

Buen Vivir and Disability's Swerve

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English Abstract

Buen Vivir is a postdevelopment philosophy enshrined in Ecuador's 2008 Constitution, which offers an alternative to neoliberal development frameworks. This paper examines the distinctive features of Buen Vivir and associated reforms regarding disabled people's rights, alongside Boaventura de Sousa Santos' analysis of "ecology of knowledges," to suggest that the outlook offers important resources for theorizing disabled people's active role in shaping shared notions of living well. These reforms uphold epistemic ideals of solidarity and the possibility of developing embodied knowledges that can further contribute to the life of the community. Buen Vivir is both a goal, living with rich, meaningful relationships in a pluralistic society, and a process, developing the knowledges that can inform the expression of those relationships. As such, Buen Vivir motivates creating the conditions that allow for disabled persons to participate in processes creating new knowledges that shape meanings of disability and good ways of living.

Resumen en español

El Buen Vivir es una filosofía de pos desarrollo consagrada en la Constitución de Ecuador de 2008, que ofrece una alternativa a los marcos de desarrollo neoliberales. Este documento examina las características distintivas del Buen Vivir y las reformas asociadas con respecto a los derechos de las personas con discapacidad, junto con el análisis de Boaventura de Sousa Santos de la "ecología de los conocimientos", para sugerir que la perspectiva ofrece recursos importantes para teorizar el papel activo de las personas con discapacidad en la formación de nociones compartidas de vivir bien. Estas reformas defienden los ideales epistémicos de solidaridad y la posibilidad de desarrollar conocimientos incorporados que puedan contribuir aún más a la vida de la comunidad. El Buen Vivir es tanto un objetivo, vivir con relaciones ricas y significativas en una sociedad pluralista, como un proceso, desarrollar los conocimientos que puedan informar la expresión de esas relaciones. Como tal, el Buen Vivir motiva la creación de las condiciones que permiten a las personas con discapacidad participar en procesos que crean nuevos conocimientos, los cuales dan forma a los significados de la discapacidad y las buenas formas de vida.

Resumo em português

Buen Vivir é uma filosofia pós-desenvolvimentista sacralizada na Constituição de 2008 do Equador, que oferece uma alternativa às estruturas de desenvolvimento neoliberais. Este trabalho examina as características distintivas de Buen Vivir e as reformas associadas relacionadas aos direitos das pessoas com deficiência, juntamente com a análise de Boaventura de Sousa Santos da "ecologia de saberes",

perspectiva oferece recursos importantes para teorizar o papel ativo das pessoas com deficiência na formação de noções compartilhadas de viver bem. Essas reformas sustentam ideais epistêmicos de solidariedade e a possibilidade de desenvolver conhecimentos incorporados que possam contribuir ainda mais para a vida da comunidade. Buen Vivir é não só um objetivo, viver com relacionamentos ricos e significativos em uma sociedade pluralista, mas também um processo, desenvolver conhecimentos que possam informar a expressão desses relacionamentos. Dessa forma, Buen Vivir motiva a criação de condições que permitam que as pessoas com deficiência participem de processos de criação de novos saberes, que moldem significados da deficiência e boas maneiras de viver.

Recently, scholars in Disability Studies caution against the dominance of analyses of disability that assume understandings of disability stemming from the global north.[1] Tendencies to define disability in terms of capacity to work, a tendency to “naturalize” impairment, and an emphasis on the role of the nation-state in confronting disability oppression as policies extending northern conceptions of disability that can be, at the very least, inattentive to local context, and possibly emblematic of a new form of colonialism with respect to disability (Cutajar and Adjoe, 2016). Alternative frameworks for understanding disability from the Global South promise, one hopes, to subvert this risk. Given the material pressure to adopt these dominant conceptions of disability (Cutajar and Adjoe 2016, 512), though, alternative knowledges surrounding disability would emerge from a context shaped by dominant understandings of disability. This context directs attention to analyzing the possibility of developing new knowledge surrounding disability in a context informed by the dominance of Eurocentric theories.

An Inter-American philosophy of disability would be, I suggest, well-positioned to theorize the possibilities of this moment. In particular, one cannot ignore the pointed reforms and policies aimed at disability inclusion enshrined in Ecuador's 2008 Constitution and associated legal reforms surrounding the inclusion of disabled people, nor the lessons of its underlying *pensamiento*, Buen Vivir. Buen Vivir encompasses a range of post-development philosophies arising out of a variety of South American indigenous and social movements in the 1990s-2000s (Chuji, Rengifo, and Gudynas 2019, 111). The Buen Vivir (or “good way of living”) framework gives specific attention to the inclusion of disabled persons in Ecuador.[2] This affirmation contests those accounts of disability where it is construed as inimical to a flourishing life.

Buen Vivir motivates an alternative epistemological framework, one that creates a space for the development of new understandings of what good ways of living involve. Importantly, the concept Buen Vivir functions as both a goal and as a process. In

-serving this dual role, it provides a justificatory groundwork for the particular rights outlined in the constitution, as well as affirming and supporting the agency and contribution of citizens to a pluralistic *pensamiento* of the concept of a good way of living. It endorses the legitimacy of a variety of knowledges and forms of life as contributors to society's pursuit of *Buen Vivir*. While there is ample room to critique the framework's implementation and ways in which the ideology might be co-opted to justify neoliberal policies, as a philosophical outlook, the framework provides fertile ground for theorizing the difficulties and potential for disabled persons to contribute to the life of the community. Here, I draw on sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos' analysis of "epistemologies of the South" as a lens through which we might interpret the epistemic possibilities afforded by the 2008 reforms and associated laws. In the case of disability, my suggestion is that such a framework's role as both goal and process creates a space positioning disabled people as contributors to a shared pluralistic conception of a good life. To borrow Santos' word, the framework supports the conditions for a "swerve," the possible development of new knowledge surrounding disability without demanding a starting position uninformed by legacies of ableism, neoliberalism, and colonialism.

Epistemologies of the South and the Possibility of a "Swerve"

Disabled people encounter a variety of forms of epistemic marginalization. Recently, different approaches to this marginalization leverage the notion of epistemic injustice.[3] As Miranda Fricker offers, epistemic injustice occurs when one is deprived of some epistemic goods by virtue of one's social identity (2007, 7). She delineates two forms of epistemic injustice, testimonial and hermeneutic. In the former, one's testimony is discredited, potentially to the point of silencing, because one is a member of a particular social category. Concerning hermeneutical injustice, socially dominant groups can shape the available conceptual resources, vocabularies, and frameworks of understanding in a way that constrains how marginalized groups make sense of their social experiences. José Medina has drawn on the concept of epistemic injustice in the analysis of epistemologies of resistance, amending Fricker's work, arguing that analyses of hermeneutical injustice must investigate the political character of how these spaces of ignorance are formed and operate (2012, 86). Within discourse on disability specifically, many have found the notion of epistemic injustice helpful, though, as Shelly Tremain offers, Miranda Fricker and Jose Medina each may have an incomplete account of such injustice insofar as they have left disability undertheorized as a site of marginalization (2017).

While the notion of epistemic injustice is often helpful, I turn to the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos on epistemologies of the South to theorize a particular moment and possibility in addressing what might be construed as an instance of hermeneutical injustice. Santos worries about the threat of "epistemicide," "the death of knowledge of subordinated culture" (2014, 92). Justice for the global South, on Santos' analysis, demands confronting "cognitive empire," a system of knowledge that privileges forms of knowing that emerge from systems of capitalism and colonialism, buttressing the oppression of the global South. After a brief summary of Santos' framework

regarding the epistemologies of the south, I highlight a tension that Santos addresses in the emergence of these new epistemologies. Roughly, a context that itself has been determined by the primacy of Western, scientific standards of rationality informs the plural knowledges set to be developed and the circumstances in which they can operate without domination. In my reading, the heralding of the epistemologies of the South is at once revolutionary and graduated: conditions for allowing the articulation and emergence of new forms of knowing must develop out of a context where they have been silenced, diminished, or otherwise incorporated into a larger structure of knowledge. At this transition point, Santos theorizes the possibility of a “swerve,” an emergence of new forms of knowing out of the epistemic conditions formed by the dominance of colonialist structures. As my analysis of the Buen Vivir framework and disability law in Ecuador progresses, I suggest these measures create a space in which new knowledges surrounding disability can emerge in this transitory context. Put another way, they allow nascent conditions for disability's serve.

On Santos' analysis, epistemologies of the north are the epistemic corollary of colonialism and capitalist domination. He argues,

From the standpoint of epistemologies of the South, the epistemologies of the North have contributed crucially to converting the scientific knowledges developed in the global North into the hegemonic way of representing the world as one's own and of transforming it according to one's own needs and assumptions. In this way, scientific knowledge, combined with superior economic and military power, granted the global North the imperial domination of the world in the modern era up to our very days. (2018, 6)

Santos characterizes such epistemology as “abyssal:” it produces and retrenches standards of knowing that exclude or render effectively non-existent knowledges from the Global South.[4] As José-Manuel Barreto helpfully summarizes,

Santos uses the metaphor of the abyss to convey the thesis that Western thinking organizes the production and validation of knowledge along the lines of a precipice—a veritable sheer drop like the one encountered at the top of a mountain or found in the depths of the sea—that separates theories produced in the North from those elaborated in the South (2014, 401).

Scientific thought, for example, introduces a standard of knowledge that excludes, or renders on the other side of the abyss, ways of knowing that do not or cannot meet scientific standards of rationality. Santos identifies “regulation” as the aim of epistemology of the north, with scientific rationality as the most “privileged” expression of that aim (2014, 156). The effect is “epistemicide,” the eradication of non-conforming and alternative knowledges.

As regulation, epistemology of the north delineates knowledge from non-knowledge, from mere “beliefs, opinions, intuitions, and subjective understandings” (2014, 191). With respect to disability, we might read the line in terms of privileging

medical accounts of disability as instances of knowledge, while social understandings of disability or first-person testimony of disabled individuals that conflict with medical accounts are denigrated as mere opinion.

In contrast to this epistemology endorsing an ideal of regulation, Santos argues that epistemologies of the South present a destabilizing force, endorsing an ideal of "solidarity." The pluralistic aim of epistemologies of the South is an "ecology of knowledges," the hallmark of which is the "copresence" of forms of knowing on different sides of the abyssal line (2014, 191). This ecology does not eliminate scientific modes of knowing but does not valorize non-Western modes of knowing by labelling other forms as subaltern "alternatives." [5] An ecology of knowledges requires the rejection of, and recovery from, the abyssal line.

Regulation denounces forms of knowledge that don't adhere to Western reason as non-knowledge. It shapes social practices to exclude alternative modes of interaction. Absences are, in effect, created, and movement towards solidarity demands opening fields of new social practices and knowledges. This movement requires "... a quest for destabilizing subjectivity" (2016, 160). This quest is difficult, largely due to the dominance of the regulative ideal. Santos argues, "Having been oversocialized by a form of knowledge that knows by creating order in nature as well as in society, we cannot easily practice or even imagine a form of knowledge that knows by creating solidarity both in nature and in society" (2016, 156). We break from knowledge-as-regulation towards knowledge-as-solidarity within a set of circumstances shaped and molded by the ideal of regulation. That ideal has shaped possible forms of life and social practices. Thus, on route to solidarity, we look to possible new practices that emerge from within the context that, per Santos, created the absences in the first place.

At this juncture of the context informed by a history of created absences and the possibility of new knowledges, Santos introduces the idea of "action-with-clinamen":

For my notion of action-with-*clinamen*, I borrow from Epicurus and Lucretius the concept of *clinamen*, understood as the inexplicable 'quiddam' that upsets the relations of cause and effect, that is to say, the swerving capacity attributed by Epicurus to Democritus's atoms. [...] Unlike what happens in revolutionary action, the creativity of action-within-clinamen is not based on a dramatic break but rather a slight swerve or deviation whose cumulative effects render possible the complex and creative combinations among atoms, hence also among living beings and social groups. (2016, 98)

Rather than a totalizing break from prior knowledge and forms of social relationships, such subjectivities "swerve" from these structures in ways that open up new forms of knowledge that "[...] lets them compete in the social fields, thus converting them into fields of social experimentation" (2016, 160). The ecology of knowledges and the conditions for its operation emerge in a context informed and shaped by the historical dominance of neoliberalism, colonialism, and the epistemic outlook that supports them. Rather than "refuse" this past context, Sosa maintains that this clinamen "[...] assumes

and redeems the past by the way it swerves from it. [...] By virtue of such swerving, which may in itself be imperceptible, the past's capacity for interpellation enlarges to such an extent that [...] it renders possible new emancipatory experiences" (98). In fostering an ecology of knowledges, fields of inquiry like the social sciences can operate to create the conditions for this kind of swerve and the work of destabilizing subjectivities, as well as examine the new possibilities opened by these conditions (2016, 97-98).

For Santos, Buen Vivir and epistemologies of the South are linked. He opens his work, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* with a "Manifesto for Good Living/Buen Vivir" and, in a footnote, claims that the concept, "[...] is central to the conception of social emancipation whose epistemological foundations are laid out in this book" (2016, 2).[6] This tie between the ecology of knowledges and Buen Vivir motivates a closer examination of Buen Vivir. In particular, with respect to disability, I suggest that the framework confronts the absence of disability attendant on neoliberalism. First, I examine the effect of neoliberal framework in producing disability's absence. I then offer a brief analysis of the Buen Vivir framework, with special attention to how it is inscribed in Ecuador's 2008 Constitution, along with disability policy, to suggest that this framework allows the possibility for disability's "swerve," producing new knowledges that can contribute to a community's conception of disability, with particular respect to living well.

Neoliberalism and the Absence of Disability

Broadly, Buen Vivir emerged as an alternative view to neoliberal extractivism within discourses of post-development philosophy. In confronting neoliberal extractivism as a guiding principle for development, Buen Vivir calls into question an image of the "productive citizen" as the modal subject. Broadly, on such a conception, individuals are bearers of rights which offer protection for pursuing material security. This orientation puts disabled people in the uncomfortable position of affirming our own status and unique comportment as valuable without conforming to assimilating pressure (thereby erasing disability) or acknowledging that disability can and often does conflict with the project of participating in labor markets. As I maintain below, the Buen Vivir framework provides an opportunity to disrupt this uncomfortable tension, promoting an "ecology of knowledges." Recovering or creating this ecology begins with a sociology of absences, "an inquiry that aims to explain what does not exist is in fact actively produced as nonexistent, that is, a noncredible alternative to what exists" (2016, 171-72). To elucidate the possibilities of an alternative framework, then, demands analysis of how neoliberal extractivist frameworks produce disability's absence.

Extractivism as a development framework relies on the cultivation and extraction of natural resources for export. Such a policy, by itself, risks the degradation of the environment, the forms of life of indigenous people, and exploitation on the part of hegemonic political and economic actors. This particular emphasis in development can be inflected differently, depending on the state's role in guiding or limiting the process of

extraction as well as the distribution of whatever economic benefits it produces. Neoliberal systems of governance and organization minimize state intervention. Darío Restrepo Botero and Camilo Galeano contrast neoliberal approaches to development in Colombia and Peru with different Buen Vivir frameworks in Ecuador and Bolivia, highlighting that neoliberal policy,

focuses on maintaining low rates of inflation, balanced public finances and free movement of capital and goods. In this scenario, industrial policy is reduced to contemplating only those actions that can generate an increase in the country's competitiveness, such as investment in infrastructure, administrative simplification, and lower taxes, all of which are meant to attract foreign investment (2017, 274).

Neoliberal extractivism, then, is a development policy that minimizes state intervention while encouraging the conditions that purportedly lead to further foreign investment.

Tensions between neoliberal policies and disability rights and disability justice movements arise on numerous axes. Increased privatization in healthcare, for instance, threatens to further marginalize disabled persons by exacerbating responsibility for healthcare costs. In education, the framework pulls against resource allocation for disabled students. More generally, though, neoliberal frameworks create pressure to construe disability in terms of the ability to participate in labor markets or the possibility of a legitimate claim to state assistance on the basis of some exceptional condition. Neoliberal accounts of development cast the accumulation of material resources as the goal of relatively free actors, whose liberty is to be respected as central value. As Carol Breckenridge and Candace Vogler argue concerning traditional liberalism, "Liberal theory naturalizes the political by making it personal. And the 'person' at the center of traditional liberal theory is not simply an individual locus of subjectivity [...] He is an *able-bodied* locus of subjectivity, one whose unskilled labor may be substituted freely for the labor of other such individuals, one who can imagine himself self-sufficient because almost everything conspires to help him take his enabling body for granted [...]" (2001, 350). From a disability studies perspective, neoliberalism belies a conception of the citizen as able-bodied, independent, and whose desires can be translated to economic interest (Breckenridge and Vogler 2001, 350). As Fiona Kumari Campbell argues, "The 'free' citizen is one who can take charge of herself, that is, act as her own command center. When the citizen of neoliberal society is defined in terms of self-mastery, it may not be possible for some disabled people to be truly 'free' in these contexts, unless some protectionist (i.e. paternalist) strategy or ethics of 'care' is employed" (2005, 111). Conceived as a core requirement for citizenship, freedom-as-self-mastery pushes many disabled people to the margins of a society organized around neoliberal values, dependent on some proxy to represent our interests.

The neoliberal view treats the value of material development as an expression of liberty as a settled goal. On this ideology, the meaning of disability is continually reinforced in terms of the (in)ability to participate in labor markets (Soldatic and

Meeshoka 2012). In effect, the “meaning” of disability is produced and reproduced as a species of incapacity relative to freely selling one’s labor. Insofar as this impediment to freedom does not stem from any fault of one’s own, disabled people might be construed as “deserving” some degree of aid from the state (Soldatic and Meeshoka 2012, 196). Cached out in Santos’ terminology: alternative conceptions of disability are not available on the framework. Neoliberal ideology, inscribed in social, political, and economic practices, renders alternative forms of understanding disability and well-being absent. Disability, on this view, is an individual medical problem, rather than a social phenomenon. Specialized medical knowledge surrounding disability aims at approximating “normalcy,” attempting to restore health, in sense of ability to participate in the workforce, or segregating disabled people on the basis of supposed inability to work (Oliver and Barnes 2012, 83-85). Ana Bê helpfully summarizes, “These are the epistemologies to which western modernity ascribes value; in this case, mostly those produced by science and biomedical discourse. This, in turn, has had tremendous consequences for disabled people everywhere because only knowledges constructed within the parameters of normalcy are in fact considered valid” (2019, 1349).

Others have extended critiques of liberalism on the basis of their incompatibility with disability. For example, Eva Feder Kittay argues that disability and dependency work more broadly, are incompatible with the liberal tradition’s conception of a citizen as a free, independent individual acting for the sake of rational self-interest. This analysis not only highlights the tension that disability exemplifies with liberal ideology, but the self at the center of dependency work. Dependency workers, people (often women) who take on the interests and needs of those who depend on them, are particularly vulnerable to “[... a need to set aside] the exercise of those capacities needed to enter the free competition for the benefits of social cooperation. This handicapping feature creates her secondary dependency, her dependence on a provider” (1999, 46-47). For Kittay, the self of dependency work is “transparent,” wherein, “The perception of and response to the another’s needs are neither blocked out nor refracted through our own needs” (1999, 52). Care workers, then, do not embody the “self of the liberal tradition” (1999, 52), insofar as care workers exercise their agency for the sake of the people who depend on them. Similarly, disabled individuals who are embedded in relationships of dependence are confined to a subordinate position as citizens. Kittay summarizes, “[...] as long as the bounds of justice are drawn within reciprocal relations among free and equal persons, dependents will continue to remain disenfranchised, and dependency workers [...] will continue to share varying degrees of the dependents’ disenfranchisement” (1999, 76-77).

Others have highlighted the relationship between capitalist frameworks and understanding disability in terms of fitness for work, and how that meaning of disability can further intertwine with colonialist logic. Offering a critique of capitalist structures more broadly, Nirmala Erevelles argues that capitalist structures render disabled people part of a “surplus population” by casting “work” as demanding a homogenous set of physical or cognitive capacities and denying that disabled people meet those requirements (1996).[7] In the case of Ecuador, Scott Gibson, Sara Newman, and

Antonia Carcelon-Estrada trace the lingering effects of Spanish colonialism leveraging the idea of disability as unproductive labor to further isolate indigenous people (in this case, member of the Quijos community): “The European colonialist perspective oppressed the Quijos in terms of labor and autonomy. [...] Although these colonialist views meant that the Quijos were incapable of productive labor, they also imply, more insidiously, that the ‘civilization of the country’ would depend on disabling Indigenous people and dismantling their collective presence and actions on the land” (2021). The dominance of the idea of disability as inability to engage in productive labor, in this case, does not just contribute to disability’s absence, but also serves to produce the absence of indigenous knowledges.

For Santos, challenging the absence-creating force of neoliberal rationality demands confronting the epistemology underlying the view with its assumed modal subject. An ecology of knowledges replaces the dominance of economic rationality at the center of neoliberalism. That center embraces “regulation” as its aim. Knowledges that conform to Western, dominant formulations and standards can be received as knowledge, while other frameworks and ways of knowing are excised from the domain of knowledge. Disabled people’s knowledges that do not fit dominant conceptions of disability are discredited as alternatives on this epistemic outlook. By contrast, an ecology of knowledges contains multiple sets of experiences and subjectivities, values, and modes of interpreting experience. In lieu of regulation as an epistemic goal, delineating what counts as legitimate or not, an ecology of knowledges aims at solidarity: “Solidarity as a form of knowledge is the recognition of the other both as equal ... and as different, whenever equality jeopardizes his or her identity” (2016, 156). This epistemic re-orientation requires conditions that allow for the cultivation of plural knowledges and their expression. Buen Vivir, as a development framework, is at least compatible with the pursuit of solidarity. Beyond this compatibility, though, I suggest that the framework and associated policies create conditions that enable the emergence of new knowledges regarding disability out of a context shaped by an operative neoliberal ideal. Before addressing disability specifically, however, a brief overview of the contours of Buen Vivir highlights its departure from neoliberalism and its corresponding conception of well-being.

On Buen Vivir

Buen Vivir, or as it is sometimes referred to by the Kichwa term, Sumak Kawsay, forms a schema of orientation enshrined in the 2008 Constitution of Ecuador.[8] Implemented in the wake of years of activism on the part of indigenous residents and others, Buen Vivir attempts to resist neoliberal extractivist approaches to development, in part, by articulating a thick notion of living well that embeds flourishing in the life of the community, the relationship to nature, and strives to respect indigenous knowledges. The 2008 constitution takes a rights-based approach to Buen Vivir, defining “rights of the good way of living.” Notably, rights are ascribed to nature, to indigenous communities for the preservation of culture, and people with disabilities. As I will comment below, Buen Vivir resists any one settled description, and it has several

tenuous sources. For that reason, I am hesitant to claim an interpretation of the view as the “real” Buen Vivir. Nonetheless, some of the view’s core commitments, along with its expression in the 2008 Constitution and surrounding reforms, provide insight into unique possibilities for social and political inclusion for disabled people.

In contesting the neoliberal conception of development, with the underlying view of individualist well-being, Buen Vivir draws on indigenous traditions and cosmologies emphasizing relationality. Living well involves holistic well-being embedded in relationship in human communities and nature. However, “buen vivir” is not a straightforward translation of “sumak kawsay.” Rickard Lalander and Javier Cuestas-Caza summarize, “... las tensiones semánticas y de traducción han sido apenas la antesala de diversos trabajos que han comenzado a problematizar otras diferencias epistemológicas, ontológicas y políticas entre ambos conceptos” (2018). Indigenous intellectual Javier Lajo, for example contrasts an occidental account of buen vivir with the indigenous concept, charging that, “hasta hoy Occidente, no deja de usar el ‘logos’ y la ‘epistheme’, la razón y la ciencia como sus principales armas y “virtudes”. La civilización occidental padece un flagrante descuido de su parte afectiva, de sus sentimientos, de su corazón.” (2010, 115). Moreover, insofar as the political framework does draw on indigenous philosophy, transplanting these cosmologies into a context shaped by colonialism and modernity will involve a degree of interpretative violence, in which this project is complicit.[9]

Nonetheless, the 2008 Constitution, the National Development Plan, and the reforms surrounding disability, I suggest, provide some alternative prescription for inclusion of disabled persons. That is, I approach these texts as philosophical texts, outlining commitments and prescribing practices that embody at least a possible understanding of Buen Vivir. For now, beyond its necessity in articulating some core dimensions of the framework, I leave aside the issue of the relationship between sumak kawsay and Buen Vivir. Thus, I treat Buen Vivir in this context as a political outlook that orients the state towards the production and protection of multiple forms of living well, emerging from the plural forms of life operating within the national community, emphasizing the relationship with nature, the importance of meaningful interpersonal relationships, the plurality of forms of life, and the necessity of the community continuing to articulate and give content to the elements of a good way of living. In the Ecuadorian context, these values motivate a distinct set of rights.

Among the central commitments of Buen Vivir, as inscribed in Ecuador’s legal framework, is an emphasis on the flourishing of communities, of individuals as members of those communities, the environment as a fellow member of a broader community, and preservation and uplifting of indigenous knowledges. While these characteristics admit different expressions, these commitments deny the central theses of neoliberal individualism, along with the economic measures of well-being traditionally used in development analysis (Mero-Figueroa et. al. 2020). In line with Ecuador’s plurinational character, the framework affirms the importance of the co-flourishing of multiple communities embracing diverse forms of life. These commitments surface in the

preamble to the 2008 Constitution, which commits to forming, among other things, “Una nueva forma de convivencia ciudadana, en diversidad y armonía con la naturaleza, para alcanzar el buen vivir, el *sumak kawsay*; Una sociedad que respeta, en todas sus dimensiones, la dignidad de las personas y las colectividades” (2008). As a criticism of a neoliberal, development ideal, *Buen vivir* contests the rugged individualist philosophical anthropology underlying capitalist economic imperialism. Instead, the outlook offers harmonious co-existence or a more robust and expansive conception of a good life as an ideal. “El Buen Vivir recupera la idea de una buena vida, del bienestar en un sentido más amplio, trascendiendo las limitaciones del consumo material, y recuperando los aspectos afectivos y espirituales” (Gudynas and Acosta 2011, 79). Without dictating the exact features of what that must involve, there are core features of the view that, I suggest, enable the possibility of new knowledges regarding disability and well-being.

Strikingly, the view celebrates an account of community membership and flourishing in terms of relationality, including the relationship between the natural world and humans. In so doing, it undermines the dualism between nature and society. Eduardo Gudynas comments, “Nature becomes part of the social world, and political communities could in some cases extend to the non-human” (2011, 445). For instance, the 2008 Constitution extends rights to *Pacha Mama* or the natural world. Further, *Buen Vivir* emphasizes connectedness within community life. As Unai Villalba summarizes: “The community conceived of as a unit of life made of all forms of existence Community does not imply a lack of individuality, since individuality is expressed through complementarity with other beings in the group” (2013, 1430). Individual flourishing, in this case, demands attentiveness to the qualities of the relationships in which they are embedded, including the relationship with nature. This shift directs attention to the ways in which our relationships are molded by a variety of social and legal factors such that development should serve to bolster rich community life and those complementary relationships.

Though affirming that political, economic, and social institutions should aim at promoting living well, as a philosophical orientation, commentators highlight that the framework resists offering a totalizing definition of what the good way of living entails. Alberto Acosta and Mateo Abarca offer: “*Buen vivir* is a concept that aims to dismantle the idea of a universal goal for all societies. ... *Buen vivir* requires a rich, dynamic, and complex vision that is a path in itself, rather than a destination—it needs to be imagined in order to be built” (Acosta and Abarca 2018, 132). The orientation instead offers a criticism of the account of well-being underlying extractive neoliberal policies, while affirm different elements that serve as cornerstones of the inquiry into the nature of good way of living.

Further, the framework is pluralistic. What constitutes a good way of living will not be uniform between communities: “we imagine many different Living Wells coexisting, rather than a single and homogeneous Living Well. ... In contrast to what occurred with the concept of 'development' in the mid-twentieth century, Living Well should not take

the form of a single global command defining what society should look like” (Acosta 2017). Different contexts will be informed by distinct histories, the interrelation of particular groups, as well as unique natural environments. This pluralistic character mirrors Ecuador’s plurinational identity, encompassing indigenous and Latino communities. Among the rights of the good way of living enumerated includes rights, “[...] a construir y mantener su propia identidad cultural, a decidir sobre su pertenencia a una o varias comunidades culturales y a expresar dichas elecciones [...]” and “[...] a construir y mantener su propia identidad cultural, a decidir sobre su pertenencia a una o varias comunidades culturales y a expresar dichas elecciones [...]” as a way of promoting “la igualdad en la diversidad” (T. 2 Ch.2 Sect. 4 Art. 21 and 23). This pluralistic character is one of the framework’s core commitments.

Since Buen Vivir supports relations of complementarity and relies on the features of particular contexts and communities for its particular expression, it motivates a pluralistic epistemology, out of which new social practices and knowledges might emerge. Eduardo Gudynas, discussing post-development discourse more generally, highlights this epistemic project: “El postdesarrollo también permite identificar discusiones que buscan trascender el discurso del desarrollo, hace visibles saberes y sensibilidades ocultados o subordinados, atiende a críticas antes desechadas, en particular las provenientes de los pueblos indígenas, y alienta nuevas hibridaciones en la exploración de alternativas” (2014, 69). In rendering legible indigenous and subordinated ways of knowing, Buen Vivir allows the cultivation of new hybrid knowledges. These can also contribute to a shared articulation of what a good way of living entails within particular contexts. Recalling Santos’ epistemic aim of solidarity, as a framework, Buen Vivir motivates a pursuit of solidarity in affirming the value of distinct forms of knowing as contributing to a conception of living well, but also creates a space in which these plural ways of knowing can interact and yield new vocabularies that shape what good ways of living in a particular context entail.

These commitments and their implementation arise in the wake of advancing indigenous worldviews alongside centuries of colonialist practices and vocabularies. For instance, the Constitution leverages the idea of rights as part of the task of building a community life. Santos comments on this hybridity: “[...] hybridity can be identified in the ways in which indigenous conceptions have been enshrined in the new constitutions. Sumak kawsay appears combined with Western-based misconception of integral, sustainable, alternative development and of environmental rights. [...] Rights of nature is a hybrid that combines the Eurocentric conception of rights with an indigenous conception of nature” (2018, 242).[10] Buen Vivir thus rests at the intersection of multiple sources; it re-locates a “thick” conception of well-being in the life of the community and relationship to nature but does not articulate prescribed benchmarks of individual well-being. A “good way of living” sets some conditions out of which further collaboration, contestation, and interaction might give rise to new conditions and conceptions of buen vivir. As Jorge Hernandez and Javier Bravo suggest, “*Buen Vivir* is not a completely settled concept, as it is in a constant process of updating, incorporating ideas from indigenous groups and their traditional knowledge, the citizenry, and Latin

American academia" (2019). This fluidity allows a set of possible new articulations of what constitutes living well as a feature of individual, community and environmental life.

This pluralistic and connected character affirms the value of solidarity. Meaningful participation in the life of the community demands the recognition of others as having knowledge that can impact our form of life, relationships, and values. Further, part of a good way of living involves allowing the knowledges emerging from others' experiences and positions to contribute to the life of the community, as Natasha Chassange emphasizes, "[...] BV is under a process of co-construction" (2018, 490). In this process, Buen Vivir requires the participation of community members, including disabled people, to develop and re-evaluate.

Buen Vivir, Disability, and a Swerve

To support the contributions disabled people make to the conception of Buen Vivir demands creating the conditions in which unique experiences and interpretations might be generated and communicated. The *Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir, 2017-2021* reflects on the changes brought about by the shift to the Buen Vivir framework, highlighting the importance of political participation of, and the knowledges represented by, oft-subordinated groups: "el cambio de la institucionalidad implementado durante la última década ha permitido promover la participación en mayor cantidad de grupos usualmente relegados en la toma de decisiones del país (mujeres, personas con discapacidad, jóvenes, adultos mayores, etc.) y esto ha representado mejoras estructurales en la sociedad" (2017, 17). While we should not overlook instances when the Ecuadorian state failed to protect disabled individuals' rights (see, for instance, Rodríguez-Vélez, Jaramillo-Arévalo, and Duran-Ocampo 2021) or barriers that are particularly prevalent and acute for disabled indigenous individuals (see especially Rivas 2021), as a constitutional framework, *Buen Vivir* motivates a set of policies affirming the presence of disabled persons and their families. In explicitly confronting disability's absence, the various reforms regarding disabled persons allow the conditions to create this swerve.

After identifying rights of *Buen Vivir*, the 2008 Constitution identifies people with disabilities as a protected class and delineates protections and freedoms regarding disabled people (Title II, Ch. 3, Art. 35). The Constitution commits the state to promote "La inclusión social, mediante planes y programas estatales y privados coordinados, que fomenten su participación política, social, cultural, educativa y económica." (II.3. Sect. 6. Art. 48.1). Among the rights listed are: access to education, including mainstreaming, to the extent possible, disabled children; political participation; rest and leisure; and material support for families of disabled people. Further, the Constitution identifies a role for the Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad de Discapacidades (CONADIS), tasked with developing policy and ensuring outcomes that align with the Constitution (III. 3, art. 156). CONADIS operates at the interface of the state and civil society, providing one mechanism for assessment regarding social inclusion.

Alongside the explicit enumeration of rights for disabled persons in the 2008 constitution, the government of Ecuador instituted a number of reforms regarding the rights of disabled persons and policies aiming at social, economic, and political inclusion. For instance, for public employers and private businesses with more than 25 employees, 4% of the employees must be a person with a disability (Organic Law). The law also contains provisions for educational support, including financial support and scholarships for students with disabilities who might not have access to inclusive public education in their region, as well as initiatives like forming multi-disciplinary teams to train on disability-friendly pedagogy.[11] While these are aspirational aims, measures like these ensure, at the very least, the presence of disabled people in common public forums.

On an initial reading, these protections and initiatives might resemble what we would expect of a neoliberal policy: the employment law could be read as conflating social inclusion with economic participation. However, it is possible for different orientations to arrive at similar policy conclusions. And, one might ask if these reforms, along with Santos' call for a swerve, are sufficiently radical. In a separate context, Elizabeth Janson and Joao Paraskeva criticize the reliance on the idea of a swerve as insufficiently critical: "[...] these unexpected moments in which we may find moments of clinamen could mean indefinite waiting for a transformation of subjectivities. [...] Should we not challenge, instead of swerve? Why are we swerving and not creating new spaces?" (Janson and Paraska 2015, 956). This is a forceful set of questions. However, in the case of creating a community inclusive of disabled persons, we might wonder where these critiques might emerge, if not from some already operating space. Epistemologies of the South, aiming at solidarity, themselves emerge from spaces shaped by the interplay of colonialism and resistance. Just as there is no return available to a pre-Columbian moment from which to draw on an indigenous philosophy free of colonialist influence, there is no movement towards an imagined future of disabled people free from the historic influence of pervasive ableist structures. Instead, laws like these create the conditions that allow for the possible development of new knowledges and destabilizing subjectivities. In analyses of disability with regard to work, education, and public life in Ecuador discussed below, I highlight that we witness the persistence of some pernicious views of disability (particularly disability conceived primarily as an individual medical problem) alongside alternative conceptions of disability. Further, I suggest the possibility of a swerve, alternative meanings of disability, especially connected to living well, emerging in this context.

With respect to work as well as educational opportunity and access, there might be a moment of vertigo facing the possibility of new knowledges regarding disability.[12] In particular, conceptions of disability as individual medical problem or personal tragedy persist in a landscape even where laws concerning disability and disabled people's experiences support alternatives. In a study on disability and work in Ecuador, for instance, Elba Maldonado Jumbo contrasts the models of disability enshrined in the law with the persistence of the view of a medical model of disability by people in the workplace. "[...] Ecuador amplió potencialmente el panorama de derechos para las

personas con discapacidad, produciéndose radicalmente una transición. Es decir, se deja de entender a la discapacidad como un problema 'personal', en el cual estas personas con discapacidad sólo reciben rehabilitación médica y son considerados como 'objetos pasivos' -tal cual lo plantea el modelo médico-, sino que se asume un nuevo modelo 'social'" (Maldonado Jumbo 2011, 88). At the same time, with respect to workplace experience Maldonado Jumbo finds that disability is still largely construed as a personal problem (2011, 104). Regarding education, Sonia Marsela Rojas Campos similarly highlights the persistence of medical views of disability, in the midst of these legal changes (2011, 45). However, she offers that these legal changes present an opportunity to have disabled people represented in further development of these laws, signaling a need for further participation of disabled people. Though these studies witness the persistence of disability meaning an individual problem, they illustrate the moment of clash between frameworks. My suggestion is that this collision of alternative frameworks of meaning surrounding disability can be understood as the development of an ecology of knowledges akin to what Santos theorizes. The quest for destabilizing subjectivities to bring new knowledges concerning disability and our relationships within broader communities emerges out of interactions in some way conditioned by forms of life that are already operative. Given the history of exclusion and marginalization of disabled persons, that project emerges as a "swerve" from within dominant forms of association.

In other moments, the movement of a swerve within these contexts is starker. In a study of disability and urban space in Cuenca during the early years of new laws surrounding disability (2008-09), Nicholas Rattray reveals the lingering pernicious attitudes towards disability amidst the reforms: "My interviewees frequently explained that bodily or behavioral differences were seen to bring a sense of shame (*vergüenza*) to the family" (2013, 31). This shame stems from an accepted meaning of disability as a personal abnormality or contamination, which motivates social exclusion (32). Rattray analyses demonstrations intended to promote accessible public transportation. These protests contend with these background meanings surrounding disability, but, Rattray finds "the ethnographic data suggests that disabled Ecuadorians have begun to shift discourse about bodily differences historically relegated to the private realm into public debates" (2003, 41). In the wake of legislation guaranteeing access, disabled people and allies' political actions have started to situate disabled people as political actors. By casting disabled people as contributors to our political life, the framework opens the possibility of disabled people contributing in the ongoing project of giving shape to the community's conception of living well.

Finally, in other moments, the possibility of a swerve seems to highlight specific features of the Buen Vivir framework. In a study of how the effects of globalization on discourses of disability in Ecuadorian families with intellectually disabled children, as well as modes of resistance emerging from those families, Beatriz Miranda-Galarza highlights how "[...] a gap might have been created between a global process thought of as liberating and democratizing knowledge and the real possibility of recognition and representation of every local community as producers of knowledge with their own pace

and characteristics” (2016, 262). She traces how the dominance of Western, medicalized views surrounding disability cast intellectual disability as a personal tragedy. In her study of disabled family stories in Ecuador, families are certainly living in a context where they have to navigate some ablest behaviors. Parents reported neighbors suggesting they send their children to institutions, accusing disabled children of theft, and reported bullying by neighborhood children. Nonetheless, Miranda-Galarza shows how new meanings of disability emerge within these families, constituting “[...] ‘strategies of resistance’ to the labels and diagnoses that mark their lives and the lives of their disabled members” (268). This study provides a nice example of the intricacies of a swerve. The meaning of disability as tragic, individual impairment is a dominant narrative, one that impacts the self-understanding of disabled people and families. Simultaneously, though, within the life of the family emerge understandings of disability that contest this narrative. Using Santos’ language, there’s a possibility of destabilizing subjectivities created that contest the dominant notions of disability.

In line with Buen Vivir’s emphasis on complementarity relationality, Miranda-Galarza's work highlights the experience that families of disabled children seem to have embedded in those relationships. Rather than understanding disability purely through a framework of tragedy, family members’ intimate connections with their disabled children allowed “[...] an inexplicable complicity with the disabled children and a sort of spirituality that is linked with meaningful understandings of disability” (273). In these experiences, familial relationships, recognized as a source of developing notions of living well, offer a space in with destabilizing subjectivities regarding disability might develop. In different localities, inflected by different experiences along racial, ethnic, gender, and class lines, different understandings of disability emerge to confront the medicalized framework. For instance, in urban areas, families linked disability with not being to participate in the labor force, while in smaller towns in the study, the label “disability” was used by medical and education professionals, but so long as the children could participate in domestic tasks, it did not have much meaning domestically (280-281). While not specifically discussing the Buen Vivir framework, this analysis is suggestive that material support, including increased opportunity for social inclusion, buttresses possibilities for further developing and articulating local knowledges surrounding disability. More importantly, this study highlights the clash of “global” understandings of disability with local knowledge, and how local understanding can develop out of a context shaped by these dominant approaches to disability. Swerving can allow for destabilizing “hegemony’s ubiquity,” while also accounting for the unease at the site where old and new frameworks of meaning clash.

Policies aiming at the inclusion of disabled persons in arenas of public life can simultaneously embrace facets of a conception of living well formed by historically ablest forces with the aim of counteracting those forces. Again, Buen Vivir and what it means for living well are not fully explicated in advance of interaction and social experimentation. At the same time, the framework recognizes the importance of cultivating and developing contributions from different social practices and forms of life. The measures protecting inclusion for disabled persons and promoting participation of

disabled people in social and political life can be understood in terms of a process of promoting and developing new knowledges connected to the experiences of disabled people concerning disability and living well in our communities.

The framework and corresponding measures allow for the “swerve” that Santos theorizes. Given historic exclusion and institutionalization, the potential for disabled persons to immediately produce and disseminate knowledge to challenge dominant conceptions of a good life might be undermined. And, this exclusion eliminates the potential to present a “destabilizing subjectivity” publicly. Since Buen Vivir is both something to which people have a right and a process of a pluralistic community defining good ways of living within particular contexts, a salient goal of the Constitution can be to create a context in which destabilization can be allowed and the contributions of disabled people fostered. Buen Vivir thus promotes mechanisms that undergird the embodied authority of disabled people over our modes of experience, and allowing space for that authority to contribute to the knowledges in the community that shape the meaning of a good way of living.

Towards an Inter-American Philosophy of Disability

To return to the initial reflection on the possibilities and promise of Inter-American philosophy of disability, the Buen Vivir framework can offer helpful analyses on questions central to recent work in philosophy of disability, especially that which focuses on questions of whether disability is compatible with a good human life (Reynolds 2022; Barnes 2016; Bickenbach et. al. 2014). In these conversations, the stakes are high. Or, at least, speaking as a disabled person, they feel high. This work confronts tendencies to dismiss or denigrate the value of disabled people’s lives. These contentions invite immediate philosophical response to the contrary, establishing that disability is not inimical to a life worth living. By bringing Buen Vivir into conversation with philosophy of disability, these inquiries find new angles through which to foreground the agency and experiences of disabled people in contributing to these responses. That is, the framework does not provide an analysis of disability that dislodges disability from the idea of a net bad. After all, Buen Vivir resists a totalizing conception of what living well must entail for all times and all places, instead exhorting focus on local and communal experiences. Instead, a philosophy of disability informed by Buen Vivir reorients us towards a value of solidarity. The project of rendering legible the experiences of disabled persons and creating the conditions that allow for disabled persons to contribute to a guiding notion of Buen Vivir underscores a few core commitments and projects to Inter-American philosophies of disability. In particular, Ecuador’s expression of Buen Vivir includes a set of rights ascribed to disabled people including the right to the good way of living, endorses the creation of conditions that foster disabled people’s contributions to a shared conception of Buen Vivir. And, in promoting destabilizing subjectivities, it encourages examination of emerging practices and knowledges as an embodiment of a philosophy of disability.

As *Buen Vivir* is both a goal and an ongoing project, it allows for room in efforts to make disability present that both challenge and embrace traditional conventions surrounding disability, work, and public life more generally. For instance, one might interpret the law mandating a specific percentage of employees with disabilities as adopting a neoliberal approach to inclusion. One might suggest that it shows that traditional liberal values of self-sufficiency and productivity are operative in defining what constitutes inclusion. At the same time, they can be understood as a critiqueable vehicle for making the complementary relationships had with disabled persons salient. The project or process of *Buen Vivir* embraces the contingency of allowing space for the creation of destabilizing subjectivities. The contributions of disabled people to an ecology of knowledges cannot be settled in advance. Such a project would inevitably undermine the agency of disabled persons given the history of exclusion and marginalization within neoliberal frameworks. Instead, we have to allow the conditions for those knowledges and subjectivities to be developed and communicated. Since *Buen Vivir* is not settled, it invites the expression of this agency as the concept is continually re-developed and refined through the interaction of community members.

As an alternative development framework, Buen Vivir re-locates value in the life of community, affirming the value of plural knowledges and relationships with community members. This change of orientation, particularly in Ecuador's Constitution and reforms surrounding disability policy, provides an avenue for preserving the agency, particularly epistemic agency, of disabled people. We are pressed to consider whether our communities allow for the possibility of a swerve, for the possibility of a solidarity that allows contributions to a shared conception of a good way of living. As philosophy of disability continues to develop, Buen Vivir provides a rich framework motivating the conditions that allow disabled people to fully participate in our communities and as shared creators of the knowledges and interpretations that give life to the community. We are reminded to direct our attention to philosophy of disability embodied in the practices and relationships out of which new meanings of disability and a good way of living emerge.

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Notes

[1] For instance, Siobhan Senior and Beatriz Miranda-Galarza charge that, "Eurocentric historical and theoretical accounts of disability have prevented contributions from other milieus [...]" (2016, 397). And, JosAnn Cutajar and Casimir Adjoe argue that "Epistemologies deriving from the North tend to forget that a country's

geopolitical position, histories, experiences and knowledges need to be taken into consideration in policies and decisions intended to empower disabled people" (2016, 513).

[2] Further, in 2017, Lenín Moreno became the President of Ecuador, and, for the duration of his tenure, the only head of state to use a wheelchair. Between 2007 and 2013, Moreno served as Vice President under Rafael Correa. In these reforms and in the figure of its President, Ecuador became a site of interest for thinking through disability in a postdevelopment, plurinational society. It is important to note that Moreno in some ways diminished the rhetoric of Buen Vivir during his presidency. Nonetheless, the Buen Vivir framework is inscribed in the Constitution of Ecuador and the rhetoric persists in documents like the National Development Plan.

[3] Elizabeth Barnes, for instance, uses the concept to address a tendency to dismiss disabled people's testimony to a high degree of life satisfaction (2016). Jackie Leach Scully provides an overview of the particularities of epistemic exclusion that disabled people face and implications for research in bioethics (2018), while Josh Dohmen extends the analysis to disclose epistemic injustices targeting people with mental disabilities, both as givers of testimony and in terms of being excluded from hermeneutical resources (2016). Within analyses of healthcare practice, Havi Cavel and Ian James Kidd (2014) have offered an account of ill persons' susceptibility to epistemic injustice, while David Peña-Guzmán and Joel Michael Reynolds examine the intersection of disability and healthcare practice, offering an analysis of how epistemic injustice against disabled people contributes to medical error (2019). Thematically, these works highlight constraints on the epistemic agency of disabled people, offering the outlines of modes of redress in different domains (e.g. the healthcare system, bioethics, etc...) and in line with different modes of disability.

[4] Santos does not affirm that there's only one epistemology of the North, but a collection of epistemologies. Still, he maintains, "[...] they all tend to share some basic assumptions: the absolute priority of science as rigorous knowledge; rigor, conceived of as determination; universalism, conceived of as a specificity of Western modernity, referring to any entity or condition the validity of which does not depend on any specific social, cultural, or political context; truth conceived of as the representation of reality; a distinction between subject and object, the knower and the known; nature as *res extensa*; linear time; the progress of science via the disciplines and specialization; and social and political objectivity as a condition of objectivity" (2018, 6).

[5] Santos offers an example of different knowledges being copresent without labelling one as the "alternative" using medical knowledge: "If we take biomedicine and traditional African medicine as an example, it makes no sense to consider the latter, predominant by far in Africa, as an alternative to the former. The important thing is to identify the contexts and the practices in which each operates and the way they conceive of health and sickness and overcome ignorance (as undiagnosed illness) through applied knowledge (as cure or healing)" (2016, 190).

[6] Further, commentator Claudia Alicia Caudillo Félix further highlights how this exchange requires a degree of unlearning, "[...] Boaventura recupera el Buen Vivir indígena o Sumak Kawsay, desde un diálogo intercultural al que le llama 'ecología de saberes' en el que se busca incorporar lo mejor del saber ancestral y del saber

moderno, a partir del desaprendizaje de teorías occidentales y desde la escucha de las propuestas de los movimientos sociales latinoamericanos” (2012, 359). This exchange exemplifies the difficult characteristic of needing to support such an ecology, but starting from an occidental framework which might distort the interpretation of other knowledges.

[7] Likewise, historian Sarah Rose offers a history of how, in the United States, a notion of disability as meaning unproductive or lazy developed as a confluence of circumstances in labor markets, industrialization, and other social changes (2017). Once construed as “unproductive,” given the centrality of work as a proxy for independence in shared conceptions of citizenship, disabled people occupy a subordinate social position.

[8] Buen Vivir is also a guiding framework in Bolivia’s 2009 Constitution (Gregor Barié, 2014). Unlike Ecuador’s rights-based approach to Buen Vivir, the framework functions more as an ethical orientation in the Bolivian case.

[9] Criticisms of Buen Vivir highlight crucial tensions between its indigenous roots in the Kichwa notion of *sumak kawsay* and its political manifestation as *buen vivir*. There is a concern that, as a policy framework, it draws on an essentialized and static conception of “Andean” philosophy (Alonso González and Vásquez 2015, 4). Similarly, prefacing a series of interviews with indigenous people concerning *el conocimiento*, Medarso Arahuate Manizari, Jorge Carignkia, Jervacio Gualinga Chuji and Mariano Tsetsekip caution against a reductive conception of Andean thought, instead highlighting the plurality of forms of life constituting Andean indigeneity (2023). Buen Vivir cannot be authentically captured as a recovery of pre-colonial conceptions of a good life over and against neoliberalism. Projects that attempt to apply or leverage Buen Vivir, including this one, contain an element of violence: extricating cosmologies out of a form of life where they are at home involves translating them in ways that re-shape them in colonialist vocabularies. Instead of looking to recover a pre-Columbian philosophical outlook, I treat Buen Vivir as it is manifest in the Constitution, National Development Plan, and legal apparatus of Ecuador.

[10] It is difficult not to conceive some Aristotelian inflection in the operative notion of flourishing. Highlighting these multiple sources of influence, Pablo Alfonso González and Alfredo Macías Vásquez warn against drawing hard boundaries of interpretive lenses, “The Aristotelian notion of *eudemonia* is dichotomously separated from BV, given that many religious orders and colonial powers imparted the teachings of Aristotle to indigenous peoples for centuries, which may have led to the hybridization and syncretism of beliefs” (2015, 4).

[11] Pablo Cervillos Estarellas and Daniela Branwell point out that, “There is still a long way to go in this regard. However, there have been a few advances. For example, from 2010 to 2012, the number of educators prepared for special education went from 1,575 to 2,000. A new model for inclusive education was piloted 171 schools and a new curriculum for students with severe disabilities was published in 2012” (2015, 335-36).

[12] According to his study of Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil, Juan Carlos Ocampo reports that, while disabled students are increasingly more well-represented at the university, Ocampo cautions that a legal and institutional focus on technical indicators like having spaces accessible to people with a range of impairments

do not adequately capture the needed cultural changes to foster inclusion. He offers, “pero dejan de lado aspectos cruciales, de índole cualitativa, como el acceso a la información, las metodologías de enseñanza y evaluación o la preparación docente. Esto hace de la inclusión una mera lista de requisitos por cumplir y no un proceso sostenido de mejora, refinamiento y reelaboración de la experiencia educativa a favor de los estudiantes” (2018).

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