

## **ANDEAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY CHALLENGES THE COLONIALITY OF POWER**

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In the Andean countries of South America, the current political situation is determined by the need to find a new model of development, different and alternative to that imposed by neoliberal policies. This new situation includes the recognition by States of the cultural and ethnic diversity of population and, as an element of that, the need to guarantee specific rights to indigenous peoples effectively, with new public institutions and adequate resources, among the proposals that some authors call the new "multicultural constitutionalism".

This official recognition is a result of the struggles and demands of the indigenous movement, in their process of strengthening of the identity to achieve an ethnic citizenship, as social, political and cultural actors while questioning the existing of oppressive and obsolete models of citizenship, democracy, state and nation.

This scenario is a logical consequence of a history of colonialism in which, for five hundred years, these people not only suffered exclusion and discrimination, but exploitation and acculturation. Indeed, in his thought the Spanish invasion created the "Indian", as someone who must be subjected to forced labor, stripped of their lands, destroyed their beliefs and customs. The Indians –so-called the inhabitants of new continent that Spanish believed that it was India- were characterized with attributes of inferiority, of paganism, idolatry, and even doubted his human character. This vision justified ideologically the Conquest, presenting it as a commendable work "civilizing." The Spanish introduced then the enslavement of the population, their religious and cultural alienation, which, added to the carnage of wars and foreign diseases that decimated the native population, properly triggered a genocide and ethnocide.

Subsequently, once that the wars for independence occurred from the Kingdom of Spain, between 1802 et 1830, in which the Indians took care crucial role in libertarian's armies, started a long and tortuous process of formation of the Republic and the Modern State. This meant the adoption and implementation by elites descendants of the conquistadors of a political system imported from Europe who set up an incipient liberal state, semi-feudal, that institutionalized hierarchies foreign to the reality of the continent.

Thus, a monocultural and uninational state was imposed in each version of the Constitutions enacted since the nineteenth century; conforming a society based on an european ethnocentrism, which led to a political practice that only considered whites and half-caste (mestizos) for government management.

Now, ancestral Indian thought awakens to challenge the "**coloniality of power**" still present in spite of democratic regimes, to contest the coloniality of knowledge led by the occident. Coloniality refers to the fact that the relationship between colonialism and coloniality is structural and persisting, in opposition to the idea that colonialism is over. In fact, colonialism and coloniality are essentially a global ethno-racial hierarchy that remains the main organizing principle of social relations on a world scale. Against this, the "**Sumak Kawsay**" proposal by the Quechua Indians of Ecuador and the "**Suma Qamaña**" by the

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Aymara Indians of Bolivia as paradigms of liberation are subject to deep debate in the Andean region, and they have achieved to be incorporated in the recent Constitutions, in 2008.

Roughly translated as "**Good-Living**", not the "good life" of westerners (an easy and unconcerned life, one filled with little work, plenty of evening strolls and other luxuries, and zero political consciousness) nor the "live better" that are successful at the expense of others, but the construction of other types of relationships between human beings, and between them and the nature of which they are part, by preserving it in finding other forms of harmony, equilibrium and complementarity rather than unsustainable exploitation of "resources", while providing for the lives of future generations. It means eliminating prejudice and exploitation between people.

Far from being a myth or a folk belief, the Sumak Kawsay and the Suma Qamaña invite to rethink the matrix of power, therefore, the structure of the state and the economy, namely the transformation of representative democracy to a true participatory democracy, intercultural and inclusive, with a real social control, and a "development with identity", that implement a new productive matrix by supporting in a different energy matrix, less dependent on fossil fuels, respectful of biodiversity and within a framework of social economy that eliminates the accumulation of capital in few hands.

This indigenous worldview poses a fundamental contradiction with economic policies aimed at irrational extraction of natural resources and even demands a different interpretation of the notion of "resource." Since being considered nature as **Mother Earth**, the "**Pachamama**", what she offers cannot be sold, treated as a commodity.

The indigenous visions of harmony with neighbors, harmony with nature and the balanced use of the wealth that it is obtained and that be understood as the good life together, tends to revert definitely the structural asymmetries and the macro-social imbalances derived from the capitalist model and market economy.

This proposal is not to deny the possibility to promote the modernization of society, particularly by incorporating in the logic of the Good Living many of valuable technological advances. For this reason, one of the fundamental tasks lays in the ongoing and constructive dialogue of knowledge and ancestral skills with the ultimate universal thought, in a process of continued decolonization of society.

It is in this sense that the adoption of the concept of **interculturality** as a need to build relationships between groups and also between practices, logics and different skills, in an effort to confront and transform relations of power, including the structures and institutions of society, is part of a strategy that the multiculturalism or the pluriculturalism not allow it, to be simple descriptive anthropological findings, which can be used by the same World Bank and WTO to demobilize indigenous peoples with a merely formal recognition of a right.

Essential complement to this strategy is the definition and proposed construction of a **Plurinational State** which recognizes the ethnic and cultural diversity of peoples and not just a supposedly homogeneous nation where a portion of the population maintains hegemony over others. This approach involves a new type of state, decentralized, with autonomous territories where indigenous peoples can freely exercise self-government, his own administration of justice and education.

This redefinition has been recognized in the Constitutions of the Republics of Ecuador and Bolivia and its political and economic issues will be discussed at an upcoming delivery.