

PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLMOUC

Faculty of Science

Department of Development & Environmental Studies

Impact of spirituality in the community development

MASTER THESIS

ABSTRACT

Spirituality has been disregarded by the development field. Yet the exclusion of spirituality is part of the consequences of the global humanitarian and environmental crisis. Researches have shown that the replacement of traditional manifestations including spirituality with modernity has provoked changes in all fields of humanity, including global development. This study aims to show how spirituality can impact community development in modern and multicultural societies and how the use of some spiritual practices in institutions can make differences in the life of the participants and their communities. Is it possible to apply spiritual approaches in a multicultural community? This is one of the questions that my research tries to answer. Spirituality is not the same as religion. In this context it is defined as the relationship that one has with oneself and everything else, it is a search for the meaning of life and the raising of awareness towards the world, which promotes interconnection.

Based on a review of the literature on spirituality and development, an interview method approach was conducted in three institutions in Brazil, in different contexts and locations (rural and urban). None of them has spirituality as the main activity, although they apply it in their methodologies and approaches through their own activities. Respondents were selected by a set of criterias and asked questions about their lives, their involvement within the institutions and in the community. The results indicate that people who receive spiritual education are likely to notice changes in their lives and in perceptions about their communities, nature and society. It is then transformed into actions that benefit not only their personal lives, but their surroundings as well. On this basis, it is recommended that development institutions use spirituality as a tool to achieve real and long term impact in community development. Consequently, spirituality is a part of the solution for the humanitarian and environmental crisis we are faced with.

Keywords: Spirituality, community development, modern and multicultural society, humanitarian and environmental crisis

ABSTRAKT

Téma spirituality bylo v oblasti rozvoje po dlouhou dobu opomíjeno. Vyloučení duchovna z běžného života je jedním z důsledků globální humanitární a environmentální krize. Výzkumy ukazují, že nahrazení tradičních lidských projevů modernitou, duchovno nevyjímaje, vyvolalo změnu ve všech oblastech lidského života a světového vývoje. Tato studie má za cíl poukázat na vliv spirituality v komunitním rozvoji moderních multikulturních společností a ukázat, jak praktikování některých duchovních cvičení v rámci institucí může změnit osobní život účastníků těchto cvičení a následně i jejich komunit. Je možné aplikovat duchovní přístup v multikulturní společnosti? To je jednou z otázek, na kterou se můj výzkum pokusil nalézt odpověď. Termín duchovno ovšem nelze zaměnit za náboženství. V tomto kontextu je duchovno chápáno jako vztah sama se sebou a se vším ostatním. Je to hledání smyslu života, postupné nabývání povědomí o vnějším světě a následné utváření vzájemných propojení.

Na základě studia literatury zabývající se spiritualitou a osobním rozvojem jsem použila metodu rozhovoru ve třech různých institucích v Brazílii, a to v různých kontextech i urbanistických oblastech (venkov a město). Žádná z těchto institucí nemá duchovno jako svou hlavní činnost, ačkoliv jej uplatňují ve svých metodách a přístupech skrze své aktivity. Respondenti byli vybráni na základě řady kritérií a následně jim byly položeny otázky ohledně jejich osobního života a jejich angažovanosti v rámci institucí a svých komunit. Výsledky naznačují, že lidé, kterým se dostalo duchovní výchovy, jsou vnímaví vůči změnám ve svých životech, vůči svým komunitám, přírodě i společnosti. To poté přetvářejí v činy, z nichž těží nejen oni sami, ale i jejich okolí. Na základě těchto faktů doporučuji, aby rozvojové instituce využívaly duchovno jako nástroj k dosažení reálných a dlouhodobých výsledků v oblasti komunitního vývoje. Spiritualita se takto stane součástí řešení humanitární a environmentální krize, které čelíme.

Klíčová slova: Spiritualita, komunitní rozvoj, moderní a multikulturní společnost, humanitární a environmentální krize

STATUTORY DECLARATION OF THE AUTHOR

I declare that I have developed and written the enclosed Master Thesis completely by myself, and have not used sources or means without declaration in the text. Any thoughts from others or literal quotations are clearly marked. The Master Thesis was not used in the same or in a similar version to achieve an academic grading or is being published elsewhere.

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Zásady pro vypracování

The goal of this thesis is to understand the importance of spirituality in development, and how to apply spirituality in community initiatives. I also want to explore how spirituality and holistic knowledge could collaborate with some aspects of the modernization development school. And in general, how it could be incorporated more strongly into the development field. I will assess the impact of spirituality in some community initiatives using my own research, and will also examine various case studies, including the existing literature. I will mainly explore the ideas and theories of the post-development school.

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“May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done. To bring justice and kindness to all”

Franciscan blessing

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Abbreviations

CRS – Catholic Relief Services

DFID – UK Department of International Development

FBO – Faith-based organizations

GEN – Global Ecovillage Network

GIRAL – Grupo de Informática, Comunicação e Ação Local

IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística

IMF – International Monetary Fund

INCRA – Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LGBT – Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

MST – Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra

NGO – Non-governmental organization

UN – United Nations

USAID – US Agency for International Development

OSCIP – Organização da sociedade civil de interesse público

PEADS - Programa Educacional de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Sustentável

PRATEC – Proyecto Andino de Tecnologías Campesinas

RO – Religious organizations

SERTA – Serviço de Tecnologia Alternativa

UNITEC – University Institute of Technology

INTRODUCTION

It is hard to imagine a life without meaning or a community comprised of people without direction, purpose and consciousness. People not being conscious about their social and environmental impacts contribute to what the scientific community has been describing as a humanitarian and environmental crisis - climate change being one of the most serious problems we are facing today. It is essential for the quality of our lives, and the sustainability of our planet, that we keep looking for something else and not sum up our existence to the merely fact of extracting what we need from nature, making money to pay our bills and distractions, and survive. There is a huge difference between 'to survive' and 'to live', not only as individuals, but collectively. In this sense spirituality plays an important role, as it raises awareness and promotes interconnections, and should be considered and included as a fundamental aspect of our society, in all areas such as politics, economy, society, environment and culture.

Spirituality in the existing literature has been excluded by the development academia and practice and replaced by modern science, due to the perception of its inutility and ineptitude. This research aims to prove that the opposite should be considered. The promotion of spirituality in the lives of participants and their communities alleviates the current humanitarian and environmental crisis.

In this thesis I researched three institutions, and its members, located in the modern and multicultural country of Brazil. The institutions are in different contexts and locations. None of them has spirituality as their main activity, although they apply it in their methodologies and approaches with their activities. To achieve their goals, they teach spirituality based in different ways using philosophy, theology, Yoga and other holistic approaches.

Existing literature demonstrates the importance of spirituality on people's health and the quality of people's lives. On the other hand, the avoidance of spirituality in social and environmental areas can provoke conflicts and exploitation of nature. There are also many studies showing the significance of spirituality applied in traditional communities, such as indigenous people. However, there is a gap of studies in the application of spirituality in modern and multicultural societies and its impact on community development. The thesis attempts to address that.

What are the impacts of spirituality in the community development in modern societies? This is the main question that this study aims to answer. It also seeks to understand what the consequences are and why spirituality has been avoided, if spirituality has any impact in the lives of people who experience it, what is the relevance of spirituality in the development theories and practice, and if it is possible to apply spirituality in modern and multicultural societies.

Following a review of the literature on spirituality and development, the research takes an interview method approach with participants of the three researched institutions, which allows a qualitative analysis of respondents' behaviour change, learnings, expressed feelings, perception of work and education and the change in the perception and relationship with their communities and with nature. The interviews enable an understanding of how spirituality is applied in modern and multicultural societies.

This work is separated in three main chapters which is believed to provide a broad comprehension of the topic of this thesis and the answers for its questions. In chapter one, there is a detailed description of the methodology and how the research was conducted in the three selected institutions in Brazil. In chapter two, the theoretical framework shows what the existing literature says regarding spirituality, explores the difference between religion and spirituality, the relation between development and spirituality, and the relation between modern science and spirituality, and the relations between the current humanitarian and environmental crisis and spirituality. Chapter three provides the analysis and discussion about the interviews with the selected participants, the institution's founders, and notes from the author. Conclusion and recommendations about further studies and the application of the findings in the field are provided.

CHAPTER ONE

Methodology

1.1 Research problem

It is unquestionable that the planet is living in a humanitarian and environmental crisis. According to the scientists, we have a few years to stop carbon emission, otherwise climate change will be irreversible (IPCC, 2018). Every year, 8 million tonnes of plastic go into the ocean, and also in a few years, the ocean will have more plastic than fishes (UN Environment, 2018). Social problems, such as conflicts, and violation of human rights are also part of the problem (Gudynas, 2018). The list continues, and I will dedicate a few pages on theoretical framework to discourse about it, connecting what is happening with modern science.

The crisis, in my opinion, is the consequence of the impact of modern science and the absence of conscious of society, in all fields: political, economic, social, environmental, cultural, and so it is also a matter of the lack of spirituality. Spirituality is a topic that has been denied or avoided in the academic and practice in the field of development, and its avoidance has been contributing to generate the issues we are seeing today. What are those consequences? Why has spirituality been avoided? Does spirituality have any impact in the lives of people who experience it? Does spirituality have any impact in the community development? What is the relevance of spirituality in the development theories and practice? Is it possible to apply spirituality in modern and multicultural societies*? Those are some of the questions this research is looking to answer.

The research explores the relevant literature, in an interdisciplinary perspective. It also focus in understanding the questions of applicability and possibility of spirituality in modern societies. There is already an extensive area of interest and research regarding spirituality and development in traditional communities**. Although there is a lack of research on the impact of spirituality in the development of people, and communities, in modern societies. For that, this study used interview method approach of practioners in three institutions located in Brazil, a multicultural country.

1.1.1 Key objectives

1. To understand the impact of spirituality in the life of the participants of the researched institutions.
2. To understand the influence of the participants and the researched institutions in the development of their communities.
3. To analyze how the institutions applied the approach of spirituality in multicultural societies

*Multiculturalism mixed ethnic community area where multiple cultural traditions exist, such as the whole country, Brazil

**Traditional communities refers to indigenous, and/or community that keep partially or totally their old traditions until today. In the chapter 'theoretical framework', when talking about traditional manifestation of spirituality, and also about modernization theory, I explore more this concept.

4. To understand how the researched initiatives, and people who participate in it, contribute to help solving the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's world.

1.1.2 Research questions

Objective (1 and 2): How the practice of spirituality in the institutions can make any difference in the life of the participants and their communities?

Specific research questions:

- What kind of values are the participants learning?
- How the participants apply what have been learned in their daily life?
- Does their perception about themselves and the community have change somehow since they have joined the project?
- Do the participants share their knowledge learned with their communities?

Objective (3 and 4): How the practice of spirituality in the studied institutions can be applied in a multicultural community?

Specific research questions:

- What are the ways used by the institutions to stimulate spirituality in the participants and in the community?
- Why and how the founders of the institutions implemented spirituality in a non-traditional community?
- How the institutions and the participants can contribute to fight against the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's world?

1.2 Hypothesis

The practice of spirituality in institutions impact people's lives and their communities, in that way it ameliorate the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's world.

1.3 Rationale

Social science literature historically has tended to refer to spirituality and religions as belief systems based on myths, whose overall negative effect on society (for instance, colonization and manipulation of people using religions as a tool) would be replaced eventually by scientific thinking. Although, many experts in academic fields already assume the importance and relevance of combining holistic with scientific knowledge, for example, two schools of thought, Post-development and Political Ecology, call for this combination. Both of these perspectives, beyond other, assert the need of bringing back millenary knowledge and spiritual philosophies that promote

the connection between nature and human beings. However, practical methods of applying these conceptual approaches, and an assessment of their potentials for the development of cities and multicultural societies, have not been widely researched.

According to many scientists, we are living in a critical humanitarian and environmental crisis with conflicts, climate change, deforestation, scarcity of water, and so forth. Considering this scenario, when speaking about development (theory and practice), through the years we have been experiencing approaches so called: top down and bottom up development, in their diverse ways. In my point of view, the question of how to understand and effectively deal with the humanitarian and environmental crises of today's world should also include something deeper: it is a matter of start thinking and applying an "inside out" approach. It means understand the causes, and go deep into the roots of these problems, as individuals and subsequently, as collective. In this sense spirituality, could play an important role.

I truly believe that is time to connect spirituality, social and environmental awareness and science in order to address personal and communal wellbeing. The research contributes to prove that it is possible to work with these connections and make it part of people's lives and the communities' reality. With the study I try to explain how some initiatives works with development of their communities associating it with spirituality.

1.4 Methodology

I will now outline the proposed methodology for this thesis, the strategies of data collection and analysis.

1.4.1 Data collection

In order to understand in practice how spirituality can influence communities in multicultural societies, first I dedicate a few pages to explore in more detail the literature review about spirituality and development, both in theory and practice. I describe and clarify what spirituality is, what is the difference between it and religion, the ways of manifesting it (including examples in traditional and modern societies), how and why spirituality became a taboo in development, and also I briefly examine spirituality in the academy and in development organizations. Finally, in the last part of theoretical framework, I explore the modern science and the absence of spirituality in the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's world.

On the second part of this thesis, an interview method, which is an approach in the qualitative research that seeks to describe some topic and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects (Kvale,1996) was used in three institutions in different cities in Brazil (details about the interviews will be provided in the 'participants' section, in the next paragraphs). Located

in South America, it is considered a multicultural country due to the migration process since its colonization by the Portuguese in 1500. This multiculturalism implies in the diversity of people such as Europeans, Japanese, Arab, a huge number of Africans (because of slavery), later other people from Asia and South America, and of course, the indigenous people (IBGE, 2019). It also implies diversity of religion, even if the Catholic Church is still the most influential in the country: 64,6% of Brazilians declare themselves Catholics. Brazil is the 5th biggest country in the world, and its geography is also diversified, from arid locations, to beaches, and humid forests. From mega cities, like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, to small cities and communities. That is why, even if the three researched institutions are located in the same country, their context is very different, and so their challenges, approaches and stakeholders. Below I summarize the characteristics of each of them.

Figure 1: map of Brazil divided by States, with the indication of location of the institutions



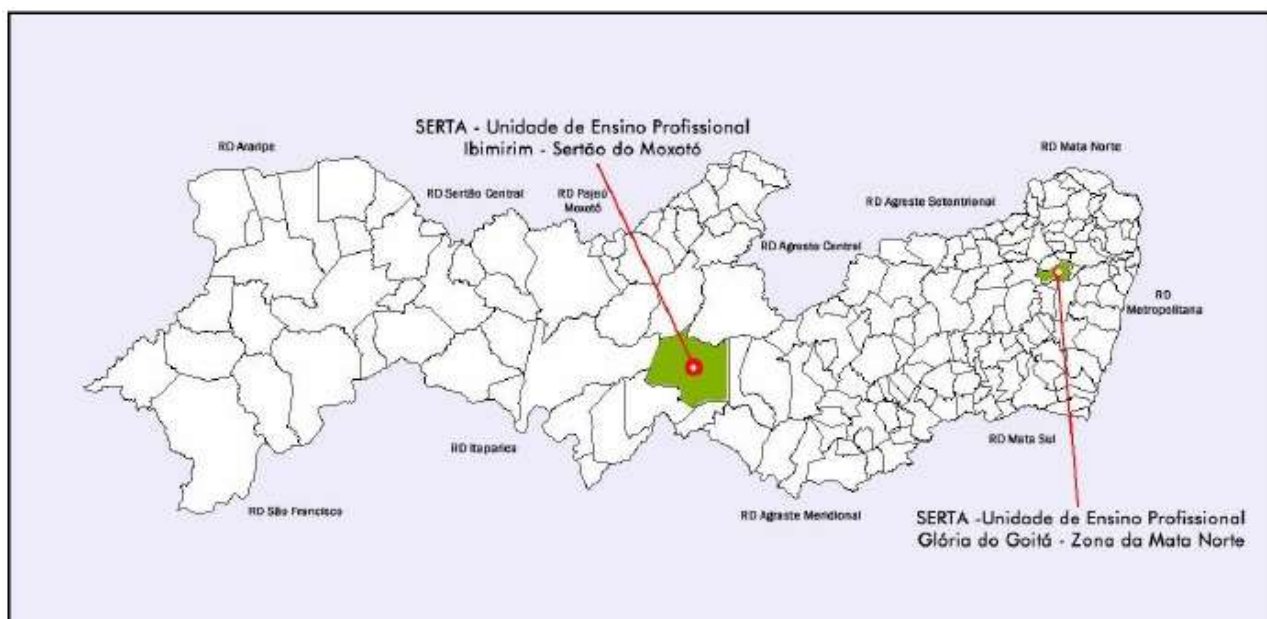
Source: the author

The institutions

General characterization of Serta

The Service of Alternative Technology – Serta is an OSCIP (Civil Society Organization for Public Interest), with non profit interest, funded in August 1989. Serta is based in two different cities in the rural area of Glória do Goitá (30.500 inhabitants), and Ibimirim (29.000 inhabitants), both located in the State of Pernambuco, Northeast region of Brazil. Both are considered small cities by IBGE - *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics). More than 40% of the population is rural, with agriculture and livestock being the main economic activity. Ibimirim is located in Sertão (one of the sub-regions of Northeast) which constitutes 70% of the territory of Pernambuco, and has a dry semi-arid climate, with irregular periods of rain (Dos Santos, 2014). According to IBGE, around 90% of the population in both cities consider themselves as Catholics.

Figure 2: map of the State of Pernambuco, with the location of Sertá's schools



Source: Dissertation thesis (Santana, 2016)

Sertá's mission is to train young people, educators and family producers to act in the transformation of economic, social, environmental, cultural and political circumstances, in the promotion of the sustainable development of the field. The students are from the state of Pernambuco. Admission to the main course, technical in agroecology, with 18 months of studying, occurs through a selective process, which the candidate must complete high school or attending the second year, preferably residing in the Agreste / Sertão Pernambucano region, preferably low income, with family farming as the means of subsistence (Dos Santos, 2014). A part of it, the school offers several other courses and activities, which will be described in the chapter three.

General characterization of Academia de Filosofia

Academia de Filosofia is an association located in São Bernardo do Campo (830.000 inhabitants), a urban city in the State of São Paulo, in the industrialized region of ABC Paulista. According to IBGE, São Bernardo do Campo is considered a big city, it has the 16^o biggest GDP in the country, and its based in the automobile industry, home of Volkswagen, Scania, Toyota, Mercedes-Benz, etc., besides the auto parts industries. Still according to IBGE, 54% of the population consider themselves as catholic.

The mission of the association is “to promote actions to help humanity, without gender, religion, race, economic condition, etc. discrimination; foster the development of human consciousness, through the study of philosophy in its most diverse lines; and encourage culture, arts, civics and patriotism, improving the world through internal changes in every man” (Academia de Filosofia's bylaws, 2010, 1). Its main activity is a 5 months course of 'free' philosophy, with the cost of R\$150 per month. To become an associated-member, the participant must finish the course.

To become a militant-member, the participant have to finish the course, and participate in the activities at the school for minimum one year.

General characterization of O Despertar do Gigante

O Despertar do Gigante is a project created by young engineers students in Lorena city (88.000 inhabitants) in 2008. According to IBGE, it is considered a medium-small city. Lorena is a university city with three universities, including USP – Federal University of São Paulo with courses in the field of engineering. The city is located 23km from Aparecida do Norte, where *Basilica de Nossa Senhora Aparecida*, the biggest religious pilgrimage centrum of Latin America is located. Conforming to IBGE, around 70% of the population consider themselves as catholic.

In its bylaws there is a list with the goals of O Despertar do Gigante, I will summarize few points relevant for this study: promotion of studies and techniques to defend, and preserve the environment; promotion of socio environmental capacitation to human development, and training multiplier agents; enviromental education to get awareness of communities in order to promote reflection, debate, transformation of values, ideas and positions in the face of preservation and conservation of the environment; to bring the contents of education closer to the natural environment, to cultural heritage, to the wisdom of indigenous peoples and traditional communities, through community integration programs; encouragement of alternatives of relations between communities and nature, without losing sight of the potentialities and fragility of ecosystems; to recognize Nature as an "intelligent system" and use this intelligence as the basis of our actions, to promote the integration and reconnection of man with nature and with himself; to develop actions based on unconditional love and cooperation that work both external and internal of our nature, to promote universal ethics in all its forms, peace, the exercise of citizenship, human rights, democracy and other universal values (O Depertartar do Gigant's bylaws, 2010, 1).

Table 1: basic information about the institutions researched

	Type of institution	Year of foundation	N. of direct beneficiaries in history	Main activity
Serta	OSCIP (Civil Society Organization for Public Interest)	1989	10000	Technical course in agroecology
Academia de Filosofia	Association	2007	612	Course in 'free' philosophy
O Despertar do Gigante	Project	2008	2860	Social and sustainable development through practices of agroforestry and permaculture

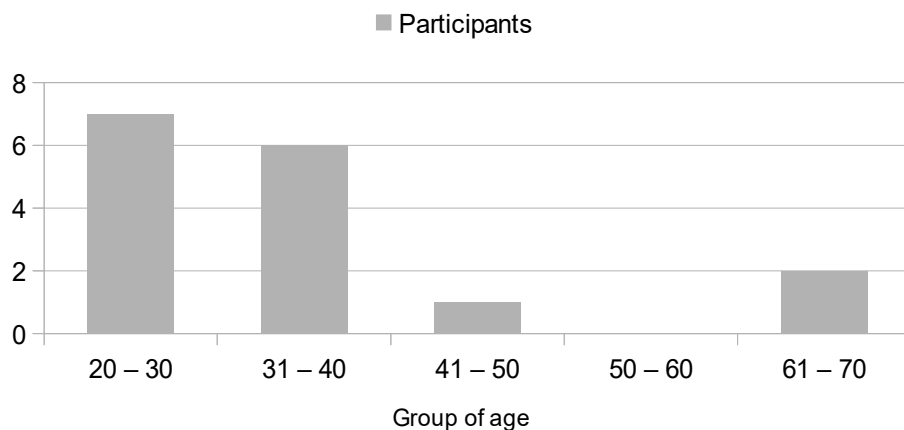
The participants

Some interviews were conducted in person, but mostly were conducted by voice call (Whatsapp and Skype) – due to distance and time availability of the researcher and the participants. The strategy of sample chose was the purposeful sampling. In this type of sampling, participants are selected or sought after on pre-selected criteria based on the research question (Palinkas, Horwits, et al., 2015) . The sample included interviews with 16 participants, which 5 are from Serta, 5 from Academia de Filosofia, and 6 from O Despertar do Gigante. I also interviewed the 4 founders of the projects (1 from Serta, 1 from Academia de Filosofia, and 2 from O Despertar do Gigante). Together with the founders, and other members of the three institutions, we selected participants that are directly part of the project for more than one year, as I consider this time the minimum to collect relevant information that this study needs. To guarantee diversity of the sample, we have selected people of different ages, gender, and background (scolarity and occupation). To facilitate the analysis, the interviews were coded with letters, from “A” to “P”, as per the table 2 and graph below. All the quotations in the chapter three was referred by letters, not using the participants names to guarantee their anonymity, with the exception of the founders of the studied institutions, because of previous agreement of no anonymity with them.

Table 2: profile of the interviewed participants

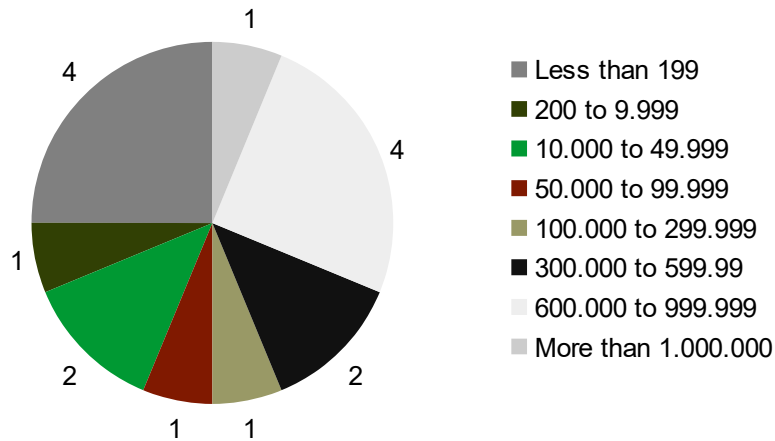
Interview	Occupation	Gender	Time in the institution
A	Agroecology technician	F	3 years
B	Agroecology technician	M	7 years
C	Teacher	F	2 years
D	Agroecology technician	F	3 years
E	Communication assistante	M	3 years
F	Retired – executive secretary	F	9 years
G	Psychotherapist	M	8 years
H	Administrative assistant	F	11 years
I	Nutritionist	F	8 years
J	Retired – logistics	M	4 years
K	Federal public servant	M	2 years
L	Cook	F	2 years
M	Logistics	M	5 years
N	Teacher	F	3 years
O	Farmer	F	4 years
P	Administrative - basic sanitation	F	1 year

Graph 1: age of the interviewed participants separated by groups of age

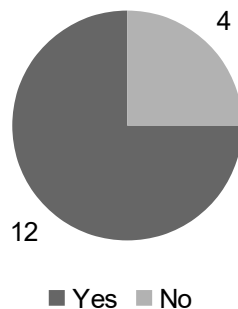


What was also relevant for the sample, was the diversity of size and type of communities where the participants come from, from small communities in rural areas to small and big cities. Also important was to understand if the participants were originally from those places, or not, as showed in the graphs 2 and 3 below:

Graph 2: number of inhabitants of the city of the participants



Graph 3: is the participant originally from the community?



I piloted the interview that I did with the participants of the institutions twice, and made the necessary adjustments before the formal interviews. All the 20 interviews, in all the institutions, were done in one month. This time was enough to get a general idea about the activities and the perception of the participants. The classification of interview was structured with open questions for the participants of the institutions, which means it has a set of questions to follow, and semi-structured to the founders, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview (Edwards and Holland, 2013), see appendix 1. The type of interview is open, because it enable collection of qualitative data that involves the perceptions and feelings of the participants.

Although I recognize that the sample could be bigger, and involve more participants, and even more institutions, I decided that working with a small, but diverse sample, can give this research what it is looking for: how spirituality can be applied in development, and that it is possible to use this approach even in multicultural societies.

1.4.2 Data analysis

Once all the interviews were finished, more than 10 hours of audios were transcribed in 88 pages using the application *InqScribe*. The application allowed the use of exactly time (minutes and seconds) of the questions and answer, what facilitated the searches for the analysis. All the interviews were transcribed in Portuguese, which was the language used on the interviews. It was very important to transcribe the interviews in order to avoid the lost of important details. The transcriptions were then coded by reading and highlighting words and sentences, observing the frequency of words and quotations, the connection with the topic and the relevance for the study. Then the generated codes were grouped by concepts: behaviour change, learnings, feelings, relation with work and studies, relation with community, and relation with nature (for details, see appendix 4). The concepts were crossed in order to understand specific trends, for instance, the relationship with nature with learnings and behaviour change. I based the four key objectives of this thesis to structure the analysis and discussions, and it was separated in four sections: spirituality applied in multicultural societies; the impact of spirituality in the lives of the participants; the impact of the participants in the community; and the contribution of the researched participants and institutions in helping to solve (or minimize) the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's world. The sections have subsections which describe each group of codes, and the case of the first section, subsections for the researched institutions.

1.5. Timeframe

The research design and the theoretical framework were done in four months. The personal and the Skype and Whatsapp interviews in twenty one days. Extra information relevant for this study was analyzed, changed and included during the whole period of the study, in parallel with all the other described phases. The analysis and conclusion were done in fifteen days.

1.6. Feasibility

In terms of time, the research was expected to be completed in two months between interviews, data collection and analysis, which I think was enough to deliver maximum results with the available resources. Regarding the access to the participants, the methodology is feasible, despite some respondents being based in another country. Skype, Whatsapp and e-mail communication guaranteed that all the interviews and data were collected on time, and with quality.

The nature of the data collection entailed that there was no necessity to transport or store any physical material. The personal interviews were made during my visit to Brazil, which was already programmed, and was done with my own financial resources.

The language used in the interviews was Portuguese, which the interviewees and I are native

speakers. It helped to reduce any communication barrier, not just because of the language itself, but because of the previous knowledge and contact I, as the researcher, had with the three institutions.

The reports with the results of the research will be shared with the institutions. It is also possible that the study can be shared with academic magazines or other communication tools that may have interest on the topic.

1.7 Quality Indicators

The topic of this study is subjective and requires a holistic view. Therefore it was extremely important to be aware of these before the research begins. In this case, I have to mention that I, as the researcher, have formation in Yoga studies since 2016, with years of access to literature regarding spirituality, from different manifestations: philosophy, religions, art, etc. I also have to mention my work experience with community development, as I worked for four years for the biggest mining company in Latin America in social projects, and conflict management in communities around Brazil (traditional communities, rural and urban), and as a consultant for the same topics for people who were working with communities in Argentina, Peru, and Canada.

Another important point is that I know personally the three institutions that were researched, and their founders, so I had easy access to the participants and data.

The richness of the information was reached thanks to these points: the research method: interviews; different aspects of society being covered by the research questions (development, education, social, environmental, politic); and finally the fact that I have made three groups into the sample may help to get several points of view from different perspectives and approaches.

According to Creswell (2006), there are a few strategies to validate the research, I have applied the “prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field”. I already had contact with the founders of the institutions, and some of the participants. I have been following their activities for years, not always in the field, but always getting information about the activities and progress, by informal conversations, getting access to online documentation, videos, pictures, and following them on social networks. For this reason I recognize that my proximity with the institutions could be a bias, so to insure objectivity throughout the process, I had several consultations with my thesis supervisor, and discussions about the progress with other contacts with relevant experience in the field.

Another validation strategy was the approach “member checking”. The transcriptions, tables, and findings were shared with the participants, which helped me to identify any misunderstanding I could have done during the research.

To ensure the quality of research, I also paid serious consideration to ethical matters, which will be discussed below.

1.8 Ethics

In order to guarantee the voluntary consent of the participants, a formal agreement between the parts were explained and provided (see appendix 2). The document was signed by every member of the three participant groups. It ensured anonymity and confidentiality during the whole process and after it, and the document guaranteed that the participants understood that, after their participation on the interviews, an analysis for this thesis would be made, and it may get public. The founders of the studied institutions do not have the same agreement of confidentiality, as we they agreed to be exposed.

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Framework

WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY

2.1 What is spirituality?

Spirituality is a crucial subject for the way humans take every single decision, the way one perceives life, sees and treats himself and his surrounding. Spirituality can be defined as the relationship that one has with oneself and everything else: other beings, nature, the universe, the activities one does. As per Beek (2000) it is the inner self that defines who we are. But spirituality is often misunderstood. It is confused and compared with religion, with divinity or something beyond the human power and access.

Spirituality is the search for 'something else', or according to the professor of history and philosophy Leandro Karnal (2018), spirituality is the capacity of going beyond the body, the material, the touchable, and be able to 'resignify'. In other words, it is the capacity of, we as individuals, giving 'new meaning' for everything we do: work, relationships, our behaviour, the way we buy, eat, etc, a new meaning for life itself. Karnal defends that there are many ways to find and practice spirituality and resignify, for example by religion, philosophy, theology, art, social service and so on. Becoming a spiritual being it is the way we can go out of this 'prison of life', exhausting and repetitive, in the sense of living our lives just to solve tasks. Spirituality is the capacity of thinking in a higher purpose, and take us out of this pattern of repetition, unable to produce transcendence. It may enhance the intellect, sensitivity (toward other humans and nature), and the capability of choosing the best ways in life (Vasconcelos, 2017).

Spirituality also promotes the sense that one is relevant because one belongs to something bigger. "This is the great historical sense of spirituality: I belong to something greater, regardless of how I am, there is a greater plan and I am not only bound to body" (Karnal, 2018, 15). Vasconcelos (2017) says that the idea of one's search for something greater it is conducive to the feelings of self-fulfillment and meaning. He pointed out that spirituality reveals itself through the deep understanding about the meaning of life, human nature, and the adoption of transcendental perspective. As a consequence of it, the view about the micro and macro world that surrounds us change, it inspires behavior, attitudes, thoughts, and decision makings.

In his article "*Spirituality interpreted by sciences and health*", Pessini (2007) quotes the North American philosopher Solomon who stated that the place to look for spirituality is the right here, in our lives and in our world. There is spirituality in our sense of humanity, friendship and family. It is closer to the heart so spirituality can be found in our noble passions, particularly in love.

According to the medical doctors and professors Saad, Masiero et al. (2001), the dimension

of well-being does not come from body or mind. It transcends the everyday life and it is based in personal questionings of existential questions of meanings and purposes. Spirituality is the human propensity to find meaning for life through concepts that transcend the tangible, a sense of connection with something greater than itself. “Spirituality is a personal feeling, which stimulates an interest in others and for themselves, a meaningful meaning of life capable of enduring debilitating feelings of guilt, anger and anxiety, for instance” (Saad, Masiero, et al., 2001, 108). Chile and Simpson (2004) emphasize this connection with the others, and the community through spirituality: “it places us in a context of time that is larger than that for which we live and provides the connections that exist between individuals within the collective” (Chile and Simpson, 2004, 320).

Pessini (2007) quoting, Solomon, defends the concept of 'naturalized spirituality', which means a spirituality that is not dogmatic, anti-scientific, mystical and uncritical. He pointed out two simple examples of manifestation of naturalized spirituality: music and nature. Music because it allows us to transport ourselves into a larger universe and promotes communion between us, and nature as we cannot deny the majesty, irrespective of what one believes it to be: a God creation, or a mystery that science is trying to understand.

Once in the path of spirituality, one should be applying it in every single decision and area of its life, as an exercise of transcendence. Spirituality demands huge efforts to be developed and practiced on a daily basis (Vasconcelos, 2017). It means that those who are aware of their spirituality, are also able to notice that everything and everybody is in a constant change or, as referred in Buddhism a permanent state of 'impermanence'. It means that reality is never static but is dynamic throughout, impermanence is the essential characteristic of all phenomenal existence. “We cannot say of anything, animate or inanimate, organic or inorganic, 'this is lasting'; for even while we are saying this, it would be undergoing change. All is fleeting; the beauty of flowers, the bird's melody, the bee's hum, and a sunset's glory” (Buddhist Publication Society, 2008, 5). For instance in a marriage, to understand that the person who one married does not exist anymore, it is in constant change. And so the person who started to work few years ago, does not exist anymore either. This capacity to reinvent yourself, to find new meaning over and over again, and understand the inconstancy of life is spirituality.

In the sense of spirituality been applied in every aspect of our lives, Anselmo Vasconcelos (2017) speaks about the spiritual knowledge been used in work. He points out that spirituality provides a change in perception of career challenge “under the framework of a higher purpose or noble mission, as well as performing their duties inspired by values such as tolerance, alterity and friendship” (Vasconcelos, 2017).

Other two important concepts about spirituality are 'counscious' and 'interconnection'. For

that self knowledge is impervious. Self knowledge is a state where one achieves when start to get awareness of who we are, ones personal growth, evolution, and connection with others (Kavar, 2015). Spirituality is fundamental to our understanding of self and lead us to what were already mentioned in the paragraphs before: realization, trancedence, getting out of an automated life, finding the higher purpose. Interconnection is the understanding that everything in this universe depends, as a mechanism, of the small parts to work. In other words, it is like the universe is a body, and each organ has its responsibility to keep the body working well. This apply to external world: everything around us, and internal, inside ourselves.

When spirituality is rightly understood, it strengthens our purpose of life, self-esteem, and positive affect. Also other dimensions of human life such as intrinsic motivation, simplicity, gratitude, moderation, and happiness (Vasconcelos, 2017).

In summary, spirituality is the relationship that one has with oneself and everything else, it is the believe that there is 'something else', its a search for meaning in everything in life, a search to resignify, as everything is in constante change. Spirituality looks for the higher purpose, and take us out of this patter of repetition, it makes the spiritual being transcend. It brings a life of conscious towards ourselves and the world around us, and this awareness promotes interconnection.

2.1.2 Spirituality and religion are not the same

Spirituality and religion are not synonyms. Traditionally, spirituality was used to describe a religious person, but now it has expanded to include the religious seeker, the seeker of wellbeing and happiness, and a completely secular person (Shukla, 2015). Religion is only one of the ways through which spirituality finds expression. Religion as described by Chile and Simpson (2004) is a “faith-based institution through which belied system and practices became recognized in particular practice traditions.” Different from that, spirituality is the inner-self that defines who we are and it is developed and expressed in many ways outside of religion. In other words, religion can be the source of spirituality, but it does not mean that all people who are religious are necessary spiritual, and in the same way we cannot affirm that all spiritual people are necessarily following an institutionalised religion.

Spirituality is based on the actual experiences of the divine dimentions of reality and does not necessarily rely on a special location or an officially appointed person to facilitate these experiences (Pruyser, 1968). It is developed and expressed in many ways outside religion. Spirituality pre-dates organized religion. Jesus Christ, Krishna, Mahavira, Buddha and Mohammed were not religious leaders, but spiritual masters of their time (Wulff, 1991). As I have already quoted before, professor Leandro Karnal, a very respected professor in Brazil, which has been studying, among others, religions for more than 30 years, but does not follow any of them, says that

spirituality can be also achieved by philosophy, theology, art, and so forth.

What is also worth to mention here, and will be further discussed on the section spirituality and modern science of this thesis, is the churches as part of modernity, and it includes being part of environmental impact. According to Eduardo Gudynas (2018), churches operate from the supposition that only humans are subjects and agents of value, it generates contradictions and tensions with forms of knowledge and sensibilities that are not tied to those restrictions, such as the right of Nature, and differences with those other sensibilities endure. The Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef (1992) describes it as the “myth” and points out that the environmental crisis we are facing is not a mistake of planification or wrong social, political, economical theories, it is the essence of our culture: the original myth that one can find on the bible, in the book of Genesis where God said: “Grow and multiply, fill the earth and dominate it”. According to Max-Neef, our understanding in this sense is not integration between human and nature, but men over nature, whose only purpose is to serve us, human beings.

Gudynas (2018) says that we are facing simultaneous divergences in different dimensions, both at cultural and political bases of modernity and in its spiritualities. In the Catholic or Protestant churches, most of the activism give first priority to the fight against poverty, and use this idea to dismiss the rights of Nature. “There are also situations in which practices from Christian churches are seen as part of the problem associated with environmental impacts. This situation is possibly more rigid in some Pentecostal practices that do not participate in mobilizations of denunciations regarding environmental justice and seek to adapt to capitalism modernization” (Gudynas, 2018, 236). Liberation theology can be quoted as an example of the churches effort to the fight against poverty. Latin American liberation theology was originally a phenomenon of the late 1960s through the late 1970s, its considered unique hermeneutic was an attempt to theologians give voice to all the oppressed, the considered 'poors', such as women, sexual minorities, indigenous, mestizo, and afrodescendent of Latin America (Petrela, 2005).

Although, still according to Gudynas, opposing these stances are those of figures who, also from a religious position, defend spiritualities that accept or incorporate other ethics and sensibilities. He encounters the key question of “whether Western churches, immersed as they are in modernity can overcome it to recognize other sensibilities and spiritualities, such as the right of Nature” (Gudynas, 2018, 236).

But even though religion cannot be considered the same as spirituality, one should recognize the importance of the institutions, and its important set of values, as a kind of first step to recognize and practice spirituality. Those set of values are needed to face contemporary global development challenges such as poverty, inequality and resource distribution, and according to Jenny Lunn “is no surprise that the sacred texts and teachings of the major religions contain values and principles

relating to them” (Lunn, 2009, 944). She points out that the commonly-found values includes charitable and sacrificial giving, and describes them as: “respect for fellow humans and other living beings; compassion and assistance for the poor and needy in society; the pursuit of equity and justice; and care for the natural environment” (Lunn, 2009, 945).

Religion and its values and beliefs are important specially for some groups. As described by Karnal (2015), ateism is a rare phenomen definide by schoolars as practice by 'white, urban, successful male', where there are rare women, financially poor people, indigenous and rural communities. “If you depend on the rain to save a year of work, your belief in God increases. Maybe for others, that rain means just using an umbrella, but to the rural man it can ruin or give him a year of food and work. Those who depend directly on the land have little tendency to manifestate 'rational' beliefs” (Karnal, 2015, 5).

In his work, Kurt Alan Ver Beek gives an example of the community activism that the values in religion could mobilize. In 1994 over 4000 Lenca men, women, and children marched into Tugucigalpa, capital city of Honduras, and stayed in front of the Congress building until the polititians hear the demands of their community. After a feel days, the government signed a document ensuring the majority of the request of those people. The aspect for mobilising that number of people, some of whom had never left their village, was the spiritual characterisation of the event. For the Lenca people, they were not participating in a demonstration or protest, they were in a pilgrimage. They called it 'Pilgrimage for Life, Justice, and Liberty'. Pilgrimage is a common practice to Catholicism and to the Lenca tradition. The Lenca people marched to the Honduran capital singing religious songs, and doing religious manifestations. The event had the support of the local priests and the local Catholic church. According to Beek, the case demonstrates that for the Lenca “spiritual themes are potentially powerfull mobilisers for social change” (Beek, 2000, 35).

There are no doubts that these values are important. As religions have a vision of creating a better world, they should not be focused in economic factors, their values and moral codes provide a strong foundation for a more sustainable and appropriate development strategy. The question is whether they are used in a way which is beneficial or harmful for developmet. Some values and teachings have been interpreted, applied or even manipulated in ways that have not been beneficial for development (Lunn, 2009)

2.1.3 Examples of manifestation of spirituality

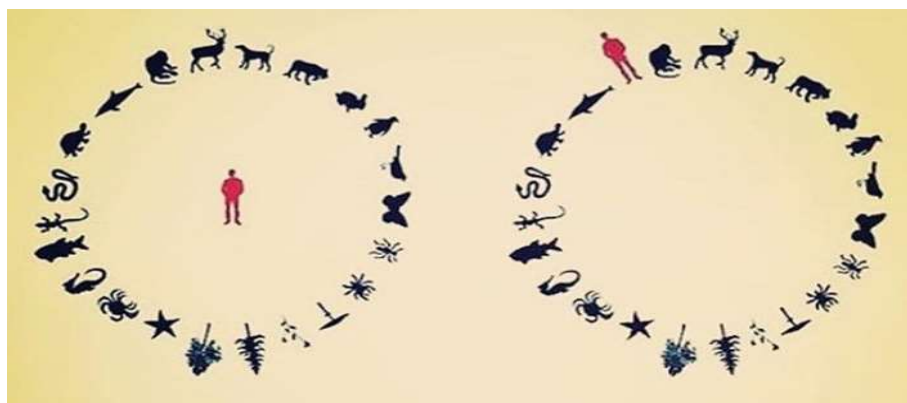
2.1.3.1 Indiginous and traditional communities

One way to see spirituality applied very cleary is in traditional societies. Spirituality is not just an aspect of these communities, but it is intrinsically lived and applied in all aspects of people lives. From the way they born and raise their childreen, to the relationship with their work, nature, and

everything else. As we are going to see in the next section of this chapter, modernization deprived people from expressing their spirituality, as it was considered an aspect of traditional and non-modern societies. Therefore, those communities which still preserve their culture and values, are more likely to value their spiritual development, and treat it as the base for all their actions and behaviour. Before I use examples of manifestation of spirituality in these communities, we should see the different ways and sensibilities to understand and determine values, to distinguish among different types of religious and spiritual perspectives. For that, we should understand the distinct types of cosmovision and ontology. For Ishizawa (2009) a cosmovision is the basic way of seeing, feeling and perceiving the world, and it is manifested in the way people act and express themselves.

On one hand, according to Gudynas (2018), we have the anthropocentric, which means that only human beings have their own values and are the only ones capable of giving value. In this perspective, there are no values considered to nonhumans, and nature gets an utilitarian view. In this sense, there are those who see the environment as just a basket of resources that should be exploited, there are others who propose a sustainable use of flora and fauna, and those who wish to protect certain sites due to their beauty. There are also people who defend environmental justice from an anthropocentric viewpoint, saying that it can be good quality of life for humans if the environment in which they live is contaminated. On the other hand, there are groups that perceive values belonging to the nonhuman that are inherent, and do not need a person to ascribe them. These are some cases of indigenous communities in South America, which proclaim the rights of Nature and what is known as *Buen Vivir* (Gudynas, 2018).

Figure 3: different cosmovisions, Western compared to indigenous



Source: internet, author anonymous

Still according to Eduardo Gudynas, South America is a specific case regarding both described ontologies:

“In South America, an ontology belonging to modernity would dominate, as the inheritor of colonial legacies of forms of knowledge, which its society-nature dualism; it is attached to progress, is anthropocentric, defends science and Western technology, and considers itself part of a universal history. In the ontologies of some indigenous people, the situation is the opposite: since the

universal condition is that of subjects – human, nonhuman, and spiritual unities – while there is a diversity within what we might identify as nature” (Gudynas, 2018, 238).

In few words *Buen Vivir* expresses its spirituality by means of its knowledge and living based on the communion of humans and nature and on the spatial-temporal-harmonious totality of existence. That is, on the necessary interrelation of beings, knowledges, logics, and rationalities of thought, action, existence, and living (Walsh, 2010). It is an indigenous philosophy of life based in the search and maintenance of the harmony with the community and the other beings in nature. It is the idea that everyone should have access to the resources. “The *runa* (self-identification for indigenous persons) needs to acquire and maintain inner strength (*sámai*), wisdom (*sabiduria*), well-balanced conduct (*sasi*), capacity for comprehension (*ricsima*), the ability to envision the future (*muskui*), perseverance (*ushai*) and compassion (*llakina*)” (Waldmüller, 2014). All aspects of spirituality.

Buen vivir, in some Andean countries can have different approaches depending on the region and/or community. There is that such as the concept of *Pachamama* (Mother Earth), and others that are the results of critiques taking place at the heart of modernity. It is plural, as there are different visions in different traditions, for example in *sumak kawsay* (Kichwa people of Ecuador), *suma qamaña* (some Aymara people of Bolivia), or even other practicante non-indigenous. *Pachamama* is not a “sacred” Nature as the Western understand it, it is a framework made up of both the human and nonhuman: people do not occupy it – they are a constitutive part of it. It is ecological and social at the same time (Gudynas, 2018).

In the documentary “*Humano: Sudamérica renace*” (Human: South America reborn), the argentinian director Alan Stivelman shows his experience in an Andean community in Peru where he went to learn in a very practical way how the indigenous spirituality is taught and preserved, through rituals, initiation and new structures that are known by the community as the keys to break and expand our consciousness. Most of the rituals are made observing and using components in nature, in some cases including reproducing some movements of animals, or getting inside nature to really feel as part of it. For instance, he was conducted by the *paqo* (“andean priest”) to cross a cave above the river blindfolded. As Stivelman described, it was the first time he not just feel fear as an abstract emotion, but faced it and almost could “touch it”. Also all aspects of spirituality, as we saw in the previous section of this chapter.

In New Zealand the *Maori* (indigenous from that country) have also an interesting culture manifestation which got my attention since the time I lived on that island. Different from other indigenous cultures that I have personally met, Maoris are not isolated in remote areas of the country, and their culture manifestation can be seen, somehow, alive even in the cities. Love M. Chile, a researcher and director from the School of Health and Community Studies, UNITEC, in Auckland,

New Zealand, and Gareth Simpson who works with Community Development at the Auckland District Health Board, described in their work “Spirituality and Community Development: exploring the link between the individual and the collective”, how the Maoris use the living environment to provide ways of attaining harmony through balance, collaboration and collective nurturing:

“Maori spirituality evolved from the belief in an essential connection between humanity, the natural world and the universe. This is an invisible relationship derived from Maori, the universal soul, life force and energy. There is a strong vision of ultimate and independent well-being, or 'Ora', that informs Maori approaches to social and environmental issues in potentially holistic way. (Chile and Simpson, 2004, 326).

I could describe and use much more examples about spirituality in traditional communities around the world, but as it is not the purpose of this study, I presented just few examples to illustrate how indigenous knowledge uses the living environment to provide ways to achieve harmony through balance, collaboration and collective nurturing. These spiritual principles consistent with conditions for sustainable transforming community development (Chile and Simpson, 2004).

2.1.3.2 Modern societies

In many societies the plurality of culture, the modernization, the colonial legacies, the anthropocentric view are predominant. Although, manifestation of spirituality can be found even on those communities, in diverse ways such as religion, philosophy, theology, art. For the purpose of this thesis, I am going to describe only few examples that can be found in modern communities:

2.1.3.2.1 Yoga

In sanscrit Yoga means “re-union” between one with oneself, and the universe. It believes that everything is connected, but somehow human beings get disconnected with oneself and everything else. It is a traditional philosophy first found on *Vedas*, which are four books with all the knowledge received by the “great wise men” from the past (called *dersis*). *Vedas* emerged by the view that everything in the creation is, not only interconnected, but guided by a set of laws that make all this universe possible (Isvara). It is in the second *Veda*, *Jñana Khanda*, we find the *Upanisads* texts. The *Upanisads* are for those who question the purpose of life, how to be free of suffering, and liberation (*moksa*), it reveals the real nature of the “self” and our identity as *Brahman*, the absolute (Branco and Jones, 2015). This set of knowledge is called *Vedanta*. The classical Yoga, as we know in the Western and modern societies, appeared with the *Yogasutras* by Patanjali, which uses *Vedanta* in a practical manual of Yoga and contains eight interconnected steps that guide the practitioners how they should do, from the beginning to the end. The steps are:

- 1) *Yama*: the set of ethical which should be done for the life in society be harmonic, and in this way, the mind be free of conflicts with other human beings. The five values are: non-violence or non-harming of all creatures, including ourselves (*ahinsa*), honesty, non-stealing of other's property, time, energy, etc, including ourselves (*asteya*), truthfulness or honesty in words and actions (*satya*), detachment, non-coveting of judgments, unnecessary material possessions, feelings and emotions (*aparigraha*), and energy restriction, fidelity (*brahmacharya*);
- 2) *Niyama*: the attitude that practitioners have to have with themselves, to rule their minds. The five Niyamas are: contentment, acceptance of others and of one's circumstances as they are, optimism for self (*santosh*), purity, clearness of mind, speech and body (*sauca*), austerity, self-discipline, persistent meditation, perseverance (*tapas*), study of self, self-reflection, introspection of self's thoughts, speeches and actions (*svadhyaya*), and contemplation of the Ishvara (God/supreme being, *Brahman*), true self (*isvarapranidhana*).
- 3) *Asana*: the pose which is well known in the Western. The Yoga poses serves the purpose to correct health problems of the body and minimize the impact of negative emotions on it.
- 4) *Pranayama*: is the breathing exercises that make the practitioners be conscious awareness of breath, the conduction of prana (energy).
- 5) *Pratyahara*: in Sanskrit means "withdrawal of the senses." Pratyahara is the key to the relationship between the outer and inner aspects of Yoga. It shows how to move from one step to the other, for example, it is not possible for most of people to move directly from the poses to meditation, it requires jumping from the body to the mind, forgetting what lies between.
- 6) *Dharana*: is the concentration of the mind. Practicing dharana involves fixing the mind on a particular object. It is the binding of attention to anything more than a single spot.
- 7) *Dhyana*: is meditation. It is builds upon the practices of *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, and *dharana*.
- 8) *Samadhi*: in Sanskrit it means "completely", "perfectly". It is the final stage, before the 'Self' is released from its self-ignorance, and its most basic definition implies a complete state of concentration. For a practitioner of Yoga and for a disciple of meditation, the spiritual significance of samadhi is much more profound.

In the “modern” Yoga few styles were created and adapted to the Western practitioners, the most famous are: Hatha Yoga, Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Yoga Integral, and Vinyasa Yoga (Branco and Jones, 2015).

2.1.3.2.2 Meditation

Each human being has a sophisticated computer called mind that is capable of complex rationality, analysis, organization, classification, comparison, planning, and investigation. This 'computer' is programmed, day by day since we are born, by all the experience we have from our parents, family, social institutions, the society in general. We see huge mind evolutions with the past of years after so many intellectual, and training, and also with the rhythm of our modern lives. But these evolutions are not only about positive sides, but dangers effects such as we get confused with so many information, and also with the role of our minds, our 'computers' in our lives. We confuse ourselves with our minds, we think that we are our thoughts, and the simple idea of 'stop thinking' scare many people (Cardoso, 2011).

Meditation allows us to realize the real role of the mind. It is an exercise of perception where its goal is to observe, without trying to dominate it, judge, destroy, compare or analyze. Just observe how this 'computer' works, what is its true meaning. For that, there are many techniques, such as passive concentration, passive perceptive, active meditation, and so on.

Eastern philosophy and religions often suggest meditation to their followers, and many people still confuse meditation with religion. But this is not actually true, as meditation in Western or modern societies does not necessary need to be connected with a set of beliefs. The doctor Roberto Cardoso (2011) describes some of the psychophysical effects from the point of view of science, not connected with any religion. They are: physiological effects, psychic effects, psychic relaxation, positive experience, feeling of 'inner peace', feeling of happiness, satisfaction, the impression of hamony with the world, less tendency to lose control, temporal and tactile distortion, changing in the quality of sleeping, and the feeling of 'spiritual experience'. This last feeling, he points out that researches show that between 25% to 50% of individuals report that, when they are practicing meditation, they had a kind of 'spiritual experience' during the practice. Some of them described it as a 'state of mind' hard to define, others describe it as having a perception of a 'huge presence', that they also do not know how to explain (Cardoso, 2011).

Science has been studying the impact of meditation in human's brain, health, behaviour etc for a quite of time now. According to Pessini (2007) scientists that have scanned the brain have discovered that meditation can change brain activity and fortify the immune response. Other studies have shown that meditation can decrease the beats heart disease and blood pressure, consequently the stress.

2.1.3.2.3 Philosophy and theology

We can observe in the modernized countries, specially in colonized countries, the mix of approaches to express spirituality. Theology, for instance, was used by Paulo Freire, a professor,

pedagogue and Brazilian philosopher. His pioneer theo-ecological literature was the result of numerous local community-based grass-roots groups in Brazil, organized with the church as their base, critically discussing their social, spiritual and political futures (Chile and Simpson, 2004).

In their research *“Education and spirituality as fundamental experiences for humanization in Paulo Freire”*, Chaves, Silva et al. (2016) points out that Paulo Freire developed a pedagogy deeply grounded in a model of 'liberating spirituality', educating for freedom through humanization that values justice, freedom and hope. In this sense "acting" for education for freedom a human will, and what influences human desire and make it to change direction is spiritual. Still according to the authors, the recognition of our own responsibility indicates that we begin to walk the path of life from the point of view of coherence. In this way, ethics overcomes the aesthetic design of a superficial society. For spirituality to enter into a partnership with education in the process of human formation, it is necessary to be involved with a model of education that proposes the problematization of the daily life of man. Thus, Paulo Freire problematizes daily life to make man conscious of his oppressive reality that does not allow him to live the totality of the potential that life offers. Paulo Freire's pedagogy has liberating aspects that presents the presence of a model of spirituality: non-alienating and pedagogical that problematizes everyday life, through the awareness that humanizes people, allowing them to live the totality of the good life (Chaves, Silva et al. 2016).

Another influente movenment in Latin America was the Liberation theology, that arrised in late 20th-century. The movenment promotes the inclusion of the poor and oppressed in political and civic affairs. “Liberation theology provides a society-transforming vision that goes beyond personal salvation into a political dimension for social critique linking personal suffering to oppressive power structures. Christ the social activist invited people to participate in the struggle for justice, liberation and the integrity of creation through the removal of the oppressive circumstances and structures” (Chile and Simpson, 2004, 327).

Philosophy also has been used as capable tool of leading us to the answers to the questions we seek. As for etymology, the word "philosophy" comes from the combination of two Greek terms: "phyla", which indicates "search, aspiration, love" and "sophia", meaning "wisdom, knowledge." Thus, the philosopher, that is, the seeker of wisdom, is an individual who seeks to contextualize himself in the Universe, and before his Laws, in order to rescue the knowledge about who we really are, where we come from, where we are going, what life is for and all the things that surround us. The study and practice of philosophy can contribute to recognize that many issues in our lives are not the causes, but the effects of our inability to love and to act in a morally correct way. Therefore, philosophy has the function of leading us, above all, to the rescue of our self-esteem, in addition to re-establishing us socially as free and independent human beings (Academia de Filosofia, 2018).

2.1.3.2.4 Workplace spirituality

Workplace spirituality refers to employee experiences of spirituality at workplace. It is a new concept in modern societies, and can be defined as the promotion of the spiritual of interconnectedness, shared by all those involved in the work process, from the awareness of each member, raising and maintain one sense of honesty, kindness, and courage, and leading to the collective creation of a motivational environment characterized by a sense of purpose, high ethical standards, acceptance, etc. (Pawar, 2009).

2.1.3.2.5 Ecovillages

According to the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), an ecovillage is an intentional, traditional or urban community designed through community participatory process focused in social, culture, ecology and economy dimensions to generate social and natural environments. It is made by the combination of wise use of modern technology and resources with traditional heritage and wisdom. Each ecovillage is designed by the people who live there, according to their vision, context, culture and interests. The Network nowadays reaches out around 10.000 communities all over the world. Most of the people who get together to build an ecovillage, or those who plan to move to one of them, are from modern societies.

Some ecovillages have a strong spirituality approach. For instance, I have visited few times Nazaré Uniluz, an intentional community in São Paulo (Brazil) which has a vision of deep self-reflection, incorporating elements of monastic living. Uniluz not just have permanent residents, but also a huge flux of invited people for weekend workshops or week-long immersions. I have myself participated in two immersions in this place.

Lüpke (2012) stated in his work that with variety of approaches, ecovillages are pioneers for cultural transformation, because they establish a different consciousness. He highlighted that ecovillages are agents of change in sustainable and environmental lifestyles. It can be achieved by collectively discussing and dealing with processes of personal growth in communication and spiritual awareness, combining inner growth with social and ecological projects. The focus, according to Lüpke, is enhancing individual's personal potential as a precondition for collective transformation.

SPIRITUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT

2.2 Spirituality and its absence in the development field

Spirituality should receive attention and be considered an important subject in the level of social, environment, economics, and politics in the development field. It is an inherent part of the human being, and should not be denied or treated as a second subject, even more because all the other topics studied and applied in the area of development are interconnected, and if denying one of them, we are not able to see the big picture and understand and act effectively in helping the communities in their development.

It would be likely that, due the relevance of the topic, and its link to issues in development, spirituality would have a notable place in the development theory and practice. Although, it is under-represented in both literature and development organizations. Kurt Alan Ver Beek, in his research made a comparison of topics published in development journals, using a bibliographic database:

Table 3: number of articles with references by topics, by journal

Journals – period (1982 - 1998)	Key words				
	Environment	Gender	Population	Spiritual and spirituality	Religion and religious
<i>World Development</i>	83	85	89	0	5
<i>Journal of Development Studies</i>	19	46	38	0	1
<i>Journal of Development Areas</i>	18	32	43	0	10

Source: Beek, K. 2000. Spirituality: a development taboo

Spirituality is also missing in the sub-fields of development literature. Beek (2000) gives the example of two important sub-fields: first the integrated rural development, which was popularised in the 1970s and 1980s, where he points out that the role of spirituality, whether as a hindrance or as a support, has been ignored, and second, as we already showed in the previous section of this chapter, the connection between indigenous practices (including health and agriculture) and spirituality. The indigenous knowledge literature would also seem a logical place to find discussions relating to the connection between spirituality and development. But, even that spirituality is a central element for many decisions and actions taken by indigenous people, the subject receives little more than fleeting attention (Beek, 2000).

This absence of spirituality in the literature may suggest that it is not a legitimate or appropriate research topic. According to Jenny Lunn “the systematic omission or devaluing in scholarship is a form of cultural imperialism which could result in the reduced effectiveness of development research and potentially damaging interventions” (Lunn, 2009, 940). The author also points out that some scholars believe that the difficulties in quantifying ‘soft’ measures and

evaluating the impact of religion and spirituality on development may cause this absence. Others suggests that academics interested in spirituality do not associate it to development, and have tended to publish their research in specialist journals for the study of religion and do not reach a bigger audience by publishing in mainstream social science journals (Lunn, 2009).

Kurt Alan Ver Beek (2000) in his work *"Spirituality: a development taboo"* describes possible explanations why spirituality has been avoided in development. In the next paragraphs I will explore his ideas. One possible reason is exactly this absence of precedent and models for addressing spirituality in development literature and practice. This lack may convince some that spirituality is not a legitimate research topic or that they will risk professional disfavour by pursuing it. They also can think that the topic is inappropriate or might cause conflict with supervisors, funders, or participants. Another explanation could be the fear of imposing or appearing to impose an outsider's perspective. It maybe comes from colonialism, when religion was used to manipulate people's ideas and behaviour. Until today we can see examples of religious organisations that have used their so called development programmes in order to impose their perspective to the communities. For that reason, researchers and practitioners may avoid the topic in order to also avoid any perceived imposition (Beek, 2000).

Those people with a 'scientific/materialistic' perspective may be also cautious when discussing spirituality. In social science literature historically it has tended to refer to spirituality and religions as belief systems based on myths, whose overall negative effect on society would be replaced eventually by sound scientific thinking. Beek highlights some ideas from relevant personalities regarding religion and its negative effects:

"Marx, in 1844, argued that religion was 'the opium of the people'. Freud believed religion to be nothing more than an 'infantile' response and 'the adult' s reaction to his own sense of helplessness'. Weber argued that religion/ideology could give birth to, or at least shape, broad development trends such as the growth of capitalism; however, his remained largely post hoc descriptive variables which allowed for very little intervention" (Beek, 2000, 39).

Some development theories were built upon ideas from the philosopher Karl Marx. He believed that religion was a human invention to make life tolerable, and this distracts the followers from reality, and makes them lose motivation to change society. His viewpoints still today influenced the long-term absence of religion in development theory (Lunn, 2009).

Beek believes that even if the 'scientific /materialistic bias' is predominant in the contemporary development theorists and practitioners, the avoidance of the topic spirituality could be more related to respect for local culture, and the perception of the dangers of imposing their view. Which for him can be found some condescension implicit in with holding what one believes to be a superior understanding of reality, so as not to offend or impose. In other words, it means that

this view that people's spirituality is weak, and so should be protected, but with a undeclared conviction that science and development ultimately will allow people to leave behind 'unscientific' beliefs (Beek, 2000).

Some of the problems with this non interactions can be the lack of communication and discussion about the topic spirituality, thereby neither science community and spiritual have an opportunity to debate and learn from each other. Another problem with this avoidance in the form of respect, is that it can result in the blind adoption of a more scientific/materialistic perspective in such areas as agriculture, health, and social action. If communication with equal importance between science and holistic knowledge were given, people could reflect and explore how to apply both in all fields of their lives and communities (Beek, 2000).

The fear of conflict is another reason why the scientific community has been avoiding the topic spirituality. Beek (2000) gives the example of the Middle East and the manipulation of spiritual and religious themes as symbols that can distrust and hatred. However, he points out that the pervasive silence of academics and practitioners can precipitate changes in people's spirituality and subsequently in their whole way of life without the participants' awareness or consent, and this actually can lead to conflict. Mark Tesslet says that "there is a strong historic connection between religion and politics in the Muslim world, reflecting Islam's character as a religion of laws pertaining to society's organization as well as individual morality" (Tesslet, 2002, 339). In my opinion, we cannot just ignore the influence of Islam in those societies, as we cannot ignore any other spiritual values in any other society when it comes to development, political regime or any other subject. In the long run, it will not work, it will actually make things worse. Just see how we are as a humanity right now, with the lost of values such as respect, care, compassion, equality etc. after few models and policies introduced into many other societies, depriving people's culture and such values to manifest. The powerful group takes advantage of this gap and implements even stronger ideas, and radical in some ways, to promote the rescue of people's beliefs. And this is not just a case of islam or middle east, we can also apply it to other cultures, for instance the recent elections in Brazil, which the extremely rich candidate with a campaign of bringing back conservative ideas, like the family values, bring religions into power, including military control, attracted the most part of the population and won the elections. The new president is already making changes that are reducing a lot of rights of minority, including indigenous.

Finally, Beek points out the absence of dialogue and the failure of engage spirituality that can also be the question of understanding and accepting the different ontologies, the sacred and the secular, as previous mention in the chapter one of this thesis. According to the author, for many societies the decisions about who should treat a sick child, when and how to plant fields, and whether or not to participate in risky, but potentially beneficial social action, are secular and not

spiritual matters. He completes: “people’s beliefs about the sacred, such as a belief in the ‘Divine’, or in the power of prayer, are private and personal matters and make many development scholars and practitioners uncomfortable”. If they are personally uncomfortable, it can contribute to the avoidance of spirituality in the development field, in the sense of using their funds improperly for the promotion of spiritual study and action (Beek, 2000).

Eduardo Gudynas (2018), in his work, explores the importance of recognizing and understanding the different ontologies in different societies, other spiritual sensibilities, other conceptions of the transcendental and the sacred. He gives an example of ontologies that see communities of human and nonhuman people (animals, mountains, spirits, etc) in a specific territorial context. For most of Western societies this idea of non-human community does not fit in a strict sense. So in the case some people recognize, for instance, that the mountain is opposed to a mining venture, it does not mean that it represents a god or that it is sacred, it expresses for some that the mountain is itself a being, with its rights and 'voice'. The author appeals that we have to understand and accept these other views, and accept that 'modernity', such as we know it, has only one possible ontology, with its limits, and so 'development'. Regarding modernity ontology, Gudynas complements:

“Modernity as ontology has a distinctive feature: it presents itself as a condition that encompasses everything, without limits, where it is only possible to discuss different options at its core. It is an ontology that possesses a universalist ambition, and it annuls or obscures other possible ontologies. It is not that this is part of a plan; it is instead the consequence of its very essence, which causes it to operate as a brake or impediment for any substantive alternative” (Gudynas, 2018, 239).

It is important to mention that alternate ontologies are varied and it is not possible to assume that one single ontology should be applied for all societies. For instance, *Buen Vivir* is plural even within the societies where it is found, it is specific to geographical spaces and particular histories, and ecologies, what can be different in other communities (Gudynas, 2018). For every community, it is important to dialogue, “it is the way that people can come to better understand how spirituality shapes their lives and decisions, how it can affect and be affected by different development paths, and how they can make informed decisions about which path will best serve them” (Beek, 2000, 40).

In my point of view, we should also consider the question of magnitude when speaking about spirituality and development. The philosopher Aristotle believed that a big city should not be misunderstood as a populous city. He furthermore proposed that a good limit of a community should be a maximum number which one could reach in just one look. This idea can look absurd for modernism, because in its ontology efficiency and greatness are confused with gigantism, the 'more

and big is better' (Neef, 1988). Although, as in the size of city or in every aspect of development, spirituality is a very local and specific topic. For instance, Gudynas points out that the rights of Nature or of the *Pachamama* are always local. They are based in specific territories and environments, in concrete communities, and therefore it does not make sense to refer to the right of planet Earth, it would not make sense to propose a universal '*Buen Vivir*' plan (Gudynas, 2018). Another example of paying attention to the size of the communities is the Sarvodaya Movement, started by Mahatma Gandhi in India, or the diverse ecovillages created around the world.

We can definitely adapt an spiritual approach to the values of a certain community. As we saw in the previous section of this thesis, for instance, in the case of Yoga in modern societies, or a cultural affirmation to reinforce the existing spiritual approach, such as the case PRATEC is doing (we will see in the next section of this study), but we can never use it to spread as a model to the whole societies. Otherwise, we would make the same mistakes as imposing religion in colonialism time, democracy (as a Western model), or any other kind of imposition to all the countries in the world.

2.2.1 Spirituality in the academy: modernization and postdevelopment theories

2.2.1.1 Modernization theory and spirituality

According to Jenny Lunn on her work '*The Role of Religion, Spirituality and Faith in Development: a critical theory approach*', the avoidance of religion, and spirituality, could be attributed to the lasting legacy of the period of modernism, what include the modernization theory and its antithesis based on neo-Marxist concepts. In case of modernization theory, the main aim is economic growth, and to achieve this, it was believed that societies must go together with secularization. Thus, modern rational values would replace "traditional" (therefore assumed as 'backward') world-views and beliefs. Religion, spirituality and faith in the sacred were considered as an impediment to economic increasing, totally irrelevant for modern science and something that should be avoided and replaced with time (Lunn, 2009).

Modernization school adopted two theories, evolutionay theory and functionalist theory. The first one born as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, with the application of science and technology to increase productivity and the conquest of the world market, and the French Revolution, which came with the political order of liberty, equality, freedom, and parliamentary democracy. The theory assumed three features: first, social change happens from the exclusive direction from primitive to modern, second there is a value judgment based on progress, humanity, and civilization, and third, take time to a society goes from primitive to modern, because it is based in evolution, not revolution.

The second, functionalist theory, believed that human society is like a biological organism. In this perception, different institutions intercorrelated and interdependent are needed to interact with one another. Like a system, each part performs a certain function for the growth of the society, and if one of the parts changes, then the other parts will also change to establish equilibrium. Inside this theory, there are five variables to distinguish traditional societies from modern societies: first, the relationships in modern societies are seen as neutral, while in traditional societies there is an affective component, in all aspects of life from family to work. Second, in traditional societies people treat themselves particularly, they know each other, they associate with members of the same social circle, and there is trust between the members, on the other hand, in modern societies, where there is a high density of population, people must interact with strangers and so it becomes universalistic relationships. Third, in traditional societies there is a collective orientation, loyalty is often an obligation to the community and family, it means avoiding social instability caused by individual actions. In modern society self-orientation is applied in order to develop technological innovation and economic productivity, people are encouraged to be themselves, develop their skills, and developing their own career is very important. Fourth, in traditional societies, someone is evaluated by its ascribed status, their relationships, and story, while in modern societies this evaluation is based in achievement, technical qualification, skills, etc. Fifth, traditional societies are functionally diffused, and in modern societies functionally specific, it means the roles are defined for each member, for instance, the employer's obligation is limited to the work place, it avoids extra duties and employer and employee can be focus in increasing efficiency and productivity (So, 1990).

The modernization theory is a sociological, economical and political school that search for a "model" of development based on changes as social structure (family, institutions etc), differentiation (modern and non-modern societies), economical speed (going from the traditional to mass consumption) and enhance the capacity of political system. One of the main contributors to this theory is Rostow and his 'Stages of Economic Growth model'. It comprises five stages, starting from the recognition of the traditional society, which have to be modified in order to 'grow' and 'evolve'. Second it is an economic precondition for take-off, it means make the financial condition for the traditional community start to change, for instance an international loan, aid, or tax collection. Third, the take-off. The last two are the drive to maturity, and finally the high mass consumption (So, 1990).

Another scholar which contributed to the modernization theory, in the sociological approach, was Levy. He defines modern and non-modern societies based on a set of characteristics such as family consideration, degree of centralization, relationship emphasis (tradition x racionality) etc. So, for a relative non-modern society to become modern it has to achieve a certain degree of

'evolution' in some social aspects and, accordingly to him, once a society become modern, there is no way back (So, 1990). We can observe here how influential the modernization theory was and still is in defining development. This concept of modern and non-modern, or developed and underdeveloped, is still the way that most of the society classify each other, and how many people see the degrees that separated those societies. A traditional culture that is based on family values, such as tribal families in Africa, or traditional communities in Asia or Latin America, is still seems as the non-modern society, comparing to any country such as United States or Western European countries.

Smelzer also contributed to the sociological approach, defining the structural differentiation in developing countries. According to his ideas, in getting modern, a society who has multiple functions, for instance the family, is divided into many institutions with specialized functions, like schools, companies, religion institutions etc. He points out the problem with integration and value conflicts with a social disturbance among different structures (So, 1990). Modernism model was held to be objective and value free. With modernization theory and neoliberalism, religion, and consequently spirituality, was moved from the public to the private sphere, and Church and State were separated. As a result, Lunn points out that many Westerners were (and still are) very uncomfortable talking in public about belief and spirituality, which they view as private and personal. This accounts not only at an individual level, but also for organizations. The conflict and discomfort can also be found between Western scholars and some of their non-Western counterparts, who are able to write from different intellectual traditions and cross-disciplinary boundaries, for instance economics with theology or sociology and indigenous philosophy (Lunn, 2009).

Finally, two other authors added to the modernization theory the political aspect, with focus, of course, on democracy. Lipset made the relation with democracy and economic development, which includes high degrees of industrialization, urbanization and education. He correlated the degrees with the phases of modernization, which means that the last stage of a society to be considered modern is democracy (So, 1990). The second scholar is Huntington, who agrees that wealth is necessary for democracy, but believes that only wealth is not sufficient. He includes four elements which in his point of view are precondition to democratization: first, the social structure (autonomous intermediary institution), second the external environment (rise and fall of democratic government in global scale), third the economic wealth (the correlation between wealth and democracy), and finally the cultural context, which includes the impact of religion on political culture (So, 1990). Alvin Y. So describes Huntington hypothesis about the relation between some religions and philosophy and a democratic state:

“Huntington finds that Protestantism has a high correlation with democracy, that Catholicism has a

moderate and delayed impact on the growth of democracy, that Hindu and Shinto cultures did not prevent democratization, and that Islam, Confucianism, and Buddhism have been conducive to authoritarian rule” (So, 1990, 82).

Modernization theory is still the model applied in development assistance. It is related with neo-liberal ideas of development through free market and democracy. Capital is still the most important ingredient to development. Most of the societies still see mass consumption as the model of development. The way to achieve it would be giving up tradition and accepting the economic conditions in order to grow and get democratic values and benefits, even if it deprives people from manifesting their spirituality.

2.2.1.2 Postdevelopment theory and spirituality

Some people may understand that the discovery of the potential of spirituality for development is actually nothing new at all, as it always has been there. It is not an invention from this century, and thus there is not a completely new direction ignoring everything that came before. Nevertheless, the idea of incorporating spirituality in the development field, both in theory and practice, has become more acceptable because of some changes in perception. As we saw in the previous paragraphs, the dilemma in development theory between modernization and neo-Marxist political economy has made many thinkers to come up with new ideas and theories. After a period of antidevelopmentalist feelings, largely in the 1990s, more constructive 'postmodern' ways appear, including post-developmentalism, postcolonialism, post-structuralism and post-traditionalism (Lunn, 2009). From this academic perspectives, development started to be understood in different ways, beyond the economic and technical, and expanding its context, including spirituality.

Postdevelopment emerged from a poststructuralist and postcolonial critical thinking, an analysis of development as a set of discourses and practices that had profound impact on how colonized countries started to be called as “underdeveloped” and treated as such (Escobar, 2012). The expression underdeveloped and the notion of developing the underdeveloped, brings the idea that, some humans or societies are developed, and some are not. The polarity of winners and losers, rich and poor, happy and sad, became a natural part of society and were also used to justify modernization as a superior way of development, inevitable and more valid and valuable than any other form of social development (Chile and Simpson, 2004). According to Arturo Escobar, postdevelopment in this context was thought to interrelate three points, such as the need to decenter development, a possibility to think about the end of development (in other words, an 'alternative to development', rather than 'development alternatives'), and finally the theory emphasizes the importance of “transforming the 'political economy of truth”, the developments order of expert

knowledge and power (Escobar, 2012).

Arturo Escobar (2012), one of the Latin American thinkers of postdevelopment was influenced by the philosopher Michel Foucault and his idea that the power relation, as the polarity rich-poor mentioned in the previous paragraph, is not as simple as it rationally looks like, instead it is produced in and through all the things we do, even and specially when thinking about development, and this perception of the most powerful helping the ones in need. Following this thinking, Escobar realized that development planning could be a problem even when it apparently succeeded, because it strongly set the terms for how people in 'underdeveloped' societies could live and behave.

However, some postdevelopment scholars, as Escobar, do not think that the solution proposed by some anti-development thinkers, as a 'going back' ignoring the currently existing modernisation and the previous changes for the majority of the society is the right way. The debate proposed by Escobar is the creation of real intellectual space for the locals to assert themselves. It means, encouraging local communities and traditions rooted in local identities to address their own 'development', solve their own issues, and express their culture, and their spirituality, in their own way. The other point proposed by this school is to recognize and, somehow, avoid the influence that can cause distortions and limit peoples' ability to develop themselves (Escobar, 2012)

The central idea of postdevelopment is the promotion of diversity in its many manifestation such as art, music, science and literature. It thus allows spirituality to be expressed and considered without the need to get approval from the scientific community, or meet any standard of truth and rationality of it. The concept of multiple truths and ontologies, already discribed in this thesis, defended by postdevelopment scholars does not promote the competition, it actually leads to collective consensus (Chile and Simpson, 2004). In this sence, another very important concept to mention that is directly connected with spirituality, community and development, is freedom. Freedom is another underused word (like development itself), that is understood different, in different ontologies. For the purpose of this study, I will expose it as a question of consciousness, or mentioning a Mahatma Gandhi quote “the prison are not the bars, and freedom is not the street; there are men arrested in the street and free in prison”. Chile and Simpson in their paper “Spirituality and community development: Exploring the link between the individual and the collective” say that liberty is about the individual's freedom to attain his or her full potential and should not be mistaken for self-interest. As postdevelopment theorists, the two authors appeal to a revision of concepts and values (such as freedom):

“Spirituality in community development requires a radical revision of very fundamental knowledge and values, even a revision of consciouness. It requires us to go beyond structural approaches and onto matters of the very meaning of life, and re-examine how the secular society masks the

creation of what is essentially a new religion of competition and consumerism. We define this as a religion because both process seem to provide a set of new meaning and ethics for people's lives” (Chile and Simpson, 2004, 325).

2.2.2 Spirituality in development organizations

Not only in the academy, but also in practice, spirituality has been avoided in the policies and programmes of the development practitioners. Kurt Alan Ver Beek (2000) made a survey about the largest development organisations to determine their policies toward spirituality and other issues. He found out that while all of the agencies studied had broad policies and programme for dealing with sensitive topics such as gender, indigenous peoples, and the environment, none of them had developed any written policy regarding religion and spirituality. In the next paragraph I will expose some of his findings.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) states in its policy, that it does not finance activities with a significant religious purpose or content. CARE, one of the largest US development NGOs, declares that it is non-sectarian organization, and discussing spiritual or religious beliefs is not part of its programmes. They say that they respect the importance of spirituality for the people with whom they work in the developing world, but it does not form part of their programming. They reinforce that they concentrate on the physical and social well-being of communities. The Catholic Relief Services (CRS), an NGO directly controlled by the US Catholic Church, states that they do not promote or support discussions about the religious beliefs and practices of staff or participants (Beek, 2000).

Lunn (2009) points out that in Selinger’s survey of the web pages of the UN, DFID and World Bank there are very few articles addressing religion and development, and those he found were concerned with the relationship between religion and development, rather than involving religion in the construction and critique of development strategy. For Beek, the avoidance of spirituality in the development organizations results in a failure to explore the deep community problems and possible solutions. “They fail fully to understand the people whom they wish to help and also devalue the very thing which may give people the strength and hope they need to participate in risky development activities” (Beek, 2000, 39).

However, as the emergence of interest in the academic literature, such as postdevelopmentalists, there has been a small, but significant shift among development agencies in understanding that cultural values and beliefs could be effective for development practice. According to Jenny Lunn, some bilateral agencies (like UN, World Bank, and IMF) have begun to engage with religious representatives and groups to understand how they can contribute to development. Some examples are the UK Department of International Development (DFID), which

are getting involved with representatives of different faiths, funding development projects run by faith-based organisations (FBOs), and working with UK faith communities on development education. The department has also funded a Religion and Development research programme based at Birmingham University, while the Dutch Ministry for Co-operation and Development in The Netherlands has instituted a Religion and Development Knowledge Forum (Lunn, 2009).

Since the 90s the literature on civil society has grown, and in development there has been a focus on non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The NGOs begun to be central and other organizations, such as religious organisations (ROs) were left behind. The term 'faith-based organisation' has now become common, but complex. The work of organizations connected with spiritual approaches or religion has been reduced to charitable assistance, relief and social services (Lunn, 2009). It is the case of Christian missions in the fields of health, education and humanitarian aid or Islam, as the donors of waqfs (charitable endowments), however those institutions are significant actors in development, in many cases contributing in the absence of other actors (Lunn, 2009). It is not my aim here to discuss if this contribution is positive or negative, but it is important to mention the existence of those organizations.

Still conforming to Jenny Lunn, the historical context can explain why the interest in religion, spirituality and faith started to draw attention by some development practioners. Some events which have highlighted the role of religion in politics, economics and social change are: the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new identities; solidarity movements in Latin America; the emergence of the Christian Right in the USA; and the incidents of September 2001 and the subsequent 'war on terror' (Lunn, 2009).

George Ishizawa, a systems engineer and member of the *Proyecto Andino de Tecnologias Campesinas* (PRATEC), a nongovernmental organisation whose mission is the cultural affirmation of the Andean Amazonian communities based on their own knowledge and traditions, criticizes the effect in the Andean communities of modernization, and its practioners. He points out that yet the people of the central Andes have, somehow, resisted the Western colonization and its cosmovision know as modernisation (industrialisation) of agriculture, it has promoted the outright erosion of biological and cultural diversity. He mentions that even if we can observe a growing recognition of the importance of the communities' traditional knowledge, the professionals remains applying a technical protocol to validate traditional knowledge according to the criteria of modern science and technology. "The outside technical agent sets not only the agenda for the intervention (if not, why the need for participation?) but also the approach to be used. The result is that local knowledge is subsumed into techno-science, and local approaches are ignored" (Ishizawa, 2009, 107).

For Ishizawa and PRATEC, the problem goes beyond the ontological. As we come from different backgrounds, culture, and different cosmovisions, even for the most well-intended

development practitioner, the translation between different knowledge systems is sensible and subtle. Being well educated, as the modern society requires, does not suffice. In his paper “*Affirmation of cultural diversity – Learning with the communities in the central Andes*”, he gives an example extracted from Machaca Mendieta work:

“This way of relating with reality requires a distance between the planner who considers himself a subject and everything else as objects ready for manipulation... For example an activity planned in December for a ceremony for the Earth in March, implies having provisions for buying ritual elements, including the probable site for the deposit of the offering... Every ritual or offering takes place in conversation with Pachamama (Mother Earth) and the conversation flows between equivalent persons, is born spontaneously from direct contact, from affection and the desire to do so, which could not have existed with a pre-planned organised decision-making. Hence we take distance from our own feelings and emotions, and repress all feeling of immediacy and of rapport... which happens among persons in the living Andean world” (Ishizawa, 2009, 109)

What he wanted to highlight in this example is the lack of correspondence between the planners’ deliberate concentration on future activities and the way of the local community culture where ‘everything has its own time’. It is unnecessary to anticipate anything in any detail. “The required attitude is rather one of tuning oneself in with the world, of attentive listening, of conversation” (Ishizawa, 2009, 109).

2.2.3 The importance of integrating spirituality with other subjects in development

It is very hard to imagine spirituality being separated from everything else in the world. One cannot achieve inner peace and well-being without applying the connection between his spirituality and everything related with one’s life. Well-being only comes from deep awareness, which requires compassion (a value highly emphasized in spirituality), for oneself and a deep sensitivity to the well-being of others. Spiritual approaches lay emphasis on interconnectedness that require a holistic framework which incorporates related issues, such as social justice, economic fairness, human rights, and ecological sustainability (Chile and Simpson, 2004). For that, it is crucial to integrate socioeconomic, politics and environmental with the topic of spirituality.

In the 1970s development practitioners began to recognize the different dimensions involved in development. Spirituality was one of them, together with political, social, cultural, and environmental, all sit alongside the economic and technical (Lunn, 2009). Even if, in practice as we saw in the previous paragraphs of this thesis, the incorporation of the topic spirituality in development has not been spread and applied, the recognition of spirituality in these dimensions is an important step to the inclusion of holistic knowledge in the development field.

Jenny Lunn points out that, in the follow decade (1980) special issue of World Development on Religion and Development was an important starting point from existing scholarship on

development. The argument presented by the editors, and the other contributors, was that spirituality “should be seen as the moral base of society rather than one of several dimensions comprising society” (Lunn, 2009, 946). In other words, it should not be used as just an aspect of development, but rather be the framework for it, since spirituality is an integral part of the majority of people’s lives. According to Lunn, it does not mean that spirituality will solve all the world’s problems or that it will be equally influential for all people or in all situations around the world, yet it provides possibilities of rethinking development. And it does not apply only for the so called ‘developing’ societies, holistic development, without any doubt, should be applied to the humanity in general, to all countries, respecting each community ontology, and history, as defended before.

When speaking about the contemporary global issues, there is an increasing consensus of the scientific and academic communities, covered more and more often by the national and international media, that the current situation is incredibly serious (I will explore it further in the next section of this chapter), and that this situation cannot be solved only through better public management or more advanced technology, and that radical changes in ethics and spirituality are essential (Gudynas, 2018). Holistic knowledge is crucial for the understanding of the causes and solutions for the contemporary social, economical, environmental and political issues of today’s world. Biological rationalism does not account for the complex web of behaviour and relationships, which is the basis of mutual interdependence. This interdependence, for instance, is described and understood by the Buddhism concept of *karma* and Hindu concept of *moksha* (life of spirituality and renunciation), symbolizing the interconnectedness of human lives and all reality (Chile and Simpson, 2004). Sacred texts and teachings of the major spiritual philosophies and religions contain values and principles relating to contemporary global development challenges, such as respect and care for nature and other human beings, compassion, justice - it includes social, environmental, gender, economic, etc. (Lunn, 2009). Though spiritual experience may be subjective, spirituality in development allows a practical understanding that community development is about respectful and sustainable approaches to nature and to all human beings (Chile and Simpson, 2004).

Combination of ontologies in multicultural societies is also an important subject when speaking about the integration of spirituality in development. It is important to incorporate a holistic vision of development that transcends the dualisms of modern mindset which separate the sacred from the secular, and the material from the spiritual. Still according to Lunn, some authors show that either the imposition of the secular development project, or a non-worldly transcendence are not the solution for effective development. For that integrating the sacred and the secular are necessary:

“For Verhelst and Tyndale, development which draws on traditional experience and knowledge to complement modern techniques creates ‘local modernities’ or ‘trans-modernities’. Agnivesh writes

of 'applied spirituality' which sees integration of the sacred and secular, and spiritual values integrated into economic, political and social contexts. Soedjatmoko talks of the scope for science and spirituality to co-operate for the good of humankind, while Harcourt calls for an appreciation of the 'potential synergies' between secular and religious approaches to development." (Lunn, 2009, 946)

Jenny Lunn in her research complements that a few writers and practitioners have suggested frameworks for building a holistic approach to development practice where spirituality is an integral part. To quote some: 'co-evolutionary cosmology', by Richard B. Norgaard; 'Asset Based Community Development', by Valeriano Joaquim Vaz; and 'Holistic Spirituality' by Jechoutek (Lunn, 2009).

According to Beck there are few reasons why we definitely should include spirituality with all the other subjects in development. One of them, as we already saw on the first section of this chapter, spirituality can shape decisions and actions, which in development can be both for and against change, and thus, exploring spirituality's role would result in more effective interventions. Another reason would be that, in case of interventions which ignore spirituality, intentionally or unintentionally, not only people's spirituality would be affected, but also areas such as environment, gender relations, and community interdependence. And, finally, the failure to allow and encourage the role of spirituality in people's lives take out from them the opportunity to determine their own values and priorities, and is therefore, anti-developmental (Beck, 2000).

To conclude this section, I quote Vasconcelos: "is unreasonable to expect that the betterment of the planet, organizations, society, and humanity will be achieved without the strong commitment to developing and practicing spirituality on a larger scale" (Vasconcelos, 2017, 21).

THE IMPACT OF MODERN SCIENCE AND THE ABSENCE OF SPIRITUALITY

As we saw in the previous chapters, modernization has been shaping all aspects of our lives, from family structures, work, consumption, to human and nature relationships, our sense of community, and so on. As a consequence, we are living in an unquestionable humanitarian and environmental crisis, which are directly related with the way we are dealing with all aspects of society: politics, economic, social, cultural, etc. in the last decades. For the purpose of this thesis, in this section I will point out, without the intention of going deeper in each subject, the impact of modern science in today's planet, considering the absence of spirituality.

According to the world's scientists community, reported in the study of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), we are in a final alarm on climate. The Harvard Business Review published the alarm:

“Studies tell us that sea level rise is going to be worse than we thought, Antarctica is melting three times faster than a decade ago, and Greenland is losing ice quickly as well. If both those ice sheets go, sea level rise could reach 200-plus feet, resulting in utter devastation, including the loss of the entire Atlantic seaboard (Boston, New York, D.C., etc.), all of Florida, London, Stockholm, Denmark, Uruguay and Paraguay, and land now inhabited by more than 1 billion Asians” (Harvard Business Review, 2018).

We have about 12 years to take serious actions. For that, we have to slash carbon emissions by 45% by 2030, and completely decarbonize by 2050. Climate change sounds like an urgent topic which every single human being should be worried, but actually what we see are the emissions still rising. “The CO₂ increase in 2017 over the previous year was 1.6 percent, and in 2018 it's looking like emissions will have grown a further 2.7 percent. With the economy strong throughout most of the world, 2019 looks to be headed in the same direction, in terms of carbon emissions” (NPR, 2018).

The list of environmental impacts caused by our societies is big. It includes, among others, the decrease by 60% of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles since 1970, leading the world's foremost experts to warn that the annihilation of wildlife is now an emergency that threatens civilization (Living Planet Report, 2018). An estimated 18 million acres of forest are lost every year. Deforestation is responsible for more than 20% of the planet's carbon emissions, and the biggest culprit for that is agriculture and cattle raising (World Economic Forum, 2019). Since 1950, when the production of plastic took off, more than 8 million tonnes of plastic go into the ocean each year, by 2050 oceans will carry more plastic than fish and an estimated 99% of seabirds will have ingested plastic (UN Environment, 2018).

Social problems, such as conflicts, and violation of human rights are also part of the problem. Business, such as large-scale surface mining, oil extraction in tropical forests, and the

spread of the single-crop farming of genetically modified soy, multiplied the social and ecological impacts, and increase popular resistance, and conflict. It also implies differing types of human rights violations: from restrictions on the rights to information, and civic participation, to the invasion of indigenous lands (Gudynas, 2018).

One of the fields where we can clearly see the impact of modern science is agriculture. Kurt Alan Ver Beek describes the conflict between modern and tradition agriculture in the Lenca culture, in Central America. He points out how the avoidance of spirituality has been changing the *compostura*, a ceremony that is perceived as a God's requests as a payment for the human act of clearing the land for his maize plot, as it is believed that the weed and trees began to bleed and cry out with the action. In *compostura*, the hosts must invite all villagers to help plant their maize, and after which they serve the workers a meal prepared from the sacrificed animals, provide *chicha* (a fermented maize drink), dance and music. According to Beek, the ceremony shows not only how Lenca spirituality shapes their agricultural beliefs and practices, but also how they affirm their respect for the earth, and their social ties of cooperation and community. Although, the practice has been suffering with modern science influence:

"The compostura has survived and adapted to centuries of religious and economic pressures. However, in recent years these pressures have been joined by 'scientists' in the form of government and NGO agronomists. According to those I interviewed, none of the 'professionals' working in the area has reflected with the villagers on the social, economic, and spiritual costs or benefits of abandoning the compostura. Nevertheless, through inattention and at times open derision, they are hurrying the demise of this spiritual and communal tradition. Some villagers have adopted a modern scientific perspective regarding the compostura, stating that 'the agronomists have shown us that [those who practice it] are wasting their time and money, and it makes no difference, we get the same harvest in the end'" (Beek, 2000, 33)

Beek concludes that, because the impact of 'modern' methods on traditional agriculture, and spirituality has not been discussed openly, the agronomists and the villagers do not reflect on the wisdom of these changes (Beek, 2000). Just to mention that In Brazil similar practice known as '*mutirão*' also still happen. According to the Dicionário Tupi Guarani (2019), '*mutirão*' is a free assistance provided to each other by the members of a particular community, to the benefit of either one of its members, or all the community. We will see more about it in next chapter.

Agricultural modernization, through state programs and foreign development projects, has contributed to the partial abandonment of traditional practices in some places. Even despite the growing recognition of the importance of the communities' traditional knowledge, the way of the "educated" professionals remains one of applying a technical protocol to validate traditional knowledge according to the criteria of modern science and technology. It means that modern society still consider the traditional rural practices as ignorant ways of being in the world, subject to the

determinations of a hostile nature, and the ‘obligations’ inherent in community life (Ishizawa, 2009).

I will use my own experience to give another example of what was said above. For four years I worked as a community relationship analyst for the biggest mining company in Latin America, and the second biggest in market value in the world. I was one of the responsables for conflict management and social programs in the Brazilian territory. During this time I participated directly in the family farming program that the company provided for the rural communities which it used to be located. All the methodology was based in what the 'experts' considered to be the best for each community, even if the small farmers were consulted and the process were called 'community participatory', at the end the company and the very 'well prepared' technicians decided what the farmers needed, applying their own knowledge to help the families to increase their productivity. It was always safe for the donor to trust in their own structured diagnosis and evaluation.

Jorge Ishizawa points out that the dominion over nature through the application of systematically acquired knowledge, control and management have been the objectives and results of the way we perceive and know the world in modern societies. According to him, control and management search for mechanization and ‘artificialization’ and therefor the homogenization of components. There is a great trouble on the part of science and technology with diversity, and for that, diversity is often seen as an obstacle. Ishizawa believes that for all these reasons the knowledge of the professional technician, which learns in the formal educational system, today contributes to the ecological crisis and the destruction of diversity on the planet (Ishizawa, 2009).

Eduardo Gudynas believes that the environmental crisis is generated by modernity, and so it cannot be solved from within modernity itself. It is naive to think that there will be a technological fix, a green economy, or a benevolent modern politics that will save us from ecological collapse. There is an increasing consensus, including in the scientific community, that the current situation is very serious. For the author, changes have to do with a much deeper modification in forms of attributing value, and with another spirituality in the face of Nature and the human. “The crisis cannot be solved only through better public management or more advanced technology, and that radical changes in ethics and spirituality are essential” (Gudynas, 2018, 228).

Both authors quoted in the paragraphs above recognize changes taking place in many civic activist circles. There is an increasing respect for what we might call a spiritual stance. According to Ishizawa, one way of building the bridge between cosmovisions: modern and traditional, is what they call in the central Andes a ‘transductor’. People that have been educated for long years in a conception of life different from her original mode of living, and have, therefore, a lived experience of both. The ‘transductor’ brings its professional experience and verify the pertinence according to

the context of its community, the knowledge of its ancestors and the customs regenerated by generations as a basis for wellbeing. Its role is to promote and facilitate the conversation between different cosmovisions (Ishizawa, 2009).

In summary, in my opinion, we also should understand how we arrived to this point considering history, and all the aspects involved: the way we do politics, the importance we gave to economic development (as explored in the previous sections), the changes in culture and peoples beliefs and faith, etc. But we cannot just “go back” to the past to try to solve the humanitarian and environmental crisis we are facing today. We also cannot just ignore modern science. We have to find a balance between the modern and the holistic approaches, for that spirituality should play a huge role in 're-connecting' people within themselves, and nature.

Pessini (2007), quotes Marcelo Gleiser, who said that the function of science should not be take God out of people, but offers a description of the natural world and then, contribute to alleviate human suffering, whether material or metaphysical. Geiser believes that we only can speak about the conciliation between science and spirituality when the social role of each one is clear. Refusing any of them means we ignore that humans are both spiritual and rational beings (Pessini, 2007). Marcelo Gleiser is a physics teacher and the only scientist to won the Templeton Prize, the prestigious award that recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to matters of spirituality, past recipients include Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama (Greene, 2019).

CHAPTER THREE

Analysis and Discussion

We saw in the research problem of this thesis that the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's world could be a consequence of modern science and the absence of consciousness of society, in all fields: political, economic, social, environmental, cultural, and so it is also a matter of the lack of spirituality. The hypothesis of this study is that initiatives that promote spirituality in their activities can generate good impact on the lives of their participants, their communities and consequently, help in the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's world. To analyse it, the four key objectives were: to understand the impact of spirituality in the life of the participants of the researched institutions; to understand the influence of the participants and the researched institutions in the development of their communities; to analyze how the institutions applied the approach of spirituality in multicultural societies; and to understand how the researched initiatives, and people who participate in it, contribute to help solving the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's world.

In the following paragraphs I will expose the analysis and discussion of the interviews with the 16 participants and 4 founders of three institutions already presented in the chapter one: Serta, Academia de Filosofia and O Despertar do Gigante, my notes and observations. The analysis and discussion will be based in the four objectives presented above.

Regarding spirituality applied in multicultural societies

In response to the objective: "to analyze how the institutions applied the approach of spirituality in multicultural societies", this study was also dedicated to understand how spirituality can be enforced in this context. As we saw in the previous chapter, there are several literature regarding spirituality and development applied in traditional societies, however there is also a lack of research on the impact of spirituality in the development of people and communities in modern and multicultural societies. In this section I present the analysis and discussion about the topic, using the interviews with the founders and some codes from the interview with the participants. I divided it in subsections according to the institution.

Serta

Serta – Serviço de Tecnologia Alternativa is the oldest institution researched from the three of them. It was founded four years after the end of a period of 21 years of military dictatorship in Brazil. This is considered as important information since the context and some important persons, such as Paulo Freire and the Catholic bishop Dom Helder Camara, fought in that period and

influenced the methodology of Serta today with their strong ideas against Western influence. As already mentioned in the chapter one of this thesis, another fact is the high number of the population that considered themselves as Catholics (90%) in the both regions where Serta is based. Germano Barros (2015), a researcher and today president of Serta, points out that Serta, since its foundation, promotes the education in the rural areas in a different way, applying its own methodology. In his work, he quoted the founder of the institution Abdalaziz de Moura (who I also interviewed for this thesis):

“In order to think about rural education it is necessary to perceive not only what the dominant culture has determined for the Brazilian field, but also what the philosophy, the concepts explain and interpret the rural, its role, its history, its future scenarios, the role of its protagonists in the past and in the globalized present. It is in the interpretation that the misunderstandings of the education that has been realized until now are” (Barros, 2015, 24).

In its program, called *educational program to support the sustainable development* (PEADS), the institution works to break four paradigms: first, philosophical, which searches for provide an education not guided by Western world of traditional, positivist science, which, according to Barros “is only interested in cognitive knowledge”. Second, science and knowledge should be only instruments to help a happy life. Serta works with the principle of using the science with heart and emotion, privileging the person and their findings and self-esteem. The third one refers to financial resources, which means not to be subordinated to money, infrastructure and technologies, but treating them as means, not ends itself. The last, treats the political aspect, allusive to the responsibility that Serta has with its purposes (Barros, 2015).

At the institution there is a strong believe that everything is interconnected, from the created human system and its politics, economy, social structures, etc. to human beings and nature. Abdalaziz de Moura, in the interview for this thesis, tells how they use their main activity, agroecology, to show it to the participants:

“we work with the conception of the world, especially in two synthetic dimensions: where you consider yourself as out of the world, where the world is at your feet, where the world is at your service, at the disposal of your interests. Then we show to them the result of this conception in the history of humanity. After we study the conception of agroecology, which sees you in the world, you as belonging to nature, as part of it, and that your relationships are not of oppression, nor of domination, but rather, cooperative relations”, said Moura.

In the description of what spirituality is in the chapter two, interconnection was mentioned as one important aspect of spirituality. Spiritual beings after start to be aware of themselves and their surround, the feeling and understanding that everything is connected increase.

Moura explained the strong influence of Dom Helder Camara in the foundation of the ideology and methodology of Serta. He worked close with the Catholic bishop for 7 years. Camara

received 4 times nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1970, 1971, 1972 and 1973, he was one of the most influente personalities of his time. He was invited to give lectures in dozens of universities around the world. His ideas were considered close to liberation theology (see previous chapters of this thesis). Dom Helder believed that love should be expressed not only through words, but by actions, and was an assiduous questioner of the Catholic "business". In the documentary *"Dom Helder Camera - the holy rebel"* (2004), the theologian Leonardo Boff points out that Camara was chased both in society and in the church. He was very active in the politics, against the military dictatorship in Brazil, and other movements, as the Alliance for Progress, initiated by United States in 1961, to establish economic cooperation between US and Latin America. During his whole life, Dom Helder Camara worked to stop alienation, and stimulate the awareness of the people.

One of his most emblematic creation, was the *'Encontro de Irmãos'* (Union of Brothers), a movement that come together to discuss the problems, reality, and what could be done in their communities. It was in this movement that Abdalaziz de Moura, as one of the coordinators, became closer to Dom Helder's ideas. Moura told me:

"I developed a whole process of popular education, training people, training farmers, training women, young people, always very close to Dom Helder, we use to talk a lot. He was already an international figure in this period. Even after I left Recife [capital city of the State of Pernambuco] and went to work in the backlands, I still continued with his influence on me".

The ideas of Dom Helder Camera such as, love applied to all beings, communion, cooperation and activism was previous mentioned in the chapter two of this thesis about liberation theology. Christ was quoted as a model of social activist who invited people to participate in the struggle for justice, liberation and the integrity for themselves (Chile and Simpson, 2004). All these aspects are considered spiritual learnings and practice, as also mentioned in the previous chapter, with the influence of the pure spiritual side of the Catholic church.

Another important influencer in Serta was the educator, pedagogue and Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire. In the sense that literacy, education, is not only for the letters, but is to read, interpret and intervene in the world. For Moura it is a perspective that education cannot be neutral, abstract, universal. So Freire's influence has to do with having a committed education where people become the subject of their training, not a mere receiver of information, but a constructor of knowledge. In Freire's ideas people should be recognized as able to receive and have knowledge. So the teacher is not the one who knows more, is just the one who knows different, that recognizes the knowledge in people.

Moura pointed out that, in Freire's idea there is a concern that education should be concrete, historical, directed at people in their human context, not abstract, and universal. He affirmed in our

interview:

“We always carry these ideas in the work processes that we developed with the farmers, throughout the training process. Serta today develops a pedagogical proposal which the student is the author and has prior knowledge before arrive in our institution, so he or she is recognized in the education process by the educator. That makes a lot of difference”.

He also focusses on the idea that they educate people to act, and not just to contemplate and it is a strong brand in their education process, which I will illustrate in the next sections when speaking about the relationship of the participants with their communities.

Paulo Freire’s ideas are directly connected with spirituality in the sense of foment education through a pedagogy based in allowing a free mind of individuals and promoting awareness. As we saw in chapter two, Chaves, Silva et al. stated that this educating for freedom is achieved by humanization, the promotion of the values of justice, freedom, ethic and hope. For spirituality to enter into a partnership with education in the process of human formation, it is necessary to be involved with a model of education that proposes the problematization of the daily life of people (Chaves, Silva et al. 2016).

Moura concludes that Paulo Freire from a more pedagogical perspective, and Dom Helder from a more social perspective, became gurus for them in the construction of the popular education.

We can see the methodology and approach described in the previous paragraph applied. When the participants were asked what, in their perception, were the Serta’s values, *respect, solidarity, ethic, cooperation, honesty, self knowledge, care and personal relationship* were the most quoted. Moura explained in the interview the philosophy applied in term of self knowledge and self love:

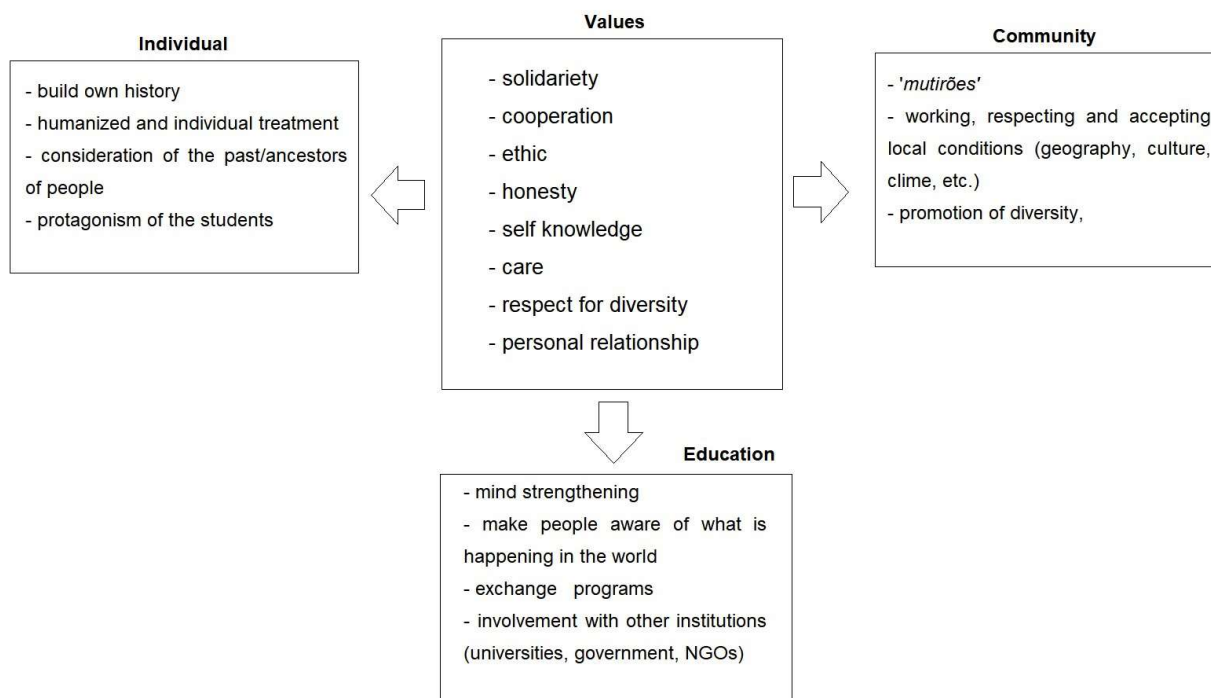
“we work with the conception that everybody, the teacher, the student, the technician, all people, they cannot be loved by their partners, or bosses, or family, but they have one condition that we always reinforce during the courses here, is that they must love themselves. Because people sometimes come full of conflicts and depression, then when they start to see themselves in another perspective of self love, a positive concept about themselves, raise their self-esteem, believe in their potential, they begin to believe in themselves and take care of their image, dress better, without us having to make any speech about it”.

Self knowledge is a central aspect of spirituality, as described in the previous chapter. Below graph 3 illustrates the values recognized and their connection with individual, community and education approaches taken by Serta.

During the interviews with the participants it was also possible to recognize practices that are connected with the values and the approach that Serta takes. Considering the individual aspect, what was quoted by all the interviewed was the *humanized and individual treatment*, as described by Moura when justifying the influence of Paulo Freire’s ideology. Another identified point was the

sence of the participants of *building their own history*, as they feel they are the *protagonists*. This is also connected with the *consideration of their past* in the process of their learning, which can mean that the participants started to understand, respect, and be proud of their origin, and their communities. I will explore more this relationship more in the next sections.

Graph 4: values and practices of Serta recognized by the interviewees



As explored in chapter two, spirituality can also be defined as the relationship that one has with oneself and everything else: other beings, nature, the universe, or the activities one does. We already saw in the previous paragraph the relationship created by the participants with themselves, but it was also possible, during the interviews, to recognize the approach influenced by liberation theology of Dom Helder Camara, in their relationship with their communities. The three most quoted activities was the *acceptance of local conditions*, the *promotion of diversity*, and *'mutirões'*.

Moura stated the importance of diversity in Serta's conception:

“the group is very diverse, we have people from all 'tribes', from indiginous, quilombola [descendants of African slaves who, somehow, maintain their African culture], farmers, wife, husband, LGBT, and so on so fourth. People come from very different lives and experiences: very poor farmers, unemployed people, people with master degree, with basic education. There is a whole diversity that we try to show to them as a wealth, not as a restriction, not as a limit”.

Regarding to *mutirão*, as explained in the previous chapter of this thesis, is not just a matter of labour and communal assistance, but it has a ritual function that usually comes with food, music and sharing between the members of the community. “The sharing is as necessary as the work itself. So important that the service does not aim remuneration, but the symbolic exchange instead. The volunteer work is the guarantee of the persistence of this kind of community relationship that helps

each other, as each member of the community is considered unique, as the unity that characterizes the common” (Oliveira, 2017, 66). I will also explore more about the relationship between the participants and their communities in the next sections.

Connected with the individual and communal learnings and practices described by the participants, the education provided by Serta, in their perception, *promotes mind strengthening and make people aware of what is happening in the world*. Two aspect we can see in the approach that Serta takes in their education methodology, and are directly signs of spirituality: awakening of consciousness. *Exchange activities and involvement with other institutions (universities, government, NGOs)* were also quoted and considered important aspects of Serta’s approach. They are connected with the promotion of diversity and the attempt to involve the participants in more aspects of their communities.

Academia de Filosofia

Academia de Filosofia, as already quoted in the chapter one, is located in the big city of São Bernardo do Campo, with more than 800.000 inhabitants. Its main activity is a 'free' philosophy course. During my interview with Walmir Cardarelli, the founder of the association, an explanation about the content of the course, and the difference between free philosophy and academic courses of philosophy was given. He pointed out that it is not connected with any kind of ideologies, political or religious (religion as an institution), where the main focus is to guarantee and allow the emergence of the thinking man. It is a philosophy that fosters the free responsible thinker, and that promotes education in its base respecting the individuality and specific condition of each person. Free philosophy is synonymous for classical philosophy, classical is what will never perish, because it is essence, it is the spirit of philosophy. *“That is what was lost when our society formatted the courses of academic philosophy, and made it a profession. Philosophy could not be seing just as a profession, philosophy is a way of life”* he emphasized.

Free philosophy, necessarily leads to spirituality in the means that teaches and promotes the study of the 'natural laws” and self knowledge. By natural law the founder describes as the law that human beings did not born to be poor, violent and coarse, but to be prosperous, kind and happy. This is the inexorable destiny of all mankind when finally deciding to choose the way to spirituality. And spirituality, the association, by the words of its founder, understands that it as something which starts in the simple practices, as taking care of a plant, keep our houses clean, be kind, take care of our financial lives, contemplate the day, the night the rain and the sun, kiss, eat with conscience, drink water or a glass of beer, laugh and tell jokes. Give our best in everything we do, including work, relationships, acting conscious as citizens. Doing all this with depth and awareness, not in an automatic and superficial way.

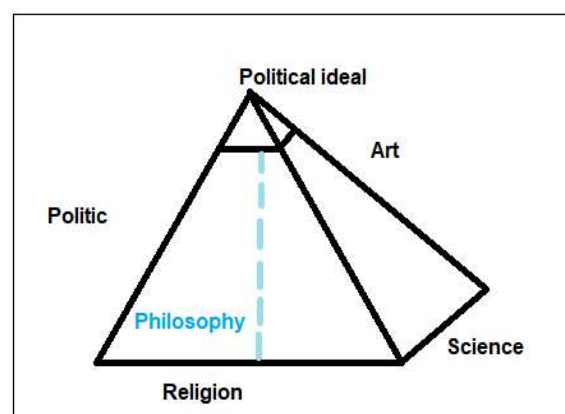
Cardarelli pointed out that human beings lost the ability to do even the basic things as breathing, eating, walking, thinking, and so on:

“The disconnection of man brings this effect. Children increasingly engaged in activities that do not add to their soul and keep them away from nature and themselves, men and women living without enthusiasm and joy, getting more and more dependent to the most diverse addiction such as TV, social media, alcohol, licit and illicit drugs, etc. each day people are more distant from themselves, with no time for anything but banalities”.

For that reason the school offers several other courses and activities (for details see table 4) to help this reconnection with oneself, and the understanding of integration of everything else. For instance, through 'taste and health workshop', the association teaches the value of real food and the importance of eating health; in the chess it teaches the non-competitiveness and the philosophy of the game; with the martial arts the concentration, respect, hierarchy, and values like care, humility and acceptance are taught; meditation also teaches attention and concentration, how to breath, and so on.

The association believes that we lost the sense of integration. Politic, art, science and religion should be seen as interconnected subjects in order to achieve a political ideal of society. In other words, when speaking about art, for instance, one could not ignore the political aspect on it, or science could not set apart religion, and so on. In this sense philosophy could be used as a link to integrate the aspects of societies, as shows the pyramid in the figure 4 below. As we saw in the chapter two of this thesis, one of the main aspects of spirituality is the interconnection. Interconnection is the understanding that everything in this universe depends, as a mechanism, of the small parts to work. It includes interconnection between ourselves and all the aspects in the world in general.

Figure 4: pyramid with the relation of topics and philosophy as the link



Source: the author, based in the information of the interviews with the founder

The biggest influence for the foundation of Academia de Filosofia was Plato. In Plato's book "The Republic", the philosopher talks about education and how it should be. Analyzing the

structures of education, he believed that almost all of them are inverted. That is the reason why, according to Waldir Cardarelli, there is a Platonic structure at Academia de Filosofia, where it is directed according to what he called aristocracy (the government of the best). *“Very simple, the most well prepared must be in front of the movement and activities”*, Cardarelli affirmed. At Academia they do not adopt ideologies, they adopt guidance material left by masters of wisdom, and all the influences that add to the content of the Academia (see table 4).

The two ideas *“nobody can help nobody”* and *“if you want a new and better world, start by yourself”* were emphasized during the interviews, and it is related with self knowledge and to not provide assistance to people, but to be an example for them (we will see it more in the next section). When also asked about the values of the association, the most quoted ones by the participants were *ethics, diversity, equality* and *interconnection*. As stated in chapter two and in the previous paragraph, two important concepts about spirituality is 'conscious' and 'interconnection' through self knowledge. In this sense, self knowledge is a state which is achieved when you start to get awareness of who we are, ones personal growth, evolution, and connection with others (Kavar, 2015).

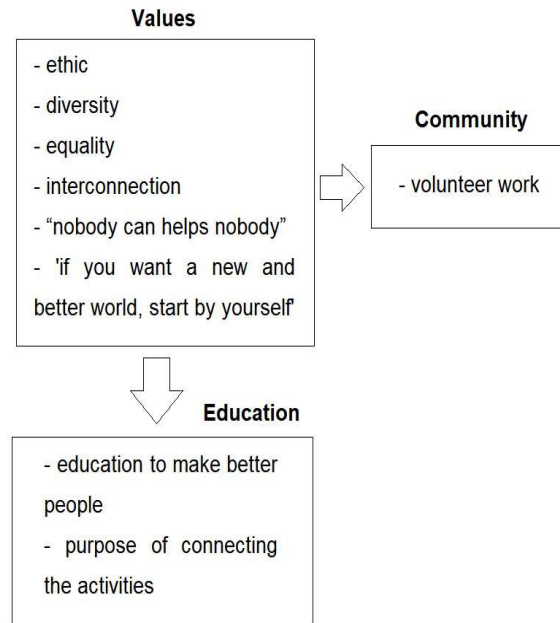
As community practices, *volunteer work* was also strongly quoted. The volunteer work mentioned refers to the job the members do inside the Academia de Filosofia space, and it includes administration, cleaning, marketing, maintenance, and so on. Thoits and Hewitt (2011) concluded in their research that there is a directly relationship between volunteer work in the community and the personal well-being of volunteers in six aspects: happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, sense of control over life, physical health, and depression. Waldir Cardarelli talked about it:

“we promote volunteer work because it is a tool to self knowledge, the learning of 'give yourself'. Love is an art, which as all the arts, must be practiced, and one learn with time. Volunteer work is an opportunity to each one of us engage in society in an active way, donating our best, and this is something to learn”.

Once more we see the interconnection pointed out when speaking about the education promoted by the institution. The *purpose of connecting the activities*, was quoted and refers to what was mentioned in the previous paragraphs about the several courses and activities offered by Academia de Filosofia to help the reconnection with oneself, and the understanding of integration with everything else. *Education to make better people* was also quoted.

Below graph 4 shows the values recognized by the participants and their connection with community and education approaches taken by the institution.

Graph 5: values and practices of Academia de Filosofia recognized by the interviewees



O Despertar do Gigante

The last project, O Despertar do Gigante, located in a medium-small university city in the State of São Paulo, was created to work with development, integrating rural areas and the city. To be located in a university city influenced the activities and approach of the project since the beginning. The first years groups of students of the School of Engineering of Lorena – Federal University of São Paulo, did few social environmental activities in favor of the community, including *mutirões*. In the project’s foundation, in 2008, there was not a single ideology and methodology. The founders were observing the subjects in the society that needed attention and through the years it was getting bigger and taking the format it has today. According to Bruno Vidal, one of the founders, agroforestry and permaculture, the main activities the project promotes today, has a philosophy in which the human development goes together with the evolution of the system Earth, including humanity as important beings to the maintenance and growing of life (see the other activities promoted in table 4).

After few courses the activities of O Despertar do Gigante began evolving from technical and informative to the holistic approach it has today, which includes Yoga and meditation. The idea was no longer to teach agroecology and agroforestry, but also personal development. *“Throughout the day's contact in the courses, people were already getting more emotional. Then I saw the healing role that it had on people. From the third course, in 2015, we included the holistic approaches”*, said Bruno Vidal in the interview for this thesis. Vidal described how he applies what he nominated as “sensitive walking” approach: walking, looking, listening, and feeling what has been teaching:

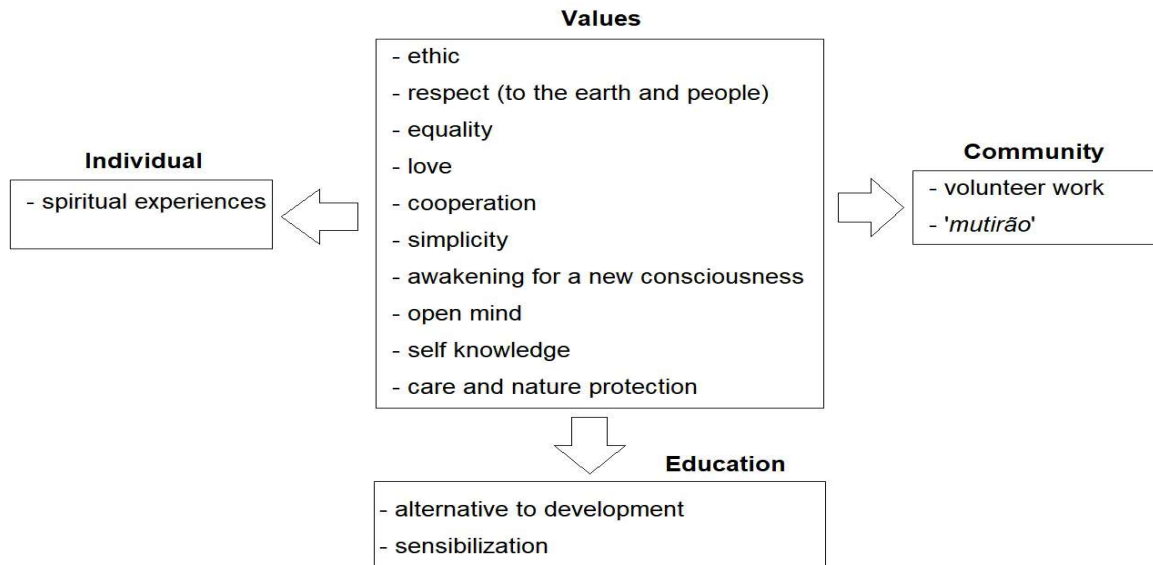
“I first raise awareness for them to feel the place. I walk with the participants to the place where we will work, to feel the ground. We walk very slowly from the most soil degraded part, to the better part. This is the first step, I called it the “sensitive walking”. We go to the edge of the river, where the soil was very degraded. I stop for a while in the strong sun, I ask them to try to feel and understand what was happening before in that soil. We dig the soil a little, the person take it in their hands, and smell it. Then I ask them to do the same up, to the part where we had already reforested, but before we stop few times in the middle of the path to watch the evolution of the soil, life appearing where the agroforestry is. They feel that the climate is different there, the soil smells different”, explained Vidal.

Through out this process, Vidal explains the link the city has with all they are learning and experience. He speaks about food and shopping habits, the person's routines, all to justify that degradation, being an effect in proportion to what is consumed and done, the damage it does in nature. According to the founder, it helps the person to understand and take more responsibility. *“For me it is taking away the veil of ignorance and the person having to deal with responsibilities. This was the first part of awareness raising. You do in one side, and feel the consequences in the other”,* he said. This is part of a methodology developed by Vidal that he calls 'feeling learning': contact with nature, historical and economic context, promoting the relationship of everything with the whole:

“It is about interconnection and action, it is also breaking feeling of the apathy of the global impact. We connected, for instance, the slavery system that happened for so long in the region, with the erosions they are seeing. The plantations were done as corridors, and not as in level curves, so the 'owners of slaves' could see the slaves workings. Because of it the water from the hills used to come down with all the nutrients. It is already 300 years of heavy exploration like that. Then we speak about urban favelas, the concentration of income, etc. It involve all components as being part of the same package. People get very shocked, seems that they have never stopped to think how things are historically, economic, environmental and social linked”, said Vidal.

This interconnection was seen in the interviews, about the perception of the participants of the values of O Despertar do Gigante, which described *self knowledge, open mind* and *awakening for a new conscious* as three of the main values of the project. This is also connected with the educational approach which the participants describe as *sensibilization* and *alternative to development*, which for them means a new way to see the world, their work, and development of the society itself. Other values quoted were *ethic, respect, equality, love, cooperation, simplicity, care* and *nature protection*. Graph 5 illustrates the values recognized by the participants and their connection with individual, community and education approaches taken by the institution.

Graph 6: values and practices of O Despertar do Gigante recognized by the interviewees



Yoga and meditation brings the practice to what the project wants to share, so it is applied during the course and the experiences. But as stated by the founder, in most of the cases they do not call it Yoga, they describe it as a 'practice of movements', the same happens with almost everything in agroforestry, as with the food they offer in the project, which they do not classify as vegetarian, but as 'local agro-ecological food'. *"We do not put names, we let it open, so the people can feel and realize for themselves what they need to realize"*, Bruno Vidal said. He and also another interviewee, who helped the implementation of the project, affirmed that these holistic approaches are tools to help people to understand what condition they are. In Yoga, for instance, sometimes the participants have to stay in the same pose for seconds, then the pain comes, the difficulty in stretching, to be standing still, leaving the spine straight, so they start to notice their bodies are not in such a nice condition. According to Vidal, people feel the same throughout the day, working in the arid soil to build the agroforestry, and to realize the difference of the food that come out of the not so good condition of the soil, and the food that comes from a strong soil. *"As the soil condition, without nutrients, the same is our body and minds, what you eat, do, think"*, Vidal affirmed. The breathing helps to slow down the participants frequency, watch their bodies and minds first, then watch the soil. The experience also included the experimentation of food, that the volunteers prepare taking the fruits and vegetables from the agroforestry. They ask the participants to eat in silence, and slowly, so they can really feel the food.

Conclusion of this section: Serta is able to promote spirituality in its activities through humanized education, individual treatment, self knowledge, awareness education, mind strengthening, and promotion of the protagonism of its students. Its location, in rural area with predominance of the Catholic religion, did not affect the stimulation of spirituality, on the contrary, its own methodology

which is influenced by personalities such as Paulo Freire and his popular education approach, and the Catholic bishop Dom Helder Camara, with influence of liberation theology reinforce it. Academia de Filosofia has a different challenge in promoting spirituality in a big city, but I believe that free philosophy as the main approach, together with the volunteer work, and several other activities that the place offers, attract people to this little community located inside a inhospitable spiritual environment and enable the members to make the interconnection between what is happening in the outside world, but mainly the connection with the inner self. And finally, O Despertar do Gigante, with its strong approach in Yoga and meditation, mixed with practices of sensibilization in the field, gives the participants the sense of interconnectivity, self knowledge, open mind and awakening for a new conscious. The point of not giving names to their practices, can also contribute to the assimilation of people to the ideas, avoiding preconception and resistance, especially because of religious beliefs, as the project is located in a central Catholic place.

The three institutions recognize the importance of putting all their education in historical, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental context, and make it clear to the participants that everything is integrated and one cannot separate, neither oneself of everything, neither the subjects in order to have an awakening of consciousness.

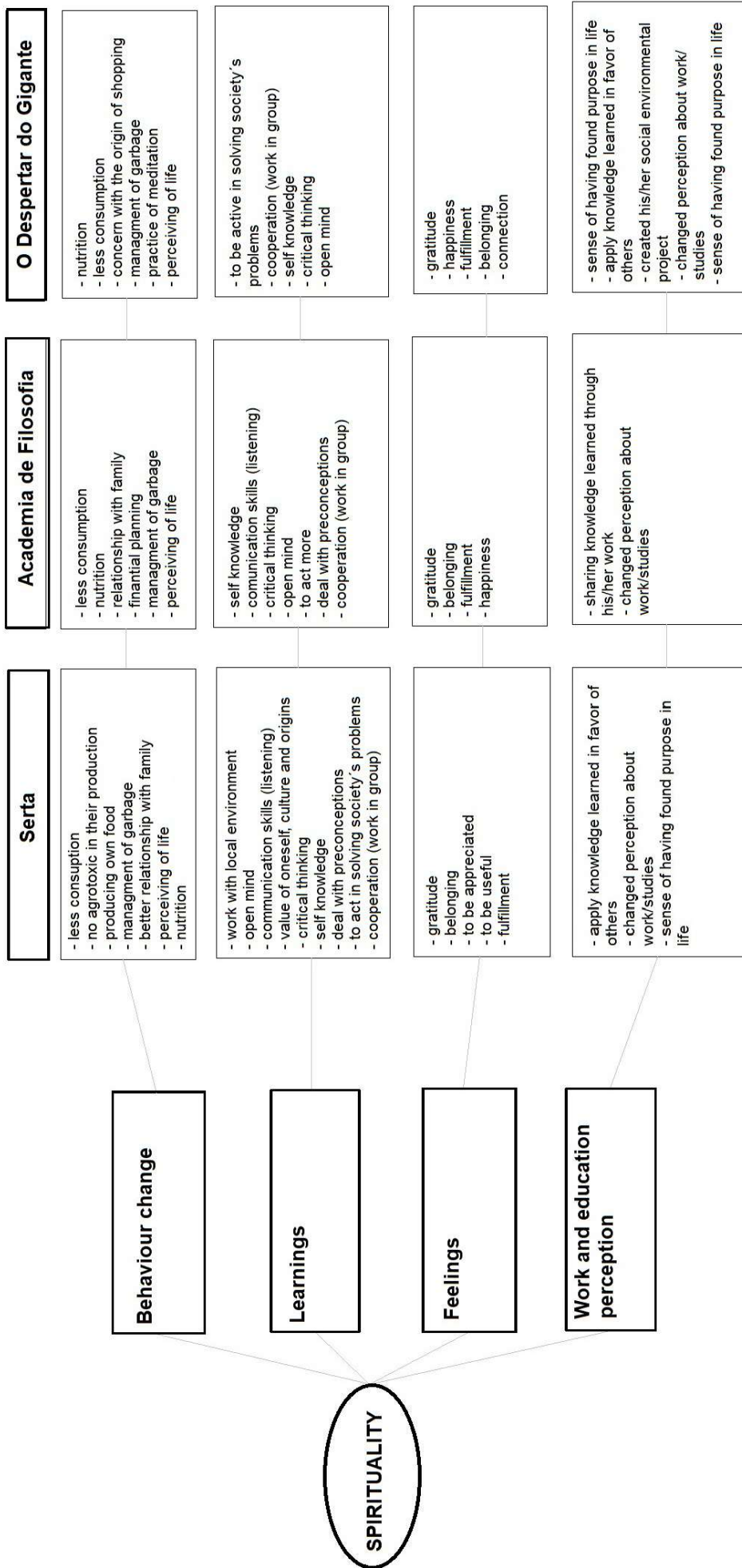
Table 4: the institutions and their activities, methodology, practices applied and involvement with public government

	Main activity	Secondary activities	Methodology	Practices applied	Involvement with public government
Serta	Technical course in agroecology	- Courses: wastewater treatment, agroecological management of soil, urban gardens, bioconstruction, field and contextualized education, gardening, agroforestry, productive yards, cultivation of unconventional food plants - Several projects with the community	Own methodology, with few influences such as: - Pedagogical perspective: theo-ecology, popular education (Paulo Freire) - Social perspective: liberal theology (Dom Helder Camara)	- 'Mutirões' - Students living together and sharing activities - Individual education <i>"build your own history, be the protagonist of it"</i>	- Member of sector policy councils (national commission for agroecology and organic production, sustainable rural development council) - Some projects receive financial support from the government
Academia de Filosofia	Course in 'free' philosophy	- Small fee: Martial arts (aikido, iaido, tai chi chuan), singing, musical instruments, Clio Museum, workshop 'flavor and health', sumi-e, Yoga, Chess. - Free activities: weekly meditation, publication of articles, and weekly seminars.	Own methodology in free philosophy, with influences: - Socrates, Aristotle, Helewa Petrovina Blavastik, Alan Kardek, Yogananda, Emanuel Kant, Seneca, Cicero, Carl Yung, Sigmund Froid. - Other influences: Buddhism, Candomblé, Spiritism, Hinduism, Taoism.	- Volunteer work - Interconnection between activities to achieve the goals of the association - Individual education: <i>"if you want a new and better world, start by yourself"</i>	- No involvement
O Despertar do Gigante	Social and sustainable development through practices of agroforestry and permaculture	- Weekend spiritual experiences in agroforestry, workshops for the community (production of home soap, etc.), restoration of degraded areas, restoration of springs, environment education to children, talks in universities, participation in public events,	Own methodology called 'feeling learning', with influences: - Yoga - Rescue of ancestral knowledge	- 'Sensitive walking' - Meditation - 'Mutirões' - Volunteer work - Individual education: <i>"individual awakening to a collective awakening"</i>	- Member of sector policy councils (council of municipal parks, council of environment) - Partnership in projects with public university

Regarding the impact of spirituality in the lives of the participants

One of the four objectives of this thesis was to understand the impact of spirituality in the life of the participants of the researched institutions. For the analysis of it, four groups of codes were identified: behaviour change, learnings, feelings, and work and study perception. With the first one, *behaviour change*, was analysed if/how their participation in the institution, and the practice of what they have learned, generate some behaviour change in their day lives. In the second one, *learnings*, it was possible to identify what the participants have learned in their institutions, that impact in their lives, their relationships and their attitudes. The third group of codes, *feelings*, describe what they expressed in the interviews regarding their feelings while participating in the activities in the institutions and, sometimes, the extension of these feelings to other aspects of their lives. The fourth, *work and study perception*, tells how the respondents see their work and studies after participation in the institutions. All of the four groups of codes are related with a spiritual approach. Below is a table with the groups of codes and their specific codes, separate by institution.

Graph 7: codification of the interviews separated by four groups of codes



The first group *behaviour change* showed that there were aspects such as *less consumption, management of garbage and nutrition* that repeated in almost all the institution's participants interviews. In nutrition some of the aspects mentioned was the no use of agrototoxic, in their own production of food (in most of the cases in Serta and O Despertar do Gigante), or less use of it when buying food, also the increase in consumption of natural food, instead of industrialized ones, and the less consumption of alcohol. Participant (N) described its change: *"first I became vegetarian, because I thought that this was the way to my evolution. Then I started to be aware of organic food, I did not want more food with agrotoxic. After O Despertar do Gigante I started to appreciate these kind of things, to make the connections between everything I was using and eating"*. Interviewd (E) also pointed out the change: *"today I do not need designer clothing or an expensive car to be respected by other people. I know I can have less, and it is not what I have that will make me a good person to society, or bring me peace and happiness. To have a good life mean to have healthy relationships, to work with what we love."*

Be aware of the *origin of the products* they buy was also a point quoted in the interviews. Other points such as *financial planning, practice of meditation* (in the case of O Despertar do Gigante, which promotes meditation strongly) and *change in the behaviour in relationships* were also said. Participant (B) stated the last point: *"my behaviour with my family changed. My parents came from a very conservative family. I spent years of my life without knowing what was a hug, or hear "I love you" from my father. I missed it a lot. I started to learn in Serta the importance of family, and we worked on this relationship. Today I do not have problem with it"*. The relation with family was also quoted by other participants, such as participant (D): *"my father was a alcoholic, and I spent my whole life treating him with apathy. After the humanization approach in Serta, I began to realize that it was a disease and needed treatment. I changed my perception, and from that moment we have another kind of relationship"*.

The change in the way the interviewed *perceive their lives* was also considered a behaviour change. As per participant (D): *"before I was not caring much for anything. I was not interested in continue with what my family built, or agriculture, or in giving my opinion in my community"*, and participant (J): *"years ago I was leaving my life to change, now I have to have plans, to have directions, a guideline in life"*.

Concluding this topic: we already saw in the previous chapter that spirituality is a crucial subject for the way humans take every single decision, the way one perceives life, sees and threats himself and his surrounding. Once in the path of spirituality, one should be applying it in every single decision and area of his life, as an exercise of transcendence. Spirituality demands huge efforts to be developed and practiced on a daily basis (Vasconcelos, 2017). In this sense it is possible to analyse

that the spiritual approach learned by the participants allowed the expansion of their visions of themselves, their lives, and others, as a consequence their day-life actions also changed. It was possible to notice that in the institutions Serta and O Despertar do Gigante aspects related with agrotoxic and planting own food was more emphasized, due their proximity with the production of food in agroecology. In the chapter two we also studied that spirituality is the search for 'something else', or according to the professor of history and philosophy Leandro Karnal (2018), spirituality is the capacity of going beyond the body, the material, the touchable, and be able to 'resignify'. In other words, it is the capacity that we, as individuals, of giving 'new meaning' for everything we do: work, relationships, our behaviour, the way we buy, eat, etc, a new meaning for life itself.

The second group of codes is *learnings*. One of the most repeated code in this group was *self knowledge*. It was expressed in different ways by the participants, for instance I will quote three participants, interviewed (I): *“before I had this idea that I had to change things outside, today I know that I only can change myself. When we understand that we only can change what we are not happy about us, we begin to see the outside in a different way. It does not mean 'I do not have anything to do with this', but a way we put ourselves in a condition to do what is possible for us to do”*, interviewed (H): *“we are always learning and philosophy collaborates in this sense, to know where we are wrong and we can improve. It benefits everyone when we put ourselves in a different way in the world”* and interviewed (F): *“you start to know yourself as a human being, and that you do not have just one phisical body, there is something beyond, and we have to take care of all these bodies that make us. When you have the control of your emotions, your mental, concious of your body, as much knowledge you have, more you want to contribute with others”*. Remembering what was already said in the previous chapter, self knowledge is a state where one achives when start to get awareness of who we are, ones personal growth, evolution, and connection with others (Kavar, 2015). Spirituality is fundamental to our understanding of self and lead us to: realization, trancedence, getting out of an automated life, finding the higher purpose.

Communication skills, with focus in listening, were also frequently quoted by the interviewed. Participant (C) and (A) spoke about the point: *“when I learned how to listen, I started to understand people better. Because before I used to hear, but I could not connect. Today I understand the context, and that we have to enjoy the moment”*, (A): *“it opened my mind completely. We open a door to communication, learn how to deal with people, as we understand that we have to treat everybody the same, it does not matter how much money that person has, work, culture”*.

To act more, which means not only be aware of the personal and communal issues, but do something to change, was also quoted as a learning by the participants. Participant (K), (N), and

(M) statements exemplify this point (K): *“from the moment I put my ideas in practice I realized that only my actions will lead me to the place where I believe, where I want to live, the society I think is good for my family, and neighbours. And as a consequence, it is also better for the whole community. We cannot just stay in the 'world of ideas', or just blame the system. We have to use the methodology of being examples”*, (N): *“we need to be awake, not just conscious, because I know many people who are aware of everything that is happening, you cannot just be 'eco friendly' , we need people to make difference in their neighbourhood, city, state, and so we can achieve more. I am a person who does not wait, I make things happen”*, (M): *“to live in a big city like São Paulo can make things harder, but if one really wants to do something, you will make it happen. It does not matter where you live, and what you do for living, there will always be an option, that maybe cannot be the perfect for you in the moment, but it is the best in that context. I believe it is a matter of inside out, of realizing what you really want, believe in your values and go to action”*.

To value oneself and one's culture and origin were aspects analysed in Serta's participants. Quoting few examples: (C) *“Even if I am from rural area, I used not to participate in rural activities. Once I moved to the city to work, when I came back and join Serta, I started to work in my parent's property. Serta showed me that rural has value, and we have conditions to live there, we just have to learn how. There we can achieve our goals if we work right, observe and learn how to plant, the phases of nature”*. (A): *“I have learned a lot to value my own indiginous culture, because Serta gives this confidence in the sense of valuing our own roots. It changed a lot my inner self, it is today something that has central importance to me”*. (D): *“I did not have that rural identity, I was not proud to say I am from where I am. I could not see potential in my community. In my mind we have to finish school and migrate to the big cities, because here 'were dry', and we could not do anything about it.”*

Some other points such as *critical thinking* and *open mind* were also mentioned during the interviews and attributed as learnings. The last one is connected with *dealing with prejudices* which was mentioned by some participants in Serta and Academia de Filosofia, and it is related with the approaches of the institutions as we saw in the previous section. This code can be seen in the example of the quotation that follows (B): *“I have learned to deal with some prejudices I had in terms of religion, race, and homosexuality, because I am from a community that is not used to this diversity, so we became conservative. This learning was one of the most important for me in this period”*. (D): *“I had a prejudice against MST (movenment of people without land). It was just after Serta I changed it, and my behaviour as a person”*. (E): *“it is cultural, inclusive inside my family, that men is the dominante. Men do not work inside the house, do not respect some women rights. This is something that I matured, because in here [at the institution] everybody clean its own dishes, we share the bathroom cleaning, organization of the rooms”*.

By Serta's participants, to *work with local environment*, respecting their unique geography was a learning mentioned which is connected with what was said in the first section of this chapter, when analysing the institution approach. It is possible to interpret it as a sign of acceptance of one's condition and respect of nature (as we will see in the next sections). *Cooperation* was also mentioned and can be attributed, among others, to the activities promoted by the institutions such as *mutirão* and volunteer work.

Concluding this topic: what were identified in the group of codes learnings are connected with the values, practices, and approaches of the three institutions. Self knowledge gives to the participants awareness of who they are, their potentials and limitations, it also provides a sense of curiosity to study themselves as a new subject, with all its complexity and beauty. It makes one's mind more critical and opened to a world of possibilities inside its micro universe and, with time and practice, expands to the macro, to the outside, to the community. So the feeling of motivation to act more comes. As we saw in the chapter two, when spirituality is rightly understood, it strengthens our purpose of life, self-esteem, and positive affect. Also other dimensions of human life such as intrinsic motivation (Vasconcelos, 2017). And so with a opened mind and self knowledge other learnings come such as to deal with prejudices and to value oneself and ones roots.

The third group of codes is **feelings**, and in almost all of the interviews, in all the institutions, the feelings of *gratitude* and *belonging* were exposed. By the interviews one could notice the voice tone of the participants when speaking about those topics, without hesitation. In this part of the interviews we spent quite a while, as the participants liked to share their feelings. To exemplify I selected few quotations from respondents (D), (G) and (N). (D): "*I believe the feeling is that of belonging. It is to find our identity that we spend our lives searching for. It is like if before I was not fitting anywhere, and now I'm from here. I help to build this place with my brick*". (G): "*feeling of belonging, union. Several times one person would start a job, another would come to help, everyone moving, pushing the stone to the same place*". (N): "*when I met Despertar I felt that I was not alone. It is like I found my place in the world*". We also previous saw it in chapter two, that spirituality promotes the sense that one is relevant because one belongs to something bigger. As stated by Karnal (2018), it is a historical sense of spirituality which provides these feelings of belonging to something bigger, regardless of how one is, there is a greater plan and one is not limited to body.

The feeling of belonging, in some cases, extended to the communities of the participants, and even further to the planet itself. We can also see the connection between the questions of the feelings and the definition of their communities. Some respondents showed this connections in

questions referring to their activities in their communities, in their family and specially in their vision and interaction with nature. This point will be explore in the next sections “the impact of the participants in the community” and “the contribution of the researched participants and institutions in helping to solve (or minimize) the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today’s world”.

Fulfillment, happiness and connection were also highly mentioned during the interviews. To give just one example, respondent (I): “*there is a question of feeling fulfilled. It is a feeling of light and fun learning that completes me. I Feel good to be part of it, and do what I do here*”. *To be useful and appreciated* was also quoted by Serta’s participants, but not so often as the previous feelings. As we saw in the previous chapter, when spirituality is practiced and understood, it strengthens effect dimensions of human life such as intrinsic simplicity, moderation, and happiness. Vasconcelos (2017) points out the idea of one’s search for something greater it is conducive to the feelings of self-fulfillment and meaning. He defends that spirituality reveals itself through the deep understanding about the meaning of life, human nature, and the adoption of transcendental perspective. As a consequence of it, the view about the micro and macro world that surrounds us change, it inspires behavior, attitudes, thoughts, and decision makings.

Concluding this topic: we can notice that all the feelings are related with spirituality, as per the previous chapter pointed out, and somehow they are interconnected: fullfillment can be a consequence of gratitude and belonging; happiness also can express gratitude and belonging, and can be connected with other feelings; we can relate belonging and the sense of being useful, and so forth. All the feelings can also be linked with learnings, such as self knowledge, to act more and communication skills, and also the changes in the behaviour, as per quoted in the paragraph above. Thoe who start to live better with oneself, is also more grateful. Those who start to act more also can feel more useful, and feel that one belongs to a place where one is understood and accepted. Communication is also important to integrate and feel part of something, and to act.

The fourth and last group of codes is **working and education perception**. In this aspect firstly I want to highlight that none of the participants works directly with spirituality, with just one exception. The respondents comes from different fields such as engineering, nutrition, logistics, communication, agriculture, education, administration. And have different scholarity, like geography, agroecology, history, philosophy, letters, psychoanalysis, nutrition, business administration, computer science, chemical and civil engineering.

Two of the most aspects quoted by the participants were the application of knowledge (coded as *apply knowledge learned*), in the sense of applying what they have learned in their work, and *sharing of knowledge* with the communities and in their relationships. However, more than

sharing knowledge, it was possible to identify that most of the participants understand their works as fundamental not only to themselves and their families, but to their communities and the society, as expressed in the quotation of participant (B), (C) and (G). (B): *“I do not have a great salary, I do not work for that. I chose to dedicate my life to defend sustainability, the clean agriculture, and help people to be conscious of all this in our planet”*. (C): *“I think knowledge is essential to our evolution, and also in my work. Because everything that I am searching to know, that I learn, will contribute not just with myself, but also with other people”*. (G): *“the point of my work today is to share the feeling of union, through the encouragement of the desconstruction of beliefs that we have to see ourselves as separated from each other”*. The sense of community for the participants of Academia de Filosofia is different from the other two institutions, as will explore in the next section of this thesis, and só the application of knowledge is also different. It, somehow, is more limited to the relatives and close people, inside and outside the institution.

In the previous chapter we saw that spirituality provides a change in perception of career challenge “under the framework of a higher purpose or noble mission, as well as performing their duties inspired by values such as tolerance, alterity and friendship” (Vasconcelos, 2017). The perception of the participants about their work was another aspect analysed (coded as *changed perception about work/studies*). Most of the participants said that after they start to get more aware of themselves, the way they perceive work and studies, as two of the main activities one has as tools to personal development, has transformed completely. I will mention just few quotations to illustrate it. Participant (E) said that: *“before I saw work and study like an obligation. I had to work with, does not matter what, to feed myself, as society dictate, so only in that way you can have a family, and a house. With the study is the same. You 'need a diplom' to find a good job. In my case, for instance, I am studying philosophy, which is not a mandatory field in the schools in Brazil anymore, like arts. But I do not care, because I like it”*. Participant (J) stated: *“before my job was to work to earn money, simply to collect everything I could materially, without knowing the exchange relationship with the universe, offering my best”*. Participant (K) reinforces: *“the big diference is that I realized that we are always in some place for a reason. People have this image that work is just income, it is a burden.”*

Another aspect analysed in the interviews is how the participants started to apply spirituality in their professional activities. Which also can mean that, somehow, they have found how they can contribute, through their formation and work, to their communities, and society in general and see the importance of their work/studies to do it. The *sense of having found purpose in their jobs*, and in their lives, where said by some of the participants. The chapter two stated that spirituality is the capacity of thinking in a higher purpose, and take us out of this patter of repetition, unable to produce transcendence, and this is connected with the searching for the purpose of life. This topic

can also be attributed to the others aspect already quoted in the previous paragraphs, as motivation and meaning. I have selected few quotations to illustrate these points:

(K): *“what moves me is a question of expanding my knowledge and do different things outside of my field, which is IT. I found a point of intersection. I can include my academic formation with agroecology, for instance, I can make a drawing and put it in practice much easier”*.

(L): *“I used to see my work as a cook just as a way to produce money to my survival. Of course there was love, but the focus was to pay my bills. Today I see that what I do is a door to solve the situation of today’s world, powerfull tool of change of consciouness, awareness, awakening of the change we need”*.

(M): *“I am a chemical engineer and worked for the private sector. I felt empty working there, then I left. Today I am finally happy. The salary is not the same, but I believe it will change. There is no money that can pay this feeling of doing the right thing”*.

(P) *“I have studied civil engineering, and I wanted to work in constructions. But today I am leading my activities to the environmental field. I saw that civil engineering itself genetares a lot of solid wast, and not just it, but it pollute a lot. A civil engineer should be capable of changing something to pollute less”*.

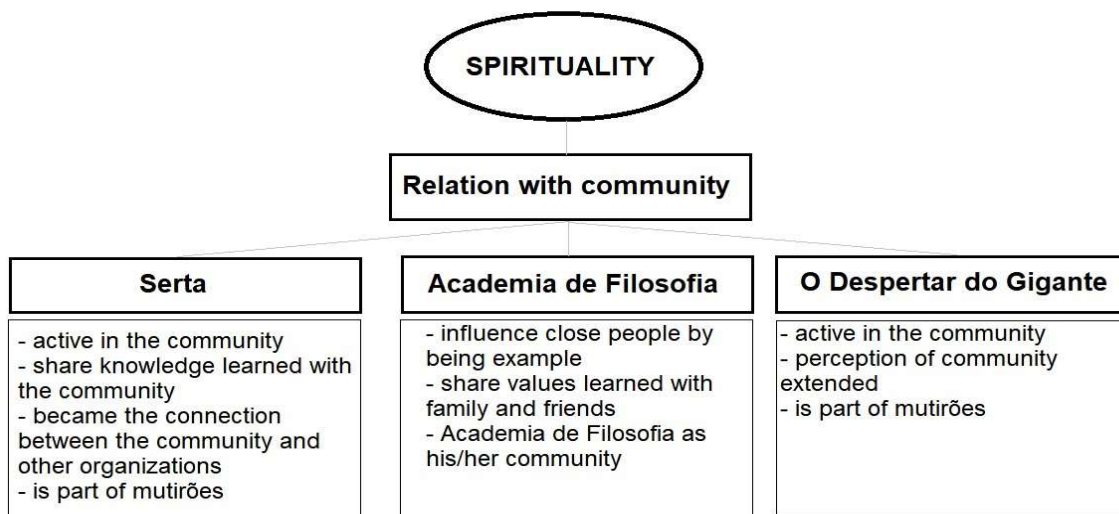
Concluding this topic: as stated by Karnal (2018) spirituality is the search for 'something else', is the capacity of going beyond the body, the material, the touchable, and be able to 'resignify', give 'new meaning' for everything we do, including work, relationships, our behaviour, the way we buy, eat, and so on, a new meaning for life itself. Becoming a spiritual being it is the way we can go out of this 'prision of life', as Karnal refers to the sense of exhaustion and repetition, of living our lives just to solve tasks and earn money to pay our bills and distractions. This transformation of the perception was noticed by the participants. It was also possible to observe that the relation with the work and study that the respondents have today influences the way they see their lives and nature. It can also influences the people around them and of course the society as they get a more conscious vision of the importance of their works to the development of all.

Regarding the impact of the participants in the community

Another objective of this thesis was to understand the influence of the participants and the researched institutions in the development of their communities. It means that after the participants join the values and practices promoted by the institutions, they would somehow impact their communities. This section will be dedicated to analyse that.

The group of code *relation with community* demonstrates how the participants perceive, act and contribute to what they consider their community, as per the graph 7 below.

Graph 8: codification of the interviews separated by the group of codes 'relation with community'



The perception of the concept of community itself varied in few aspects between the respondents of the same institution, and varied considerably between the participants of the three institutions. For most of the respondents of Academia de Filosofia, their community is limited to their families, friends, and the Academia's members. It can be explained by the location of the association, in a very populous city, with limited feelings of connection between people who share the same geographical space, like in a small village. As stated in chapter two of this thesis, it is a question of magnitude. Neef (1988) points out that as in the size of a city or in every aspect of development, spirituality is a very local and specific topic. We can also observe that it is not the purpose of the association stimulate their members to act in their neighborhood, for instance, but being examples of human beings in the society, as exposed by interviewed (F): *"I realized that it is not imposing your ideas that we will have a better world, but through being an example in your own life. Then people around you realize that you got better, your relationship with them is better, they also start to have another attitude"*.

Although, even in the case of Academia de Filosofia, what can be observed is that, the founder and the members created a 'small community' inside the city, where they share interests and reinforce their spirituality. At the same time, they consider that they influence and share the values

learned with people around them (family, relatives, friends, and people who get in touch with them), outside of the association. Participant (J) explains this relationship: *“it is important to situate ourselves in the universe, in the middle of a community, in a position of exchange, to offer something and to obtain something back. Not simply to try to take things only in our favor.”*. In other words, the interviewed (I) also points out this exchange: *“for me, today community is not a place, but a group of people that I can count on, school, my family, close friends. It has to do with common good, in that I can help them and they help me, an exchange”*.

On the other hand, O Despertar do Gigante, promotes the integration between the participants in the community, specially in the sense of expanding the awareness to the region where people are based. All of the interviewed are active in the community, and almost all of them started their own social environmental projects after their participation in O Despertar do Gigante. Those projects are developed in their places of origin (as some of the participants are not from the region where O Despertar do Gigante is), or in the same region as the project. Regarding to the concept of community, according to the respondent (M), *“community is not a phisical space, or a matter of people. It is a matter of mentality. The sense of community is cooperation, that is what I want to bring to my city with the agroforestry”*. This kind of perception and the relation with the communities is something that have been developed with time and the participant’s actions, as stated by interviewed (K): *“I have grow as a human being with the sensibility that it is possible, and we need to get together in community to achieve our goals. I am more active, putting my work force in favor of nature, and everybody”* and also by the interviewed (P): *“Before I saw people only as neighbours, today I see community as a collective”*.

Serta strongly promotes the sharing and integration of the participants with their communities. All of the interviewed are active and share the knowledge and values learned in Serta with their communities. What was also possible to observe, is that this perception about their community has changed since they start to study at the school, as stated by interviewed (B): *“I was those guys who never participate in the community meetings, I was not interested to know the problems of my community. Today I go to all association meetings”*, by the interviewed (D): *“before I thought of community just like houses and people living on them, now I believe in community as people who have several things to build. We can get together to make cement, planting, and doing religious parties. The community is union, it is a feeling, it is a link that must be built”*, and by the interviewed (C): *“the concept of community is to live in partnership, cooperating, knowing the development of the community. It is not live isolated, but in fellowship”*.

The change in their perception was highlighted in few moments in all the interview, and as we saw in the sections before in this chapter, it is directly connected with Serta’s methodology and values, which apply spirituality. The institutions promotes the integration, connection, awareness of

the local environment, the feelings of pride of one's roots and history. As a consequence, it is believed that the participants start to be motivated to act and share in their own places all these feelings and learnings, and that can make the difference in their communities, as said by the interviewed (C): *“the community was not active, even because there were not many things happening or somebody to come and explain some things. From the moment me and some other young people from the community join Serta we started to bring 'mutirões', and round of talk to involve more the community in the process. Today we have a very active community”*.

Conclusion of this section: when a person start to know himself, the feelings presented by the participants, such as gratitude, belonging, happiness, fulfillment tend to expand to the environment around him, and it includes his community, or the people who he is in contact with. As also already stated in chapter two of this thesis, well-being only comes from deep awareness, which requires compassion (a value highly emphasized in spirituality), for oneself and a deep sensitivity to the well-being of others. There is spirituality in our sense of humanity, friendship and family Pessini (2007). The type of activities that the three institutions promotes: *mutirões* and volunteer work, which both do not aim financial return, also reinforce the sense of cooperation, union and connection, practices of spiritual teachings. Another aspect we can connect with the findings in Serta's participants, is what was said by Ishizawa (2009) in the previous chapter about the “transductor”, those people who brings professional experience and verify the pertinence according to the context of its community, the knowledge of its ancestors and the custom regenerated by generations as a basis for wellbeing. All of the participants in this institution are originally from their rural small communities and showed these characteristics. To finish this section, I quote again what was said in chapter two by Chile and Simpson (2004), that though spiritual experience may be subjective, spirituality in development allows a practical understanding that community development is about respectful and sustainable approaches to nature and to all human beings. It means that the feelings, learnings, and behaviour changes observed in the previous section, reflect the care and respect to other beings and that, without a doubt, can promote real development and deep changes to the surround. It includes nature in the micro level, and consequence in the global level, as we will see in the next section.

Regarding the contribution of the researched participants and institutions in helping to solve (or minimize) the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's world

The fourth and last objective of this thesis was to understand how the researched initiatives, and people who participate in it, contribute to help solving the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's world. As we saw in chapter two of this thesis, the absence of spirituality in the modern science influence the mentioned crisis. It was believed as the hypothesis of this thesis states, that the opposite, the appliance of spirituality can contribute to solve (or minimize) the crisis. In the next paragraphs I will identify few points that, in my interpretation, can give us an idea about this statment.

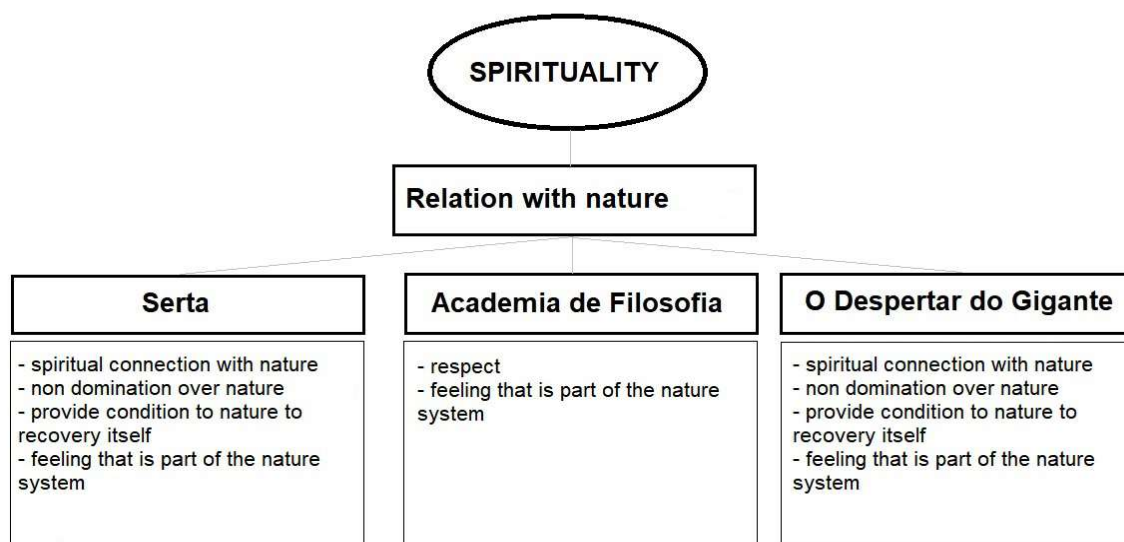
First I have to point out that, the three institutions recognize the importance of put all their education in historical, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental context, and make it clear to the participants that everything is integrated and one cannot separate it, this is an indication that the participants understand better the origin of the crisis, or at least, do not see it as an isolated symptom. Chile and Simpson (2004) affirm this point (already quoted in chapter two) that spiritual approaches lay emphasis on interconnectedness that require a holistic framework which incorporates related issues, such as social justice, economic fairness, human rights, and ecological sustainability. Interviewed (M) pointed out this connection between spirituality, the system, and himself: *“the contact with agroforestry made me understand how connected we are. Sometimes we do not understand the cicle of nature. I see today that the logic that we have been creating in our system does not make sense, and that is why we are collapsing. It was also good to connect myself, and then I could understand that nature and I, we are one, we are integrated”*. Also already mentioned in the previous chapter, interconnection is the understanding that everything in this universe depends, as a mechanism, of the small parts to work. In other words, it is like the universe is a body, and each organ has its responsability to keep the body working well. This apply to external world: everything around us, and internal.

Second, the change on the participant's behaviour such as consumption, nutrition (less agrototoxic, less meat, more local food, etc.) and managment of garbage are indication that the participants are not just more aware of the social and environmental impacts in their lives and in the planet, as also they are taking actions to change something. Participant (B) said: *“I look to nature with respect, when we respect the mother earth, we changed our conception about production, pollution, contamination”*. Some participants stated that they started to be more worried about the impact of his/her action in all the consumption chain, as said by interviewed (L): *“today I search before I buy anything, from food to cosmetics. I want to know where did that come from, who has produced it, if it was in a fair condition. I changed a lot in the sense of being worried about what my shopping does to other people. It was a change of not only looking to myself, but to all the*

system and the process of that thing from production until arrival at my home”, and (N): “I became less consumerist, I started to search and apply how I could impact less in this world, how I could contribute, effectively”.

Third, the relation the participants established with nature is considered a very important indication that is connected with their attitudes in behaviour change, but also in their actions in work and in their community. In graph 8 we can see the indication of *spiritual connection with nature* for almost all of the participants of two institutions, (what can be explained because of the closeness and direct link the interviewees have with the natural environment, and also the main activities of the institutions, which directly work with agroecology) and *respect* and the *feeling that is part of nature system* is expressed by almost all of the respondents. As much connected we are within ourselves and the surroundings as much care we take, as we could see in the chapter two with the example of indigenous people, spirituality and their relationship with nature. Some participant explained his vision, such as interviewed (K): “from the moment you realize you are part of nature, your connection increases. Doing a trekking today in Mata Atlântica [tropical forest in Brazil] it is much more intense because of my connection with the natural elements. There are not “her” (nature) and I, we are both a system. Before I liked to be 'there', today I know I am her, and so I like it even more”, interviewed (G): “when we look inside us and we recognize nature, that she is us, and we are here, there is no more “she” or “us”, and interviewed (O): “we are nature, with same components. We are all one, everything the same. We are part of a cycle”.

Graph 9: codification of the interviews separated by the group of codes 'relation with nature'



This connection and perception were something that, according to the big majority of the interviewed, was being built with time, knowledge, and contact with the natural environment. As we saw in the chapter two, Pessini (2007) quoted Solomon and one of his example of manifestation of naturalized spirituality through nature, because we cannot deny the majesty, irrespective of what

one believes it to be: a God creation, or a mystery that science is trying to understand. During the interviews, when speaking about the relation between the participants and nature, I could notice the emotion of many of them and several interesting quotations about the topic were collected. Here I selected three of them to illustrate: (D): *“I believe I always had loved nature, as everybody say they do, without connection. They say they love because it is beautiful, but without that feeling inside of belonging. I am also nature, I am a natural being that is part of this system”*, (E): *“Before I had an ignorant point of view regarding nature. I was one of those people that was mad when it was raining, I wanted to go out and the rain was disturbing me. This because of my lack of connection with nature”*, and again (D): *“I realized that I am nature, and she is me. If I do not take care of nature, I will be destroying myself slowly”*.

Still regarding to the spiritual connection with nature identified in the interviews, the spiritual approach used in the institutions was also reconized as important to their change in perception. As showed by participant (P): *“I was never a 'nature' person , but with Despertar we know new things. Personally, I started to pay attention more about energy, the frequency you send to the universe. It is something that yet I did not understand completely, but I like it a lot. I think it cannot be harmful when, it does not matter of religion, or your beliefs, if everything that connects you to something good”*, participant (D): *“it is like if I was outside, nature in one side, me in another; as a superior being. After Serta we start to understand we are part of it, and we should take care of our brothers. A tree has feelings like us, it does not demonstrate as us, but in its own way. So why not respect the feelings of a tree, animals, plants”*, and participant (L): *“what is clear for me now is the inter connection in our earth. Me, as a human being, being part in this system. Spirituality makes you understand that all this process is even bigger than we though from a simplistic human being perspective, it goes beyond the phisical. We can realize it when participating in the practical experiences at Despertar, during the eating, the planting, the talking”*.

Fouth, it is also a matter of a spiritual cosmovision, as we saw in the previous chapter of this study. The way we, as individuals and society, perceive nature and all its elements, including humanity, is directly connected with the way we make politics, economy, the way we live, treat other beings and act, so as the consequences of what we do and think can be seen in the world. It was possible to notice that in all of the interviews, the vision of humans as part of nature, not as a superior being, was unanimous. To exemplify, I quote participant (H): *“The big mistake, and that is the reason we are with all these problems, is that men see themselves apart of nature. It is this wrong vision of us being superior, because we can ratiocinate, and think that nature is here to fulfill our needs. We are just part of all this”*, and participant (B): *“We began to lose ourselves when we thought we had nature over our power. The true is, nature is unconquerable, we need to learn and*

to live together with it”, participant (B) completes: “nature was not a gift to humans. Long before men arrive in the earth it was already here. So we have to adapt to nature, not the other way around”.

Fifth and last point, we saw that most of the participants demonstrated changes in understanding and using their works and background in benefits of the society. In the case of the participants of O Despertar do Gigante, and other participants of the three institutions that were not interviewed for this thesis, but its publically known that they started their own social environmental projects. O Despertar do Gigante estimates that more than 20 social environmental projects have started in the region because of its influence, nine are agroforestry projects, which includes conservation, forest restoration, trade and production of food produced by family farming. Serta also has huge influence in the regions where it is based. We could not estimate how many projects started by influence of it (as it would require time and methodology to research), but some examples can be mentioned such as '*Acreditar*', a very well known non-profit microfinance institution, whose aim is to strengthen the productive activities of low-income local entrepreneurs in various business segments through targeted productive microcredit and financial education. Another big institution called '*Giral*' (group of IT, communication and local action) works with several projects in the topics of human rights and digital inclusion.

Conclusion of this section: all the points stated in this section are signs of applied spirituality, such as the behaviour change, perception about the world, the use of each individual skill in work to the benefit of themselves and others, the relation established with nature, the vision of integrality in all fields of society, the effort to help the development of the communities, and the way the participants, somehow, adopt a more spiritual cosmovision, are strong indications that these people can make a difference in the world and contribute to fight against the humanitarian and environmental crisis of today's planet. Beek (2000) believes that spirituality can shape decisions and actions, which in development can be both for and against change, and thus, exploring spirituality's role would result in more effective interventions. Gudynas (2018) says that in order to change the situation, we need more than public management or more advanced technology, we need changes in ethics and spirituality. The institutions researched offer the holistic knowledge for the understanding of the crisis, and more than that, in the cases of Serta and O Despertar do Gigante, act directly in one of the main areas responsible for society's social, economic, and environmental problems, which is agriculture.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to identify the impact of spirituality in community development in modern and multicultural societies. Based on a qualitative analysis of interviews, it can be concluded that the communities are influenced by the institutions and their participants that assume a spiritual approach in their activities. The results indicate that people who receive a spiritual education are likely to notice changes in their lives and perceptions about their communities, nature and society and it is transformed into actions with benefits not only on their personal lives, but also their surroundings.

The interconnection generated by the institution's approaches leads the participants to expand their awareness, to make them more active in solving community's problems and encourages cooperation and union in the development of the communities. The research demonstrates that people that were immersed in spiritual learnings showed aspects of behaviour change, such as habits in consumption and nutrition, experiment of feelings, as gratitude, belonging, fulfillment, happiness and connection and that those feelings are also shared with their surrounding. People also showed changes in their work and education perceptions. Through the realization of the importance of their workforce to their communities and society, through the application of spirituality in their professional activities, they have found purpose in their lives. The change in the relationship with nature was also noticed as a spiritual connection with nature in terms of the feeling of being part of a system, not as dominators, but as a member.

Spirituality is an essential part of one's life in the sense of bringing meaning and a life of consciousness towards ourselves and the world around us. Through the methodology of this thesis, with a broad literature review and interviews in three different institutions, in different contexts and approaches, it was shown how spirituality can be applied in modern and multicultural societies despite the challenges of different cultures, religious beliefs and magnitude of the cities. The research conducted in rural and urban areas revealed that it is possible and feasible to use holistic approaches in development, integrated with all the other fields such as politics, economy, society, culture and environment and in diverse geographic spaces. Although it also raised the question of how deep is the impact in the communities in urban areas, especially in big cities, as the sense of community is different of those in rural and small cities.

In the theoretical framework we could see that spirituality has been excluded by the development field in practice and theory. Some possible reasons were described, such as spirituality not been considered as a legitimate subject by the academia and practioners, the fear of imposing or appearing to impose an outsider's perspective and the miscomprehension between religion and spirituality. It is also a matter of, what we saw in the modernization theory section, the

duality created the separation between modern and traditional, and spirituality being considered a traditional human manifestation, which should be avoided in order for the society to keep up with modernization.

As we saw, even if spirituality has been neglected by the development field, there are plenty of studies showing the importance of spirituality in development and how it has been used in traditional communities, such as indigenous people, to live a life through the connection with all beings and its impact in nature protection. Post development studies attempt to understand development beyond the economic and technical aspects, and to expand the development context, including spirituality, without the need to get approval from the scientific community, or meet any standard of truth and rationality of it. However, there is a gap in the post development literature that this thesis addressed regarding the application of spirituality in modern and multicultural societies. This work could be considered as a contribution to the post development studies. The findings of this research can also be taken into consideration not only to the development of the so called “developing countries”, but to other societies around the world as spirituality is missing in most places in humanity.

The relevance of this work goes beyond the theory as it has shown also how institutions in modern and multicultural societies have been applying spirituality in their activities, which is a valuable contribution to inspire future organizations, especially development agencies, which are willing to include spirituality in their methodology and activities.

RECCOMENDATION

Disregarding spirituality and neglecting the diverse existing ontologies can be a possible cause of the current humanitarian and environmental crisis. It was demonstrated that people and institutions who apply spirituality in their methodologies and activities can contribute to minimize the crisis we are facing by several ways. For this reason, we should consider to continue exploring the so called 'alternatives to development' and the holistic approaches.

Spirituality should not be treated as an isolated subject; it should be incorporated in every single aspect of humans' lives. It includes the fields of economy, sociology, politics, anthropology and environmental studies. Spirituality should be practised in all institutions, not only in those that are considered to be “experts” in promoting spirituality, such as Yoga studios or Churches, starting by the Academia.

I suggest that further researches should be done in this area, which focuses on the applicability of spirituality in work places, schools, public institutions, NGOs, development

agencies, and etc. Also studies with other institutions that promote other approaches not covered by this thesis. Other contexts and communities could also be explored.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: interviews questions

Interview 1: Structure interview with open questions to participants of the institutions

1. How long have you been participating in the project?
2. What were the activities you have been involved in?
3. What have you learned so far?
4. Apart from the main activity, could you describe the values that the institution promotes?
5. Could you describe the feelings you have when you are participating in the institution's activities?
6. Could you describe your behaviour before you start to participate in the institution?
7. Have some aspect of your life changed?
8. How do you see your studies/work today?
9. Could you describe your daily life since you join the institution?
10. How do you perceive your life now?
11. How do you perceive your community now?
12. What is your relation/connection with politics, environment, and social in your community?
13. Do you have contact with other members of your community? If yes, how is the relationship?
14. Did your perception about your community changed somehow? Describe it.
15. Have you been part of any other activity in your community, with or without the support of the institution?
16. Did your perception about the society and the world have changed somehow? Describe it.
17. How is your relationship with nature now?
18. Please choose one, from the following statement, that best describes how you see the role of human beings with nature and justify your answer: 1) human beings should benefit from nature, as it was given to us as a gift; 2) human beings are equally part of nature, as any other element.

Interview 2: Guided questions - semi-structured interview with the founders of the institutions

1. When and why did you decide to start the institution?
2. What kind of approach does the institution take? Why did you choose it, for that specific community?
3. What were the influences you had to create the institution (people, ideology, philosophy, etc.)?
4. In practice, how to you apply, teach, and keep the values that the participants told me they have learned in the institution?
5. In the interviews, we spoke about sharing what is learned in the institution with external people (family, friends, community and society). How does the institution promotes the practice of its teaching?
6. How do you perceive spirituality?
7. How does the institution and its activities contribute to the development of spirituality in the participants?



Pesquisa de Mestrado em Estudos do Desenvolvimento Internacional

Pesquisadora: Monique Lima Leite

Nome: _____ Idade: _____

Principal atividade atual: _____

Escolaridade / formação escolar: _____

Quanto tempo de participação na Academia (período em meses ou anos): _____

Atividades realizadas na Academia de Filosofia: _____

Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo estudar o impacto da espiritualidade no desenvolvimento comunitário. O foco da entrevista que você irá participar será em entender como você, um (a) participante da **ACADEMIA DE FILOSOFIA**, entende, pratica e dissemina alguns dos valores promovidos pela instituição.

Sendo um dos entrevistados, você concorda em participar, voluntariamente, desta pesquisa. Esteja ciente de que todos os dados coletados são confidenciais e serão utilizados apenas para fins acadêmicos. Caso a pesquisa seja divulgada externamente, seus dados pessoais serão preservados anônimos. Você também concorda que o pesquisador lhe informou sobre os fins desta pesquisa, bem como lhe conferiu dados para contato caso surjam futuras dúvidas.

Acreditamos na hipótese desta pesquisa de que espiritualidade pode gerar impacto positivo na vida dos participantes de projetos que utilizam esta abordagem, a comunidade e consequentemente, colaborar no combate a atual crise humanitária e ambiental do mundo. Com isso, cremos que o estudo beneficiará a comunidade acadêmica, bem como agências de desenvolvimento e interessados.

Data e assinatura do participante

Appendix 3: pictures of the activities in the researched institutions

Picture 1: scale model of Serta's campus in Glória do Goitá



Source: the author

Picture 2: activity in the field



Source: Serta's Facebook page

Picture 3: course in productive garden



Source: Serta's Facebook page

Picture 4: graduation group of 2017



Source: Serta's Facebook page

Picture 5: Serta in Glória do Goitá city



Source: the author

Picture 6: activity with the community



Source: Serta's Facebook page

Picture 7: Academia de Filosofia in São Berardo do Campo city



Source: Academia de Filosofia's Facebook page

Picture 8: activity at Academia de Filosofia



Source: Academia de Filosofia's Facebook page

Picture 9: Clio Museum at Academia de Filosofia



Source: Academia de Filosofia

Picture 10: class of sumi-e



Source: Academia de Filosofia

Picture 11: monograph symposium



Source: Academia de Filosofia

Picture 12: one of the founder's books



Source: Academia de Filosofia

Picture 13: agroforestry course at O Despertar do Gigante



Source: O Despertar do Gigante's Facebook page

Picture 14: spiritual experience at O Despertar do Gigante



Source: O Despertar do Gigante's Facebook page

Picture 15: activity in agroforestry at O Despertar do Gigante



Source: O Despertar do Gigante's Facebook page

Picture 16: spiritual experience after working in the agroforestry at O Despertar do Gigante



Source: O Despertar do Gigante's Facebook page

Picture 17: activity with the community



Source: O Despertar do Gigante

Picture 18: agroforestry activity at O Despertar do Gigante



Source: O Despertar do Gigante

SERTA (Serviço de Tecnologia Alternativa)

Values: Respect for diversity, personal relationship, solidarity, cooperation, ethic, honesty, self knowledge, care

Intrate practices: Mind strengthening, build own history, humanized and individual treatment, accepting and respecting local conditions (semi-arid for instance), promotion of diversity, consideration of the past/ancestors of people, 'mutirão', protagonism of the students, make people aware of what is happening in the world, exchange activities, involvement with other institutions (Universities, government, NGOs), popular education

In.

Behaviour change	Learnings	Feelings	Working and education perception	Relation with community	Relation with nature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Producing own food -Avoiding agrotoxic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To work with the local environment -Better relationship with others, specially family -To open mind -Communication skills (listening) -Value herself -Value her own indigenous culture -Value more her community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Gratitude -Belonging -Being appreciated -Useful for society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More human work and education system -Value of humanistic approach in education and work -Changed perception about work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Active in the community -See importance in participate in the community -It is the connection between her community and the city -Share knowledge with community -Is part of 'mutirões' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Spiritual connection with nature -Indigenous connection with nature
<p>Main quotations</p>					
<p>"We try to produce food in our home. It changed a lot our concept of feeding, because we know about the agrotoxic."</p>	<p>"I have learned a lot to value my own indigenous culture, because Sertão gives this confidence in the sense of valuing our own roots. It changed a lot my inner self, it is today something that has central importance to me."</p> <p>"It opened my mind completely. We open a door to communication, learn how to deal with people, as we understand that we have to treat everybody the same, it does not matter how much money that person has, work, culture. If he is 'quilombola', even because I am also from traditional community, I am indigenous, from Kambiwá tribe."</p> <p>"Before I was a girl which did not accept other people's opinion. I did not listen my family, and sometimes I was expert in being hard on them. I was inflexible."</p>	<p>"To know how to deal with people, understand when someone has a problem. To know how to seat, to talk. You be able to cuddle a student, talk to him and understand what is going on inside his head, these all are very gratifying."</p>	<p>"In the traditional schools you have that pedagogical content which must be followed. You have to learn someone else history, in the way they want. You have to get good score in the exams, it does not matter how you are feeling. In Sertão is totally different, here we study and live our own history. They understand we have a life, with problems, and sometimes you do not have mood to work. Here we find this relation between school, teacher and students, this cooperation and understanding, it is a wonderful thing. We should have it in all schools."</p> <p>"We should work with the mind of the people, it is not everybody who has a good psychological and health condition. It is not everybody who understand the things. We should study the inner self, we cannot know just looking outside who is suffering."</p>	<p>"We become more valued in the community. The community appreciate people when we are working, sharing different things with the others."</p> <p>"Everybody in my community is important to me, because if something happen to anyone of them, I will feel it. Everybody who makes my community is important."</p> <p>"Today I am a bridge between my community, the city, Sertão, etc. I take some knowledge to there, according to what I learn and apply it using what we already have in the community."</p>	<p>"As an indigenous community, when we talk about nature we are speaking both in terms of valuing our clima and soil in 'caatinga', and as the spirits that we receive. We have faith in our sacred nature, it has power. Nature is responsible for building wisdom, our traditions, the strength of our thoughts. Our inner strength comes from nature."</p> <p>"It's the same as in your family. You have the base: husband, children, grandchildren. If one dies the system fails. You will never be the same person again. It works like in nature, we have an exclusive biome, we have several plants, if one plant dies it affects the biome. We can use wood that is already on the ground, but we can also let some pieces there to make the organic decomposition. It is important to understand nature, that the plants need each other to survive."</p>

<p>-Nutrition (eating health) -Not using agrototoxic -Management of garbage -Buying only what is necessary -Closer relationship with family -Alcohol consumption</p>	<p>-Communication skills (listening) -Accept himself -Self knowledge -Dealing with preconceptions -Value his community (settlement of agrarian reform) -Value his roots -Cooperation -Open mind</p>	<p>-Gratitude -Proud of himself -Proud of his community and the People Without Land movement -Belonging</p>	<p>-See the importance of his work to society -Loves what he does -Sense of having found purpose in life -Changed perception about work</p>	<p>-Active in the community -Provided family awareness against agrototoxic -Responsible to getting community together to solve own problems -Always helping neighbours -Is part of 'multirões' -Share knowledge with community</p>	<p>-Respect -Non domination over nature -Spiritual connection with nature -Provide conditions to nature to recovery herself</p>
<p>Main quotations</p>					
<p>"I started to respect more the people and myself. I was young when I became a student in Sertão, and I had a serious health problem because of alcohol. Sertão helped me in this process of recovering."</p>	<p>"I have learned to deal with some prejudices I had in terms of religion, race, and homosexual, because I am from a community that is not used to this diversity, so we became conservative. This learning was one of the most important for me in this period."</p>	<p>"Even that I live in a settlement of agrarian reform for almost all my life, I had prejudices with settlements, and with the 'Movimento dos Sem Terra' (movement of people without land). I had to learn the history of the movement, the importance of the agrarian reform for the country, for the families, and only then I began to understand and participate more in my community."</p>	<p>"For me one of the most important things in what I do is when you are with the small farmers, then you give them some information and you see the shine of their eyes. This is much more important than money. Because income is important, we need it, but to see their eyes shining, it does not have price."</p>	<p>"I began to realize how important it was for us to strengthen the community, to be unite in community to be able to fight for public policies, to be updated about what is happening in society, so that we can have subsidy as well."</p>	<p>"We began to lose ourselves when we thought we had nature over our power. The true is, nature is unconquerable, we need to learn and to live together with it."</p>
<p>"My behaviour with my family changed. My parents came from a very conservative family. I spent years of my life without know what was a hug, or listen "I love you" from my father. I missed it a lot. I started to learn in Sertão the importance of family, and we work on this relationship. Today I do not have problem with it."</p>			<p>"I see my work with a central importance to the future of our planet. If we continue doing agriculture as we do, with the abusive use of agrototoxic, water, land and pollution, we will destroy nature, and we will transform the rich Brazilian soil in a desert."</p>	<p>"Me, as a member of settlement of agrarian reform, I was those guys who never participate in the community meetings. I was not interested to know the problems of the settlement. Today I go to all association meetings."</p>	<p>"Where I live there were no birds and so much trees. Today sometimes we have to scare the birds away otherwise they will eat all the guava. We provided the conditions to nature to recover what was her in the first instance."</p>
			<p>"I do not have a great salary, I do not work for that. I chose to dedicate my life to defend sustainability, the clean agriculture, and help people to be conscious of all this in our planet."</p>	<p>"We made, for example, some activities with the farmers to understand the potentials they had inside the settlement, and the difficulties. And for that we also involved Inkra. We promoted workshops on natural defenses, lectures with the social worker, etc."</p>	<p>"I look to nature with respect, when we respect the mother earth, we changed our conception about production, pollution, contamination."</p>
<p>B</p>					<p>"Nature was not a gift to humans. Long before men arrive in the earth it was already here. So we have to adapt to nature, not the other way around."</p>

<p>-Being active -Buying only what is necessary</p>	<p>-Communication skills (listening) -Enjoy the moment -Value her community -Value her roots -Cooperation -Open mind</p>	<p>-Belonging -Compassion -Gratitude -Being fulfilled</p>	<p>-See the importance of her work to society -Knowledge applied to herself, and others</p>	<p>-Active in the community -Is part of 'multirões' -Share knowledge with community</p>	<p>-Care -Provide conditions to nature to recovery</p>
<p>Main quotations</p>					
<p>"I participate in religious groups, women association, where we get together once per month, I am also part of 'Legião de Marias' women group, where we deal with community problems. I am dedicating myself every day more to these activities."</p>	<p>"Before I was not communicating a lot. I had mania of interrupt people when they were speaking. I learned how to listen and communicate myself better." "When I learned how to listen, I started to understand people better. Because before I used to hear, but I could not connect. Today I understand the context, and that we have to enjoy the moment." "Even if I am from rural area, I used not to participate in rural activities. Once I moved to the city to work. When I came back and join Serta, I started to work in my parent's property. Serta showed me that rural has value, and we have conditions to live there, we just have to learn how. There we can achieve our goals if we work right, observe and learn how to plant, the phases of nature."</p>		<p>"I think knowledge is essential to our evolution, and also in my work. Because everything that I am searching to know, that I learn, will contribute not just with myself, but also other people."</p>	<p>"The community was not active, even because there were not many things or somebody to come and explain some things. From the moment me and some other young people from the community join Serta we started to bring 'multirões', and round of talk to involve more the community in the process. Today we have a very active community." "The conceit of community is to live in partnership, cooperating, knowing the development of the community. It is not live isolated, but in fellowship."</p>	<p>"I always had this care for nature, not throw garbage on the streets, but I was not active in 'multirões' to reforestry. Today I know that we need to worry not only in conservation, but in restoration."</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relationship with family -Producing her own food -Less consumption -Being active -To care more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Believing in herself -Affectivity -Flexibility -Dealing with preconceptions -Value her community -Value her roots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Belonging -Gratitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work with what she loves -Opened mind for options -Conscious decision about work -Changed perception about work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Active in the community -Community awareness, planting trees -Is part of 'multirões' -Share knowledge with community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Spiritual connection with nature -Belonging
<p>Main quotations</p> <p>"According to my mother there was a deep change that impacted in our family identity. We did not have that feeling of union. My brothers and I stopped arguing (they also have studied in Sertão). We all got better as human beings."</p> <p>"My father was a alcoholic, and I spent my whole life treating him with apathy. After the humanization approach in Sertão, I began to realize that it was a disease and needed treatment. I changed my perception, and from that moment we have another kind of relationship, much better."</p> <p>"Before I was not caring much for anything. I was not interested in continue with what my family built, or agriculture, or in give my opinion in my community."</p> <p>"I believe the feeling is that of belonging. It is to find our identity that we spend our lives searching for. It is like if before I was not fitting anywhere, and now I'm from here. I help to build this place with my brick."</p> <p>"I had a prejudice against MST (movement of people without land). It was just after Sertão I changed it, and my behaviour as a person."</p> <p>"I learned how to be more flexible. I was like a stone with feelings. Now I am more sensible. I can recognize the importance of a hug. A hug, the family, our connection with the land. All these I changed after Sertão."</p> <p>"I did not have that rural identity, I was not proud to say I am from where I am. I could not see potential in my community. In my mind we have to finish school and migrate to the big cities, because here were dry, and we could not do anything about it."</p> <p>"I have tried many areas, like sale, administration, included I was accepted in the university for study business administration. But the feeling is that I would do just to do, like an obligation, to occupy my time. After Sertão I started to look forward, and I realized that the child dream of become a teacher could be possible, even if my family was against it. I realized that I did not need other people approval, I just need my own approval."</p> <p>"I believe I always had loved nature, as everybody say they do, without connection. They say they love because it is beautiful, but without that feeling inside of belonging. I am also nature, I am a natural being that is part of this system."</p> <p>"It is like if I was outside, nature in one side, me in another, as a superior being. After Sertão we start to understand we are part of it, and we should take care of our brothers. A tree has feelings like us, it does not demonstrate as us, but in its own way. So why not respect the feelings of a tree, animals, plants"</p> <p>"I realized that I am nature, and she is me. If I do not take care of nature, I will be destroying myself slowly."</p> <p>"Before I thought of community just like houses and people living on them, now I believe in community as people who have several things to build. We can get together to make cement, planting, and doing religious parties. The community is union, it is a feeling, it is a link that must be built."</p> <p>"We did things without Sertão, for example, we saved little money to buy material to help a colleague's dream of having a wood fire to make cake and sell it in the fair. Today she sells cake to the community, has her own income, is empowered, does not depend on her husband for everything."</p> <p>"We become reference, people come to ask our opinions."</p> <p>"We are creating the women association, we are bringing empowerment to the women in my community. We are working with the issue of keeping the young people in their villages, through associativism, 'multirões'. It is an attempt to fortify their identity."</p> <p>"We participated in the multiannual city plan, it was the first time the farmers were part of it. Me and 11 young people were able to take more than 100 small farmers to the city Council where they were heard for the first time."</p>					

<p>-Less material consumption -Open mind for social topics</p>	<p>-Breaking sexism -Relationship brought personal growing -Dealing with preconceptions -Critical thinking</p>	<p>-Belonging -Gratitude -Satisfaction</p>	<p>-Work with love -Changed perception of work and study</p>	<p>-Sharing knowledge with family and friends -Active in local politics because of Sertá</p>	<p>-Respect -Non domination -Spiritual connection with nature</p>	
<p>Main quotations</p>						
<p>"I did not have any notion of feminist, social movements, popular education, social changes. I could not make connections between all these with abusive relationships, drugs, etc. Sertá brought those subjects and that generated conflict at first, I had an identity crisis."</p>	<p>"It is cultural, inclusive inside my family, that men is the dominant. Men do not work inside the house, do not respect some women rights. This is something that I matured, because in Sertá everybody clean its own dishes, we share the bathroom cleaning, organization of the rooms."</p>	<p>"What I learn here I take home, egalitarian relationship between people, respecting the limits of the other, ideas, opinions."</p>	<p>"Currently I participate in battle of rap, it is a movement. Before I saw it as a gangster thing, people who had nothing better to do. But I had never looked it close."</p>	<p>"Before I saw work and study like an obligation. I had to work with, does not matter what, to feed myself, as society dictate, so only in that way you can have a family, and a house. With the study is the same. You 'need a diplom' to find a good job."</p>	<p>"In Sertá we are like a family, we trust each other, understand the limits and skills of each other and work with it. It is a relation that I bring with me to the streets, to my home, my friendships."</p>	<p>"Before I had an ignorant point of view regarding nature. I was one of those people that was mad when it was raining, I wanted to go out and the rain was disturbing me. This because of my lack of connection with nature."</p>
<p>"Today I do not need designer clothing or an expensive car to be respected by other people. I know I can have less, and it is not what I have that will make me a good person to society, or bring me peace and happiness. To have a good life mean to have health relationships, to work with what we love."</p>	<p>"I have this vision that maybe the work does not have to provide you with big amount of money, but you have to do with love and pleasure. The same as with studies. I, for instance, I am studying philosophy, which is not a mandatory field in the schools in Brazil anymore, like arts. But I do not care, because I like it."</p>	<p>"Some activities require us to go to town hall to know how much is the budget for the food they should provide at schools, or to local agriculture. Sometimes we do it just to know"</p>	<p>"To know that nature works in cooperation inspire our social relations. We are part of nature, we cannot be dominators, it is not in our hands. To understand that a pest in monoculture is an attempt of nature to recover herself is a wisdom bigger than our."</p>	<p>"I had a limited vision of nature. To know when was the right time to plant, when it was winter, the seasons, why is important to preserve the forests. Things that I believe the majority of people do not care, because they do not have knowledge. The conventional schools do not teach it."</p>	<p>"To know that nature works in cooperation inspire our social relations. We are part of nature, we cannot be dominators, it is not in our hands. To understand that a pest in monoculture is an attempt of nature to recover herself is a wisdom bigger than our."</p>	

ACADEMIA DE FILOSOFIA

Values: Ethic, diversity, equality, interconnection, "nobody can help nobody", "if you want a new and better world, start by yourself"

Interate practices: Education to make better people, volunteer work, diversity of activities

Int.	Behaviour change	Learnings	Feelings	Working and education perception	Relation with community	Relation with nature
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Being tolerant -Less material consumption -Type of reading -Relationships -Financial planning -Health care (nutrition) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Self knowledge -Value her time -To be more comprehensive -To live together -Cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Gratitude -Being useful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Helping to encourage the personal growing of other through her work -Changed perception about work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Influence people by being good example -Sharing value learned with relatives and close people -Doing her part for a better world -Academia de Filosofia, family and close people as his community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Respect
F	<p>Main quotations</p> <p>"You start to have another vision of the world and people. So I think my relationships are better."</p> <p>"I thought that things were wrong and people should change. When I believed that something was unfair, I wanted to impose my idea."</p>	<p>"You start to know yourself as a human being, and that you do not have just one physical body, there is something beyond, and we have to take care of all these bodies that make us. When you have the control of your emotions, your mental, concious of your body. As much knowledge you have, more you want to contribute with others."</p> <p>"I thought that things were wrong and people should change. When I believed that something was unfair, I wanted to impose my idea."</p>	<p>"It is very grateful, when I am not at school I miss it, because when I am there I feel useful, doing something to those people. They do for me, I do for them."</p>	<p>"Today my priority is what I can contribute with the world. Of course I am in a different moment of my life, I am retired, I have time, but I could simply do things only for myself. I found this opportunity at the Academia to contribute to a better world. Through my participation there, and the other members, we are also providing to other people the environment for their own self development."</p>	<p>"Today, I am a more useful person, not only inside Academia, but also outside, because I try to contribute to people in a more intelligent way."</p> <p>"I realized that it is not imposing your ideas that we will have a better world, but through being an example in your own life. Then people around you realize that you got better, your relationship with them is better, they also start to have another attitude."</p> <p>"It does not matter what you do there, you are creating this opportunity to the place exists, and other people join it. I bring it to my personal life, because I learned to live together with people by the values I learned at Academia."</p>	<p>"I like nature very much. I like to be in contact with her, I always respect the animals, and the environment in general. At Academia we talk about it, we have classes."</p>

<p>-Nutrition (food, alcohol, drugs) -Buying only the necessary -Meditation -Tai chi chuan</p>	<p>-Communication skills (listening) -Not judge others -To think outside of the box -Critical thinking -Being altruist</p>	<p>-Belonging -Union -Compassion</p>	<p>-Devotion his work and studies to develop the collective -Changed perception about work</p>	<p>-Sharing values and knowledge with other, close people, and also through his work</p>	<p>-Spiritual connection with nature -Vision of integrality</p>
<p>Main quotations</p> <p>"In 2010, when I was 23 years old, I started the philosophy course. There I 'broke my mind'. I started to explore things that I have never explored before, I felt different from society, my family, and friends in general, but I did not know what was that. Academia brought me a infinite horizon. Naturally, without any effort, I stopped to drink alcohol, and smoke pot."</p> <p>"At the Academia, the proposal I feel I have learned, and bring to all aspects of my life, is basically the instigation to new ideas and perspectives that are not 'normal' to society, that is not interesting to add in the educational system. Thinking outside of the box. Encouraging a reflection within us and the subjects that exist in general."</p> <p>"Feeling of belonging, union. Several times one person would start a job, another would come to help, everyone moving, pushing the stone to the same place."</p> <p>"All my last studies and work was directed related to the development of the collective. Without thinking about how to take money from someone, how to vitiate someone's taste, how to have more followers."</p> <p>"The point of my work today is to share the feeling of union, through the encouragement of the desconstruction of beliefs that we have to see ourselves as separated from each other."</p> <p>"The proposal of my project 'Conhece-te' is, from many ways, share with people around me the values I have learned, for instance, not promoting gossip, or encouraging any critic that somebody did about the government, the boss, partner. I first observe, than I try to not feed this desconnection."</p> <p>"When we look inside us and we recognize nature, that she is us, and we are here, there is no more "she" or "us"."</p> <p>"Nature from the point of view interior, looking inside, not existing conflict. This brings a bigger conscious of who I am. Consequently, the nature outside I also learn to respect."</p> <p>"There is no division, no individual, family, society, if I agree with this division, I am separating the things. The stone, the animals, the air. It is all a single ecosystem of interdependency. The individual is a constant, not a final point. It is dealing with feelings and thoughts, and everything is in constantly change: ideas, cells, organs, bones. Atoms, animals and trees are moving. Everything is part of a unique movement."</p>					

<p>-Relationship with family -Perspective in her life</p>	<p>-Self knowledge -Communication skills -Being useful in the society -Open mind -Emotional independence -To live the present moment -Cooperation</p>	<p>-Belonging -Compassion -Being accepted -Fraternity</p>	<p>-Understand her work as beneficial to society -Changed perception about work</p>	<p>-Share knowledge about philosophy with workmates -Share values with close people</p>	<p>-Human beings as part of nature -Respect</p>
<p>Main quotations</p> <p>"I did not have plans for the future. I was lost in the world. It was just my parents and I, and I was not able to understand my mum, we had a lot of problems in our relationship. With time and with philosophy, I could understand what I wanted for my life, and I included my parents on it. Before philosophy I could not understand my mum's reasons."</p> <p>"We are always learning and philosophy collaborates in this sense, to know where we are wrong and we can improve. It benefits everyone when we put ourselves in a different way in the world."</p> <p>"It's a good feeling of belonging to something. A place where you are accepted the way you are."</p> <p>"We work for more people to awake and do the difference around them."</p> <p>"I work in a university, doing the register of the diplomas, today I understand that what I do is to deliver an opportunity to the students. Philosophy teaches us that each one in its role needs to contribute with the other, and I feel I contribute somehow."</p> <p>"We became more sensible to interact with other people. It was like this with my family, and now it is like this with other people. 'How can I be useful in all situations', we start to think like that. For example, when my mum was at the hospital for a long time, I started to understand much more how I could be useful for her in that moment."</p> <p>"I do not have family anymore, so my family are all the people around me, like my friends, and people that stop to talk to me. We learn in philosophy that we are all brothers and sisters. We are the same in essence. Not just us, but animals, plants, everything."</p> <p>"We became more sensible to interact with other people. It was like this with my family, and now it is like this with other people. 'How can I be useful in all situations', we start to think like that. For example, when my mum was at the hospital for a long time, I started to understand much more how I could be useful for her in that moment."</p> <p>"The big mistake, and that is the reason we are with all these problems, is that men see themselves apart of nature. It is this wrong vision of us being superior, because we can ratiocinate, and think that nature is here to fulfill our needs. We are just part of all this."</p>					

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consumption of alcohol -Less use of disposables (menstruation pads, diapers for child, etc) -Manage her garbage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To control impulsiveness -Self knowledge -Less control over things -To be more patience -To work in group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Belonging -Being fulfilled -Happiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More collaborative at work -Open mind in her profession -Changed perception about work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Share values and knowledge about food, garbage, body perception with family and other people -Influence people by being good example -Academia de Filosofia, family and close people as his community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Human beings as part of nature -Respect 																								
Main quotations																													
<p>"I have learned to get along with myself and others, in a different way. I was always impulsive, and I had to deal with that. Self knowledge showed me my qualities and faults."</p> <p>"The main slogan of the school is 'if you want to change for better world, start by yourself'. What you look outside, in fact you have to build inside."</p> <p>"Before I had this idea that I had to change things outside, today I know that I only can change myself. When we understand that we only can change what we are not happy about us, we begin to see the outside in a different way. It does not mean 'I do not have anything to do with this', but a way we put ourselves in a condition to do what is possible for us to do."</p>						<p>"There is a question of feeling fulfilled. It is a feeling of light and fun learning that completes me. I feel good to be part of it, and do what I do here."</p>						<p>"I worked for SUS (Sistema Único de Saúde – public health system) and I use to put a lot of energy there. When we came to Academia, we learned that we could fight for what we believe in a non-violent way, I do not mean it physically, but in a way of investing your energy in a less aggressive manner."</p> <p>"I have learned how to do things in a more collaborative way, valuing my workmates. Understanding more, having more patience."</p> <p>"In the field of nutrition I have learned that there is no 'good' or 'bad', like they teach us at the university. There is what is possible, what each one likes, and we need to respect it. I have learned to build with the person what is possible to contribute to her health, not what the university dictate."</p>						<p>"For me, today community is not a place, but a group of people that I can count on, school, my family, close friends. It has to do with common good, in that I can help them and they help me, an exchange."</p> <p>"The best way of sharing is by our own behaviour. We are changing and habits, and people are realizing and start to have more interest, more than if I want to convince them by words."</p>						<p>"I have learned how to develop respect for nature, more than when I lived closer to it. But before I did not understand the influence of our attitudes in nature."</p> <p>"We think we came to this world to take advantage of everything, as if we were not part of it, and we did not have responsibilities to maintain. We are part of everything. Nature teaches us many things, we just have to open our eyes."</p>					

<p>-Discipline (time, organize the house) -Changed priorities (financial, consumism) -Perspective in his life -Nutrition (quality feed)</p>	<p>-Authenticity -To give meaning for his life -To act more -To change attitude of contempt with other -To take everything more serious -Cooperation -Critical thinking</p>	<p>-Belonging -Happiness -Enthusiasm</p>	<p>-Work connected with relationships, universe, doing for others -Changed perception about work</p>	<p>-Vision on integrity -Academia de Filosofia, family and close people as his community</p>	<p>-Respect -Improving himself in relation with nature protection (consumism)</p>
<p>Main quotations</p>					
<p>J</p>	<p>"I had no idea that we have an exchange relationship with the universe. What we send to the universe, it comes back. My attitude was simply to be able to embrace and get everything I could financially."</p> <p>"Years ago I was leaving my life to change, now I have to have plans, to have directions, a guideline in life."</p> <p>"Today I try to see the cause and effect relation in everything I do."</p>	<p>"Academia gives us some guidelines to reorganize our lives, and give meaning to it. For example, organizing your time, your house. No one who has a desorganized house, or is always late for their appointments will have a productive spiritual life. We can not separate physical life and spiritual life. We have to work with certain things, such as eliminating mental addictions, bad habits, organizing small things, respect for others."</p> <p>"The gain in money, in pride, vanity, all this does not exist, is secondary. The goal is to act."</p>	<p>"Before my job was to work to earn money, simply to collect everything I could materially, without knowing the exchange relationship with the universe, offering my best."</p>	<p>"It is important to situate ourselves in the universe, in the middle of a community, in a position of exchange, to offer something and to obtain something back. Not simply to try to take things only in our favor."</p>	<p>"It is a matter of respect. Selecting the garbage, not polluting. Although one of the things I need to reduce would be the habit of eating meat."</p> <p>"Humans are inseparable from nature. It cannot be distinguished. Certain religions think that men has to serve God, and nature to serves man. The only thing human has is intelligence and strength. He dominates the rest, codifies plants, enslaves animals, but all these are wrong. He has to place himself in a position of respect for nature, he is an integral part and every injury he causes to nature, reflects for him as well."</p>

O DESPERTAR DO GIGANTE

Values: Ethic, respect to the earth, equality, love, cooperation, simplicity, awakening for a new consciousness, open mind, self knowledge, care and nature protection

Interate practices: Promotion of diversity, sensibilization, alternative to development, volunteer work, 'mutirão', spiritual experiences (meditation, Yoga, live feeding)

In.	Behaviour change	Learnings	Feelings	Working and education perception	Relation with community	Relation with nature
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To be more sustainable (garbage, water, etc) -Nutrition -Life style -Being optimist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Being active in solve problems in society -Being aware about relation with nature, and his role in society -Cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Gratitude -Happiness -Love -Being fulfilled -Belonging -Connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sense of having found purpose in life -Uses his education background to the benefit of nature and community -Has his own social environmental project today -Changed perception about work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -See all planet as a community, but act in the region -Is part of 'mutirões' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Spiritual connection with nature
K	<p>"From the moment I put my ideas in practice I realized that only my actions will lead me to the place where I believe, where I want to live, the society I think is good for my family, and neighbours. And as a consequence, it is also better for the whole community. We cannot just stay in the 'world of ideas', or just blame the system. We have to use the methodology of being examples."</p>	<p>"[Integration] We are a heterogeneous group, different skills. We have engineers like me, agronomist, farmer, cook, etc. The projects are diverse, and in it sense we can contribute more when someone needs a consulting, for instance."</p>	<p>"The big difference is that I realized that we are always in some place for a reason. People have this image that work is just income, it is a burden."</p> <p>"What moves me is a question of expanding my knowledge and do different things outside of my field, which is IT. I found a point of intersecion. I can include my academic formation with agroecology, for instance, I can make a drawing and put it in practice much easier."</p>	<p>"I have grow as a human being with the sensibility that it is possible, and we need to get together in community to achieve our goals. I am more active, putting my work force in favor of nature, and everybody."</p> <p>"We have a group to recovery springs in Guaretingueta with 'Corredor Ecológico'. People already know about our work, see that it is working so they start to come closer. They participate in 'mutirões', for instance."</p>	<p>"From the moment you realize you are part of nature, your connection increases. Doing a trekking today in Mata Atlántica it is much more intense because of my connection with the natural elements. There are not "her" (nature) and I, we are both a system. Before I liked to be 'there', today I know I am her, and so I like it even more."</p>	

<p>-Being tolerant -Changing in consumption (concern with the origin and process of shopping)</p>	<p>-Cooperation -Work in group</p>	<p>-Happiness -Love -Being fulfilled -Belonging -Peace -Connection</p>	<p>-Has her own social environmental project today -Changed perception about work outside</p>	<p>-Community as the place where she lives and impacts -Active in her community, and outside -Concept of community changed</p>	<p>-Spiritual connection with nature</p>
<p>Main quotations</p> <p>"Today I search before I buy anything, from food to cosmetics. I want to know where did that come from, who has produced it, if was in a fair condition. I changed a lot in the sense of being worried about what my shopping does to other people. It was a change of not only looking to myself, but to all the system and the process of that thing be produced until arrive in my home."</p> <p>"I used to see my work as a cook just as a way to produce money to my survival. Of course there was love, but the focus was to pay my bills. Today I see that what I do is a door to solve the situation of today's world. There is power to bring change and balance, so the peace will remain. I see my work today as a powerful tool of change of consciousness, awareness, awakening of the change we need"</p> <p>"One example [of her work in community] is the project we have in Seritinga city. There was no agroforestry in the city, where they just have livestock, now I am bringing a new concept of agriculture. A possibility to work with the land with more respect, work in group. Another example is an event I participated in Passa Quatro city last year. I gave a lecture about eat consciously, connecting the land and soil to the plate. There I explained the planet scenario and the question of balance, biodiversity, etc. connected with our food system."</p> <p>"What is clear for me now is the inter connection in our earth. Me, as a human being, being part in this system. Spirituality makes you understand that all this process is even bigger than we thought from a simplistic human being perspective, it goes beyond the physical. We can realize it when participating in the practical experiences at Desperatar, during the eating, the planting, the talking."</p> <p>"Before I could see only beauty in nature. Today I have connection. I like to feel the soil with my hands, I like to feel the energy of the plants. Today I feel part of it. Before I thought nature was outside, and I was a spectator, today I know 'I am nature'."</p>					

	-Practicing meditation -Practicing outdoor sports	-Being active in solve problems in society -Cooperation -Self knowledge	-Connection -Personal fulfillment -Happiness	-Sense of having found purpose in life -Changed perception about work	-Participate in other social environmental projects in the community	-Spiritual connection with nature
M	Main quotations "To live in a big city like São Paulo can make things harder, but if one really wants to do something, you will make it happen. It does not matter where you live, and what you do for living, there will always be an option, that maybe cannot be the perfect for you in the moment, but it is the best in that context. I believe it is a matter of inside out, of realizing what you really want, believe in your values and go to action."	-Improve herself daily -Cooperation, working in group -Being active in solve problems in society	-Belonging -Being fulfilled -Peace -Achievement	"I am a chemical engineer and worked for the private sector. I felt empty working there, then I left. Today I am finally happy. The salary is not the same, but I believe it will change. There is no money that can pay this feeling of doing the right thing."	"Today I am an activist in my family, the one who are always saying 'let's not use plastic'. I have two compost space in my home, I am always paying attention on my garbage. Selfknowledge brought me all this." "For me community is not a phisical space, or a matter of people. It is a matter of mentality. The sense of community is cooperation, that is what I want to bring to São Paulo city with the agroforestry."	"The contact with agroforestry made me understand how connected we are. Sometimes we do not understand the cicle of nature. I see today that the logic that we have been creating in our system does not make sense, and that is why we are collapsing. It was also good to connect myself, and then I could understand that nature and I, we are one, we are integrated."
N	Main quotations "First I became vegetarian, because I thought that this was the way to my evolution. Then I started to be aware of organic food, I did not want more food with agrototoxic. After O Desperatar do Gigante I started to appreciate these kind of things, to make the connections between everything I was using and eating." "I became less consumerist, I started to search and apply how I could impact less in this world, how I could contribute, effectively."	"We hope that our fight attract and awake more people. We need to be aware. But not just conscious, because I know many people who are aware of everything that is happening. But you cannot just be 'eco friendly', we need people to make difference in their neighbourhood, city, State, and so we can achieve more. I am a person who does not wait, I make things happen."	"When I met Desperatar I felt that I was not alone in this world. It is like I found my place in the world." "It is like a meeting of tribes. We meet there to reinforce our values, and be able to spread as much as we can."	"We are here for some reason. We are not here 'to have', we are here 'to be.'"	"Myself I organized some experiences in agroforestry in my project. We did like in Desperatar, with meditation, Yoga, natural food. We brought all these values and it attracted so many people. That is amazing, and so important. It is not the agroforestry itself, but the fact of you attracting people to 'this world', to show them the importance of being conscinuous. This is very necessary in the world today." "In the apartment complex where I live, I started an organic garden, and this got the attention of the community. I am also responsible for the urban afforestation in my neighborhood, among other activities."	"I appreciate the contact with insects, animals, the development of the plants. But nature has always existed for me, I need it to everything. To make an exchange of energy, hug a tree, put my feet on the grass. I need the ocean, and the rivers to have energy. Sometimes I stay too far, for long time, of the ocean and I feel very bad. I need to recover my energy in the water, in planting a tree, growing food."

<p>-Change in life style -Meditation everyday -Eating more what she produces -Outdoor sports</p>	<p>-Self knowledge -Cooperation -Group work</p>	<p>-Love -Gratitude -Freedom -Detachment -Positivity</p>	<p>-Has her own social environmental project today -Sense of having found purpose in life -Changed perception about work</p>	<p>-Change of concept of community</p>	<p>-Spiritual connection with nature -Appreciation -Provide conditions to nature to recovery</p>
Main quotations					
	<p>"I think that we are working to develop a community more awake. With more nature, less violence. We have everything to grow, to get better, and go further, I think this is already happening. O Despertar do Gigante is getting powerful in the region, acting outside of Lorena [where it is based], taking ideas for other places and people, and I think the tendency is just be better."</p>		<p>"I believe that everything happen for a reason, all the courses and work we do have some purpose, because of the relationship we make. I worked as an intership in the industry, and while I was studying my master in science (I am a chemical engineer) I went back to the corporation, I worked for Johnson and Johnson. I used to spend 12h out of my home, and it used to take energy that I could use to other things, for working in serving the planet, planting. I already knew agroforestry that time and I decided to leave the business world, which definitively were not my place."</p> <p>"In Despertar, when we see that it is possible, we start to believe, and so we put it in practice. My perception changed and I placed it as my purpose of life, because that started to make sense for me, it is what I want to dedicate my time and energy on."</p>	<p>"I believe that all the species that are living temporarily with me in this earth are my community. Everything that is physically close: family, friends, other beings from other species, and also those who I cannot see".</p>	<p>"We are nature, with same components. We are all one, everything the same. We are part of a cycle."</p> <p>"When we are working with nature we are more present, it is automatic. I meditate when I am working with soil, I feel present, and when we are present our perceptions change, creativity comes."</p> <p>"I never liked to kill animals, but my perception about other species changed. Before I planted inside my house, and I did not know what the plant needed to grow. Today I know that as much life, is better, because life means that there are more nutrients. With more nutrients, more energy. Good energy for the plant, and for everybody."</p>

<p>-Managing her garbage -Eating less industrialized and more organic food</p>	<p>-Perception that is easy to help society, with easy methods -Being active in solve problems in society -Focus on her mental and spiritual health -Critical thinking</p>	<p>-Gratitude -Hope on the planet -Love -Belonging</p>	<p>-Has her own social environmental project today -Changed perception about work</p>	<p>-Active in her community</p>	<p>-Feeling of integration and interconnection with nature have been improving</p>
<p>Main quotations</p>					
	<p>"Before some things disturb me, but I did not do anything to change the situation. I think I did not know the way. When I joined Despertar, I saw my options, they open you the ways. So today besides things in the world bother me, I take actions."</p>	<p>"I am grateful to be part of something. We are exploring too much, and it has been heavy for nature. I think that even if we give a little, we all can make difference. To be able to do my part is very gratifying. Now I try to work a lot with this gratitude feeling inside of me, because I am grateful for the small things."</p>	<p>"I have studied civil engineering, and I wanted to work in constructions. But today I am leading my activities to the environmental field. I saw that civil engineering itself generates a lot of solid waste, and not just it, but it pollute a lot. A civil engineer should be capable of change something to pollute less. Before I just watched, even if these things used to disturb me, after Despertar I had the opportunity to work with environmental management, and it opened ways for me as a professional, and the field I want to work."</p>	<p>"Before I saw people only as neighbours, today I see community as a collective." "My project treats the sewage in an ecological way, and also it is beneficial for the community in the economical way: for each dollar invested, basic sanitation, we can save four dollars in public health care." "The system is made to rural areas of the city, usually the person who receives the system helps in its implementation. The community wants to help everybody."</p>	<p>"We are part of nature, we are all interconnected, and that is also the reason we have to care and protect it, not as if it was something external, because without nature we cannot survive. Today I can see in this way." "I was never a 'nature' person, but with Despertar we know new things. Personally, I started to pay attention more about energy, the frequency you send to the universe. It is something that yet I did not understand completely, but I like it a lot. I think it cannot be bad when, it does not matter of religion, or your beliefs, if everything that connects you to something good."</p>