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Complementary Coexistence

A Constructivist Grounded Theory Study Exploring the Conceptualization of Health in The Philosophy of Buen Vivir / Sumak Kawsay

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Abstract

Background: The Andean indigenous philosophy known as Buen Vivir or Sumak Kawsay, loosely translated into *Good Living* or *Well Living*, is rarely studied within the field of public health. The studied philosophy has been institutionalized in Bolivian and Ecuadorian constitutions, why it sets the agenda for health in the Andean region. The ongoing progression of the health definition, combined with global public health trends of multicultural alliances and international policies, create incentives to shed light on the studied philosophy. It is also of great interest to explore how the studied philosophy might contribute to the international field of public health.

Aim: The purpose of this study was to explore the conceptualization of health within the given Andean indigenous philosophy. The ambition was also to create an understanding for how the conceptualization could contribute to the international field of public health.

Methods: Data was collected from a fluent set of twenty-five written documents, that discuss and/or explore the studied philosophy. The data was analyzed using Charmaz' (2006) constructivist grounded theory approach.

Findings: Based on the gained understanding of the studied philosophy's conceptualization of health, this study presents a conceptual model of health. The model consists of the three categories of *Nurturing life, Being part of totality,* and *Setting one's own agenda,* where each category is defined by various properties.

Conclusion: The philosophy's conceptualization of health defines health as multidimensional and collectively constructed, where self-determination is key. Furthermore, the study found that a definition of health should account for health's constant need of cultivation of all dimensions, also including nature. International public health-work should therefore operate on a community level, ensuring setting sensitivity, with an extended rights-based approach. In addition, the study found that preventative public health-work should aim for complementary coexistence, emphasizing an intercultural and intergenerational perspective.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale for the Study

The Andean indigenous philosophy called *Buen Vivir* or *Sumak Kawsay*[1], is known for its complexity, diverse interpretations and multi-lingual appearance. The Philosophy is loosely translated into *Good living* or *Well living*, although an accurate term is lacking (The Guardian, 2013). The Philosophy's name hints about its possible connectedness to public health and perspectives on health, but its actual meaning within the field remains complex and unclear.

The Philosophy was institutionalized in the constitutions of Ecuador in 2008 (Asamblea constituyente Ecuador, 2008), and the Plurinational State of Bolivia in 2009 (El Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2009). In conjunction with these constitutions, there are national plans and guidelines for the interpretation and implementation of The Philosophy. In Ecuador, The Philosophy is portrayed as "*Good living, A better world for everyone*" in the national plan (Republic of Ecuador, 2013), and in Bolivia it is entitled as "*Diplomacy for Life. Messages and documents on Living Well"* (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010). The establishment of such documents can be understood as an indication of the complexity of The Philosophy, and thereby as an invitation for further investigation on The Philosophy's conceptualization of health, as it is an inherent part of a good life.

Inspiration to conduct this study was also gained from current trends and frameworks that governs the global arena of public health, building on the United Nations' (UNs) *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (UN, 2015a) with the associated *17 Sustainable Development Goals* (UN, 2015b), as well as the World Health Organization's (WHO's) framework for *Health in All Policies* (WHO, 2015) with its prevailing intersectoral approach. These long-term global commitments and goals are adopted internationally, and serve as guidance for future international development and public health-work. These trends are an opportunity and an entry point for this study to be conducted, with the ambition that new insights and perspectives will contribute to the evolving international public health field.

Accordingly, international collaborations of global alliances, multi- and bilateral assistance in multicultural settings characterizes the public health field (Beaglehole & Bonita, 2009). The ambition is therefore to shed light on alternative and intercultural perspectives on health, as a contribution to increase awareness about the broad variation of existing views.

[1] Due to multiple names, I will throughout the thesis refer to the studied philosophy as "The Philosophy". This is done as an attempt to not exclude any of the existing denominations or interpretations.

Moreover, this study intends to create an understanding regarding how The Philosophy and its perceptions of health could serve as future contributions of the health definition. This is relevant outcomes, since policies and definitions are important building blocks to hold on to, serving as the framework and guidance for public health-work (Buse, Mays, & Walt, 2005). Correspondingly, they are important foundations to agree upon in the integration of all dimensions within the field, which will enable the best attainable potential for public health collaborations (Beaglehole & Bonita, 2009; Buse, Mays, & Walt, 2005; WHO, 2010). Consequently, it is essential to incorporate this Andean philosophy's view on health.

1.2 The International Public Health Field Relevance

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1946)

WHO's definition of health, established in 1946, is often used within the field of public health. Simultaneously, there is emerging literature and work conducted on alternative perspectives and definitions of health. According to the literature review conducted for this study, there seems to be an on-going paradigm shift regarding the health definition. WHO's Commission on Social Determinants of Health (SDH), chaired by Michael Marmot (2008) has influenced how health is taking altered shape, declaring social factors to be the major determinants of health-outcomes within populations. Further development of the health definition and improvement of targeting public health is noticed due to the emerging field of international (OECD, 2013; Marmot, 2016; WHO, 2011; WHO, 2008; WHO, 2015) and national (Marmot, 2010; Stigendal & Östergren, 2013; Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009) establishments of commissions and conducted reports.

Concepts such as *sustainability*, *equality*, *a holistic perspective*, *social progress*, and *well-being*, are reoccurring in the evolving process of public health and the SDH approach. There are, however, little or no explanations regarding what these concepts actually mean. It seems like an agreement on the necessity of a redefinition, or rather a reconstruction, of the health concept, has been reached among a wide range of public health professionals, politicians, and scholars. However, the new conceptualization of what health should consist of is open-ended and diverse. Constant progress and debate among researchers and interest groups, advocates for alternatives and variations (Biggs, King, Basu, & Stuckle, 2010; Charlier, et al., 2016; Horne, Khan, & Corrigan, 2013; Llamas & Mayhew, 2016; Pretty, et al., 2015; Scerri, 2012; Wiist, 2006; Wilkinson & Picket, 2010).

The changing nature of the conceptualization of health can be interpreted as a result of its constant improvement, adapting to new insights gained from research, knowledge and evidence based practice. The conclusion by the Stiglitz Commission (2009), which prompts for the importance of "*what we measure affects what we do*" (Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009), is an incentive to keep guidelines in line with the current public health discourse. The on-going progression within the public health field is an entry point for this study, enabling the author to participate in the debate and contribute with the insights gained from this study.

1.3 Previous Research on The Philosophy

An emerging interest of The Philosophy has been noted from both academic (Alonso González & Macías Vázquez, 2015; Gudynas, 1989; 2011; Gudynas & Acosta, 2011; Hermida, 2011; Kothari et al., 2014; Lalander, 2014a;b; Merino, 2016) and non-academic (Agebjörn et al., 2016; The Guardian, 2013) perspectives, with entry points from various fields of studies and interests. However, there is no clear cut on what The Philosophy means, other than its usefulness as an alternative approach to conventional thinking. Consequently, an encouragement of continued research on The Philosophy's potential contribution have been expressed in previous mentioned articles. Hermida's (2011) article focuses on The Philosophy's contribution to a new health paradigm in Ecuador, and acknowledges the existence of a vibrant discussion about the content of The Philosophy and its "keys to reconstructing common wellbeing".

To study this Andean indigenous philosophy will therefore serve as a strategy to change the pattern of thoughts in the redefinition of health. Moreover, it will contribute to new insights and perspectives on health, and embrace the existing knowledge and potential within the multidimensional global field of public health.

1.4 Aim and Research Question

The aim of this study is to explore the conceptualization of health within the Andean indigenous philosophy of Buen Vivir/Sumak Kawsay. To achieve this, methods of constructivist grounded theory is used, and the study is narrowed to a document analysis. Additionally, the ambition is to shed light on, and spread knowledge about, an Andean indigenous health perspective's potential contribution to the international field of public health.

The research question to guide this study is:

- *How is health conceptualized in The Philosophy of Buen Vivir/Sumak Kawsay?*

2 Methods

2.1 Study Design

The applied methodology for this study is grounded theory, based on the interpretative framework developed by Charmaz (2006), known as constructivist grounded theory. The methodology was chosen due to its suitability to explore and create conceptual understandings of both common and unexplored concepts (Charmaz, 2006), which corresponds with the aim and research question of this study. In addition, the contribution to future research has been considered in the application of a constructivist grounded theory approach. The generation of a conceptual model will spread knowledge about new insights of how the studied concept is related to the health definition, as well as how it might be applicable in the field of public health.

The choice to use written material as data has been inspired by Charmaz (2006) arguments about how written material both constitutes and sets the agenda for definitions. Document analysis was further acknowledged by Bowen (2009) to be considered as a suitable analytical approach, since written documents are claimed to be treated as primary references in a study with a constructivist grounded theory approach (Bowen, 2009).

The set of methods that Charmaz (2006) suggests in her constructivist approach enabled the author to delve into the material with a limited preunderstanding and an open mind towards the emerging results of the constant comparison approach to data collection and analysis. The study was conducted in line with Charmaz's (2006) advices to deconstruct the collected material of the studied concept, search for patterns, piece them together, and interpret the conceptual meaning of the identified categories that conceptualize the studied phenomenon.

The interpretative definition of theory brings Charmaz's (2006) approach to a pragmatic stance with regards to the methodological approach of grounded theory, where the end-product not automatically implies a generated theory, but rather a conceptual understanding. Charmaz's approach suited well with this study's aim: an abstract and interpretative understanding that could generate new insights into what the studied phenomenon is constructed upon (Charmaz, 2006).

2.2 Study Context and Material

Document analysis has been applied on written material of various nature, such as interdisciplinary previous research on The Philosophy, official constitutions and national plans regarding The Philosophy, and media articles about The Philosophy. All material was

electronically accessible, retrieved from research databases such as PubMed and LubSearch, authorities' official websites, and websites with relevant articles from interest organizations.
As previously mentioned, the choice of using written material as data source was inspired by Charmaz (2006) who urges the intrinsic power of written material to reproduce and enforce definitions. Bowen (2009) served as guidance in the practical tools of conducting a document analysis when using written material as data within the framework of a grounded theory study.

2.3 Sampling and Data Collection

The concept of *The human as a researcher* (Dahlgren, Emmelin, & Winkvist, 2007) and *The researcher with an open mind* (Charmaz, 2006), create the basis of the data collection and sampling procedure of grounded theory studies. This includes sensitivity, reflexivity and creativity, which has been the foundations for the sampling and data collection procedures throughout this study.

The specific purposive sampling methods applied in this study were guided by Charmaz (2006), consisting of *initial sampling* followed by *theoretical sampling.* The initial phase in this study consisted of the Bolivian and Ecuadorian constitutions, which contributed to an essential introduction to the studied phenomenon. Thereafter, the phase of theoretical sampling was adopted in the sampling procedure, which was controlled by the emergent design of the study (Charmaz, 2006). The strategy of theoretical sampling allowed the author to let data and emergent concepts, related to health in an inclusive sense, serve as guidance to select the subsequent data. This enabled for a successful generation of a conceptual model, since the author could follow the paths that was found, while being observant and cope for the shortages in the understanding of a health concept. The strategy of theoretical sampling uttered by Charmaz (2006) to "*follow the leads you find*" during the abductive procedure of integrated data collection and analysis, was thereby applied.

All material included in the study was obliged to have a clear connection, and refer to, The Philosophy. A criterion for the included material was a publish-date within the past ten years, e.g. 2007-2017, to enable a study based on the most relevant and updated data. The languages required were Spanish, English, and Swedish, all in correspondence to the author's language skills. Saturation was considered reached when no new insights that could contribute to the answer of the research question were retrieved from the studied material.

2.4 Data Analysis Process

The data analysis process was conducted in line with Charmaz's (2006) suggestions to initially read through the material attentively, followed by conducting initial and focused coding. Thereafter, the conceptual organization and groupings of codes into properties were conducted. This ultimately resulted in a conceptual model, by grouping the properties into categories that reflected the conceptualization of the studied phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006). Examples of the coding process are shown in appendix 1.

The RQDA software[2] was used to facilitate the analytical process. The author wrote memos and kept a research journal throughout the analytical process, which supported to identify patterns and relationships grounded in the data. As proclaimed by Charmaz (2006), these tools facilitated the construction of new insights and meanings of the studied phenomenon.

The analytical process was conducted with the intention to consistently search for the multiple dimensions and components that together would generate a conceptualization of health. All indications of health-relevant aspects in the data were therefore included in the analysis, to generate a comprehensive understanding of the concept and reach saturation.

Characteristic for grounded theory studies is the constant comparison approach, constituting an integrated procedure of data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Consequently, an abductive line of reasoning was applied in this study, which means that the steps of data sampling, collection, analysis and theoretical conceptualization were repeated simultaneously until the studied phenomenon was described (Dahlgren, Emmelin, & Winkvist, 2007).

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Correct references to all used sources of data, in combination with consequent stating of the ownership of original data and thoughts, have been strictly conducted throughout the study. According to Tripathy's (2013) discussion on ethics within secondary data analysis, all data that are freely available in books, internet and other public forums, are also free for use and analysis.

3 Findings

In total, twenty-five written documents were coded and analyzed. Eight of them were academic publications, two were constitutions, each accompanied with a national plan for the

[2] The RQDA software is a free qualitative analysis software, especially developed for analysis of textual data. RQDA stands for R package for Qualitative Data Analysis.

implementation of the Philosophy, issued by the governments of Ecuador and Bolivia. Seven were popular media articles or websites and five were published books. All material used was published between the years 2008-2016. A table of the collected material is attached in appendix 2.

Coding of the material resulted in three categories with respectively three, five, and six properties attached to each category. The identified categories were: *Nurturing life*, *Being part of totality*, and *Setting one's own agenda*. A conceptual model of health in accordance with The Philosophy is presented in appendix 3.

The categories, shown in three sections, with associated properties shown as subheadings, are described in more detail below. The attached excerpts from the data demonstrates how the descriptions of the findings are grounded in the data.

3.1 Nurturing Life

This category reflects The Philosophy's view on how life, as an inherent part of health, in all different dimensions, must be nurtured. It demonstrates how life needs cultivation and how it is not something one can take for granted. In general, the category clarifies how life is understood as multidimensional and incorporates an open and inclusive view, which aims to embrace and value life. The associated properties are: *Living in balance and harmony, Enjoying the present and valuing life*, and *Fostering body and soul*. These properties demonstrate the various aspects that have nurturing effects on life.

3.1.1 Living Life in Balance and Harmony

Characteristic expressions for how The Philosophy was explained in terms of its views on life were *balance* and *harmony*. These concepts reoccurred throughout the studied material and were essential components to understand The Philosophy.

"A defining characteristic of buen vivir is harmony, he says, harmony between human beings, and also between human beings and nature" (The Guardian, 2013).

This quote indicates a notion of how harmony was inter-relational, created through interactions incorporating both humans and nature. This harmony was further built upon in the concept of aspiring for a plentiful life, in balance and respect.

"Living in plenitude, knowing how to live in harmony with the cycles of Mother Earth, of the cosmos, of life and of history, and in balance with every form of existence in a state of permanent respect" (Vanhulst & Beling, 2014).

The Philosophy had a multidimensional and inclusive understanding of the concept of life and what life consists of. This was demonstrated in the previous excerpt that recognized the inter-relation of harmony and balance to incorporate not only humans and nature, but also dimensions of time and space. An active awareness about life and the act of living was acknowledged as means of the strive towards harmonious living and being.

3.1.2 Enjoying the Present and Valuing Life

Descriptions of how life is captured in the moment, how it is appreciated and valued as a guiding principle in all decisions and stages, were frequent features in the understanding of The Philosophy and its views on what components that nurtures life. Life was looked upon as a journey of knowledge and appreciation.

"Life is a path that needs to be travelled to understand and learn. Life teaches one to make decisions and take new initiatives" (Chakravorty, 2016).

Life itself was the guidance throughout life, and one must pay attention to what life is teaching.

"It means that we have to learn how to dance, to play, to take care of the elderly, and of the nature- we have to learn how to live and we have to learn how to die. We have to learn that nothing lasts forever and that death is a part of life" (Petersson, 2015).

Joyful things in life were important components that were actively learned and valued. Death was also seen as a natural component of life, which reinforced the awareness of appreciation and being. Consequently, having life as a guiding principle was crucial for The Philosophy.

"In Vivir Bien, the most important is neither the man nor the money, the most important is life" (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010).

Accordingly, nothing else but life itself was what mattered. This line of reasoning was present in the way simplicity was valued over luxury.

"The Vivir Bien means using less resources, accumulating less, and being guided by simpler ways of life, giving time and space to a greater personal fulfilment" (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010).

To give more room for life and self-realization was realized on the expenses of reduced consumption of resources that generated obstacles from enjoying life and being present. It was also shown how the term of being rich not only had to be equated with money and resources, but rather the opposite, where wealth was reached through being fulfilled by life itself.

A pronounced importance of nurturing the social life through activities that served the act of being present, feeling appreciation and joy was identified. Nurturing social, physical, and intellectual aspects of life were realized through the proclamation of leisure time.

3.1.3 Fostering Body and Soul

By taking care of both body and soul one also takes care of, and facilitates for, a plentiful life in harmony and balance. The Philosophy took an inclusive stance in everyone's self-realization where cultural identity and spirituality were important components to embrace.

The active fostering and protection of cultural identity was crucial, as cultural identity was seen as a crucial part of oneself and life.

"Dignity without identity is like a rootless plant. If we are not defending our identity, we are going to die, we are going to disappear" (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010).

Consequently, the presence and maintenance of identity were crucial to enable the state of being fully alive. This goes hand in hand with embracing the spiritual dimensions of life, which was an essential feature of culture and life. It was shown how spirituality encompasses several dimensions, and proclaimed to be of importance to embrace and safeguard a harmonious life.

"We live in harmony with Nature and the Cosmos. We have a great and living culture with which we live with our own spirituality. [….] To return to the Pacha (Earth), we have to start to Remake our own Spirituality. Rewrite our own Memories. Recollect the knowledge and information of our forefathers and the elderly about the things that exist. Organize, systematize our own Spirituality. Make sure that it grows. We have to speak our own language and do whatever possible to keep alive our own Spirituality, our own Education and our own Health" (Chakravorty, 2016).

Furthermore, the components of nurturing both body and soul included prevention of diseases and promotion of healthy behaviors. A preventative stance was encouraged, and often in combination with advocacy regarding nature's healing capability.

"Let's prevent against diseases before seeking medicines to cure them, and let's use our own natural medicine which does not cure one disease by creating another" (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010).

3.2 Being Part of Totality

This category describes The Philosophy's perception of how all life is part of the totality, where everything is interrelated in both time and space. Correspondingly, individualism and socially

constructed divisions are undesirable in favor for embracing coexistence and inclusiveness, since totality is embodied in the communal perspective.

3.2.1 Incorporating an Active Awareness of Inter-relational Surrounding

The conception of everything being part of totality demanded an active awareness of the surroundings and a holistic perspective that recognized the presence of an inter-relational setting. By doing so, the perception of coherence in all dimensions will automatically be achieved, and socially constructed divisions will be diminished.

"The fruit dies to give space to the seed, the seed dies to give space to the plant, the plant dies to give space to the fruit. The vital cycle includes everything. I cannot isolate anything without isolating myself. I am part of everything, and everything is part of me. I am in all parts and all parts are in me" (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010).

This quote indicated that totality is comprehensive and extensive, embracing the fullness. It also showed how nature was essential in the understanding of life, how everything was interrelated, and how all life was intertwined in a totality. Human beings were inevitably seen as included in totality, which made individuals united, and not divided, from their surroundings. The time aspect of totality created an encompassing view of life for all existence in all times. This was further explored regarding how time and life were viewed in a cyclical perspective.

"The world from above, the world from below, the world from outside and the world from here, it connects and form part of this totality, within a non-linear spiral perspective of time" (Larrea, 2010).

Moreover, The Philosophy possessed a holistic view of life, which in a health aspect meant to encompass health in an expanded sense.

"The limited view of health that separated body and soul is re-placed by an approach that reunifies them, applying a holistic concept of health for individuals, groups and society […]" (Hermida, 2011).

The holistic view had both individual and societal ambitions in the perspective of health and life. A communal interest and reciprocity were keys in living in harmony according to The Philosophy, which was the justification for putting emphasis on seeing good as not better, since better was not good.

"There is a big difference between 'Good Life' and Living Better as the first implies equality of conditions while the second is egoist, disinterest in others and individualism on the part of a small section of the people" (Chakravorty, 2016).

3.2.2 Viewing Nature and Human as Interrelated

To view life as being part of totality incorporated a view of nature and human as interrelated. The Philosophy saw life as a creation generated from nature.

"One of the most important foundations of buen vivir is the view on the human as a part of nature. The division human – nature does not exist. When one talks about mother earth in buen vivir, one means not only nature, but that all of us are part of mother earth" (Petersson, 2015).

The concept of nature was given an expanded sense when encompassing human, where harmonious living was considered to be living in harmony with oneself and totality, since nature and life were embraced in totality. The proclamation of a relational interdependence between human and nature was a consequence of the integral concept of nature and life:

"At the same time, however, it breaks away from this current because it does not hold humans to be subordinated to nature, but rather recognizes their mutual interdependence and the need for their harmonization based on a principle of reciprocity: nature is not something surrounding human beings; rather humans are an integral part of nature" (Vanhulst & Beling, 2014).

Socially shared responsibility showed to be important, where humans were put in a responsible positions for their self-inflicted assault on nature and totality itself, causing disturbances of balance in the inter-relational totality.

"This implies obligations on behalf of human beings, the only living beings with the capability to destroy the ecosystem's balance, to affect the symbiosis between human and nature, and even to change the climate. These are obligations of respect and of reparation of Mother Earth" (Houtart, 2011).

3.2.3 Valuing the Community as a Uniting Entity for Existence

The entity of a community, in an expanded sense, entailed a notion of being part of totality that was applied in practice for all beings. The Philosophy acknowledged community living and participation as the natural arena for life.

"We do not live alone. We are part of the ayllu, we are part of the community, like the leaf is part of the plant. No one says: I am going to take care of myself, my ayllu is not important to

me. It is as absurd as if the leaf would say to the plant: you are not important to me, I am going to take care of myself" (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010).

The importance of the community also generated values dedicated to the community.

"It is not possible to vivir bien [live well] if the others are viven mal [live bad], it is about living as part of the community, with protection from it, without affecting the others or the nature" (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010).

The community concept was further defined as a uniting entity that emphasized unity in diversity. This was in line with a harmonious living, acknowledging variations and different identities.

"It also breaks away from the idea of cultural and social homogeneity, assuming its logical impossibility in an inevitably diverse world, and posits instead a path of harmony and "unity in diversity"" (Vanhulst & Beling, 2014).

The interdependence was a uniting factor within a community, which was a consequence of being part of the totality. The Philosophy connaturally put emphasis on the common good before self-interest.

3.2.4 Complementary Coexistence

A reoccurring concept that was both a product of, and a facilitator for, being part of totality, was complementary coexistence.

"An important concept for understanding buen vivir is complementarided, or complementarity. It means that everything has a function and mutually contributes to keeping the world in balance – nothing is more important than the other. This also applies to men and women. Thus, equality plays an important role in the creation of buen vivir" (Nylander, 2014a).

Complementarity was about interaction and collaboration within the totality to encourage balance, which, as a result, touched upon the encouragement of gender equality as shown above. Equality was key within coexistence, where all parts of totality had the same share of value. Wellbeing was therefore seen as collectively constructed.

"It includes the classical ideas of quality of life, but with the specific idea that well-being is only possible within a community" (Gudynas, 2011).

The collective feature of wellbeing implied a harmonious coexistence of humans and nature, in accordance with the understanding of all life as part of the totality.

"The concept of 'Good Life' [...] refers to the relations of Equilibrium of the People with Society and Harmony with Nature. 'Good Life' with Nature means living in Equilibrium and Harmony with all that which surrounds us" (Chakravorty, 2016).

3.2.5 Being Connected with Previous and Future Generations

As previously mentioned, being part of totality involved dimensions of both time and space. This allowed for having an inter-generational perspective, taking into account both previous, present and future generations of the totality. Accordingly, indigenous knowledge and traditions had made great contributions to The Philosophy's formulations and perceptions. This was shown in how indigenous knowledge and traditions were embraced.

"Using the concepts of 'Good Life', Bolivia is pursuing an international agenda with a focus on protecting Nature, Mother Earth and for utilisation of the wisdom of the ancient and indigenous people who know how to live in harmony with Nature. For them Life is most important" (Chakravorty, 2016).

The tribute to previous generations did not only reflect ancient times, but also elderly's experiences and history.

"The knowledge is reflected in the experiences and wisdom of our elders. That is why one says that we have to read the wrinkles of the elders, to understand what is taqini" (Chakravorty, 2016).

The knowledge from history, and the wisdom it contributes with, was emphasized. Consequently, a powerful desire of regaining that knowledge of life was expressed, with the ambition to recuperating to the origins' way.

"We have decided to return to our pathway, to the way of balance, not only between persons but also between man and nature" (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010).

Future generations were also included as a crucial component of the inter-generational perspective and being part of totality.

"Nature is not harmed and is allowed to regenerate in order to enhance the lives of future generations" (Mercado, 2015).

Having an inter-generational perspective was an intrinsic and essential feature of viewing life in its fullness.

3.3 Setting One's Own Agenda

This category addresses the importance of self-determination, the collective power grounded in consensus, and an ever-evolving process of advocacy. Implicitly, the category also includes prerequisites for the setting: to be free from external oppression, to have the ability to operate one's own power, and decide over one's own agenda of life. The properties reflect the various required conditions which enable empowerment and self-determination in accordance with The Philosophy.

3.3.1 Collective Participatory Power

Being in charge of one's own life through collective participatory power were essential building blocks in setting one's own agenda. This was argued to be achieved by operating through consensus in decision making.

"It is very important for us that every one of us participates with the same rights, that each one has the same opportunities, that everyone is heard. Everyone has to participate and we have to reach agreement with all. We have to convince everyone and take a decision with the participation of everyone, not only through the exercise of a vote" (Chakravorty, 2016).

Consensus was considered to ensure the power of the people, as well as change the perceived socially constructed power hierarchies. Collective participatory power was uttered as a means to ultimately achieve the aim for everyone to be in charge of their own lives, which was essential in The Philosophy:

"Persons who wish to "have power to make their life", without leaving them at the mercy of factors that are alien and hostile" (Houtart, 2011).

3.3.2 Breaking Free from Oppression

To be free from enforced ruling hegemonies was seen as essential to set one's own agenda. Criticism of oppressive power was constantly present and elaborated on in the studied material of The Philosophy. To strive towards liberation from colonial structures was a crucial component in the process of breaking free from oppression.

"Appealing to the wisdom of all the cultures that enrich us…as heirs to social struggles of liberation from all forms of domination and colonialism…we have decided to construct a new way of living together as citizens, in diversity and harmony with nature, to achieve 'common wellbeing,' sumak kawsay" (Hermida, 2011).

The de-colonialization was argued to generate the opportunity to be in charge of one's own life, thoughts, beliefs, and values. This indicated that harmonious living was based on each and everyone's self-determination, as a counterpart to, and liberation from, the history of oppressive powers. The Philosophy was seen as a new construction of another way of living, free from colonialism. What is known as conventional development was therefore not an alternative, since the term was created by oppressive powers.

"It is about an important element of the construction of alternatives to "development"" (Houtart, 2011).

Discouragement and critique of conventional concepts and models of development agendas and governance based on values of neoliberalism, capitalism, and materialism, were expressed in accordance with the process of breaking free form oppression.

3.3.3 Representing the Local Context Through an Intercultural Perspective

To safeguard recognition and representation of the local setting was a prerequisite for being able to set one's own agenda. The requirement of a setting sensitive understanding was key in both the formulation and interpretation of The Philosophy and life itself.

"There is no room for an essentialist position. Furthermore, is not possible to identify one idea of the Buen Vivir as the best one that became a standard reference to be followed by all others indigenous groups in Latin America. […]. There is no sense in trying to apply the concept to other regions; other cultures will have to explore and build their own Buen Vivir" (Gudynas, 2011).

The setting sensitive understanding implied that neither direct transferability nor comparability of The Philosophy from one setting to another was possible. The representation of the local context, and a strategy to decrease the barriers connected to transferability issues, were facilitated by a shared understanding through intercultural dialogue:

"As we can see, for this indigenous thinker, interculturalism should involve a parity dialogue or through equal conditions, because from the dominant discourse of Western culture interculturality is posed as a possibility to integrating the indigenous cultures into their circuit, diluting them" (Caudillo Félix, 2012).

Accordingly, an equal share of power for all views and cultures in an intercultural dialogue was essential, since this was what differentiated from the hegemonic power and unequal

representation. Likewise, it was encouraged to apply an intersectoral collaboration to facilitate the comprehensiveness of the contextual aspects, while safeguarding equality and balance.

"Rather it describes a way of life and a form of development that sees social, cultural, environmental and economic issues working together and in balance, not separately and hierarchically as at present" (The Guardian, 2013).

The local context was suggested to always be prioritized in front of distant needs. This has generated advocacy for sovereignty of the local market and needs.

"One should first satisfy the local needs, in coexistence with Mother Earth and in reciprocity and affection with the others" (Houtart, 2011).

3.3.4 Advocating for Human Rights and Social Inclusion

The advocacy for human rights and social inclusion was articulated throughout the analyzed material. Much weight was dedicated to the importance of guaranteeing core values of non-discrimination, social equality and inclusion.

"Where there are neither exploited nor those who exploit, where there are neither excluded nor those who exclude, where there are neither marginalized nor those who marginalize" (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010).

Intercultural interaction and social inclusion were encouraged actions to protect non-discrimination. A symbol and example of how intercultural recognition and social inclusion have been promoted is the intercultural flag called Wiphala.

"The squares of our Wiphala are all of the same size. We tell ourselves that all of us are of the same size, not more not less. The Wiphala also tells us the same thing. There are no superiors, there are no inferiors. There is nothing like that" (Chakravorty, 2016).

In itself, The Philosophy can be interpreted as a supportive stance for equal rights, recognition, and social inclusion in regard to how it represented indigenous people. The presence of The Philosophy gives voice to indigenous movements in their advocacy to stand up for their own rights, where having access and capacity to participate on equal grounds in decision-making were key components to be able to set one's own agenda.

3.3.5 Defending Nature

Nature was considered to be an active part of life, holding both rights and values. This was central when arguing for the right to set one's own agenda, since this did not only imply human

beings as subjective actors. The subjectification of Nature and how it affected the human position was expressed in the following quote:

"Last, but not least, intrinsic values are recognized, and Nature becomes a subject; human beings as the only source of values are therefore displaced" (Gudynas, 2011).

The rights-based approach for both people and nature made the relationship interdependent, since their intrinsic rights collaborated and protected one another. This relationship was crucial and exercised throughout the process of safeguarding the rights-based approach. The next citation is an example of how a human right draws upon, and supports, nature's right.

"It recognizes the populations' right to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment is recognized, which guarantees sustainability and buen vivir, sumak kawsay. It declares the public interest of the preservation of the environment, conservation of ecosystems, biodiversity and the integrity of the country's genetic heritage, the prevention of the environmental damage and recuperation of degraded natural areas" (Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

Simultaneously, it can be the other way around too, when nature's rights are ensured and defended by the rights and responsibilities of humans.

"In the face of climate change and the rapid destruction of the environment, particularly in the Amazon region, there is wisdom to be found in Buen Vivir which rejects the anthropocentric perspective of our modern culture, and places a high value on the importance of preserving, protecting, and respecting Nature" (Mercado, 2015).

The necessity of de-commodifying the commons was a prolonged consequence when viewing nature as a subject, holding values and rights.

"This implies going beyond a conception of the common as a material reality or resource to understand it as 'alternative, noncommodified means to fulfil social needs, e.g., to obtain social wealth and to organize social production'" (Alonso González & Macías Vázquez, 2015).

Conclusively, The Philosophy did not see commons and nature as interchangeable, but treated on equal grounds as humans, creating an interdependence of safeguarding the extended rights-based approach.

3.3.6 An Ever-evolving Process

The construction and maintenance of setting one's own agenda and living life were described as constantly ongoing and dynamic processes, with neither a beginning nor an end.

"We are working to create material and spiritual conditions to build and maintain the Vivir Bien, which is also defined as harmonious life in permanent construction" (Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia, 2010).

The aim of living in accordance with The Philosophy should therefore not be mistaken for having a shortcut to success, since it was rather the path towards achieving the goal that made the success reachable. The inherited uncertainty and vagueness of The Philosophy was explained by its visionary character and ever-evolving construction that will emerge along the pathway towards a new era.

"Buen Vivir is a visionary concept, a portal into the next era of great social change. It opens our eyes to what could be possible, and positions us to reach a greater understanding of our own human potential" (Mercado, 2015).

Conclusively, self-determination, agenda setting, advocacy, and life itself, were all seen as processes under constant construction, in need of continuous maintenance for survival.

4 Discussion

4.1 Methodological Discussion

This study was conducted through Charmaz's (2006) constructivist approach to grounded theory methodology. This allowed for exploring a conceptual understanding of a concept grounded in the collected data. Written material was the source of data upon which the analysis was conducted. The choice of using written material as data source was made due to the deemed feasibility to answer the research question and to the scope of this study. Availability and accessibility of material were other additional determinants. Written material facilitated for achieving a comprehensive understanding from an intersectoral approach of The Philosophy. To limit the data to written material can be considered a weakness, since the study does not incorporate all existing perceptions of The Philosophy. It is therefore important to announce that this study is one interpretation out of many of The Philosophy, and the findings are grounded in the data of this study explicitly. Transferability is therefore not aimed for, but the study's quality is assured through rich descriptions of the analytical process to provide transparency. Additionally, the frequent provision of excerpts in the presentation of the findings was used as a tool to improve the quality, and show how the findings were grounded in the data, e.g. ensure credibility and confirmability.

The application of a grounded theory methodology allowed the author to conduct the study with an open mind. This suited both the author's sparse preunderstanding of the studied phenomenon and the limited spread of knowledge of the public health relevance of The Philosophy. The existence of the author's limited preunderstanding was attentively bracketed during the process of data collection and analysis. Additionally, the author conducted extensive memo writing during the abductive process of data collection and analysis, in combination with writing a research journal throughout the whole study process. These were measures taken by the author to create awareness around the role as a researcher, and improved the author's skills to stay neutral to the data, which further assured confirmability of the study.

The emphasis on the researcher's central role in grounded theory studies was considered as both a strength and a weakness. One limitation identified during this study was the loneliness of the author, not having any peer-researcher to collaborate with during the process of data analysis and discussion of the findings. This was compensated for through the extensive memo writing and research journal. Further compensation for the lack of involved peers was done through supervision by a senior researcher through reviewal of codes and the conceptual model.

To study a distant philosophy and to use data in Spanish are potential weaknesses of this study, since the author is of Swedish origin and Spanish is the author's third spoken language. However, these are not considered as major weaknesses since the author is fluent in Spanish and has experience from both living and working in Latin American contexts. The translation process from Spanish to English was safeguarded from linguistic and cultural flaws through peer-review by a native Spanish speaker from Latin America.

For future research, it would be interesting to apply different methods of data collection, and incorporate a wide range of informants. Possible methods could be interviews and focused group discussions. Informants of interest could be stakeholders such as politicians and policy makers, in combination with local people holding different demographic characteristics. Future additional studies will generate a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of The Philosophy and its connectedness to health.

4.2 Findings Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore how health could be conceptualized in the studied philosophy, and further to discuss how these findings can contribute to the international field of public health. Methods of constructivist grounded theory was used to gain an interpretative understanding of The Philosophy to facilitate the creation of a conceptual model of health.

The findings are presented in a conceptual model (appendix 3), where three categories were identified as the major building blocks of how The Philosophy conceptualizes health. These three categories were: *Nurturing life*, *Being part of totality*, and *Setting one's own agenda*.

These findings aim to contribute to the development of the health definition in accordance with how health was conceptualized in the studied philosophy. In addition, it was discovered how the understanding of The Philosophy's conceptualization of health can contribute and serve as guidance in public health interventions.

It is therefore advised that the findings of this study should be taken into account in public health-work, since they reflect and incorporate a wider perspective. This advice is based on the arguments uttered by Beaglehole & Bonita (2009), Buse et al. (2005) and WHO (2010) saying that policies and definitions are highly important to agree upon as a uniting factor in international public health-work.

The findings will be discussed category by category below.

4.2.1 Nurturing Life

This category indicated a multidimensional view of life that was seen as a living feature in need of constant cultivation. It was found that The Philosophy was centered around the act of how one should live life in balance and harmony; the importance of living in the present and enjoying life; having a view of life that incorporates both body and soul. The various aspects of nurturing life are understood as essential components to achieve good health.

In a health definition perspective, this category contributes with important aspects of how health is multidimensional. It states that one must incorporate not only the absence of sickness, but a comprehensive understanding of the other factors that are incorporated in the concept of life, and therefore health. Consequently, this goes beyond the WHO definition of health (1946), since The Philosophy does not restrict health only to social interactions but to all life. The Philosophy can therefore bring additional contribution to the previously identified field that seeks to reconstruct the definition of health (Biggs, King, Basu, & Stuckle, 2010; Charlier, et al., 2016; Llamas & Mayhew, 2016; Pretty, et al., 2015; Scerri, 2012; Wiist, 2006; Wilkinson & Picket, 2010).

Living life in balance and harmony was identified as essential for nurturing life. This generates a notion of how health is a state where balance and harmony is achieved on an inter-relational level among all existing life, incorporating both humans and nature. This means that health

cannot be achieved individually, since balance and harmony is created inter-relationally. Through a public health-perspective, this means that programs and interventions must encompass the broader picture, striving for equalizing the inter-relations to generate a healthy, harmonious living.

Further, The Philosophy supports preventative health actions, which are the foundational characteristics for public health-work. This is seen in the way The Philosophy proclaims life as the guiding principle, stressing preventative actions for a harmonious life to facilitate health. The Philosophy can therefore be used in advocacy for the importance of public health-work through global long-term commitments, such as the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development (2015a), and the WHO HiAP approach (WHO, 2010).

This category also tells us that life itself is something that must be lived in order to be understood. Accordingly, importance is dedicated to having the possibility to live life fully without limitations, and to learn from own experiences and allow for mistakes, to achieve health. This view indicates that health must be defined through lived experiences. Public health interventions should therefore be characterized by admitting environments and self-reflection.

The findings also showed that The Philosophy promotes living life in simplicity, and valuing leisure time as a facilitator for nurturing life and health. This should be embraced in public health interventions, through promoting social and physical activities to improve health outcomes. The simplistic way of living indicates that health should not be measured in monetary terms. This corresponds with several other advocators for alternatives to monetary indicators and evaluation, in relation to health and social progress (Biggs, King, Basu, & Stuckle, 2010; Pretty, et al., 2015; Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009; Wiist, 2006).

The inclusion of both body and soul as important components of nurturing life indicates that the definition of health must encompass both external and internal factors of health. The notion of soul indicates that mental health is an important aspect to recognize as integral for health. Moreover, The Philosophy stresses cultural identity and spirituality as two important aspects of nurturing life. This multidimensional view should therefore be incorporated in the definition of health, and further safeguarded in public health interventions. The content and catchment area of public health-work will thereby expand as a result of improved understanding, with increased recognition and representation of multicultural settings, as were mentioned characteristics when Beaglehole & Bonita (2009) discussed the new era of global public health. Mentioned external factors that nurtures body and soul are nature's richness and curing effect, such as healthy and

nutritious food and natural medicines. Ensuring accessibility is therefore essential in public health interventions, which agrees with Marmots report (WHO, 2008) on essential components to achieve health equity.

4.2.2 Being Part of Totality

The study found how The Philosophy views all life and existence as integral of the same totality. This has a crucial impact on the definition of health, making it overarch and embrace all life in both time and space, taking a communal and inter-generational stance, which advocates for complementary coexistence.

The view of an inter-related totality generates an inclusive perception of life, where nothing can be seen as isolated or independent, but rather as dependent components that together are a united entity in its fullness. This forces the health concept to incorporate all existence and life, in all times. Health is therefore collective, only achieved in its completeness, where all and everything are in harmonious balance, coexisting, and given equal value and recognition. Consequently, nothing should be assaulted or exploited, since that would be the same as violating oneself, health and life. In practice, this means that health should be understood in an expanded sense, including humans, nature and animals, in the past, present and future. The communal perspective should always be favored in public health interventions, since totality benefits from it. This also sheds light on past, present and future generations, since all are part of totality. This is to some extent in line with the SDGs (UN, 2015b) regarding how present generations are responsible for how their actions affect future generations and the planet. On the contrary though, The Philosophy and its cyclical time perspective neglects how the term development is used, which is a contradiction to the foundation of the SDGs, that clearly focus on development. Scerri's (2012) focus on green citizenship can be seen as another similarity, since he argues for an inclusive view where nature and future generations must be considered in todays' actions.

A strong advocacy for community living and participation was identified in the material, where the community in an expanded sense was the natural arena for all life. In a public health perspective, this indicates that successful interventions should be operated on a community level, since that will encompass all life in its completeness, which facilitates health improvements. On a higher level, this could also fit within the appearance of international collaborations and global alliances (such as UN, WHO, their member states, and other commissions), if one views them as communities where several actors collaborate for a common good.

Furthermore, findings showed how the valued features of equality and communalism are not the same as homogeneity, but should rather be interpreted as unity in diversity, recognizing and representing all varieties. Consequently, complementary coexistence was a crucial concept applied, and is therefore advised to be included in the definition of health. This means that public health interventions should strive for social inclusion and coexistence, embracing the complementarities generated from the existing diversity. Further focus should be put on integration and facilitating social interaction, to enable diverse and inclusive environments, in order to recognize and represent all life. Similarities can be seen with the SDH approach (Marmot, 2016; WHO, 2008; WHO, 2011), although The Philosophy stresses complementarity more than equity as the key for coexistence.

An expressed tribute to indigenous and ancient generations, mostly in regard to their wisdom about life, was pervading. Their knowledge and representation should therefore be accounted for when defining health, and should consequently influence public health interventions. The intergenerational perspective was also found in the proclamation of incorporating a historic perspective, embracing traditions gained from previous generations. Accordingly, the public health field should strive towards incorporation of all ages and generations, where the complementary coexistence is strengthened and inclusive environments are embracing harmonious living and health for all.

4.2.3 Setting One's Own Agenda

The findings drawn from this category indicate the importance of the health concept to be self-determined by the local environment, people and setting.

Setting one's own agenda was considered as an ever-evolving process, in need for constant elaboration and change. This can be related to how the processes of both defining health and conducting public health-work inherit this ever evolving feature. It can therefore be argued that The Philosophy advocates for this dynamic process, since health is as alive as life itself, and must therefore be seen as something that has to be evolved in the same pace, to reflect the present environment. In line with Stiglitz et al. (2009) "what we measure affects what we do", it is deemed important that public health-work is sensitive and responsive to its environment.

The findings showed that The Philosophy advocated for non-discrimination, social equality, and inclusion. These values are therefore crucial to guarantee for all existing life, in order to encompass the totality in setting one's own agenda for life and health. Specific importance was claimed to incorporate and safeguard indigenous people. These core values are consistently

incorporated and discussed in the international public health field (UN, 2015b; WHO, 2008), and essentially acknowledged when advocating for universal health coverage. However, the inclusion of minorities and indigenous people can be improved and safeguarded even better in today's public health-work, through giving minorities a voice, and equal share of power in national and transnational assemblies.

Collective participatory power was found as a critical component for setting one's own agenda. The Philosophy argues for using consensus as the crucial tool for decision making, to ensure everyone's voice to be heard. This could be operated in public health interventions too, for example as a method when establishing a project that allows for adherence to the people's needs and desires for improving their own health. Ensuring power of the people in the process of formulating needs and strategies corresponds with what is normally considered as a bottom-up-approach. However, The Philosophy argues for an expanded approach, involving consensus in decision making, instead of democratic governance that relies on majority voting. "People powered health" studied by Horne et al. (2013) could possibly be closer to what The Philosophy advocates for, which presents the needed actions to transfer the power to the people in public health-work.

To break free from oppression was identified as crucial, which reflects the importance of being able to form one's own agenda for life and not be ruled by enforced hegemonies. A prerequisite uttered was the importance of representing the local context, through favoring local needs and demands. This should be accounted for in the health definition and in public health interventions, through emphasizing the people's desires, and avoid adoption of an enforced agenda constructed by oppressive powers.

Findings showed how The Philosophy pushes for an integrated intercultural perspective, to achieve a setting sensitive understanding, which accurately and comprehensively represents and recognizes the local context. This is important, since the findings claimed the inability of understanding The Philosophy without a setting sensitive understanding. Furthermore, an intercultural perspective was explained to incorporate all cultures and totality. Consequently, recognition, representation, and social inclusion are crucial to encompass in the formulation of public health interventions. As mentioned in the findings, there is not one standardized form of understanding The Philosophy. This can also be applied to the definition of health, as well as guidelines and frameworks of public health interventions. Responsiveness and sensitivity to the local context through intercultural dialogue are therefore important in order to embrace the knowledge and priorities of the specific setting. These measures are required, and will facilitate

for public health improvements, and are therefore the key to what Beaglehole & Bonita (2009) discuss as multicultural settings of the expanded field of public health-work.

The intercultural dialogue that was argued for, is characterized by the equal share of power and representation of cultural diversity, facilitating for coexistence and inclusion, distancing from oppressive powers. Interculturality stands for inter-relational coexistence, collaboration, and recognition. Consequently, interculturalism (instead of multiculturalism) should be the guiding principle for future public health-work. In addition, the principle of intersectoral collaboration was identified as essential, viewed as a prerequisite to ensure comprehensive agenda setting, ensuring all dimensions' detachment from oppression. Public health-work should therefore adhere to intersectoral collaboration, which is an ongoing strategy in line with WHO and HiAP (WHO, 2010).

Furthermore, findings showed the absence of a correct interpretation of both The Philosophy and health. A setting sensitive understanding was deemed essential, and should consequently be applied by all actors in the global public health field. Special attention should be taken when establishing overarching agendas and guidelines, ensuring to represent people's power and local values. Refereeing to Horne et al. (2013), empowerment must be formulated by the people and not be internationally standardized.

Findings showed how The Philosophy views nature as a holder of intrinsic values and rights, e.g. nature becomes a subject, equalized with humans and all other existing life. This connaturally has implications on the process of setting one's own agenda, since human preferences are not the only ones that count in decision-making processes. This generates an altered entry point in agenda setting processes, applying an extended rights-based approach in public health-work, where all rights must be accounted for and defended.

According to the findings, it exists an interdependent relationship between the rights of humans and nature, which safeguards each other to reach fulfilment. Possibilities for this relationship to be used as a facilitating component in public health interventions are noted, where a subjectification of both humans and nature could ensure protection of health for all. The subjectification of nature requires a de-commodification of nature, as shown in the findings of this study. In a health perspective, this means that access to nature and commons should be free of charge and equally distributed to everyone, without harming nature or life itself. Possible similarities are noted between the SDGs (UN, 2015b) and the non-commodification of nature, since The Philosophy proclaims nature's rights as a mean to achieve sustainability within

nature's limits. It is also in line with the argumentation for universal health coverage, advocating for equal access and rights among all people. However, what distinguishes The Philosophy from those frameworks is how The Philosophy emphasizes nature as a right holder in need for protection, and declaring equal treatment for nature and humans.

5 Conclusions

This study explored how The Philosophy's conceptualization of health can be visualized through three main categories: *Nurturing life*, *Being part of totality,* and *Setting one's own agenda.* Accordingly, the health definition should account for health as multidimensional and collectively constructed, in constant need for cultivation, where self-determination is key.

Drawing upon this, guiding principles for international public health-work should aim for complementary coexistence, and target both body and soul through preventative approaches. Public health-work should be operated on a community level with a setting sensitive approach, and ensure non-discrimination through an intercultural and intergenerational perspective. Collective participatory power should be guaranteed, and an extended rights-based approach should be adopted, to ensure nature's subjectivity.

Suggestions for future research are to conduct additional studies with other methods and data sources in order to improve understanding. Further research on how findings can be developed into a conceptual framework for international public health-work would be interesting, as well as to generate an understanding of how the findings from this study could serve as an inspiration for other settings.

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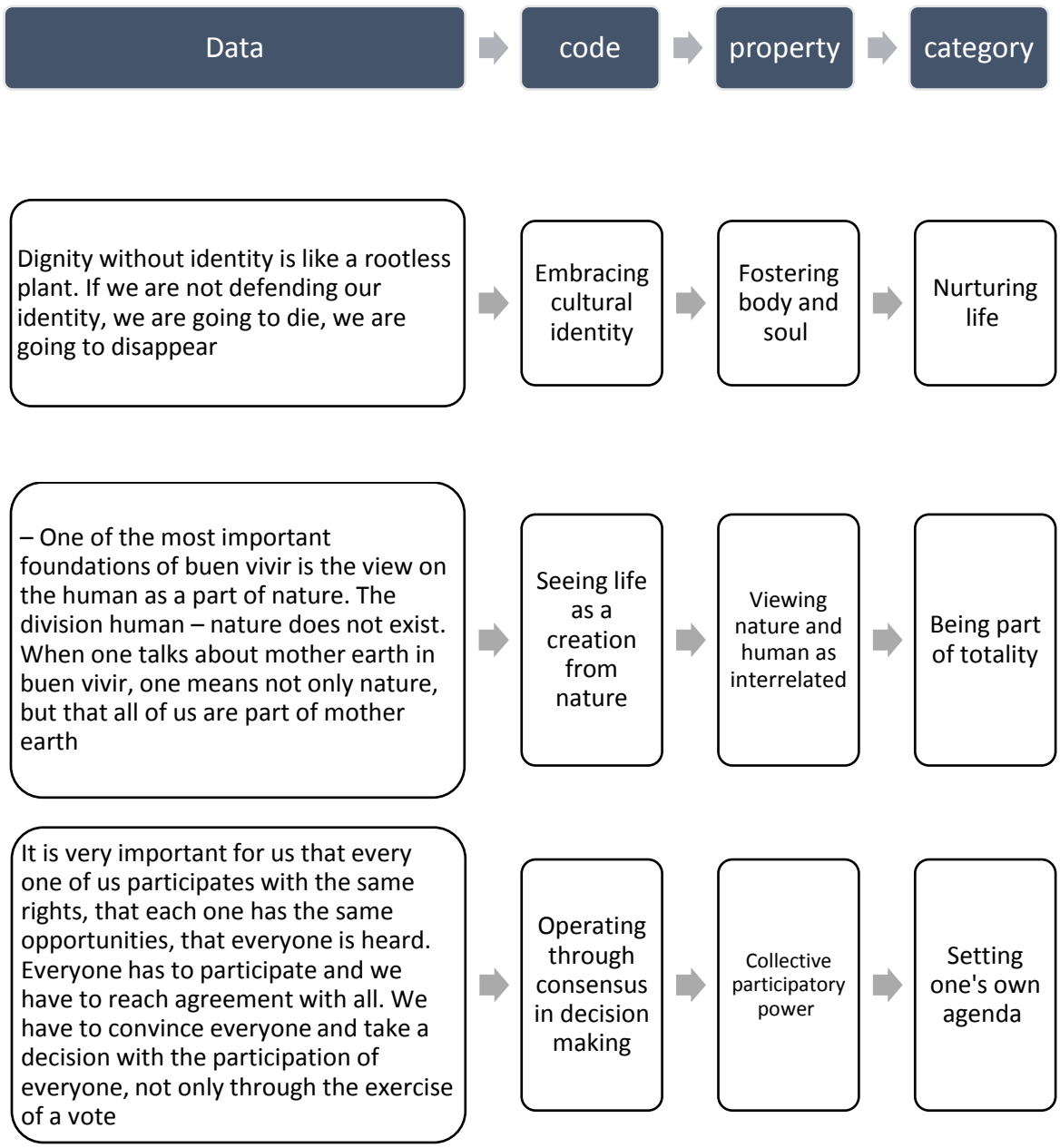
8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1. Example of the coding process



Note: The categories shown in the model consist of several properties and codes grounded in the data.

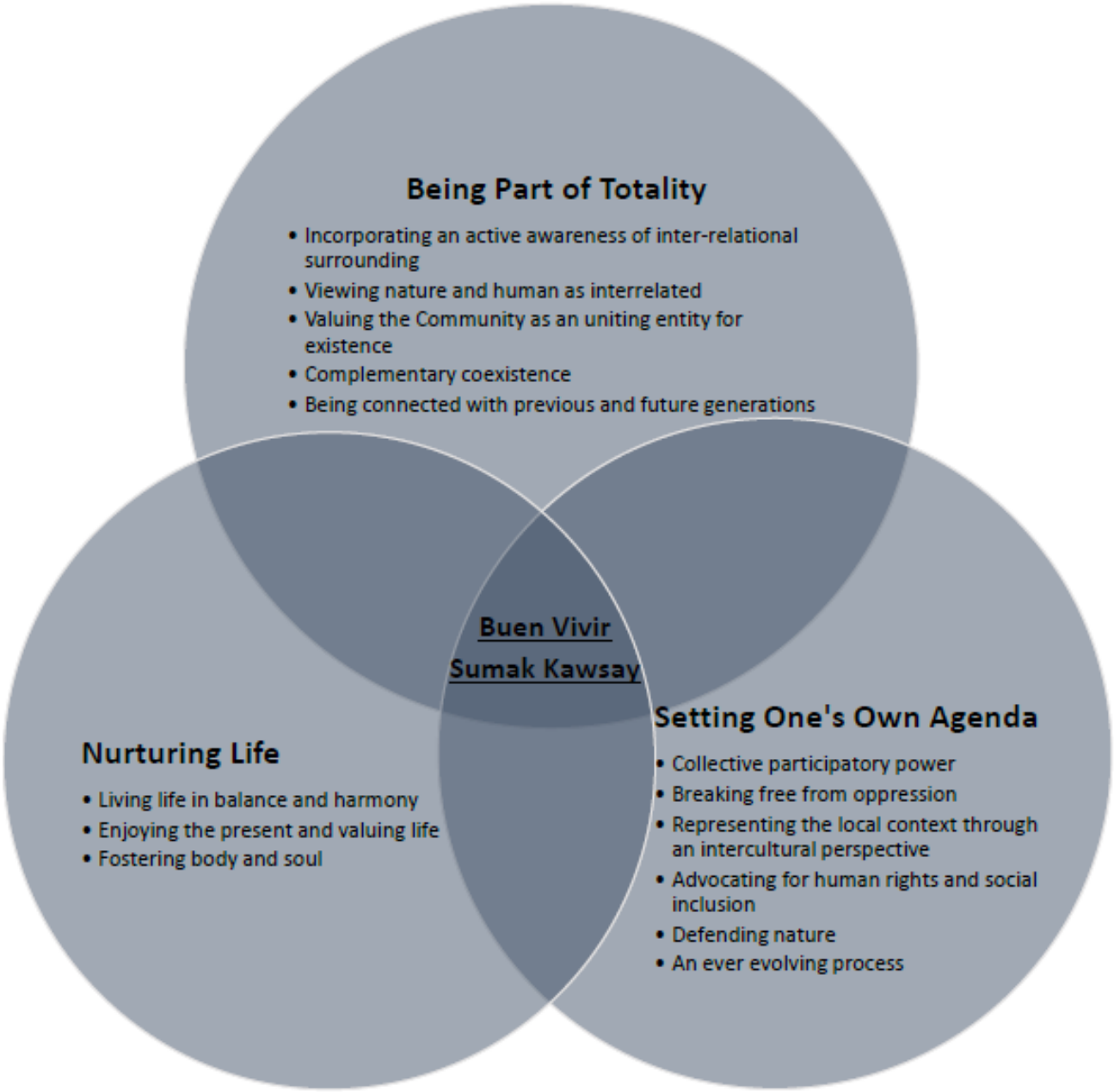
8.2 Appendix 2. Table of collected material

Coding order	Author	Title	Type of document	Publishing year	Language
1	El Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia	Constitutción politica del estado (CPE).	Constitution	2009	Spanish
2	Republic of Ecuador	Asamblea constituyente Ecuador	Constitution	2008	Spanish
3	SENPLADES. Republic of Ecuador	Good living. National plan. 2013-2017. A better world for everyone	Official document	2013	English
4	Ministerio de relaciones exteriores Bolivia	Diplomacia por la vida, 3. Mensajes y documentos sobre el Vivir Bien. 1995-2010. // Diplomacy for Life. Messages and documents on Living Well	Official document	2010	Spanish
5	Merino, R.	An alternative to alternative development	Academic published article	2016	English
6	Gudynas, E	Buen Vivir: Today's tomorrow	Academic published article	2011	English
7	Hermida, C.	Sumak Kawsay Ecuador builds a new health paradigm	Academic published article	2011	English
8	Vanhulst, L. & Beling, A. E.	Buen vivir: Emergent discourse within or beyond sustainable development?	Academic published article	2014	English
9	Chakravorty, S.	Andean Cosmovision and Diplomacy for Life	Academic published article	2016	English
10	Caudillo Félix, G. A.	El Buen Vivir: Un diálogo intercultural // The good life: Intercultural dialogue	Academic published article	2012	Spanish
11	Macas, L.	Sumak Kawsay: La vida en plenitud // Sumak Kawsay: Life in its fullness	Published chapter in a book	2010	Spanish
12	Choquehuanca Céspedes, D.	Hacia la reconstrucción del Vivir Bien // Toward reconstruction of Good Living	Published chapter in a book	2010	Spanish
13	Mercado, J.	Buen Vivir: A New Era of Great Social Change	Media article/website	2015	English
14	The Guardian	Buen vivir: the social philosophy inspiring movements in South America :	Media article/website	2013	English
15	Petersson, S.	Klimatexperten Pablo Solón: Vi måste lära oss att leva	Media article/website	2015	Swedish

16	Fatheuer, T.	Buen Vivir A brief introduction to Latin America's new concepts for the good life and the rights of nature	Published book	2011	English
17	Alonso Gonzalez	An Ontological Turn in the Debate on Buen Vivir – Sumak Kawsay in Ecuador: Ideology, Knowledge, and the Common	Academic published article	2015	English
18	Houtart, F.	El concepto de Sumak kawsay (buen vivir) y su correspondencia con el bien común de la humanidad	Academic published article	2011	Spanish
19	León, I.	Ecuador: la tierra, el Sumak Kawsay y las mujeres	Published book	2010	Spanish
20	Leon , M.	El 'buen vivir': objetivo y camino para otro modelo	Published book	2010	Spanish
21	Acosta, A.	"El «buen vivir» para la construcción de alternativas"	Media article/website	2008	Spanish
22	Larrea/ SENPLADES	Dispute over the meanings of Good Living as a counter-hegemonic process	Official document	2010	Spanish
23	Karlsson, L.	Lev ett gott liv i harmoni, lev efter buen vivir	Media article/website	2014	Swedish
24	Nylander, A.	Ett liv i samklang med naturen	Media article/website	2014	Swedish
25	Nylander, A.	Vi är inte bara framtiden, vi är även nutiden	Media article/website	2014	Swedish

Type of document	**Count**
Constitution	2
Official documents	3
Academic articles	8
Media article/website	7
Published (chapter in a) book	5
count	**25**

8.3 Appendix 3. Findings overview: A conceptual model



The model visualizes The Philosophy's conceptualization of health, constructed upon the categories and properties grounded in this study's data.

8.4 Appendix 4. Popular Science Summary

This study has looked upon how a philosophy called Sumak Kawsay or Buen Vivir explains what health means. The studied philosophy has its origins in the Andes in Latin America. The reason why this study was done came from the writers wish to understand what the philosophy meant, and how it could be used within public health-work. The writer thought that it is important to include different explanations of health, and that this study could bring new ones.

The question that guided this study was "*How is health conceptualized in The Philosophy of Buen Vivir/Sumak kawsay?"*, which was about to be answered by a constructed model.

Twenty-five different types of texts and written documents about The Philosophy were read and analyzed, in order to generate an answer to the question of the study.

The results showed that The Philosophy's view on health could be explained by a model consisting of three different categories that were named: *Nurturing life*, *Being part of totality* and *Setting one's own agenda.* These categories covered several different aspects each, which explained in more detail what each category meant. Thereafter, the author of this study discussed how the discovered health concept could be used when talking about the more general health definition, and also how it could be used when working within the field of public health.

The study's conclusion was that the studied philosophy's view of health has many interesting aspects that are possible to use both when thinking about what health can mean and also when planning and working in the field of public health. For instance, health should be understood as something that needs to be taken care of on all levels surrounding us, since health is created when everything is in balance and harmony. When working with public health, it is therefore suggested to work with communities, and form the work together with community members to match their needs and values. It is important to make sure that all existing features of the community, including nature, are involved and have their rights protected.

Finally, the author suggested that additional studies about The Philosophy should be done, to get an even better understanding of The Philosophy and how it can be used in a good way within public health.