Neoliberalism, nature, and buen vivir: Diverse and divergent pathways to living well in Ecuador

Jan Kucic-Riker

August 28, 2015

A major paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies.

York University, Toronto, Ontario

Jan Kucic-Riker, MES Candidate

Anna Zalik, Major Paper Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Through a case study of *buen vivir* in Ecuador this paper considers the challenge of building post-capitalist alternatives and reimagining wellbeing as separate from economic growth in the context of globalization. *Buen vivir* is an adaptation of the Quechuan concept *sumak kawsay*, meaning to "live well" which rests on preserving (or regaining) a state of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The "living well" of Andean indigenous societies differs from the "living better" of industrialized civilization insofar as it must not come at the expense of others or the environment. I contend that *buen vivir* emerges out of a longer history of neoliberal development and colonialism in Latin America and provides a pathway from which to transcend the legacy of these systems. I argue that the incorporation of *buen vivir* into Ecuador's 2008 constitution and its national development plan is more an attempt at moulding *buen vivir* to fit with existing state structures than at remaking those structures in a fashion that resonates with the ethos of *buen vivir*. I claim that many substantive differences exist between the state's reading of *buen vivir* and indigenous understandings of *sumak kawsay* and that these are a source of contradictions in the policies and programs seeking to operationalize alternatives to conventional development models in the country. Through considering recent decisions over oil, mineral, and water governance, I suggest that the state pursues an export-driven growth model dependent on the extraction of raw materials that leaves Ecuador's submissive form of insertion in the global market unquestioned. While the insertion of *sumak kawsay* into Ecuadorian political discourse by no means bridges the Andean and Western cultural worlds nor does it transcend the ontological divide between humans and nature, it frees the state to think outside of dominant economic and political narratives. I conclude that *buen vivir*'s success depends not on its realization of a post-capitalist and post-colonial order, but on its ability to prepare the ground from which such alternatives can take root.

FOREWORD

As part of my concentration in development theory and ecological economics, this paper takes up both of these subjects through a case study of *buen vivir* in Ecuador. My approach herein emphasizes the deeply political nature of environmental issues and engages with Keynes' call that "finding ways of living wisely, agreeably, and well" requires addressing issues of justice. This study provided a platform from which to examine the disparate spatial and temporal effects of environmental impacts and consider alternatives to the precarious "growth model of progress". It also allowed me to problematize neoliberalism's claim that an infinitely expanding economy drawing from a homogenous and expendable nature is not only viable but our best course to prosperity and wellbeing.

Buen vivir is noteworthy in its suggestion that the realization of a "good life" is only possible within a community of which nature is a part. The indigenous societies committed to this ethos recognize nature as a life-giving entity that is relational to and synonymous with humanity, and not an inanimate materiality valued only for its use to humans. Ecuador's recent constitution established nature as a political actor that has the right to "integral respect for its existence, and for the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions, and evolutionary processes".

This representation challenges the society-nature dualism prevalent in Western philosophy and breaks from the conventional development paradigm based on growth and material progress. It also displaces the binary view of the economy – made up of capitalism and its negation – affirming that a wealth of economic forms exist between these poles. This paper gave me the opportunity to contribute to a broader body of scholarship on development and its entanglements with poverty, wealth, progress, and nature. Most importantly, it provided an avenue to engage with "other" worlds, not as a means of claiming an understanding of them, but as a rare opportunity to take another's perspective.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Anna Zalik for her continuous support during my Master's research. Her thoughtful comments and suggestions immensely improved the quality of this work. I am grateful for the engaging discussions shared over coffee and the sense of sanity she brought to the table when I had lost mine. Her enthusiasm for and insight into issues of political economy, resource extraction, and environmental change not only brought clarity to this work but informed a broader engagement with these subjects. Without her guidance, reassurance, and encouragement this paper would not have been possible.

I am indebted to my advisor Anders Sandberg for his early and enduring support throughout my time at York University. Anders was instrumental to creating a space within which I could explore and develop my research interests. His forthright questions and constructive feedback challenged me to think differently and inspired me to pursue work related to the environment and development.

I am also thankful to Peter Victor for his guidance in the field of ecological economics and for his advice on matters of inequality and degrowth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract i
Foreword ii
Acknowledgements iii
List of Abbreviations v
1. Introduction 1
2. Development Discourse and Buen Vivir 6
The Washington Consensus Goes South 7
Coloniality, Citizenship, and a Pathway to Postdevelopment 12
Post-neoliberal Entanglements and the Ecuadorian State 17
Regionalization and Alternative Trade Alliances 20
3. Sumak Kawsay: Indigenous Good Living 25
The Democracy of the Ayllu 27
Living Better/Living Well 32
Sumak kawsay, Ecological Economics, and Degrowth 37
4. Buen Vivir as a Political Project 41
Constitutional Reform and the National Development Plan 42
Oil, Minerals, and Water: The Praxis of Buen vivir 52
5. Conclusion 63
References 69

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALBA	The Bolivarian Allaince for the Americas
AMWAE	Association of Waorani Women of the Ecuadorian Amazon
AP	Country Alliance
CAN	The Andean Community
CONAIE	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador
DECOIN	Organization for the Defence and Ecological Conservation of Intag
Ecuarunari	The Confederation of Peoples of Kichwa Nationality
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITT	Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
Mercosur	The Southern Common Market
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAWE	Nationality Waorani of Ecuador
NPGL	National Plan for Good Living
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PRODEMINCA	Mining Development and Environmental Control Technical Assistance Project
Senplades	National Secretariat of Planning and Development
UNASUR	The Union of South American Nations

1. INTRODUCTION

> We can only think wisely about what we actually know well. And no person, however sophisticated, intelligent and overloaded with the information age state-of-the-art technologies, can ever "know" the Earth except by reducing it statistically, as all modern institutions tend to do today, supported by reductionist scientists.
>
> —Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash

> Seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another…All that I can in true humility present to you is that truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility.
>
> —Mahatma Gandhi

Buen vivir is a concept that belongs to a number of people and a number of places. It can be found in the Altiplano and the Amazon, along the cambering Curaray and the crest of Cotopaxi. It exists amongst Quechua pastoral farmers and Waorani hunter-gatherers. *Buen vivir* is but one name for a concept constantly under construction, indeed a concept that is still evolving in the hearts and the homes of those seeking a meaningful and practical existence with one another and with the natural environment. Its origins predate Columbus and the conquistadores and its spirit persists in indigenous cultures that have overcome nearly five centuries of racism, slavery, and oppression.

Buen vivir is variously defined and remains notoriously difficult to pin-down. In its most general sense, it 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, p. 18). In contrast to Western modernity, *buen vivir* rejects the mantras of progress and wealth accumulation as ends in themselves and identifies as its goals,

> The satisfaction of needs, the achievement of a dignified quality-of-life and death, to love and be loved, the healthy flourishing of all in peace and harmony with nature, the indefinite prolongation of cultures, free time for contemplation and emancipation, and the expansion and flourishing of liberties, opportunities, capacities, and potentials. (Thomson, 2011, p. 451)

These values suggest the need to explore alternatives to development that transcend conventional Eurocentric knowledge bound up with individualism, rationalization, and secularization. More radically, *buen vivir* endorses the dissolution of the dualism between society and nature. It

contends that nature constitutes part of the social world, and that political communities extend in some cases to include non-humans (Gudynas, 2011a).

Some scholars (Ruttenberg, 2013; Deneulin, 2012) categorize *buen vivir* as part of the field of wellbeing economics[1] premised on the recognition "that being poor is not a mere reflection of lacking sufficient material income or capacity for consumption" and conversely, "that high income and consumption levels do not define genuine wealth". A similar parallel exists with the capabilities approach (Sen, 2004; Nussbaum, 2011), the focus of which is on what individuals are able to do and be. Here, *buen vivir* and the capabilities approach both take issue with the utilitarian discontinuity between the value of persons as such and the value of the experiences of pleasure or satisfaction that persons experience. The Benthamite maxim "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" emblematic of utilitarianism ignores differences in capacities between individuals and overlooks the multitude of values – beyond the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain – people choose to practice even when they involve considerable discomfort. *Buen vivir* asserts that central amongst the many other valuable things outside the economistic monomania with capital accumulation and GDP growth is situating oneself within a larger natural community. Hence, wellbeing is a matter that rests not on greater consumption levels, but on supporting the development of human potentialities through creating meaningful livelihoods, strengthening social relations, and fostering a harmonious co-existence with nature (Ruttenberg, 2013).

A tapestry of Latin American indigenous traditions makes up the backbone of *buen vivir*. Each of these distinct formulations of "good living" has its own language and history, and occupies a specific sociopolitical context tailored to the surrounding landscape. While the principles and practices of *buen vivir* are widespread across indigenous communities, only Bolivia and Ecuador have recognized them at the national level. Ecuador is the focus of this study for the reason that it has adopted *buen vivir* (founded on the Quechuan philosophy of *sumak kawsay*) as the basis of national development and designated it a right for all citizens[2]. Gudynas (2011a) describes *buen vivir* as an umbrella-term related to the cosmovisions of Latin American indigenous peoples, however I make a key distinction between *buen vivir* and *sumak kawsay* in

---

[1] It is important to differentiate between wellbeing and welfare economics here. The former utilizes survey research across nations and time to measure life satisfaction, and demonstrates the discontinuity between economic objectives and citizens' wellbeing needs. The latter employs mathematical modelling to compare economically feasible allocations of resources in terms of the social welfare they entail. Welfare economics however works on the assumption that competitive markets produce Pareto efficient outcomes – often taken as an analytical confirmation of Adam Smith's "invisible hand" theorem. In fewer words, wellbeing economics posits that markets alone cannot produce socially-optimal outcomes, while welfare economics argues that they can.

[2] Conversely, Bolivia treats *buen vivir* (referred to in Spanish as "*vivir bien*") as a set of ethical and moral principles guiding the values, ends, and objectives of the state but does not include *buen vivir* as a right.

this paper that differs from this usage. I use "*buen vivir*" to refer to a state-centered alternative to neoliberal development policies prominent in contemporary Ecuadorian politics. In contrast, I use "*sumak kawsay*" to refer to the concept's original Quechuan connotations that are part of a more extensive Andean cosmovison[3].

One can consider the institutionalization of *buen vivir* at the national level in Ecuador as part of a recent trend towards left-wing politics in Latin America. Given histories of authoritarian rule or the considerable influence of IFIs in the region, the backlash to neoliberalism in Latin America is nothing if not overdue. Traditionally a laboratory for neoliberal experiments as well as one of the sites where neoliberalism took some of its most radical forms, the continent has rapidly turned into a leading arena for resistance (Sader, 2008). Having entered the twenty-first century with the highest levels of inequality in the world and over a third of its population living in poverty (Ruttenberg, 2013), the election of leftist leaders and their subsequent implementation of new social and economic policies has done a great deal to soften the deepening inequality inherited from the neoliberal era.

During his presidential campaign Rafael Correa of Ecuador stated that if elected he would use an executive decree to prompt a national referendum to establish a constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution and expand state control of the nation's economy. Four months after taking office in January 2007 Correa's referendum passed with overwhelming support. It allowed the 130-member assembly controlled by Correa's party to supplant the allegedly corrupt National Congress as the unicameral legislative branch of government (Soto, 2007). The assembly convened in November 2007 under the leadership of economist Alberto Acosta and had the task of writing a new constitution reflecting "a new form of public coexistence, in diversity and harmony with nature". Ecuadorians ratified the constitution in September 2008, affirming the rights of nature and enshrining *buen vivir* as an alternative to neoliberal development.

Correa has since decried Acosta's leadership claiming that he filled the assembly with unionists and members of civil society organizations that drafted an excessively regulatory constitution (Jorden, 2014). In response, Acosta criticized Correa for subverting the constitution through placing restrictions on opposition media, authorizing environmentally destructive extractive activities, and supporting policies that criminalize protest (Gaudichaud, 2013; Acosta,

[3] A cosmovision is not primarily about beliefs, but about the experience of reality made possible through those beliefs. In this sense, the Andean cosmovision is the basis for understanding the reproduction of a collective subject generated through the perpetual interrelation of living and non-living things.

2013). The ideological rift between Correa and Acosta is emblematic of deeper conflicts over the meaning and matter of *buen vivir* that are the focus of this paper.

My analysis centers on whether the Ecuadorian state's model of *buen vivir* is consonant with the principles of *sumak kawsay* and if it signifies a genuine departure from the logics of neoliberalism and capitalism. I consider whether the state provides an effective platform from which to challenge these logics, and how this paradigm determines the relationship between the environment and development. Although Correa garnered the support of social movements while campaigning and rode anti-systemic protests to power, his policy objectives and abrasive governing style have led to an estrangement from what was initially strong support from these allies (Becker, 2013). The major wedge between these groups is and continues to be strong disagreement over the place and role of collective action in realizing *buen vivir* on a national scale. It is not so much that the state and civil society have divergent views on how to achieve *buen vivir* but that the state has undercut existing organizational efforts and sought to displace or replace these movements that is contentious.

I begin by examining *buen vivir*'s emergence in development discourse as a phenomenon intrinsically bound to colonialism and contend that is impossible to understand it outside of this context. I argue that *buen vivir*'s heterogeneity – existing simultaneously as a development critique, indigenous worldview, and political program – acts as both its greatest strength and weakness. On one hand, this multiplex existence with its grounding in Latin American cultural traditions fosters resilience to the perpetual repackaging and depoliticization of development aid. However, the fragmentation of *buen vivir* along these lines also opens it up to reinterpretation and revisionism, and diffuses demands to go beyond the modernist roots of development.

In the third chapter, I take up these issues through the perspectives of Amerindians by considering their value-systems and the ways they organize their political and economic lives under *sumak kawsay*. I attempt to draw out some common features from diverse understandings of "good living" focusing primarily on the Quechuan experience as it relates to the formulation of *buen vivir* in Ecuador. *Sumak kawsay* diverges from neoclassical notions of wellbeing in its declaration that "living well should not come at the expense of others or the environment". By giving precedence to the non-material and spiritual elements of a good life, I suggest that *sumak kawsay* challenges the neoclassical model of "economic man" and destabilizes the singular representation of the economy as a pre-eminently capitalist space, located in the non-domestic sphere and unified by "the market" (Gibson-Graham, 1996; 2006).

Structural changes in accord with this challenge in Ecuador have however been partial and uneven as I attempt to show in Chapter 4. In reviewing the 2008 constitution, I note that while marginal populations gained several important concessions in political and representational space, these concessions failed to redress historic exclusions and colonial dispossession. The state's implementation of policies and programs directed at realizing *buen vivir* point to a greater concern with centralizing power in the executive than with empowering citizens and civil society to challenge the structures of neoliberalism and colonial domination themselves. I attempt to illustrate the contradictions in the state's praxis of *buen vivir* through a review of recent decisions related to economic development and oil, mineral, and water governance.

In the final chapter, I discuss the tensions with neoliberalism and nature around which *buen vivir* is articulated. I make the case that the implementation of *buen vivir* clashes with the principles of *sumak kawsay* and produces a dynamic in which political and economic sovereignty more so than plurinationalism and alternative-building is at the center of the state's agenda. That said *buen vivir*'s significance lies not with its ability to transcend the logics of neoliberalism and capitalism but in what it entails for the possibility of thinking through "other" worlds and readying the ground from which such transformations may emerge. *Sumak kawsay*'s call for the "reproduction of life" (as opposed to economic reproduction) provides an opportunity to rethink the individualistic ideals of progress and wellbeing through a collectivist ethos.

2. DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE AND BUEN VIVIR

The act of knowing is always performed by a subjectivity specified by locations in cultural time and space. Every time I think or speak, I become dependent on my culture.
—Raimón Panikkar

Capitalism in all these cases is the central or dominant identity of "Third World", industrialized, and global economies...Development as a discourse is seen to have produced the "Third World" as a dependent identity subordinated to the management and surveillance of an international development bureaucracy.
—J.K. Gibson-Graham

Development economists are gradually coming around to question whether the image of the Western consumerist lifestyle and its accompaniment of policy prescriptions including deregulation, privatization, and trade liberalization provide an effective or even desirable pathway by which to improve human wellbeing. Likewise, multilateral development banks (MDBs) are targets of increasing scrutiny because of their practice of "getting money out the door" rather than delivering results. Such practices tend to reduce, or worse yet, utterly ignore the intensely political nature of development. The question of how to foster development becomes a technical problem amendable to the manipulations of "development professionals".

The 2008 financial crisis is in part responsible for triggering the re-evaluation of a number of self-styled unassailable "economic truths" governing the way markets organize economic activity and individual decision-making. Contrary to the classic precepts of Smith and Walras implying that the economy was an equilibrium seeking and sustaining system, the 2008 crash was a reminder that capitalist economies tend towards positive feedback loops and increasingly precarious risk-tasking over periods of prolonged prosperity (Minsky, 1992). Considering the connections (or lack thereof) between economic growth, resource use, and wellbeing, there is a significant logic to making due without growth in rich countries (Jackson, 2009; Latouche, 1993; Victor, 2008). However, in the countries were the case for growth is still strong, decisions regarding its form and function should hinge on the needs of those people rather than the demands of global markets.

At the juncture of several of these debates are questions about the way we organize our societies and economies, how we identify and determine the components of a "good life", and which groups we marginalize and/or exclude from these processes. The concept of *buen vivir* takes up several of these issues through its focus on the interconnectedness of economics with the

political, sociocultural, and environmental spheres. The rising prominence of the concept in Latin America can be read as a challenge to the neoliberal status quo. That said it would be mistaken to paint *buen vivir* solely as a political challenge to the pervasive and sacrosanct logic of the market. While the development agenda associated with *buen vivir* is a relatively new occurrence, the concept itself has a rich, extensive history. In what follows, I explore some of these debates and questions through the perspectives of "*buen vivir* as development" and "development as *buen vivir*" to examine how each paradigm influences the other and the way in which development discourse is constructed under each.

The purpose of this chapter is fourfold corresponding to each of the sections outlined below. In the first, I situate *buen vivir* within a longer history of neoliberal development in Latin America and examine its relationship with traditional development orthodoxy such as the Washington Consensus. I introduce distinctions between post-neoliberalism and postdevelopment as "alternative developments" and "alternatives to development", respectively. The second section introduces the concept of "coloniality" and outlines its effect on the organization of race, subjectivity, and knowledge into a system of hierarchies. Here I argue that *buen vivir* offers a way of transcending Ecuador's historic disenfranchisement of its non-European citizenry through the decolonization of traditional forms of knowledge production and an affirmation of "other" cultural systems. In the third section, I expand on the concept of post-neoliberalism by looking at neo-developmentalism. I indicate that neo-developmentalism is limited in its ability to generate possibilities for moving beyond capitalism and confines Ecuador within a raw materials-exporting modality. In the final section, I discuss Ecuador's insertion in the global economy and its experience with regionalization through alternative alliances such as UNASUR and ALBA. I contend that the state's efforts toward regionalization are bound to an economistic agenda that lacks coherence with indigenous understandings of *buen vivir* and does not decidedly move beyond the historical construction of "development".

THE WASHINGTON CONSENSUS GOES SOUTH

The fields of ecological economics, political ecology, and critical development studies offer various prognoses related to problems at the intersection of economy, environment, and development. Ecological economics explains that the economy is subject to the laws of thermodynamics, embedded in the environment, and limited by ecological constraints; political ecology goes on to show that the environment is a politicized space comprised of actors with varying power relations; and critical development studies demonstrates that the power relations

that shape our knowledge of and approach to development have a historical basis and reflect Western hegemony. *Buen vivir* lives at the nexus of politics, economics, and international development, allowing for diverse readings depending on the lens through which one views the concept.

Analyzing *buen vivir* as a singularity to the exclusion of its other "lives" puts it a jeopardy of political co-optation, cultural appropriation, or assimilation back into mainstream development discourse in the case of adapting it to the state and its structures, divorcing it from its indigenous roots, or rendering it the latest "development trend", respectively. Uruguayan ecologist Eduardo Gudynas (2011, p. 442) describes early formulations of *buen vivir* as emerging "in reaction to classical development strategies, either due to their negative social or environmental impacts, or their debatable economic effects". As I attempt to show in this chapter, *buen vivir* is one response to the mounting sense that the conventional development paradigm has not only failed to fulfil its promise of extending the benefits of modernity to the rest of the world – in reality having repeatedly contributed to the further immiseration of the poor[4] – but that this was a misguided goal to begin with.

Buen vivir's multiple identities lend to a problematic in establishing its relation to what development critic Arturo Escobar (1995) refers to as "alternative developments" and "alternatives to development"[5]. The former refers to the development apparatus' tendency to create an environment conducive to its own reproduction by dint of using each successive failure to justify and amplify cries for more development – albeit under a new veneer each time. Ilan Kapoor (2005) describes this phenomenon of repackaging development through the production of "trendiness" – *e.g.* the trend of "women in development" in the 1980s, "sustainable development" in the early 1990s, "human development" in the late 1990s, and so on – as an inherent feature in safeguarding the discipline's renewal and marketability comparable to the corporate strategy of product differentiation. "Alternative developments" pose a paradox insofar as the archetypal development intervention cannot escape the framework it has itself created. That is to say, as long as development is conceptualized as a depoliticized program for technical assistance, it will continue to generate appropriate targets for aid intervention; however, the recognition that

[4] Poverty in Latin American during the so-called "lost decade" of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s increased in both absolute and proportional terms while the number of people living in extreme poverty was higher by the end of the 1990s than in 1980 (ECLAC, 2004).

[5] While arguments can be made for both interpretations of *buen vivir* as either an "alternative development" or an "alternative to development" my usage of Escobar's concept here is intended to position *buen vivir* on a spectrum between the two limits rather than placing it within a mutually-exclusive binary.

popular change is contingent on a plurality of approaches tied to the culture and knowledge of the "underdeveloped" precludes the participation of development agencies as such.

It is in this vein that "alternatives to development" seek to transcend the institutional paradigm of development entirely. As such, "development" is understood as a real historical formation, although one that is articulated around the artificial construct of "underdevelopment" (Escobar, 1995). Harry S. Truman's inaugural address on January 20, 1949 was instrumental in shaping this idea of "underdevelopment" and dismantling – at least overtly – the colonial demarcations that had partitioned much of the world throughout the twentieth century. Truman declared that,

> 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. More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas…Our aim should be to help the free peoples of the world, through their own efforts, to produce more food, more clothing, more materials for housing, and more mechanical power to lighten their burdens…Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge. (Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, 2015)

Henceforth, the "old imperialism" would yield to a development binary of underdeveloped and developed with the United States the "pre-eminent among nations in the development of industrial and scientific techniques". As a result, the societies of the Third World were no longer seen as "diverse and incomparable possibilities of human living arrangements, but were placed along a single progressive track, judged more or less advanced according to the criteria of Western industrial nations" (Sachs, 2000, p. 4). Ivan Illich (1969) remarked that "this formula has failed and must fail" considering the ways in which development has converted mass needs to the demand for new brands of packaged solutions forever beyond the reach of the majority.

Truman's "Point Four Program" also marked a transition from Gillian Hart's (2001, p. 650) concept of "little d" development, characterized as the evolution of capitalism as a geographically uneven, profoundly contradictory set of historical processes to "big D" development defined as the post-Second World War project of intervention in the Third World as framed in Truman's address. Thus, "development" became ahistorical, rational, and modern; GDP became the unrivaled metric for progress; and the social relation tying poverty to affluence dissolved. MDBs and IFIs became the exclusive purveyors of development and bewailed poverty

while at the same time stressing the need to "make markets work" for the poor. What John Williamson later (1993, p.1334) summarized as the "Washington Consensus" became the blueprint for Third World development and was presented as "the common core of wisdom embraced by all serious economists".

In juxtaposition to the seemingly ubiquitous neoliberal orthodoxy, postdevelopment theorists such as Escobar, Sachs, and Illich argued for "alternatives to development" emphasising that local knowledges and cultures ought to be given precedence, or at the very least rights to determination, over industry and the market in defining the direction and form their development would take. While postdevelopment theory and *buen vivir* evolved independently of one another, Gudynas (2011, p. 442) argues that strong similarities exist between the two because each represents "a radical deconstruction of the cultural base of development, its legitimating discourses, its applications, and institutional frameworks". *Buen vivir* therefore acts as a platform for critical views on development, wherein alternatives serve not as provisional fixes to current strategies, but as wholesale replacements to the very idea of development.

A number of scholars (Arsel, 2012; Radcliffe, 2012; Ruttenberg, 2013) describe *buen vivir* as a post-neoliberal development alternative that is in discursive opposition to "Western" and "global neoliberal" development. In Latin America, post-neoliberalism and *buen vivir* emerged at the end of the "long neoliberal night", a period marking over three decades of policies endorsing deregulation and the expansion of the market economy in the region – the height of which were a series of dramatic economic crises throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. While the neoliberal program managed to stymie ballooning hyperinflation during the 1970s and 1980s, it also paralyzed economic development for over a decade, raised the concentration of wealth to new heights, sent public deficits spiralling out of control, and expropriated the employment and labour rights of the mass of the population (Sader, 2008). As development strategies, post-neoliberalism and *buen vivir* form part of a response to the contemporary challenges of growth in the Global South by emphasizing policies that address this legacy of poverty, inequality, and exploitation, albeit each using different tools and methods to this end.

For Ecuador, debt acquisition and resource extraction coalesced in a predictable and self-sustaining dynamic governed by laissez-faire economic reforms throughout the neoliberal period. Between 1976 and 1982, the nation's external debt increased eighteen-fold from $160 million to $2.9 billion (IAC, 2007). By the end of the 1980s debt servicing was already taking up more than 50 percent of Ecuador's export earnings. Since these funds were siphoned away from social or infrastructural investments, the government facilitated debt payments through further

liberalization such as auctioning off oil block concessions to foreign companies and undertaking large-scale geological surveys to locate, map, and open up the country's mineral frontier (Davidov, 2012). The climax of Ecuador's "neoliberal night" came through a series of protests that erupted following a banking crisis resulting from plummeting oil prices in 1998. The banking crisis caused inflation and unemployment rates to soar and triggered the collapse of Ecuador's currency the *sucre*. In an attempt to slow inflation, the government froze bank deposits, agreed to IMF bailout loans, and adopted the US dollar as its new official currency (Jacome, 2004). The unpopularity of these decisions led to further mass protests and ultimately a coup d'état removing President Jamil Mahuad from office in 2000.

Attempts to establish the Washington Consensus as the standard course of development in sites such as Ecuador showed that conventional Eurocentric knowledge bound up with utilitarianism, commoditization, and economism failed to provide a workable theory of development in Latin America. Post-neoliberalism, which many Latin American leaders have embraced as *Socialismo del siglo XXI*, "socialism of the twenty-first century", emerged with the election of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in 1999 and marked the start of the "pink tide" with other left-leaning leaders coming to power across the continent during the 2000s. Post-neoliberal governments condemned the elitist and technocratic democracies that accompanied the market reforms of the 1980s and 1990s and sought to establish participatory systems in their place.

The leaders of Latin America's new left also renewed a broad "fiscal social contract" (Bebbington, Hinojosa, Bebbington, Burneo, & Warnaars, 2008) that tied together citizens and governors and extended measures allowing citizens to hold the government to account. As part of this social contract, the state is morally responsible to respect and deliver the inalienable – that is, the non-market-dependent – rights of their citizens, alongside growth. In this sense, post-neoliberalism represents "an evolving attempt to develop political economies attuned to the social responsibilities of the state whilst remaining responsive to the demands of positioning national economies in a rapidly changing global political economy" (Grugel & Riggirozzi, 2012, p. 4). With post-neoliberal governance working in step with the demands of a liberalized global economy, it primarily differs from neoliberalism in government attitudes towards the poor and discourses of citizenship rather than economic management as such.

As I attempt to show in Chapter 3, the Quechuan concept of *sumak kawsay* that serves as the basis for *buen vivir* is distinct from its representation in Ecuadorian politics. While *buen vivir* purports to reflect the values of indigenous ontologies, its actualization is more characteristic of post-neoliberal ideals. For Grugel and Riggirozzi (2012), these ideals remain trapped in an export-

led growth model, despite introducing new mechanisms for social inclusion and welfare. Redistribution therefore relies on a rising demand for regional exports (especially natural resources) and high prices in commodity markets. In Latin America, the nationalization and successive expansion of export industries remains the primary avenue through the government delivers the rights of their citizens. This situation, in which a government advances radical environmental and economic rhetoric but actually ends up endorsing traditional extractive industries, is known as the "Latin American paradox" due to its prevalence in the region (Villalba, 2013).

This is not to suggest that all post-neoliberal governance follows this pattern unswervingly. Indeed, various politico-economic interpretations of post-neoliberalism exist and their treatment has not been uniform across Latin America. In the final section of this chapter, I examine the characteristics particular to Ecuador's treatment of post-neoliberalism and their interface with *buen vivir*. Before turning to that topic however, I want to situate *buen vivir* emergence out of an extensive struggle with colonial exclusion and exploitation. I argue that *buen vivir*'s sociocultural and historic background is indispensable to not only understanding its key principles as part of an indigenous cosmovision, but that its power as a platform to express the silenced worldviews of a historically marginalized group of peoples is bound to this framework. In what follows, I will explore this history and its effects on national identity, political participation, and citizenship in Ecuador, and Latin America more broadly.

COLONIALITY, CITIZENSHIP, AND A PATHWAY TO POSTDEVELOPMENT

Contrary to Truman's appeal that the elimination of colonial administrations would amount to the decolonization of the world, the eradication of colonial regimes signalled a transition from a period of "global colonialism" to the current period of "global coloniality". Coloniality is not equivalent to colonialism since it is irreducible to the presence or absence of a colonial administration. Instead, it focuses on the discourses and practices of colonialism that govern social orders and forms of knowledge. In this sense, the "coloniality of power" introduces a structuring process that articulates peripheral locations in the international division of labor[6] around a system of hierarchies (Grosfoguel, 2007). This system, oriented along the axis of race under colonial administrations, incorporates the production of subjectivities and knowledge. It

[6] In World Systems Theory, the core countries (*viz.* industrialized capitalist) focus on high skill, capital-intensive production, while the periphery provides low-skill, labour-intensive production, typically through the extraction of raw materials. The resulting dynamic reinforces the dominance of core countries that control and benefit from the global market. See Wallerstein (1974).

represents the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations by naturalizing the relations between Europeans and non-Europeans in succeeding social orders.

The heterogenous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years writes Grosfoguel, did not evaporate with the juridical-political decolonization of the periphery over the past 50 years. Hence, the emergence of a persistent categorical and discriminatory discourse reflected in the structure of modern postcolonial societies. These hierarchical orders helped crystalize European hegemony in the social, political, and economic spheres and justified European domination based on phenotypic differences and skin colour that colonialists claimed were "innate biological traits". Due to their ascribed inferiority, traditional forms of knowledge production and "other" cultural systems governing the scope and focus of science, subjectivity, gender expression, and politico-economic organization were repressed.

Social relations founded on the category of race are therefore the principal determinant Latin America's political history. Race remains the key criterion for the distribution of the population into ranks, places, and roles in society's structure of power. The naturalization of the conquered and dominated peoples of Latin America into a position of inferiority included the expropriation of their cultural discoveries, the repression of their symbolic universe and forms of knowledge, and coercion to learn the dominant culture in any way that would be useful to the reproduction of domination. In contrast, modernity and rationality became the exclusive domain of European "conquerors". Colonial administrations justified this relationship contending that the differences between Europeans and non-Europeans were natural – that is to say, racial – differences and not consequences of a history of power (Quijano, 2000, p. 542).

This system of representations left a lasting and divisive influence on the construction of identity in contemporary Latin American nation-states. The contradictory character of having "independent states of colonial societies" contributed to an incoherence between the interests of dominant groups and the exploited. The formation of a shared identity through collective decision-making over the distribution of power was partial and uneven given that the formation of identity relied on the exclusion[7] of a significant part of the population. As Quijano (2000, pp. 565-566) explains,

> The small white minority in control of the independent states and the colonial societies could have had neither consciousness nor national interests in common with the American Indians, blacks, and *mestizos*. On the contrary, their social interests were explicitly antagonistic to American

[7] I refer to exclusion here not only as a restriction on voting, but more broadly as a lack of effective political voice for poor and marginal populations.

> Indian serfs and black slaves, given that their privileges were made from precisely the dominance and exploitation of those peoples in such a way that there was no area of common interest between whites and nonwhites and, consequently, no common national interest for all of them.

Thus, the foundation of national identity was not the democratization of fundamental social and political relations, but the barring of non-Europeans from citizenship and democratic participation.

The legacy of colonialism has complicated electoral politics and the nature of citizenship rights in Ecuador. Spanish colonial administrations delineated civil, political, and social rights in highly exclusionary terms that barred women and blacks from full participation. The colonial regime treated indigenous peoples as wards of the state in need of protection and legally inferior to those of European descent thus barring them from citizenship as well. To preserve social hierarchies the state differentiated between "nationals" and "citizens". Nationality was granted to those born in Ecuador or could be obtained through a process of naturalization. Citizenship on the other hand required that persons were married or older than twenty-two years of age, owned property worth at least 300 pesos or were engaged in an independent "useful" profession or industry (domestic servants and day laborers were explicitly excluded), and were able to read and write (Becker, 1999).

Ecuador's independence in 1822 freed indigenous peoples from their legally inferior status. In spite of this, their real position in society fell due to a loss of protection from the Spanish crown and the subsequent concentration of power in the hands of the creole elite. Indigenous people remained complete outsiders in government and public affairs. Though they were technically eligible to vote if they were literate, police and landowners would regularly confiscate their documents in order to control the ballot (Becker, 1999). The state withheld voting rights from illiterates – disproportionately indigenous or black – until 1978. Thus throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth electoral politics in Ecuador remained a minority affair, with only about three percent of the population qualified to vote and electoral participation rates ranking consistently amongst the lowest in South America (Becker, 1999).

The extension of coloniality to the underlying realms of knowledge and of being had the effect of negating, excluding, and occluding difference and the possibility of other totalities. For Mignolo (2007), it was not the "discovery" of the Americas that integrated the region into an already existing capitalist economy, but rather the "conquest" of the Americas that allowed for the emergence of a capitalist economy. The massive appropriation of lands and exploitation of labour in Latin America made possible the production of commodities on a new scale for a global

market. It also entrenched the articulation of labour, land, and resources around the axis of capital and the global market. As I show in Chapter 4, the effects of this economic structure are still evident in Ecuador's discourse on sovereignty and nationalism today.

A postcolonial understanding of *buen vivir* that moves beyond development's modernist roots requires decolonization to be not only political and economic but also cultural and spiritual (Villalba, 2013). The actual substance of *buen vivir* in this sense is of secondary importance to its symbolic value as an expression of the collective ontologies and epistemologies of historically marginalized peoples. Interestingly, it is the political program associated with *buen vivir* and its tangible influence on the economic and political spheres (*i.e.* its challenge to the coloniality of power) that has been the focus of attention. *Buen vivir*'s less evident – although arguably more significant – struggle to decolonize the realms of knowledge and being are either overlooked or lost in the concept's institutionalization.

Restructuring the state is nonetheless a critical point of entry for *buen vivir*. Its goals may include re-establishing the centrality of the state in managing the economy following its fragmentation under neoliberalism[8], acknowledging indigenous and black territories, upholding indigenous forms of justice, conferring citizenship to frontier populations, amplifying collective rights, strengthening intercultural education, and granting indigenous languages official status (Radcliffe, 2012, p. 244). It is worth mentioning that the realization and implementation of this list of objectives is a contested process that naturally differs across countries due to their unique social, political, and economic circumstances. Another consequence of the regional and sociocultural specificity of *buen vivir* is that it presents a limit to the concept's universalization. Extricating *buen vivir* from its ties to the histories discussed above risks constructing an essentialist reading of the concept – that is, reducing *buen vivir* to a set of principles for living well divorced from their cultural meaning as a response to coloniality and neoliberal governance[9].

Walsh (2010) contends that the basis of struggle and transformation amongst marginalized groups in Latin America is no longer simply about identity, access, recognition, or rights, but about perspectives of knowledge that have to do with the model and logic of life itself. Thus, the incorporation of the concept of coloniality into *buen vivir* has opened up "the re-construction

[8] The conjecture that neoliberalism dismantles the state here is reductive. The goal of restructuring is often more complex and involves the creation of a politico-economic order in which the primary task of the state is to create value; see Peck, 2001; Gough, 2002.

[9] Villalba (2013) contends that transposing the concept from its indigenous domain is inevitably reductive since the Quechuan *sumak kawsay* or the Aymaran *suma qamaña* have no literal translation into Spanish or English and that their interpretation as *buen vivir* constitutes a pale metaphor that tends to weaken their meaning in an anthropocentric manner.

and the restitution of silenced histories, repressed subjectivities, and subalternized knowledges and languages" (Mignolo, 2007, p. 451). In this sense, the depiction *buen vivir* as a development "critique" is misleading in some ways insofar as its intention is to highlight possibilities for non-Western life-visions through a recognition of the legacy of colonial domination and Western capitalist interests rather than disparaging the failures of development as such.

I contend that *buen vivir* is more a complement to postdevelopment theory than its analogue. While the two share common ground in deconstructing the cultural basis of development – each of them veers in different directions. A key element of postdevelopment's identity, as part of an effort to undermine the cultural hegemony of development is tied to its critique of the prevalence of ethnocentrism, economism, and universalism in international aid regimes. Postdevelopment theory tends to extricate standard assumptions about progress from development discourse with the intent of opening up space for non-Western peoples and their concerns. Nevertheless, it refrains from putting forth a prescriptive program that charts "alternatives to development". This is not to say that it denies the need for change, but that it insists we conceive of change in different terms; hence, any attempt to (re)package generic "development solutions" proves antithetical.

Buen vivir on the other hand seeks to recall the standard assumptions of progress in development discourse to revitalize the ontological and epistemic practices of marginalized peoples. In other words, *buen vivir* looks backward to question what is, while postdevelopment questions what is, to open spaces from which to go forward. The lasting legacy of colonialism in Latin America, and Ecuador more specifically, has pushed indigenous movements to the center of almost every struggle for social reform since the 1990s. Therefore, without taking into account the influence of coloniality on *buen vivir*, the concept becomes depoliticized and ahistorical. Transposing *buen vivir* onto societies with no such grounding functions to erase this history and suggests that indigenous epistemologies and ontologies are incompatible with state structures.

I do not mean to claim that the principles of *buen vivir* are inapplicable to countries outside of Latin America, nor do I wish to discourage their uptake in areas unacquainted with Andean indigenous traditions. However, if *buen vivir* is to avoid falling into a trap of trendiness and amalgamating with a bureaucratized and technocratic international aid regime, it must take up postdevelopment's defence of localized, pluralistic grassroots movements. In this respect, *buen vivir* is not a panacea to poverty, inequality, or environmental destruction but a response speaking to locally specific manifestations of these issues and grounded in the experience and culture of Andean indigenous peoples. In the words of Escobar, (2012) "[*buen vivir*] is not a theory of

development; it's a theory of something else that is not development". If *buen vivir* is to exist elsewhere, it must reflect the traditions and history of that region, represent the values and needs of those people, and perhaps most importantly challenge the notion that there is only a single path to development. In other words, it must ask what "development" implies as a possibility and not as a predetermined future.

Promoting *buen vivir* as a "development theory" risks perpetuating the homogenizing treatment of poverty as a technical problem. To paraphrase Escobar (1995), using poverty to define whole peoples, not according to what they are and want to be, but according to what they lack entails the erasure of complexity and ensures that the slum dweller in Rio de Janiero, a Quechuan peasant, and an Aché hunter-gatherer are equivalent to each other as poor and underdeveloped. The construction of the poor and underdeveloped as universal, preconstituted subjects also extends to the construction of nature as functionally limitless, replaceable, and valuable only to the extent that it serves human needs. The broad task of *buen vivir* then is to challenge coloniality's hegemonic form of representations, and to demand a new form of citizenship that embraces diversity and harmony with nature. The remainder of this paper is dedicated to exploring the pathways through which *buen vivir* contests these representations and the contradictions that arise from its implementation in Ecuador.

POST-NEOLIBERAL ENTANGLEMENTS AND THE ECUADORIAN STATE

The concept of indigenous neo-developmentalism refers to a politico-economic ideology representing a specific approach to economic growth, institutional transformation, and distribution of power. It is one of four politico-economic ideologies that Calderón (2008) suggests as part of a useful typology to differentiate amongst the various post-neoliberalism regimes in Latin America. I analyze *buen vivir* as a form of indigenous neo-developmentalism rather than post-neoliberalism so as to highlight the spatial variability and continuities with neoliberalism that typically accompany challenges to neoliberal orthodoxy – *buen vivir* being but one example. Accordingly, the understanding of post-neoliberalism retained herein borrows from Yates and Bakker's (2014) definition of the concept as a combination of an ideological project and a set of policies and practices that revolve around the dual aim of: (1) redirecting a market economy towards social concerns; and (2) reviving citizenship via a new politics of participation and alliances across sociocultural sectors and groups.

I differentiate between the various expressions of post-neoliberal reform in Latin America, not in an attempt to fragment or undermine post-neoliberalism as a tangible, unified project, but

to underscore the mutually constitutive nature of neoliberal and post-neoliberal projects (Yates & Bakker, 2014). In other words, post-neoliberal projects do not – and cannot – lead to a wholesale break from neoliberalism or produce its binary other insofar as they rely on the institutional structure of neoliberalism (Sader, 2008). In what follows, I limit my discussion of *buen vivir* as a form of indigenous neo-developmentalism to its entanglements with neoliberal development discourse and its potential to generate possibilities for moving beyond it.

To begin, it is worth mentioning the other three ideologies - practical reformism, popular nationalism, and conservative modernization – put forth in Calderón's (2008) typology since a regime rarely corresponds to single classification. Features of practical reformism include the renewal and recreation of the party system; building economic alliances; and institutional management combining economic growth with inclusionary policies. Elements of practical reformism can be seen in Brazil, Chile, and Peru where economic stability and growth is prioritized, but placed alongside experiments in institutionalizing participatory forms of decision-making (Yates & Bakker, 2014). The popular nationalism characteristic of Venezuela and Argentina is distinguished by the centralized state's imposition of development and democracy; prioritization of redistribution over production; and anti-imperialism. Conservative modernization evident in Colombia, Mexico, and Nicaragua is marked by authoritarian governance based on putatively shared and unquestionable values and a moral order associated with the expansion of the market. Finally, indigenous neo-developmentalism most prominent in Bolivia and Ecuador relies on strong social and indigenous movements; extensive political participation and deliberative democracy; inclusivity; and moderate anti-imperialism.

These categorizations are imperfect either as signifiers of progressive governance or as coherent categories in themselves (Yates & Bakker, 2014). My intent however is not to extend or refine Calderón's typology, but to situate *buen vivir* amongst these ideologies and ask what contradictions and assets it brings to bear in producing regionally- or locally-specific alternatives to the dictates of neoliberalism. In particular, I am interested in how *buen vivir* participates in destabilizing neoliberalism, and the extent to which new development regimes are able to break with and shrug off the past. In this respect, *buen vivir* implies a rescaling of governance and allows one to ask if this necessarily implies greater empowerment for local actors or a state monopoly on planning decisions. I will briefly explore these themes below and return to these questions again in Chapter 5.

Correa's Ecuador undoubtedly exhibits many characteristics of a neo-developmentalist state. The disparity between the radical rhetoric of *buen vivir* and its more moderate

implementation is evidence of this inclination. Neo-developmentalism's dissociation from the postulates of the Washington Consensus is in many ways partial. For one, it maintains that a state's legitimacy hinges on the nation's economic performance. Hence, economic growth remains the overarching goal of the state and the guiding principle for political decisions. In this sense, the neo-developmentalist state pursues a type of economic pragmatism where policies work with the grain of a liberalized global economy (Grugel & Riggirozzi, 2012). Rather than deconstructing capitalist economic forms, neo-developmentalism merely aims to (re-)socialize the market through strengthening labour relations, and building a solidarity economy (*viz.* sponsoring co-operatives, associations, and community organizations). Whereas developmentalism achieved these objectives through protectionist policies aimed at fostering a strong internal market, neo-developmentalism favours a state-sponsored industrial upgrading strategy to build on a country's existing comparative advantage. For Ecuador, this implies remaining in the same raw materials-exporting modality and leaves their submissive form of insertion in the global market unquestioned (Acosta, 2011).

Monni and Pallottino (2013) argue that neo-developmentalist discourse produces a selective and depoliticized understanding of *buen vivir* given that economic thinking still dominates the discussion on the way a society "has to", or "shall" develop. As Ferguson (1994) argued in his review of the work of development agencies in Lesotho, if the final objective of development is assumed as known and clear, then diagnosing the "problem" becomes a technical, rather than a political exercise. Under the neo-developmentalist framework, this "problem" remains divining the proper application of investment in science and industry to initiate the Rostovian (1960) drive towards rapid, perpetual economic growth. It also implies that the self-sustaining drive to growth is an inherent and exclusive product of capitalist institutions (Foster, 2012). Thus, neo-developmentalism refers to forms of development understanding and practice that leave unchallenged the fundamental premises of development discourse, even if introducing a series of important changes (Escobar, 1995).

If not the most important, the most discernable of these changes is the recentralization of power in Ecuador's executive branch of government, particularly with respect to matters of national planning, environmental management, and economic development. In addition to consolidating the authority of the executive branch, Ecuador's 2008 constitution and its attendant National Development Plan introduce measures aimed at the re-politicization of Ecuadorian society and the reconceptualization of development, territoriality, and identity. Converting these principles into concrete policies and practices however has been a tremendous challenge (Escobar,

2010) – as is evident in the discontinuity between certain policies and the constitutional delineation of *buen vivir*. Gudynas (2011, p. 446) succinctly captures this problematic in his remark that,

> *Buen vivir* will not stop building bridges, and will not reject the use of Western physics and engineering to build them, but the ones that it will propose may well have different sizes and materials, will be placed in other locations, and certainly will serve local and regional needs and not [those] of global markets.

Gudynas' bridge building analogy comes with the caveat that the means (*i.e.* Western knowledge and values) for operationalizing progressive development policies and programs, are party to co-producing "alternative developments" themselves. It is farcical for the state to go down the path of modernization and claim that free market policies and extractivism do not constitute "development" while the benefits accrued from those activities do. For example, Correa described recent changes to Ecuador's mining law designed to offer tax incentives to attract foreign investors (Powell, 2013) as indispensable to realizing other goals within the National Development Plan. However, his approval of these changes – regardless of their benefits in other sectors – is an explicit affirmation of modernization and export-driven development incoherent with *buen vivir* and the principles set out in Ecuador's constitution. Yet given the state's exclusive jurisdiction over national planning, economic policy, and energy resources it is able to – and frequently does – override environmental protections. While I examine these tensions more closely in Chapter 4, my goal here is to draw attention to the contradictions arising from the centralization of power in the state and its appropriation of *buen vivir* under the Correa government to garner a "green" image of Ecuador.

REGIONALIZATION AND ALTERNATIVE TRADE ALLIANCES

Correa's desire for a progressive image in the international arena is evident through his endorsements of a set of new regional blocs within Latin America. Kellogg (2007) contends that the drive towards regional integration in Latin America stems from hostility towards what would have been the logical outgrowth of an expanding web of neoliberal trade agreements – the unsuccessful Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Resistance to the FTAA, a project proposed during the Summit of the Americas in 1994 and intended as the logical successor to NAFTA, galvanized opposition against a program of neoliberal restructuring. For Latin American leaders the FTAA was little more than the consolidation of US hegemony in the region. The initiative would have broadened free market policies such as extensions to investor rights,

commitments to liberalize services, and the increased protection of intellectual property. Understood as a form of trade colonization the failure of the FTAA spurred the creation of trade blocs and customs union in Latin America that reflected the values of Chávez's twenty-first-century socialism.

For Gudynas (2011a) alternative alliances to initiatives such as the FTAA offer a practical strategy for breaking from economism, consumerism, and the commoditization of everyday life that frame recent developments in capitalism. Yet the initiatives that emerged out of Latin America's "new regionalism" in the late 1980s, while allegedly antagonistic to the FTAA, assume nuanced and complex positions on the matter of economic development. These vary within and amongst alliances and range from fervent anti-imperialist rhetoric on one extreme to practical appeals regarding the importance of competitiveness on an international scale on the other.

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) is an intergovernmental coalition integrating two existing customs unions – the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) and the Andean Community of Nations (CAN). UNASUR, inspired by and modelled after the European Union, aspires to propel regional integration on issues of democracy, education, energy, environment, infrastructure, security, and social inequality. Yet while positioning itself against the Washington Consensus indeed branding its vision the "Buenos Aires Consensus", UNASUR remains faithful to a development model dominated by capital interests attracted by import liberalization, fiscal austerity, pegged currencies, and privatization of industries and natural resources (Sader, 2005). Modelling UNASUR after the EU also suggests the need for a supra-national institution to facilitate regional economic development and reinforce South America's negotiating position in terms of world trade. In fact, a joint EU-Mercosur cooperation agreement that entered into force in 1999 stated that the goal of both unions was to "uphold and strengthen the tenets of international free trade in compliance with World Trade Organization rules". A similar declaration made in 2008 expressed the commitment of both organizations to the Doha Development Round on lowering trade barriers around the world, despite controversies over the maintenance of agricultural subsidies and access to patented medicines.

For Kellogg (2007), the ideological tilt and administrative structure of UNASUR is indicative of the organization's orientation towards a "politics from above". Decision-making flows from a secretariat elected by the Heads of State of the member nations and a dozen ministerial councils that set mandates for regional integration on issues of social and economic development. While restricting US interference in South America, economic asymmetries between member nations raise the concern that integration through UNASUR will only give rise

to a new regional hegemon. Some critics (Burges, 2005; Malamud, 2005) contend that Brazil is poised to take on this role given its ability to absorb the costs of region-building and influence regional trade policies. Though UNASUR provides a medium through which to oppose US hegemony, the organization is ultimately embedded in the class power structure of Latin America (Kellogg, 2007).

Another intergovernmental organization, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), departs from neoliberal schemes that encourage free trade, the free movement of capital, and binding government policies concerning the treatment of investment and services and intellectual property protection. ALBA's endorses trade based on principles of solidarity with the exchange of goods and services intended to meet social needs and foster economic complementarity. Though ALBA does not have an explicit mission to promote the type of economic and political transformations consonant with *buen vivir* it seeks to concretize the existence of alternatives to capitalist growth strategies through "support[ing] governments that are themselves pursuing such processes of transformation" (Hart-Landsberg, 2009). Amongst the founding principles of ALBA is a recognition of trade and investment as more than an end in itself but as an instrument for just and sustainable development. As such, ALBA endorses special and differentiated treatment to account for asymmetries in trade between participating countries and facilitates "trade in kind" – a way of bypassing money-based trading networks in favour of direct exchanges via bartering, alternative currencies, and informal markets.

ALBA differs from UNASUR in the sense that regionalization does not serve as the basis for a post-neoliberal order but as a model of integration more closely related to the principles of *buen vivir*. While also emerging from disenchantment with the Washington Consensus and the FTAA, ALBA challenges Latin America's power structure more radically by individually negotiating membership terms, offering non-reciprocal market access to favour smaller and/or weaker member economies, providing tariff protection for infant industries, and supporting production for national markets (Girvan, 2011). In addition to these policies, the key principles of ALBA are complementarity, as an alternative to competition; solidarity, as opposed to domination; cooperation, as a replacement for exploitation; and respect for sovereignty rather than corporate rule. ALBA also includes provisions for the protection of the environment and indigenous rights.

While ALBA's trade agenda is more far-reaching, it is not without its problems. For an organization whose origins are in mass movements demanding direct democracy and populist reforms, ALBA much like UNASUR remains heavily dependent on the decisions of the leaders

of the participating countries. For Hart-Landsberg (2009), ALBA's top-down organizational structure leaves little to no opportunity for popular discussion over how best to implement specific projects. ALBA's commitment to a development strategy anchored in state-centered collaboration with an emphasis on the creation of "Grand-National Enterprises" produces a bias toward large-scale megaprojects, many of which raise environmental concerns and make it harder to ensure that development projects are responsive to the communities they serve.

For Riggirozzi (2012, p. 422) UNASUR and ALBA are not simply "*ad hoc* subregional responses to the meltdown of neoliberal governance", but political spaces where the coordinates of the Washington Consensus are being revised and new endogenous understandings about issues of inclusion, democracy, and economic management are emerging. UNASUR's take on regionalization seems to rely more on restructuring Western bias than with making people's worldviews and livelihood strategies the starting point for development. Where UNASUR attempts to soften neoliberalism, ALBA exhibits an outright antagonism towards it through asserting the primacy of the state over the market, favouring the production of local industries and peasants, and protecting basic social services from privatization and commercialization. That said, in spite of ALBA's direct challenge to neoliberalism, it puts forth only a partial challenge to capitalism. Kellogg (2007, p. 205) argues that ALBA represents an "attempt to return to that earlier Keynesian era, where governments imposed limits on corporate rule…and workers, peasants, and the poor had some scope to legitimately organize in defence of their own rights". This sentiment however does not necessarily reach beyond the bounds of capitalism.

Buen vivir's relationship with regionalization then is to demand that any alternative to neoliberalism also becomes a challenge to capitalism itself. To paraphrase Gibson-Graham (1996), if capitalism exists as a monolith and non-capitalism as an insufficiency or absence, the role of non-capitalist alternatives such as *buen vivir* is to present this territory as a plural space, a place of difference and struggle. In the above discussion of *buen vivir* as a "development", I sought to highlight *buen vivir*'s function as a catalyst that gives way to an array of capitalist difference, wherein capitalism is not something large and embracing, but something partial. As I discuss in the next chapter, the economy of *sumak kawsay* does not exist within a capitalist totality, but in a separate totality grounded in a broader Andean cosmovision that is neither capitalist nor socialist (Gudynas, 2011b).

Conversely, Ecuador's engagement with regionalization through UNASUR and ALBA suggests that neither neoliberalism nor capitalism is at issue. Rather taking US hegemony to task and exercising sovereignty in political and economic affairs is the lynchpin of the state's program

of *buen vivir*. While the state may view sovereignty as the freedom to govern without interference, for the indigenous peoples of Ecuador sovereignty involves recognizing and reversing coloniality's hegemonic form of representations, and giving voice and currency to their ontological and epistemological practices. However, because regionalization efforts tend towards state-centered processes of change the transformations that are encouraged are more bureaucratically- than popularly-oriented (Hart-Landsberg, 2009).

Regionalization highlights one of the underlying contradictions of "development as *buen vivir*". Insofar as *buen vivir* calls for a broad definition of development – one that does not subscribe only to the goal of economic growth – the need for growth permeates most aspects of Ecuador's strategic insertion in the global economy; thus "the premise of growth is questioned as an end but not as a means" (Escobar, 2010, p. 22). On one hand, development as *buen vivir* highlights the undesirability of a model based solely on growth and material progress and facilitates an examination of alternative forms of knowledge production and ways of being. Yet a significant gap and lack of coherence exists between the state's pronouncements and actual practice. In this sense, Ecuador's experience with *buen vivir* provides an opportunity to contest the historical construct of "development" but because "living well" remains enmeshed in statist projects of modernization it does not decidedly transcend it.

3. SUMAK KAWSAY: INDIGENOUS GOOD LIVING

> Nature, being a social construct, that is, a term conceptualized by humans, must be wholly reinterpreted and revised if we intend to preserve the life of human beings on the planet. To begin any reflection, let us accept that mankind [sic] is not outside nature and that nature has its limits.
>
> —Alberto Acosta

> In the kingdom of ends everything has either a price or a dignity. What has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; what on the other hand is raised above all price and therefore admits of no equivalent has a dignity.
>
> —Immanuel Kant

Disputes over the theoretical content and political implications of *buen vivir* have their roots in the plural interpretations of "good living" that include the *suma qamaña* of the Aymara, the *sumak kawsay* of the Quechua, the *ñandareko* of the Guaraní, the *shiir waras* of the Shuar, and the *küme mongen* of the Mapuche, among others[10]. Transposing these value-systems from their indigenous domain into the political and economic realms as in Ecuador's efforts to constitutionalize *sumak kawsay* has given rise to numerous contradictions and inconsistencies. While nuances in the ontological content of these traditions exist, I will focus on the common core of these ideas and the divergences between indigenous and state narratives of "good living". Given that *buen vivir* seeks to institutionalize and universalize these concepts, it is important to ask whether the implementation of *buen vivir* at the national level is representative of the semantic richness of these traditions.

The focus of this chapter is on the Quechuan concept of *sumak kawsay* and its rupture with *buen vivir*. For the reason that *sumak kawsay* forms the basis of Ecuador's new constitution and National Development Plan, I treat it as the closest approximation of the Andean indigenous peoples social context in the country. Though I use "*sumak kawsay*" hereafter to refer to Ecuadorian indigenous peoples visions of "good living", it is necessary to acknowledge that these visions are not equivalencies, nor is their usage restricted to indigenous cultures[11]. I also use

[10] These traditions are collectively referred to as *pachakuti*, a term taken from the Quechuan *pacha* meaning time and space or the world, and *kuti* meaning upheaval or revolution. Thus, the concept denotes a re-balancing of the world through a tumultuous turn of events that is either catastrophic or restorative (Cusicanqui, 1991)

[11] By way of example, the so called "Cambas of the Amazon forest" in northern Bolivia, are non-indigenous peoples of mixed heritage that defend the "quiet life" emphasizing safety, welfare, and happiness based on an identity closely tied to the jungle (Henkemans, 2003 cited in Gudynas, 2011b). Walsh (2010) argues that a similar cosmovision is also present in the descendants of the African diaspora.

"*sumak kawsay*" as a signifier of indigenous traditions to differentiate from the institutionalization of the concept through the state that I refer to as "*buen vivir*". The various and varied expressions of good living in indigenous traditions should not be held as synonyms but as complements with converging sensitivities. In a sense, there is no indigenous "good living", because the category "indigenous" is itself socially constructed in a manner that serves to homogenize many different peoples and nationalities, each of which has their own conception of "good living" (Gudynas, 2011b).

Ecuador's latest census data from 2010 shows that Quechua peoples – the large majority of Ecuador's indigenous population – account for just over a million of the country's 15 million people. The indigenous organization CONAIE however disputes this figure, holding that the number is closer to four million[12] (Gerlach, 2003). Exact figures are difficult to ascertain due to the under-registration of indigenous people during census taking as a result of language barriers (*i.e.* the census being conducted in Spanish), fear of census information being used to rescind benefits, and refusal to participate. The rejection of the census dates back to the colonial period where head counts carried out by the colonial administration were seen to serve only for taxation (Ortiz, 2010). While a comprehensive examination of ethnic identity amongst indigenous peoples in Latin America is beyond the scope of this paper, Van Cott (2010, p. 397) provides what may be one reason for these discrepancies, arguing that the categories used to classify ethnic identities "fail to capture their dynamic, contingent, internally and externally contested, and context-specific nature and do not measures degrees of ethnic identity which vary significantly within populations and over time." Likewise, Jackson and Warren (2005) contend that the politicization of ethnic labels in Latin America makes them more an index for ideological alignments and loyalties rather than a marker of ethnic identity.

Here I show that *sumak kawsay* is part of an indigenous heritage that includes multiple ontologies or "good lives", which assume different formulations depending on the social or environmental context. Despite a lack of literal translations of the Quechuan *sumak kawsay* into English, the concept's etymological roots and epistemic perspectives set it apart from the anthropocentric and self-contained logics of Western modernity. In the first section, I describe how *sumak kawsay* fits into an Andean indigenous cosmovision based on relationality and co-dependence between communities and *pachamama*. I consider *sumak kawsay* as a multidimensional paradigm that draws on a complex linguistic history and review some of the

[12] A lack of anthropological identity between Quechua speakers and those of Quechua heritage also complicates matters as total population estimates in Latin America range from 13 to 16 million people.

concept's central features through understandings of community, governance, nature, and spirituality. In the second section, I discuss what I believe is *sumak kawsay*'s most evident break with neoliberal orthodoxy in its implications for "living well". In particular, I examine its diverse views of work, leisure, consumption, and wellbeing and contrast them with prevalent neoclassical norms. I consider representations of the economic agent as the collectivist *homo reciprocans* and the self-interested *homo economicus* and explore how each of these models produces the "economy" as either a cooperative, convivial space or a competitive, individualistic one. In the final section I take up a comparison with similar schools of thought such as ecological economics and the degrowth movement to draw attention to divergences and parallels with *sumak kawsay*.

THE DEMOCRACY OF THE AYLLU[13]

Ecuador's constitutional invocation of the indigenous concept *pachamama*, translated as "Mother Earth[14]", implies a recognition that human communities form a part of nature. Nature is therefore irreducible to mere natural resources and is worthy of respect and preservation for its intrinsic value alone (Arsel, 2012). *Pachamama* is central to Andean indigenous cosmovisions as an omnipresent and independent goddess with the self-sufficient and creative power to sustain life on earth. As Walsh (2011, p. 56) puts it,

> She is the mother that protects her children and provides the spaces, sustenance, and elements – cosmic, physical, affective, spiritual, cultural, and existential – necessary to live. She is the body of nature that receives and gives the seed of life in its infinite manifestations. Human beings are an expression of nature, her children. As such, there is no division between humans and nature; the equilibrium, development, and survival of society rests in this harmonic relation of integration.

Through this lens, and in contrast to the Western anthropocentric view, the basis of indigenous ontologies is relationality and not dualism. The Andean cosmovision does not subscribe to the division of nature and society, us and them, individual and community. Instead, it constructs a worldview that reveres the whole organic, living, spiritual universe and in which nature's web of life and the Earth constitute a single organism.

---

[13] *Ayllu* is a word in both Quechua and Aymara referring to a self-contained highland community of extended families that own some land in common and work it communally. *Ayllus* are distinguishable by their comparative self-sufficiency, commonly held territory, and relations of reciprocity. The *ayllu* is a dynamic space that consists of the whole community of living and non-living beings that exist there - *e.g.* plants, animals, the mountains, the rivers, the rain, etc. The interrelation amongst these beings is a foundational element of *sumak kawsay*'s concept of community. For more refer to De La Cadena (2010), Fabricant (2010), and Godoy (1985; 1986).

[14] A more literal translation would be "World Mother" since *pacha* initially referred to "world" or "land" and was later widened to denote "cosmos" or "universe".

Relational ontologies such as *sumak kawsay*, argues Escobar (2010, p. 39) "disrupt and de-naturalize the hegemonic distinction between nature and culture on which the liberal order is founded" and undermine "the distinctions between civilized and Indians, colonizer and colonized, developed, and underdeveloped." That is to say, humans and nature occupy the same material and spiritual dimension and exist as subjects in relation to one another rather than as "objects" or individuals. Consequently, it is impossible to understand the needs, wants, and aspirations of a community through aggregating the preferences of the individuals that make it up. Instead, an understanding of community and its vision of "good living" rests on the interrelation between all its human and non-human members. The eminently collective thinking of *sumak kawsay* is therefore integral to understanding "good living" (Radcliffe, 2012) which relies on the "we" of human communities cohabiting with nature.

The term *sumak kawsay* is polysemic and draws meanings ranging from basic connotations of existence and subsistence to appraisals of health and wellbeing. Villalba (2013) explains that *sumak* is that which is full of plenitude, is sublime, excellent, magnificent, and beautiful, whereas *kawsay* is life, to exist in a dynamic, changing, and active manner; hence, possible translations include "life of fullness", "good coexistence", or "harmonious life". During the colonial period a Jesuit missionary, Diego Gonzalez Holguín (1552-1618) listed no fewer than twenty-three variations in the specific meaning of *kawsay* in his 1608 dictionary of Southern Peruvian Quechua, making it one of the most versatile indigenous words. Geographer Karl Zimmerer (2012) points out that consistent between these variations is an emphasis on the social relations in and among families and communities needed for the intertwined fabric of learning, knowledge, work, and enjoyment in healthy living. Alongside the extensive quotidian usage of *kawsay* common in Quechua conversation, Zimmerer emphasizes the rising prominence of the term's newer public expressions. Whereas *kawsay*'s principle meanings[15] all refer to human lives and livelihood experiences, the term has more recently become a favoured referent of indigenous mass movements in framing alternative visions of development and nationhood.

This latter understanding having moved into Ecuadorian national discourse through voicing the unpopularity of neoliberal reforms coexists uneasily with what anthropologist Charles Hale (2002, p. 487) refers to as "neoliberal multiculturalism" – the proactive endorsement of "a substantive, if limited, version of indigenous cultural rights". Neoliberal multiculturalism serves as a means of defusing demands for more radical economic and social structural changes, particularly

[15] Zimmerer (2012, p. 602) sets out four principle meanings that anchor the concept's everyday use: "to live, to exist"; "to start, to be pending"; "life, lifestyle"; and "staple foodstuffs, agricultural products".

those that challenge its system of representations, by bringing marginalized indigenous populations into the political process. On one hand, Ecuador's embrace of *sumak kawsay* may signify a decolonial turn that through differentiated citizenship permits historically marginalized peoples to "speak for themselves[16]". Conversely, it may serve to reproduce coloniality by incorporating and ultimately assimilating dissident views through the state vis-à-vis neoliberal multiculturalism. This begs the question whether the reconstruction of the state along the lines of *buen vivir* in Ecuador is indeed a transformative practice of postdevelopment or "a reinstatement of old-style developmental states seeking to undo the neoliberal transformation of the 1980s and 1990s" (Ferguson, 2010, p. 169).

The tension between differentiated citizenship and neoliberal multiculturalism is part of a broader divergence between two positions that Guardiola and García-Quero (2014) refer to as the "conservationist" and "extractivist" readings of *buen vivir*. The conservationist reading draws from the principles of *sumak kawsay* and is prominent in indigenous organizations such as Ecuarunari and CONAIE. It argues that to achieve *buen vivir* it is necessary to transition away from a growth-based economic model dependent on the extraction of natural resources. Such a transition calls for power-sharing relationships (as opposed to a centralized state), a recognition of collective rights (as opposed to individual rights), the dematerialization of the economy (as opposed to industrialization), and independent production geared towards the needs of communities (as opposed to those of global markets).

The extractivist position holds that exploiting natural resources and assigning the benefits to communities via employment generation and fiscal income distribution is a prerequisite to *buen vivir*'s realization. It appropriates *sumak kawsay*'s values of social inclusion, community building, and respect for nature into state policy. For Guardiola and García-Quero (2014), "extractivism maintains a conventional emphasis on economic growth, fostering the massive extraction of natural resources as a primary means to guarantee *buen vivir* and casting aside any respect for nature and indigenous communities". The extractivist position therefore principally reflects the government's agenda for development and the post-neoliberal ideals of Chávez's socialism of the twenty-first century in which extractive exports finance social programs.

Another divergence between *buen vivir* and *sumak kawsay* is in their linguistic, epistemic, and ontological understandings of "development". Exchanges between the Western paradigm

---

[16] I use this phrase in reference to the environmental justice movement's credo "we speak for ourselves", to describe the attempts of subaltern groups to take back environmental policy decisions – and more broadly their right to self-determination – from "experts" or the state.

expressed in English or Spanish and the Andean paradigm expressed in Quechua or Aymara are unavoidably reductive and thus one can only investigate equivalences in the two models. Villalba (2013) explains that for the reason that many indigenous traditions do not conceive of a beginning or end in time there can be no "progress" or "development" insofar as there is no preliminary situation of "underdevelopment". The nearest parallel to "development" is the iterative and dynamic evolution of a community. "Development" however is not the literal transformation of buildings, services, and infrastructure, but the figurative ebb and flow of life that bonds humans and other-than-human beings. In this sense, a community is not where one is from, but who one is (De La Cadena, 2010).

While it is one thing to say that *sumak kawsay* denotes living well within a community that encompasses nature, this statement says little about the people and how they interact; their ethical frameworks and values; their assumptions about what does and does not exist; and their approaches to knowledge and objectivity. It also raises the concern that any attempt to adapt *sumak kawsay* to a Western paradigm for development will neglect, or worse yet distort the concept's original essence. The implication being, as emphasized in Chapter 2, that if *buen vivir* is to transcend conventional development thinking it must decolonize not only the political and economic realms, but also the cultural and spiritual ones. This does not suggest however, that expressions consonant with "living well" or positions critical of Western thought do not exist[17] outside the Latin American discourse of *sumak kawsay* but merely that they have often been marginalized or excluded – which is part of what makes the extensive public support for and adoption of the *buen vivir* ethos in Ecuador unique.

As the essence and giver of all life, *pachamama* embodies the intricate connection that yokes together nature and community. More than a group of people living in the same place, a community represents a unity of life made up of all forms of existence and implies a harmony with, rather than a dissociation from or dependence on nature. *Sumak kawsay* emerges from the community's reproduction of a collective subject. In this sense, the Andean ideal of nature is a "humanized landscape of indigenous food-producing environments and technologies" (Zimmerer, 2012, p. 604), as opposed to the Western ideal of nature as pristine wilderness. Thus, commoditizing or "developing" nature by uprooting people's ties to the land jeopardizes the fundamental aspects of *sumak kawsay* – ecological integrity and community bonds.

---

[17] The biocentric environmentalism of Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss (1989) for instance shares many parallels with *sumak kawsay* in its defence of the rights of nature, rejection of anthropocentrism, and expanded identification with the environment.

Sumak kawsay departs from the liberal conception of individual rights and responsibilities by interweaving different types of collective rights in legislative and practical ways. Akin to the framework of differentiated citizenship, *sumak kawsay* organizes citizens and their claims "around the lines of cultural and social differentiation that exist, rather than around the requirement that all citizens be the same" (Radcliffe, 2012, p. 242). The notion of differentiated citizenship also extends to community governance where consensus-based decision-making takes precedence over individual representation, aggregated and expressed in votes and majorities (Villalba, 2013).

In her incisive study of autochthonous forms of modernity amongst Andean peoples and the complexities of peasant politics, anthropologist Juliana Ströbele-Gregor (1996) shows how traditionally rooted patterns of participation and control in indigenous communities contrast with the secularization, individuation, and professionalization of politics in the West. Relative to Western models of democracy characterized by minimal political participation and representative parliamentary or presidential systems the communal self-administration of Andean peasant communities requires every family head to assume office once over the course of their lifetime as a way of meeting their obligations to the community. Commenting on the political and cultural practices of Aymara and Quechua communities Ströbele-Gregor (1996, pp. 73-74) remarks,

> These peasants do not perceive themselves to be free agents living lives of complete detachment but have close ties to and are an integral part of their communities and have incorporated a religious worldview that guides their thinking and action. With the merging of traditionally rooted and Western patterns of life and values, the indigenous rural communities have developed their own ways of coping with modernity.

The rotating democratic organization of *ayllus* (see footnote 13 for definition) corresponds to some principles of the Western concept of "direct democracy" (*e.g.* the assembly as the highest decision-making body, direct control over public officials, and clearly defined terms of office and functions) nevertheless,

> This does not do it [the *ayllu*] justice to define it in terms of Western models of organization, since the communal political organization is embedded in a religious worldview that is manifested in the functions performed by officeholders in ritual festivities as well as the assembly. Although the meetings of the highest communal decision-making authority, which take place at least monthly, are open to the public, it is not a general assembly of individuals of equal standing but an assembly of heads of families. Resolutions are, if possible, to be adopted by consensus so that all members of the community will regard them as binding. As is the case with cooperative forms of work and ritual, it is imperative for the assembly to overcome factionalism and to foster a sense of unity and cohesion. (Ströbele-Gregor, 1996, p. 78)

Hence, a secularization of politics is inconceivable for the reason that spirituality and everyday life are not separate. The elements of relationality, complementarity, reciprocity, and solidarity that typify community life also permeate the political life of Andean peoples. As Walsh (2011) notes, there exists a pragmatic expression of correspondence in all interactions: among humans, between humans and nature, and between humans and the divine. That is, humans are equally "with" and "in" nature. For Hernández (2011, p. 169), *sumak kawsay* recognizes "the value of both nature and humans without drawing an ontological distinction between them". The role of politics is then to harmonize human lifestyles to "the *pacha*" and infuse everyday customs with a sense of reciprocity with nature. *Sumak kawsay* endeavours to pluralize politics in a way that transforms "politics as power disputes within a singular world" to include the possibility of "politics as adversarial relations among worlds" (De La Cadena, 2010, p. 360). In Chapter 4, I expand on some of the challenges associated with the ontological pluralization of politics and the reconfiguration of the political in Ecuador.

Sumak kawsay brings to light an asymmetry in Ecuador's implementation of *buen vivir*. Its radical expression associated with indigenous traditions not only diverges from, but is antithetical to Western conceptions of liberal democracy, individual and property-based rights, the separation of nature and society, and an understanding of history as a linear process of development. Its articulation at the national level in Ecuador reinforces a more moderate, potentially pluralistic stance that is willing to engage with and denounce the currently dominant model of development, without claiming a wholesale incompatibility with it. Given that *sumak kawsay* is embedded in a worldview that is alien to modernity, efforts to extrapolate its principles into modern linguistic categories amount to what Vanhulst and Beling (2014, p. 55) describe as "attempts at building bridges between two incommensurable spheres". In this sense, Gudynas' metaphor about *buen vivir*'s engagement with Western knowledge may call for an addendum that reads, "*Buen vivir* must recognize that the world is more than one sociocultural formation. Its task is to interconnect such plurality without making diverse worlds commensurable."

LIVING BETTER/LIVING WELL

"We can't be beggars sitting on a sack of gold" is a favourite catchphrase of Rafael Correa's. The Ecuadorian President has used this slogan to argue that his country needs to take better advantage of its rich natural resources despite resistance from rural communities and those threatened with the loss of their livelihoods and traditional ways of life due to extractive activities. Indigenous peoples are typically at the heart of these struggles due to their concentration in rural

centers as well as their cultural ties to the land. Anti-oil resistance in Ecuador for example has become an iconically "indigenous" issue due in part to its geographic contours – oil production being clustered in Ecuador's east – and its association with ethnic and peasant struggles (Davidov, 2013). As a Quechua man from Cotachachi explains,

> The cosmovision of the indigenous people is different…we see the earth as our Mother Earth…different from the *mestizo* perspective. They see it as a physical space to make your home and tend to the animals…[therefore] the environmental impacts for the indigenous people will always be twice as bad, like someone is doing this to our mother, in contrast to the *mestizos*, for whom the issue is a transformed space, where before they could ranch and farm well, and now they cannot…the impact will always be twice as bad for the Indians. (Cited in Davidov, 2013)

At the core of the rupture between extractivist and conservationist discourse is the respective and incongruous treatment of nature as either an instrumental entity or a relational whole. However, this is neither to accuse extractivists of casting aside respect for nature and indigenous communities, nor is it to romanticize conservationists as valiant environmental stewards, but rather to indicate the concurrent and opposing polarities from which formulations of wellbeing take place.

Concepts such as *comida*, *impostura,* and *uyway* detail the mutuality, cooperativeness, and reciprocity that underpin *sumak kawsay*'s expression of living well. The Spanish word *comida*, explain Esteva and Prakash (1998, p. 55) refers to ethnic food but disappears where people buy, prepare, and cook foods to nourish the myth of the "individual self". The "we" of *comida* is in contrast to the "I" of *alimento*, which refers to foods eaten by the individual self and reserved for professional, institutional, or industrial use. *Comida* signifies a complex cultural relationship between peasant groups and their land rooted in a world of commons. Thus, *comida* includes an entire cultural way of being that connects producer and consumer as one and the same, or at the very least known by and related to each other. More than even shared eating, *comida* implies convening a community.

Impostura also refers to a relationship that unites people and land through community bonds and sustenance. Its pragmatic significance is as an informal contractual relationship in which partners make an implicit promise to exchange part of their meal with each other. Neither party seeks an advantage through exchange. Instead, *impostura* emphasizes consideration, affection, and kindness in exchange, which allows anyone to give *impostura* regardless of their economic status. For the reason that each person offers according to their means and proportionality is not a determinant of exchange, *impostura* fosters interpersonal relations and solidarity. Esteva and

Prakash (1998) argue that it would be folly to try to displace or globalize *impostura* since the concept is oriented towards local needs and understood through a specific cultural context. Communities must rediscover their own specific ideals of *impostura* reflective of their history and traditions.

Uyway is a Kichwa term denoting mutual relations of care among humans and also with other-than-human beings. The practices that make up *uyway* translate to "raising children, and making plants and animals grow". As De La Cadena (2010) explains, *uyway* is not a concept or explanation as such, but a fundamental part of life in the Andes. It implies a wish to nurture and to be nurtured that extends to all beings. In this sense, *uyway* is the force the holds *pachamama* together. The nurturing of *uyway* does not suggest a hierarchical relation, but a conversation, affective and reciprocal between equivalents (Bowers & Apffel-Marglin, 2008, p. 39). Just as we nurture the seeds, the animals, and plants, they also nurture us.

For indigenous cultures, the principles of *sumak kawsay* involve adhering to normative practices that govern sustainable behaviours such as using only what is necessary or living with the least possible means. Ecuadorian economist Magdalena Léon contends that the economic policies informed by such practices radically transform economic discourse because they oust "accumulation" as a core category of the economy and replace it with the "reproduction of life" (Léon, 2010 cited in Villalba, 2013). Therefore, the principle concern of *sumak kawsay* is not to accumulate, but rather to cultivate an "ethic of sufficiency for the whole community" (Chanto, 2011).

Homo economicus – an archetype of the "economic human" as a narrowly self-interested actor seeking to maximize their utility as a consumer and economic profit as a producer – is an aberration in the framework of *sumak kawsay*. Indeed, individuals that ascribe to *homo economicus*' mantras of working more, earning more, selling more, and buying more typically care little for the wellbeing of others and behave selfishly (Yamagishi, Li, Takagishi, Matsumoto, & Kiyonari, 2014). In the eyes of *homo economicus* fellow humans and nature are little more than mechanistic objects serving as means to one's ends. Hence, any altruistic or reciprocal relationship amongst humans or between humans and nature is inconceivable insofar as it is impedes the pursuit of self-interest. *Sumak kawsay* views the "economic human" not as a rational being but as a psychopath; likewise, it understands the insatiable quest for "more" as entirely futile and profoundly alienating.

Economist Edward O'Boyle's (2011) insightful work on human needs and their relation to work, leisure, and consumption provides some useful observations on the divergent values and

variegated approaches to economic organization under relational and dualist ontologies. For relational ontologies such as *sumak kawsay*, the representation of *homo reciprocans* – an archetype of humans as innately cooperative and motivated by fairness – gives a closer approximation of the typical economic actor. O'Boyle (2011, p. 263) explains that *homo reciprocans* abandons the belief that the moral good invariably consists of having more and the portrayal of the economic agent as an individual whose value is strictly instrumental. Rather than "having more", the orientation of *homo reciprocans* is on "being more" which renders the economic agent as a social being with a sacred dignity quite apart from their instrumental value.

Work under *sumak kawsay* is one indication of the communal orientation of the economic agent. Whereas the neoclassical understanding of work emphasizes its role in generating income to purchase needed or desired goods and services, in *sumak kawsay* work is linked to the soil and flourishing in the community (Villalba, 2013). In this respect, work relies on reciprocity – between both humans and non-humans – and provides an opportunity to interact with others, develop a sense of belonging, and enhance creative talents and energies. Work is thus a key element of what O'Boyle refers to as *homo reciprocans* orientation on "being more" seeing as the choices people make in this regard powerfully determine who they are, what they are, and to whom or to what they belong.

To the extent that work is mutually constitutive of personal growth and sharing in a genuinely supportive community, the distinction between leisure and work in the *ayllu* is also more fluid than that of neoclassical economics. The latter characterizes leisure in negative terms and reinforces the passivity of the economic agent through relegating leisure to "time spent not working". In contrast, *sumak kawsay* frames leisure as way of returning to a balanced sense of sacredness and spirituality in daily life; a state that celebrates being human rather than having or consuming material things; and a time and activity not driven by duty, accomplishment, or productivity (Stockhausen, 1998). For indigenous societies, leisure has the unique function of reconstructing cultural and spiritual meanings and reassuring identity (Iwasaki, 2007). It also serves as valuable time for contemplation and is essential to acquiring knowledge and understanding inseparable from and reflective of pervasive worldviews maintained and valued by indigenous peoples.

Due to its emphasis on the individual, neoclassical approaches adhere to the "living better" (rather than "living well") model of consumption. Here agents are autonomous want-satisfying consumers driven strictly by their self-interest and endless desires. The dichotomy between these approaches makes two courses to affluence available: one through producing much and the other

through desiring little. Anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (1997) elaborates on these approaches arguing that market societies adhere to the "living better" model assuming that human needs are great, not to say infinite, whereas their means are limited, but improvable; hence, the gap between needs and wants can be narrowed – although never bridged – by continuously intensifying industrial production. Conversely, the "living well" of vernacular societies suggests that human material wants are finite and few, and technical means unchanging but on the whole adequate. While the material dimension of human existence matters much, *sumak kawsay* posits that the spiritual dimension – embodied in the communal spirit of "living well" – provides the key means through which humans can develop their full potentialities.

Another way of framing the interplay of wealth and wellbeing under *sumak kawsay* is through adapting the concept of human security as "freedom from want". For Ruttenberg (2013) deconstructing what "want" encompasses requires recognizing the complexity and context-specific nature of social needs and values. Since the concept of wellbeing is subjective in nature[18], quantifying and comparing what constitutes wellbeing in one community or society with the human experience of wellbeing in other parts of the world presents a significant challenge. In conceiving an economics of wellbeing, a necessary first step towards satisfying "freedom from want" writes Ruttenberg (2013, p. 86) is to redefine "want" on the basis of subjective wellbeing rather than from a universalist income- and consumption-centered mentality. This is not to say that no correlations exist in the way we perceive wellbeing between countries, over time, and between populations; however, people(s) are diverse and the ways in which we prioritize the satisfaction of our needs and seek fulfilling lives differ across cultures and even within communities (Ruttenberg, 2013, p. 75). For example, in their study of subjective wellbeing and the *buen vivir* ethos in Ecuador Guardiola and García-Quero (2014) found that while income and employment played a role in life satisfaction, variables related to the environment, community participation, and food sovereignty all contributed to high levels of life satisfaction despite people living in disadvantaged circumstances.

While *sumak kawsay*'s treatment of wellbeing's material dimension has an aspect of asceticism to it, it does not suggest a return to the past, nor does it attempt to establish an indigenous cosmovision that supplants conventional development thinking. For anthropologist José Sánchez Parga (2009, cited in Gudynas, 2011b) *sumak kawsay* has "nothing to do with

---

[18] This is contrary to the assertions of many wellbeing economists that claim quality of life indices with their use of specific indicators can equalize needs and the experience of wellbeing across cultures; see Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs (2015).

tradition", but rather with people who want "to make their lives", without being put at the mercy of factors that are alien and hostile to them. Gudynas (2011b) contends that this allows for a reconceptualization of welfare in ways that do not depend solely on the possession of material goods or income levels. This reconceptualization of a good life with deference to its non-material and spiritual constituents bares resemblances to the movement for degrowth and resonates with several principles of ecological economics.

SUMAK KAWSAY, ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS, AND DEGROWTH

Both *sumak kawsay* and ecological economics oppose the neoclassical "growth model of progress" arguing that it erroneously conflates GDP growth with economic success and wellbeing. Part of the reason for this misconception is due to the neoclassicist understanding of scale (Alexander, 2012). That is, neoclassical economics accepts that an optimal scale exists on a microeconomic level – *i.e.* that a point exists after which further growth in an individual firm's production will cost more than it is worth – yet it accepts no such optimal scale at a macroeconomic level. Taking into account the Earth's finite pool of resources and its limited ability to ameliorate wastes, the notion of an infinitely expanding economy is at best fanciful thinking and at worse ill-fated hubris. To this *sumak kawsay* adds that the choice between economic growth and quality of life is a false dilemma to begin with.

Ecological economics holds that the economy is actually a subset of nature and not the other way around. In other words, nature can survive without the economy, whereas the inverse does not hold. This does not imply that humans cannot use nature for their benefit – indeed doing so is an integral aspect of both *sumak kawsay* and ecological economics. Rather, ecological economics and *sumak kawsay* set out guidelines to govern resource usage and call attention to the holistic value of ecosystems, albeit doing so in different ways. Ecological economics does so by deferring to the laws of thermodynamics[19] and accounting for ecosystem services and natural capital. For *sumak kawsay*, the notion that an ecosystem is worth more than the sum of its parts is embedded in traditional practices. Indigenous societies purposefully construct their belief systems and ways of life in manner that is consistent with their environment. They do so with indifference to international economic integration and its imperatives of "free" trade and markets. Barkin (2012) for instance points to indigenous highland communities left out of the processes of

[19] The laws of thermodynamics reveal that in a closed system such as our planet energy can neither be created nor destroyed, but simply converted; however, with each conversion the capacity of energy to do work decreases. Therefore, open systems such as our economy that demand progressively more from their environment are limited in their functioning by the environment that sustains them.

globalization that have long been creating viable productive opportunities for themselves "in direct consonance with their environments and the natural pressures that emanate from the ecosystems on which they depend".

Whereas ecological economics exists as a formal school of thought, degrowth on the other hand has no such established principles, policies, concepts, or theories. For French economist Serge Latouche (2004), "degrowth is just a term created by radical critics of growth theory to free everybody from the economic correctness that prevents us from proposing alternative projects for post-development politics". Demaria, Schenider, Sekulova, and Martinez-Alier (2013, p. 192) contend that degrowth has no aspiration to be adopted as a common goal by international organizations such as the United Nations, the OECD, or the European Commission. On the contrary, it aims to re-politicize the debate on much needed socio-ecological transformations and expose strategies such as "green growth" and "sustainable development" as untenable and idealistic. Degrowth then serves as an interpretative frame that identifies disparate social phenomena (*e.g.* humanitarian and environmental crises) as intrinsically related to economic growth. It suggests that economic and social policies focus on disentanglement – not development – as a way of removing the obstacles that prevent a society from developing differently.

Sumak kawsay's most significant challenge to the growth model of progress is its revival of an indigenous cultural identity that at its core is anti-economistic. Its adoption at the national level brought forth specific proposals including accounting for the environmental and social costs of resource development; substantially taxing extractive activities; integrating the principles of social, economic, and ecological justice at all levels of decision-making; and emphasizing the use of and access to goods and services over their ownership. Critical to both *sumak kawsay* and degrowth is that all of these components – justice, biocentrism, deliberative democracy, and wellbeing – are taken into account collectively. Emphasizing one component at the expense of another can lead to the formation of incomplete and reductionist projects that are fundamentally incompatible with *sumak kawsay* or degrowth. For example, concern over resource scarcity, or with ecosystem destruction, but not with social justice or democracy can lead to authoritarian anti-population proposals (Demaria, Schneider, Sekulova, & Martinez-Alier, 2013). As heterodox challenges to economism, *sumak kawsay* and degrowth call for holistic readings.

A number of thinkers (Fritz & Koch, 2014; Kallis, Kerschner, & Martínez-Alier, 2012; Muraca, 2013; Thomson, 2011) argue that fruitful syntheses between Western critiques of growth and indigenous knowledge are possible. One aim of such syntheses is to curb over-consumption and accumulation in the Global North as both an end in itself and a means to redistribute

surpluses and begin to repay the ecological debts owed to the heretofore exploited Global South. Degrowth, understood as the planned and equitable downscaling of production and consumption, serves as a potential intermediary between Western and indigenous epistemologies capable of carrying out such change. Perhaps the most notable similarity[20] between *sumak kawsay* and the degrowth paradigm is that they both seek to displace "the economy" and its attendant pursuit of growth as the overriding objective of social and political life. Indeed, a critical thread in both these discourses is shifting and re-politicizing the terms in which economic relations and identities are considered. Valérie Fournier (2008, p. 529) makes the key distinction that "growth" itself is not the main culprit, but the "ideology of growth" – that is, "the system of representations that translates everything into a reified and autonomous economic reality inhabited by self-interested consumers". The task of degrowth and *sumak kawsay* then is not to call for lesser, slower, or greener growth – since this leaves them trapped in the same economistic logic – but with entirely escaping "the economy" as a system of representations.

Nevertheless, the degrowth movement departs from *sumak kawsay* in its core proposition of downscaling which primarily targets industrialized or "overdeveloped" economies in which further growth has ceased to translate into better choices, richer lives, and enhanced welfare. Degrowth exists in a predominantly modernist frame speaking to the consequences of productivism and consumerism in the Global North such as the reduced availability of energy sources, resource depletion, and the pernicious effects of inequality on health and social indices. While these issues also impinge on the lives and livelihoods of citizens in the Global South, the proposal to limit demand – particularly when sizable parts of the population lack access to necessities such as food, shelter, and sanitation – is controversial. The North's reluctance to take the initiative in creating non-growth societies while demanding so of the South also stands to exacerbate tensions between the two.

Both degrowth and *sumak kawsay* reject growth as the main objective of development. *Sumak kawsay* however gives serious attention to various ethical settings and incorporates spiritual positions into this consideration. By imbuing non-human entities with agency, the politics of growth take on a broader scope under *sumak kawsay*. Complementarity between humans and their environments calls for pluralism in economic organization. Just as there are diverse

---

[20] An anecdotal similarity also exists with respect to cultural interpretations of the terms. Some French proponents argue that degrowth the English translation of the French term *décroissance* (much like the linguistic rift between the Spanish *buen vivir* and the Quechuan *sumak kawsay*) cannot be understood in its original sense outside of its French context. For a comparison of degrowth à la Française with sustainable degrowth in ecological economics refer to Martínez-Alier, Pascual, Vivien, & Zaccai (2010).

landscapes, there must exist diverse economic forms to match them. Therefore, growth and development depend on the context that binds them. As I discuss in the following chapter, *sumak kawsay*'s emphasis on the economy at a community scale and *buen vivir*'s efforts to generalize the principles of sufficiency, reciprocity, solidarity, and complementarity at the national level give rise to a number of contradictions.

Latouche (2004) submits that degrowth in Southern societies should not imply a return to an idealized version of an informal economy but should serve as caution from rushing up the blind alley of growth economics. For *sumak kawsay* the meaning of degrowth is therefore limited to the formation of an economic system that functions within the limits of planetary boundaries and enables people to live better lives whilst working and consuming less. Interpretations of what constitutes a boundary and how far its limits extend are a matter of debate (Rockström, et al., 2009). While neither *sumak kawsay* nor degrowth purport to have any absolute answers, they each open up new avenues for thinking about these issues.

Sumak kawsay incorporates degrowth not as an objective, but as consequence of a broader agenda. In this respect, the predominantly European-led degrowth school and the Amerindian philosophy of *sumak kawsay* strive to realize comparable economic objectives though they operate from radically different positions. For degrowth the challenge is not to highlight the importance of structural change, but to outline and foster the necessary cultural preconditions for such change; while for *sumak kawsay* which already culturally embraces notions of sufficiency, reciprocity, solidarity, and complementarity in economic behaviour, it is to translate this culture into structural change consonant with these principles. It is to this subject, the translation of *sumak kawsay* into the political project of *buen vivir* that I turn to now.

4. BUEN VIVIR AS A POLITICAL PROJECT

> Increasingly, public debate has come to hinge, not on what kind of society we are or want to be, but on what the needs of the economy are. Hence, a broad range of social policies are now debated almost entirely in terms of how they fit in with the imperatives of the market.
>
> —Fred L. Block

> Democracy depends on localism: the local areas are where the people live. Democracy doesn't mean putting power some place other than where the people are.
>
> —Douglas Lummis

The implementation of *buen vivir* at the national level in Ecuador brought with it a simultaneous sense of triumph and trepidation. On one hand, the government's endorsement of *buen vivir* granted historically marginalized groups – predominantly indigenous peoples, but also Afro-Ecuadorians, and Montubios[21] – greater control over territory and resources, opened up the country's political structures, and integrated *sumak kawsay* as the core of its development plan. On the other, it raised concerns over the state's absolute sovereignty over all territory and resources, Correa's centralized and even authoritarian decision-making processes, and the entrenchment of export-led development policies. Tensions concerning the adaptation of *buen vivir* are borne out in questions regarding its interpretation by the state, civil society, and indigenous organizations, and its operationalization into concrete programs and policies.

This chapter consists of two sections in which I speak to both of these themes beginning with a review of *buen vivir* in Ecuador's 2008 constitution and its national development plan. In this section, I discuss the substantive elements of *buen vivir* that the state omitted, amended, and appended relative to the indigenous formulation of *sumak kawsay*. In the second section, I discuss the praxis of *buen vivir* through the enactment of policies and programs ranging from radical efforts to remake nature into locus of value such as the Yasuní-ITT initiative to reformist approaches to resource management such as Ecuador's recent mining and water laws. I argue that Correa's environmental discourse forwards a symbolic assertion of sovereignty through a natural resource policy primarily concerned with increasing the state's share of revenues from extractive activities.

---

[21] Montubios are an officially recognized ethnic identity of coastal people of mixed-race and indigenous descent in Ecuador.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Ecuadorian constitutional referendum took place on September 28th, 2008 following overwhelming support to establish a Constituent Assembly to rewrite the 1998 constitution. As leader of Alianza País (AP) Correa won 79 of the 130 seats in the assembly, thereby ensuring the new constitution would be to his liking (Kueffner, 2007). Following eight months of writing and debate, the assembly, led by former energy minister and highly regarded economist Alberto Acosta, put forth a draft constitution in July 2008. Ecuadorians went on to approve the constitution in another referendum in September 2008 with 69 percent voting "yes" to ratify the document. The constitution was Ecuador's sixth since the Second World War and its twentieth since becoming an independent republic in 1830.

Sumak kawsay underpins many of the constitution's 400-plus articles and its principles are borne out in a rights-based approach to water, food, a healthy environment, education, shelter, health, and social security. In a comparison of the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia, Gudynas (2011a) notes that the two handle the concept of *buen vivir* in quite different ways. The Bolivian constitution takes a multicultural approach in which *vivir bien* refers to the Aymara concept of *suma qamaña*, but also to the Guaraní ideas of *ñandereko* (harmonious living), *teko kavi* (good life), *ivi maraei* (the land without evil), and *qhapaj ñan* (the path to a noble life); these ideas and ethical-moral principles are all presented together at the same level, without hierarchies and are linked to the economic organization of the state. In contrast, the Ecuadorian constitution centers on a rights-based approach and links *buen vivir* only to the *sumak kawsay* of the Quechua. It is not an ethical principle for the state as in Bolivia but a complex set of rights – many of which are borrowed from Western traditions and repurposed into a different framework. The constitution makes clear that development must align with the objectives of *buen vivir*. Rather than development determining and limiting economic and social life, the Ecuadorian approach requires that the state arrange economic, political, and social life in a way that guarantees *sumak kawsay* (Gudynas, 2011a, p. 443). Put simply, the aim of development is to realize *sumak kawsay* and not the other way around.

The rights of nature are a focal point of the constitution and a milestone for environmental legislation. The codification of a set of legally enforceable ecosystem rights have made Ecuador the first country in the world to recognize the intrinsic value of nature and ensure its protection through advancing it constitutional rights. The oft-quoted articles bear repeating here as they reflect elements of the Andean cosmovision and acknowledge *pachamama* as a political subject with legal standing. Nature has "the right to integral respect for its existence and

for the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions, and evolutionary processes" (art. 71); "the right to be restored apart from the obligation of the state and natural persons or legal entities to compensate individuals and communities that depend on affected natural systems" (art. 72); and "persons, communities, peoples, and nations shall have the right to benefit from the environment and its natural wealth" (art. 74). The biocentric ethic of *sumak kawsay* permeates these rights and calls for a new form of public coexistence, in harmony with nature.

The constitution urges "all persons, communities, peoples, and nations" to call upon public authorities to enforce the rights of nature. The state has an obligation to apply "preventative and restrictive measures on activities that might lead to the extinction of species, the destruction of ecosystems, and the permanent alteration of natural cycles" (art. 73) and to apply and enforce environmental management policies (art.395). Arsel (2012) points out that these measures are problematic insofar as they authorize the state to both enforce the rights of nature and mediate the relationship between the environment and development. The problem with holding the state responsible for oversight is that it operates at a higher plane of authority and is able to make exceptions to these clauses.

Articles 71 through 74 which make up the "rights of nature" declare the state's centrality in providing incentives to protect nature, establishing mechanisms to restore damaged ecosystems using means it deems effective, and managing the production, delivery, use, and development of environmental services. Article 407 addressing protected areas puts a blanket ban on extractive activities within their borders but allows the "extraction of non-renewable natural resources or forestry production" to proceed given "the substantiated request of the President of the Republic and a declaration of national interested issued by the National Assembly". Article 313 and 315 follow in a similar vein. The former reserves the right of the state to "administer, regulate, monitor, and manage" strategic sectors that include non-renewable natural resources, oil and gas transport and refining, biodiversity and genetic heritage, and water. The latter enables the state to establish public companies for the management of these strategic sectors. Collectively these articles vastly increase the power of the state over the economy and guarantee it has a free hand in natural resource management and the regulation of environmental services.

Another essential and contested aspect of the constitution concerns the repeated demands of indigenous activists to create a more inclusive political system by way of declaring Ecuador a plurinational republic. Becker's (2011) incisive account of Correa's battle over political space with indigenous movements during the writing of the 2008 constitution highlights the many clashes

over the meaning of "plurinationalism". The 1998 constitution, which defined Ecuador as "pluricultural" and "multiethnic", did not identify indigenous peoples as nationalities but sardonically remarked that they "define themselves as nationalities". According to Becker (2011, p. 54) the careful use of terminology ensured plurinationality would "remain on the level of rhetoric without any significant substance or concrete implications". For AP delegates the vague definition was preferable as it allayed fears that plurinationality would challenge the state's sovereignty or fragment the country into autonomous groups.

Ecuarunari and CONAIE however insisted that plurinationalism would be part of a unitary state and that its importance rest in remaking Ecuador's neocolonial political system. The two organizations pressed for mechanisms to make Ecuador's economic landscape more participatory and inclusive by way of increasing social control over public goods and the state. For indigenous peoples plurinationalism had the added significance of remonstrating previous government attempts at dividing or de-ethnicizing them through labels such as "peasants" or denigrating them with racist terms such as, "savages", "naturals", "tribes", "hordes", and "ethnics" (Becker, 2011, p. 54).

Taking the complexities of indigenous cosmovisions into a homogeneous institutional arrangement is a complex task and necessitates a number of changes, not the least of which are new institutions but also renewed territorial organization, juridical and political pluralism, and participatory democracy (Monni & Pallottino, 2013). Hence, the many "good lives" of indigenous peoples depend on a realization of plurinationalism that recognizes and respects different visions of development and social and political organization. For Jameson (2011) the continued centrality of the indigenous movement in Ecuador is a result of its constant advocacy of the plurinational state – a matter that continues to define the relations between social movements and allegedly progressive parties and governments.

Central amongst the institutional changes in the transition from nation-state to plurinational state is rethinking the state and markets. Vanhulst and Beling (2014) argue that reframing these institutions along the lines of *buen vivir* involves recovering the protagonism of the citizenry in policymaking at the state level and democratizing the market in ways that are responsive to the needs of the majority of those citizens. As Acosta quipped, the state needs to be "citizenized" and the market "civilized". The constitution takes a step in this direction through recognizing alternative forms of labour organization including communal, cooperative, domestic, and autonomous (art. 319) and acknowledging the right to work in self-sustenance and caregiving (art. 320). For Ecuador's indigenous movements, plurinational economic development implied

that nationalities were "political economic entities with differentiated cultural histories" and with "a right to their territory and autonomous internal political administration" (Jameson, 2011).

The Constituent Assembly eventually conceded to designating Ecuador a plurinational state though it quickly became apparent that this was a largely symbolic gesture when Correa's party voted against the proposal to grant the Kichwa language official status in Ecuador. In response to indigenous organizations condemning the act as racist, Correa maintained that in much of the country learning English was more important than learning Kichwa (Becker, 2011, p. 56). The assembly granted a minor concession by recognizing Kichwa and Shuar as "official languages for intercultural ties" (art. 2), although Spanish remained the only official language of Ecuador. Considering demands for equal recognition and greater inclusivity had been at the fore of indigenous agendas far in advance of even the 1997 constitutional referendum, which had already recognized Kichwa, Shuar, and other ancestral languages as "official for the use of indigenous peoples", the editorial revisions in 2008 did little more than maintain the status quo. For Becker (2011) the assembly's decision to stop short of granting indigenous languages official status suggests a broader effort to deemphasize the role of social movements and reinforce the imagery of a "citizen's revolution" as the mainspring of social change in Correa's Ecuador.

The accompaniment to the 2008 constitution, the National Development Plan – also known as the National Plan for Good Living (NPGL) – aims to "materialize and radicalize" the project for change initiated under the "citizen's revolution" and secure "good living" for all Ecuadorians. The National Secretariat of Planning and Development, Senplades had the task of creating a comprehensive plan that would set out development objectives for the period 2009 to 2013, which they have since revised to cover the period 2013 to 2017. In addition to setting out the national planning agenda, the NPGL addresses issues of territoriality, guidelines for investment of public resources, regional integration, and state autonomy.

Considering the plan's extensive scope, I limit my discussion to the dozen national objectives for good living and their implications for political inclusivity, society-nature relations, and economic pluralism. These three categories reflect the plan's focus areas of changing power relations, planning for good living, and transforming Ecuador's productive structure, respectively. I give details on the scope and orientation of the objectives, the strategies for their realization, and their potential as post-neoliberal and/or post-capitalist alternatives. The discussion that follows introduces the theoretical framework of *buen vivir* in the NPGL, while the subsequent section examines the policies and operationalization of *buen vivir* resulting from this framework.

The NPGL begins with the objective of consolidating democratic governance, which is to say recovering and transforming the state through freeing it from "interest and pressure groups", (re)appropriating resources, and reconstituting its regulatory role. Senplades (2013, p. 52) notes that recovering state capacities to plan national development is of utmost importance. The NPGL touts planning as "participatory, decentralized, and transparent" and underscores its role of "fostering social and territorial equity and promoting consensus-building". The two aims are seemingly incongruous in a plurinational context in which the state itself is not a neutral instrument for planning but an institution interested in the recentralization of power as a means of ensuring its longevity. Correa for instance has pursued changes to restrict the governing authority of sub-national governments through withholding, delaying, and reducing the size of fiscal transfers, and skirting laws that oblige him to send a set percentage of national revenues to these administrations (Eaton, 2014).

With respect to political inclusivity, the NPGL extols the virtues of equality, justice, and diversity, but shies away from engaging with the reality of inequality, corruption, and discrimination. Senplades goes on to mention the problem of racism, though it abruptly dismisses it as part of Latin America's colonial legacy – that is, an ailment inflicted on Ecuador rather than an innate reality with entrenched roots – and segues by making a straw man out of neoliberal capitalism. To be clear, the impacts of colonization in Latin America were and continue to be immense and pervasive, and the imposition of neoliberal capitalism is as an extension of that legacy. Nevertheless, it is impossible to suture these wounds through prosaic remedies that dismiss or deny parts of this history (Cusicanqui, 1991). To grieve these injustices requires conceding one's own participation in them and acknowledging the past in its entirety. Goals to increase the redistribution of wealth, reduce illiteracy rates amongst marginalized groups, and employ greater numbers of Afro-Ecuadorian, indigenous, and Montubio peoples in the public sector, while noble, are no panacea to these systemic issues.

In the NPGL Senplades sets goals and targets to consolidate democratic governance but fails to enquire about the factors that lead to political exclusion in the first place. Why do indigenous peoples feel alienated from contemporary political structures? How is increasing their representation in the National Assembly a fitting approach to integrating their intangible cultural heritage with traditionally liberal ideologies? What are the effects of severing *buen vivir* from its origins as a comprehensive philosophy with normative ascendance over the political debate? And critically, is its transformation into a programmatic concept situated within a dominant Eurocentric modernity a worthwhile exercise that attends to indigenous demands for autonomy?

The NPGL neither raises nor speaks to any of these questions. On fostering territorial cohesion Senplades' policies and goals amount to overcoming inequalities between rural and urban populations by reducing the wealth gap between the wealthiest and poorest deciles (Senplades, 2013, p. 55); on building spaces for plurinationality its objectives are to "preserve and revitalize heritage" and "promote cultural industries" (p. 64); and on transforming the judicial system its aims are to reduce crime and improve access to justice (p. 68).

Senplades maintains a moderate reformist stance with its objectives for transforming society-nature relations. The policies for guaranteeing the rights of nature and promoting environmental sustainability make the rift between *sumak kawsay*'s conservationism and *buen vivir*'s extractivism patently clear. The NPGL describes Ecuador's wealth of biodiversity as its "greatest comparative advantage" and claims that it is "fundamental to tap it adequately" (Senplades, 2013, p. 70). The reference has a worrying overtone given that comparative advantage is contingent on liberalized trade and differentiated degrees of cost internalization between countries, aligning with the principles the FTAA sought to forward. Two problems that arise from endorsing the rights of nature through vindicating comparative advantage are that it encourages a "race to the bottom" mentality to attract industry and investment; and that industry and investment tend to seek out countries with the lowest costs of production – typically coinciding with lax environmental standards. Reforms to Ecuador's mining and water laws and the controversy over the Yasuní-ITT Initiative are early manifestations of these problems.

Although Senplades frames tapping Ecuador's biodiversity in terms of generating bio-knowledge and community eco-tourism services, the country's biogenetic inheritance is also of interest to medical institutes and pharmaceutical corporations. One example of the intersection between Ecuador's biogenetic wealth and private interests occurred in 1990 when a medical brigade drew 3500 blood samples from 600 Waorani peoples for medical research to study a genetic mutation that they believed conferred immunity to certain diseases. Over 30 research papers based on the collected data were written, all of which were authored without the consent of the Waorani. The tribe was under the impression that their blood was being taken to conduct medical examinations; however, they never received any results nor reimbursement for their participation despite their DNA samples being sold to medical labs in eight different countries (Hogan, 2014). Yet Senplades maintains that exporting products based on bio-prospecting and bio-commerce is essential to increasing exports of high value-added goods and services. As with other strategic sectors, the state reserves the right to administer, regulate, oversee, and manage the use of Ecuador's biodiversity and genetic heritage.

Another ongoing exercise of Ecuador's comparative advantage is its development and export of natural resources, most notably crude oil. Ecuador having rejoined OPEC shortly after Correa assumed office in 2007 depends on crude oil for over half its total export earnings – more than its next nine top commodity exports combined (UN Comtrade, 2013). Of its 555,000 barrels per day of crude oil production, Ecuador consumes approximately 250,000 barrels per day, which account for nearly 80 percent of its total primary energy consumption (EIA, 2015). Senplades frames Ecuador's dependence on extractive industries absurdly, claiming that the government "aims to use the extraction of raw materials in order to stop the extraction of raw materials" (Senplades, 2013, p. 49). In setting out goals for encouraging Ecuador's transformation to a knowledge-based economy Senplades calls for mapping mineral resource availability throughout all the nation's territory (p. 84) and industrializing mining activity[22] (p. 83).

Other policies and objectives directed at forwarding the rights of nature amount to enlarging marine and terrestrial conservation areas and increasing recycling rates. The NPGL addresses climate change only at the level of rhetoric and offers no concrete measures to set emissions targets beyond ambiguous commitments to "implement climate change mitigation and adaptation measures" (Senplades, 2013, p. 71). The plan pays similar homage to renewable energy setting out vague targets to increase its share in the energy mix (p. 83). Energy sovereignty takes clear precedence over any program to reduce emissions in the NPGL with Senplades underscoring the importance of reinforcing non-renewable energy stocks and adequately managing energy demand as part of its strategy to achieve "long-term sustainability and minimize risk in the energy supply" (p. 44). There is brief mention of energy efficiency measures and pollution prevention but again Senplades does not elaborate on these policies making clear that downscaling production is not part of the government's agenda.

The NPGL embraces certain aspects of ecological economics including an overarching recognition that the economy depends on nature and ecosystems to support life, supply resources, and ameliorate wastes. Where ecological economics tends to reject the substitutability of natural capital and ecosystem services with human-made capital, Senplades holds that a "productive transformation" of nature is possible. Their quip to make true the motto "planting petroleum" is illustrative of their attitude towards extractive development. In the NPGL, they contend that resource development is justified if it contributes a net benefit to society. As Kanbur (2003) points

[22] These objectives mirror those that the World Bank sought to achieve with its PRODEMINCA initiative in the 1990s.

out however, evaluating the gains and losses of extractive projects using metrics of Pareto efficiency[23] and cost-benefit analysis is imprecise at best.

Another tension between ecological economics and Senplades political discourse plays out in the debate over weak and strong sustainability. Weak sustainability insists that technology is infinitely improvable and can therefore provide a substitute for any and all scarce materials. In effect, weak sustainability holds that it is possible to decouple economic growth from environmental pressures. Strong sustainability on the other hand, holds that natural resources and ecological functions are irreplaceable – at least in any economic sense. Hence, economic policy has a fiduciary responsibility to the greater ecological world. The NPGL tends towards weak sustainability and reverses the relationship between development and *sumak kawsay* by putting resource development ahead of environmental integrity.

The objectives regarding Ecuador's economic structure go furthest in enacting the structural changes called for in the constitution. Beginning with education and training, the NPGL sets out policies to foster locally-specific knowledge, promote intercultural dialogue, and guarantee access to education reflective of one's traditional culture (Senplades, 2013, pp. 61-62). Another key aim is building the "popular and solidary economy" which at its core denotes privileging labour over capital and orienting the economy towards the needs of human beings and nature. Akin to the correlation between work and personal growth in *sumak kawsay*, the NPGL recognizes work as a vital component of good living and the basis for unfolding people's talents (p. 76). Most notably the NPGL proposes to establish and guarantee the sustainability of "self-supply and subsistence activities, as well as human care activities" and acknowledges their value in maintaining household and community reproduction. In terms of facilitating the transformation of the economy's productive structure, the NPGL's goals remain more modest and are limited to diversifying production, expanding manufacturing output, and increasing the number of skilled labourers (p. 81).

While the state takes a prominent role in the organization and accessibility of Ecuador's political structures as well as the management of natural resources, its eminence in economic affairs is particularly marked. Unfortunately, the recentralization of the state coincides more with policy pragmatism than with any radical attempt to break from capitalist orthodoxy. The state's efforts largely revolve around generating economic growth and consolidating its role in driving production and regulating the market. Senplades rightfully contends that this nevertheless signals a

[23] A Pareto efficient outcome is when, compared to the status quo *ex ante*, at least one individual is made better off and no individual is made worse off.

momentous change since now more than ever before the state is able to redistribute the benefits of growth socially. However, even the degree to which transfer programs reduce inequality as a result of the recentralization of the state is up for debate. Eaton (2014) shows that in many cases social programming is merely changing hands. For example, Correa's 2008 endorsement of technical changes to reduce oil revenue transfers to subnational governments limited the range of welfare services local governments could provide. Correa subsequently used the new revenue to finance the expansion of centrally funded programs like *bono de desarrollo humano* (the human development bond) and replace welfare assistance cut from the subnational level.

Several scholars (Monni & Pallottino, 2013; Ruttenberg, 2013; Villalba, 2013) point out that *buen vivir*'s translation into the NPGL fails to challenge current economic, social, and political structures in Ecuador. For Villalba (2013, p. 1435) the vision of the NPGL is clearer in proposing a "de-neoliberalization of the country than proposing an alternative form of society". He argues that the relatively harmless set of social targets come closer to theories of human development than to the *buen vivir* approach and suggest that there is a "considerable degree of adaptation and hybridization in the translation [of *buen vivir*] from theory to practice". Monni and Pallottino (2013, p. 17) write that the *buen vivir* introduced in the NPGL, "risks to come to light only as rhetoric, a political discourse, functionally used to reach power but devoid of the strength needed to bring about a real transformation in policies as well as in institutional arrangements." Ruttenberg (2013, p. 85) echoes these sentiments noting that the institutionalization of *buen vivir* is problematic insofar as it is paired with a "lack of comprehensive understanding of what the concept actually entails in a practical sense, as well as which policy mechanisms are required for its full realization."

As each of these scholars explains, the tensions and incoherencies in both the constitution and the NPGL are not indicative of any uncertainty on behalf of the state and its orientation towards *buen vivir*. Indeed, the constitutionalization of *buen vivir* represents something "historical" in the sense that it provides an alternative way of conceiving society and its transformation (Monni & Pallottino, 2013, p. 16). For Villalba (2013, pp. 1435-1436) the NPGL's shortcomings underscore "the scale of the changes undertaken and the challenge implied in implementing them in attainable, measurable, and contrastable public policies, as expected of any government action." Or as Ruttenberg (2013, p. 85) remarks, the institutionalization of *buen vivir* demonstrates that the concept, like other articulations of social wellbeing, "is itself of a subjective contextual nature" and that "each community or people defines and experiences *buen vivir* differently, such that a universal definition can neither be determined nor applied to all."

Disenchantment with the NPGL however, seems to have less to do with the gulf between the revolutionary wording kept from the constitution and its translation into mildly reformist decrees, than with the narrow set of goals and policies considered. The NPGL, for all its calls for economic sovereignty does not propose replacing the US dollar as legal tender in Ecuador, nor does it seriously consider alternatives to a raw materials-exporting modality. The nationalization of natural resources, rather than safeguarding the territories of indigenous peoples exposes them to state-sanctioned extractive activities. Resource development not only proceeds at the state's discretion but also supersedes the rights of the communities in whose territory those resources are located to dissent.

Unlike the constitutional assembly, Senplades excluded critical voices – particularly those of social movements – from drafting the NPGL. As a result, the plan converts *buen vivir* into a neutral project for technical assistance that stands in stark contrast to *buen vivir*'s emergence as a politicized movement linked to the struggles of indigenous peoples. Former assembly member and indigenous activist Monica Chuji denounced the policy objectives stemming from the NPGL as "a rehashed neoliberalism with a progressive face" (Becker, 2011). The perspective of voice and liberation of the indigenous communities was lost from *buen vivir* and replaced with a series of prosaic objectives to improve the livelihood of individuals (Monni & Pallottino, 2013).

Ecuador's implementation of *buen vivir* seems to provide a counterpoint to Ferguson's (1994) influential study of the Thaba-Tseka development project in Lesotho, in that its significance lies not in what the operationalization of *buen vivir* fails to do, nor indeed what it does, but in what it never attempts to do to begin with[24]. Correa aptly frames public discourse so as to tie resource extraction to basic needs and the elimination of income poverty and unemployment. In this sense, development can either succeed or fail to varying degrees based on community involvement, environmental stewardship, economic success, and so on, but the development agenda is beyond reproach since material prosperity is an *ex ante* requisite to guarantee *buen vivir*. This is not to say that the state fails to recognize non-productivist visions of wellbeing but precisely that it only recognizes them insofar as it can neatly amalgamate these perspectives into a hegemonic structure that gives the state exclusive power to define the terms of poverty, development, and wellbeing. Thus, the integration of *buen vivir* as a guiding principle

---

[24] In his study, Ferguson argued that it was not enough to note what development projects failed to do but that it was necessary to analyze the instrumental effects of those "failures" and the process through which they were redefined as "successes" on which new projects were to be modelled.

for the state is more an exercise in moulding *buen vivir* to fit with existing state structures than with remaking those structures to resonate with the ethos of *buen vivir*.

OIL, MINERALS, AND WATER: THE PRAXIS OF BUEN VIVIR

If *buen vivir* demands disrupting the anthropocentric and teleological model of linear development in terms of growth, industrialization, and modernization (Agostino & Dübgen, 2012) then the state's efforts towards this end are mixed. On one hand, the rights of nature prompt courts to view the environment, not from an anthropocentric perspective, but from the perspective of nature itself. Indeed, the judiciary is vindicating the rights of nature in Ecuador with ever increasing legal effect (Daly, 2012). Conversely, the effects of *buen vivir*'s "constitutionalization" on resource development patterns and environmental subject-making are non-uniform and fragmented. The state still treats nature as a stock of resources to be transformed into goods, rather than a source of intrinsic value distinct from its use to humans. Ecuador's oil-mining schism in which the state affixes a negative symbolic charge to oil extraction and praises mining as a treasure trove for state-building is an example of this dissonance. The state-sponsored Yasuní-ITT proposal for instance, is not only (or even primarily) a project for promoting radical new ways of valuating natural environments, but a historically contingent approach to asserting Ecuadorian sovereignty through the medium of nature (Davidov, 2012).

Two years prior to the Yasuní proposal, Block 31, an area immediately west of the ITT (Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini) oilfields in the heart of Yasuní National Park, became the center of a showdown with Brazil's national oil company Petrobras. The Brazilian oil giant submitted an environmental impact study to construct two oil drilling platforms within the northeastern section of the park. In May 2005, Petrobras began constructing a road – involving requisite cutting of primary forest – to the northern limits of the park, and sought a final permit to extend its construction into the park. In response to the construction, a group of over fifty scientists with research experience in Yasuní submitted a technical advisory report to the Ecuadorian government warning that roads were the main catalysts for deforestation and biodiversity loss, and that they substantially impinged on the Waorani's lifestyle who called the park home. The group advised the government to prohibit further road construction into the park[25].

[25] For political correspondence and a full technical report, see Scientists Concerned for Yasuní (2004) and Albacete, Espinosa, & Prado (2004), respectively.

Two major oil access roads already existed within Yasuní, the first of which, the Auca road, constructed in the early 1980s by Texaco (now Chevron) had spawned a protracted legal battle over the dumping of toxic wastes into the area's waterways. Extending approximately 120 kilometers into Waorani lands, the Auca road led to illegal timber harvesting and hunting and since no controls regulated its use, it brought about violent confrontations with the areas indigenous inhabitants. The second road, built in the early 1990s and named the Maxus road after the oil company that constructed it, attempted to rectify these issues by staffing a control post to deter trespassers. Land conversion and unsustainable hunting rates however continued unabated since the Waorani took advantage of the free transportation along the road provided by the oil company to not only increase their hunting territory, but also to bring their catch to market (Suárez, et al., 2009). Increased accessibility and ease of transport made roads the strongest predictor of where deforestation would occur in Yasuní. As Finer *et al.* (2009) indicate the Auca and Maxus roads were directly responsible for habitat fragmentation, soil erosion, altered hydrology, vehicle-wildlife collisions, noise, and forest edge effects.

Petrobras' venture into Block 31 eventually halted after massive demonstrations forced President Lucio Gutierrez's regime out of office at the end of April 2005. Ecuador's new Environment Ministry informed Petrobras that it did not have authorization to extend their road or build a processing facility within the park and instead would have to develop a roadless entry design. A year after the Environment Ministry denied them access into the park Petrobras submitted another environmental impact study involving helicopter access to the drilling platforms. Although by 2008 following another round of legal and administrative challenges, Petrobras ultimately decided to terminate their contract and return the block to the state. Environmental and indigenous organizations celebrated the end of the Block 31 saga as they thought it had set a "no-new-road" precedent throughout the region and inspired a newfound resolve to prohibit development in Yasuní.

Yasuní National Park established in 1979 at the juncture of the Amazon, the Andes, and the equator sits atop Ecuador's second largest untapped oil fields known as the ITT and contains a wealth of endemic species. It is also arguably the most biodiverse place on Earth due to its location at the core of a unique area where the continent's plant, amphibian, bird, and mammal species richness centers overlap (Bass, et al., 2010). In addition to Yasuní's natural wealth, the park

is home to the nomadic Tagaeri and Taromenane tribes – relatives of the Waorani people[26] – who live in voluntary isolation in the reserve and have no peaceful contact with the outside world. The combination of high biodiversity and rainforest indigenous peoples along with oil and timber interests has led to intense conflicts and a complicated array of overlapping protected areas, indigenous reserves, and extractive concessions in the region (Finer, Vijay, Ponce, Jenkins, & Kahn, 2009).

In September 2007, Correa presented the Yasuní-ITT initiative to the United Nations, in which he proposed to leave the ITT oil underground in exchange for financial contributions from the international community amounting to approximately half the value of the oil, at least $3.6 billion. The multi-partner trust fund office of the United Nations Development Program established the Yasuní-ITT trust fund in August 2010 to collect these contributions. It earmarked resources from the fund to facilitate the implementation of projects in Ecuador dealing with biodiversity conservation, renewable energy, social development in the surrounding areas, and for innovation and science in the fields of bio-knowledge, energy, and water management (Pellegrini, Arsel, Falconí, & Muradian, 2014). By May 2013, donors had committed approximately $336 million to the fund yet Correa claimed that of this amount Ecuador had only received $13.3 million (Valencia, 2013). Correa appointed a commission to review the initiative's progress in August 2013 and concluding that the economic results were insufficient he declared the initiative dead and blamed the international community for failing to come through with funding.

In addition to environmental conservation, Yasuní-ITT also had important implications for the adjacent Waorani Ethnic Reserve. The government officially granted the land (covering roughly a third of their ancestral territory) to the Waorani people in 1990 as part of a reduction to the borders of Yasuní National Park in order to allow oil exploration along its limits. The government maintained subsurface rights in the reserve and explicitly stated that the Waorani could not reject government-sponsored oil activities in the area (Finer, Vijay, Ponce, Jenkins, & Kahn, 2009). As Finer *et al.* point out in their review of Yasuní's turbulent history the Waorani fiercely defended their territory from outsiders variously drawn to the region by the rubber boom in the late 1800s, early oil exploration in the 1940s, missionary work starting in the 1950s, and the oil boom in the 1970s. Lu (2001) highlights how the Waorani have undergone a rapid process of acculturation beginning with market involvement, formal schooling, and sedentarization. More

[26] Much of the previous literature uses the term "Huaorani", though "Waorani" is the preferred designation as reflected in the titles of their own organizations NAWE (Nationality Waorani of Ecuador) and AMWAE (Association of Waorani Women of the Ecuadorian Amazon).

recently, petroleum development leading to environmental degradation, increased contact with outsiders, and more wage labour opportunities, has catalyzed a breakdown in the Waorani's value system and demographic change. For Ziegler-Otero (2004) the destruction of the Waorani's traditional way of life and conversion to a foreign religion and a new set of social norms is tantamount to ethnocide.

Pressure from activists on the Ecuadorian government to adopt precautionary measures to protect the land and lives of the Tagaeri and Taromenane peoples living in voluntary isolation eventually led to the creation of an "Intangible Zone[27]" encompassing the entire southern half of the Yasuní National Park and parts of the Waorani Ethnic Reserve. The government also established an uncontacted peoples policy elaborated upon in the 2008 constitution that affirmed,

> The territories of the peoples living in voluntary isolation are an irreducible and intangible ancestral possession and all forms of extractive activities shall be forbidden there. The State shall adopt measures to guarantee their lives, enforce respect for self-determination and the will to remain in isolation and to ensure observance of their rights. The violation of these rights shall constitute a crime of ethnocide, which shall be classified as such by law (art. 57).

Article 407 as mentioned above, however, creates a loophole allowing extraction to go ahead in protected areas and zones declared intangible assets. The decision to drill is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the President and the National Assembly.

In May 2014, following the decision to abandon the ITT-initiative, Correa – whose party controlled 100 of the 137 seats in the National Assembly – invoked these powers to grant environmental approval to Petroamazonas, a subsidiary of the state oil company, to drill in the Tiputini and Tambococha oil fields (Alvaro, 2014). The permits allow Petroamazonas to begin constructing access roads and camps (and clearing primary forest) in preparation for drilling, with oil production in Tiputini and Tambococha slated to start in 2016 and in Ishpingo by 2018.

Ecuador's Environment Minister Lorena Tapia made a statement that Petroamazonas had fulfilled all set requirements and carried out prior consultation with indigenous communities in the area (Alvaro, 2014). Consultation however, only implied that a community was informed within a reasonable time period and that it was entitled to compensation for social, cultural, and environmental damages. Communities did not have the right to veto the state's decision – even with majority opposition – and extractive activities were not subject to their consent (art. 398).

---

[27] The Intangible Zone established by presidential decree in 1999 served as an area off limits to extractive activities in order to protect Tagaeri and Taromenane territory. The policy however was largely unenforced and the Intangible Zone's borders remained unprotected.

The decision to drill in the ITT directly contravenes Ecuador's ratification of ILO convention 169, a legally binding directive stating that indigenous and tribal peoples have the right to "decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual wellbeing and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control over their economic, social and cultural development", that is their right to free, prior, and informed consent. Because the Tagaeri and Taromenane live in voluntary isolation, the government has skirted consultation maintaining that they will act in the best interest of all Ecuadorians. Nevertheless, the decision to allow drilling in the ITT raises suspicions that the interests of some Ecuadorians are more important than others.

Following the collapse of the ITT initiative Correa declared that Ecuador's development would not be derailed just because a few environmentalists were unwilling to accept some "minor sacrifices" (Vidal, 2014a). In response to the government's plan to drill in the ITT oilfield a group of campaigners calling themselves "Yasundios" began collecting signatures to trigger a referendum on the issue – Ecuador's 2008 constitution allows citizens to call a referendum on any matter granted they can obtain backing from at least five percent of the electorate (art. 104). The petition gathered approximately 850,000 signatures, but the National Electoral Council deemed only 359,762 of those signatures legitimate, bringing the total well under the roughly 583,000 needed for a referendum (Vidal, 2014b). The National Electoral Council claimed that the rejected signatures were duplicates, incomplete, or not registered as eligible voters. Yasuní campaigners retorted that the council had manipulated materials, barred outside observers from monitoring the process, and eliminated tens of thousands of signatures based on technicalities such as using blue rather than black ink. As of this writing, Yasundios is appealing the decision and planning to go to international courts to halt development.

Viewed in this light, Correa's political manoeuvring over the course of the Yasuní campaign had less to do with realizing *buen vivir*'s ethos of recasting society-nature relations than with forwarding a critique of neoliberal development through a symbolic assertion of Ecuadorian sovereignty. I argue that Correa's assertion of sovereignty through the ITT initiative was largely symbolic because the independence gained through bringing oil production under national control[28] was directly offset by the liberalization of Ecuador's mining industry. As Davidov (2013) points out, Correa's discourse on the environment as a locus of value rather than goods

[28] It is imperative to differentiate between national control and nationalization here. National control suggests that the state plays a leading role in managing and benefiting from resource extraction, as opposed to nationalization, which implies the industry is state-owned.

paradoxically only applies to certain environments in Ecuador. Oil, explains Davidov, is the industry sector where the national memories of the neoliberal years are located and is cast as a site of development "failure".

In this sense, the ITT initiative was positioned as a critique of both "the unfair economic relationships Ecuador was subjected to and the way in which Ecuador's natural environments had become the medium through which these forms of economic inequality were perpetuated" (Davidov, 2013, p. 14). Oil also occupies a particularly prominent space in Ecuador's history and is synonymous with the country's entanglement with the World Bank and the IMF, and Texaco's pollution of the Amazon. Drilling in the ITT would signal the failure of the Yasuní initiative as a conservation project. Yet as an assertion of sovereignty, the Yasuní initiative succeeds regardless of the outcome in the ITT, since the very existence of the initiative has recast oil "as the symbol of Ecuador's autonomy over its natural resources" (Davidov, 2013, p. 15). Inasmuch as the Yasuní initiative was a ground-breaking paradigm in ecological valuation, this was ancillary to its role in establishing Ecuador's resource sovereignty and its capacity to decide to which ends it would put these resources to use.

The ITT initiative also offered Correa a convenient means through which to absolve himself of responsibility over the initiative's outcome insofar as he could pass the blame for Yasuní's failure onto the rich nations for not giving enough to make it work. For Correa's government the ITT initiative's potential to create a paradigm shift in environmental valuation was of secondary importance to its principal function as a moral narrative rebuking the entanglement of national resources and foreign debt. If the government genuinely sought to reframe nature as a relational whole vis-à-vis *buen vivir*, then why asks Davidov (2012) were no ITT-type initiatives proposed to keep copper inside the mountains of the Imbabura province – which includes some of the most biodiverse forests in the world – or for prohibiting gold mining in the Cordillera del Cóndor with its low-canopy of dense rainforest housing a multitude of endemic species?

Mining and oil extraction in Ecuador receive radically different treatments from the state. While the state brands oil extraction a tool of extranational neoliberal forces, it depicts mining as the site of a new nationalism and positions it as a populist endeavour lending to progressive state-building (Davidov, 2013). Though mining and oil extraction are functionally equivalent as forms of resource-led development, crude oil, which has been Ecuador's primary export since the 1960s, came with a lack of environmental protection and virtually no accountability on behalf of the foreign companies involved in its extraction. The oil boom in the 1970s that enabled Ecuador to

cash in on low interest loans had sent the nation's external debt skyrocketing when oil prices crashed and interest rates spiked in the 1980s. As a result, oil revenue no longer subsidized national wellbeing through infrastructural investments but shifted toward servicing Ecuador's ballooning external debt, which contributed to increased dependence on IMF loans, structural adjustment, and a succession of neoliberal presidents.

Mining is comparatively new to Ecuadorian soil having begun in the 1990s with the World Bank funded Mining Development and Environmental Control Technical Assistance Project known as PRODEMINCA. The purpose of the project was to promote industrial mining in Ecuador by attracting new private mining investment to the country. PRODEMINCA's primary function was to modify Ecuador's mining legislation to make it more favourable to industry and to produce maps of the country's mineral deposits. The Organization for the Defence and Ecological Conservation of Intag (DECOIN) filed formal complaints against PRODEMINCA for prospecting in national parks but with the project near its end in 2006, it was too late to modify. DECOIN along with a number of communities across Intag are developing alternatives to mining such as agro-tourism, organic coffee production, sugar collectives, and subsistence farming. However, since many of PRODEMINCA's projects have yet to reach the extraction stage (Davidov, 2013) the initiative has not encountered the same sort of resistance as oil development.

Correa's 2009 mining law mimicked PRODEMINCA's design by granting "national treatment" to foreign companies, allowing them to expropriate land and prospect without the consent of local communities. The law also removed the requirement to have an environmental management system in place before the environment ministry granted project licences and gave companies the right to use any and all resources within the concession needed for mining, which included water. Relative to Correa's 2007 decree claiming 99 percent of oil companies' "extraordinary income" for the state, the 2009 mining law imposed only paltry royalties that originally entitled the state to "no less than 5 percent of sales". Following a series of amendments, the government capped the open-ended royalty clause to an 8 percent ceiling and allowed companies to forego payment of windfall taxes until they had recouped their investment (Garcia, 2013).

The mining law attracted the ire of social movements arguing that the new legislation was unconstitutional because it violated provisions regarding collective rights, rights to dissent, and the rights of nature. An administrative protection clause in the law protects holders of mining rights from "intrusion, dispossession, invasion, or any other form of disturbance preventing the exercise

of its mining activities". Hence, anyone entering concessioned mining areas with an intent to disrupt their activities was subject to sanctions including the confiscation of their tools and equipment, fines, and imprisonment. This *de facto* criminalization of protest allowed mining companies to not only define what constitutes a "disturbance" or "disruption" but also to prosecute those who opposed, criticized, or denounced their actions.

The law jeopardizes the constitutional guarantee of individuals and communities to resist activities that undermine their rights (art. 98) and endangers several collective rights of indigenous communities including their ownership right of ancestral lands, their right to free, prior, and informed consent, and their right to keep and promote their practices of managing biodiversity and their natural environment (art. 57). The legislation renders consultation a mere formality given that public participation only takes place after a mining concession is granted – *i.e.* once the state awards it to an individual or corporate entity, or it is auctioned off to the highest bidder. Additionally, Ecuador's Mining Ministry, a body appointed by and responsible to the state, has the last word on whether projects go forward. The law also allows the state to dispense with their constitutional obligation to protect food sovereignty and the human right to water in concessioned mining areas since it declares mining operations in all their phases to be of "public utility".

Correa has attempted to frame the expansion of mining as a precursor to poverty reduction and social investment. Indeed, using these ends to justify the need for mining, he has made clear that extraction must go ahead even in the face of resistance because its fruits are for all and because no other quick pathway to increased social investment exists (Bebbington & Bebbington, 2011). Correa's aphorisms draw attention to a shared understanding that Ecuador's riches have not always been used for national benefit but rather exploited for the gain of foreign interests. In this sense, Correa's mining-driven regime of resource nationalism corresponds to a narrative of Ecuador transitioning from "a petrostate plagued by neocolonialism to a populist democracy where subsoil minerals belong to the people" (Davidov, 2012, p. 14).

As I discussed above, regardless of whether an extractivist strategy actually implies the "greatest good for the greatest number", such development is irreconcilable – indeed antithetical – to the tenets of *sumak kawsay* and the principles of *buen vivir* set out in the 2008 constitution. Reliance on "easy" revenues from extractive activities has shielded the government from the need to address deeper issues around economic diversification, underlying inequality, and tax reform. As Grugel and Riggirozzi (2012) argue, the emerging paradox of post-neoliberal economic governance in Latin America is that the greater fiscal capacity of the state has come at the expense

of a broad economic base and locked-in export dependence – exactly what most development strategies in the twentieth century sought to escape. In Ecuador, the government has applied the threat of expropriation and higher taxation on oil production strategically to force multinational companies to renegotiate contracts. That said its intention has never been to nationalize the oil industry – indeed the number of new concessions it has granted to foreign oil companies suggest the opposite. Rather the objective is merely to increase the state's share in oil profits. The recent changes to Ecuador's mining law are illustrative of the state's interest to attract large foreign investors to fill its coffers, not to support artisanal or small-scale mining. As Grugel and Riggirozzi (2012, p. 14) contend, the thrust of Ecuador's natural resource policy is to "increase the volume of revenue to the government rather than to bring the export sector into public ownership".

Though it garnered less attention than the protracted Yasuní-ITT fracas and Ecuador's headlong foray into mining development, the country's new water law passed in June 2014 has equally important repercussions for society-nature relations and indigenous rights over resource management. As a vital element for nature and human existence, water goes hand in glove with *buen vivir*. It also occupies a unique position in that the state classifies water as a strategic resource much like oil, mining, and biodiversity; yet, unlike these resources the state also guarantees access to water and lists it as part of the rights to buen vivir. In spite of this, the new law subordinates Ecuador's community-managed water systems to a number of state authorities, which are responsible for regulating, managing, and planning water use. The law also designates the state as "the exclusive competent authority to control water resources" (Picq, 2014) and denies indigenous communities the right to vote on matters that could negatively affect their water resources.

The water law contains a clause akin to Article 407 of the constitution describing water as an "exclusively public resource" while granting the state rights to override this status and control its provisioning and uses. Article 6 of the law prohibits the privatization of water, upholding the constitution's affirmation of the human right to water. However, the subsequent article enables the state to make an exception to public or community provisioning of water in the case of an emergency or if the state deems local authorities as lacking in financial or technical means to manage their water systems (Picq, 2014). As a result, the state is able to circumvent the collective rights of indigenous or peasant communities to manage their water resources should they stand in the way of extractive activities. The law also allows groundwater to be included in the sale of land (Diaz, 2014), which grants private companies control of water resources and violates article 318 of the constitution that states any form of water privatization is forbidden.

In their study of water reform in Ecuador, Boelens, Hoogesteger, and Baud (2013) contend that issues concerning water governance and control reflect broader conflicts over authority and legitimacy between the state and civil society. They show that both neoliberal era governments and Correa's administration have undercut efforts that would challenge the hugely unequal distribution of water access, water rights, and water decision-making powers. For instance, water allocations are still highly skewed towards agri-businesses and large landowners and municipalities are still able to delegate water service provisioning to private companies[29]. The state celebrates the cultural diversity of water rules, water user identities, and water organizational forms only as long as these align with official government programs and objectives. In this sense, efforts to integrate peasant and indigenous voices into state institutions are characteristic of "neoliberal multiculturalism". The limited incorporation of these "other" views allows the state to co-opt or sideline the plurality of social organizations and dissident voices that might otherwise challenge their discourses, practices, and rationality.

While constitutional provisions protect water from the type of commoditization besetting the oil and mineral sectors, the new law attempts to soften these protections. Article 318 of the constitution obliges the state to plan and mange water resources for human consumption, irrigation to guarantee food sovereignty, ecological wealth, and productive activities in that order of priority. Correa however insists that water due to its classification as a "strategic resource", shall be managed as such. Removing community water controls risks exacerbating Ecuador's already disproportionate distribution of water. Small landholders that produce the majority of food for internal consumption in Ecuador correspond to 86 percent of water users, but only have access to 13 percent of the total water available. In comparison, large private landowners representing 1 percent of agricultural production consume 64 percent of available water (Harris & Roa-García, 2013). With the state mapping and regulating water usage, peasant organizations and indigenous communities that had until now managed water according to their own rules and principles no longer have the ability to do so. State institutions such as the National Water Secretariat and the Agency for Regulation and Control of Water are supplanting Ecuador's polycentric patchwork of organizations and replacing their diverse normative and legal traditions with a standardized set of laws.

The aforementioned policies and programs governing resource development share a number of similarities. First, they all centralize decision-making power within the state and the

[29] In Ecuador's largest city, Guayaquil the international consortium Interagua manages domestic water supply. See Swyngedouw (1997).

executive branch more specifically. In the case of the Yasuní-ITT proposal, Ecuador leveraged its natural wealth against the international community's willingness-to-pay for "environmental services". The state justified its decision to drill by framing it as an exercise of national sovereignty over natural resources despite fervent domestic opposition. Correspondingly, new mining and water laws have sought to attract foreign investment and create new revenue streams for the state by stripping communities of their rights to manage these resources themselves. Second, Correa's operationalization of *buen vivir* replaces the hegemony of the market with the hegemony of the state. The state claims exclusive ownership over the task of breaking down the structures of neoliberal domination and elite oppression, which it purportedly does on behalf of its citizens. By excluding citizens and civil society groups from participating in this project the state produces a narrative in which existing grassroots organizations and movements no longer represent the will of the people. Third, many of the state's reforms are partial, and not wholly resistant to neoliberalism. The state operationalizes *buen vivir* to justify its perpetuation of export-driven growth dependent on the extraction of raw materials. Notwithstanding the advances of the "citizen's revolution" in improving the conditions of the poor, and in spite of the new discourses and techniques, Correa's regime is fundamentally reproducing existing practices (Boelens, Hoogesteger, & Baud, 2013).

I now turn to a concluding discussion of the implications of these findings on the articulation of post-neoliberal and post-capitalist ideals. Therein, I return to questions around *buen vivir* as a transformative process and consider the relationship between the state, civil society, and indigenous peoples in Ecuador in constructing the discourse of *buen vivir*.

5. CONCLUSION

> The existence of these parallel worlds reveals that we are moving, or at least intending to move, from a world of power and individualism to one of solidarity and community…The need for a radical change of the dominant economic model underlies all the components of the movement.
> —Philip Smith and Manfred Max-Neef

> The re-establishment of an ecological balance depends on the ability of society to counteract the progressive materialization of values. The ecological balance cannot be re-established unless we recognize again that only persons have ends and only persons can work towards them.
> —Ivan Illich

The implementation of *buen vivir* is a fragile project fraught with tensions. As discussed through examples of collective rights, regionalization, and environmental valuation, its engagement with neoliberalism and nature reveals that "living well" is possible not only within a globalized economy, but also in spite of it. *Buen vivir* remains contested among those aspiring to harvest the fruits of contemporary economic globalization and those opting to live outside of its consumptive project. Comparing *buen vivir* and *sumak kawsay* makes clear the significance of questions of where one thinks from, with whom, and for what purpose. Such questions remind us that we can never really know more than a minuscule part of the world, and that our particular understanding of it represents but one piece of a larger mosaic. To say that our positioning influences our thinking may be stating the obvious, but from that follows that no one way of thinking is inherently superior to another. I do not mean to make a case for cultural relativism here. Rather I point to the importance of acknowledging these different positions in such a way that rather than different views of a single world, a view of different worlds becomes apparent (Viveiros de Castro, 2004).

The disparity between the principles of *sumak kawsay* and the implementation of *buen vivir* reveals that the rhetoric of consensus and agreement conceals all sorts of asymmetries, conflicts, and disagreements. These issues arise as part of a dialogue that attempts to bridge two opposing worlds. For *sumak kawsay* there is no reason to "develop", the point is rather to preserve (or regain) a state of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature (Monni & Pallottino, 2013). It departs from a position that has no sense of the linear concepts of "progress" or "development" seeing as no analogous position of "underdevelopment" exists. It rejects anthropocentrism for a biocentrism that does not distinguish between nature and culture.

The differences between *sumak kawsay* and *buen vivir* while significant, are of secondary importance to their opening up of the possibility to "think with" other philosophies, cosmovisions, and collective relational modes of life. The insertion of *sumak kawsay* into Ecuadorian political discourse by no means bridges the Andean and Western cultural worlds nor does it transcend the ontological divide between humans and nature. Likewise, the reconceptualization of development as a process leading to the realization of *sumak kawsay* has not brought about the structural changes necessary to make Ecuador's economic and political institutions consonant with its principles. That said *buen vivir*'s key contribution to development discourse is that it frees the state to think outside of dominant economic and political narratives.

In the second chapter, I argued that *buen vivir*'s emergence in Ecuador is bound to Latin America's experience with neoliberal development. I examined *buen vivir* as a form of post-neoliberalism evolving out of Chávez's discursive project for a "twenty-first century socialism" which aims to renew a broad fiscal-social contract between the state and its citizens. While post-neoliberal governance makes great strides in securing the economic, social, and cultural rights of citizens, I argued that it works in step with the demands of a liberalized global economy and is thus limited in its ability to generate post-capitalist futures. With various and varied expressions of post-neoliberal governance across Latin America, I made the case that Correa's Ecuador is characteristic of a neo-developmentalist state marked by a raw materials-exporting modality.

Buen vivir issues a challenge to this characterization through deconstructing the colonial order that integrates Ecuador into the global economy as an exporter of natural resources. Through its struggle to reintroduce "other" forms of knowledge production and cultural systems into national discourse, *buen vivir* undermines coloniality's system of representations and its effect of naturalizing conquered and dominated peoples into a position of inferiority. I suggested that *buen vivir* demands a new form of inclusive citizenship that reflects not just a single way of knowing and being but is sensitive to the ontological and epistemic perspectives of all Ecuadorian peoples. Ecuador's designation as a plurinational republic is a significant achievement in and of itself because it points to a recognition of and respect for the differentiated cultural histories of Ecuadorian peoples and their right to persist in a fashion keeping with their traditions.

In Chapter 3, I considered *sumak kawsay* as part of an Andean cosmovision founded on the principles of relationality, complementarity, and reciprocity. I argued that *pachamama*, as the essence and giver of all life, is essential to indigenous understandings of humanity as equally "with" and "in" nature. In contrast to *buen vivir*'s aim of improving the livelihood of individuals, *sumak kawsay*'s realization rests on fostering a harmonious coexistence between humans and non-

humans. In this sense, "good living" consists of constantly harmonizing human lifestyles to "the *pacha*". Rather than conceptualizing wellbeing in terms of material goods or income levels, *sumak kawsay* posits that spiritual connectivity is the basis from which humans develop their potentialities and lead fulfilling lives. I indicated that *sumak kawsay*'s emphasis on a community economy clashes with *buen vivir*'s efforts towards regional and global economic integration and creates contradictions between what is and is not an economic subject.

Counter to the claims of Ecuadorian indigenous and environmental organizations, Correa insists that material prosperity is an *ex ante* requisite to guarantee *buen vivir*. As I discussed in Chapter 4, Senplades argues that the extraction of raw materials is instrumental to satisfying basic needs and ensuring employment and poverty reduction. Senplades' objectives in the NPGL and the state's position on resource extraction contradict the tenets of *sumak kawsay* as well as several articles in the constitution guaranteeing the collective rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of nature, and rights to dissent. Correa's politics seem to support the belief that the only way to create a non-capitalist alternative is to build a prosperous capitalism first. To be clear, material prosperity has a palpable influence on wellbeing up to a certain point (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2015), and the political argument for economic growth in Ecuador is a reasonable one. However, the details regarding this growth and its consonance with the principles of *sumak kawsay* remains contentious. It also makes clear that more work is needed to define the substance of *buen vivir* and bridge the gap between the principles of *sumak kawsay* and the state's development strategy.

The political ecology of extraction in Ecuador suggests that natural resources belong to the nation, not to local or indigenous populations; hence, Correa's willingness to tell environmental and indigenous groups to get out of the way of national priorities. I submit that recent changes to Ecuador's mining and water policies make resource development incontestable through criminalizing protest and centralizing decision-making powers in the state. As a result, the state's export-oriented development strategy ensures that raw materials continue taking on greater economic importance, despite the NPGL's claims otherwise. Tensions over these policies have led to demonstrations that Correa has responded to with increasingly harsh rhetoric and support for legislative reforms to reduce the scope of citizen voice (Bebbington & Bebbington, 2011).

As I showed through debates over the Yasuní-ITT proposal, the state allows development initiatives to succeed or fail but places the development agenda beyond reproach since material prosperity is antecedent to *buen vivir*. In comparing Correa's depiction of mining as a populist endeavour lending to progressive state building with the branding of oil extraction as a tool of extranational neoliberal forces, I argued that Ecuador's resource environments receive radically

different treatments from the state. In this sense, the Yasuní-ITT proposal was more a declaration of Ecuador's sovereignty over its resources than a radical approach to valuating natural environments.

Evidenced through the state's reaction towards protests against mining and oil development, Correa makes clear that opposition to resource extraction is equivalent to "terrorism" or "extortion" (Bebbington, 2009; Becker, 2013). Community opposition however does not necessarily imply opposition to all forms of extraction, but points to a concern over how the expansion of these activities is taking place. When extractive activities inevitably go forth at the behest of the state and in spite of protests, they render the purported processes of consultation meaningless by sacrificing local concerns to those of the state. Correa's evasion of questions about his own arguably authoritarian political style (at least on the subject of extraction) is telling of the state's unwillingness to further a dialogue on these issues. While environmental and indigenous rights groups have led other leftist leaders to reconsider or reverse their positions on extractive-based development (Achtenberg, 2013), Correa has moved in the opposite direction, arguing that environmental activists are undermining the gains of his "citizen's revolution".

The resulting dynamic suggests that there is no longer a need for non-state institutions because the state now guarantees citizens' interests. The state claims that as long as the people, as individuals, follow the nation's revolutionary leadership, they do not have to bother with societal problems and contradictions as collective groups (Boelens, Hoogesteger, & Baud, 2013). As Correa remarked,

> Please, let us not fall into the right-wing trap that "the state is the enemy"; we are all the state. The state is a fundamental instrument for coexistence, because through that institutionalized representation we undertake collective actions. (Cited in Boelens, Hoogesteger, & Baud, 2013, p. 6)

In this sense, *buen vivir* as development is the state (Walsh, 2010). This is problematic because it undermines polycentric governance structures and community rule-making that is fundamental to environmental management regimes in indigenous societies. Rather than consolidating democratic governance and empowering Ecuadorians as set out in the NPGL, the state has merely supplanted the hegemony of the market with its own.

As a counter-discourse to neoliberalism, *buen vivir* maintains that development must foster more inclusive (albeit smaller) economies (Escobar, 1995). In this sense, the overriding problem facing both *buen vivir* and *sumak kawsay* is not how to make markets work better for the poor or how to maximize personal welfare, but how to build a biocentric and just economy

responsive to the needs of diverse communities and environments. As I discussed in Chapter 3, work in such an economy contributes to the "reproduction of life" and instills a sense of belonging linked to the community and the soil. The ethics governing exchange cultivate cooperativeness, kindness, and reciprocity rather than advantage-seeking and competition. Likewise, the maximization of leisure time and activities celebrate being human rather than having or consuming material things. Whereas *sumak kawsay*'s economic orientation is towards cultivating an ethic of sufficiency for the whole community, I claim that *buen vivir* remains trapped in a logic of individualistic wellbeing.

I demonstrated that Ecuador's efforts at alternative regional integration continue to define development in terms of a top-down organizational structure that leaves little room for community voice or popular discussion over how best to implement projects. Using Ecuador's participation in Latin American trade alliances as an example, I argued that Correa's engagement in these forums is primarily a matter of rebuking US imperialism and bolstering sovereignty over his nation's political and economic affairs. In this sense, the state's view of sovereignty as the freedom to govern without interference does not always coincide with giving voice and currency to the ontological and epistemic practices of Ecuador's indigenous peoples. Correa continues to present *buen vivir* as part of a "citizen's revolution", though in reality it remains a state-centered process of change that encourages transformations which are more bureaucratically- than popularly-oriented.

The fact that economic growth remains at the center of development narratives tends to devalue or marginalize the possibilities of non-capitalist development. Thus, the elimination of non-capitalist forms (or at least their subordination to capitalism) is necessary in order to advance the narrative of capitalism as "the only game in town" (Gibson-Graham, 1996). Thinking through *buen vivir* as a transformative project that challenges neoliberal hegemony and disrupts prevalent political formations is an attempt at destabilizing a hegemonic capitalism from within. *Buen vivir* rejects the neoclassical "growth model of progress" and puts forth the possibility of communities creating viable productive opportunities that are consonant with their environment and the natural pressures emanating from the ecosystems on which they depend. How to replicate and extend such projects across a varied landscape is a challenge facing the Ecuadorian state and a matter for further research.

Along with postdevelopment critics and the degrowth movement, *buen vivir* challenges the coding of non-capitalist forms of economy as stagnant, traditional, primitive, backward, and incapable of independent development. By placing people and nature – as opposed to profits and

commodities – at the center of development narratives *buen vivir* contests capitalism's appropriation of the right to set the economic agenda in such a way that refusing to build capitalism is to build nothing at all. While Ecuador's implementation of *buen vivir* is still navigating a capitalist space, *sumak kawsay* points to economic forms and practices that are neither capitalist nor socialist but uniquely grounded in the Andean cosmovision. As I showed through comparisons of *homo economicus* and *homo reciprocans*, *sumak kawsay*'s understanding of humans as convivial and motivated by fairness implies that living better at the expense of others is not only misguided but also immoral.

Whether *buen vivir* succeeds as a form of post-neoliberalism, post-capitalism, or postdevelopment is beside the point. I contend that its key contribution is as an epistemic alternative – a way of thinking through other worlds. Its implementation at the national level in Ecuador serves to translate indigenous ontologies into a living process by way of recognizing and validating their cultures, knowledges, and modes of life. While the integration of *sumak kawsay* into the state's institutions, programs, and policies is uneven and full of contradictions, its success in displacing the monolithic image of neoliberalism and bringing into visibility cultural and social difference is indisputable. *Buen vivir* provides an opportunity to slow down reasoning and provoke the kind of thinking that enables us to undo, or more accurately, unlearn, the singular interpretation of what it means to "live well".

REFERENCES

Achtenberg, E. (2013, April 25). *Bolivia: TIPINIS road on hold until extreme poverty eliminated.* Retrieved from NACLA: https://nacla.org/blog/2013/4/25/bolivia-tipnis-road-hold-until-extreme-poverty-eliminated

Acosta, A. (2011, January 10). Alberto Acosta Interview. (V. Gago, & D. Sztulwark, Interviewers) Retrieved from http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/dialogos/21-160169-2011-01-10.html

Acosta, A. (2013, September 4). *Why Ecuador's president has failed the country over Yasuní-ITT.* Retrieved from The Guardian: http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/sep/04/ecuador-president-failed-country-yasuni-itt

Agostino, A., & Dübgen, F. (2012). Buen vivir and beyond: Searching for a new paradigm of action. *Paper in Venice 2012 Degrowth Conference*, 1-16.

Albacete, C., Espinosa, P., & Prado, W. (2004). *Rapid evaluation of the Gran Yasuní Napo.* ParksWatch. Retrieved from http://www.parkswatch.org/spec_reports/yasuni_eng.pdf

Alexander, S. (2012). Planned economic contraction: the emerging case for degrowth. *Environmental Politics, 21*(3), 349-368.

Alvaro, M. (2014, May 22). *Petroamazonas gets green light on Ecuador's ITT oil block.* Retrieved from The Wall Street Journal: http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303749904579578234036757754

Arsel, M. (2012). Between 'Marx and Markets'? the State, the 'Left Turn' and nature in Ecuador. *Royal Dutch Geographical Society, 103*(2), 150-163.

Barkin, D. (2012). Communities constructing their own alternatives in the face of crisis: Economic globalization in mountain regions. *Mountain Research and Development, 32*, 12-22.

Bass, M., Finer, M., Jenkins, C., Kreft, H., Cisneros-Heredia, D., McCracken, S., . . . Kunz, T. (2010). Global conservation significance of Ecuador's Yasuní National Park. *PLOS One, 5*(1), 1-22.

Bebbington, A. (2009). The new extraction: Rewriting the political ecology of the Andes? *NACLA Report on the Americas, 42*(5), 12-20.

Bebbington, A., & Bebbington, D. (2011). An Andean avatar: Post-neoliberal and neoliberal strategies for securing the unobtainable. *New Political Economy, 16*(1), 131-145.

Bebbington, A., Hinojosa, L., Bebbington, D., Burneo, M., & Warnaars, X. (2008). Contention and ambiguity: Mining and the possibilities of development. *Development and Change, 39*(6), 887-914.

Becker, M. (1999). Citizens, Indians and women: The politics of exclusion in Ecuador. *Conference on Latin American History.* Washington, D.C.

Becker, M. (2011). Correa, indigenous movements and the writing of a new constitution in Ecuador. *Latin American Perspectives, 38*(1), 47-62.

Becker, M. (2013). The stormy relations between Rafael Correa and social movements in Ecuador. *Latin American Perspectives, 49*(3), 43-62.

Boelens, R., Hoogesteger, J., & Baud, M. (2013). Water reform governmentality in Ecuador: Neoliberalism, centralization, and the restraining of polycentric authority and community rule-making. *Geoforum.*

Bowers, C., & Apffel-Marglin, F. (2008). *Rethinking Freire: Globalization and the environmental crisis.* London: Routledge.

Brenner, N., Peck, J., & Theodore, N. (2010). Variegated neoliberalization: Geographies, modalities, pathways. *Global Networks, 10*(2), 182-222.

Burges, S. (2005). Bounded by the reality of trade: Practical limits to a South American region. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 18*(3), 437-454.

Calderón, F. (2008). La inflexión política en el cambio sociocultural de América Latina. In F. Calderón (Ed.), *Escenarios Políticos en América Latina* (pp. 15-102). Buenos Aires: Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD)/Siglo XXI.

Chanto, P. (2011, April 12). *El Buen Vivir, repensar el desarrollo.* Retrieved from Otramerica: http://otramerica.com/temas/el-buen-vivir-repensar-el-desarrollo/40

Cusicanqui, S. (1991). Pachakuti: The historical horizons of internal colonialism. Retrieved from http://web.net/~bthomson/degrowth/pachakuti_cusicanqui_1991.pdf

Daly, E. (2012). The Ecuadorian exemplar: The first ever vindications of constitutional rights of nature. *Review of European Community and International Environmental Law, 21*(1), 63-66.

Davidov, V. (2012). Saving nature or performing sovereignty? *Anthropology Today, 28*(3), 12-15.

Davidov, V. (2013). Mining versus oil extraction: Divergent and differentiate denvironmental subjectivities in "post-neoliberal" Ecuador. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology, 18*(3), 485-504.

De La Cadena, M. (2010). Indigenous cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual reflections beyond "politics". *Cultural Anthropology, 25*(2), 334-370.

Demaria, F., Schneider, F., Sekulova, F., & Martinez-Alier, J. (2013). What is degrowth? From an activist slogan to a social movement. *Environmental Values, 22*, 191-215.

Deneulin, S. (2012). Justice and deliberation about the good life: The contribution of Latin American buen vivir social movements to the idea of justice. *Bath Papers in International Development and Wellbeing*, 1-16.

Diaz, A. (2014, July 29). *New water in Ecuador: Big business versus local communities.* Retrieved from Food and Water Watch: http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/blogs/new-water-law-in-ecuador-big-business-versus-local-communities/

Easterly, W. (2009, October 13). The ideology of development. *Foreign Policy.* Retrieved from http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/13/the-ideology-of-development/

Eaton, K. (2014). Recentralization and the left turn in Latin America: Diverging outcomes in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. *Comparative Political Studies, 47*(8), 1130-1157.

ECLAC. (2004). *A decade of social development in Latin America, 1990-1999.* Santiago de Chile: ECLAC.

EIA. (2015). *Ecuador Country Profile.* U.S. Energy Information Administration. Retrieved from http://www.eia.gov/countries/analysisbriefs/Ecuador/ecuador.pdf

Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the third world.* Princeton University Press.

Escobar, A. (2010). Latin America at a crossroads. *Cultural Studies, 24*(1), 1-65.

Escobar, A. (2012, September 28). "Alternatives to development": An interview with Arturo Escobar. (R. Hopkins, Interviewer) Retrieved from http://www.transitionnetwork.org/blogs/rob-hopkins/2012-09-28/alternatives-development-interview-arturo-escobar-0

Esteva, G., & Prakash, M. (1998). *Grassroots post-modernism: Remaking the soil of cultures.* London: Zed Books.

Fabricant, N. (2010). Between the romance of collectivism and the reality of individualism: Ayllu rhetoric in Bolivia's landless peasant movement. *Latin American Perspectives, 37*(4), 88-107.

Ferguson, J. (1994). *The anti-politics machine: "Development," depoliticization, and bureaucratic power in Lesotho.* University of Minnesota Press.

Ferguson, J. (2010). The uses of neoliberalism. *Antipode, 41*(1), 166-184.

Finer, M., Pappalardo, S., Ferrarese, F., & De Marchi, M. (2014). *Yasuní, Block 31: Ecological trail or oil road?* Retrieved from http://www.geoyasuni.org/?p=1694

Finer, M., Vijay, V., Ponce, F., Jenkins, C., & Kahn, T. (2009). Ecuador's Yasuní biosphere reserve: a brief modern history and conservation challenges. *Environmental Research Letters, 4*, 1-15.

Foster, J. (2012). The planetary rift and the new human exemptionalism: A political-economic cirtique of ecological modernization theory. *Organization & Environment, 25*(3), 211-237.

Foster, J., Clark, B., & York, R. (2010). *The ecological rift: Capitalism's war on the planet.* New York: Monthly Review.

Fournier, V. (2008). Escaping from the economy: the politics of degrowth. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 28*(11), 528-545.

Fritz, M., & Koch, M. (2014). Potentials for prosperity without growth: Ecological sustainability, social inclusion and the quality of life in 38 countries. *Ecological Economics, 108*, 191-199.

Galeano, E. (2008). *La naturaleza no es muda (nature is not mute).* Montevideo: Semanario Brecha.

Garcia, E. (2013, July 13). *Ecuador congress OKs law to ease mining investment terms.* Retrieved from Reuters: http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/13/ecuador-mining-idUSL2N0EP1BJ20130613

Gaudichaud, F. (2013, February 19). *Interview with Alberto Acosta: The "citizen revolution", the extractive model and the left critiques.* Retrieved from Upside Down World: http://upsidedownworld.org/main/news-

briefs-archives-68/4139-interview-with-alberto-acosta-the-qcitizen-revolutionq-the-extractive-model-and-the-left-critiques

Gerlach, A. (2003). *Indians, oil and politics: A recent history of Ecuador.* Wilmington, DE: Rowman & Littlefield .

Gibson-Graham, J. (1996). *The end of capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Gibson-Graham, J. (2006). *A postcapitalist politics.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gibson-Graham, J. (2008). Diverse economies: performative practices for 'other worlds'. *Progress in Human Geography, 32*(5), 613-632.

Girvan, N. (2011). Is ALBA a new model of integration? Reflections on the CARICOM experience. *International Journal of Cuban Studies, 3*(2), 157-180.

Godoy, R. (1985). State, ayllu, and ethnicity in Northern Potosí, Bolivia. *Athropos, 80*, 53-65.

Godoy, R. (1986). The fiscal role of the Andean ayllu. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 21*(4), 723-741.

Gough, J. (2002). Neoliberalism and socialisation in the contemporary city: Opposites, complements and instabilities. *Antipode, 34*(3), 405-426.

Grosfoguel, R. (2007). The epistemic decolonial turn. *Cultural Studies, 21*(2), 211-223.

Grugel, J., & Riggirozzi, P. (2012). Post-neoliberalism in Latin America: Rebuilding and reclaiming the state after crisis. *Development and Change, 43*(1), 1-21.

Guardiola, J., & García-Quero, F. (2014). Buen vivir (living well) in Ecuador: Community and environmental satisfaction without household material prosperity. *Ecological Economics, 107*, 177-184.

Gudynas, E. (2011a). Buen vivir: Today's tomorrow. *Development, 54*(4), 441-447.

Gudynas, E. (2011b, July 14). Good life: Germinating alternatives to development. *América Latina en Movimiento*(462). Retrieved from http://alainet.org/active/48054

Hale, C. (2002). Does multiculturalism menace? Governance, cultural rights and the politics of Identity in Guatemala. *Journal of Latin American Studies, 34*, 485-524.

Harris, L., & Roa-García, M. (2013). Recent waves of water governance: Constitutional reform and resistance to neoliberalization in Latin America (1990-2012). *Geoforum, 50*, 20-30.

Hart, G. (2001). Development critiques in the 1990s: Culs de sac and promising paths. *Progress in Human Geography, 25*(4), 649-658.

Hart-Landsberg, M. (2009, September 4). Learning from ALBA and the Bank of the South: Challenges and possibilities. *Monthly Review.*

Helliwell, J., Layard, R., & Sachs, J. (2015). *World happiness report 2015.* New York: Earth Institute.

Hernández, E. (2011). Climate change and philosophy in Latin America. *Journal of Global Ethics, 7*(2), 161-172.

Hogan, C. (2014, July 17). *Biopiracy: The new tyrant of the developing world.* Retrieved from Council on Hemispheric Affairs: http://www.coha.org/biopiracy-the-new-tyrant-of-the-developing-world/

IAC. (2007). *Final report of the integral auditing of the Ecuadorian debt.* Quito: Ministry of Economy and Finances: Internal Auditing Commission. Retrieved from http://www.jubileeusa.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Ecuador/Internal_Auditing_Commission_for_Public_Credit_of_Ecuador_Commission.pdf

Illich, I. (1969). Outwitting the "developed" countries. *The New York Review of Books, 13*(8). Retrieved from http://ournature.org/~novembre/illich/1969_Outwitting_the_Developed_Countries.html

Iwasaki, Y. (2007). Leisure and quality of life in an international and multicultural context: What are major pathways linking leisure to quality of life? *Social Indicators Research, 82*(2), 233-264.

Jackson, J., & Warren, K. (2005). Indigenous movements in Latin America 1992-2004: Controversies, ironies, new directions. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 34*, 549-573.

Jackson, T. (2009). *Prosperity without growth: Economics for a finite planet.* Routledge.

Jacome, L. (2004). *The late 1990s financial crisis in Ecuador: Institutional weaknesses, fiscal rigidities, and financial dollarization at work.* International Monetary Fund.

Jameson, K. (2011). The indigenous movement in Ecuador: The struggle for a plurinational state. *Latin American Perspectives, 38*(1), 63-73.

Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies. (2015). *Address by Harry S. Truman, 1949*. Retrieved from Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/swearing-in/address/address-by-harry-s-truman-1949

Jorden, D. (2014, September 4). *President Correa: "Biggest mistake in recent years was letting Alberto Acosta be President of the Constituent Assembly"*. Retrieved from Upside Down World: http://upsidedownworld.org/main/news-briefs-archives-68/5033-president-correa-biggest-mistake-in-recent-years-was-letting-alberto-acosta-be-president-of-the-constituent-assembly

Kallis, G., Kerschner, C., & Martínez-Alier, J. (2012). The economics of degrowth. *Ecological Economics, 84*, 172-180.

Kanbur, R. (2003). Development economics and the compensation principle. *Internationla Social Science Journal, 55*, 27-35.

Kapoor, I. (2005). Participatory development, complicity and desire. *Third World Quarterly, 26*(8), 1203-1220.

Kellogg, P. (2007). Regional integration in Latin America: Dawn of an alternative to neoliberalism? *New Political Science, 29*(2), 187-209.

Klein, N. (2014). *This changes everything.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kueffner, S. (2007, October 1). *Correa wins majority in Ecuador vote to rewrite constitution*. Retrieved from Bloomberg: http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=ahC.qiXINCA8

Latouche, S. (1993). *In the wake of the affluent society: An exploration of postdevelopment.* London: Zed Books.

Latouche, S. (2004, November 14). *Degrowth economics: Why less should be so much more*. Retrieved from Le Monde Diplomatique: http://mondediplo.com/2004/11/14latouche

Lu, F. (2001). The common property regime of the Huaorani Indians of Ecuador: Implications and challenges to conservation. *Human Ecology, 29*(4), 425-447.

Malamud, A. (2005). Mercosur turns 15: Between rising rhetoric and declining achivement. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 18*(3), 421-436.

Martínez-Alier, J., Pascual, U., Vivien, F., & Zaccai, E. (2010). Sustainable de-growth: Mapping the context, criticisms and future prospects of an emergent paradigm. *Ecological Economics, 69*, 1741-1747.

Mignolo, W. (2007). Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality. *Cultural Studies, 21*(2), 449-514.

Minsky, H. (1992). The financial instability hypothesis. *The Jerome Levy Economics Institute Working Paper No. 74*.

Monni, S., & Pallottino, M. (2013). Beyond growth and development: Buen vivir as an alternative to current paradigms. *Working Paper in Economics of the University of Rome*, 1-26.

Muraca, B. (2013). Décroissance: A project for radical transformation of society. *Environmental Values, 22*, 147-169.

Næss, A. (1989). *Ecology, community, and lifestyle.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nussbaum, M. (2011). *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

O'Boyle, E. (2011). Meeting human need through consumption, work, and leisure. *International Journal of Social Economics, 38*(3), 260-272.

Ortiz, G. (2010, November 23). *Ecuador: Native people stand up to be counted in census*. Retrieved from Inter Press Service: http://www.ipsnews.net/2010/11/ecuador-native-people-stand-up-to-be-counted-in-census/

Peck, J. (2001). Neoliberalizing states: Thin policies/hard outcomes. *Progress in Human Geography, 25*(3), 445-455.

Pellegrini, L., Arsel, M., Falconí, F., & Muradian, R. (2014). The demise of a new conservation and development policy? Exploring the tensions of the Yasuní ITT initiative. *The Extractive Industries and Society, 1*, 284-291.

Picq, M. (2014, July 16). *Conflicts over water rights in Ecuador*. Retrieved from Al Jazeera: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/07/conflict-water-rights-ecuador-201471364437985380.html

Powell, L. (2013, June 17). Opening the door to mining in Ecuador. *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*. Retrieved from http://www.coha.org/opening-the-door-to-mining-in-ecuador/

Quijano, A. (2000). Colonialiy of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *Nepantla: Views from the South, 1*(3), 533-580.

Radcliffe, S. (2012). Development for a postneoliberal era? Sumak kawsay, living well and the limits to decolonisation in Ecuador. *Geoforum, 43*(2), 240-249.

República del Ecuador. (2008). Constitución de 2008. Retrieved from http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Ecuador/english08.html

Riggirozzi, P. (2012). Region, regionness and regionalism in Latin America: Towards a new synthesis. *New Political Economy, 17*(4), 421-443.

Rist, G. (2003). *History of development.* London: Zed Books.

Rockström, J., Steffen, W., Noone, K., Persson, A., Chapin, F., Lambin, E., . . . Foley, J. (2009). Planetary boundaries: Exploring the safe operating space for humanity. *Ecology and Society, 14*(2), 1-32.

Rostow, W. (1960). *The stages of economic growth: A non-communist manifesto.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ruttenberg, T. (2013). Wellbeing economics and buen vivir: Development alternatives for inclusive human security. *Praxis: The Fletcher Journal of Human Security, 28*, 68-93.

Sachs, W. (2000). *Planet dialectics: Explorations in environment and development.* Zed Books.

Sader, E. (2005). Taking Lula's Measure. *New Left Review, 33.* Retrieved from http://newleftreview.org/II/33/emir-sader-taking-lula-s-measure

Sader, E. (2008). The weakest link? Neoliberalism in Latin America. *New Left Review, 52.*

Sahlins, M. (1997). The original affluent society. In M. Rahnema, & V. Bawtree, *The post-development reader.* London: Zed Books.

Scientists Concerned for Yasuní. (2004). *Proposed Petrobras road into Yasuní National Park.* Retrieved from http://www.saveamericasforests.org/Yasuni/Science/SciConcrndfrYasuni.pdf

Sen, A. (2004). Capabilities, lists, and public reason: continuing the conversation. *Feminist Economics, 10*(3), 77-80.

Senplades. (2010). *National plan for good living 2009-2013: Building a plurinational and intercultural state.* Quito: Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo.

Senplades. (2013). *National Plan for Good Living 2013-2017.* Quito: National Secretariat of Planning and Development.

Soto, A. (2007, November 30). *Ecuador's congress will accept closure -lawmaker.* Retrieved from Reuters: http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/11/30/ecuador-assembly-idUSN3030791120071130

Stockhausen, G. (1998). Leisure in the economic thought of John Paul II. *Internationla Journal of Social Economics, 25*(11/12), 1672-1683.

Ströbele-Gregor, J. (1996). Culture and politica practice of the Aymara and Quechua in Bolivia: Autonomous forms of modernity in the Andes. *Latin American Perspectives, 23*(89), 72-90.

Suárez, E., Morales, M., Cueva, R., Bucheli, V., Zapata-Ríos, G., Toral, E., . . . Olalla, J. (2009). Oil industry, wild meat trade and roads: indirect effects of oil extraction activities in a protected area in north-eastern Ecuador. *Animal Conservation, 12*(4), 364-373.

Swyngedouw, E. (1997). Power, nature, and the city: The conquest of water and the political ecology of urbanization in Guayaquil Ecuador: 1880-1990. *Environment and Planning, 29*(2), 311-332.

Thomson, B. (2011). Pachakuti: Indigenous perspectives, buen vivir, sumaq kawsay and degrowth. *Development, 54*(4), 448-454.

UN Comtrade. (2013). Ecuador: Goods imports and exports. In *International Trade Statistics Yearbook.* United Nations Statistics Division. Retrieved from http://comtrade.un.org/pb/

Valencia, A. (2013, August 16). *Ecuador to open Amazon's Yasuní basin to oil drilling.* Retrieved from Reuters: http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/08/16/us-ecuador-oil-idINBRE97E15220130816

Van Cott, L. (2010). Indigenous peoples' politics in Latin America. *Annual Review of Political Science, 13*, 385-405.

Vanhulst, J., & Beling, A. (2014). Buen vivir: Emergent discourse within or beyond sustainable development? *Ecological Economics*, 54-63.

Victor, P. (2008). *Managing without growth: Slower by design, not disaster.* Northampton: Edward Elgar.

Vidal, J. (2014a, April 30). *Yasuní campaigners claim oil drilling petition results are being manipulated*. Retrieved from The Guardian: http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/30/yasuni-campaigners-oil-drilling-petition-results-referendum

Vidal, J. (2014b, May 8). *Ecuador rejects petition to stop oil drilling in Yasuní national park*. Retrieved from The Guardian: http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/may/08/ecuador-rejects-petition-oil-drilling-yasuni

Villalba, U. (2013). Buen Vivir vs development: a paradigm shift in the Andes? *Third World Quarterly, 34*(8), 1427-1442.

Viveiros de Castro, E. (2004). Perspectival anthropology and the method of controlled equivocation in Tipití. *Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America, 2*(1), 3-22.

Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The modern world-system.* New York: Academic Press.

Walsh, C. (2009). *Interculturalidad, estado, sociedad: Luchas (de)coloniales de nuestra época.* Abya-Yala, Quito.: Universidad Andina Simon Bolivar.

Walsh, C. (2010). Development as Buen Vivir: Institutional arrangements and (de)colonial entanglements. *Development, 53*(1), 15-21.

Walsh, C. (2011). Afro and indigenous life-visions in/and politics: (De)colonial perspectives in Bolivia and Ecuador. *Bolivian Studies Journal, 18*, 49-69.

Williamson, J. (1993). Democracy and the "Washington Consensus". *World Development, 21*(8), 1329-1336.

Yamagishi, T., Li, Y., Takagishi, H., Matsumoto, Y., & Kiyonari, T. (2014). In search of Homo economicus. *Psychological Science, 25*(9), 1699-1711.

Yates, J., & Bakker, K. (2014). Debating the 'post-neoliberal turn' in Latin America. *Progress in Human Geography, 38*(1), 62-90.

Ziegler-Otero, L. (2004). *Resistance in an Amazonian community.* New York: Berghahn Books.

Zimmerer, K. (2012). The Indigenous Andean concept of Kawsay, the politics of knowledge and development, and the borderlands of environmental sustainability in Latin America. *PMLA*, 600-606.