

Qamiri: What lessons can be learnt from indigenous peoples?

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND DEGROWTH, A POSSIBLE ALLIANCE

Indigenous people issues and degrowth are both huge domains of investigation. In order to speak about them in general terms, it is necessary a grotesque oversimplification. However to think about the common points of critique that the indigenous people movements share with the degrowth academic community can be an enriching activity.

This poster/paper want to emphasize that the discourses on degrowth find a natural ally in the indigenous people discourse. Schematically the reasons for this alliance are:

- Degrowth and Indigenous People discourses both identify in the current economic mainstream growth oriented mode of production the cause of environmental degradation, contamination and natural resources exhaustion.
- Degrowth and Indigenous People discourses do not recognize economic growth as source of happiness and wellbeing and "well-living".
- Degrowth and Indigenous People discourses point out at the fact that global economic growth and mainstream development projects fail to tackle poverty.
- Degrowth and Indigenous People discourses point out at the relationship between capitalistic market expansion and lack of humans rights respect, absence of active participation of the citizens in the decision making process, and cultural diversity loss.
- Degrowth and Indigenous People discourses share idea of the central importance of an harmonious relationship between man and nature.
- Degrowth and Indigenous People discourses seek practical and lifestyle alternatives to the mainstream narratives.
- Degrowth and Indigenous People discourses have to -strengthen their recognition in the mainstream scientific community and in the international development and governance clubs.

LOSS OF TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOODS, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Some examples regarding the following categories of traditional livelihoods:

Agriculture and shifting cultivation.

- In Cambodia indigenous peoples livelihood is based on shifting cultivation and collection of forest products.
- In VietNam the Cong: their primary occupation is slash and burn agriculture

Pastoralism:

- Tibetan nomads resettlement
- Aurunci Italian pastori problems with the montain parks

Fishery:

- Indigenous peoples of the Philippines, among them, the Calamian Tagbanua
- Mozambique, several local communities are impoverished due to Japanese concession of fishing areas

Hunters and gatherers:

- So called Pygmies of Africa are forced to sedentarization and become agriculturalists often working for Bantu people (see situation in Cameroon)
- Vietnam, Ruc or Chut people

Forest peoples.

- In Bangladesh, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, indigenous peoples have lost access to their forests because of government policies.
- In the Philippines, the Batak suffer from government restrictions and logging companies invasion

Highlands and mountains peoples.

- Igorots in the Philippines
- Nepal, Gurung: rely heavily on a pastoral and agricultural way of life.

WESTERN AND INDIGENOUS CONCEPTS OF DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

Reversely from the dominant perspective and way of living, indigenous peoples' perspective of societies' well-being is based on equilibrium and harmony whose foundations are values of reciprocity, diversity, solidarity, harmony with Mother Earth, and accountability

Qamiri or Buen Vivir

Buen vivir represents the main meaning of social movements and is the result of years of struggle in Latina America. Mainly can be synthesized as Individual as well as collective quality of living in accordance with the rules and laws of a harmony with nature and Mother Earth.

INDIGENOUS RESPONSES TO ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

Despite world crisis and the worsening conditions in terms of environmental degradation, we are testimonies of a persistence of traditional livelihoods and the revitalization of indigenous knowledge and management systems that lead to effective adaptation and coping strategies.

Therefore, learning from indigenous peoples' mitigation and adaptation strategies and their traditional environmental management and resource use, meanwhile, strengthening the cultural identity of indigenous peoples regarding natural resource management and conservation, securing their rights, ensuring legislative and policy backing, and supporting agency and communities capacities, are urgently needed strategies which would let us all move toward environmental justice and better governance systems.

CONCLUSIONS

The main point of this contribution is not a romanticized parallelism between the indigenous lifestyle, and degrowth call for a voluntary simplicity, neither a proclamation of the necessity to the "return to the good old village". The main point is acknowledging that the *degrowth movement* shares with the *indigenous people movement* a critique of the development economic-growth paradigm. This critique has very practical reasons but has also some epistemological foundations. The hierarchy of the values in the indigenous worldview are much closer to the degrowth rather than to the capitalistic development paradigm. Finding common points between the *degrowth* and the indigenous people represents a mutual fortification of their alliance and a confirmation that environmental justice represents one on the main forces for Sustainability. Strengthening indigenous people knowledge and responsibilities in the world institutions that rule the governance of common goods and natural areas can benefit a lot from a scientific recognition of their value, this should happen also be considered in the *degrowth* awareness that is rising in the western world.

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