

booklets

LIVING BETTER WITH LESS

**Overcoming the Ideology
of Unlimited Growth**



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Joan Carrera i Carrera

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OF UNLIMITED GROWTH**

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PROLOGUE

Often, as a result of talks I have given on the issue of ecology, and more specifically on the encyclical *Laudato si'*, at discussion time, I find that one question, though formulated in different ways, is always raised: is the current capitalist economic system compatible with ecological values?

This will be the *leitmotiv* of this current booklet, which will be focussed more on the cultural than the economic context, seeking to identify the common threads of alternative social and economic models from an ecological and “de-growth” point of view, which challenges the current capitalist system.

For many, these proposals have an excessively utopian character, are difficult to apply and impractical, which is true to a certain extent. Talking about realistic alternatives is almost a paradox, given that, when questioning the current state of affairs, any alternative presented seems to be utopian in nature, as if it were an idea that had escaped from our collective imagination.

As we will try to demonstrate in the course of this booklet, many of the val-

ues that we find behind the proposals of these alternatives are actually at the root of Christian morality, as well as that of other religious traditions. This is why I would like to begin by quoting the words of Pope Francis in 2015, in a meeting with some popular movements from Bolivia; as Christians and people of goodwill, we should challenge ourselves and become attentive to the changes that these alternative movements propose:

Before all else, let us begin by acknowledging that change is needed. Here I would clarify, lest there be any misunderstanding, that I am speaking about problems common to all Latin Americans and, more generally, to humanity as a whole. They are global problems which today no one state can

resolve on its own. With this clarification, I now propose that we ask the following questions:

Do we truly realize that something is wrong in a world where there are so many farmworkers without land, so many families without a home, so many laborers without rights, so many persons whose dignity is not respected?

Do we realize that something is wrong where so many senseless wars are being fought and acts of fratricidal violence are taking place on our very doorstep? Do we realize something is wrong when the soil, water, air and living creatures of our world are under constant threat?

So, if we do realize all this, let's not be afraid to say it: we need change; we want change.

In your letters and in our meetings, you have mentioned the many forms of exclusion and injustice which you experience in the workplace, in neighborhoods and throughout the land. They are many and diverse, just as many and diverse are the ways in which you confront them. Yet there is an invisible thread joining every one of the forms

of exclusion. These are not isolated issues. Can we recognize that invisible thread which links them? I wonder whether we can see that those destructive realities are part of a system which has become global. Do we realize that that system has imposed the mentality of profit at any price, with no concern for social exclusion or the destruction of nature?

If such is the case, I would insist, let us not be afraid to say it: we want change, real change, structural change. This system is by now intolerable: farmworkers find it intolerable, laborers find it intolerable, communities find it intolerable, peoples find it intolerable ... The earth itself – our sister, Mother Earth, as Saint Francis would say – also finds it intolerable.

We want change in our lives, in our neighborhoods, in our everyday reality. We want a change which can affect the entire world, since global interdependence calls for global answers to local problems. The globalization of hope, a hope which springs up from peoples and takes root among the poor, must replace the globalization of exclusion and indifference!¹

1. LIVING WITH THE IDEOLOGY OF UNLIMITED GROWTH

The twenty-first century has not been the century of great ideologies with global visions that claim to explain everything, but rather the century that has offered a diverse array of partial alternatives seeking a way out of the dominant mindset. These are alternatives which foreshadow innovations at a local level, challenging that which has become normalised in our culture and our way of life, by pointing out that this worldview is not normal at all and nor should it be generalised on a geographical or historical level.

1.1. A system based on growth

Western society and its dominant culture has based itself on an economic system in which the model of the free market and the inviolability of private ownership dominates, even though it is true that different versions of this model have emerged, with stronger welfare states as well as states with much more liberal models. This model experienced its greatest expansion during the second half of the twentieth century, with the creation of a global market

that has become increasingly open to the movement of goods, capital, information... (We should add, albeit in brackets, that the same has not happened with people, whose movement has become increasingly difficult).

The system has functioned with a basic notion which emerged in the modern era: that of constant expansive economic growth; unlimited growth that has become the framework for progress and a necessity so that the product owners or shareholders can achieve the maximum revenue. We

have internalised this idea of progress in such a way in our culture that we are incapable of conceiving any other model, other than the continued improvement of everything that we use on a daily basis, thus giving in to our constant expectations for greater speed, efficiency and an increase in our range of possibilities. This dynamic of progress and infinite growth appears to be continuing in the hope that science and technology will find a definitive solution to the problems that concern us, whether they be medical, related to energy, food, transport, communication, etc.

This is why we should ask ourselves what we understand by the term “growth”. Although no single answer exists, since we live in a system which prioritises the economy, this is the focus to which we submit our vision of reality.

We could also ask ourselves whether the system, as we know it today, could survive without economic growth. With a stagnant or declining GDP, the current capitalist system would find it difficult to continue. It is true that there are periods of zero or negative growth, but they are temporary, and a way of overcoming them at any cost is immediately sought. Thus when the alarm sounds and growth begins to decline, mechanisms to stimulate the economy are put into action, whether that means, for example, making work conditions less satisfactory or moving companies to different locations in search of labour conditions, social benefits or environmental legislations which will allow an increase in profitability with the aim of increasing economic growth. Herein lies a para-

dox of the system: it promotes a single universal market (in which goods and capital can move freely), but it needs to have the option of different state frameworks, which it takes advantage of in order to increase its returns.

From the nineteen-eighties onwards, when profits in Western countries began to decline, large companies maintained or increased their profits thanks to sales in a globalised world. This new framework offered a free flow of capital, the option for large companies to move location and likewise, a mechanism which allowed diverting money to the financial sector, thus ensuring huge profits. This new dimension of the financial sector moved away from the real productive economy –which generates real wealth–, a phenomenon which soon became known as the “financialization” of the economy.

The economic crisis of 2007-2008 could have been a turning-point and an opportunity to rethink the dominant model of the capitalist system (or at least its most neoliberal and financial version), but if we analyse this period and the solutions adopted by Western countries, the same formulas which unleashed the crisis came into play again, with the aim of stimulating economic growth. In fact, the only difference consisted in a new agreement on basic economic policies, either by cutting state spending (“policies of austerity”, according to official language), leaving broader scope for initiatives with companies and the markets, or by increasing public spending with Keynesian style measures. Both economic policies, although seemingly opposed, actually coincide on the fact

that they do not question the prevailing model of growth (or production), and disregard the negative consequences of that system of economic growth (environmental damage, unfair redistribution of wealth, increasing financialization...); consequences which, instead of easing, worsened with the crisis.

We could say then, that the notion of unlimited growth has become an authentic ideology, in the fullest sense of the word: a system of ideas and judgments designed to describe, define, interpret and justify the situation of a group or collective and which, inspired by certain values, propose ongoing actions which serve the interests of specific individuals and groups, to such an extent that we could ask ourselves whose interests are being served by this model of unlimited growth.

1.2. A system based on hyper-consumerism

So that this constant economic growth becomes the driving force behind the system, it needs a set of values, lifestyles and production models, which are not found in other cultures, to become internalised and understood as dominant models. For example, this constant growth would not have been possible without so-called “hyper-consumerism”; in other words, a type of consumerism which becomes increasingly based on goods that are neither basic or necessary, but instead superfluous. There are reasons for this hyper-consumerism. Certain items have of course allowed us to be less vulnerable to chance and Nature. Nobody would deny that the emergence of

certain technological gadgets has liberated us from very wearisome tasks, which would otherwise have required much time and effort. Yet it is also true that if at first they gave us greater independence, this independence was lost when it turned into a form of compulsive consumerism, and when it created dependencies in relation to the ownership of certain products.

This constant consumerism has also been encouraged by measures introduced by producers with the sole aim of preventing the system from slowing down. I’m referring to phenomena such as planned obsolescence (products whose use has an expiry date), or the psychological obsolescence encouraged by *marketing strategies* which present new products in a progressive way because they have more features. There are of course psychological reasons which explain this insatiable human appetite, but the capitalist system itself is largely responsible for the hyper-consumerism which has become one of the pillars of our society. Today, owning things is not just about the fact of owning material goods in order to satisfy material needs, but the mere possession of such items plays a strong symbolic role, since they give status and build an identity, thus allowing people to participate in a social life.

Similarly, the possession of certain items constitutes a language in itself, in the way in which these items represent an extension of the self.² The possession of certain items may also seem to offer a substitute of a pseudo-religious nature, offering fantasies and dreams that allow one to escape a harsh reality.³ When the self finds itself

void of meaning, or alone, it is inclined to seek a meaning for life through buying products, which *marketing strategies* offer as pathways to fulfilment. This void feels greater the more it is exposed to the manipulation of *marketing strategies*, something which the markets know very well. However, the fantasy world associated with consumerism will never reach fulfilment and only generates more frustration. This failure however, paradoxically results in success for the model of hyper-consumerism, given that we enter into an unstoppable cycle where it becomes increasingly urgent to satisfy the desire to buy more products. In the past, people used to firstly save money, and only once they had saved enough money for the item would they buy it, whereas nowadays, through methods such as credit cards –easy to use and fast–, the time spent between the desire to buy something and its purchase has practically disappeared.

1.3. A myth which has started to be questioned

Up until recently, the positive notion of growth has not been questioned: growth means moving from one situation to another in which we gain something which we didn't have before and which we need, or at least, we believe we need. The mantra of constant growth is closely linked to the notion of progress as we understand it in modern society. A faith which leads us to believe that we have infinite possibilities to improve ourselves, dominating nature and controlling the environment in order to put them at our service. In

this way, we have reduced more manual types of tasks, battled illnesses and made natural catastrophes more predictable.

This idea of growth and progress did not exist in traditional rural societies, in which time had a more cyclical dimension (seasons, harvests...), and technological advances generally took place over longer periods of time. Thus, growth became associated with an improvement in living conditions and lastly, with a specific image of what human happiness should be. Using religious terminology, we could say that growth has become an idol in itself. In Europe, at the time of the Industrial Revolution, the paradigm of growth imposed itself as an answer to the emergency caused by the demographic explosion and the resulting increase in societal needs, a situation which the model of production of the time could not handle. Gradually, this new paradigm changed from being an emergency response to establishing itself as a permanent model of production, which ended up being the form of capitalism we know today.

However, this idol has always been built on shifting sands, given that it was built on a pyre of victims, not all of which were foreseen: the exploitation and destruction of nature, the exploitation of the workforce, colonialism, the exploitation and manipulation of the role of women... For decades, nature and the labour force have had to give way to the push for growth, until, in the nineteen-seventies, people began to talk about overpopulation and a shortage of natural resources. The famous Meadows report reflected this preoccupation,⁴ although it did so by

focussing on growth and overpopulation in the countries which were then known as “third world”, and the threat that this situation posed for the “first world”.

It was during the nineties that, following the first reports by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), the issues of global warming and non-biodegradable waste were put on the table. Since then, the consequences of climate change have become so evident that there are fewer people who doubt that global warming calls into question the future of the current model of unlimited growth.

There is another factor which challenges the current model: the growing social inequality within society; in other words, the capitalist economy has created a lot of wealth, but it has not distributed it well; a situation which has become more evident since the wave of neoliberalism that emerged in the eighties. This inequality is even affecting those countries that are guided by more redistributive economic models. All of this means that, little by little, the notion of economic growth is becoming disconnected from the issue of wellbeing, understood in its

broadest sense. Nevertheless, there are still those who, while acknowledging the problem, believe that “increased growth” will end up solving the negative effects of the model of growth that fuelled these inequalities in the first place. They say things like: “technology will find a solution to climate change”, “it is necessary to grow more economically in order to be able to distribute more”, “the problem with poor countries is that they are not sufficiently globalised (they should enter the global market and in this way they will enjoy its benefits)”...

Fortunately however, not everyone accepts these arguments. At the end of the twentieth century, a variety of movements emerged which challenged the model of unlimited growth, suggesting other lifestyles and other models of happiness, different to those proposed by the dominant culture. In spite of their differences, they coincided on certain values, and even though they were not technophobes in the broader sense of the word, they did not believe that solutions to the complex crisis would be found solely within the responses put forward by modern technology.

2. ADOPTING DIFFERENT VALUES IN ECONOMIC GROWTH

While it is true that some people have proposed the provocative suggestion of bringing about “de-growth”, and that what they are asking for is a significant reduction in production and consumption, the majority would not lean towards the suggestion of “less”, but rather the suggestion of “different”: this is not then about initiating a decline in growth, but instead about facilitating growth in a different way. In order to achieve this, these movements –which range from the economy of the common good to co-operativism, from feminism to environmentalism, from libertarian movements to communitarian ones, from anti-globalisation to alter-globalisation– are aware of the need to escape from the fantasy world of the current system, challenging the values on which the neo-liberal capitalist system is based.

2.1. Criticism of the system’s values

The first value which these movements reject is, in paraphrasing Ignacio Ellacuría,⁵ that the accumulation of wealth should be considered a driving force of history; this challenges an essential premise of capitalism: the right of each individual to accumulate resources be-

yond their basic needs and to use them to achieve what they consider to be a full and happy life, without regard for others.

They also argue that the emancipatory ideal of modernity has been betrayed: instead of gaining more freedom, individuals are becoming increasingly subordinate to the dictates of the markets, gradually losing their

ability of discernment when faced with the latest offers. Some authors have spoken of a “psychological impoverishment”, in the sense that a state of continual and generalised dissatisfaction has been created, caused by the loss of our ability for real autonomy, since we have now become dependent upon consumption.⁶

They also criticise the fact that the balance always leans towards the first option in the following scenarios: competition versus cooperation, egotism versus altruism, global versus local, material versus relational, owning versus sharing, luxury versus frugality, private versus common. We could also add as a criticism the fact that human greed has freed itself from any moral or social constraints.

2.2. Anti-capitalism or pre-capitalism?

Faced with this criticism, we must ask ourselves if these movements are anti-capitalist. The answer is not a simple one; we are more inclined to think that what they do is to call into question the values of modernity and that they challenge the economic models of capitalism as much as they challenge so-called “real communism”.⁷ In fact, some of the alternative proposals could best be described as being “pre-capitalist”, given that they suggest production methods which predate capitalism, adopting as their models cultures in which there has never been a Western style industrial revolution. In any event, what is clear is that in order to understand these movements, we must abandon the right-left dialectic com-

mon in the West during the twentieth century. In other words, we should try to overcome a system which is diseased, while at the same time avoiding a direct conflict (which is predominantly an ideological one) with the capitalist system.

Many of these movements do not accept that a group of élites should be looking for solutions to our environmental problems and so they adopt drastic measures on this issue with the aim of saving the planet themselves.⁸ They believe that certain élites would impose measures for their own benefit, taking advantage of the inability of a democracy to make decisions, by proposing policies tied to economic power. These movements are the so-called “authoritarian Ecocracies”, or “eco-fascists”...⁹ On the other hand, the movements on which we base our alternative proposals seek, instead of authoritarianism, solutions which are fed by pacifism and the democratic participation of the whole population. Another criticism they share is the extreme individualism of modern society, which has destroyed any sense of the collective. We will be looking at how these movements offer alternatives which highlight the value of the common good.

Lastly, we find in them a critical analysis which tries to explain the way in which the values of the current system have infected our mindset in such a way that they have become normalised, to the point of being considered a normal characteristic of humanity. The result has been a generation of uncritical citizens, undiscerning, docile consumers, competitive and hardworking technocrats. For these movements, it

has become an urgent issue to identify which value system is being predominantly taught in the West,¹⁰ and how we can bring about a change in this mindset which has become systemic. The proposals on this subject are also diverse: some use religious language (conversion), while others speak of the need for a cognitive decentralisation...

Due to their differences, it is difficult to find one definition which encompasses all the movements which suggest a policy of de-growth, but if we broaden our perspective, we see that there are some shared values, although their specific social and political proposals differ.

2.3. Another form of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is possible

Many of the movements focus on two interlinked problems: climate change and the growth in unequal economies, and they criticise the solutions which have been put forward up to now. Technology cannot slow climate change, nor can greater economic growth get rid of inequality, given that current growth (understood purely in terms of an increase in GDP) is uneconomical and unfair. Uneconomical because it only focuses on growth and does not take into account the impact and costs this brings about (for example, on health), and because it does not distinguish between good and bad activities (for example, it sees as growth those activities which are committed to repairing the negative consequences brought about by the system itself: the building of prisons, the cleaning of riv-

ers...). Neither does it offer information on the distribution of revenue, or take into account many activities which are beneficial for society (such as domestic work, volunteering, the work of carers...), and furthermore, it is unfair because it does not take into account that, above a certain income level, the factor which increases the wellbeing of the population is equality, and not economic growth (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009; Deaton, 2015).

As an alternative to the indicators which are currently used in the preparation of the GDP figures, many other methods have been proposed which, in order to measure the development of a society, use parameters which cannot be reduced solely to matters of the economy: life expectancy, education, gender equality, ecology... For example, there is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which has for many years proposed the Human Development Index (HDI) as an alternative to the GDP. Thus for these movements, a decrease in terms of the GDP does not necessarily mean that other indicators of a society's wellbeing do not improve. For this reason, some believe that the concept of "de-growth" can lead to misunderstandings linked to the idea of what the term "growth" represents.

Furthermore, the dominant idea of growth is unfair because it makes parenting work invisible, as well as the care of dependents, which, as the feminist economy points out, is a clear example of gender discrimination. On the other hand, it is also unjust because it does not take into consideration the unequal trade between countries. Raw materials and energy resources are

obtained from developing countries (according to the classical definition by GDP), which suffer the impact of unregulated extraction, and where, even after the extraction, waste and pollutants are sent in return for small amounts of money.

Another aspect criticised is that current growth has led to a mindset of commodification which has extended into every sphere of life, even affecting social and individual activities (such as hospitality, care, thoughtfulness...), which until now were not subject to the logic of commercial exchange or that of personal economic benefit. As the philosopher Michael Sandel points out, “we have drifted from a market economy to a market society”.¹¹ What we now need to do is reclaim and restore everything which improved society’s wellbeing, and which used to reside outside of the markets, to its rightful place.

2.4. Relational goods

Closely linked to the two previous criticisms, these movements give great importance to so-called “relational goods”, which are those goods which can be found outside of the markets, and which are therefore not included in the growth statistics of the GDP. These are goods which lawyers and economists refer to as “common goods”, and which, although they include very different realities, respond to two criteria, as Serge Latouche and Didier Harpagès explain: “*non-rivalry* (the quantity of available goods is not diminished by the fact that others benefit from them) and *non exclusion*

(access to this type of goods is free)”.¹² There are different types of relational goods, some of which are born from a context of coexistence and mutual care... these are goods which generate life and take care of it. Traditionally, many of them have mainly been in the hands of women, and this is why feminism has associated women as being agents of wellbeing. These are goods which oppose the logic of productivity and become subverted when they enter into the logic of the markets.

Their threat to the current system mainly resides in the fact that they are more time-consuming – which would affect production– and because they would also break with the extreme individualism of the markets– in order to create forms of mutual support among people. In this way, they generate a feeling of interdependence, which would allow the problems of one individual to be shared with others.

Within these goods, some speak about the restoration of “*commons*”, whose specific historical origin is linked to common lands, although this could also include other elements, such as a furnace, or a mill to mill grain... These were found in pre-capitalist economies, in small communities that managed public goods to which all members of the community would have access. One possible definition of “commons” would be: “A resource becomes common when a community or group of people take on the responsibility of its care”.¹³ The commons formed part of European economies before progressive liberalisation began privatising resources. It is important to focus on the fact that the commons aims to create a community which de-

cides what is shared and how it should be shared, as well as being a form of local self-government of shared resources. In a context which is more specifically based on values, commons replaces the necessity of “having” with a productive system in which working together and sharing tools in production (shared usage and collaboration), improve our quality of life. They also create methods of self-government in which all members can participate and restore local production. The movements which criticise the current economic system defend the commons for different reasons. Firstly, it represents a saving of resources, because they are shared. Secondly, precisely because the resources are shared, it encourages good relationships among people.

On the other hand, it revitalises the public space, without necessarily bringing about an increase in public administration. Christian Felber, in his proposal for an economy based on the common good, without breaking with the markets, defends the existence of what he calls “democratic goods” (schools, universities, hospitals, water, energy, public transport...), which citizens would control in a participative way and at a local level, without the intervention of government at a higher level.¹⁴

2.5. Austerity

Another value which these movements support, and which appears under different names is that of austerity. They propose a form of voluntary frugality, which links in with the philosophical tradition which recommends simplify-

ing life in such a way that possessions are not seen as a way of obtaining happiness. Serge Latouche talks about “moving from a consumerist society to a society of frugal abundance”,¹⁵ or as Tim Jackson summarises in a more moderate way, “prosperity without growth”.¹⁶ As Latouche adds, a re-kindled form of frugality allows the growth of a society of abundance, with an understanding that people will be less dependent on superfluous needs and find happiness in relational goods. As Kate Soper affirms, “consumer society has passed a critical point where materialism is now actively detracting from human well-being”.¹⁷ Ultimately, there is a sense that there is a certain basic level of material wellbeing, but when more needs are created, a person’s sense of wellbeing decreases, as does that of society. The idea of self-limitation, focussing only on basic needs, ends up generating a sense of abundance and goes against the idea of shortage, without needing to expand the production system.

Frugality, also understood as an interior experience in fact becomes, as Trainer explains, a requirement for one’s spiritual life: “Living with a considerable degree of self-sufficiency and interdependence is necessary if we want to enjoy some of the most important experiences that contribute to our quality of life”.¹⁸ Therefore, the way of simplicity may seem attractive and enriching, something which also gives meaning to people’s lives.

Ignacio Ellacuría used similar terms, presenting it as a condition that would allow a real, human spiritual richness to grow: “[...] This poverty is what really opens us up to the Spir-

it, which will no longer feel choked by the craving to have more than the next person, by the constant yearning to possess all types of superficialities, when the majority of humanity is lacking the most basic ”.¹⁹

Along the same lines, an interesting reflection is carried out by the authors in the epilogue of the book *Decrecimiento*,²⁰ in which they put forward a dichotomy which is opposed to what the current economic system offers: instead of “social austerity/ individual excess”, they prefer to talk about “personal simplicity/ social expenditure”. Finding a meaning for life at an individual level is an anthropological illusion which leads to environmentally unfair outcomes, due to the inability to apply this to the whole world. Using the dichotomy of personal simplicity / social expenditure, the individual can find a meaning for their life by focusing on their daily life, placing a value on their health and participating in social spending agreed in a collaborative way. It offers a much narrower focus, and underlines the criticisms directed at the capitalist system by these movements, given that they challenge an essential element of the system: which is that each person, individually, and without any social awareness, has the right to accumulate possessions that go beyond their basic needs for survival.

2.6. Policies of proximity

Another value, closely linked to a reappraisal of the economy, is the revitalisation of politics at a local level. The way in which this is boosted is in favouring the consumption of local

products, which brings with it a reduction in the consumption of energy due to the reduction in transport needed. We would then have a local economy which could be managed by the local communities themselves. Giacomo D’Alisa notes an idea that many of these movements share: there is a shift from experts making decisions to the expert community making them; in other words, increasing the participation of people in the decisions that affect them.²¹ What they are doing, in a word, is calling for a change in the understanding of democracy so that their alternative proposals can be applied. Their criticism is similar to that of social movements like the Anti-Austerity Movement in Spain, Occupy Wall Street...; movements that have become the turning point in the fragile alliance between democracy and capitalism, which has dominated the West since the end of World War II, arguing that the economic and financial system has hijacked weak democracies, in such a way that they no longer represent the will of the people, but instead find themselves at the service of global economic élites.

Some of the proposals in favour of a return to the local economy come from countries like India, where they were implemented in some of the main cities under the Gandhian economy, in order to establish democracies on a small scale, with the aim of promoting local agriculture and industry. Before western movements tried it, Joseph Chelladurai Kumarappa proposed an economic model that was focused on caring for natural resources, putting an emphasis on grassroots movements, mutual help and care, appreciating in-

terpersonal relationships, spiritual values, and permanence, values which are all opposed to conspicuous consumerism. The ideas defended by the Indian movement, known as the “Economy of permanence”, would later influence the French de-growth movement.²²

2.7. Learning and unlearning

The proposals we are looking at require a change in the collective mindset, hence the importance of movements offering education. Specifically, they understand that through education, it is possible to bring about a turnaround in the system, by encouraging non-participation in the dynamics of consumerism, which make growth unsustainable and, as a result, the entire system upon which it is built.²³ Similarly, while it disregards the current consumerist system, it does try to work at alternatives, which must be both inclusive and collaborative –and which will not be imposed by any group under any banner, but instead require a clear community-based development.

Serge Latouche suggests looking over the values on which liberalism is based and instead promoting their opposites: altruism instead of egotism, cooperation instead of competition, local instead of global, relational instead of materialism.²⁴ It is necessary to abandon the ideological logic that supports capitalism, something that for Latouche does not necessarily mean abandoning all the social institutions of the current economy, as these could be re-established under a different logic, since as the author reminds us, some of them predate capitalism, such

as is the case with the internal market and currency. Latouche wonders how the consumerist mindset became our mindset, and he answers by highlighting the role our education played, as well as the role of media manipulation; together they instilled this mindset in us.²⁵

In his work *The Simpler Way*,²⁶ Trainer dedicates an entire chapter to education, in which he is very critical of the issue. Today, education is aimed at providing a perfect workforce, it does not challenge inequality, but instead produces competitors, it helps create enthusiastic consumers, and generates docile and passive citizens. The author proposes a form of education based instead around the following themes: compassion, social responsibility, feeling bad when others suffer, challenging adversity and failure. Besides these, he points to other qualities: the capacity for gratitude, gratitude for the gifts life has given us (being happy with little, being capable of *being* rather than *doing*...), the feeling of satisfaction when we see others are doing well and knowing how to appreciate the beauty of things. He believes education should increase our ability to be inspired by things, using the most emotional part of our humanity, and deconstructing the normalisation of values that are clearly problematic and at odds with our wellbeing: the obsession to accumulate wealth, the emphasis on competitiveness, extreme individualism and the lack of collective values, indifference in the face of social problems, apathy and the rejection of everything to do with politics, and the lack of compromise when working towards the common good.

2.8. A matrix of alternatives

Having written a quick review of these movements and the values they stand for, it can be said that they present themselves as a matrix of alternatives against the dominant mindset in the social, economic and political spheres, and that they try to envision a future with characteristics which oppose the current norms: a path to happiness which is not a result of consumerism and hedonism, a path which assures a more harmonious relationship with nature and other human beings, and a path which challenges liberal, globalised capitalism, instead favouring a return to more local and community-based forms of production, models which also challenge the democratic logic as it exists today, offering more collaborative alternatives. If these alternatives have something in common, it is the fact that all of these movements question the type of growth and development which has dominated our world since the end of the Second World War.

These alternatives and their values are lived out by small groups of people who dare to hope that more people will

follow them, so as to be able to transform the current system and secure the future of humanity. The majority of them are in an ambiguous situation, given that they live at the same time within a system which claims to dominate them. They are very aware that they need to try, little by little, to change the mindset of people, in order for them to see that other lifestyles and ways of co-existence are possible. Changing ideas on progress and happiness which are very deep-rooted in our culture, is not an easy task. However, despite our sleepwalking culture, such problems are becoming increasingly evident and highlight the need to seek new solutions: climate change, a shortage of resources, the loss of meaning in life, the weakness of a liberal democracy...

One of the difficulties that these alternatives anticipate is that they require a certain level of ruralisation of the world, and the creation of smaller social and political spheres with a certain degree of autonomy. All of this should be compatible with the creation of much broader political and decisional forums, given that planet Earth functions as one single ecosystem.

3. REVOLUTION IS COMING FROM THE SOUTH

One of the constants of the last few decades has been the globalisation of consumerist practice and mindset, which we could say has reached all corners of the planet. For this reason, one of the criticisms made against proposals for alternative models of growth is that they represent, yet again, the imposition of the wealthy North –the cause of the current critical situation due to their going beyond all reasonable limits– on the poor South. Thus they can be seen as a type of new imperialism imposing environmental conditions on agricultural products coming from the South, as well as imposing demographic conditions, such as those which seek ways of decreasing the birth rate.

The South, nevertheless, is beginning to be a protagonist of change. Firstly, because it suffers the most from the consequences of unlimited growth and the over-exploitation of natural resources. Secondly, because the South has the most vivid memory of non-capitalist systems of production, which were more inclusive, more community-based, and more respectful of the environment.

Against that background, it is not strange then that many of the movements suggesting alternative econo-

mies and social organisation look to the South or else come directly from there. A base of knowledge which, though disregarded one way or another for decades, has now been recovered. This is how Boaventura de Sousa explains it in many of his works, under the category of “epistemologies of the South”. Indigenous peoples from some countries of Latin America and Africa live every day with these values, practicing these alternatives. In the words of Ignacio Ellacuría: “...some historical places are more favourable to the

emergence of prophetic utopians and utopian prophets”.²⁷ Jon Sobrino, commenting on these words, also explains: “Specifically, the place where it is possible to think of the ‘civilisation of poverty’ is not the world of affluence, where the individual, success and the good life are exalted. Even less is it the world of arrogant power...It is in the Third World, where prophecy and utopia seem necessarily to come together, where injustice and death reach intolerable levels, and where hope seems to be the quintessence of life ”.²⁸

Let us recall that, before these alternative movements were created in the West, and above all since the crisis of neoliberalism, movements had already appeared in India which proposed a different form of development. For example, the so-called “Voluntary Simplicity Movement”, based on the teachings of the spiritual leader Gandhi, who encouraged people to live more simply so that others could simply live.²⁹ Or the one we referred to earlier, the so-called “Economy of Permanence”, of Joseph Chelladurai Kumarappa (1892-1960) based on the principles of the Gandhian economy.³⁰

Nevertheless, there are two outstanding models which inspired alternative socio-economic movements in the West. One of these is African, the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, and the other is from Latin America, the current of thought known as *Sumak Kawsay*, inspired by the indigenist movement in Ecuador and Bolivia. We will be looking at the values which caught our attention the most, and how they can help us to seek alternative lifestyles to that which the dominant system proposes. Perhaps they are models that

are difficult to imitate if we take into account the anthropologies and worldview of where they were founded, but still, they can help provide a contrast to our way of life, as well as making us realise that the history of the West is also full of similar socioeconomic models.

3.1. *Ubuntu*

Ubuntu is a philosophy originally from southern Africa which encourages and promotes the idea of interdependence and a universal link between all of humanity. It has come to be translated as “I am, because you are”, and it has spread widely since the democratisation of South Africa and its popularisation by the Archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu. It had a great influence as the basis for establishing peace, non-violence and social justice in many different African countries over the last thirty years.³¹

In the *Ubuntu* philosophy, humanity exists in giving, receiving and passing on the fruits of the earth to others. The ethical stance of men and women is to care for others. The slogan of *Ubuntu* is that we are people through others; life is preserved through mutual care, sharing, and from there springs the importance of community: of the living, of our ancestors and even of those who have not yet been born. Furthermore, the concept of life extends to the environment and its preservation through rituals and the observance of taboos...

Ultimately, this is a philosophy which offers an alternative mindset and could inspire those who are ques-

tioning the growth models of the West and opting for community-based solidarity, commons and cooperation.³²

3.2. Good Living

Good Living (*Sumak Kawsay*) could be seen as a philosophy for life based on harmony with the community, other human beings and nature. It grew in strength in the first half of the twenty-first century for three reasons: the emergence of indigenist movements, the increasing disrepute of the nation-State and the constitutional reform in Ecuador and Bolivia.

In spite of its ancestral origins, it has once again become relevant and been recreated according to the experiences of the indigenous peoples and their way of building community and living within nature. According to Antonio Luis Hidalgo Capitán, the *Sumak Kawsay* has three main ideas,³³ but on this occasion we will focus on the one he considers to be most authentic and which indigenist Ecuadorian intellectuals have emphasised. The *Sumak Kawsay* needs to take place on a specific piece of land, in which material and spiritual elements interact. This land has three sections: the vegetable garden, which provides basic sustenance; the forest, which would allow meat to be hunted as a complement to the diet; a water source from which domestic water can be obtained, as well as fish which would serve as food, and other materials. In order to obtain these resources, the indigenous need interior strength (*samai*), the ability to behave in a balanced way (*sasi*), wisdom (*yachai*), future vision (*muskui*),

perseverance (*ushai*) and compassion (*llakina*); some virtues can be acquired through the community thanks to a period of apprenticeship based on experience and myths. Virtues are seen as having an ethical dimension, such as domestic harmony, which reveals itself specifically through eating, drinking and making love; solidarity or compassion (*llakina*), help (*yana-pana*), generosity (*kuna*), the obligation to receive (*japina*), reciprocity (*kunakuna*), advice (*kamachi*) and listening (*uyuna*). The economy of the community is based on these, and these aspects in particular have caught the attention of modern movements at a time when alternative economies are under discussion: this represents an economy based on self-sufficiency and solidarity; in other words, only taking just what one needs from nature and sharing any excess. If the family unit encounters problems, the community reacts instantly, practising the virtues of generosity and reciprocity.

Other forms of solidarity are not linked to material goods, but rather with service (community work and work for the benefit of families...). The idea of accumulating wealth does not exist and the idea of self-enrichment is considered inappropriate, since this would break with the social harmony that is based on equity. A full life is not possible at the margins of the community (*ayllu*), and instead a form of collaborative democracy is practised where decisions are based on consensus.³⁴ These are communities that understand nature (*Pachamama*) in a holistic way, in such a way that they care for it as if it were an entity of which they form part, and when they need

something from nature to meet their needs, they ask permission through rituals and offerings, showing gratitude for the gifts they have received.

The current constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia are based on the principles of Good Living, when it comes to putting into law a proposal for the rights of people and communities, and the obligation of the State to preserve those rights. In the preamble of the constitution of Ecuador, for example, we read: “A new form of public co-existence, in diversity and in harmony with nature, to achieve the good way of living, the *sumak kawsay*; A society that respects, in all its dimensions, the dignity of individuals and community groups”.

Many articles are linked to respect for the environment, health, education... In article 14, in relation to nature, it says: “The right of the population to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment that guarantees sustainability and the good way of living (*sumak kawsay*), is recognized. Environmental conservation, the protection of ecosystems, biodiversity and the integrity of the country’s genetic assets, the prevention of environmental damage, and the recovery of degraded natural spaces are declared matters of public interest”.

Article 32 describes a series of rights which are linked to Good Living: “[...] water, food, education, sports, work, social security, healthy environments [...]”. Or as article 74 acknowledges: “[...] Persons, communities, peoples, and nations shall have the right to benefit from the environment and the natural wealth enabling them to enjoy the good way of living.

Environmental services shall not be subject to appropriation; their production, delivery, use and development shall be regulated by the State”.

Furthermore, in article 283 it speaks of the State’s duties to guarantee the principles of Good Living: “The economic system is socially oriented and mutually supportive; it recognizes the human being as a subject and an end; it tends towards a dynamic, balanced relationship among society, State and the market, in harmony with nature; and its objective is to ensure the production and reproduction of the material and immaterial conditions that can bring about the good way of living”. In the same way, the different forms of the organisation of economic production are given: “[...] including community, cooperative, public and private business, associative, family, domestic, autonomous and mixed-economy. The State shall promote forms of production that assure the good way of living of the population and shall discourage those that violate their rights or those of nature” (Art. 319).

In the Bolivian constitution, they cite principles and values that the State should keep in mind: “The State adopts the following as ethical, moral principles of the plural society: *ama qhilla*, *ama llulla*, *ama suwa* (do not be lazy, do not be a liar or a thief), *suma qamaña* (live well), *ñandereko* (live harmoniously), *teko kavi* (good life), *ivi maraei* (land without evil) and *qhapaj ñan* (noble path or life). The State is based on the values of unity, equality, inclusion, dignity, liberty, solidarity, reciprocity, respect, interdependence, harmony, transparency, equilibrium, equality of opportunity, social and

gender equality in participation, common welfare, responsibility, social justice, distribution and redistribution of the social wealth and assets for well being” (Art. 8.1).

In summary, Good Living is a collective mindset which restores the im-

portance of the local, embraces all aspects of life and values the importance of memory; in other words, it does not break with traditions. It is a model which is opposed to Western thought, which is universal, fragmented, individual and non-historical.

4. CHRISTIANITY AND ALTERNATIVE MOVEMENTS

All the movements we have described in the preceding sections, in spite of the fact that they use many concepts and values which originate in religious traditions –for example, the conversion of the individual and collective mindset that is necessary–, they do not make these links explicit. We believe that religious traditions have much to contribute to a new culture that would help establish a matrix of alternatives, which would lead to the conversion of an economy that is at the service of all, as well as being respectful of the environment.

I will now go on to focus on the Christian tradition and envision how, in order to help leave behind the mindset of the dominant socio-economic system, many of the alternative movements favour values from the Christian tradition. Firstly, I would like to recall some words of Pope Francis who encouraged the popular movements of Bolivia: “You can do a lot. I would even say that the future of humanity is in great measure in your own hands, through your ability to organize and carry out creative alternatives”. In this speech, he asks them to be “social poets”, and sowers of change; that is, drivers of change and not merely occupiers of space. Working on a small

and local scale, “amid forms of injustice which you do not simply accept but actively resist, standing up to an idolatrous system which excludes, debases and kills”. In the face of this, he calls on them to establish “a culture of encounter”, because “no one loves a concept or an idea. We love people...”.

4.1. Two disconnected transforming powers

The entire social teachings of the Church work towards creating a social economy at the service of people and the common good, understanding this last point in the way that it is de-

scribed in *Laudato si'*: “In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters” (*LS* 158). The notion of the universal destination of goods helps us understand this, but as the Pope reminds us, it “is not a figure of speech found in the Church’s social teaching. It is a reality prior to private property. Property, especially when it affects natural resources, must always serve the needs of peoples. [...]”.³⁵

The centrality of the poor, the marginalised, and those who live at the world’s peripheries, gives us a different outlook. Earlier, when we quoted Boaventura de Sousa, he called this the “epistemologies of the South”. Yet, there is a sense that in the Church, and in Christian communities in general, this outlook is not widespread. In spite of the radical nature of some approaches to social teaching within the Church, which strongly challenge the current economic system, there has been a general fear of undertaking profound change. This is why the Church has not become too involved in new social movements, which generally have a more libertarian and anti-patriarchal character.

Neither have social movements been able to realise the transformative potential of Christianity and other religious traditions; an ability to touch not just the heart of structures, but also the heart of people. This Church-social movements split has been very noticeable in Europe, but less so in Asia and Latin America.

4.2. Reordering “disordered affections”

If we analyse this from the point of view of Christian ethics, the issues that social movements are raising are nothing new. Christianity came to accept economic growth as a means of helping people escape poverty, although it never understood growth in purely economic or materialistic terms, hence there is a long tradition of austerity and poverty in the Church.

Austerity and poverty are justified within Christian morality for two reasons: firstly, in order to show solidarity with the poor (distributive justice), and secondly, in order to gain inner freedom so that the heart can focus on following Christ, thus developing a much more liberated relationship with possessions, which are simply regarded as means to an end rather than an end in themselves.

Let us also recall the Church’s moral teachings, for example, the Ten Commandments (the Decalogue), could be viewed as standard norms which try to put limits on the human ego. In other words, ways of containing (ordering) the most basic desires of the human being, which at their basic level are good for the survival of the human species, but when disordered, can become a source of slavery and exploitation. For example, “do not steal” and “do not covet your neighbour’s goods” requires a degree of self-control over the greed we all possess. These are commandments which aim to dominate our compulsive desire of greed for what others have.

Commandments bring limits (this is why they are often expressed in a

negative way), and are present in both Christian and non-Christian traditions, which give examples of how they can be put into practice in daily life. For example, St. Ignatius speaks of removing disordered desires, or “attachments”. St. Augustine refers to the twisted and self-obsessed ego which it is necessary to overcome in order to open ourselves up to greater communion with others. In other words, how to move from desires that are focused on the self to an ability to bring about communion with others. All spiritual paths propose practices, some more external (fasting, vigils, abstinence from luxuries, sexual abstinence), and other more interior practices (mortifications, self-denial...). Their objective is not to suppress these necessary human instincts, but rather to learn to master them in order to overcome their predatory and self-possessing nature.

The classic vows of religious life (obedience, poverty and chastity) contain many of these elements. Their ultimate aim is (or should be) to open up the “self” to the notion of alterity. I say “should be” because of course this isn’t always the outcome. On occasion, these practices, when they are focused on willpower and one’s own efforts, can end up boosting the ego: the ego can also benefit from these spiritual paths. In the Gospel, when Jesus criticises the Pharisees, he does it precisely for this reason.

4.3. Interdependence

In general, however, we can say that the understanding of happiness and the human model of coexistence offered

by Christianity are very different from the materialistic and individualistic model of today. Instead, they are very similar to the de-growth movements in that their understanding of happiness is relational and not materialistic. This is where the value of dependence comes in (or rather, interdependence): the human species is interdependent in relation to the other species that share our biosphere. It is an interdependence that links the idea of Christian communion very well with, in this case, communion among living beings.

Of course, our culture does not make it easy for us to be aware of the interdependence between all living beings. It is difficult for us to realise how much our life depends on others, and that, in a certain manner of speaking, it is a gift from others. Instead, when we interact with others, we can treat them as mere objects to observe and manipulate, but towards whom we have no obligations (*ob-ligare*). We have internalised the idea that the self does not need anyone or anything. *Laudato si’* expresses this very clearly: “The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures” (*LS 240*). The Pope encourages us that: “If we truly desire positive change, we have to humbly accept our interdependence, that is to say, our healthy interdependence. Interaction, however, is not the same as imposition; it is not the subordination of some to serve the interests of others” (*Address of the Holy Father in 2015 at the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements, 3.2*).

4.4. Accepting limits

The ideal of happiness which we find in the Gospels could also help us to accept and become aware of our limits, in a culture which does not respect limits. It is as if everything the human being can do, he did without wondering about the consequences he might bring upon himself and the environment. Human self-limitation is a way like no other of exercising true liberty.

The encyclical *Laudato si'*, without going into the debate on de-growth, criticises the current model of development and our understanding of the economy. Here are some extracts which express this:

But we need to grow in the conviction that a decrease in the pace of production and consumption can at times give rise to another form of progress and development. Efforts to promote a sustainable use of natural resources are not a waste of money, but rather an investment capable of providing other economic benefits in the medium term. If we look at the larger picture, we can see that more diversified and innovative forms of production which impact less on the environment can prove very profitable. It is a matter of openness to different possibilities which do not involve stifling human creativity and its ideals of progress, but rather directing that energy along new channels. (*LS* 191).

So that new models of progress appear, we need to “change global models of development”, which means reflecting responsibly “on the meaning of the economy and its goals, with an

eye to correcting its malfunctions and misapplications”.

It is not enough to balance, in the medium term, the protection of nature with financial gain, or the preservation of the environment with progress. Half-way measures simply delay the inevitable disaster. Put simply, it is a matter of redefining our notion of progress. A technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress. Frequently, in fact, people’s quality of life actually diminishes – by the deterioration of the environment, the low quality of food or the depletion of resources – in the midst of economic growth. In this context, talk of sustainable growth usually becomes a way of distracting attention and offering excuses. It absorbs the language and values of ecology into the categories of finance and technocracy, and the social and environmental responsibility of businesses often gets reduced to a series of marketing and image-enhancing measures. (*LS* 194).

In any event, if in some cases sustainable development were to involve new forms of growth, then in other cases, given the insatiable and irresponsible growth produced over many decades, we need also to think of containing growth by setting some reasonable limits and even retracing our steps before it is too late. We know how unsustainable is the behaviour of those who constantly consume and destroy, while others are not yet able to live in a way worthy of their human dignity. That is why the time has come to accept decreased growth in some parts of

the world, in order to provide resources for other places to experience healthy growth. (LS 193).

Ultimately, even though *Laudato si'* emphasises the need for a change in mentality (a conversion towards ecological values), it ends with a reference to the capitalist economic system, which is responsible for instilling people with the values that have led us to this dangerous situation. Christianity is far from the values of the capitalist system which emphasise getting the maximum benefit for oneself, the inviolability of private property, and consumerist materialism. In the words of the Pope:

The principle of the maximization of profits, frequently isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy. As long as production is increased, little concern is given to whether it is at the cost of future resources or the health of the environment; as long as the clearing of a forest increases production, no one calculates the losses entailed in the desertification of the land, the harm done to biodiversity or the increased pollution. (LS 195).

4.5. Conclusion

In summary, the Christian tradition can offer:

1. Alternative values capable of helping to build a new inclusive and ecological economy, focused on the common good and the preferential option for the poor and those excluded from the current system.
2. A spirituality which helps to move towards a change in economic model. A spirituality which is not unrealistic, since it is aware of the ambivalence of the human heart, of greed, of the desire to dominate, and for this reason offers ascetic alternatives. It is not so naïve as to be unaware of the existence of personal and structural sin which damages good intentions.
3. A morality which, given its universality, could help to go beyond small groups and ethnocentrism, in such a way that the new social model would be inclusive, and not just for one minority group. Furthermore, given the conditions of the world today, in which growing inequality exists, it would ask popular movements to give a preferential option for the poor and the voiceless.
4. A notion of a person who abandons individualism and offers a more community-based model of coexistence: we are grateful for the gift of others. The rationale that proposes communion, gratuity, can help break with the logic of ownership and commodification (the idea that everything can be bought and sold on the markets), which is the status quo in our world today. The need for communities to face up to global issues like climate change, the loss of biodiversity...
5. Hope in the face of uncertainty, in the face of the losses we may experience. A hope that is not passive and which values small gestures, in

which nothing is lost, since these small gestures can help to break with the dominant logic of our culture. A hope that can see the seeds of life and rebirth in death and the most negative of circumstances.

6. An open community that understands that it is necessary to listen and enter into dialogue with these movements which also want to change the planet and human relationships so that they can be fairer.

1. Address of Pope Francis at the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements, given at the Expo Feria Exhibition Centre, Santa Cruz (Bolivia), July 9th 2015.
2. BELK, Russel W. (1988). "Possessions and the Extended Self", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 15, pp. 139-168.
3. There is an interesting reflection from CAMPBELL, C. (2004). "I Shop Therefore (I know that) I am. The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Consumerism", *Elusive Consumption*, Oxford, Berg. Quoted in JACKSON, T. (2011). *Prosperidad sin crecimiento*. (tr. Prosperity without growth), Barcelona: Icaria, pp. 130-131.
4. "Los límites del crecimiento" (*The Limits to Growth*) is a report by the Club of Rome undertaken by the MIT and was published in 1972, a little before the first oil crisis. The main author of the report, in which seventeen professionals collaborated, was the biophysicist Donella Meadows.
5. ELLACURÍA, I. (1989). "Utopía y profetismo" (tr. Utopia and prophecy), *Revista latinoamericana de Teología*, no. 17, p. 170.
6. BAUDRILLARD, J. (1974). *La Sociedad de consumo. Sus mitos, sus estructuras*. (tr. The consumer society. Myths and structures). Barcelona: Plaza y Janes. Quoted by LATOUCHE, S. (2012). *La sociedad de la abundancia frugal*. (tr. Towards a society of frugal abundance). Barcelona: Icaria, p. 17.
7. "Real communism" is what we will call the socio-economic system imposed in the USSR and its satellite countries from the October Revolution up until the Fall of the Berlin Wall.
8. A science fiction novel reflects this scenario: HARRISON, H. (2008). *Make Room! Make Room!* Londres: Penguin Random House.
9. LATOUCHE, S. (2012). *Op. cit.*, pp. 68-71.
10. TRAINER, T. (2017). *La vía de la simplicidad*. (tr. The Simpler Way). Madrid: Trotta, pp. 220-226. An interesting reflection from an American point of view, on how education directed towards personal benefit has replaced real education, thus creating a society that has abandoned critical thought, empathy, understanding of others and a sense of justice.
11. SANDEL, M. (2013). *Lo que el dinero no puede comprar*. (tr. What money can't buy). Barcelona: Debate, p. 18.
12. LATOUCHE, S; HARPAGÈS, D. (2011). *La hora del decrecimiento*. (tr. Farewell to Growth), Barcelona: Octaedro, p. 61.
13. HELFRICH, S; BOLLIER, D. "Procomún", (tr. Patterns of Commoning), in D'ALISA, G.; DEMARIA, F; KALLIS, G. (eds.) (2015). *Decrecimiento. Vocabulario para una nueva era*. (tr. Degrowth: a vocabulary for a new era), Barcelona: Icaria, p. 193.
14. FELBER, C. (2012). *La economía del bien común*. (tr. Economy for the Common Good), Barcelona: Deusto.
15. LATOUCHE, S. (2012). *Op. cit.*, p. 18.
16. JACKSON, T. (2011). *Op. cit.*
17. SOPER, K. (2011). "Exploring the Relationship Between Growth and Wellbeing", *Thinkpiece for the SDC Seminar Living well within the limits*, quoted by JACKSON, T. (2011). *Op. cit.*, p. 185.
18. TRAINER, T. (2017). *Op. cit.*, p. 234.
19. ELLACURÍA, I. (1989). *Op. cit.*, p. 170.
20. D'ALISA, G.; KALLIS, G.; DEMARIA, F. (2015). *Op. cit.*, p. 307.
21. D'ALISA, G., "Ciencia postnormal" (tr. Post-normal Science), in D'ALISA, G.; KALLIS, G.; DEMARIA, F. (2015). *Op. cit.*, p. 217. For his part, Trainer, in *La vía de la simplicidad* (tr. The Simpler Way), denounces the passivity of citizens who delegate to the government or experts.
22. CORAZZA, C; VICTUS, S., "Economía de la permanencia" (tr. Economy of Permanence), in D'ALISA, G.; KALLIS, G.; DEMARIA, F. (2015). *Op. cit.*, pp. 290-292. The landmark book of this movement is: KUMARAPPA, J. C. (1945). *Economy of Permanence*. Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sang Prakashan.

23. TRAINER, T. (2017). *Op. cit.*, p. 294.
24. LATOUCHE, S. (2012). *Op. cit.*, p. 81.
25. LATOUCHE, S. (2009). *La apuesta por el decrecimiento* (tr. The Bet of Degrowth). Barcelona: Icaria, pp. 147-151.
26. TRAINER, T. (2017). *Op. cit.*, pp. 219-228.
27. ELLACURÍA, I. (1989), *Op. cit.*, pp. 141.
28. SOBRINO, J. (2014), “Civilización de la pobreza contra civilización de la riqueza para revertir un mundo gravemente enfermo” (tr. Civilisation of poverty vs. civilisation of wealth in order to reverse a gravely ill world), *Papeles de relaciones ecosociales y cambio global*, no. 125, p. 150.
29. Already in 1936, a work on voluntary simplicity was published in the Indian review *Visva Bharati Quartely*. JACKSON, T. (2011). *Op. cit.*, p. 186.
30. CORAZZA, C.; VICTUS, S. (2015). *Op. cit.*, pp. 290-292.
31. MORO, R. (25-03-2015). “Es la hora de Victoire en el corazón de África” (tr. It is the hour of victory in the heart of Africa). Blog by Cristianismo y Justicia.
32. RAMOSE, M. B., “Ubuntu”, in D’ALISA, G.; KALLIS, G.; DEMARIA, F. (2015). *Op. cit.*, pp. 290-301. Y RAMOSE, M. B. (1999). *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*. Harare: Mond Books Publishers.
33. HIDALGO CAPITÁN, A. L.; ARIAS, A.; ÁVILA, J. (2013). “El pensamiento indigenista ecuatoriano sobre el *Sumak Kawsay*” (tr. Ecuadorian Indigenist thought on *Sumak Kawsay*), report by the XV World Economy Meeting in Santander, pp. 35-36.
34. The idea of consensus is found in foundational myths, in which the gods offer advice and reach an agreement.. Quoted in HIDALGO CAPITÁN, A. L.; ARIAS, A.; ÁVILA, J. (2013). *Op. cit.*, p. 56.
35. Address of Pope Francis at the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements, given in the main hall of the Expocruz in Santa Cruz (Bolivia), July 9th 2015.

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