AFTER DEVELOPMENT: BUEN VIVIR AND TRANSITIONS TO POST EXTRACTIVISM IN SOUTH AMERICA

Arturo Escobar

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Rural areas in South America are the scenario of a diverse array of tensions, contradictions and conflicts facing extractivist development strategies (including large open pit mining, oil drilling in tropical areas, and expansion of monocultures linked to agribusiness). There are at least three different types of disputes against extractivism: reactions due to the local social and environmental impacts; proposals of alternatives within established development strategies (usually include discussions on the role of the State and the use of economic compensations); and the search for alternatives to development. Buen Vivir in its original sense is one example of the third type, and is examined in its current situation in the region. Buen Vivir as an alternative to development is not essentialist; it is both post-capitalist and post-socialist, and at the same time, it moves beyond any reference to “race”, and “rurality.” Buen Vivir also diverges from the conventional “new rurality” models in Latin America. However, the same term, Buen Vivir, is also use by governments and scholars to convey new versions of modernization. In these cases, Buen Vivir loses its radical opposition to development, and is transformed into a new and revised version of development. The presentation discusses the disputes over the concept and its meaning, based on examples for Bolivia and Ecuador.