

Pfyn-Finges Nature Park: a Valais Sumak Kawsay?

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Sumak Kawsay ("Living Well" in the *Kichwa* language) stems from the philosophy and movement of the Abya-Yala indigenous people of South America, and is a much broader project for a society that is an alternative to the global system (Cliche, 2017). This 'Bien Vivre' in French proposes a world where people and nature coexist in time and space, but always maintaining reciprocal links (Cliche, 2017). For Berdier and Viteri Palomeque (2015), this development framework is a social paradigm that can propose priorities other than economic growth. It can be summed up in four principles summarised by Cliche (2017) as follows: the first aims for social justice through more egalitarian social relations, means of production and redistribution. The second is based on respect for Nature. In the original spirit of indigenous peoples, this means paying attention to the way in which wealth is produced. The third principle is an economy that serves society. Finally, there is the search for a balance between material and symbolic elements, be they economic, political, cultural or ecological. The ideal of this "Good Life" is a sustainable balance between people, communities and nature.

The Yasuní ITT initiative (2007-2013) in the Yasuní National Park (9,820 km²) in the Ecuadorian Amazon was a model of the application of this principle, with the decision not to extract oil from the Ishpingo, Tambococha and Tiputini deposits in order to preserve the natural environment, which was classified as a biosphere reserve by UNESCO (1989), and the habitat of the indigenous Huaorani people (Damian, 2017; Martin 2011). This decision, taken in particular by indigenous movements, the Ecuadorian Minister of Energy and Mines and civil society, was aimed at achieving a sustainable balance with nature and respecting the lives of indigenous people (Ibid.). Unfortunately, the arrival of a new president in 2013 who pursued a policy of extraction put an end to this ideal, against a backdrop of economic crisis (Ibid.). Another initiative is the linear parks in Guayaquil, also in Ecuador (Berdier and Viteri Palomeque, 2015), two objectives in particular highlight the desire to make it a Sumak Kawsay: to make the mangrove banks accessible and to promote gentle and alternative travel, as well as sport (Ibid.).

There are currently twenty national parks recognised by the Swiss Confederation. The Pfyn-Finges Nature Park in Valais is one of them, and is unique in that it extends over thirteen municipalities from the plains to the peaks, at altitudes ranging from 500 to 4,100 metres. Recognised in 2013, the park is a region rich in biodiversity, particularly in terms of ornithology. At the heart of the Nature Park are villages, towns, vineyards and the Bois de Finges (a protected area with one of the largest pine forests in the Alps). Financed 60% by the Confederation and the Canton and 40% by sponsorships and collaborations, the park has a very democratic form of governance, reflecting the Swiss culture of association (Lamprecht, Stam and Fischer, 2020).

Interviews with winegrowers in the area and with the park's management during the course of a thesis highlighted projects aimed at promoting local produce, soft mobility and partnerships with players actively working on ecological issues. Welcoming tourists and raising awareness of nature through courses and workshops, as well as the creation of a directory of local craftsmen to promote local consumption and their know-how, all contribute to the hypothesis that the Pfyn-Finges Nature Park can be understood as a Sumak Kawsay: respect for Nature, promotion of local characteristics (highlighting the dialects spoken in the park area through a "Dialectes" project, promoting the production of local products, etc.), active participation by the local population, the promotion of local culture and the promotion of local products.), active participation of the local population, economic players and interest groups in park management, etc.

The Pfyn-Finges park has all the characteristics of a Sumak Kawsay, including the specific resources of the Valais and mobilising local networks to develop activities, for example, according to theories on territorial development (Colletis and Pecqueur, 1993 ; Kebir 2010). What's more, the learning dimension (invitations to schools, courses for adults, educational walks for tourists) and the transmission of 'nature' knowledge that emanates from it make it a Sumak Kawsay in the Valais of life.

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