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**Hope Movements: Naming Mobilization in a Post-development World**

**Ana Cecilia Dinerstein and Séverine Deneulin**

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**ABSTRACT**

Social mobilizations devoted to contesting development and creating alternative economic arrangements conducive to the pursuit of a dignified life have recently sprung up. Not only do they criticize the current state of affairs but they actively seek and experience new ways of living, inspired by what Bloch calls the anticipatory consciousness of the ‘not-yet-become’, that is, another reality not yet materialized but which can be already experienced. The paper argues that these mobilizations are not adequately captured by the term ‘social movements’. The uniqueness of these mobilizations requires a conceptual and epistemological turn that is able to accommodate the post-development critique of development as well as their emancipatory dimension. We propose to name them ‘hope movements’ to account for the collective action directed to anticipate, imperfectly, alternative realities that arise from the openness of the present one. We conclude by discussing the political relevance of hope movements for the pursuit of the good life as an alternative to development.

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## INTRODUCTION

Evidence is mounting that a growth-based development model does not create an environment conducive to leading a dignified life. In its Growth Report published in 2008, the Commission on Growth and Development acknowledged that a universal replication of successful growth stories would be environmentally destructive and even cancel the gains of the increases in living standards of the last 200 years.<sup>1</sup> The pursuit of material wealth also has significant human costs. Data from the UK and US over the last 50 years show that affluence has been driven by a constant desire for novelty which has created, among other phenomena, increased levels of addictions, depression, family breakdowns, stress and reduction in commitments.<sup>2</sup> Rather than fulfilling needs, this economic model is constantly creating new needs in an attempt to increase profits through the expansion of differentiated markets, whilst widening inequality within and across countries in the process.

Through the publication of its annual Human Development Reports, the United Nations Development Programme has been of the first voices to question the wisdom of assessing a country's development level in terms of its production and consumption activities. Instead it places the concern for human dignity centre stage. It started with the Human Development Index in 1990 and has now evolved to include a series of measures to account for the multiple dimensions of human well-being. This search for new development indicators is spreading throughout the world. The Sen-Fitoussi-Stiglitz Commission in France and the OECD 'Better Life Index' are examples of this.<sup>3</sup>

However, by concentrating on policy evaluation, these initiatives neither question the underlying economic model and its values and practices (which lie at the root of poor human well-being records), nor propose an alternative economic model to the one driven by the unbounded pursuit of material growth on a bounded planet. They assume that it is sufficient to measure development differently for practices to be different. Creating new development indicators is one step towards directing attention to what matters — creating an environment for people to live well — but whether it is sufficient remains to be proved. Measuring the long working hour culture in the UK and its negative impact on family life and mental and physical

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.growthcommission.org](http://www.growthcommission.org)

<sup>2</sup> See Offer (2006) and the *Prosperity without Growth* report of the UK Sustainable Development Commission at <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk>

<sup>3</sup> See [www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr](http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr), [www.beyond-gdp.eu](http://www.beyond-gdp.eu), [www.oecd.org/progress](http://www.oecd.org/progress)

health will not change the economic practice of long working hours unless it is coupled with collective mobilization to change such practices. Measuring the impact of political conflict on child malnutrition will not change nutrition levels unless it is accompanied by collective mobilization for peace.

Social movements, and their collective action, are key in the discussion and redefinition of the meaning of development. But there is a constant a gap between the new realities imagined by social movements and the ways development policy is organized. The ‘alternative development’ approach seeks to close that gap by promoting new forms of radical participation and engagement at the grassroots, but does not fully reflect the aspirations of several movements in pursuit of living well (*buen vivir*).<sup>4</sup>

In this paper we analyse two of those movements and discuss them in the context of the social movement and development literatures. By looking at the experience of the Zapatistas in Mexico and Live Simply in the UK, we argue that the classification ‘social movement’ does not adequately capture their action for radical change and the establishment of new collective ways of life for *buen vivir*. We suggest that a conceptual and epistemological turn is required to acknowledge the significant role of these movements in the critique of development. We contend that the name ‘hope movements’, inspired by Ernst Bloch’s principle of hope, is better suited to account for them, for they try to live, imperfectly, what Bloch calls the ‘not-yet-become’. We conclude by discussing the significance of ‘hope movements’ for the pursuit of the good life as an alternative *to* development.

## **Social Movements and Development**

Since their emergence, social movements have always been a significant means of expressing dissent, contesting the norms, values and politics that govern capitalist societies. They are major drivers of social change and are critical for development and poverty reduction, as they challenge existing power relations and call for a more equitable distribution of power and wealth. Bebbington (2007, 2010) identifies four pathways for social movements to reduce poverty: by challenging the institutions at the heart of the political economy of poverty; by reworking the cultural politics of poverty; by affecting directly the assets of the poor; and by engaging with the state. Social movements do not aim to reduce poverty as such, but they

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<sup>4</sup> On current debates on the *buen vivir*, see ALAINET No. 449 (October 2009), No. 452 (February 2010), No. 453 (March 2010) and No. 462 (February 2011), at <http://www.alainet.org>

contest the underlying values and practices of the prevailing economic model which generates inequality and poverty. They question how societies should be organized (Bebbington, 2010) and frequently produce their own knowledge (Santos, 2008).

Social movements play a critical role in changing the way society conceives of progress, knowledge and development, but they themselves are the product of these conceptions. Up until the 1960s, the labour movement occupied a central role in the struggle for social justice understood as income distribution and welfare provision. The capitalist crisis of the 1970s brought about a general crisis of labour. With it, the recognition of the power of trade unions by the state and the incorporation of trade unions into decision-making processes in Western democracies were questioned. The wave of social mobilizations that spread across Europe and the US in the late 1960s, led by other collective subjectivities than labour, marked a turning point in the study of social movements. Despite the continued significance of the labour movement in the contentious politics of the time, labour society was in a crisis (Offe, 1985) since dimensions of life other than ‘work’ were now essential to identity formation and political mobilization. This, albeit contested, claim displaced the centrality of the capital–labour relationship in shaping social conflict.

In the late 1970s, ‘new social movement’ theory (NSM) developed through the work of Alain Touraine, Alberto Melucci, Jürgen Habermas and Claus Offe. NSM scholars proposed that the transition from industrial to post-industrial societies had created a new ‘societal type where the identity of social actors corresponds to their capacity for self-reflection or reflexivity’ (Foweraker, 1995: 13). Unlike ‘old’ movements — for example, the labour movement with the struggle over distribution at its core — ‘new’ movements focus on recognition and undertake collective action with a variety of actors other than the working class (such as anti-war and civil rights activists, students and women).

But the distinction between old and new has been continuously contested and discussed since the emergence of NSM theory. NSMs cannot be conceived of in unitary terms, as they vary with respect to social relations, ideologies and meanings attributed to their collective action, their support base, motivations to participate, organizational structure and political style (Dalton and Kuechler, 1990; Escobar, 1992; Santos, 2007). Generally speaking, their ‘newness’ is argued to lie in their focus on quality of life; their orientation towards civil society rather than the state (Nash, 2000); their defence of autonomy (Adler Hellman, 1992;

Scott, 1990); their intention to diffuse power; their creation of a ‘new political morality’ (Slater, 1985: 11); and their ‘emancipatory energy’ (Santos, 2001: 78).<sup>5</sup>

In addition to this, there are also significant differences between Latin American and Western European movements. The former have tended to lead a ‘rebellion from the margins’ (Ouviña, 2004: 107), rather than being part of the mainstream network of social movements. They have rejected ‘politics as usual’ (Lazar, 2006: 185) and tended to distrust the state in principle, rather than seeking to consolidate spaces for negotiation. They are also more inclined to craft ‘popular spaces’, rather than accepting to be part of ‘invited spaces’ (Cornwall, 2004; Cortez Ruiz, 2004).

One feature which brings them together is that at least for the past two decades, and specifically but not exclusively in the Global South, movements have been articulating other forms of social and productive organizations which confront capitalist social relations of production and dominant development discourses. These include non-profit forms of local production and distribution, and land occupation and use. These actions have been driven by communal values, and have involved democratic collective decision-making processes and direct participation of those involved.

As such, these new interventions have received special attention from an alternative or post-development perspective. Alternative development emerged as a powerful critique of the developmental paradigm in the 1970s, and prompted the discourse of participatory and people-centred development (Nederveen Pietersen, 1998; Reygadas et al., 2009). The discourse embraces associative forms of production, sustainable development, economic support of the marginalized through appropriating land and housing, women’s and grassroots empowerment, and the revival of ‘the local’ (Escobar, 1992; Santos and Rodriguez Garavito, 2006).

But since mainstream development theory and policy has shifted from the ‘growth’ to the ‘human development’ paradigm, many of the practices originally seen as ‘alternative’ have been integrated into mainstream development, leaving little scope for differentiating current from alternative forms of development, and leading some authors to claim that “‘alternative’ has no more meaning than ‘new’ in advertising’ (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998: 349).

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion on new social movements in Latin America, see also Álvarez, Dagnino and Escobar (1998), Biekart (2005), Calderón (1986), Jelin (1985), and more recently Stahler-Sholk, Vanden and Kuecker (2007, 2008) and the special issues of the *Observatorio Social de América Latina* (OSAL) No. 24 (2008) and No. 28 (2010). For new social movements in Europe, see also Kriesi, Duyvendak, and Giugni (1995).

The post-development perspective proposes that human dignity cannot be achieved by *improving* the management and distribution of wealth, but rather by articulating alternatives *to* development in response to the crisis of modernity/civilization (Espinosa, 2010; Lander, 2010). Post-development theorists perceive a radical and irreconcilable opposition between alternative development and alternative to development, with the former being associated with Westernization and the latter rejecting it wholly (Latouche, 1993: 161). In short, many are of the opinion that the current situation requires ‘alternative visions of democracy, economy and society’ and political practices (Escobar, 1992: 22).<sup>6</sup>

### **Movements Seeking *Buen Vivir***

The movements that embody this post-development perspective and create these alternative visions are unique in their type and not adequately represented by the category of (new) social movement. They are autonomous and resist being framed by the traditional left-wing discourses with their focus on the need for a revolutionary movement to occupy and use the power of the state. These movements do not attempt to articulate or engage in alternative development initiatives, as they ultimately reproduce the logic of the state. Instead they are engaged in an autonomous *search* for a new way of life which is more conducive to creating an environment where human beings can live in dignity. They see human dignity as incompatible with conditions of exploitation and oppression. Their notion of dignity is linked to self-determination and realization of human potential. They have no agenda to win, no success to score. Their aim is holistic and not fixed for there is no single, universally valid answer to the question of what it means to live well as a human being.

This does not suggest a retreat from politics to the realm of a self-reflexive social and cultural inner world, but a radical form of politics. In what follows, we examine the case of the Zapatistas in Mexico who are part of a wider movement in search of dignity and emancipation in Latin America, and the Live Simply initiative in the UK which is part of a broader religious movement in pursuit of ‘wholly living’.<sup>7</sup> Our aim is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of each case or compare them but to discuss them briefly as illustrative examples of our argument: the need for naming this unique type of emancipatory movements.

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<sup>6</sup> See also Cavalcanti (2007), Esteva and Prakash (1997).

<sup>7</sup> See the report ‘Wholly Living’ by theology think-tank Theos and evangelical and Catholic development agencies Tearfund and CAFOD at <http://www.cafod.org.uk/resources/policy/wholly-living-report2>.

On 1 January 1994, the National Liberation Zapatista Army (EZLN) astonished the world by exclaiming ‘Enough is enough!’ and occupying several municipalities of the Chiapas region of the south-east of Mexico. They opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement, which was going to open up indigenous land to large agro-business. This was only the surface of a deeper struggle for dignity, justice and democracy, which would become a global symbol of resistance. The Zapatista declared war on the Mexican state, defined globalization as a ‘war against humanity’<sup>8</sup> and vindicated dignity as the fundamental value of revolutionary movements. The EZLN made clear that they did not seek to seize state power but to construct a new world within many other worlds in order to pursue *buen vivir*. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide an exhaustive analysis of the Zapatista movement.<sup>9</sup> Our aim is to highlight how their practice of autonomy *de facto* opened a political space for hope and the pursuit dignity.

Autonomy is for the Zapatistas a ‘lived utopia’ (Mattiace, 2003: 187). Since the creation of their ‘parallel governments in rebellion’ (Burguete Cal y Mayor, 2003: 1991) in 2003, they practice autonomy *de facto* in the *comunidades autónomas en rebeldía* of Chiapas. Self-government was established as a result of the failure of negotiations with the state. In 1995, after the cease-fire, the San Andrés Accords were signed between the Zapatistas and the Mexican government. The government promised constitutional reform that would recognize indigenous peoples’ right to autonomy and guarantee self-governance and collective production. But the Accords were not put into practice under president Zedillo, who opted instead for a repressive policy, epitomized in the Acteal massacre, which marked a breaking point in the use of repression by the state (Subcomandante Marcos and the Zapatistas, 2006). The San Andres Accords were postponed again with the appointment of president Fox in December 2000. The Zapatistas channelled their rage in the thirty-seven day ‘March for Indigenous Dignity’ (February–March 2001) through twelve Mexican states (Ceceña, 2001: 10; Replogle, 2005). In 2009, the autonomous communities called a ‘festival on dignifying

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<sup>8</sup> Subcomandante Marcos (1997) ‘The Seven Loose Pieces of the Global Jigsaw Puzzle’ at <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/1997/jigsaw.html>.

<sup>9</sup> See also Earle and Simonelli (2005), González Casanova (2001), Harvey (1998), Henck (2007), Holloway and Peláez (1998), Muñoz Ramirez (2008), Neil (1999), Ponce de Leon (2001), Ross (2006), Rus et al. (2003).



rage' to channel their rage at the destructive nature of capitalism and to create new production and distribution systems.<sup>10</sup>

Eventually, when the 2001 constitutional reform was enacted it became apparent that what was being legally validated was not what the Zapatistas had signed for and expected. While the law accredited the right to self-government to indigenous communities, it did so by indicating that the only acceptable form of self-government was the 'free municipality'. This form of local democracy encourages 'empowerment' and 'participation from below' in accordance to World Bank Development programmes, and is used for governmental projects of decentralized governance.

The Zapatistas rejected the legal reform because it took away the communities' ability to decide their own path. After sometime of reflection, a process of demilitarization of the movement towards the strengthening of its civil component began. In 2003, the hitherto five territories in which the Clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Committee (CCIR) operated became *autonomous* municipalities. Five Snails (*Caracoles*),<sup>11</sup> each of them with a *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* (JBG)(Good Government Council), govern the *comunidades autónomas en rebeldía*.

The GGCs displace and replace the state through administering justice, delivering health and education to the impoverished and neglected communities of Chiapas (education serves the purpose of awareness-raising about the values of human dignity), legislating on the use of the land outside the grasp of the Mexican law, and facilitating the creation of work cooperatives for the production and commercialization of fair trade products (Dinerstein, 2009).<sup>12</sup> The two principles governing the Zapatista new world are 'Asking we walk' (there is no definitive plan to follow but questions to answer as they go along) and 'Command while obeying' (there are no established hierarchies but horizontality and radical democracy) (Esteva, 1999).

The Zapatistas have taken 'autonomous control over their development trajectory' (Earle and Simonelli, 2005: 115).<sup>13</sup> This autonomy *de facto* forced the government to shift from a military strategy to disarm the EZLN to a strategy to disempower the *comunidades autónomas en rebeldía* via development policy. Direct military action was replaced by a low

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<sup>10</sup> See the Enlace Zapatista Campaign (2010), 'A thousand rages, one heart: The Zapatista communities live!' at <http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx>.

<sup>11</sup> For the meaning of the snail, see Solnit (2008).

<sup>12</sup> This *de facto* practice of autonomy is however not without pitfalls, see Adler Hellman (2000) and Stahler-Sholk (2007).

<sup>13</sup> See also Swords (2007).

intensity war together with the intention to influence public opinion by manipulating information and networking with political forces and civil society sectors (Hidalgo Domínguez, 2006). Now transformed into NGOs, paramilitary organizations began to promote the formation of cooperatives and facilitated access to deeds for the lands previously distributed by the EZLN. The budget for development policy increased in order to respond to 'community needs'. Governmental goals were directed at geographically reorganizing the population of Chiapas, orienting public policy towards service provision in the Chiapas territory, and promoting 'co-responsibility' among the affected population.<sup>14</sup>

The Zapatistas cannot be categorized as a social movement or an example of participatory development. They do not seek to participate in the poverty reduction activities of the state and its policies. Neither are they 'empowerment' movements, which carry out tasks that the state does not perform. They are not service providers or self-help organizations that offer educational, health or employment opportunities because of state failure or power devolution. *Zapatismo* presents a challenge to the logic of development in that it is an 'experiment in alternative logic' (Earle and Simonelli, 2005: 20). The Zapatistas do not demand another 'distribution of power' at the political level and/or a redistribution of resources and opportunities. The Zapatista 'revolt of dignity' (Holloway and Peláez, 1998) is driven by a desire to create something new altogether.

### *Live Simply*

A-typical movements of social change like the Zapatistas are not confined to the contours of Latin America. Europe too has witnessed in recent years the rise of movements which attempt to resist the exploitative and environmentally destructive nature of capitalism. Together they seek new ways of living that are directed towards overcoming the gap between the way they live and the way they believe they should live.

In 2007, a large number of Christian organizations and churches in the United Kingdom set up the 'Live Simply' initiative to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor.<sup>15</sup> Its starting point is the gap between the way humans live in the capitalist world and the way they are called upon to live by virtue of their belief in God. According to

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<sup>14</sup> An example of this is a cash transfer scheme to women, see Mora (2007).

<sup>15</sup> See <http://livesimplyaward.org.uk>, <http://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk>

Christian beliefs, humans are meant to live in dignity. But the current economic system with its capitalist logic does not create an environment where people can live in dignity. They oppose an economic ideology that commodifies health and denies access to healthcare to those who cannot afford it. They believe that the human body is God's creation and that human dignity is violated when the body is treated as a profit-making opportunity. They contest an economic system which widens inequality and gives more voice to those who command higher income. They believe that each human being has been created by God as equal and that human dignity is violated when they are not treated as such. They question an instrumental view of the natural environment and its exploitative use. They believe that nature has been created by God and that humans are to act as the custodians, and not the owners, of nature.

While campaigning for changing economic and political structures remains a central aspect of Christian involvement in social change, they seek to transform society and create an environment which enables people to live in dignity, as they have been created to live. This is pursued through leading an alternative lifestyle that rejects capitalism, emphasizes solidarity over individualism and material pursuits, respects the environment instead of perpetuating unsustainable consumption, and fosters loving and caring relationships instead of being part of the rat-race and subscribing to its underlying principle of 'survival of the fittest'.

In some ways, the features of the Live Simply initiative are not new as the initiative continues to articulate the basic Christian principle: to live a life suggestive of a new social order which has not yet materialized but which can already be anticipated. However, the Live Simply initiative is not merely a set of individuals who try to live simply in accordance with their beliefs. It elevates this basic Christian principle to a collective statement that confronts an economic and political order which violates human dignity.

Christian groups are not unique in this search for living wholly, which is similar to the indigenous idea of *buen vivir*. Other religious or spiritual traditions, and even people of no religious belief, equally emphasize solidarity and respect for the environment as part of the way humans should live according to their faith. In mass consumption societies, people are increasingly voluntarily embracing a simple and sustainable lifestyle and seeking meaning and satisfaction outside material pursuits — such as spending more time with family and friends, cultivating a plot of land and working fewer hours (Etzioni, 2004). They are also

increasingly doing so through coming together in various networks to find community-led responses to global capitalism and climate change.<sup>16</sup>

The Live Simply initiative, and the voluntary simplicity movement more generally, can neither be classified as a social movement nor be associated with alternative forms of development. Its actions are an attempt to construct another reality where justice is done to human dignity. They are not a means to achieve a goal, but ends in themselves. They are about seeking to live an alternative reality, about closing the gap between the way one lives and should live as a human being.

### **Hope and *Hope Movements*: Naming the Unnamed**

The *emancipatory* dimension of both the Zapatistas and Live Simply — present also in other movements — can be situated within the framework of the critical post-development perspective. However, its emergence has not led to a conceptual and epistemological discussion of social movements in order to arrive at a more adequate *naming* of these collective subjectivities. By engaging in innovative personal and collective practices which announce a reality ‘not-yet-become’ and what it means to live well as human beings, they question the relationship between social movements and development, and the very notion of social movement/development. They do not sit comfortably with conventional development discourse or alternative development proposals of empowerment, participation, community self-help alternatives, or local initiatives, but radically contest ‘development’ altogether. They denounce the social ills that have been brought about by capitalism and create something new that embodies the motto of the World Social Forum: ‘Another World is Possible’. Despite their growing significance, they remain unnamed and classified using existing vocabulary. We propose to name them Hope Movements, drawing on Bloch’s principle of hope.

In *The Principle of Hope* (1959/1986), German philosopher Ernst Bloch argues that the world is unfinished, unclosed:

No thing could be altered in accordance with wishes if the world were closed, full of fixed, even perfected facts. Instead of these there are simply processes, i.e. dynamic relationships in which the Become has not completely triumphed. The Real is process;

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<sup>16</sup> See for example the Transition Network in the UK at <http://www.transitionnetwork.org>

the latter is the widely ramified mediation between present, unfinished past and above all: possible future. (Bloch, 1959/1986: 196)

According to Bloch, humans possess an anticipatory consciousness that enables them to dream a not-yet-become conscious knowledge of *future* possibilities (Roberts, 1987; italics added). Future does not mean an expectation or wish for a better time ahead but that the present moment already contains the ‘not-yet-become’, what Bloch also calls the *Novum*:

[T]here is in present material, indeed in what it remembered itself, an impetus and a sense of being broken off, a brooding quality and an anticipation of Not-Yet-Become; and this broken-off and broached material does not take place in the cellar of consciousness, but on its Front’. (1959/1986: 11–12)

The utopian function of hope alters the given past–present–future temporalities by articulating the possibility of anticipating the future within the present. Through hope, the future is already in the present (Dodd, 1994). Hope, according to Bloch, rests on the basic human drive of hunger that originates in a lack, whether material or non-material (Roberts, 1987). Hope then gives us the possibility to experience a better life where our existing lacks are fulfilled (Roderick, 1987) even if one does not actually know exactly what those lacks are or how and when can they be satisfied. Hope facilitates the ‘opening outwards’ (Holloway, 2010) that makes reality unfinished and open ended.

Bloch’s starting point is the awareness that the world is wrong: we ‘scream’ (Holloway, 2002a) at the unfairness and injustice of the present economic system. We do not fully grasp yet what a new fair and just world would be like but we can already see that the present reality of unfairness is wrong. But because the world is unfinished and open, another reality is possible (Levitas, 1990). Acknowledging the existence of the not-yet-become in every reality opens up the possibility of anticipating other realities. Daydreaming consciously anticipates the future as the ‘non-yet-conscious’. Through daydreaming, hope enables humans to creatively imagine another reality. Hope is not ‘utopian’ in the wishful sense but it guides concrete action, i.e., wilfulness (Levitas, 1990). The radical nature of hope is not the plan to be fulfilled but, as Lear (2006: 103) highlights, the fact that hope ‘is directed towards a future goodness that transcends the current ability to understand what it is. Radical hope anticipates a good for which those who have the hope as yet lack the appropriate concepts with which to understand it’.

Hence for Bloch, hope illuminates the present reality beyond it. It is hope, as the not-yet-become, which informs human action and enables the creative transformation of the world (Mendes-Flohr, 1983). This anticipation is critical for inspiring social action that seeks to remedy injustice. This other reality is not ‘objectively’ possible (i.e. probable and expected) but ‘really’ possible (possible and uncertain):

Objectively possible is everything whose entry, on the basis of a mere partial-cognition of its existing conditions, is scientifically to be expected, or at least cannot be discounted. Whereas really possible is everything whose conditions in the sphere of the object itself are not yet fully assembled; whether because they are still maturing, or above all because new conditions — though mediated by existing ones — arise for the entry of a real. (Bloch, 1959/1986: 196–197)

Hope is very different from what Bloch calls ‘fantasizing’. Unlike fantasizing, hope is an ‘essential component of human consciousness and is soundly rooted in real possibilities in the world, even when the means for or route to realizing these may not yet be at all apparent’ (Bauckham and Hart, 1999: 63). Or as Bloch (1959/1986: 144) puts it:

[T]he determined imagination of the utopian function is distinguished from mere fantasizing precisely by the fact that only the former has in its favour a Not-Yet-Being of an expected kind, i.e. does not play around and get lost in an Empty-Possible, but psychologically anticipates the Real Possible.

Hope has long been a theological category. Bloch reconstructed Christian hope for an atheist society but left out some of its original features. Christian hope, like Bloch’s, rests on the tension between what is already known and what is not yet experienced. But unlike Bloch’s, the Christian vision of hope derives from a reality already witnessed. Hope is not about daydreaming of a possible imagined future but about establishing a reality that has already been inaugurated by Christ (Ferguson and Wright, 1988). This is why, in contrast to Bloch, Christian hope does not have a utopian function. Its function is to ‘show present reality to be not yet what it can and will be’ (Bauckham, 2005: 152), but what the reality can be and will be, will never be fulfilled in this world.<sup>17</sup> This is why there is always a space for humans to imagine *another* future. One could say that this capacity to imagine a world beyond the one

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<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between hope in Christianity and utopia, see Webb (2008).

that one can see is part of what it means to be human. Bloch's spiritual Marxism, and his principle of hope, constitutes an attempt to articulate this dimension of human life outside a religious framework.

There is a significant similarity between the Christian and Bloch's concept of hope. For Bloch, the establishment of a new world is 'really possible' and this new world, this 'not-yet-become', can already be grasped in human consciousness. For Christians, the establishment of this new world is a 'real possibility' as well, rather than 'objectively possible', but at the end of times. But for both, there is a need to experience or witness another reality in this world, albeit for different reasons.

The notion of hope has enormous potential to capture the emancipatory dimension of movements for change without classifying them into old or new categories. By naming them hope movements we intend to revisit the relation between social mobilization and development and to shed light on those invisible and unspoken dimensions of the movements' actions and perspectives. We aim to contribute to recent epistemological attempts that explore the ways in which they are reinventing emancipation (Escobar, 2008; Lugones, 2003; Santos, 2006, 2007, 2008; Vázquez, 2011).

Some clarification on naming is necessary here. It can be rightly argued that hope animates any social and political movement which seeks to alter adverse and unjust realities. Old and new social movements are similarly characterized by the recognition of a gap between a normative reality not already in place and the empirical reality of the world. However, for hope movements, this gap is by no means to be filled fully, for the normative and empirical reality will always be mismatched. Nonetheless, the search to fill the gap enables hope movements to anticipate (through the experience of living simply or practising autonomy *de facto*) a better life that is worth pursuing.

Secondly, our intention is not to add another classification to the already complex social movement terminology<sup>18</sup> but to explore the implications of hope as a 'philosophy of change' (Zournazi, 2002), and derive its implications for collective action and development. Hence, we are 'rephrasing' (Holloway, 2010) in order to account for this shift in focus from a 'strategy of opposition' to a 'strategy of construction of a new world order' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:188) (although both are clearly intertwined). As the Zapatistas claim, it is very difficult to change this world, it is better to create a new one.

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<sup>18</sup> See for example the term 'grass root post modernism' by Esteva and Prakash (1998).

Thirdly, the name hope movements is not to suggest that these autonomous movements are circumspect and remain outside any pressure from or interaction with the state or economic powers. Concrete utopia or the realization of hope is always mediated and thus contested as it takes place within the economic, political and cultural institutions that hope movements seek to alter. Pure autonomy from existing political and economic power, from the state and capitalism, is an illusion. And indeed, many alternative projects by Latin American autonomous social movements have been usurped (or attempts have been made to usurp them) by the logic of state power either by means of state repression or, as has been happening lately, via policies that encapsulate the ethos and functioning of autonomous practices through the encouragement of ‘participation from below’ (Dinerstein, 2010). There is always a risk for the radical vision of the ‘not-yet-become’ to be integrated within the present reality. The politics of hope movements develop at an ‘interstitial distance’ from the state (Critchley, 2008: 113). Hope positions hope movements’ politics at a distance that, whilst not completely disengaged from the state, allows the possibility of deploying radical and autonomous collective actions in collaboration with, in opposition to, and beyond the domain of capital and the state and development discourses (Böhm, Dinerstein and Spicer, 2010).

Finally as a ‘political name’ (Critchley, 2008),<sup>19</sup> hope movements can aggregate a variety of anti-capitalist struggles and anti-development endeavours observed worldwide, although the forms of organizing hope vary greatly (Dinerstein, 2012). The ‘name’ does not exclude the one who names, but facilitates our the engagement with the movements’ own theorizing (see Cox and Nilsen, 2007)

Five reasons can be advanced to further substantiate our motivation for naming them hope movements. First, the movements discussed above strongly oppose capitalism and embody the hope for a better life. Secondly, they display a similar way of addressing the schism that exists between the way we currently live under capitalism and their vision of a dignified life. They do not establish a goal to fulfil in the future but embrace and celebrate the inconclusiveness and openness of the world. Thirdly, hope movements make apparent the distinction between alternative development and alternatives *to* development. They see alternative development initiatives as business as usual insofar as they do not question the instrumental relationship between humans and the natural environment and do not change the structural processes which marginalize people. What hope movements demand is not another

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<sup>19</sup> On ‘naming’ see also Laclau (2007).



way of *doing*, but another mode of *being*. Fourthly, hope movements seek alternatives to development through engaging in personal and collective endeavours without taking or sharing state power. This distance from the state was already present in new social movements, which, according to NSM theory were self-reflexive and community-driven. In the case of hope movements this has become a catalyst for radical change. Fifth, whilst social movements are engaged in ‘the politics of poverty’ which places demands on the state and belong to the realm of social regulation, hope movements engage in ‘the politics of dignity’ (Holloway, 2010: 60)<sup>20</sup> that connects rage with hope and moves beyond demand.

## CONCLUSION

Hope is a fundamental human driving force. Yet, it has long been overlooked in writings on social movements and development studies. The principle of hope has a two-fold significance. On the one hand, it informs present individual and collective forms of resistance that intend to move beyond global capitalism. It presents an alternative vision to development that will not come about through state power. Alternatives to development initiatives have put at the centre not only the significance of nature, the collective use of natural resources, the construction of a solidarity economy, the idea of substantive equality and radical democracy (Santos and Rodriguez Garavito, 2006), but also the idea that it is necessary to imagine another world in order to change this one (Acosta, 2010). By imagining we mean the concrete experience of anticipating a better future in the present. This quest for *buen vivir* against developmentalist policy is very distant, or even opposed to the ‘empowerment’, ‘partnership’ and ‘participation’ discourses characteristic of international development which discipline ‘dissident meanings’ that movements are offering to devise alternatives beyond the development paradigm (Cornwall and Brock, 2005).

In this paper, we have embarked on an epistemological and conceptual journey with the intention to name a collective action that has been silenced by dominant discourses on social movements, development and globalization, and which has been left unnamed by the post-development critique. By analysing movements through the prism of hope we resisted

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<sup>20</sup> As Holloway (2010: 241) writes: ‘A demand is addressed to someone and asks them to do something on our behalf in the future, whereas in the politics of living now [dignity] there is no demand. We ask no permission of anyone and we do not wait for the future, but simply break time and assert now another type of doing, another form of social relations’.

the temptation to introduce another ‘descriptor’ and tried to engage with the movements’ own voice and theorizing (Cox and Nilsen, 2007; Holloway, 2002b).

By keeping a critical distance from the state and the realm of public policy — which is limited to improving ‘well-being outcomes’ through reforming, rather than replacing, existing economic and political practices — and by their experience of new practices in tune with human dignity, hope movements are a prophetic voice which points to the fact that the reality we are currently living is not the only one. Another world is indeed possible.

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