



Cultivating Post-development: Pluriversal Transitions and Radical Spaces of Engagement

José Castro-Sotomayor and Paola Minoia

INTRODUCTION

The current ways humans occupy Earth are unsustainable and pose an existential threat to all species. As the climate emergency aggravates, from the Global North and the Global South national states are still proposing climate crisis solutions that adhere to neoliberal global market principles and corporatist interests embodied by ostensible limitless economic growth and technological innovation (Gudynas, 2013). This adherence has produced spaces of coloniality where the State systematically controls

J. Castro-Sotomayor (✉)
California State University Channel Islands, Camarillo, CA, USA
e-mail: jcs@csuci.edu

P. Minoia
University of Turin, Turin, Italy
University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

© The Author(s) 2024
H. Melber et al. (eds.), *Challenging Global Development*,
EADI Global Development Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-30308-1_6

labour, nature, bodies, and minds through various forms of epistemological and political violence—legal, military, or geographic (Chagnon et al., 2022; Gago & Mezzadra, 2017; Quijano, 2000; Veltmeyer & Petras, 2014). Facilitated by the State’s actions or lack thereof, territories are desecrated by corporations’ indiscriminated extractivism—from unrestrained mining and fossil fuel to agrarian and forestry. These spaces of coloniality deny or annihilate local and ancestral modes of living, hence, dispossessing areas of their ecological, social, and cultural identities (Minoia, 2020; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The material and symbolic violence constitutive of contemporary geopolitics render the ‘sustainable development’ framework insufficient to decelerate the ecocidal trend of unrestrained growth. This is because the notion of ‘development’ is in essence anthropocentric and profoundly shapes how human-nature relations are represented in plans and structures of environmental governance (Adelman, 2018; Arrifin, 2007). The increasing sense of urgency in the face of climate havoc, therefore, offers the opportunity for an epistemological and ontological tour de force that is vital to cultivate alternative civilisational frameworks to replace development-as-modernisation praxes. The current planetary scale of the problems humanity faces demands new articulations of identities, actors, institutions, and territorialities to liberate people and the land, foster advocacy, build community, and embrace pluriversal ways of being, knowing, and acting.

In this chapter, we present ways of theorising and practising pluriversal knowledge and agency to cultivate post-development futures. That is, embracing the pluriverse in which ‘there are multiple worlds, partially connected but radically different [whose recognition and praxis] entails an entirely different ethics of life, of being-doing-knowing’ (Escobar, 2020, p. 27). Drawing from our research on territorial justice, territoriality of Indigenous people, ecocultural identity, environmental global discourses, and Indigenous movements, especially in Latin America (Arias & Minoia, 2023; Castro-Sotomayor, 2019, 2020a, 2020b; Hohenthal & Minoia, 2021; Krieg & Minoia, 2021), we argue that to cultivate post-development in a world of different colonial histories entangled with imperial modernity, post-development practitioners should depart from culturalist and anthropocentric notions of identity, embrace place-based embodied experiences, and attend to nonhuman voices and agency. First, we present the generative concept and framework of ecocultural identity and elaborate on how this encompassing notion may contribute to pluriversal transitions in environmental governance. Then, we redirect

our attention to territory and territoriality as strategic constructions of space that entail spiritual, material, and political dimensions of engagement that are at the core of post-development praxis. Third, we reflect on the multiple voices and agencies implicated in the germination of pluriversal worlds and show the challenges and opportunities social and political movements face in advancing alternatives to development. In closing, we suggest entry points and avenues to ‘cultivating ourselves as theorists and practitioners of multiple possibles’ (Escobar, 2020, p. xx) and finding creative and hopeful sources of political imagination.

PLURIVERSAL TRANSITIONS: ECOCULTURAL IDENTITY AND RADICAL SPACES OF ENGAGEMENT

Humans’ suicidal arrogance and egocentrism stem from a system of knowledge that has fed the delusion of our independence from, and superiority over, the more-than-human world (Plumwood, 2002). Dangerous dualisms such as human/nature, nature/culture, and nature/society, define cultural narratives that foster individualistic and human-centred worldviews, which undermine and obscure human embeddedness within ecological webs of life. The predominant notion of development benefits from this insulating and hierarchical position that deeply informs how humans construct our sense of self in relation to others. Anthropogenic propositions ‘continue to reinstitute modernity’s separation of nature and culture, through the exploitation of class, race, and gender to obtain cheap labour and access to land’ (Tornel & Lunden, 2022, p. 1). To cultivate post-development futures, it is urgent to challenge the culturalism and anthropocentrism that pervade our understanding of identity. That is, to interrogate the dominant narratives that circumscribe identity to the cultural realm (Grusin, 2015; Milstein & Castro-Sotomayor, 2020).

Ecocultural identity is a bridging framework that can be used to innovate around approaches, engagements, problematisations, and possibilities of (post-)development. The ‘post’ in post-development, ‘signals the notions that the economy is not essentially or naturally capitalist, societies are not naturally liberal, and the state is not the only way of instituting social power as we have imagined it to be’ (Escobar, 2010, p. 12). In other words, to ‘visualise an era in which development ceases to be the central organising principle of social life’ (ibid.), we must also be able to imagine an era in which culture ceases to be the central organising

principle of identity. Post-development spaces ‘cannot be framed within classical narratives of development or dependency’ (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2015, p. 209). Neither can they be fully understood by investigating identity mainly as the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, and ability without meaningful consideration to the ecological dimension that intersects but also encompasses these sociocultural identifications (Milstein & Castro-Sotomayor, 2020). To challenge development, therefore, we must understand identity ecoculturally.

Ecocultural identity is a generative concept and a framework. An ecocultural framework ‘troubles the tendency to conceive of the environmental as separate from or a subsidiary of the economic, political, historical, and cultural, and instead situates group and individual ecological affiliations and practices as inextricable from—and mutually constituted with—sociocultural dimensions’ (Milstein & Castro-Sotomayor, 2020, p. xviii). As a generative concept, ecocultural identity interrogates what it means to be human at the intersection of environmental and sociocultural struggles and resistance arising from patriarchal, imperialist, capitalist, and extractivist systems that exploit bodies, lands, waters, and well as information and outer space (Gómez-Barris, 2017; Junka-Aikio & Cortes-Severino, 2017; Moore, 2015). As Milstein and Castro-Sotomayor (2020, p. xix) state, all identities are ecocultural because ‘we are made of, part of, emerging from, and constantly contributing to both ecology and culture—producing, performing, and continuously perceiving and enacting through them both. In these ways, one’s ecocultural identity—whether latent or conscious—is at the heart of the positionalities, subjectivities, and practices that (in)form one’s emotional, embodied, mental, and political sensibilities in and with the all-encompassing world.’

To expand the scope and redefine sociocultural identities as always already ecological, means redirecting attention to the power relations shaping and being shaped by human and nonhuman entanglements. An ecocultural conceptualisation of identity forces us to revisit the symbolic, structural, and political dimensions that converge and constitute environmental governance—‘the process of formulating and contesting images and designs, and implementing procedures and practices that shape the access, control, and use of natural resources among different actors’ (Castro et al., 2016, p. 6). However, environmental governance still relies upon discursive forms that privilege standardised business-as-usual practices that reproduce Western development assumptions and promises of progress. As argued elsewhere, environmental governance processes

would benefit from ‘conceiving political spaces of participation as intercultural spaces in which ecocultural identities are negotiated, environmental ideologies are implicated, and ecological practices are legitimised through communication practices’ (Castro-Sotomayor, 2020a, p. 80). Communication is deeply integrated in procedures and practices of engagement, and it is fundamental to guarantee a degree of participation that furthers the ideal of democratic dialogue and deliberation (Hunt et al., 2019). Within these public participation contexts, however, communicative practices can be constructive or destructive depending on the power relations that inform the interplay among symbolic constructions, institutional frameworks, and agonistic politics (Peterson et al., 2016). The power dynamics intrinsic to processes of dialogue and deliberation could limit or foster empowering modes of organising by disregarding or engaging with dissent and non-traditional, even confrontational, practices.

Communication, in its pragmatic and constitutive modes, allows us to identify five dilemmas affecting environmental governance processes: participation, communication, culture, anthropocentrism, and territoriality. The *participation dilemma* arises from the predominance of a neoliberal capitalist logic that overshadows legitimacy in the name of efficacy. Efficacy is attained by displaying an ‘ideology of management’ and a ‘language of collaboration’ (Dukes, 2004, see also Melkote & Steeves, 2015) that privilege short-term, measurable outputs over relational outcomes. Furthermore, participation is conceived as an ‘intrinsic good’, although it is never neutral because the way participation is defined and by whom establishes who participates and whose solutions are most likely to be operationalised (Sprain et al., 2012). Managerial logics and uncritical approaches to collaboration risk neglecting or undermining the existence of disagreement and increasing the possibility of excluding dissident voices, hence, weakening democratic participation.

In praxis, the *communication dilemma* sheds light on how spaces where individuals and groups discuss post/development privilege a technical-functionalist understanding of communication, which reduces communication to a matter of gathering and transmitting pre-existing information. Furthermore, a technical-functionalist understanding of communication risks feeding an information deficit model. The model assumes the public lacks scientific knowledge about the issue at hand; hence, providing more information or facts is enough to increase people’s interest and involvement and possibly change their attitudes and behaviours regarding the matter (Kinsella, 2004). The information deficit

model has been proven insufficient to deliver legitimate and sustainable policies as it neglects the uneven power relations in which public and expert interactions and knowledges are embedded (Bernacchi & Peterson, 2016). This oversight renders it less likely that the public will challenge the authority of the experts' scientific knowledge and specialised language narrowing the opportunity for alternative worldviews to be part of the deliberation (Waisbord, 2015).

Third, the *culture dilemma* stems from understanding culture as apolitical and instrumental. Unproblematic notions of development benefit from this 'technification of culture' that confines it to three senses—material (e.g. art and food), behavioural (e.g. values and traditions), and functional (e.g. knowledge for problem-solving). This fixed, ahistorical, and apolitical concept of culture is used by (development) agencies, at all levels, 'to reproduce modern liberalism tenets of freedom, democracy, and individualism' (Telleria, 2015, p. 263). A critical appraisal of the concept of culture, on the other hand, would reveal that culture 'is not a benignly socially constructed variable' (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010, p. 6). Rather, the construction of culture or 'cultural' meanings is embedded in unbalanced power relations that often maintain social hierarchies and privileges. Culture is historical and political but also inextricably ecological, hence the notion of ecocultural identity discussed earlier in the chapter. And it is precisely the disregard of this foundational identity condition that leads to the fourth dilemma.

The *anthropocentrism dilemma* refers to the limited ability of communication-based participatory models 'to address anthropocentrism (human-centred interpretations and decisions) and extra-human participation' (Callister, 2013, p. 437). This limitation is not accidental; rather it is a logical consequence of the ontological separation between humans and nature, which debilitates the design of more comprehensive and inclusive processes of environmental governance and activism (Druschke, 2013; Tipa, 2009). The propagation of Western development's tenets stems from this split as it facilitates a type of environmental governance that disregards the well-being of the land's ecologies of life, obscures our ways of knowing, and hinders imagining plural ways of being that exist and thrive in specific territories.

Finally, the *territorial dilemma* refers to the different political understandings of the spatial dimension of post-development engagement and agency and its communicative entanglements. Conventional institutional

perspectives conceive territories as spaces of control and the formation of uniform national identities organised by state authorities under principles of cultural assimilation and capitalist development based on resource extraction (Arias & Minoia, 2023; Minoia & Tapia, 2023). This conceptualisation is challenged by the notion of territories as living areas, material and affective, that exceed the conscious and strategic will of humans (Usher, 2020). Contrary to a delusive understanding of territory that characterises authoritarian right-wing nationalist ideologies, our notion of territory illuminates the diverse and contested ecocultural identities that need to be democratically represented to address the planetary ecological crisis (Latour, 2017) and nurture regenerative practices in coexistence with Mother Earth (Gualinga, 2016).

Critical approaches to participation, communication, and culture are essential to democratise environmental governance processes. But to transition to the pluriverse we must create radical spaces of engagement. A critical, decolonial, and imaginative ecocultural approach provides an ‘inclusive aperture through which to begin to reencounter and reimagine the range of human belief and meaning systems, values and norms, and every day and institutional interactions that symbolically and materially inform our own species’ and countless others’ realities’ (Milstein & Castro-Sotomayor, 2020, p. 475). The generative concept of ecocultural identity directly responds to the vital need to humbly enter realms of understanding by departing from human exceptionalism. This is a step towards cultivating post-development, a historical process that demands confronting human-centred spaces of deliberation pervaded by a managerial ideology, a technical-functionalist understanding of communication, an ahistorical and apolitical conception of culture, and a phantasmagorical sense of territory. Embracing pluriversity is a vital strategy to resist the current climate crisis and ecological mass extinction. A transition to the pluriverse is unlikely to occur unless we prioritise politics and action of socio-ecological regeneration. In the following section, we expand the discussion on territories and territoriality and show how embracing emplaced embodied experiences and attending to the voices and agencies of the more-than-human world also contribute to creating paths to pluriversal worlds.

TERRITORIES OF PLURIVERSITY

Territories, as material and affective spaces, and territoriality's relational political and cultural configurations contextualise the praxis of post-development. As an analytical term specific to Latin America (López et al., 2017), *territorio* informs Indigenous and Afro positions around reclaiming land rights, revaluing natural resources, and socially and politically re-appropriating nature beyond the historical constructs of the nation-state and its government structures (Krieg & Minoia, 2021). Territory enshrines memories that remain alive through the emplaced connections with the past made of narrations of ancestors and events, and of the physical cycles of degradation and regeneration of seeds, soils, biota, infrastructures, and artefacts. Finally, territories are formed as earthly and political spaces where wider ecological processes of regeneration, and struggles for social and environmental justice, take place (Latta & Wittman, 2012). Territoriality refers to the relationships and communicative practices that reveal situated cosmopolitics which inform both the political governance of those that belong to and live on the land, and the cultural governmentality strategies that (re)locate and emplace environmental practices such as ecological conservation and stewardship (Castro-Sotomayor, 2020b). Territoriality constitutes territories as communal spaces of spiritual, material, and political dimensions of agency, at various scales, including bodies, land, and the Earth (De la Cadena & Blaser, 2018).

The multiscalar entanglements of these dimensions form the ontology of the ecological and political communities of human and nonhuman beings. Development practitioners and Western scholars, however, still fail to fully understand these ontologies and neglect them—intentionally or not. A search for more appropriate and responsive scholarly definitions of land, territories, and 'nature' has animated a geographical debate for more than a century in Western academies (Elden, 2010; Storey, 2020). Despite their differences, particularly in the emphasis given to physical, political, or techno-political features, these debates still rely on the dominant vision of neocolonial capitalist modernity. They portray land, territories, and nature as entities ontologically separated from and functionally dependent upon human actions through State regimes (Vela-Almeida, 2018).

Discrete Western conceptualisations of territories have created a foundation for expansive necrotic interventions for the extraction of resources from the ground. These are notoriously, but not surprisingly, advanced

by military actions supported and legitimised by nation-state policies and development plans (Gómez-Barris, 2017; Karikari et al., 2020). These bloody interventions of capitalist accumulation, which have increased especially after the 2008 financial crisis, have energised neocolonial apparatuses causing serious environmental damage to areas that were previously densely natured and protected by Indigenous peoples. Hence, these earthly casualties contributed to the current climate crisis and massive biological extinction. The corporate-state machinery, egregiously exemplified by Jair Bolsonaro, the president of Brazil, has dispossessed Indigenous people of their land by denying them their land rights and forcefully removing them from their territories to extract resources through plantations and mining whose products are then transferred and sold (Peet et al., 2011). Such ‘disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence’ (Tuck & Young, 2012, p. 5). Violating these territories means dispersing and destroying community ecologies and knowledges. Therefore, returning to land and territory is a central tenet in post-development thinking as ‘repatriation of land is an objective of decolonisation’ (ibid., p. 7).

Post-development opens possibilities for pluriversal understandings of territoriality where ecological and cultural ancestral knowledges can be reproduced and revitalised via interspecies dialogues and internatural communication practices that recognise and elevate nonhumans as legitimate interlocutors of the Earth (Plec, 2013) and rightful participants and actors in political decision-making processes (Castro-Sotomayor, 2020b). A concrete example of the importance of territories is offered by the political activism of the Kichwa communities of Ecuador (Iza et al., 2020). For them, ancestral territories are spaces in which Kichwa community practices validate their ecological and cultural ancestral knowledges that revitalise Kichwa’s unity with the earth (Arias & Minoia, 2023). Various Kichwa concepts express the different spiritual, cultural, and political articulations that constitute their territoriality. For instance, *ayllu* is a powerful term, which for Luis Macas (2019, p. 12) indicates a family of human, nonhuman, and more-than-human beings, and at the same time, their living places:

[*Ayllu*] is more than just a family made up of parents and children and other close relatives. It is a cosmic family in a plentiful relationship among all the beings that cohabit it. [*Ayllu*] is a space within mother earth where

plants, animals, minerals, water, fire, air, and earth are found. But the spiritual dimension is also present, the sacred sites, the *wakas*, the spirits of our ancestors, the energies of other beings, the great spirit. [*Ayllu*] is a true social, political, economic, and spiritual fabric. [author's translation]

Other relevant evocative terms include *llakta*, which encompasses ancestral people and their territories named *Sumak Allpa*—vital spaces of *Sumak Kawsay*¹ or life in plenitude—where Kichwa people exert political and cultural control and reaffirm their autonomy and self-determination against attempts of land dispossession and ecocide (Vitery Gualinga, 2021). A newer ecological concept expressed by the people of Sarayaku in the Amazon is *Kawsak Sacha* (living forests) where all living beings, both visible and non-visible, on surfaces and deep underground, dwell in different places ranging from swamps to waterfalls (Gualinga, 2019).

Living forests have inspired life plans, a political programme of regional planning for achieving *Sumak Kawsay*. Life plans serve for the maintenance of a 'healthy territory free of contamination as well as abundant productive land that can help preserve food sovereignty. In this way, *Kawsak Sacha* aims to serve as a viable economic model' (Gualinga, 2016, p. 2). A living forest is an alive and conscious subject of law, according to the 2018 Declaration of the people of Sarayaku (Pueblo Originario Kichwa de Sarayaku, 2018). In this claim for territorial governance, legal rights shall protect all species, a stand that denounces human exceptionalism supported by anthropocentric worldviews (Srinivasan & Kasturirangan, 2016). This means that humans do not matter more than others beings but have the duty to protect all species by all means possible. The unity of Mother Earth is a principle claimed by the people of Sarayaku in opposition to the administrative, vertical subdivision between surfaces and undergrounds that the State uses to exploit areas for mining, even in Indigenous territories. Sacrality and unity of the living forest, understood as territory, express an Indigenous cosmopolitics that challenge the conformist ontological separation of nature and society made by institutional planners and developers.

¹ The term *sumak kawsay* has been at the centre of a significant and generative philosophical debate. For an illustrative discussion on the cosmological root of the term, its possibilities and epistemological obstacles see Oviedo Freire and Estermann (2014).

Indigenous conceptions of territory and territoriality stem from the ontological reckoning brought about by the recognition of the more-than-human world's voice and agency. This recognition also elicits frictions and potentialities of emergent ecocultural political sensibilities implicated in social and political movements that demand radical spaces of engagement and strive to advance alternatives to development (Bebbington et al., 2008; Mignolo, 2007; Villamayor-Tomas et al., 2022). The final section shows how these pluriversal social movements present alternative forms of agency across multiple scales, from the grass-roots to the global, in order to build more democratic, equitable, and ecological existences beyond the praxis of coloniality of the State.

PLURIVERSAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Pluriversal social movements contribute to creating paths to the recomunalisation of social life, the relocalisation of activities to enhance convivial modes of living, and the strengthening of local communities and direct forms of democracy (Escobar, 2020). There are social movements that, contrary to those featured in our discussion, operate within the limits of Western development, sustainability, and climate change discourses. Accordingly, the praxis of these collective organisations usually tends to suggest moderate changes to the system's market-driven logic or even advance changes that deepen the socio-environmental injustices exacerbated by the disruption of Earths' climate (Anshelm & Hultman, 2015; Hickmann, 2016). Pluriversal social movements, on the other hand, actively engage with ongoing territorial struggles and the politics of ecocultural identity by (re)positioning the more-than-human world as essential to the process of sense-making and the elaboration of non-anthropocentric conceptualisations of voice and agency (Grusin, 2015).

The collective actions of pluriversal social movements show how recognising more-than-human world entities as an inextricable element in human's coevolution and coexistence as earthlings is far from re-enchancing nature, nor does it mean a return to a romantic naturalism that essentialises nature by conceiving of it as pristine and disinterested. On the contrary, recognising how the more-than-human world—in its environmental or nature form—affects our ways of being in the world obliges (re)thinking and sensing the more-than-human world's voice and agency. Growing programmes of research have challenged

dominant visions of development and explored pluriversal experiences across the globe, especially popularised by Kothari et al. (2019). Pluriversal social movements entail a wide assemblage of practices based on earthly cosmologies that surpasses nation-based political rationalities and embraces the many forms of Nature-based spirituality. These forms engage with the territory's life cycles that nurture communities with food, knowledge, livelihoods, and energy. Social movements that cultivate pluriversal futures allow understanding of alternative ways of being and living not as simply poor or derelict, but as productive—and creative—in their own ways, and more and more necessary. Therefore, it is essential to attend to how the ontological reckoning of embracing more-than human voices percolate into the political realm, engender innovative social movements, and further transborder activism.

In the political realm, pluriversal social movements offer alternatives to the technocratic national and international organisations, which deploy conventional development discourses that shape the contemporary global governance built upon the North–South divide (Hidalgo-Capitán et al., 2014, Latta, 2014; Piñeiro, 2016). For instance, this geopolitical divide informs developmentalist discourses that still position countries in the Global South as subjects of aid. Along with environmental concepts such as common good, bilateral or multilateral concessional aid (Power & Mohan, 2010), and global stewardship, they reproduce the colonial roots of the international governance structures that continue to function based on GDP ideologies of progress and well-being. Mobilisation in political actions creates convergences of critical support to reverse oppressions causing ecocide and epistemicide. An encouraging example is the resistance and successful court cases moved by Sarayaku and Waorani Indigenous peoples, especially women, against extractive corporations that had entered their territories. The corporations were protected by the Ecuadorian state which disregarded the people's right to free, prior, and informed consent (Sempértegui, 2020). Territorial, anti-extractivist struggles have also been supported by wider Indigenous organisations like the Confederation of the Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and international NGOs, primarily Amazon Watch (2018). These and other collective actions show that at the margins of human destruction it is possible to find elements of resistance and rhizomatic connections that can regenerate and become diverse formations in new cycles of collaborative multispecies survival (Tsing, 2015).

Furthermore, approaching social movements as seeds for cultivating post-development from pluriversal knowledge and engagement allows us to challenge the dominant frames used to understand grassroots cultural and political significance. For example, Maldonado-Villalpando and Paneque-Gálvez (2022) have demonstrated that grassroots innovation in Europe is primarily embodied by sustainability transformations championed by middle and upper-middle-class urban citizens. Another example they provide is about grassroots innovation in India underpinned by a capitalist ideology. Accordingly, grassroots' creative initiatives are conceptualised as the invention of profitable products and technologies that can improve local livelihoods and the well-being of poor people. These grassroots initiatives do not offer alternatives to development, which should instead create 'radical ruptures with the economic and cultural logics of capitalism, crafting deep social-ecological transformations to pursue just sustainabilities, enabling intercultural dialogues to create new knowledges, or building community autonomy through collective organization and management to be as independent of the state and the neoliberal market as possible' (*ibid.*, p. 82).

Finally, pluriversal social movements experiment with ways of articulating means of production and environmental and political ideologies, not only within specific geographic locations but also across national borders and rural–urban spatial dualities. Transborder activism and political movements of resistance represent 'the emergence and remaking of political imaginaries [which] often lead to valuable localised actions as well as greater transborder solidarity' (Massicote, 2009, p. 424). These cut across multi-layered spatial and temporal scales and reflect the different fields of force implicated in the reproduction of histories, geographies, ideologies, and discourses. Examples of this global solidarity include the Consortium of *ICCA—territories of life*, an association of territories and conservation areas managed by Indigenous peoples and local communities (ICCA Consortium, 2022); the global *tapestry of alternatives* advanced in India by *Vikalp Sangam* (Confluence of Alternatives) and expanded worldwide (Kothari, 2019); and *La Via Campesina*, a transnational food sovereignty movement that has unified peasant-led agroecology projects against the corporate agro-industry (Val et al., 2019). We could also include the World Social Forum and its ramifications for bringing together diverse struggles, feminist, and alter-globalisation, thus creating global networks of solidarity as an alternative to global capitalist competition (Conway, 2013).

Urban grassroots collective actions are also an example of pluriversal social movements resisting gentrification and the creation of class and racially segregated spaces for the sole benefit of capitalist expansion. These collective actions include countermapping of spaces of solidarity, anti-eviction struggles, squatting, and other practices in cities (Halder et al., 2018). When urban grassroots embrace critical and decolonial approaches to understand and change their realities, Acosta and Tapia (2016) argue, their performances articulate memory and utopia from which a collective positioning emerges and nurtures the fight and courage to save their histories from erasure. Cultivating post-development from pluriversal knowledge and engagement, then, involves transcending colonial geopolitical borders and returning to the territories of life that sustain radical collective ethics. From these territories, we remember the ecological dimension of our cultural existence and recognise the evocative voices of the more-than-human world and its agentic power. To follow this path will offer the pluriverse the potential of moving from a thought alternative to a lived reality.

CONCLUSION: REAPING COMMON FUTURES FROM MANY WORLDS

We have proposed that cultivating post-development will require embarking on pluriversal transitions as a form of radical engagement—in commonality and reciprocity—with the more-than-human world. As a starting point for this transition, we must recognise that subjectivity—voice and agency—exceeds the human world, and that all earthlings, human and nonhuman, have the intrinsic right to be protected against the current trend towards extinction. It is increasingly evident that the timid attempts of the SDGs to reform development policies render the current sociocultural, political, and economic systems inadequate to face the urgency and existential threat posed by climate change (Beling et al., 2018; Murphy & Castro-Sotomayor, 2021). Amid the intensification of the climate crisis and the inequities its effects exacerbate, it makes sense that the targets of political action are governments complaisant with extractivist enterprises and corporations, often defended by military forces. Pluriversal social movements embodied radical political action by socio-territorial movements to reverse these oppressions through, for example, protest, political proposals, and direct engagement in experiments of radical commonality, reciprocity, and care (The Care Collective,

2020). Formed around shared ecocultural values that embrace the more-than-human world as a legitimate political actor, pluriversal social movements unite various groups across national borders and along ethnic and other intersectional lines to foster processes of social and environmental change. These movements' defence of a multispecies survival signals the path towards the formation of significant globalised local struggles whose responses in solidarity are encouraging and hopeful.

Within this transitional moment, what is the role of theorists and practitioners in cultivating post-development? How can our scholarship, teaching, and activism contribute to advance efforts towards pluriversal futures in which relationality, integrality, complementarity, and reciprocity between humans and nonhumans shape political and environmental governance? We have suggested that to account for plural vitalities and ecocultural sensibilities is a step towards a radical political imagination. We offered ecocultural identity and a revised notion of territory/territoriality to contribute to the creation of new social grammars (de Sousa Santos, 2011) essential to a political language that could break the cycle of violence and injustices bred at the core of unrestrained development and progress. However, we must be cautious about treating terms such as land, cosmovision, and interculturality as though they were static and ahistorical. As Inuca (2017) reminds us, these terms are usually conceived of as stemming from traditional, or Indigenous, ways of thinking that stand in opposition to Western conceptions of the world. Yet, Inuca (2017, p. 48) asserts, the dichotomy between Western and traditional 'exists in an ambivalent way because there are operational knowledges that emerge from Indigenous people that cannot be considered traditional because they have born from the blast of the relationships and struggles against the dominant society'.² Thus, researchers, teachers, practitioners, and activists must critically engage with how Indigenous/non-dominant languages are used to define what 'development', and sustainability and climate change for that matter, means in relation to territory, land, 'nature', and self. This praxis may legitimise democratic participation processes and outcomes as well as strengthen the civic action of communities at the margins (Micarelli, 2015; Taddei, 2012).

Ultimately, to cultivate post-development requires disciplinary cross-pollination, dialogue of scientific and cultural knowledges, and radical

² Translated by the author.

relationality and mutuality. As researchers and practitioners of post/development, we have an obligation to nourish creative and hopeful political imaginations; to re-invent concepts that could erode the dominant anthropocentric narrative that informs our ethical frames of actions and care. An example of language reinvention is the term Humilocene, the ‘epoch of humility’, as coined by Abram et al. (2020). This term echoes humble, humility, even humiliation and ‘suggests, and even enjoins, a step toward restraint and a new humility for our kind’ (ibid., p. 9). Given the current global civilisational and climate crisis, it is time for a final exit from the epistemic dominance of modernity that obscures the probability of actualizing legitimate alternative ways of being-doing-knowing. In that regard, the Humilocene affords imagining non-anthropocentric ethical and empathetic frameworks within which the plurality of worlds is recognised, acknowledged, and embraced in its plenitude. Only then, we will be seeding a pluriverse future.

REFERENCES

- Abram, D., et al. (2020). Interbreathing ecocultural identity in the Humilocene. In T. Milstein & J. Castro-Sotomayor (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Ecocultural Identity* (pp. 5–25). Routledge.
- Acosta, G., & Tapia, C. (2016). El diálogo de saberes en comunicación o el giro del pensamiento y de la acción en las prácticas de comunicación para la movilización y el cambio social. In G. Acosta et al. (Eds.), *Diálogo de Saberes en Comunicación: Colectivos y Academia* (pp. 1–17). CIESPAL.
- Adelman, S. (2018). The Sustainable Development Goals, anthropocentrism and neoliberalism. In D. French & L. J. Kotzé (Eds.), *Sustainable Development Goals: Law, Theory and Implementation* (pp. 15–40). Edward Elgar.
- Amazon Watch. (2018). *Defending Indigenous Lands, Territories, and Resources at the UN*. Retrieved on June 1, 2022, from: <https://amazonwatch.org/news/2018/0510-defending-indigenous-lands-territories-and-resources-at-the-un>
- Anshelm, J., & Hultman, M. (2015). *Discourses of Global Climate Change: Apocalyptic Framing and Political Antagonisms*. Routledge.
- Arias, R., & Minoia, P. (2023). Nacionalidades: Introducción: La educación como revitalización cultural para las nacionalidades amazónicas amenazadas por los procesos extractivos. In R. Arias & P. Minoia (Eds.), *Plurinacionalidad y Justicia Epistémica. Retos de la Educación Intercultural en la Amazonía Ecuatoriana*. Abya Yala (in press).
- Arrifin, Y. (2007). Developmental and environmental policies: Past trends, present issues, future prospects. In P. de Senarclens & A. Kazancigil (Eds.),

- Regulating Globalisation: Critical Approaches to Global Governance* (pp. 205–248). United Nations University Press.
- Bebbington, A., et al. (2008). Social movements and the dynamics of rural territorial development in Latin America. *World Development*, 36(12), 2874–2887.
- Beling, A., et al. (2018). Discursive synergies for a ‘great transformation’ towards sustainability: Pragmatic contributions to a necessary dialogue between human development, degrowth, and Buen Vivir. *Ecological Economics*, 144, 304–313.
- Bernacchi, L., & Peterson, T. R. (2016). How reductive scientific narratives constrain possibilities for citizen engagement in community-based conservation. In T. R. Peterson (Ed.), *Environmental Communication and Community: Constructive and Destructive Dynamics of Social Transformation* (pp. 75–96). Routledge.
- Callister, D. C. (2013). Land community participation: A new “public” participation model. *Environmental Communication*, 7(4), 435–455. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2013.822408>
- Castro, F., et al. (Eds.). (2016). *Environmental Governance in Latin America*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Castro-Sotomayor, J. (2019). Emplacing climate change: Civic action at the margins. *Frontiers in Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2019.00033>
- Castro-Sotomayor, J. (2020a). Ecocultural identities in intercultural encounters. In T. Milstein & J. Castro-Sotomayor (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Ecocultural Identity* (pp. 66–85). Routledge.
- Castro-Sotomayor, J. (2020b). Territorialidad as Environmental Communication. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 44(1), 50–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2019.1647443>
- Chagnon, C., et al. (2022). From extractivism to global extractivism: The evolution of an organising concept. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2022.2069015>
- Conway, J. M. (2013). *Edges of Global Justice: The World Social Forum and Its ‘Others’*. Routledge.
- de Sousa Santos, B. (2011). Epistemologías del sur. *Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana*, 16(54), 17–39.
- De la Cadena, M., & Blaser, M. (2018). *A World of Many Worlds*. Duke University Press.
- Druschke, C. G. (2013). Watershed as common-place: Communicating for conservation at the watershed scale. *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, 7(1), 80–96.
- Dukes, E. F. (2004). What we know about environmental conflict resolution: An analysis based on research. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 22(1–2), 191–220.
- Elden, S. (2010). Land, terrain, territory. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(6), 799–817.

- Escobar, A. (2010). Latin America at a crossroads. *Cultural Studies*, 24(1), 1–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380903424208>
- Escobar, A. (2020). *Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible*. Duke University Press.
- Gago, V., & Mezzadra, S. (2017). A critique of the extractive operations of capital: Toward an expanded concept of extractivism. *Rethinking Marxism*, 29(4), 574–591.
- Gómez-Barris, M. (2017). *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*. Duke University Press.
- Grusin, R. (Ed.). (2015). *The Nonhuman Turn*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Gualinga, J. (2016). *Kawsak Sacha—Living Forest. A Proposal of the Kichwa People of Sarayaku for a New Protected Areas Category*. Retrieved on January 23, 2023, from: <https://amazonwatch.org/assets/files/2016-kawsak-sacha-proposal-english.pdf>
- Gualinga, P. (2019). Kawsak Sacha. In A. Kothari et al. (Eds.), *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* (pp. 223–226). Tulika Books.
- Gudynas, E. (2013). Transitions to post-extractivism: Directions, options, areas of action. In M. Lang & D. Mokrani (Eds.), *Beyond Development: Alternative Visions from Latin America*. Transnational Institute/Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.
- Halder, S., et al. (2018). *This Is Not an Atlas: A Global Collection of Counter-Cartographies*. Verlag.
- Halualani, R. T., & Nakayama, T. K. (2010). Critical intercultural communication studies: At a crossroads. In T. K. Nakayama & R. T. Halualani (Eds.), *The Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* (pp. 1–16). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hickmann, T. (2016). *Rethinking Authority in Global Climate Governance: How Transnational Climate Initiatives Relate to the International Climate Regime*. Routledge.
- Hidalgo-Capitán, A. et al. (Eds.) (2014). *Sumak Kawsay Yuyay Antología del Pensamiento Indigenista Ecuatoriano sobre el Sumak Kawsay*. Universidad de Huelva and Universidad de Cuenca.
- Hohenthal, J., & Minoia, P. (2021). Territorial and mobility justice for indigenous youth: Accessing education in Ecuadorian Amazonia. *Mobilities*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2021.1987154>
- Hunt, K., et al. (2019). *Breaking Boundaries Innovative Practices in Environmental Communication and Public Participation*. Suny Press.
- ICCA Consortium. (2022). *ICCA Consortium Webpage*. Retrieved on January 30, 2023 from: <https://www.iccaconsortium.org/> <https://www.iccaconsortium.org>

- Inuca, B. (2017). Kawsaypura yachay tinkuy: Convergencia y confrontación de saberes “entre culturas.” In J. Gómez (Ed.), *Repensar la Interculturalidad* (pp. 37–71). Artes Ediciones.
- Iza, L., et al. (2020). *Estallido: La rebelión de Octubre en Ecuador*. Red Kapari.
- Junka-Aikio, L., & Cortes-Severino, C. (2017). Cultural studies of extraction. *Cultural Studies*, 31(2–3), 175–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2017.1303397>
- Karikari, E., et al. (2020). Illegal mining, identity, and the politics of ecocultural voice in Ghana. In T. Milstein & J. Castro-Sotomayor (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Ecocultural Identity* (pp. 240–259). Routledge.
- Kinsella, W., et al. (2004). Public expertise: A foundation for citizen participation in energy and environmental Decisions. In S. P. Depoe (Ed.), *Communication and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making* (pp. 83–95). State University of New York Press.
- Kothari, A., et al. (2019). *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary*. Tulika Books.
- Krieg, C. P., & Minoia, P. (2021). Anthropocene conjunctures. In R. Toivanen & C. P. Krieg (Eds.), *Situating Sustainability: A Handbook of Contexts and Concepts* (pp. 39–50). Helsinki University Press.
- Latour, B. (2017). *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*. Polity Press.
- Latta, A. (2014). Matter, politics and the sacred: Insurgent ecologies of citizenship. *Cultural Geographies*, 21(3), 323–341.
- Latta, A., & Wittman, H. (Eds.). (2012). *Environment and Citizenship in Latin America: Natures, Subjects and Struggles*. Berghahn Books.
- López, M., et al. (2017). Space, power, and locality: The contemporary use of *territorio* in Latin American geography. *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 1, 43–67.
- Macas, L. F. (2019). La universidad Intercultural Amawtay Wasi del Ecuador, un proyecto atrapado en la colonialidad del poder. *Revista Universitaria Del Caribe*, 23(2), 31–43.
- Maldonado-Villalpando, E., & Paneque-Gálvez, J. (2022). Grassroots innovation in alternatives to development: A review. *Nordia Geographical Publications*, 51(2), 80–102.
- Massicote, M. J. (2009). Transborder activism in the Americas: Exploring ways to better assess and learn from less powerful forces, towards other possible worlds. *Globalizations*, 6(4), 411–431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747730903298595>
- Melkote, S. R., & Steeves, H. L. (2015). *Communication of Development: Theory and Practice for Empowerment and Social Justice*. Sage.
- Mezzadra, S., & Neilson, B. (2015). *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*. Duke University Press.

- Micarelli, G. (2015). *Indigenous Networks at the Margins of Development*. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.
- Milstein, T., & Castro-Sotomayor, J. (Eds.). (2020). *Routledge Handbook of Ecocultural Identity*. Routledge.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2007). Introduction: Coloniality of power and de-colonial thinking. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2–3), 155–167.
- Minoia, P. (2020). Corporate Land Grabs: Colonial Continuity and Space of Exception in Kenya. *Land Use Policy*, 99, 104964. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2020.104964>
- Minoia, P., & Tapia, A. (2023). Políticas públicas educativas y lucha del movimiento indígena por una interculturalidad decolonial. In R. Arias & P. Minoia (Eds.), *Plurinacionalidad y Justicia Epistémica. Retos de la Educación Intercultural en la Amazonía Ecuatoriana*. Abya Yala (in press).
- Moore, J. W. (2015). *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*. Verso.
- Murphy, P., & Castro-Sotomayor, J. (2021). From limits to ecocentric rights and responsibility: Communication, globalization, and the politics of environmental transition. *Communication Theory*, 31(4), 978–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtaa026>
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2013). *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonisation*. CODESRIA.
- Oviedo Freire, A., & Estermann, J. (2014). *Bifurcación del buen vivir y el Sumak Kawsay*. Sumak.
- Peet, R., et al. (2011). *Global Political Ecology*. Routledge.
- Peterson, T., et al. (Eds.). (2016). *Environmental Communication and Community: Constructive and Destructive Dynamics of Social Transformation*. Routledge.
- Piñero, E. (2016). Buen vivir. In F. Sierra & C. Maldonado (Eds.), *Comunicación, Decolonialidad y Buen vivir* (pp. 219–236). CIESPAL.
- Plec, E. (Ed.). (2013). *Perspectives on Human-Animal Communication International Communication*. Routledge.
- Plumwood, V. (2002). *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. Routledge.
- Power, M., & Mohan, G. (2010). Towards a critical geopolitics of China's engagement with African development. *Geopolitics*, 15(3), 462–495. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1465004090350102>
- Pueblo Originario Kichwa de Sarayaku. (2018). *Declaración Kawsak Sacha-Selva Viviente Ser Vivo y Consiente Sujeto de Derecho*. Retrieved on January 30, 2023, from: <https://sarayaku.org/declaracion-kawsak-sacha-selva-viviente-ser-vivo-y-consiente-sujeto-de-derecho/>
- Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power and eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology*, 15(2), 215–232.

- Sempértégui, A. (2020). Decolonising the anti-extractive struggle: Amazonian women's practices of forest-making in Ecuador. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 21(7), 122–138.
- Sprain, L., et al. (2012). The 'wickedness' of participation in climate change adaptation governance. In S. Movik & A. Vatn (Eds.), *Students Papers* (pp. 77–93). Thor Heyerdahl Summer School in Environmental Governance.
- Srinivasan, K., & Kasturirangan, R. (2016). Political ecology, development, and human exceptionalism. *Geoforum*, 75, 125–128.
- Storey, D. (2020). *A Research Agenda for Territory and Territoriality*. Edward Elgar.
- Taddei, R. (2012). Social participation and the politics of climate change in northeast Brazil. In A. Latta & H. Wittman (Eds.), *Environment and Citizenship in Latin America: Natures, Subjects and Struggles* (pp. 77–93). Berghahn Books.
- Telleria, J. (2015). What does culture mean for the UNDP? The implicit cultural logic within the human development framework. *Cultural Studies*, 29(2), 255–271.
- Tipa, G. (2009). Exploring indigenous understandings of river dynamics and river flows: A case from New Zealand. *Environmental Communication*, 3(1), 95–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524030802707818>
- The Care Collective. (2020). *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence*. Penguin Random House.
- Tornel, C., & Lunden, A. (2022). Editorial to re-worlding: Pluriversal politics in the Anthropocene. *Nordia Geographical Publications*, 51(2), 1–9.
- Tsing, A. L. (2015). *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton University Press.
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonisation Is not a methaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1, 1–40.
- Usher, M. (2020). Territory incognita. *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(6), 1019–1046.
- Val, V., et al. (2019). Agroecology and La Via Campesina I. The symbolic and material construction of agroecology through the dispositive of 'peasant-to-peasant' processes. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 43(7–8), 872–894.
- Vela-Almeida, D. (2018). Territorial partitions, the production of mining territory and the building of a post-neoliberal and plurinational state in Ecuador. *Political Geography*, 62, 126–136.
- Veltmeyer, H. & Petras, J. F. (Eds.) (2014) *The New Extractivism: A Post-neoliberal Development Model or Imperialism of the Twenty-first Century?* Zed Books.

- Villamayor-Tomas, S. (2022). Social movements and commons: In theory and in practice. *Ecological Economics*, 194, 107328. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2021.107328>
- Vitery Gualinga, A. (2021). *Sumak Kawsac Sacha Allpa: The Territory of the Kichwa People of the Anzu River in Ecuador*. Retrieved on May 15, 2022, from: <https://www.iwgia.org/en/news/4498-sumak-kawsac-sacha-allpa-the-territory-of-the-kichwa-people-of-the-anzu-river.html>
- Waisbord, S. (2015). Three challenges for communication and global social change. *Communication Theory*, 25(2), 144–165. <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12068>

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

