanced relationship with nature, and redefining exchange relationships on the basis of the reciprocity principle.

Hence, in this work, we intend to analyze the constitutional reform processes of Ecuador and Bolivia based on GL/LW as critique to the proposal of the hegemonic notion of development. It is important to highlight the visibility acquired by these alternative ways of organizing community life against an economy of capital accumulation, which purports to be a globally closed and unique option (Álvarez, 2012: 168).

Now, after 10 years since the beginnings of these processes, can it be said that these reforms had a significant impact on our society? By virtue of these alternatives to the hegemonic model of production, new fields of research have opened up about the different forms of contradiction between capital-labor.

Keywords: Good Living, Living Well, development, Latin America, Social and Solidarity Economy.

INTRODUCTION

For over a decade now, Latin America has played a leading role in renewing the critique of the notion of western development by ascribing constitutional status to the knowledge and practices of native peoples of the continent.

Thus, the Good Living or Living Well (GL/LW) have become alternatives to development as they question the conception of only economic growth, by putting forward a balanced relationship with nature, and redefining exchange relationships on the basis of the reciprocity principle.

The adoption of a GL/LW notion was an attempt to change the way in which the use of space is conceived of and, therefore, the way in which the relationships established among individuals and between individual and nature are conceived of. In other words, it is a philosophical contribution that challenges basic concepts of Modernity and of the capitalist civilization, since they are plural, multidimensional concepts in construction. (Gudynas, 2011).

Nevertheless, constitutional recognition of these ancestral practices that represent a new set of strategies (called Social and Solidarity Economy) of Ecuador and Bolivia Governments have shown flaws, since they face the dilemma of designing two opposite models of development to avoid the issue of growth and distribution. In fact, current chances of distribution are related to the strengthening of the production model of extractivism, which stands at the opposite side of what the Constitutions hold.

For this reason, the temporary panorama these renewed old practices imply goes beyond present time and must be interpreted as the beginning of a civilatory change free of contradictions, and of current and future struggles, which exceed the achievements of the progressive governments of Rafael Correa in Ecuador and Evo Morales in Bolivia.

Hence, in this work, we intend to analyze the constitutional reform processes of Ecuador and Bolivia based on GL/LW as critique to the proposal of the hegemonic notion of development. We believe that it is important to point out the importance acquired by alternative ways of organizing communal life before capital accumulation economy, which aims at being the only option in the world (Álvarez, 2012).

Historical evolution of the notion of development and its turning into neoliberalism

The usual meanings of the word "development" point to advances and progress in the economic and social sphere¹. In addition, the conventional meaning of development, and the so-called "development economics", gained currency immediately after the Second World War. Ideas were outlined, backed by economic theory, and presented as practical responses to challenges such as poverty and wealth distribution. A division was established between developed countries and underdeveloped nations (including Latin America) (Gudynas, 2011).

Thus, the idea of development became tied to economic growth and, consequently, the issue of human well-being was left in a subordinate position, since it was felt that inequality and poverty would be solved essentially by economic means. Since the attachment to progress and modernity was already evident in Latin America since the 19th century, development ideas were easily slotted in place to represent a supposed economic and social revolution.

By the mid-20th century, development concepts had become almost indistinguishable from those of economic growth. Growth was said to take place in a series of stages, as described by Rostow (1965), whereby the backward countries ought to be inspired by the advanced economies and follow their example. According to these authors, the key issue was economic growth rather than income distribution, and this type of thinking led to a hardening of the insistence on resorting to indicators such as the Gross Domestic Product, turning it into a target itself (Gudynas, 2011).

Thus, by the mid-20th century, the idea of development that had become consolidated was one of a linear process of essentially economic evolution, brought about by making use of natural resources, guided by different versions of efficiency and profitability, and aimed at emulating the western lifestyle (Quijano, 2000).

Shortly after these ideas about development became widespread, the first critiques started to appear. These first alerts reached Latin America, although the region's attention was focused more on the debates initiated by Raúl Prebisch. His position,

¹ The word comes from other fields, and was often used in biology, for example, to refer to the stages of growth and maturity of a living being. In the social sciences and in politics, development alludes to a wide range of academic and practical matters; there are even agencies that include the word in their names (like the Inter-American Development Bank, IDB).

known as structuralism, placed emphasis on the heterogeneous structure of Latino America's economies, in which more advanced sectors coexisted alongside others that were backward and subsistence-based². These economies specialized in exporting just a few primary commodities, although they had some modern enclaves. This gave rise to asymmetrical relations between a centre, occupied by the industrialised countries, and a periphery comprised of the developing countries (Bonetto and Piñero, 2006).

In the years that followed, further steps were taken with what became known as dependency theory. In this case, the starting point was the insight that underdevelopment is not a phase that precedes development, but rather its consequence and, to a great extent, the result of colonialism and imperialism (Bonetto and Piñero, 2006). Capitalism, including the asymmetries in international trade, was the explanation for this unequal situation, and in fact it acted as a brake on progress. Based on these ideas, development is conceived of as a world, historical phenomenon. In few words, this theory is an analysis of imperialism seen from dependent countries.

According to Gudynas (2011:4), "Dependency theory branched out into several variations (Bustelo, 1998), depending on how international conditionalities or the role of local historical-political contexts (exemplified among others, by Gunder Frank, 1970; Furtado, 1964; Cardoso and Faletto, 1969). While conventional development economics did not adequately take into account historical situations or power relations, dependency theory brought them into the foreground".

Although all these heterodox positions strongly criticized the onward march of development, they nonetheless repeated some of its basic ideas, such as the importance of economic growth as the expression of material progress (Bonetto and Piñero, 2006)³.

² This theory was very influential and explains, for instance, the substitution strategies that sought to replace imports by means of domestic industrial production. It also introduced a much-needed international view of development.

³ In general, they assigned a major role to industrialization and called for greater efficiency in the exploitation of natural resources. The debates centred on questions such as how the supposed benefits were to be distributed, the asymmetries in international relations between countries, ownership of the means of production, etc. What was not up for discussion were the ideas of "advancement", "backwardness", "modernization" or "progress", or the need to take advantage of Latin America's ecological wealth to feed that economic growth. This is why alternative development proposals kept economic progress at their core, and the debates focused on the best means to achieve such progress.

At more or less the same time as the debates about dependency were going on, environmental warnings began to be sounded questioning the key idea of development as perpetual growth. An example was the alternative model *Catastrophe or New Society? A Latin American World Model* in 1975, coordinated from the Bariloche Foundation under the leadership of Amílcar Herrera⁴. The case of this alternative Latin American model should be borne in mind, because some elements of this perspective reappeared years later in the policies of certain progressive governments (Gudynas, 2011).

Parallel with the debates on the ecological limits of economic growth, other critical approaches attempted to reformulate the economic and social aspects of development. The most important contribution was the concept of “human scale development,” proposed by the Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef. This is based on three key propositions: development should focus on people rather than objects, the means to satisfy needs can be identified, and poverty is a plural concept that depends on unmet needs (Max-Neef et al., 1993).

As the 1970s debate on the environment and development continued to evolve, the first versions of the concept of “sustainable development” appeared at the beginning of the 1980s. The term “sustainable” came from population biology, and is understood as the possibility of extracting or harvesting renewable resources provided that this is done without exceeding their renewal and reproduction rates (Gudynas. 2011). Such extraction should also be directly aimed at meeting human needs and ensuring quality of life, goals that differ from simple growth.

At the end of the 1980s, the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe resulted in the discreditation of the options spoken of as alternatives. At the same time, neoliberal and neoconservative policies were starting to become consolidated in Latin America. These are the years when market reforms, the Washington Consensus and the drive to privatize came to prominence, and the range of possible alternatives shrank accordingly. These ideas circulated throughout the continent, with the support of local

⁴ It is a forward-looking and prescriptive model, which maintains that the problems "are not physical but sociopolitical, and based on the unequal distribution of power, both internationally and within countries." As a solution, it proposes “a fundamentally socialist society, based on equality and the full participation of all human beings in society’s decisions,” in which the consumption of material goods and economic growth would be regulated to make them compatible with the environment (Herrera, 2004).

elites and the adherence of academic institutions. The discussion about development was becoming meaningless, as it was assumed that the market would more or less spontaneously generate development; planning and intervention were seen as pointless as well as dangerous.

The globalized capital generates economic forces that exacerbate their innate predatory impulses towards nature in general and human beings in particular. Extractivism, over-exploitation of the waged and other forms of work organization included in the capital are phenomena resulting from the logic of endless accumulation of capital, which drives the new acceleration of the destructive innovation and the privileged sectors' wave of consumerism (Gudynas, 2011).

This material process entails subjective effects that result in the hegemony of capitalist culture. We refer specifically to the effect of forty years of neoliberalism, which can be summarized as the formation of common sense as fatalist acceptance (Coraggio, 2013):

- a) the social integration of the economy through a set of institutions typical of a market economy (market economy is an irreversible fact that can only be moderated politically or by limiting its defects)
- b) the concept of rationality as instrumental rationality, driven by the rendering of the absolute utilitarianism of individuals or particular groups (we are selfish by nature),
- c) the capital enterprise paradigm that implies identifying profitability with efficiency and competing rather than cooperating (we must learn from enterprises to improve our income at the expense of others),
- e) the notion of wealth as mass of commodities, ignoring the production for the family or community consumption (the lifestyle we all wish is that which grants access to great goods resulting from business innovation);
- f) the identification of a good living as an individual access to choices with the optimization of well-being in common, meaning the possession and consumption of commodities (the more I have, the happier I am and, in turn, the more I am accepted by society);

g) the social discrimination between the winners and losers in market, as well as between cultures close to capitalism and those regulated by other ideas, especially community cultures (such as the homeless, since they do not want to work);

h) the objectification and commodification of nature and human life in every sense (any resource whose utility is measured by the profit or income it allows to obtain).

From 1999 on, there was in Latin America a political retreat in terms of neoliberal reforms of market, whose political expression was made evident in the accession of governments self-defined as left-wing or progressive⁵. This turning resulted from, on the one hand, several processes, such as acid criticism and reactions to neoliberal strategies and, on the other hand, the opening of debates on development.

Thus, the wave of neoliberal reforms was partly stopped, and different regulatory controls were imposed; different processes of strengthening of the State, including the return of state-owned enterprises, and new programs to tackle poverty were widely executed. The context of the debate on development changed completely. Nevertheless, the group of progressive governments is very diverse, therefore, there are distinct focuses on policies, which range from extreme control over currency exchange and trading of basic goods, like in Venezuela, to economically more orthodox policies, like the ones implemented in Brazil or Uruguay.

In the case of Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, the criticism against capitalism intensified, and new proposals to build a "21th century socialism" appeared. But the situation is different in the other countries. For example, a kind of "national and popular" development was formed in Argentina, which emulated the invitation to growth and exports, but with strong state intervention extended to the service of popular sectors (Gudynas, 2011). In the case of Brazil, the *novo desenvolvimento* was even more moderate; it assigned a greater role to the State, provided it was functional to the market. It rejected neoliberalism, but it stepped away from what it calls the "old left-wing populism", and finally, it frankly declared itself a liberal development (Bresser Pereira, 2007).

⁵ This group includes the administrations of Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Tabaré Vázquez and José Mujica in Uruguay, and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Others add up to this group the past administrations of Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet in Chile, and up to a certain extent, Fernando Lugo in Paraguay. Finally, the new administration of Ollanta Humala in Peru with all likelihood will be part of this group.

In both countries, these theoretical approaches are very diverse, but when it comes to this analysis, what must be highlighted is that the debates are not over the rationality of development as growth, the role of exports or of investments, or mediation in the appropriation of nature. Similarly, social matters are focused on issues such as poverty, although there is not an intercultural view. In general, what is persistently discussed is the instrumentalization of the supposed progress, the role of the State in it (as a regulating body, or by implementing directly through state-owned enterprises, for example), and ways of distribution of the surplus obtained (Gudynas, 2011).

The situation becomes still more complicated when it comes to the actual practices of the progressive governments and their action plans. Some have stuck to macroeconomic orthodoxy (the Lula da Silva or Tabaré Vázquez administrations, for example), and others have attempted larger-scale interventions, as in the case of Venezuela. But all of them defended economic growth as synonymous with development, and believed that it is achieved by increasing exports and maximizing investments.

These are precisely the key components of the "myth" of development stressed in Celso Furtado's warning. The same idea of development that was circulating in the 1960s and 1970s has reappeared in a new guise (Gudynas, 2011).

Subordination to transnational corporations and globalization in the area of trade and, with it, world governance as a whole, have ceased to be an object of criticism and are now accepted. Although extractivism veers away from social justice because of its high social and environmental impacts, the governments of the left have attempted to return to it through wealth distribution measures, especially benefit payments. But essentially this is an economic justice that is very manipulative, and looks a lot like charity and benevolence, says Gudynas (2011).

This leads to a curious situation, where the progressive development "alternative" is undoubtedly a shift away from free-market reductionism, but is also conventional with regard to many of the classical development ideas. To some extent, with its appeal to national development, it is similar to the traditional plans of the 1960s, though without the emphasis on national industries and import substitution. The measures to combat poverty are more energetic, but the system is open to imports of consumer goods, and the conventional procedures for the exploitation and commercialization of natural resources are maintained. These and other factors mean that it is no longer possible to

question either the investment goals or the export targets, and the only thing that can be discussed is how the state's surplus revenue is to be spent.

Probably, these remarks have been the breeding ground for the utmost return of neoliberal governments to the region. There is no doubt these material processes and their effects have not been considered as inevitable by critical thinking. It is known that the politics and the States, as well as everyday defensive practices of the majorities' lives, boosted by subjects constituted as social movements, can counteract those intrinsic measures of the capital, not to regain the pace of capital accumulation and the utopia of full employment, but to guarantee the reproduction and development of life.

Hence, it is important to strengthen the processes started during the times of progressive governments in Latin America. Living Well and Good Living are two elements to be considered.

Living Well or Good Living: the experiences in Bolivia and Ecuador

These different approaches have made it important to recognize that Modernity expresses a particular type of ontology, a way of being and understanding the world, which sharply separates society from Nature and which subordinates Nature to a hierarchy that allows the manipulation and destruction of it. Therefore, the most recent currents maintain that it is necessary to move away from a Eurocentric ontological view so as to be able to build other alternatives.

Currently, the aim is to recover what have been known as "relational ontologies", in which there is no typical duality of Modernity, and the elements of what has conventionally been called nature, as agency, moral status and political expression. In turn, these social elements are now within the field of environment, as it is described by western knowledge (Quijano, 2000). Relational ontologies of this kind are present in several Latin American indigenous peoples, and explain the reasons why it is not possible to conform to ideas akin to a progress that is based on the appropriation of Nature.

Under the name of "Good Living", these and other contributions have recently been organized and coordinated as an alternative to the notion of development. This vital trend abandons the use of the word 'development', and promises an enormous potential in the future (Acosta, 2010; Gudynas, 2011, Prada, 2011). It departs from the traditional views of development, such as perpetual economic growth, linear progress,

and anthropocentrism, and, instead, focuses on human welfare, broadly speaking, on their emotions and beliefs. The departure from the notion of anthropocentrism permits the recognition of environmental intrinsic values, the dissolution of the society/Nature dichotomy, and the reconfiguration of communities of political and moral actors.

The Good Living expression has precedents in the ancestral knowledge, especially Andean knowledge. It has *sumak kawsay* from Ecuador's *Kichwa* and *Suma Qamaña* from Bolivia's *Aymara* as its best known reference points. However, this expression is not restricted to them only, and similar points of view –some of which are of recent configuration– can be found in other indigenous communities (Prada, 2011). Furthermore, the notion of Good Living draws upon the contributions of biocentrism and feminism, anti-establishment traditions critical of the margins of Modernity.

The fact is that the notion of Good Living can be reinterpreted as a political "platform", which can be approached from different traditions –diverse and specific standpoints–. It is in this "platform" where substantive criticism against the development as an ideology is shared, and where alternatives to it are explored. In this way, the notion of Good Living is a set of tests that allows the construction of social and economic systems different from those imposed by Modernity.

Suma Quamaña: Living Well in Bolivia

The coming into power of the *Aymara* leader, Evo Morales, in 2006 meant the victory of the peasant social movements after many years of struggle. Their most recent antecedents were the war against the privatization of water that began in 2000 and was resumed in 2004 until 2005, the fight for the legalization of coca in 2002, and the conflict over the nationalization of natural gas in 2003 (Acosta, 2010).

The triumph of the Movement Towards Socialism (*Movimiento al Socialismo*, MAS) in Bolivia prompted the coming back of the left-wing party to power. Notwithstanding, there were now considerable differences between the workers and class-conscious left, since MAS was a political party that represented "peasant and ethno-cultural identities and demands, had its foundations in a conglomerate of trade unions, social movements and indigenous peoples, voiced in favor of a statist project, and had a foreign policy similar to the ones in Venezuela and Cuba" (Mayorca, 2008: 21).

In terms of economic policies, the Bolivian government had as its main proposal the nationalization of hydrocarbon resources, which meant the revision of contracts with

multinational oil companies (though no seizure of investments were done), and the negotiation of prices with Argentina and Brazil, which resulted in the significant increase of the state government tax revenue.

In 2006, a Constituent Assembly was convened, which had as a result the drafting of a new Constitution in 2009. Part IV of Bolivia's Constitution focuses on the "Economic structure and organization of the State". Within it, Article 306 states that the Bolivian economic model is plural, and seeks to improve the quality of life and well-being of all Bolivians (Acosta, 2010). The plural economy is composed of different forms of community, state, private and public cooperative economic organization based on the principles of complementariness, reciprocity, solidarity, redistribution, equality, legal security, sustainability, equilibrium, justice and transparency (Prada, 2011).

It is submitted that within the public and community economy, the individual's interest will be complementary of the collective well-being. In turn, the State shall recognize, protect and promote the community economic organization that includes productive and reproductive systems of public life, founded on the practices of the native indigenous peoples. Therewithal, the State shall promote the cooperatives as forms of solidarity and cooperative work, which are non-profit, and shall respect and guarantee private and collective ownership of the land.

The State adopts and promotes the following as ethical, moral principles of the plural society: *ama qhilla*, *ama llulla*, *ama suwa* (do not be lazy, do not be a liar and do not be a thief), *suma qamaña* (live well), *ñandereko* (live harmoniously), *teko kavi* (good life), *ivi maraei* (land without evil) and *qhapaj ñan* (noble path or life) (Álvarez, 2012: 8).

The introduction of the "living well" expression in the Bolivian Constitution prompted the recognition of wisdom and practices of the native indigenous peoples, since the Constitution is a representation of "the ethical, moral principles of a plural society" (Albó, 2008: 02). The *aymara* expression *suma qamaña* means "live well (together with others), not ones better than others or at the expense of others" (Albó, 2008: 04). *Suma qamaña* has strong ethical implications, since it suggests the need for emotional bonds and reciprocal relationships as a central axis on which human existence revolves around. Therefore, and within this view, it is not possible to think of the idea of development in terms of economic growth and capital accumulation. The human dimensions, especially the notion of community (in the sense that it is not possible to live in society if some live in worse conditions than others) or the idea that one

becomes a person as long as that person is able to "live together with others", having reciprocal exchanges, and the particular relationship with nature challenge the material and immaterial territories of capitalism (Albó, 2008).

The practice of the community economy of reciprocity results in the importance of the Gift, since the capacity of the Gift defines authority and symbolizes power. "To accept a Gift socially implies the reproduction of it. The cycle shall continue integrating the rest of the society to consume (...) the opened gift chain shall sooner or later be closed, forming a great circle of generalized reciprocity" (Álvarez, 2012: 162).

Generalized reciprocity involves a new way of sharing and redistributing, where no financial monitoring of reciprocal exchanges is done, since these exchanges are not characterized by symmetry and balance (what I receive should equal the amount of what I give). On the contrary, indigenous peoples always give more than what they receive, aiming at integrating as many people as possible into the circle of redistribution and reciprocity. Contrary to what the commercial economy suggests "you are only worth as much as you have", the solidarity economy of the indigenous communities, which are located mainly in rural areas but still connected with the cities, implies the idea that "the more I give, the better I become", which means that the notion of giving is a symbol of prestige and communal authority.

Suma qamaña's worldview unveils in Latin America a profound civilizing controversy that challenges deep-rooted conceptions, which are present in old Latin American constitutions, and which pay tribute to the liberal tradition. It also disproves the already questioned worldview that revolves around the evolutionist ideas of progress and development (Acosta, 2010; Prada, 2011).

For Bolivian president, Evo Morales, while indigenous peoples propound the idea of "Living Well" to the world, capitalism focuses on "Living Better". The latter denoting the idea of living at the expense of others, exploiting people, plundering natural resources and privatizing basic services. By contrast, Living Well means living in solidarity, in equality, in harmony, in complementarity, in reciprocity (Albó, 2008).

The recovery of the *ethos* of the agrarian community and the ethnic identity does not exclude modern peasants nor does it reject the modern and industrial society, the new technologies or the markets. This is so because their structures allowed for a new organization, which prevented them from having been left isolated and closed in economies of production for self-consumption. (Álvarez, 2012). Therefore, alternative

proposals to the notion of *development* appeal to ancestral and modern knowledge and practices, which are the result of the heterogeneity of the socioeconomic and cultural structures of Latin America (Quijano, 2000).

Sumak Kawsay: A Good Living in Ecuador

Prior to Rafael Correa's ascension to the presidency in 2006, Ecuador had already gone through three major crises, which resulted in coups d'état (the 1997 coup against Bucaram, the 2000 coup against Mahuad Witt, and the 2005 coup against Gutiérrez). These three coups d'état had as a backdrop the crisis of the democratic regime and the political parties, both of which had been undermined by neoliberal economic policies. The dismissals were the result of the demands of large-scale social movements, which were supported by different sectors of the ruling class and defined by the Armed Forces (Ortiz Lemos, 2014: 16)

This long period of political instability and of crisis of political representation gave rise to the formation of a new social and political trend that was assembled by the PAIS Alliance party. This political party capitalized on the weaknesses of the party system, the factionalism between the elites, and the loss of social legitimacy of the Washington Consensus neoliberal policies (Ortiz Lemos, 2014), by issuing a rallying call for nationalism, democracy and social justice.

Once assuming office and after calling for a popular referendum, President Rafael Correa summoned a National Constituent Assembly, which resulted in the drafting of a new Magna Carta in 2008. The Magna Carta confirmed the national and popular sovereignty, strengthened the role of the State, and introduced –among other reforms– a new direction that led to the adoption of an alternative model of development based on the notion of *sumak kawsay*.

Title VI of the new Constitution is about "development structure" and contained within it, article 275 asserts that development structure is the organized, sustainable and dynamic group of economic, political, socio-cultural and environmental systems which underpin the achievement of the good way of living *sumak kawsay*. In addition, article 275 asserts that the good way of living shall require persons, communities, peoples and nationalities to effectively exercise their rights and to fulfill their responsibilities within the framework of interculturalism, respect for their diversity, and harmonious coexistence with nature. As we can see, in Ecuador, *sumak kawsay* is linked to the

basic rights enjoyed by people and nature. It manifests itself as part of the rights of the good way of living, in which other rights –healthy environment, food, and water, among others– are included. All of these rights are in keeping with the *sumak kawsay*.

Article 283, for its part, states that the economic system is socially oriented and mutually supportive; it recognizes the human being as a subject and an end; it supports a dynamic, balanced relationship among society, market and State, in harmony with nature; and its objective is to ensure the production and reproduction of the material and immaterial conditions that can bring about the good way of living. The economic system shall be comprised of public, private, mixed, popular and solidarity forms of economic organization. The social and solidarity economy shall include cooperative, associative and community sectors (Prada, 2011).

For the purpose of regulating and protecting the economic activities, the "Social and Solidarity Economy Law" was passed. It is defined as "the set of individual or collective economic forms and practices, which are self-regulated by their owners. In the case of collective forms and practices, the owners are at the same time workers, suppliers, consumers and users of these, which favors the human being as a subject and end of their activity, which is oriented towards the notion of a good living, is in harmony with nature, and is beyond profit and capital accumulation" (Art. 1). The organization of a social and solidarity economy seeks to meet the needs of its members and is characterized by its commitment with the community, its non-profit and non-discrimination philosophy, its democratic and participatory self-management, and the predominance of work, of reciprocal and cooperative relationships and of collective interests (Dávalos, 2008).⁶

The Law establishes four types of organization: the cooperative sector, the associative sector, the community sector and the popular economic sector. While the first three are collective types of organization, the last one recognizes individual and family-based initiatives.

⁶ Notice that the Law could have referred to the "social and solidarity economy" as the interplay between the social sector and the solidarity sector. Instead, it uses the coordinator "and", establishing apparent contradictions. In this sense, the Law recognizes the single economic entity ("self-employed worker", as it is usually denominated in specialized literature) as part of its subject matter. This, in turn, leads to a departure of the Law from the collective spirit, which the standards of the social and solidarity economy were elaborated with. Nevertheless, later on a more associative logic is adopted, taking into account the fact that the definition says that it is based on "relationships of solidarity, cooperation and reciprocity."

The inclusion of the Social and Solidarity Economy in the Constitution not only reflects the pursuit of a society opened to different types of markets, but it also aims at establishing dynamic and constructive relationships among the market, society and State.

Despite its theoretical weaknesses found in Art. 1, the Law has some strong points, such as the inclusion of the solidarity finance sector, the fostering of the associative capacities among self-employed workers, the introduction of ancestral reference points like *Sumak Kawsay*, and the development of a set of principles based on alternative movements' ideas like fair trade and responsible consumption.

Nevertheless, in view of the characteristics of the traditional model of development – which is based on the permanent accumulation of capital–, both economic models cannot coexist, taking into account the fact that a capitalist development means the commercialization of social relations external to the purely commercial relations (Acosta, 2010).

Final thoughts

It is important to highlight the visibility acquired by these alternative ways of organizing community life against an economy of capital accumulation, which purports to be a globally closed and unique option (Álvarez, 2012: 168). Bolivia and Ecuador (as well as Venezuela) proposed progressive Constitutional reforms, which resulted in a new way of thinking about the States in Latin America. Now, after 10 years since the beginnings of these processes, can it be said that these reforms had a significant impact on our society?

Nancy Fraser (2000) postulates two fundamental concepts which help us understand the current situation of these revolutionary proposals that have been critical of the Eurocentric and neo-colonial development. Of the two, the concept of cultural recognition replaces the socio-economic redistribution as a remedy for the injustice and as the goal of the political struggle. By virtue of these alternatives to the hegemonic model of production, new fields of research have opened up about the different forms of contradiction between capital-labor. At the same time, this poses new historical and political challenges that makes us think about multiple forms of articulation of a variety of individuals with specific interests each, but who converge on their opposition to capitalism.

As Gudynas (2011) says, once the field of post-development has been defined, we can go one step further. Indeed, criticism against development entails an approach to the ideology of development and, at the same time, to the program of Modernity. From this criticism, the notion of progress emerged, which later on became development in itself. Therefore, the exploration of any alternative demands careful consideration of the program of Modernity.

The content of these discussions includes old complex issues, such as the role of the State or the market, or new ones, such as the relational ontologies and the expansion of citizenship. Even traditional issues, such as the role of the State and the market, are nowadays conceived of differently. An example of this is the recovery of a diversity of markets in the region, which have different views, such as those of reciprocity and bartering.

There emerges a new clear tendency in which any of the alternatives would support the idea that development cannot be restricted to economic growth only, and that the living standard and the protection of nature are now the central goals. The welfare state does not remain in a material or individual level, but it incorporates a collective, spiritual and ecological character.

There are some heated debates in the field of ethics, since many alternatives are questioning the notions from which the traditional values are based on, such as the assignation of values according to the use and exchange (i.e., according to the price). On the one hand, this entails a necessary renewal of the economy. On the other hand, this implies the acceptance of other types of values, apart from utilitarianism, and the recognition of the intrinsic values (and, therefore, rights) of nature.

At the same time, these alternatives depart from the western science and practices that aim at solving all the problems and explaining all the situations. This means the abandonment of manipulative and utilitarian realities and the recognition of uncertain and risky realities.

It is in this context that the traditional political viewpoints, such as liberalism, conservatism and socialism, remain insufficient, when looking for alternatives to development. In other words, the new changes shall not only be post-capitalist, but also post-socialist, if they seek to break away from the ideology of progress.

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