



Alli Kawsay: Epistemology and Political Practice in the Territories, a Possibility from the Andean Pluriverse for Ecological Justice and the Care of Mother Nature

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Abstract

Indigenous communities are noted for being resilient. The following presentation is an epistemological-political action from the world of possibilities in the pluriverse of indigenous knowledge. The *Alli Kawsay (Buen Vivir)* and its political, cultural, and epistemic options offer the possibility to work collectively in favor of our ‘Mother Nature.’ From the urgent options to be heard in the current climate crisis and even more in the sociopolitical crisis, it is essential to strengthen respect for Mother Nature. This document arises from learning in indigenous communities in walking and listening to indigenous talk in the Andean region in high Andean and Amazonian communities. Presented here are elements of the rights of nature. The *Alli Kawsay* is an option to be lived urgently now, as a serious and fundamental option that originates from ancestral knowledge, is lived by millions in the global south, and that today is taken up again at the global level by activists and people aware of the care of nature as a subject of rights in the international political framework.

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1 Introduction

At the international academic level, we speak of southern epistemologies, and we have chosen to take on board the importance of these epistemologies or the very essence of the term. These epistemologies as such are part of the activism and political territorial defense that indigenous communities of the global south assume every day.

For our case, we refer to how external academics have spoken of the essence of the epistemologies of the global south and especially of the indigenous movements of Latin America, while largely ignoring the position and daily practice of political territorial defense and what it implies, ignoring, as such, the activism that indigenous communities practice in their daily lives.

When we speak of indigenous epistemologies we do not refer exclusively to the re-emergence/relocation in the geopolitical scenario of the indigenous movement, as is the case of the Mas in Bolivia, or the indigenous movement of Ecuador and its re-emergence in the first uprising of 1990, which gave rise to the CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador), nor to the continuous mobilization of the indigenous movement in Colombia with the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC), and all the organizational structures in the departments of Colombia with the communities that have manifested themselves in the past 60 years in South America. In this sense, when we refer to epistemology we are referring to the process of political-cultural resistance that begins with the very moment of colonization and which is maintained for generations from the political-cultural framework of the original communities. This process is potentialized in the framework of social and indigenous movements as part of these epistemologies, liberating the processes of Mother Earth, as decolonial ideology, and that enter to operate for the rights of nature in new frameworks and pro-ecological movements. These epistemologies in the first place have a character of ancestrality, because they are part of the wisdom that has been passed on by the generations that fight for decolonization and that is part of the representation/cosmovision and cultural imagery, as well as part of the political-territorial activist option of understanding Mother Nature as a living being. This knowledge or wisdom that passes from generation to generation invites us to opt for practices of caring for nature: community work or *minka* (work in group, common good), as well as sharing in *minka* as a form of redistribution of the economy that is maintained until the present in community-indigenous economies and which in turn can minimize the impact on Mother Nature.

Second, these epistemologies are part of the political-cultural resistance and categories of decolonization, because they are in turn the result of resistance, the survival of the peoples in placing themselves in the scenario of genocide that implied colonization in the historical moment of colonization of the Spanish Empire. The

epistemologies also result in the strategies of neo-colonization by the monocultural path of the hegemonic discourse of transnationals with effects we already know very well: the ancestral seeds, the territories with mining on a great scale, the construction of great infrastructure projects to the vertiginous rate of “commercial development” that affect biogeostategic zones such as moors, wetlands, rivers, and mountains and with it the animal species. Of this form, it is given then to step into the scene of the monopoly development to confrontations where the speech of development is in the forefront of ancestral, noncivilized, primitive, and wild speech, within the framework of marked exclusion and the operating monoculture. This political resistance by the original communities can be understood as another proposal/alternative proposal that is part of that resistance which struggles to survive maintaining its own economies, its own language, and the linguistic-cultural importance that this implies, added to the defense of the ancestral territory.

Many options appear in the global south as part of the epistemologies of social and ecological justice, diverse categories, and linguistic positions from interculturality, to rescue as the center of its discourse is the defense of Mother Nature.

In this way, these epistemologies urgently need to be heard, but in the scenario of exclusion and selfishness that marks the daily life of millions of people at the global level, it is urgent to opt for practices that promote listening to others: the community meetings, the care of Mother Nature by each and every one of us by our daily actions, a path that is not evident from the hegemonic political-economic system nor from global public policy.

At the international level today, there is talk of proposals, possible solutions in favor of Mother Nature, but these indigenous communities have always called for the care of Mother Nature. It is known that the communities have spoken and their millennial knowledge is heard, but the center of the discourse is the spiritual dimension, the holistic thinking of the native communities from the Alli Kawsay, that invites us to relocate the human being in community, but first of all in respect with nature and to reinterpret the way of interaction between these dimensions, starting from the basic action of spiritual growth, but at the same time heeding the marked activism that promotes environmental justice.

Third, the Alli Kawsay is part of the environmental justice battles that correspond to a cultural resistance struggle that has been going on for more than 500 years in Latin America. This struggle for territory, understood from the indigenous cosmovision as the entire geo-cultural and socialization space with common meeting factors and its own cultural patterns, is shared by its own sociolinguistic and cultural heritage, but at the same time, the Alli Kawsay, as a practice of good living, emphasizes the struggle for respect for Mother Nature as a subject of rights. This is of transcendental importance from the spiritual dimension, but from the connection/interaction with the political dimension, this defense acquires an epistemological turn of political nature, and especially in the current scenario of struggle for natural resources and the lack of strategic natural resources in the framework of global deterioration, places Mother Nature as a subject of rights in the scenario of

constitutional law. An example is the Republic of Ecuador, an element closely linked to the just struggle of new generations of environmental activists at the global level.

2 Global Scenario, Anthropocene Deterioration: True Lies?

The *Alli Kawsay* is part of the full life, which implies it is to be lived in the daily practices, and above all it invites a rupture with the hegemonic economic practices that affect considerable forms in Mother Nature. This manifest is mentioned by Dr. Gomez, on the urgency in taking measures in our practices in the cities:

Drastically reducing the level of GHG emissions through investments in low-carbon infrastructure – the physical networks that are responsible for providing water, energy, transport, buildings, industry and waste management in cities – is, therefore, a prerequisite for the Paris Agreement targets. With a growing urban population, as already mentioned, large investments in infrastructure will be required to satisfy their demands, particularly in developing countries where the greatest growth will take place. It is here where two-thirds of the new investments will be needed and another third will need to be dedicated to replacing ageing infrastructure in developed countries [45]. What types of investments are made in urban infrastructure will also have, as already mentioned, an impact on the urban form or physical structure of cities and affect the systemic characteristics of urban energy use. This in turn has consequences and a lasting influence on the patterns of energy use in cities for decades to come and potential carbon lock-in [48]. A higher density urban form that promotes electric and nonmotorized mobility and energy efficient buildings will lead to lower energy use, in contrast to urban sprawl, which does not [50, 51]. Path dependencies, particularly in transport, create challenges for policymakers trying to introduce low-carbon goals. (Gomez 2018: p. 8)

Personal activities, community, and above all forms of economic exchange from the ancestral cosmovision have to do with the care of Mother Earth. In this sense, the territory is understood from this cosmovision as the care of Mother Earth because she provides us with food and resources necessary for life, but at this point, we have asked ourselves how important is the life of Mother Nature, even leaving aside the comfort offered by modern life, or so-called developing life?

In the current so-called Global Village, it is evident that to live in development and accept all manifestations conducive to material comfort, so as to be within the parameters of moral and ontological normativity, implies the plundering of *Allpamama*; de facto, the mechanism that has taken place in man–nature relationships is considerably affecting *Allpamama*, and in this sense, development invites us to opt for the state of total well-being that is correlated with consumerism–capitalism. Hence, development is seen as an euphemism and obnubilation of the deterioration of *Allpamama*.

Within this framework, it would seem then that the exhortations made by Amazonian spiritual leaders, among them shamans, *Taytas*, *Mamitas*, and leaders of original communities as a whole, that at a global level all is linked to the episteme of *Alli Kawsay* or how to achieve the so-called full life is simply linked to a utopia, or an environmental romanticism or fanaticism of simple meaning. However,

evidently this episteme is transcendent in the midst of environmental deterioration – or do we have a second planet available for the survival of planetary species?

In fact, the patterns of human consciousness have been exceeded because we do not recognize nature as a being or a subject with rights from the integrality of values that the original communities have. In this sense, the ancestral communities speak as if the fabric of relationships in the good life or full life has deteriorated: starting from associating this fabric with life, the integrality of all beings is affected, and in this way we can represent how the social fabric or planetary life is threatened and is being fragmented. Thus, it is as the uniqueness of beings who inhabit Mother Nature we are threatened. In this order of ideas, if we look to the scientific path, the recent report of “The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change” published in 2014 emphasizes the effects on Mother Nature as a result of exaggerated human intervention, thus highlighting the group of expert scientists: “Observed changes and their causes human influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems.” (IPCC 2014: p. 18).

3 Everyday Practices: Options to Be Again Taken Up

In the Amazonian Andean territory, a network of dynamics of identity inheritance and patterns of sociocultural interaction of the primitive cultures stand out. Here is an example: the commercial interactions that are established in the front of a territory. Part of these commercial exchanges is typical of communities, such as barter, or called, in the Kichwa language, *Randi Randi*. In this way, *Randi Randi* is catalogued as giving, donating, or exchanging. For this reason, barter from alternative economies is an owned experience exercised between peers or “exchange between peers,” profoundly opposed to the practices of the capitalist system, where we already know factors such as surplus value or exchange value and that those are not worth remembering because we are immersed in the epistemologies of indigenous reciprocity. To emphasize how reciprocity is first and foremost connected to that which was before our very existence is respect for *Allpamama*.

In addition, barter is established within the dynamics of reciprocity implicit within the indigenous fairs and community meetings; thus, encounters between people and as subjects free of the alienation of the capitalist system. In this way, the *truque* promotes dialogue, camaraderie, and interaction dynamics are developed where parity becomes effective. Above all, these relationships give a personal character to economic transactions.

Likewise, within the alternative economies or what we can call the indigenization of the market (De La Cruz 2016) in South America from the interaction in the white-mestizo ethnic population with indigenous inheritance/resistance, the *Minga* stands out as the possibility of encounter between peers around a specific work of a community court for the development of common objectives. In fact, this form has survived the historical vicissitudes in *Abya Yala*, namely, colonization, the republic, and more recently the processes of economic exchange under the premises of capital.

The Minga as a collaborative action is a sample of the survival of the economic forms that seem lost in time, but that undoubtedly are part of the dynamics of the Amazonian and High Andean communities throughout South America. Even in their form of development these actions have fortunately been simulated by urban sectors to favor the achievement of objectives that benefit the community as a whole, what we could call “where everyone puts—everyone wins,” from actions of mutual agreement, such as, for example, the construction of a road, the erection of a house in a new marital union, the arrangement of a community aqueduct, or the consolidation of irrigation in the midst of drought.

In this way, goods are made of common benefit, and thus transitioning to a solvency before the possibility of social encounters towards parity (Common Goods of Humanity; Houtart 2016), very similar to the exchange of seeds that is also flourishing in the midst of the processes of euphemisms for objectives presented by mega-corporations of transgenic and seed-embracing products and commutation to the inheritance of ancestral peoples, and with it blockage to the health and survival of parity and ancestral inheritance.

These objectives are options that should be prioritized in our common practices, especially from institutions such as churches and educational institutions, and especially for each person who believes it is appropriate to rethink and resist in the midst of the Anthropocene era against the machinery and axes that mega-corporations operate in the midst of privatizations. Such factors control the market not exclusively in the process of exchange, as well as power in currencies and loans, but above all of the same forms of food such as power over the circle of seeds, the health and quality of life not only of the indigenous populations, but also populations in the large metropolises subordinated to the state of well-being and comfort characteristic of the Anthropocene and individuality for material possessions by mega-corporate control.

In particular, the urgent call by native communities and also by the scientific community is remembered as the call made by more than 15,000 scientist signatories and the results of serious scientific reports on environmental degradation. In this respect we thus mention the report published in the journal *Bioscience* (American Institute of Biological Sciences: Humanity) that is now being accorded second notice, as illustrated by these alarming trends. We are jeopardizing our future by not reining in our intense, but geographically and demographically uneven, material consumption and by not perceiving continued rapid population growth as a primary driver behind many ecological and even societal threats. By failing to adequately limit population growth, to reassess the role of an economy rooted in growth, to reduce greenhouse gases and incentivize renewable energy, to protect habitat and restore ecosystems, curb pollution, halt defaunation, and to constrain invasive alien species, humanity is not taking the urgent steps needed to safeguard our imperiled biosphere. (Bioscience 2017. Epilogue.)

Also on the part of scientists, among others, it is urgent to change our practices of energy consumption, as says Dr. McCollum in this regard in agreement with the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations Organization: “To take an example, substituting coal and natural gas in electricity generation with solar, wind

and most other renewables (though perhaps not biomass), and subsequently using that electricity to power end-use processes in the transport, buildings, and industrial sectors will help to improve the air quality of cities throughout the world (SDG3). Cleaner air, in turn, means healthier populations that can more productively contribute to the economy” (McCollum 2018: p. 14). What are we doing about it?

4 *Derechos de la Naturaleza: Rights of Nature Since the Political Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador to the Original Law*

In recent decades, in some Latin American nations, the inclusion of indigenous communities has been evident, moving from positions of coloniality to social inclusion, such as the case of the construction of interculturality in Ecuador, a process that is already binding on the theme of *Derechos de la naturaleza* (the rights of nature).

Recapitulating, here the connection between indigenous–territory–Mother Nature–*madre naturaleza*, in this order of ideas, in the episteme the rights that the cohabiter has: as human beings, they are part of the same rights (from the Western perspective) that Mother Nature has, in the indigenous episteme “rights,” so to speak from the Western point of view, which are always in the indigenous worldview, rather than rights, are part of the same *Allpamama* (in the Quechua indigenous language, Mother Nature), which is very contrary to Western law.

In this way, from the Andean circular thinking, the redistribution and twinning of the factors if it alters the order and natural law, with this reference is made to the obvious correlation and co-participation in the care of nature by all species, that in the discourse of modernity we can say renewable/nonrenewable resources. Therefore, reviewing the concept of commonality, the law of the twinning of nature implies mutual respect.

In this way, when the rights of nature are disregarded, the order of the factors is broken down, recalling here the factors of threat to the biological cycle (Planetary Boundaries, Researcher Project, Stockholm University), precisely, to speak about the rights of nature it is a totally subordinate vision, and changes the panorama of the scientific tradition, in agreement with Descola when it affirms: “To say that nature is a cultural construction supposes, in effect, that culture builds from materials that it has not been provided to herself, to, that she filters, codifies, reorganizes or discovers entities and primary properties indifferent to her intentions.” (Descola 2004: p. 4).

More than the rights of nature, it is part of the legacy that she leaves to her children, as cohabitants, of co-responsibility and co-participation in the defense of life. In this way, the fact of moving from the demand for land to the defense of the land within the historical framework of Ecuador and other nationalities and indigenous peoples in South America implied linking to the rights of nature. This translation considers the subject of anthropization; in this respect Philippe Descola affirms: “From the stratosphere to the oceans passing through the tropical forests, no one ignores it at present, our influence is felt everywhere and it will be accepted

without effort that since our natural environment is anthropized everywhere and to varying degrees, its existence as an autonomous entity is no longer a philosophical fiction” (Descola 2004: p. 6).

The *Alli Kawsay* has epistemological and dimensional depth and its episteme lies in the original communities, in the case of good living implemented in the strategy of government of the Republic of Ecuador after 2008, but in summary the strategy has great sociolegal importance to be established even in the Political Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador of the year 2008. The following are key aspects contemplated in articles 71 and following:

“Capítulo séptimo. Derechos de la naturaleza.

Art. 71.— La naturaleza o Pacha Mama, donde se reproduce y realiza la vida, tiene derecho a que se respete integralmente su existencia y el mantenimiento y regeneración de sus ciclos vitales, estructura, funciones y procesos evolutivos. Toda persona, comunidad, pueblo o nacionalidad podrá exigir a la autoridad pública el cumplimiento de los derechos de la naturaleza. Para aplicar e interpretar estos derechos se observaran los principios establecidos en la Constitución, en lo que proceda. El Estado incentivará a las personas naturales y jurídicas, y a los colectivos, para que protejan la naturaleza, y promoverá el respeto a todos los elementos que forman un ecosistema.” (Constitución de la República del Ecuador. Political Constitution Republic of Ecuador. 2008. Asamblea Nacional Constituyente. Quito Ecuador.)

“Chapter seven. Rights of nature.

Art. 71.— Nature or Pacha Mama, where life is reproduced and carried out, has the right to have its existence fully respected and the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes. Every person, community, town or nationality may demand from the public authority the fulfillment of the rights of nature. To apply and interpret these rights, the principles established in the Constitution will be observed, as appropriate. The State will encourage natural and legal persons, and groups, to protect nature, and promote respect for all the elements that form an ecosystem.”

Hence, the importance of the perspective of *Alli Kawsay* demands change in anthropization and determines the causes of said result, implying regenerating the biological cycle and with that, if we analyze the importance of its binding action, to energize the task of public policy against the results of the anthropocentric development. Following with the articles of rights of nature, the constitution details:

“Art. 72.— La naturaleza tiene derecho a la restauración. Esta restauración será independiente de la obligación que tienen el Estado y las personas naturales o jurídicas de Indemnizar a los individuos y colectivos que dependan de los sistemas naturales afectados.

En los casos de impacto ambiental grave o permanente, incluidos los ocasionados por la explotación de los recursos naturales no renovables, el Estado establecerá los mecanismos más eficaces para alcanzar la restauración, y adoptará las medidas adecuadas para eliminar o mitigar las consecuencias ambientales nocivas.

Art. 73.— El Estado aplicará medidas de precaución y restricción para las actividades que puedan conducir a la extinción de especies, la destrucción de

ecosistemas o la alteración permanente de los ciclos naturales. Se prohíbe la introducción de organismos y material orgánico e inorgánico que puedan alterar de manera definitiva el patrimonio genético nacional.

Se prohíbe la introducción de organismos y material orgánico e inorgánico que puedan alterar de manera definitiva el patrimonio genético nacional.

Art. 74.– Las personas, comunidades, pueblos y nacionalidades tendrán derecho a beneficiarse del ambiente y de las riquezas naturales que les permitan el buen vivir. Los servicios ambientales no serán susceptibles de apropiación; su producción, prestación, uso y aprovechamiento serán regulados por el Estado.” (Ibid.)

“Art. 72.– Nature has the right to restoration. This restoration will be independent of the obligation of the State and natural or legal persons to indemnify individuals and groups that depend on the affected natural systems.

In cases of severe or permanent environmental impact, including those caused by the exploitation of nonrenewable natural resources, the State will establish the most effective mechanisms to achieve restoration, and will adopt the appropriate measures to eliminate or mitigate the harmful environmental consequences.

Art. 73.– The State will apply precautionary and restriction measures for activities that may lead to the extinction of species, the destruction of ecosystems or the permanent alteration of natural cycles. The introduction of organisms and organic and inorganic material that can permanently alter the national genetic heritage is prohibited.

The introduction of organisms and organic and inorganic material that can permanently alter the national genetic heritage is prohibited.

Art. 74.– Individuals, communities, peoples and nationalities will have the right to benefit from the environment and the natural riches that allow them to live well. The environmental services will not be susceptible of appropriation; its production, provision, use and use shall be regulated by the State.” (Ibid.)

The care of biodiversity and natural resources contemplated in the *Magna Carta* of Ecuador is the result of the just demands in favor of nature and that society as a whole is called to promote from the call of the jungle, to change the paradigm of development, from the alternative care of life in the biosphere.

Against multiethnic political participation and criticism from the standpoint of indigenous alterities, against the mega-destructive capitalist system that has been strengthening in the Latin American scenario, Mignolo (2007) expresses the urgent call to indigenous communities to recall the postulates of their ancestors on the respect of Mother Nature, *Pachammama*.

Recently, in the Latin American context, the transformation towards a verticalized society is increasingly evident, even from the same educational system. In this regard the doctor in pedagogy of the University of Granada professor Marcos Santos Gómez says:

Verticality as a way of thinking and perceiving reality is, of course, an ideology, as a legitimizing thought of a society characterized by the split and separation between its members. It implies the ordination, often unconscious, that the subject makes of other people, a vertical arrangement in which he and others are placed on a scale of arrivals and

descends. Therefore, the subject becomes competitive, rivaling the other and reifying it, insofar as he considers it only according to his situation with respect to the degrees or steps of the internalized hierarchy. According to this, the person of the other tends to be treated as an object. The subject inscribed in verticality filters and eliminates everything human present in the neighbor and keeps the type or label that classifies it. Verticality implies, therefore, a kind of superficial gaze by which subjects armor themselves into the clichés that place them and legitimize the desired status. In this sense, human life and social relationships become a search for guarantees that justify the position of the subject at a high level, within the assumed scale. (Santos 2006: p. 6)

In that order of ideas, the rights of nature are linked to the change of cosmology in analogy with the ethnographer Philippe Descola, when he states: “Because the signs that presage a collapse of our cosmology are already well visible. The most obvious, the one that most mobilizes the attention of governments and citizens, is obviously the growing concern about the effects of human action on the environment” (Descola 2004: p. 5).

In this way, the change of cosmology is linked to strengthening intercultural horizontality, as Olver Quijano Valencia states, and his ethnographic approaches, as a result of walking through indigenous territory: “It is then a question of recovering, re-constructing and re-vitalizing (From the journey made after 1999 with indigenous movement in indigenous communities of Ecuador, Peru and Colombia understand, the prefix re-connect, re-vitalize, as a fact totally binding-related to spirituality from the cosmology and walk the Andean territory, action of emphasizing the action-reaction with nature, said connection from and with the environment.” “Listen to the call of Mother Nature,” in the words of the indigenous communities of the northern department of Cauca-Colombia; in the Nasa indigenous language: Cxhab Wala Kiwe-ACIN, Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca. The Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca says: “action for the liberation of mother earth,” this is, the modification of the behavior of the state of “comfort” towards personal and community management towards the change of behavior for safeguarding nature.) The place and the territory, this time for the re-production of life, and with it give way to forms opposed to the totalizing and homogenizing capitalist pretension.” (Quijano 2016: p. 216).

Linking the rights of nature in the Political Constitution of Ecuador in 2008 is a valuable historical achievement, highlighting nature as a legal subject of rights, not as a simple cliché, but, from the indigenous communality that cannot speak in this sense of rights of nature (from the Greek *demos*) to the existence of poverty in its cohabitants, or even less, when day by day increases the expansion of the agricultural frontier, deforestation, and indiscriminate felling of trees.

In this sense, exercising life to the fullest means fighting against poverty and changing course to the exercise of integral economic policy, in recognition of spirituality as a foundational basis, key factors already raised by the French sociologist and philosopher Edgar Morín in his work “The way for the future of humanity.” (Morín, Edgar. *La vía para el futuro de la Humanidad*. Grupo Planeta. Madrid-España. 2011.)

Highlighting the importance of spirituality or connection with *Allapamamama*, as the center of the indigenous task, this is how Pedro Tomé encourages: “For this reason, he affirms (Descola 1996: 99) that, faced with anthropomorphic dualism, an anthropological monism is necessary that does not conceptualize the society and culture as “autonomous and causal substances” and make emerge “a new multi-dimensional anthropological landscape in which adzes and quarks, cultivated plants and genome map, hunting rituals and oil production can become intelligible as multiple variations of a only set” (Tomé 2009: p. 4).

5 The Need for Indigenous Law at the Level of All Peoples

Indigenous peoples have a wisdom that is in synchrony and has its source in the same Mother Nature. This spirituality is not the result of capital markets, or advertising that absorbs the viewer through the marketing strategy represented in high-level advertising on the screen or mass media. On the contrary, indigenous spirituality is the result of processes of cultural resistance and, especially, is part of awakening sensitivity in the encounter with Mother Nature. These are, as we seek to promote in the encounter of contemplation, listening in the silence of nature, travel through natural territories, and especially in encounter with spaces/places of life or, as they would be called in the modern scientific field, “strategic ecosystems of the biosphere.” In this way, indigenous spirituality is articulated to the defense of Mother Earth.

Similarly, spirituality, from this ancestral perspective, of the so-called *Alli Kawsay–Buen Vivir*, implies the action of defending Mother Nature, an action that becomes an experience of spirituality in the here and now, from the actions of political mobilization as recently presented in the Ecuadorian Amazon by the Waorani brothers and which had a wide network of defenders at the global level, among them the recognized actor Leonardo DiCaprio, and a wide network of environmentalists/friends of the Pachamamma. As we know, fortunately part of this mobilization resulted in limiting the implementation of perverse strategies in the Amazon jungle. Hence the urgency of an environmental policy that seeks at the global level from the coalition to generate spaces in favor of life at the global level, in the midst of networks of global perversity.

As is evident, social mobilization, even at the global level, with the articulation of networks in defense of Mother Nature can be deeply correlated with the implementation of common agreements or the search for the “common good of humanity” and the defense of life. These are models that should be replicated as significant experiences of being taken to democratic political practice and implementation of environmental public policy, seeking common benefit (Houtart), and especially safeguarding nature and strategic resources, respecting the importance of democracy and participatory processes, as so says the recognized indigenous leader of the Saraguro people Tayta Luis Macas:

Firstly, a reformulation of democracy. A not only representative democracy, but a participatory, communitarian democracy; a much broader democracy, based on the dialogue, consensus, revocation and permanent inspection. We talked about the deepening of that democracy with the contingent of other peoples, and that is why this diversity is important in order to be able to make the existence of the Other express itself in this country. Because even the that vision does not exist at the moment; what still subsists is the vision of the colonial state that now expresses itself in other forms but with the same basic content: the invisibilization of the Other. (Macas 2005: p. 5)

The jurisdiction of indigenous peoples is not a jurisdiction that is granted as a gift or charity to indigenous peoples, as such it is a law that is born in the genesis of primeval times, is part of the time and genesis of indigenous peoples. Likewise, the law of origin is based on respect for the autonomy of the original peoples, and this autonomy implies then, to articulate networks of protection/defense of patrimonial goods/common goods of humanity in the policy, this articulation must already operate in dialogue with the epistemology that resides today in the western law of the Eurocentric court that has violated in the past 524 years (for the Latin American case) the rights and with it the same memory of the ancestral peoples.

The environmental public policy, obviously, must articulate international networks of environmentalists, the academy, but above all include the peoples and nationalities historically excluded from the political and traditional scenario, which has benefited the access to resources by historical elites. As we demonstrate at present, the geostrategic and mega-destructive elitism leaves multiple political and economic sequelae but above all in the destruction of quality of life for all humanity, ending with the dignified quality of life represented in access to clean air, clean water, basic sanitation, and environmental education in unsustainable cities. The strategy of the implementation of environmental cities or sustainable cities of the future must protect the memory of the ancestral communities, because in that same memory there is a profound epistemology that deserves to be listened to and that is holistic in the defense of life, respect for intercultural dialogue, and the search for the common good of humanity. In the case of the Republic of Ecuador, the indigenous movement in continuous political defense highlighted more recently, in 2012, the importance of community production and agriculture initiatives, as a possibility of alternative economy; in this regard comments Imbaquingo: "Community production requires incentives, because it develops in the midst of disadvantages and is forced to compete, without that being its vocation. Among the incentives we propose the delivery of a subsidy for agroecological production, which stimulates community agriculture and ensures minimum viability conditions, as a basis for food self-sustainability and the generation of surpluses, in the terms already contemplated in the Organic Law of Food Sovereignty" (Imbaquingo 2012: p. 7).

Thus, in countries whose scenario is internal armed conflict, such as Colombia, with the recent upsurge in warfare, it confines natural resources as strategic resources. In this scenario, the indigenous guards are strengthened as an organizational mechanism based on their own right and that responds to the community, the participative and autonomous organizational structure of the original peoples in the order in defense of ancestral territories, which in turn, the indigenous guarías operate

in the structure of political and dynamic power that promotes economies and relationships of exchange and participation/social cohesion in the face of common objectives. In this way, the Alli Kawsay is a specific rule to comply with reciprocal obligations and is a form of complementary distribution of power, which protects the community forms of territorial power politics.

The Andean agroecological systems at the environmental level are sustained in the epistemology of the Alli Kawsay, epistemology that is as rich in its contribution to environmental defense, dynamics of high proactivity as the same geographic wealth of the Andean nations, or the multicultural and biophysical wealth of the diverse peoples of the beautiful high mountain area of Kyrgyzstan, or the multicultural wealth of the environment and high mountains represented in the Himalayas.

Also, the broad vision of the Alli Kawsay implies recognizing the richness of the natural environment. In this sense, the biophysical and ecological characteristics that have surrounded the epistemology of indigenous communities is broadly nuanced, as it allows us to recognize the broad ecosystem richness from the richness of high mountains to the forests of Amazonian foothills and Pacific Ocean foothills. In this order of ideas, the synchrony that exists in the epistemology of good living is part of the recognition of the natural environment.

It is now pertinent to analyze how environmental policy at the global level arises from the spiritual recognition of the environment, as a possibility of recognition of otherness/otherness and to achieve the dimension of Mother Nature as a subject of rights, a topic that has been strengthening since the articulation of diverse think tanks and groups of studies at the global level in the consolidation of *derechos de la naturaleza*, the rights of nature, which must continue as a challenge in global environmental policy.

In this sense, the epistemology of the Alli Kawsay has been articulated in the political mobilization by indigenous movements in the consolidation of an integral public policy in defense of Mother Nature, which is already part of countries in the Andean region, such as the Republic of Ecuador, which is explicitly influenced by the particular biophysical and ecosystem conditions; in short, this is part of the correlation between indigenous spirituality and indigenous political mobilization practice, which promotes as a result political mobilization and the mobilization of territorial defense.

From the cultural aspects, the Andean philosophy of *Buen vivir* – good living – is related to cultural aspects that have their center in actions of deep synchrony of thinking and doing in collective, in dimensioning the impact of individual actions in the collective; this, without a doubt, changes the experience of how the present actions impact in the final result, from the practices in the West, this holistic thinking and circular cut, identity and respect for complementarity is of profound asymmetry with the Common Good of humanity. That thinking obviously forms part of the holistic and communitarian genesis views that indigenous communities have, a vision that is wide ranging and deserves profound respect, above all in the possibility of recognizing ourselves today at the beginning of the twenty-first century in the midst of the disastrous consequences of climate change and as human beings that we are called to have synchrony in and from the collective. It is then, in this urgent

moment for humanity of the so-called Anthropocene, as urgent to think about how hyper-individuality affects the collective; this is an element that urgently deserves greater recognition and learning in the West.

After spirituality, in the indigenous cosmovision, the *Ayllu* (Kowii 2009), recognized as a family group as well as the relationship of respect towards the community, is the center of the processes of indigenous relationship. However, it is in this sense, as community construction comes from the indigenous philosophy and that comes in congruence with the central *Pachacentricas*, *Pacha* practices (with center in mother earth: *Pacha*), that is to say, it is necessary to have as center Mother Earth in all interactions and implies thinking of how the relationships of interaction affect the beings that ancestrally precede us in the plane of life; that is, who from our ancestry provides the other forms of life with water, air, and food. And hence Mother Earth – *Pacha* – is the center of the interaction processes of indigenous communities. It is this central point of how to understand the mobilization/defense/continuous protest that today in the middle of the so-called environmental crisis or crisis in access to natural resources and seen in contrast from the original cosmovision is the crisis in ethics towards the relationship with life itself, with another form of life, and thus move from the indigenous cosmovision to an integral, totalizing, and multicultural gaze, because from the original cosmovision the recent Anthropocene call is the result of “continuous acute disrespect towards mother nature” sustained in a reductionist and disrespectful vision towards the generator of life.

It is important to mention how the subsistence economies that the Andean indigenous communities possess are part of inherited characteristics, and that they are also inherited from the processes of cultural resistance of the ancestral peoples and have been maintained in spite of the process of the Western cultural matrix, which has fought since the time of colonization to exterminate it.

In this sense, circularity is part of the cultural symbology/practice that is maintained in the processes of societal interaction in indigenous communities.

In this sense, categories such as solidarity, complementarity, and synchrony are the center of economic relationships in the indigenous cosmovision. In this way, the economy is also circular and in correlational form with the spiral of the is the possibility of creation/cocreation of life-generating spaces and above all to recognize how in encounter with otherness is possible spiritual wealth, community, and likewise that circularity is the possibility of economic growth.

The economies of exchange and subsistence are protected in the *Ayllu* (the family), and must respond to the community; hence, subsistence economies go hand in hand with processes such as community collaboration and are part of the so-called alternative economies/other economies/economies of the south or the economies of otherness and resistance, as processes of which if possible alternative solidarity economies in modernity and which are part sociocultural and political processes of resistance. Among these elements, the defense of seeds and generating respect for the value chain, mercantile exchange relationships, and the possibility of constructing gender roles as a defining element in circularity relationships appear. In that sense, and standing out, women are recognized for their high value to the

subsistence economy and their significant contribution to the epistemology of circularity, and this perpetuates other economies/alternative economies in society whose element empowers femininity, in correlation with socioenvironmental practices generated in diverse latitudes of the global south, as well studied by Diana Mulinari (and recognized in the midst of Anthropocene practices such as ecofeminism).

We are remembering here the valuable postulates and experience in the places of the recognized activist Ranjana Padhi (2012) in environmental justice stating in the places/experiences and joys in India, as well as ecofeminism as a practice of perpetuating life itself.

Now, practices of resistance against hegemony that are present in indigenous communities and which are part of the significant use and control of strategic resources, in fact, diverse mobilizations and defense of sacred sites, territories, are the result of the continuous process of indigenous politics/governance that has much to contribute to the political exercise of the West. Therefore, within the cultural practices and policies of indigenous autonomy, the defense of ancestral seeds, the mobilization in defense of maintaining the processes of healthy food, the value of health and the practices of healthy food free of transgenics or called genetically modified organisms GMOs, are linked in turn to healthcare as an added value. With it, environmental policy is linked to practices in the places/territories as possible to evidence the alternative economy, the search for quality of life, and perpetuating the ancestral legacy for the new generations represented in the practices of healthy food, health, and community welfare.

It is shocking to see how in recent years the defense of Mother Earth by environmentalists or talk about the importance of environmental care is a “cliché,” or a fashionable issue. But it is worth recognizing as indigenous communities not only in Latin America, but above all globally, in their ancestral worldviews and hundreds of years ago with their practices not exclusively spiritual, but also and above all in the practice of relationship/twinning towards the environmental, cultural, and political community, come redefining and relocalizing the importance of habitat and its conservation, as is the case of nations such as Buthan, Nepal. It is worthwhile then to listen and return to the look of those who in an ancestral way are already defending and potentializing the defense of Mother Earth.

It is important to highlight how the spirituality of the indigenous communities elevates to such a degree the respect for Mother Earth that gives rise to the defense of the rights of nature, not as a topic of recent interest or “political lobby” above all, is a topic that is part of the millenary gaze.

Already ancestrally peasants and native communities are insisting on the global urgency to change practices towards the respect of Mother Nature, and it is not exclusive of the cultural massification and the calls that are made from the congested “social networks” as part of changing practices of mobility and consumption.

In recent years, many people have been talking about environmental issues or agroecological or sustainable practices, but as recent radical environmentalists such as “Fridays for future” have been exhorting in recent years, are our daily practices of

energy consumption/mercantile/masificación/ truly in line with environmental discourse?

For hundreds of years since their exhortations, native communities have insisted on the change of consumption and relationship practices that must move from capitalism to the so-called post development and interweave the possibility of recovering life at a global level, but their discourse has been analyzed as simple folklore or spiritual madness. However, already recent reports emanating from scientists in multidisciplinary teams with urgency state that scientists make changes in the panorama (Climate Change Institute 2019). In this sense, the high-level scientific discourse that presents global impacts, as for example, in the poles and glaciers, is a discourse according to the discourse that emanated hundreds of years ago from the original communities and that was not wanted to be heard but has been minimized by the unilateral and stagnant matrix of selfishness.

These issues are themes of passion, but also of deep controversy; it is necessary that greater political courage and not exclusively environmental policy or a category that is part of peripheral issues, or on the contrary, the re-defining environmental policy, must urgently emanate from interdisciplinary and international dialogue.

In addition, the defense of Mother Nature, which is, as we have already argued, the defense of the vine, is part of the worldview but also part of the same governance and original political practice.

Now, how does the traditional hegemonic practice develop in modernity, which seeks the common good and enables governance from the co-participation and care of Mother Nature? Are the rights of nature, *derechos de la naturaleza*, recognized as a central objective on one side of the discourse but, even more important, is this the center of political practice? Are the rights of Nature the center of discussions in parliaments, senates, chambers, or institutions of high political-strategic geostrategic level and governance in nations in the midst of the global ecological disaster? What does society expect at the global level in indicators of mega-disaster to act in the forefront of effective recognition/practices towards the rights of Nature?

6 Conclusion

In the midst of the marked deterioration of Mother Nature by economic practices and in the form of human relations toward Mother Nature, it is evident that the ancestral epistemologies of the rural, peasant, Afro-descendant, and indigenous communities are being listened to attentively of peasant women who struggle throughout the world to care for the epistemologies and ancestral knowledge that at the same time are part of the socio-cultural and pluricultural heritage, these are, what we call in the global south the pluriverse, that is, the diverse ways of seeing the world diverse of epistemologies and socioeconomic and multidimensional practices that care for mother nature.

In short, feeling is also part of the actions of caring for the common good, that is, caring for Mother Nature, feeling life from the heart, and connecting with thought, in

this connection is based on the basic episteme of acting courageously for Mother Nature and respect for listening and activating respect for Mother Nature.

On the one hand, it is evident how the human species must develop and interact; but in this sense, many questions already arose in the text, about, how we must minimize the impact on Mother Nature, and especially how we must already, urgently listen to the epistemologies of sentiepnsar and the epistemologies of the south, but also assume already, urgently, practices that promote a multidimensional with respect to Mother Nature, and with this, the practices of alli kawsay, are linked to global ecological projects, rural social movements, indigenous movements, Afro-descendants, peasants, permaculture actions, agroecology, Chipko movement, and especially the social movements that promote the defense of ancestral territories and the care of mother nature, ay with urgency, for the common good.

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