PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLOMOUC
Faculty of Science
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An Alternative to Development – Grassroots Communities

Bachelor Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the topic of grassroots development as an Alternative to Development. The history and main standpoints of the post-development theory are stated. The thesis addresses the local grassroots movements and situates them as Alternatives to Development, giving examples of Degrowth, Ecological Swaraj, Ubuntu and Buen Vivir as representing alternatives from different perspectives. The thesis further focuses on the concept of Buen Vivir, its indigenous roots, plurality, common principles and inscription as a political alternative in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The focus of the thesis is on the international and local legal documents, that give indigenous peoples and the grassroots social movements power to implement and live their truth and accomplish the Buen Vivir.

KEY WORDS

Alternatives to Development; post-development; Buen Vivir; indigenous rights; indigenous movements; Suma Qamaña; bottom-up development; grassroots movements

ABSTRAKT

Tato práce se zabývá tématem grassroots rozvoje jako alternativou k rozvoji. Je rozebrána historie a hlavní myšlenky post-rozvojové teorie. Práce se zabývá lokálními hnutími grassroots a situuje je jako alternativy k rozvoji. Jsou uvedeny reprezentující příklady alternativních hnutí Nerůst, Radikální ekologická demokracie, Ubuntu a Buen Vivir. Práce se podrobněji zaměřuje na hnutí Buen Vivir, jeho kořeny u původních obyvatel Latinské Ameriky, pluralitu, společné principy a v neposlední řadě také vepsání konceptu jako základního principu do konstituce Bolívie. Práce se soustředí na mezinárodní a lokální právní dokumenty, které slouží jako základ pro lokální sociální hnutí grassroots pro implementaci jejich vlastní pravdy a život podle konceptu Buen Vivir.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Alternativy k rozvoji; post-rozvoj; Buen Vivir; práva původních obyvatel; sociální hnutí původních obyvatel; Suma Qamaña; bottom-up přístup k rozvoji; grassroots

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This bachelor thesis addresses alternatives to development and its place in current bureaucratic systems. It defines the post-structuralist approach and its criticism to development post World War II. The work situates grass root communities within Weber's bureaucratic theory, state structures, constitutions, laws and local grassroots movements and their influence on determining the application local development processes.

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá diskurzem alternativ k rozvoji, jejich vývojem z historického hlediska a postavení v současném byrokratickém systému. Definuje post-strukturalistický přístup a jeho kritiku rozvoje, který známe od konce druhé světové války. Zkoumá postavení místních komunit v kontextu weberovy teorie byrokracie, struktur států, nestátních neziskových organizací. Sleduje rozložení moci mezi byrokracií, státních konstitucí, práv a místních komunit a jejich vliv na určení směru rozvoje na lokální úrovni.

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I declare that all parts of this thesis have been written by myself and that I have only used references explicitly referred to in the text.

In Olomouc, May 5th 2016   _____

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Declaration of Indigenous Peoples[1]

We the Indigenous Peoples of the world, united in this corner of our Mother Earth in a great
assembly of men of wisdom, declare to all nations:

We glory in our proud past:
when the earth was our nurturing mother,
when the night sky formed our common roof,
when the Sun and Moon were our parents,
when all were brothers and sisters,
when our civilizations grew under the sun,
when our chiefs and elders were great leaders,
when justice ruled the Law and its execution.

Then other peoples arrived:
thirsting for blood, for gold, for land and all its wealth,
carrying the cross and the sword, one in each hand,
without knowing or waiting to learn the ways of our worlds,
they considered us to be lower than animals,
they stole our lands from us and took us from our lands,
they made slaves of the sons of the Sun.

However, they have never been able to eliminate us,
nor to erase our memories of what we were,
because we are the culture of the earth and the sky,
we are of ancient descent and we are millions,
and although our whole universe may be ravaged,
our people will live on
for longer than even the kingdom of death.

Now, we come from the four corners of the earth,
we protest before the concert of nations,
that, "we are the Indigenous Peoples, we who
have a consciousness of culture and peoplehood,
on the edge of each country's borders and
marginal to each country's citizenship."

And rising up after centuries of oppression,
evoking the greatness of our ancestors,
in the memory of Indigenous martyrs,
and in homage to the counsel of our wise elders:

We vow to control again our destiny and recover our complete humanity and
pride in being Indigenous People.

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[1] Sanders, D. E. (1977). The Formation of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. IWGIA Document
29. This declaration was agreed upon by the delegates to the first international conference of Indigenous Peoples
in Port Alberni, British Columbia, in 1975, which led to the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP).

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An Alternative to Development - Grassroots communities

1 INTRODUCTION

The development studies as an academic subject itself is very recent and emerged from the need to redistribute wealth, improvements in human life and the conditions after the decolonization. There have been many approaches within the field which present ideas of how development should be pursued, and define what development means. This paper does not seek to describe all the development approaches, which have emerged since 1945 onward. Rather, it focuses on the problems which arise from the traditional approaches to development and its possible alternatives that have emerged as a response to their implementations. The paper will describe the main alternatives to development and proceed with its focus on the concept of *Buen Vivir* – an alternative development scheme that has arisen in Latin America among the Native American communities.

Because of author's interest in the region, the thesis follows *Buen Vivir* in relation to indigenous 'knowledges' of the peoples of Latin America. The paper analyses the legal implementation of the concept within the state of Bolivia and its new Costitution from the year 2009, as well as applicable National Development Plan. As the people living within the communities, who fall under the general definition of *Buen Vivir*, are predominantly identifying themselves as Native Americans (CAOI et al., 2009, 2010, 2011; CONAMAQ, CNAMIB, & CIDOB, 2013; F. H. Mamani, 2010, p. 14), the thesis will also identify the basic rights of indigenous people within the international law. In the last part of the thesis, the Buen Vivir as a part of legal systems of the country of Bolivia is examined. Bolivia was chosen due to the fact that it has implemented to some extend the concept of Buen Vivir in its constitution and National Plans.

The structure of the paper goes as follows: The first part of the paper briefly states main approaches to development, and defines the problem of the *mainstream* development discourse. The transition to the post-development thinking is described, followed by the description of alternatives to development in a general sense. Selected concepts (Degrowth as an alternative concept from 'the West', Radical Ecological Democracy from India, and Ubuntu as a South African concept) out of many alternatives to development are defined. The subsequent chapter

focuses solely on the alternative grassroots development concept of *Buen Vivir,* and its history, main objectives and principles within the indigenous cosmovision and as a critique of dominant Western discourse. Next passage is dedicated to an overview of international law concerning indigenous laws and its brief history. The last part of thesis focuses on the legal implementation in the country of Bolivia and gives examples of local communities falling under the description of Buen Vivir, identifying crucial parts dedicated to indigenous peoples and the concept of Buen Vivir in its Constitution and National Development Plans.

2 OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objective of this research is to explore the concept of Buen Vivir as an alternative to development and its legal base within the international law and local law in Bolivia. This paper will focus on the state of Bolivia and particularly on the new Constitution and National Development Plans, which have tried to implement the Buen Vivir as a goal of the country's development.

In order to achieve this objective, the main research question is: "How do the international and local legal documents empower the indigenous peoples and communities to implement Buen Vivir in their communities?"

The sub-questions related to this central question are: What are the main approaches to development, and where does the concept of Buen Vivir fit in? What are the Alternatives to Development? Which are some specific Alternative to Development movements? What is Buen Vivir? Where has Buen Vivir achieved the greatest implementations within state laws? What are the main international laws that give a solid base to indigenous communities to negotiate their ideas for development? How did Bolivia implement the concept of Buen Vivir in their Constitution and National Development Plan?

The methodology used in this research uses an in-depth text analysis and research of available literature written on the relevant topic.

In the beginning of the thesis, for the selected development theories, the following authors are used as a base: Desai & Poitter (history of development studies'), Pieterse (the mainstream development), and Sumner and Tribe ('the three types of development'). Pieterse is also cited while making the statement that Sustainable development is no longer distinguishable from mainstream development. Another statement, that mainstream development is not enough since it failed to address the main issues of development, is based

on Kothari, Demaria, and Acosta. The post-development theory in this thesis is taken mainly from the book The Post-Development Reader edited by Rahnema and Bawtree, and also from the works of Sachs. Another source used for identifying post-development is Escobar. Getting deeper into the topic, the thesis uses papers by Sachs, D'Alisa, and Kallis (Degrowth). Kothari, Bijoy, and Rahnema set a base for the identification of Ecological Swaraj, while Binsbergen, Mandela, Tutu, Gade and Walmsley are cited for a better understanding of the concept of Ubuntu.

As the thesis looks into the concept of Buen Vivir, the literature begins to be less accessible and more diverse. The author chose representatives such as Acosta, Gudynas, Escobar, Mamani, Solón, Villalba and Cerdán to establish the common basis of Buen Vivir. Acosta, Gudynas, Mamani and Solón are probably the most common authors encountered when discovering the concept of Buen Vivir. The main common principles of Buen Vivir are, in their majority, based on the ideas of Gudynas, but supported by resonating authors such as Villalba, Vanhulst & Beling, Acosta, Solón, Mamani, and online indigenous webpages Portal Territorio Indígena y Gobernanza.

The part describing the indigenous laws is taken form the legal documents stated in the text. These include the documents of the International Labour Organization, as well as documents published by the United Nations. The historical events in indigenous law are mainly based on the works of Thornberry, and Niezen. The Bolivian situation in regards to Buen Vivir is based on Lanza, and Bolivian news articles for the historical base. Buano & Datta are further cited for the Constitutional change, and for the basis of Buen Vivir within the Bolivian legal system, the following documents are used: The Constitution of Bolivia from 2009, The National Plans 2006-2011 and 2016-2020. Additional Bolivian laws Nº 071 and 300 are used as the laws supporting the Rights of Mother Nature.Because of the most available literature comes from Western or non-indigenous writers, the paper might not represent exact standpoints of indigenous peoples. Having this in mind, the author tried to draw from the indigenous sources when possible.

Due to the broad sense of the concept of *Buen Vivir* and its high subjectivity and dependency on local settings and community implementations, the paper will not precisely represent or generalise the concept in all the existing communities fitting the general ground rules that define it. Rather, the paper focuses on the individual communities and their perception and application. Considering there are grassroots communities living within the concepts' mind-set everywhere in the world, other than the selected grassroots alternatives

described in Chapter 4, the focus stays set on the Latin American communities and the concept of Buen Vivir.

Author's personal background also determines the scope of research. Being from Europe, and never have visited Latin America, limitations to viewpoint and understanding Latin American indigenous concept and cosmovision are assumed.

Research has been limited due to the lack of resources on local communities in Bolivia and their implementation of Buen Vivir within their small-scale reality. Due to this fact, the research contains only analysis of legal documents, but the application of them is not included.

3 FROM DEVELOPMENT TO ALTERNATIVES

In this chapter, the transition from mainstream development to the post-modern theories is briefly covered, proceeded by the definition of the post-development theory and the Alternatives to Development. In the following subchapters, the selected alternative grassroots development concepts are characterized.

The beginnings of international development can be traced back to the post-1945 period, when the United States of America, as well as the Soviet Union, gained powers on the level of global meaning (Desai & Poitter, 2014, p. 33). These were the times of the colonies to begin their road to liberty and since these times, many of the anti-colonialist movements have started. From this period forward, there have been many campaigns aiming to eliminate the world's poverty and the Development studies as an academic subject was introduced (Desai & Poitter, 2014, p. 33).

To introduce the topic of Post-development theory and argue its points, it is important to understand the term of development itself. According to the dictionary.com, general definition of development is 'the act or process of developing, growth, or progress' ("development," n.d.). The modern, mainstream meaning of development was for a long time the economic growth (i.e. growth theory, Big Push theory, Neoliberalism) (Pieterse, 2010, p. 6). According to Sumner & Tribe, we can distinguish three main propositions in which development can be understood (2008, p. 11):

'Development' as a long term process of structural societal transformation. This approach is value-free long term process of change (Sumner & Tribe, 2008, p. 12).

'Development' as a short-to-medium term outcome of desirable targets. In this approach, the desirable goals are firmly set and evaluated within a fixed time. Different

programs are invented in order to meet these goals (for example the Millennium Development Goals, or Sustainable Development Goals, which fall under the United Nations Development Program). This approach to development has its own set values (Sumner & Tribe, 2008, p. 13).

'Development' as a dominant discourse of Western modernity. This definition of development is radically different from the other two. It focuses on the individual communities of people, considering their backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities, and points out the misconception of the Western ideas of progress and development (Sumner & Tribe, 2008, p. 14).

There has been another approach towards development, which falls under what is called Alternative Development. It tries to reform the current state of the development programs with new visions by creating new agendas that are shifting the focus toward environment and society. The Alternative Development addresses the problem that the previous views did not: the problem of environment. Advocates of this approach to development (Carmen, Friedman, Hettne) believe that the development discourse, which was at the time (1970s) mainly concerned with economic growth, has a potential to solve fundamental human problems now and in the future, if properly reformed and refocused on participation and sustainability of our actions. Therefore, we need to incorporate concerns about the nature to our attempts of improving the quality of people's lives (Hopwood, Mellor, & O'Brien, 2005, p. 40). Pieterse (1998, p. 358) argues, that Alternative development is no longer distinguishable from the mainstream development (the 'everyday development talk in developing countries, international institutions and development cooperation' as its human and sustainability points has been integrated into the mainstream.

The mainstream development is now preoccupied with Sustainable Development (e.g. United Nations Development Programme, 2015). One of the key documents coining the concept of Sustainable Development (SD) is the Brundtland report, "Our Common Future". It defines the goal of SD as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (Brundtland et al., 1987, p. 43). Therefore, even though the SD approach might seem eco-centric, this statement shows the focus on society and its future.

Approaches like Sustainable Development and Green Economy promote changes in production methods and behavioural changes while maintaining high rates of economic growth, which is still considered the main part of development. These paradigms failed to deliver the targeted results, as the unsustainable world calls for more fundamental changes that

would eliminate the growth oriented development all together (Kothari, Demaria, & Acosta, 2015).

3.1 THE POST-DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND ALTERNATIVES TO DEVELOPMENT

The roots of post-development can be traced back to the World War II. The criticism of the mainstream development approaches emerged as a reaction after the formal president of the United States of America, Harry S. Truman, stated in his 1949 Four Point Speech:

> *'We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas'* (Truman, 1949).

The post-development advocates proclaimed the traditional development programs and practices a failure (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997; Sachs, 2010). Arturo Escobar in his book entitled *Encountering Development* explains that the terms of wealth, development, and poverty are social constructs and the Western World's tool for controlling the 'underdeveloped world' (2011a). Advocates of post-development theory (Escobar, Ferguson, Rahnema, Sachs) and critics of conventional development blame the 'developed' countries for being responsible for unequal distribution of powers. These authors base their arguments on a claim that knowledge is just an illusion – according to them, it is only one of many possible ways (the Western way) of looking at a problem. The post-development backers are sceptical about economic development as an advancement for the local communities. They say the development is an ideology and a reflection of Western hegemony (Escobar, 2011a, pp. 6, 170; Esteva & Prakash, 1988, p. 11). Thus, in the Post-development theory the development should be abandoned completely.

It might seem as though the post-development discourse aims to abandon any form of development altogether. This would mean that the post-development authors solely criticise development without offering a suggestion of other possibilities. From this perspective, the only solution would be to not be involved in any kind of foreign affairs and acting only within our own local context. Sally Matthews in "Post-development theory and the question of alternatives: a view from Africa" clarifies that the term 'development' in the post-development perspective is understood as the development strategies and plans that have been practiced and implemented in the post-World War II, including all of its forms and approaches. That includes all the theories of either capitalist, or Marxist ideologies, as well as the state-led and market-

led developments (Matthews, 2004, p. 375). Matthews criticises the attempts to carry out Alternative Development and suggests reforming the current development paradigm, but stand for abandoning the entire concept and all the theories as we know them and start thinking in a completely new way.

The post-development advocates say, while the Post World War II development may be obsolete and bankrupt, the endeavour to improve peoples' lives must not be abandoned (Matthews, 2004, p. 376). One of the significant representatives of the Post-development thought is Majid Rahnema, who in his book entitled *Post-Development Reader* discloses that development is an internal process – it is given to the communities, and they define what development means for their situation. The reason for failure of the attempts to 'develop' the Third World until now is, according to Rahnema, not the fault of governments', institutions' and people's wrong implementation, but rather stands in their lack to answer to its target's needs and aspirations (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997, p. 379).

The answer of most post-development authors to the development question lies within the radical alternatives to development, and grassroots movements, which are the only way to bring about the development valuable for communities in the way the communities want to develop and improve (Matthews, 2004, p. 376). By empowering (or rather by leaving the power where it should be in first place) the locals to be the centre in their own affairs, the communities can reach the development they find important and needed, rather than being imposed to Western concepts of 'developing' and 'improving' their ways of life.

3.1.1 The Difference Between Top Down and Bottom Up Development

Development was - and continues to be for the most part - a top-down, ethnocentric, and technocratic approach, which treated people and cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of "progress." Development was conceived not as a cultural process (culture was a residual variable, to disappear with the advance of modernization) but instead as a system of more or less universally applicable technical interventions intended to deliver some "badly needed" goods to a "target" population. It comes as no surprise that development became a force so destructive to Third World cultures, ironically in the name of people's interests.

(Escobar, 2011a, p. 44)

In *Encountering Development*, Arturo Escobar explains how the Western countries pursued 'Development' and through the power of knowledge started to 'modernize' indigenous people in underdeveloped states, by forcing them to adopt the 'right' (Western) values

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(Escobar, 2011a, chap. 2). The post-development authors dismiss the concept of top-down development, which has been pursued since the end of the World War II.

The top-down type of development is based on the decision-making of Western people of power, governments and institutions that set the course of the development agenda for the 'underdeveloped' countries (Willis, 2011). It is characterised by delegation down a chain of command to manage implementation, discussions of correct allocation of resources, disputes over chosen methodologies and is the only way to manage large-scale development projects (Chitty, 2013). Although top-down development allows to create internationally comparable indicators, by which the 'progress' of different locations can be evaluated, it does not allow for locally-chosen course of development.

The bottom-up concept, also known as grassroots development, empowers the target communities to realise their interest and choose their own definition of development (Durbin, 2015, p. 7). It is characterised by the individuals working on fulfilling their own interests, locating the resources they need, and forming organisations in order to increase their powers and reach their goals (GSCE Geography, 2012). This type of development scheme engages local people, leaves most power in the hands of the local people and ensures the wanted change, and development for each community (Esteva & Prakash, 1988, p. 39).

3.1.2 Alternatives to Development

Alternatives to Development (AtD) differ significantly from the approaches already presented. The AtD introduce some holistic perspectives and renounce all the values set by the previous approaches (Matthews, 2006, p. 56). This perspective does not focus on the general change, and neither does it strive to fulfil a set of defined targets. AtD deny the capability of people to generalize, globalize, and theorize about development and the world conditions. The approach denounces any epistemology of improvement and absolutes of right and wrong. This way of thinking puts an emphasis on the local and individual cases that cannot be bundled in a 'universal manual' on how to achieve advancement, and also questions the Western views on what advancement and improvement means. It advocates for human rights and fights against ecological destruction (Kothari & Patel, 2006, p. 77).

The advocates and supporters of this way of thinking about the society (Escobar, Esteva, Gudynas, Kothari, Rahnema, Sachs) believe that the development as it is understood and implemented by the West does not bring about positive change for the locals concerned, but rather enforces the values of Western cultures and ethics upon them. It claims the Western

development approaches do not consider the local cultural background, culture, ethnical history, traditions and ethical values (Matthews, 2004, p. 373). Therefore, the final outcomes of this development don't meet the current needs and wishes of the targeted group of people. The advocates believe that imposing (external) Western-based and Western-centred ideas of well-being on the so called Developing world compromises the particular target group's rights to determine their own definition of evolvement. The AtD fall under post-structuralism movement.

The main agenda of solutions and alternatives to development differ greatly depending on location. Six proposed elements by Kothari and Patel that focus mainly on the Radical Ecological Democracy taking place in India in their paper state following six:

1. Resistance to 'development' projects and processes that are destructive
2. Revival of traditions that are still relevant, in the same or modified manner
3. Reconstruction – synthesising traditions and modern processes/knowledge into new combinations
4. Redefinition of attitudes towards nature and fellow humans
5. Reorientation of some key terms and paradigms of development
6. Restitution – handing back of territories, resource rights, and knowledge ownership

(Kothari & Patel, 2006, p. 77)

From these points, which are applicable to all radical alternatives, dismissal of traditional development as well as pattern of going to the historical roots and combining traditional knowledge with the newly obtained knowledge is obvious. In these alternatives, environment and local communities play a key role.

3.2 DIFFERENT ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

In this direction, there have been several approaches that build their worldviews on Post-structuralist ideas. Some of these are based on the old perceptions of the world by indigenous peoples, whereas some have arisen from the recent social and environmental movements (Kothari et al., 2015). Examples of these radical alternatives are *Buen Vivir* in Latin America, *Ecological Swaraj (Radical Ecological Democracy)* in India, *degrowth* in parts of

Europe and North America, and to some extend also *Ubuntu* in Africa and *Simple Living Approaches*.

Buen Vivir, a Latin-American concept that translates from Spanish as 'living well' (alt. tr.: "good living"), which promotes life in harmonious connection with nature, small-community functioning and environmental harmony will be discussed in Chapter 4. In the following subchapters, selected concepts that fall within the post-structuralist view of development through grassroots communities are explained.

3.2.1 Degrowth

One of the radical alternatives for human well-being is the concept of Degrowth (also Sustainable Degrowth), which has emerged from recent social and environmental movements in the Global North (Kothari et al., 2015). It is centred around downscaling of production and consumption as a mean of increasing human well-being. Degrowth advocates for living ecological lifestyles focused on local production and calls for reforms of institutions to provide for more equally distributed resources. It forms a contrast to capitalism (and criticises its never-ending huger for growth) and could be implemented only under a new system altogether. Degrowth also criticises the sustainable development (SD) paradigm, as the SD also advocates for economic growth (Kallis, 2011, p. 874). The supporters believe in a post-material society that is not dependent on growth as source of development.

Degrowth builds on the Club of Rome's book 'Limits to Growth'. The concept acknowledges that the resources on our planet are finite, and therefore populations and economies will not be able to grow infinitely. The concept associates the problems of reduced availability of energy resources, declining quality of the environment, decline in the health of flora and fauna, rise of negative societal side-effects (human health, poverty) and expanding use of resources to the consumerist lifestyles that the people of the first-world have (D'Alisa, Demaria, & Kallis, 2014). According to Degrowth, well-being can be achieved by decreasing consumerism, engagement in arts, quality family time, local culture and community, rather than materialistic values.

As to the form of implementation, Degrowth is an overarching concept for numerous strategies including economy exiting strategies (includes eco-villages, co-housing, subsistence and non-monetary exchange methods), schemes of direct democracies, and also the proposals of institutional reforms at the state level (Kallis, 2011, p. 876). The economy exiting strategies

are based on eco-communities, which are defined by D'Alisa et al. in Degrowth – A Vocabulary for a New Era as:

> *... specifically planned and set up (communities) for people to come and live together with the goal of living and working according to ecological principles by promoting a degree of sharing and pursuing well-being through more sustainable life-styles, direct democracy and a degree of autonomy.*

(D'Alisa et al., 2014, chap. 38)

These small-scale, rural-area-based communities usually count under one hundred members and rely on local natural resources, small sized organic agriculture, crafting and self-construction. They strive to use renewable sources of energy and low-impact materials. Typical are also shared living areas, work-sharing and common cultural and political ideals. One example of this type of Degrowth community is The Farm in Tennessee (USA), which shares not only a collectively-bought property, but a set of vegetarian hippie ideals and the Degrowth principles of reducing ecological footprint on the planet, work-sharing, house sharing and common cultural and societal values. (D'Alisa et al., 2014, chap. 38).

While Degrowth is a broad concept that can be implemented in various different ways, the eco-communities are a practical interpretation, scaling the concept down to a form that is more similar to the concepts discussed below.

3.2.2 Ecological Swaraj (Radical Ecological Democracy)

Ecological Swaraj, which is also known under the term Radical Ecological Democracy (RED), is a movement and an alternative to development that has emerged in India as a response to the violence against nature, people, and culture. This concept has arisen as a response to the government implementing the economic-growth-centred development. The first noted idea of Swaraj as an alternative to development probably comes from Gandhi's book *Hind Swaraj* in 1909. Gandhi's philosophy is that "earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs but not for every man's greed" (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997, p. 306). In his view, in the Swaraj village, everyone should take only what they need, as taking more is in Gandhi's opinion a theft. He promotes a Simple Living approach. From Gandhi's perspective, the village stands as a "complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependency is a necessity" (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997, p. 306). Gandhi's Swaraj villages seek decentralization that should bring human

happiness and mental and moral growth (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997, p. 307). The communities falling under current Ecological Swaraj concept build on Gandhi's idea.

Ecological Swaraj responds to the growing inequity brought about by the economic development. Many of the India's small farmers had been impoverished, their lands are being dispossessed, and their environment being destroyed. His concept is a grassroots development form striving to achieve human well-being through ways that empower all citizens to participate in decision-making, ensure equitable distribution of wealth, and respect the limits of the Earth and the rights of nature. Translated, Ecological Swaraj means self-rule (or self-reliance) (Kothari et al., 2015). Its aim is empowerment of people, formation of direct democracy and decentralization. This Indian alternative approach favours local community governing and economy. According to Kothari et al., this concept has 5 elementary building blocks: The Ecological sustainability and resilience, social well-being and justice, direct democracy, economic democracy, and cultural and knowledge plurality.

In this concept, humans are seen as a part of the nature, and it recognises the rights of nature to thrive. The key to well-being is through the society, cultures, spirituality, cooperation, as well as equity in rights, benefits and "responsibilities across gender, class, caste, age, ethnicities, and other current divisions". The decision-making right is given to the smallest possible settlement. The producers and consumers are to be in total control of production, distribution, exchange and markets (Kothari et al., 2015). Ecological Swaraj centres mainly around local and regional governance and economy. It advocates for the various 'knowledges' and its communication from generations, and sees education as a process of learning throughout the lifespan.

While the government of India is still mainly focusing on growth-centred development, it has passed several laws that empower the local communities and tribes to self-govern themselves, protect their lands, define their desired form of education and practice local economy. According to the RED concept, government role is to be the guarantor of rights and ensure welfare of underprivileged. Several laws were passed by the Indian government as a response to the RED movement, like the Right to Information Act from 2005, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005, The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006, and several Organic Farming Policies implemented in various Indian states.

One of the important acts that have been passed is The Nagaland Communitisation of Public Institutions and Services Act of 2002. This legislation, as stated in

A State level legislation which enables the community to participate in the management and development of public institutions as their own. Rules have been framed under this law for bringing under its purview elementary education, grassroot health services and electricity management.

(Bijoy, Gopalakrishnan, & Khanna, 2010)

This act is an example of improvement in public services, by which the government made the local communities the main stakeholder. In the year 2000 there was a government and grassroots meeting in the Indian state of Nagaland, due to the arising pressure from the public to reform the government services at the grassroots level (Bijoy et al., 2010, p. 133). This act is the first of this kind in India where all of the public services have been communitised in order to better benefit the beneficiaries. This document empowers the community to participate, create, and run their public services, focusing on elementary education, grassroots health services, and electricity management (Bijoy et al., 2010, p. 133). Subsequently, the Nagaland Communitisation of Elementary Education Institutions and Services Rules 2002 was passed to communitise the primary and middle schools in the state of Nagaland. It hands all the powers and responsibilities over managing the school system to the communities. According to Bijoy et al. in the first year if implementation, the act was found a big success, and from the 400 villages surveys, the vast majority reported improvement in the education services (villages reported improvement in these areas: 90% in school enrolment, 80% in academic performance, 75% in the dropouts, 90% in student attendance, 80% in teachers attendance; 100% villages reported to have received the government grant) (Bijoy et al., 2010, p. 134).

3.2.3 Ubuntu

Ubuntu is a Southern African philosophy, that became the academic concept for understanding the core of African social life before the European conquest (Binsbergen, 2001, p. 1). Even though the definition of the word 'Ubuntu' is not clearly known, the Oxford Dictionary defines it as 'a quality that includes the essential human virtues; compassion and humanity ("ubuntu," n.d.). Authors differ as for which language the word Ubuntu derives. The word most probably originates from the Nguni language family, that includes Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, and Dsebele (Binsbergen, 2001, p. 1). The concept has been used by different iconic people within various contexts as it usually stresses the importance of respect, helpfulness, sharing, community, trust, and unselfishness. 'Ubuntu' refers to a complex philosophy and way of living. Ubuntu is thought to be connected to the Nguni proverb 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabatu',

which is commonly translated as 'a person is a person through other persons' (Gade, 2012; Lutz, 2016; Makgoro, 2009; Ziai, 2014). This word, even by itself, expresses the communitarian culture of the people.

When Tim Modise interviewed Nelson Mandela, and asked him what his definition of 'Ubuntu' is, Mandela answered:

In the old days when we were young, a traveler through a country would stop at a village, and he didn't have to ask for food or water; once he stops, the people give him food, entertain him. That is one aspect of Ubuntu, but it will have various aspects. Ubuntu does not mean that people should not address themselves. The question therefore is, are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you, and enable it to improve? These are important things in life. And if you can do that, you have done something very important.

(Mandela, 2011)

As it can be understood Mandela's explanation of Ubuntu, it is one of the cores of the culture in which sharing is natural, and done without even anyone asking it. It is mostly considered something to be hardly comprehended by the Western world as the word itself can hardly be translated into a Western language. Desmond Mpilo Tutu, a South African social rights activist and former Anglican bishop explains Ubuntu and how it conflicts with Western way of thinking:

Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, 'Yu, u nobuntu'; 'Hey, so-and-so has ubuntu.' Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, 'My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours.' We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'A person is a person through other persons.' It is not, 'I think therefore I am.' It says rather: 'I am human because I belong. I participate, I share.'

(Tutu, 1999, p. 29)

Desmond Tutu alludes to the Western thinker Descartes. Even though Descartes's quote is only within an ontological context, it reflects the individualistic structure of the Western mind. As Tutu states, Ubuntu is about saying 'we' before 'I' and becoming aware your own existence through the existence of the others. This sophisticated African expression has inevitably entered the constitution of the South African Republic as well. The representatives of the South African Interim Constitution of 1993, agreed address the divisions and strife of the apartheid era in South Africa, 'there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for ubuntu but not for victimization' (Gade, 2011, p. 313).

The concept stresses the importance of respect, helpfulness, sharing, community, trust, and unselfishness. In the Ubuntu communities, a person is strongly interconnected to the community, and the community is the essence of the person's personness. It encompasses both the sharing when one has, as well as accepting and counting on the help of the others, when in need (Gerard Walmsley, 2011, p. 73).

4 BUEN VIVIR

In this chapter the post-development grassroots approach to development called Buen Vivir is defined. In the first part of the chapter, the definition, origin, and main principles of Buen Vivir are described. This part of the chapter is followed by the main principles that can be observed across the different contexts and cultures. In the following subchapter an in-depth analysis of Buen Vivir as a concept within the constitution and National Plans of Bolivia is presented. The country of Bolivia was chosen due to the fact that it has implemented to some extend the concept of Buen Vivir in its constitution and National Plans.

4.1 WHAT IS BUEN VIVIR?

This subchapter introduces the concept of Buen Vivir, its worldview and origin, drawing from the works of indigenous activists, as well as Latin American academics. In this chapter, Buen Vivir refers to the general concept, and the common conceptualization that are shared throughout Latin America.

Buen Vivir as an alternative to development has evolved in Latin America as a political concept of indigenous movements in the late 1990s, although the basic ideas and philosophy of Buen Vivir are much older. According to Vanhulst and Beling (2014, p. 56), the emergence of the discourse had been driven by three factors: 1) the Latin-American social (especially indigenous) movements, 2) the interconnection of the movements with arising global ideologies like anti-globalization and environmental activism, and 3) common aversion towards the idea of development. The response of Latin America to the West-led development lies in the origins of its cultures (Kothari et al., 2015). The conceptions of Buen Vivir find their origins mainly among the indigenous people with philosophies that have their roots based in the pre-colonization America (Abya Yala) (Kothari et al., 2015).

The concept draws its base from the post-development understanding of conventional development as Western-led ideas of technological and economic progress. Gudynas and

Acosta point out that while probably all of the states have been longing to develop (in the western sense of progress), very few of these countries have achieved it (2011a, p. 103). Since the colonization, the Western-centred idea of progress had slowly become a predominant concept around the world, while the indigenous alternatives were being pushed aside (Gudynas & Acosta, 2011a, p. 103).

And thus upon the discourse of president Truman (as stated above in an extract from his Four Point Speech), countries of Latin America, and other parts of the world were expected to apply a set of policies and instruments, in order to transform from the state of 'underdevelopment' into the desired 'developed state' (Gudynas & Acosta, 2011a, p. 103).

Javier Bustillos (2012), an Aymara indigenous from Bolivia, explains the philosophy of Buen Vivir as life in community, with the intention to share living (convivir) in unity with others. Bustillos says, Buen Vivir is the life in reciprocity, as opposed to the Western exchanging of favours for favours. While the later, exchanging something for something, produces guarantees, reciprocity brings about emotional wellbeing (Bustillos, 2012). With this philosophy, we can *become more*, rather than *have more*.

In the philosophy of Buen Vivir, the human race is not considered the perfect superior creation, that is to rule the nature and animals. Humans are a part of the nature, and are to live in harmony, respect, and connection with the animals and nature, that surrounds them (Bustillos, 2012). 'We all need each other in order to be complete' (Bustillos, 2012). While in the West, the paradigm is either in individualist, or collectivist, for indigenous peoples it is community-based. In individualism, the goal of people is to live better. In the collectivism, the ultimate goal is the wellbeing of humans. But in community-based approaches of indigenous peoples, which are projected in the concept of Buen Vivir, the wellbeing encompasses animals, plants, and nature, as well as humans. (F. H. Mamani, 2014). It is a holistic concept. Mamani (2012) explains further:

> *'Animals our sisters and brothers, they are our companions and parts of our community (...) Buen Vivir is a culture of respect, a culture of life (...) It is a new paradigm, a new conception of life, not only for the indigenous peoples, as we invite anyone, all world.'*

> (F. H. Mamani, 2012).

Buen Vivir is not a new extreme, or a fundamentalist concept, it derives from the traditional knowledge, worldview, and perception of good living of the indigenous peoples of Abya Yala. But it is more than some romanticized return to the past, Buen Vivir has the

potential to be the way of life of contemporary society, which is 'based on learning from our roots' (Solón, 2014, p. 3).

'In its most general sense, Buen Vivir denotes, organizes, and constructs a system of knowledge and living based on the communion of humans and nature and on the spatial-temporal-harmonious totality of existence' (Walsh, 2010). It reflects resistance to the imposition of the Western idea of development. It is inspired by the traditional indigenous knowledge, in which there was no notions of 'development' or 'poverty' (Cerdán, 2013). However, Buen Vivir concept does not only draw from the past, but also integrates some movements from the western knowledge – ecology, feminism and humanism among others (Cerdán, 2013).

Many authors remark, that the concept is still under construction and is being discussed among many actors, such as indigenous peoples, different social movements, intellectuals, politicians and governments (F. H. Mamani, 2010; Solón, 2014; Thomson, 2011, p. 449; Villalba, 2013, p. 1437).

Gudynas makes a connection between Buen Vivir and other movements, such as the studies and authors that criticize development in general, such as Arturo Escobar (Gudynas, 2011a, p. 444), other radical environmental movements, above all the deep ecology concepts and other concepts, which perceive the world as biocentric, rather than anthropocentric (Gudynas, 2011a, p. 444). Lastly, Gudynas relates the concept to the feminist perspectives, and their view of hierarchies within societies and constructed roles of gender. In the latter, the openness of indigenous views is reversed, as the indigenous traditions don't usually acknowledge gender inequalities. Through this critical Western approach, the indigenous concepts is exposed to these valuable insights (Gudynas, 2011a, p. 445).

4.2 NOT ONE BUEN VIVIR, BUT MANY BUENOS VIVIRES

When speaking about the concept of Buen Vivir, we must keep in mind, that it is a pluralistic concept. That means it values diversity, different cultures, and different 'knowledges', without putting one above the other. In Buen Vivir, there is no dominant culture, nor any hierarchy of 'knowledges'. The Western culture is criticised for imposing itself onto an imaginary throne up above all other culture. The Western knowledge is looked at as one of the worldviews, rather than the absolute truth. Pluralism is one of the main beliefs in the

traditional indigenous worldview (cosmovision[2]). Escobar argues that while the modern view sees only one world (universe), the concept of Buen Vivir highlights the interconnectedness of every being and in the relational cosmovisions there are always multiple worlds, rather than only one universe (Escobar, 2011b). Escobar calls this multi universe a pluriverse (Escobar, 2011b). In pluriverses, no divisions are made between nature and culture, individual and community, or us and them (Escobar, 2011b).

The pluriverse worldview, which has roots in traditional indigenous perceptions of the world, suggests that there is no general definition that would overarch the whole concept of Buen Vivir, but rather many perceptions of this concept exist. Pluralism also means that in the view of Buen Vivir's practitioners, there is no single correct way to 'live well', but the individual principles are tight to local context (Solón, 2014, p. 4).

There are more ways of division of the Buen Vivir concept. Following Villalba (2013, p. 1429), we can talk about 1) the 'Andean indigenous peoples' approach, which is closest to the social context of indigenous peoples of Quechua and Aymara, and 2) the 'approaches closest to mestizo', whose urban context which is more open to the Western modern ideas.

Concerning the first approach, Buen Vivir has its place in many indigenous tribes, and as the concept has a different meaning and principles in each, it also has different names, which reflect the particular indigenous understanding. The Quechuan concept in Ecuador is called s*umak kawsay* (in Kichwa), commonly being translated as living well, or coexisting well (sp. vivir bien, or convivir bien) (Gudynas, 2011b; Portal Territorio Indígena y Gobernanza, 2011). Aymara peoples in Bolivia talk about *suma qamaña,* a good life (sp. vida buena) (Gudynas & Acosta, 2011b, p. 76). For Amazonian Guaraní peoples, it is *ñande reko*, or way of living (sp. modo de ser) (Bustillos, 2012; Gudynas, 2011b, p. 7). We can also talk about Ashuar's *shiir waras* (or good life – sp. buen vivir), that can be located in the Ecuadorian Amazonia (Jimenez, 2011, p. 14). If we would look a little further to Panama, where Panama's Kuna peoples speak of *balu wala* – good life (sp. buen vivir) (Solón, 2014, p. 22). Guatemalan expressions of Mayan origin for good living are *utzlläj k'aslemal*, or *raxnaqull k'aslemal* (sp. Buen vivir)

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[2] Cosmovision is the way of viewing and interpreting the world (Brown, Phillips, & Stonestreet, 2008, p. 29; Geisler & Watkins, 2003). It is constituted by the specific knowledges, which allow us to recognize and understand the reality (Definicion.de, 2016). One can speak about the cosmovision of one person, one culture, an epoch, and so on. For example, Charles H. Kraft (1998, p. 385) defines cosmovision as "the deep level of culture, [that] is the culturally structured set of assumptions (including values and commitments/allegiances) underlying how a people perceive and respond to reality. [Cosmovision] is *not separate* from culture. *It is included in culture* as the deepest level presuppositions upon which people base their lives." Although the term cosmovision is in this paper used as the worldview of the indigenous peoples, it is very unlikely that two groups of indigenous people would share exactly the same cosmovision. This corresponds with one of the main emphasis of the thesis, the small-scale locality and non-transferability of the particular Buenos Vivires to other contexts.

(Confluencia Nuevo B'aqtun, 2014). Chilean and Argentinian mapuches would speak of *küme morgen* (living well – sp. vivir bien) (Estermann, 2009, p. 3). This is by no means a complete list of possible names and translations of Buen Vivir. Some authors also use such names as *full life* (sp. vida plena), *harmoninous life* (vida en harmonía), and *good convivial living* (buen convivir), or indigenous terms as *teko kavi* (good life), *ivi maraei* (the land without evil), *suma qamaría* (good life), *allin kawsay* (living well), and *qhapaj ñan* (the path to the noble life) (Confluencia Nuevo B'aqtun, 2014, p. 7; Gudynas, 2011a, p. 443, 2011c; Solón, 2014, p. 8; Villalba, 2013).

Due to these many interpretations, names and translations, and the plural nature of the concept, Gudynas and Acosta (2011b, p. 80) point out that rather than speaking of *Buen Vivir*, it is more appropriate to refer to the concept(s) as *Buenos Vivires*, or *Buenos Convivires*. The individual local perceptions of *Buen Vivir* are by no means interchangeable and broadly applicable. When we speak about general concept of *Buen Vivir*, we cannot only state the principles local to the Aymara *suma qamaña*. None of the above mentioned names are interchangeable, as the *balu wala* is not identical to the *ñande reko*, or *sumak kawsay* (Gudynas & Acosta, 2011b, p. 80).

4.3 COMMON PRINCIPLES OF BUEN VIVIR

As stated above, the concept of Buen Vivir is peculiar to its locality, and closely bound to the concerned culture and ecosystem. Therefore, each of the communities practicing Buen Vivir have their own particular set of principles and beliefs, which are applicable solely within their own context. It is not possible to study it and create general theories about it. This can be hard or impossible to understand, as it is practiced by individual communities and not based on a complex theory. It is strongly local and non-transferable and therefore it doesn't generally answer the global problems. Having this in mind, there are a few common attributes that make Buen Vivir an overarching concept of the indigenous community life in Latin America. Within the local specific principles, many authors writing about Buen Vivir attempted to identify the ones that are common throughout the different cultures and contexts.

Throughout the texts of most of the authors writing about Buen Vivir, values like unity, equality, dignity, freedom, solidarity, reciprocity, social and gender equity, social justice, responsibility, interconnectedness, collectiveness, community, plurality, conservation of natural wealth and harmony between people and nature are common (Acosta & Martínez, 2011; Acosta, 2013; Balch, 2014; Gudynas, 2011a, 2011b; Jimenez, 2011; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010, p. 4).

Eduardo Gudynas (2011b) distinguishes seven main principles that are common throughout the different realities of Buenos Vivires. They are as follows: First is a different model for recognizing and attaching values. While the Western paradigm sees the human as the only eligible being to assign values, the idea of Buen Vivir lays in the recognizing different measures for assigning value. These values are based on cosmo-centric view of indigenous peoples (Villalba, 2013, p. 1434). Gudynas (2011a, p. 445) states the aesthetic, cultural, historical, environmental, spiritual values, and essential intrinsic values. What surrounds us is not seen as a commodity, and is valuable in different than material standards (Portal Territorio Indígena y Gobernanza, 2011). As Villalba (2013, p. 1434) points out, in Buen Vivir 'everything is not lowered to the level of marketable goods and services'. Nature and environment then become subjects of values, and humans therefore cease to be the only source of values (Gudynas, 2011a, p. 445). The quality of life and wellbeing does not depend on the possession of material assets or income, but rather depends on spiritual wellbeing and happiness (Portal Territorio Indígena y Gobernanza, 2011).

Second main principle is the decolonization of knowledge, and recognition of plurality of 'knowledges' (Gudynas, 2011b, p. 15). Knowledge should be decolonized, and there should be a meeting of cultures to find a mutual understanding for various views to prevent one culture to be dominant over another (Villalba, 2013, p. 1433). Buen Vivir respects the diversity of different 'knowledges' peculiar to local peoples as opposed to the dominant and absolute Western knowledge. The different 'knowledges' are not put into a hierarchical order, therefore one is not considered superior to any other. The diversity of 'knowledges' is considered the meeting of cultures, not a competition for dominance (Baldi, 2013; Portal Territorio Indígena y Gobernanza, 2011; Vanhulst & Beling, 2014).

Third principle is to stop the manipulation and instrumentalization of everything around us. This encompasses the nature and the people. It is the end of the domination over our surroundings and their transformation to serve our purposes (Gudynas, 2011b, p. 15). Moreover, Villalba (2013, p. 1433) mentions that in Buen Vivir's eyes, there is no such a thing as universal development. It rejects development as being a linear process with a single 'standpoint of historicity' and opposes the manipulation of humans through the Western development discourse.

Fourth element, identified by Eduardo Gudynas, is that Buen Vivir is formed by an alternative perception of nature. The concept puts a great value on the environment and the nature. As Gudynas (2009, p. 52) puts it: 'The wellbeing of humans is only possible, if the survival and integrity of the web of life of nature is assured'. This perception of nature is an

opposite view to the Western anthropocentrism. The humans and nature are not separated, but coexist together. All living beings and nature are related and interconnected. Therefore, nature is not seen solely as a source of natural resources, but as a subject to its own rights (Ziai, 2014, p. 3). Humans are to have harmonious relationships with their community and nature (Villalba, 2013, p. 1433). The Buen Vivir draws from the biocentric indigenous view (Acosta, 2012, p. 198). Acosta (2012, p. 198) further reasons that more appropriate term would, rather than biocentrism, be socio-biocentrism, projecting itself as a new kind of socialism with an objective to organize the society and economy while still protecting and conserving the wholeness of the nature and its processes (Acosta, 2012, p. 198). Solón (Solón, 2014) also recognizes this commonality among the Buenos Vivires, and calls this element 'The Earth Community'.

Moreover, the perception of extended communities, is very important common element. Gudynas (2011b, p. 16) defines these as communities not only consisting of people, but also other non-human beings, elements, environment, or spirits. The community is viewed as an interconnected ecosystem that lives together in harmony with Pachamama (indigenous name for 'mother earth' – some other indigenous names include in Amazonia 'Madre Selva', or 'Quatamama' for the Urus) (F. H. Mamani, 2010, p. 49).

Gudynas' list of common elements continues with Buen Vivir being the 'call oriented on meeting, dialogue, or interactions between different knowledges' (Gudynas, 2011b, p. 15). It 'proposes an intercultural encounter between different cultures on an *even playing* field' (Solón, 2014). The very pluralistic nature of the concepts points to the impossibility of one culture to become dominant above any others (Gudynas, 2011b, p. 15). There is not only one correct way to have a good life (Solón, 2014). Buen Vivir promotes interaction, mutual learning and acceptance of different realities.

Lastly, in the concept of Buen Vivir, a place for experiences and emotions is always provided. While in Buen Vivir, material base might be present, the living is not restricted to only this. In the view of Buen Vivir, life 'cannot just be reduced to the accumulation of things and objects' (Solón, 2014). Quite immense emphasis is put on the 'emotional expressions, experiences of joy and sadness, rebellion and compassion' (Gudynas, 2011b, p. 16; Villalba, 2013, p. 1434).

Above these, Villalba (2013, p. 1434) as well as Solón (2014) add a commonality across different Buenos Vivires in the principle of reciprocity, complementarity and solidarity which is respected in trade relations as well as in local government'. The production and reproduction lies within the harmonious coexistence of people and nature. It lies in exchanges that consider the other, rather than competing 'at the expense of others and nature (Solón, 2014).

Buen Vivir values people and nature over profits. It does not focus on economy and product development, but rather on coexisting together in a community of Mother Earth, spirituality, ethics, reciprocity, solidarity and expression of emotion. It replaces the basic idea of mainstream development, and exchanges this as an alternative to development.

4.4 THE BASIS FOR BUEN VIVIR WITHIN INTERNATIONAL LAW

While the previous subchapters were explaining the concept of Buen Vivir, this subchapter will shift focus towards the emergence of indigenous movements, indigenous international mobilization and laws, that ensure the legal applicability of Buen Vivir. As a Latin American indigenous peoples' concept, Buen Vivir has been practiced for many years by many indigenous communities. It is only in the last two decades, that Buen Vivir arisen as a concept among academics and in the global discussions. For the indigenous peoples, as they have been (and still remain), marginalized communities for a long time, ensuring their rights and place in the modern world didn't come easily. This was only achieved by the enduring passive and active resistance of the indigenous peoples and activists to the Western-led development and modernism. To be able to protect their lives, culture, languages, lands and rights in today's world, legal documents on national and international levels are needed. It has to be stated, that having their rights declared in international or national documents on paper, doesn't mean these rights are necessarily being. It gives, however, a certain base to the peoples in order to legally oppose the external factors in today's world.

As to the context of indigenous rights in Latin America, since the 1990s and forward, Latin America has seen a boom in development projects. In defiance of the Western development discourse, Latin American indigenous peoples were particularly successful in ensuring their rights through protests and activism (Evidence and lessons from Latin America (ELLA), 2010; Lanza, 2012, p. 3; Rosengren, 2002, p. 11). The Latin American indigenous tribes and peoples have strong connection with their lands, natural resources and territory, in which their communities live. Due to this fact, they have been fighting to ensure participation and securities in decision making about their lands. They have secured their place (on the paper) in some legal documents of international organizations (among which also the United Nations) and also within some of the countries legislations and constitutions.

Buen Vivir's inscription in the constitutions of the states of Ecuador and Bolivia is definitely achieved by activism and victories of the local indigenous movements, that have been actively pursuing their vision for their countries for many decades. The development,

progress and modernity of the West are the problems which indigenous peoples face every day in their daily struggle for survival, identities, rights and freedoms (Tauli-Corpuz, 2010, p. 1).

Demetrio Cojtí Cuxil shortly summarizes the history of international development and approaches towards indigenous cultures (an example from Guatemala) in these words:

> *'as far back as 1821, the original plan for the Guatemalan nation devised by the architects of independence suggested the necessity of eliminating racial and ethnic differences to make the country viable or feasible; later orthodox Marxism-Leninism demanded that ethnic dissent be minimized or ignored in order to make the revolution or class struggle viable or feasible; then the liberal philosophy taught that progress and material development could only be achieved through a mestizo or ladino culture (according to the liberals, in order to lift the indigenous people out of poverty, one first had to lift them out of their culture and language: "the Indian has to be killed to be saved"; to put it another way, one had to take the Indian out of the Indian, i.e, to save the indigenous people from poverty, their ethnic identity had to be wiped out).'*

(Cuxil, 1996, p. 48)

During the colonization of Americas, they justified the invasion by claiming that the original peoples are primitive. A few centuries later, the excuse of modernity and development gave an excuse for a recolonization of indigenous lands and suppressing their culture and identities (Tauli-Corpuz, 2010, p. 2). As a response to this colonization of identities and cultures, indigenous peoples all over the world have mobilized within their movement, gained global attention, and achieved to ensure the inscribing legalization of their rights into the legal documents on the local and global scale (Tauli-Corpuz, 2010).

One of the first documents ensuring indigenous rights is the International Labour Organizations's (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957 (No. 107). Its main concern was integration of the 'the indigenous and other tribal or semi-tribal populations' into the life of their respective countries. The countries that ratified this were to protect indigenous peoples' civil rights as individuals. It didn't give the indigenous communities the rights to create their own societies within the nation (International Labour Organization, 1957). The right to coexist as a community is obviously crucial for the implementation of Buen Vivir communities within the states. Out of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, the convention was signed by Argentina, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru (International Labour Organization, n.d.).

Thornberry (2002, p. 21) sets the proliferation of indigenous movements into 1960s in Australia, Canada, and the United States, followed in 1970s by Latin America. These were followed by international indigenous movement(s), which 'emerged largely in the 1970s'

(Thornberry, 2002, p. 21). In 1975, the transnational World Council of Indigenous Peoples was established, constituting a first pan-indigenous organization (Kemner, 2011). In 1977, The International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) acquired 'consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)' (Thornberry, 2002, p. 21).

The very first international conference, the NGO Conference on Discrimination against Indigenous Populations, took place in Geneva in 1977 (*IITC*, 1977). An outcome from this conference, 'Declaration of Principles for the Defense of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Western Hemisphere', gives indigenous peoples the right to be seen as nations with own government, territory, population. It also gives indigenous peoples the right to make treaties with other countries as separate entities. The states are urged to recognize indigenous groups as separate government institutions and acknowledge their territorial sovereignty (*IITC*, 1977, pp. 25–26).

Another conference, Geneva Conference of Indigenous Peoples and the Land, took place at the United Nations in 1981 (Niezen, 2003, p. 45). This time, the centre of the conference's debates were the indigenous people and issues with their lands (Niezen, 2003, p. 45). Later, in 1982 and onwards, many indigenous groups joined the newly established Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), which fell under UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (Thornberry, 2002, p. 22). The WGIP had met annually, except for the year of 1986 (Thornberry, 2002, p. 23). The WGIP was discontinued in 2008, after the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII under ECOSOC est. July 2000) and United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) were established (ECOSOC, 2000; United Nations General Assembly, 2006).

In 1989, in cooperation with indigenous peoples, ILO revised the convention No. 107. In Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) (ILO 169) a significant change in the approach of ILO is evident. Recognizing, that seeing indigenous people as an ancient outdated civilization to be integrated and 'developed' into the modern system, is unethical and unsatisfactory for the indigenous community (Thornberry, 2002, p. 27). This convention is very important on the international scale, and its main points, where connecting with the implementation of Buen Vivir will be stated. The ILO 169 firstly states, that self-identification is the fundamental criterion to determining, who is concerned by the Convention (International Labour Organization, 1989).

In Article 5, the validity of indigenous values and practices is stated. This article recognizes the importance of indigenous cultures and traditions and gives them right to maintain them:

Article 5, Section (a): the social, cultural, religious and spiritual values and practices of these peoples shall be recognised and protected, and due account shall be taken of the nature of the problems which face them both as groups and as individuals;

Article 5, Section (b): the integrity of the values, practices and institutions of these peoples shall be respected;

In Article 6, the need to consult people with acts, that might concern them, is stated, as well as the need to promote and help establish their own institutions and initiatives.

Article 6, Section 1 (a): consult the peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, whenever consideration is being given to legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly;

Article 6, Section 1 (c): establish means for the full development of these peoples' own institutions and initiatives, and in appropriate cases provide the resources necessary for this purpose.

Articles 7 gives the indigenous people of the countries that ratified the ILO 169 the right to choose their own process of development (such as Buen Vivir), and the need for their participation in creating, implementing, and evaluating development plans:

Article 7, Section 1: The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programmes for national and regional development which may affect them directly.

Article 8 reserves the right for indigenous peoples to have their own customs, institution and infrastructures within the states, and if these are not possible, use measures to resolve conflicts that might arise due to the application of this right (International Labour Organization, 1989). Another principle strongly resonating with the implementation of Buen Vivir is in Article 13, section 1, that stresses the need for governments to respect indigenous cultures and values tight the land, which they inhabit. This is endorsed in the Article 14, where the problematics of indigenous lands is bound the territories, which the indigenous traditionally occupy, or are necessary for subsistence and traditional activities, and the need to protect the rights of the peoples to use:

Article 13, Section 1: In applying the provisions of this Part of the Convention governments shall respect the special importance for the cultures and spiritual values of the peoples concerned of their relationship with the lands or territories, or both as

applicable, which they occupy or otherwise use, and in particular the collective aspects of this relationship.

Article 14, Section 1: *The rights of ownership and possession of the peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognised. In addition, measures shall be taken in appropriate cases to safeguard the right of the peoples concerned to use lands not exclusively occupied by them, but to which they have traditionally had access for their subsistence and traditional activities. Particular attention shall be paid to the situation of nomadic peoples and shifting cultivators in this respect.*

Followed by Section 15, which gives ownership to the indigenous peoples over the natural resources relating to their lands. Specifically, the indigenous have the right to 'participate in the use, management, and conservation of these resources' (International Labour Organization, 2003).

Articles 25 and 27 secure the rights of indigenous peoples to establish their own institutions for health services and education. It states the need of preference to train local community health workers and educators, and these facilities should be to the achievable extend community-based. The education system should incorporate locally specific history, languages, 'knowledges', technologies, value systems, and social, economic, and cultural aspirations. The education programmes shall at the same time meet minimum education standards established by 'the competent authority' (International Labour Organization, 1989). All these should be done by, or in cooperation with, the local indigenous peoples concerned.

Throughout the ILO 169 convention, a need for support and reinforcement of these principles by the state authorities is identified. The state shall support, provide resources needed and reinforce the principles (International Labour Organization, 2003). This convention was ratified by following Latin American and Caribbean countries: Argentina, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela (International Labour Organization, n.d.).

Another one of the important global right of indigenous peoples is the right of free prior informed consent (FPIC), that is stated (among others) in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted by General Assembly in September 2007 (UN General Assembly, 2007; United Nations Declaration, 2008). In the UNDRIP, FPIC is stated in six articles, including the necessity of the authority to obtain free, prior and informed consent through appropriate indigenous institutions in following cases: 1) Prior to relocation (indigenous peoples cannot be forcibly removed from their land). If a relocation is necessary and a FPIC is obtained, they shall be appropriately compensated. 2) Prior to implementation of legislative and administrative measures that may affect indigenous peoples. 3) Prior to storage

or disposal of hazardous materials that shall take place in their lands. 4) 'Prior to the approval of any project affecting indigenous lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources' (United Nations Declaration, 2008, Articles 10, 19, 29, 32).

Indigenous populations also have the right to acquire compensations for lands that they have previously owned, or used, which have been confiscated, used or damaged without the FPIC (United Nations Declaration, 2008, Articles 11, 28).

Above stated are the most important legal international documents granting rights to indigenous peoples to have life in self-determination; own, maintain and decide about their own territories; cultivate their culture, traditions, education, and other institutions; being informed and consented with full understanding, in matters that might affect them; and choose their own development and development plans for their communities. It is understood, that the sole gratification of these rights on international and national level doesn't always mean real enforcement of these rights in the everyday lives of the communities. It is not uncommon for countries, that have ratified the ILO 169, to continue adapt policies without consulting indigenous peoples (e.g. Salmón, 2013). It can be quite challenging for indigenous communities, to claim their rights (Hill, Lillywhite, & Simon, 2010, p. 3). These laws, however, form a good base for indigenous peoples for claiming the rights that they should have and can be used in discussions with local authorities.

Beside the international law, different countries have their own laws concerning Buen Vivir and Indigenous rights as well. Out of all countries, the most advances in integrating Buen Vivir into life have been in Ecuador and Bolivia. Ecuador has been the first country to officially recognize the Rights of Nature and an alternative to development Buen Vivir in their constitution of 2008 (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, 2008). It is also legally inscribed in the Bolivian constitution since 2009 (Bolivia, 2009; Gudynas, 2011a, p. 442). This thesis further focuses on the implementation of Buen Vivir within the constitution and National Development Plans of Bolivia.

4.5 BUEN VIVIR AS A POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE IN BOLIVIA

In Bolivia, the concept of living well comes from the Aymara principle, suma qamaña (translated as Vivir Bien in Spanish). Vivir Bien in Bolivia does not only represent a *concept*, but also a *political alternative*. It draws from the cosmovision and structures of the indigenous tribes living within its territories (Lanza, 2012, p. 3). In Bolivia, the majority of the population is formed by indigenous peoples: 62% of the Bolivian population self-identified as indigenous

in 2001 census, while significantly less, 40.3%, self-identified as indigenous in 2012 census (the difference is due to the reformulation of the questions in the questionnaire) (Inter-American Development Bank, 2014). In the past decade, Vivir Bien as a vision of development process of indigenous peoples and their thinking, has become dominant in Bolivian reform (Lanza, 2012, p. 4).

The critique of neo-liberalism along with questioning of the prevailing economic model of the country was the major reason of indigenous activism towards recapturing their rights, 'knowledges' and cultures on the administrative level (Lanza, 2012, p. 4). The model as such has started uprisings, such as the Water War of 2000, when people of Cochabamba revolted and protested the privatization of their water reserves. The Bolivian government was forced to back down (Bascuas, 2013; Crespo, Fernández, Herbas, & Carrillo, 2005). In similar matter, mass protests against government's economic policies on natural gas exports in 2003 were taking place (known as the Gas War) (Perreault, 2008, p. 14). This conflict resulted in the resignation of the President Gonzalo Sánches de Lozada ("Cronología de la Guerra del Gas a Diez Años," n.d.; Quiroga, 2003).

These, and similar uprisings and marches happening throughout Bolivia led to the foundation of Constitutional Assembly in order to set a new vision of the role of the State (Lanza, 2012, p. 4). These unrests also led to the creation of Agenda de Octubre, a list of public demands calling for a thorough makeover of the economic and political frameworks of the State and society (Rada, 2012). The list comprised of three major demands: '(a) a referendum over the extraction, production, export, uses, etc. of the country's natural gas resources; (b) a new Hydrocarbons Law that would reverse the regressive nature of the law installed by Gonzálo Sánchez de Lozada; and (c) a Constitutional Assembly to elaborate a new constitution' (Jeffery R. Webber, 2005; Webber, 2011, p. 232). Although the current president, Evo Morales, stated in October 2011 that the Agenda de Octubre has been successfully implemented (Mendoza, 2011), his statement is only partially true. While the Constitutional Assembly and rewriting of the Constitution was fulfilled, the demand for nationalization of hydrocarbons has started, but has not been finished (Kenner, 2011).

In December 2005, a person of Aymara origin, Evo Morales, won early presidential elections in Bolivia with 54% of the votes (Bueno & Datta, 2011, p. 11). He is known as the Bolivian 'first indigenous president' (Buben & Somogyi, 2009, p. 156; Bueno & Datta, 2011, p. 1; International Labour Organization, 2009, p. 69; Roedl, 2007, p. 278). The election marked an era of great socio-political shift and redefinition of wellbeing in Bolivia. One month after his inauguration as a president, Morales urged social movements to pressure the Congress to

approve his bill for Constitutional Assembly (Bueno & Datta, 2011, p. 12). After a long struggle and protests of social movements, and one unsuccessful sitting of Constitutional Assembly, where the opposition delayed the Assembly's work, a new Constitution was approved and brought into effect in 2009 (Bueno & Datta, 2011, pp. 12–13; Perreault, 2008, p. 16). This Constitution is very important for the indigenous peoples and Vivir Bien.

The first notion of Vivir Bien and some of its values can be found in the preamble of the new Bolivian Constitution:

A State based on respect and equality for all, on principles of sovereignty, dignity, interdependence, solidarity, harmony, and equity in the distribution and redistribution of the social wealth, where the search for a good life ['Vivir Bien'] predominates; based on respect for the economic, social, juridical, political and cultural pluralism of the inhabitants of this land; and on collective coexistence with access to water, work, education, health and housing for all.

The Article 8 of the 2009 Bolivian Constitution states that:

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

'The State is based on the values of unity, equality, inclusion, dignity, liberty, solidarity, reciprocity, respect, interdependence, harmony, transparency, equilibrium, equality of opportunity, social and gender equality in participation, common welfare, responsibility, social justice, distribution and redistribution of the social wealth and assets for wellbeing.'

(Constitute Project, 2015 Ar. 8, Sec. 1, 2)

As Solón (Solón, 2014, p. 10) says, the mention of Vivir Bien in the national Constitution of Bolivia is an important milestone, although the extent to which is the concept covered is solely focused on a set of ethical principles, and neglects the general principles of Buen Vivir.

In the National Development Plan (El Plan Nacional de Desarrollo) for the years 2006-2011, detailed objectives and goals of the Bolivian government are given. The primary objective of the government is set to focus on removing inequality and social exclusion in country by changing the primary export patent and the foundations of colonialism and neoliberalism that sustain it (Ministro de Planificación del Desarrollo, 2007, p. 4). The plan is divided into four sections, 'Dignified Bolivia', 'Sovereign Bolivia', 'Productive Bolivia' and 'Democratic Bolivia', and incorporates the concept of Vivir Bien to a certain extend. The plan states, that 'a new proposal of development is based on the concept of Vivir Bien, which is

own to the indigenous peoples of Bolivia' (Ministro de Planificación del Desarrollo, 2007, p. 8). It further states, that this concept proposes a cosmocentric vision, which surpasses the traditional principles of ethnocentric development. The plan goes on explaining the meaning and values of the concept. 'It is not possible to live well, if the others live badly' (Ministro de Planificación del Desarrollo, 2007, p. 8).

> *'Living Well is a demand for humanization of development (...) development [therefore] becomes a collective process of community decision-making and action. The society is an active subject and not a recipient of vertical directives. Vivir Bien is the access and enjoyment of material goods as well as subjective, intellectual and spiritual realization, in harmony with nature and community.'*

> (Ministro de Planificación del Desarrollo, 2007, p. 9)

As a contrary to the principles of Vivir Bien, the national plan doesn't abandon the economic growth in its plans, as it states the desired growth of GDP. However, it doesn't promote solely economistic and linear material progress, and focuses mainly on the community and citizen development (Cunha & Gonçalves, 2010, p. 180).

In the 'Dignified Bolivia', for example, the plan promotes changes in education, that would bring together various Bolivian cultures. This encompasses the revaluation of cultures, and the indigenous languages and establishment of indigenous universities (Ministro de Planificación del Desarrollo, 2007, p. 54). Generally, nevertheless, the conventional strategies for development predominate.

While in the new National Plan for the years of 2016-2020, an evaluation of economic progress, and indicators such as eradication of extreme poverty are present, this evaluation focuses on the traditional (modernization-oriented) indicators of development. Main implementations of the National Plan, which are perceived as those following the objectives of Buen Vivir are in the evaluation recognized in a brief chapter as following:

- *The existence of different approaches, visions and tools to achieve sustainable development.*

- *The recognition of the rights of Mother Earth.*

- *Recognition of Good Living in Harmony with Mother Earth as a universal approach and [realizing] events for international discussion.*

- *Recognition of the Day of Mother Earth.*

- *Recognition of inter-scientific dialogue between traditional knowledge and modern science and the establishment of a participatory mechanism to facilitate this dialogue.*

- *The recognition of the collective action of peoples, local communities and conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of forests populations.*

- *The recognition of an alternative approach to the green economy and payment for ecosystem services under the Vivir Bien, which is the management of systems of life.*

- *Recognition of alternative approach to payment by results Reduction of Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD +) with the name set of mitigation and adaptation to the comprehensive and sustainable forest management approach.*

- *Human right to water and basic sanitation.*

- *Rights of indigenous peoples.*

- *The spread of traditional foods such as coca and quinoa.*

(Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2016, p. 44)

Due to the Bolivian attempt to incorporate Vivir Bien as an alternative to development, different tools of evaluation of Vivir Bien, rather than numbers, or a list of recognized actions on a state levels are needed. While the list indicates a certain shift towards the principles of Vivir Bien, to what extend the plan to focus on community development and implementation of Vivir Bien was successful on the local level thus remains a question. Rather than a change of development paradigm, the plan for implementation of Vivir Bien in the National Plan of Bolivia seems rather as a side-project rather than new form of development approach.

With the concept of Vivir Bien, the Rights of Mother Earth (also Pacha Mama, or Madre Tierra) go hand in hand. However, in the Constitution of 2009 there is no mention of recognition of these rights. This reality is addressed in the Law Nº 071, passed on December 21st, 2010. This Law comprises of 10 articles, and gives the mother nature the rights to life and diversity of life, right to water, right to clean air, right to equilibrium, right to restoration, and right to pollution-free living. Along with granting these rights, it defines the obligations of state to the Mother Nature (such as develop public policies to protect the Mother Earth), outlines the duties of people (such as respect the rights of Mother Earth, or promote harmony with Mother Earth), and establishes the Office of Mother Earth to ensure the validity, promotion, distribution and compliance of the rights of Mother Earth (Le Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional, 2010).

In October 15th, 2012, an additional law (Nº 300) concerning Mother Earth and comprehensive development plan for Vivir Bien was passed. This law's objective is to lay the foundations for comprehensive development in harmony and equilibrium with Mother Earth

(Gaceta Oficial del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2012). It defines the values of Vivir Bien as knowing how to grow, eat, dance, work, communicate, dream, listen, and think (Gaceta Oficial del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2012, pp. 9–10). It also states the need to establish international politics and plans for mitigation of climate change (Gaceta Oficial del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2012, p. 29).

A new National Plan for 2016-2020 has been released. This plan comprises of 13 pillars in similar matter to the previous Plan. Conventional development strategies again predominate the plan, with occasional mentions of Vivir Bien. In this Plan, the main objective is to eradicate extreme material, social and spiritual poverty (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2016, p. 56). Among the goals corresponding with Vivir Bien in the National Plan, are 'transformation of education towards incorporating the 'knowledges' and technologies of indigenous peoples in diversified and regionalized curricular programs'; 'decolonization and depatriarchalization of knowledge within the Plurinational Education System (SEP)'; 'promoting and developing artistic expressions aimed at the transformation of society under the guidelines of decolonization and the fight against racism and violence; or strengthening actions for young people related to the recovery of ancestral knowledge and socio-communitarian values (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2016, p. 64).

While Bolivia has started to shift the legislatives in the favour of indigenous cosmovisions and beliefs, many argue, if this change is actually reaching the local communities. The constitution acknowledges the Buen Vivir concept as its targeted direction in development, but this is done in very unspecific way (Bolivia, 2009). This fact, as explained above (Chapter 4.2), is also due to the plurality of the concepts that doesn't offer a general definition of the concept, nor any ultimate ways of achieving the targets, which also differ. The general guideline for development of Vivir Bien might therefore be also perceived as a mere tool of government to please the indigenous grassroots movements, and silence the mass protests, which have been in the centre of Bolivia's attention. The government of Evo Morales is also commonly criticised for being populist (Anria, 2013; Larson, Madrid, Mayorga, & Varat, 2008).

A common expectation after Vivir Bien being implemented and representing the country's main objective is that the indigenous movements would stop their protests and uprisings against the government. But as a response to the constitution and other governmental decisions regarding the Vivir Bien and indigenous rights, there have been many uprisings against the Morales' Government (Olivera & Williams, 2015; Roos, 2013). This suggests the movements and citizens are not content with the evolution of the politicization process of Vivir

Bien. Even Bolivias biggest high-land indigenous organisation, CONAMAQ, who previously supported Morales and his party MAS, has articulated distrust in the government and later even distanced from it altogether (Aguirre & Cooper, 2010; Albro, 2006, pp. 416, 422; Fabricant, 2013, p. 169).

The constitution is also criticised due to the fact, that all authority over the ownership and industrialization of natural resources is given to the state. While the nationalization of these resources were called for, the documents state, that the industrialization and commercialization of natural resources is the priority of the state. This conflicts the biocentric nature of the concept of Vivir Bien, which promotes respect to and rights of Mother Nature over extractivism (Gudynas, 2009, p. 51). It is argued that ever since Morales' presidency, while the socio-cultural changes have progressed, the economic structure of the state have remained the same (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011, p. 7).

While the 'new constitution sets high standards for indigenous rights, land redistribution and environmental protection', the corresponding policies have been criticised due to their questionable implementation (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011, p. 6). In many cases, the government fails to ensure the reinforcement of these rights, and favours policies that bring about 'immediate political and economic gains' (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011, p. 6).

As Pablo Mamani (2008, p. 25) explains, the objective of the MAS as a political tool of peasant indigenous movement was 'to engage with the State but only to dismantle its rationality in order to imagine another type of social rationality, one capable of disrupting the colonial rationality based on departmental territorial divisions'. MAS party comes from a peasant indigenous grassroots movement, and therefore represent the local people. Although a question of which community it represents. While in the legal documents, it may seem as if the government favours indigenous people, it might only target certain indigenous peasants (campesinos) and the producers of coca (cocaleros) (Siotos, 2013, p. 53; Webber, 2011, p. 130). Another problem is the possible negative change for the indigenous peoples, if a non-indigenous government is formed in the future.

On the positive side, it is remarkable that the indigenous concept was implemented in such important legal documents of the country, and continues to be in the centre of attention, hopefully in time improving the implementation practices and slowly extracting the traditional development practices out of the scope. Apart from the legal documents, the events in the country have brought the notion of Buen Vivir into the media not only inside of Bolivia, but also worldwide, and thus pointed out the issues and achievements of indigenous on the international scene.

Buen Vivir's implementation in the constitution of Bolivia should be perceived as a victory of the local indigenous movements that have been actively pursuing their vision for their countries for many decades. There is a long way to go to put Bolivian laws and rights into practice and the path will not be easy. While the implementation of Vivir Bien into the new Bolivian Constitution, the inclusion in the National Development Plans, and passing laws to overarch the Rights of Mother Earth and Vivir Bien as a harmonious life point to a shift in the development paradigm in the country, it is possible that this step is used as a political instrument to appeal to the marginalized indigenous peoples.

5 CONCLUSION

Development studies have seen numerous theories and approaches that have tried to globally change and improve the world. Most of these were coming from the viewpoint of Western modernity and were meant as a global cure for all kinds of local contexts and problems, unfortunately. The Sustainable Development approach, which can be considered the current 'mainstream' development paradigm (as seen in the UN Sustainable Development Goals), fails to deliver the targeted results, as the world calls for more fundamental changes eliminating the growth-oriented development in whole.

It is time for the Western culture to stand down from the imaginary ladder of correct cultures, decolonize the world and accept pluralism as the only approach to seeing the world. The post-development theory advocates for the end of development as known since the World War II. It calls for an abandonment of any form of development altogether, while exploring completely different approaches to improving the quality of peoples' lives, the alternatives to development. The cultures differ and so do the answers to local problems. It was thanks to the local grassroots communities and indigenous communities around the world that the problems of dominant culture began to rise to the conscience of Western academic sphere as well as into local and international political systems.

Creating their own visions for development, grassroots alternatives such as Degrowth, Ecological Swaraj, Ubuntu and Buen Vivir have secured their positions within the international law, and local constitutions and laws. An alternative to development, which has arisen in Latin America, Buen Vivir, builds on the cosmovision of indigenous peoples. It is a pluralistic concept that has a different meaning in every local context, but throughout the concept several common principles among most of the different Buenos Vivires can be found. Buen Vivir has arisen as a political concept in the late 1990s, and is still considered a concept under

construction. Buen Vivir is life in reciprocity, living in the connection with the nature around us, it has completely different value systems. Buen Vivir activists call for the decolonization of knowledge. It is the end of human domination over its surroundings. Buen Vivir shifts the anthropocentric view to the biocentric perception of the world. The communities living by the principles of Buen Vivir do not only consist of people, but the whole ecosystem, encompassing the non-human beings, elements, environment and spirits. No culture is perceived as better than the other, and within Buen Vivir, there is a space for the meeting and respectful discussions among different cultures.

In this thesis, the evolution of development discourse into the post-development theory and the rising of Alternatives to Development was described. The main idea of post-development theory was introduced and several of different communities around world and their ideas of post-development AtD were given as examples. The focus of this thesis was set on Latin American concept of Buen Vivir, which was analysed on the level of indigenous peoples' understanding and also as an academic concept. The following part of the thesis focused on the process of politicization of Buen Vivir, building on the basis of indigenous rights on the international scale. In the last part of the thesis, the Plurinational State of Bolivia was analysed as an example of a country, which has implemented and politicized the concept, to some extent. The thesis statement of this dissertation, apart from the importance of Alternatives to Development and problematic of Western-led development discourses was that while the insertion of the Buen Vivir (and all its different plural understandings) into the contemporary political systems is surely a progressive step and an important victory of indigenous and marginalized peoples' movements in Latin America, it clearly raises a question of achievable implementation of the concept as a quasi top-down policy, as well as a possible misuse of the concept as a governmental tool to quiet the movements.

One of the limitation of the thesis is the unavailability of accessible materials and studies on the implementation and effect of the Bolivian politics on the small scale communities, which have been living by and fighting for the Buen Vivir. However, this limitation also represents the opportunity for initiating future research project. As the policies continue to appear on a national level, the implementation and promises of the Bolivian government can be compared to the actual effects and changes which are taking place on the micro scale and the local communities opinions and perception of the positive and negative sides of these transformations.

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