

Since the beginning of 1990s, Latin American countries have experienced neoliberal economic and social reforms which were expected to bring about faster development and greater wealth of societies. However, neoliberal policies have increased inequalities and have caused the loss of control over crucial natural resources, leading to serious social conflicts. Dissatisfaction with the results of the neoliberal policies drove people to massive protests and the so called new social movements. It also provoked a discussion about alternatives to the neoliberal vision of development. The academic search for new 'native' economic-social ideas has contributed to the emergence of the concept of 'Good Life' (*Buen Vivir*), inspired by culture and traditions of the Andean indigenous peoples. It has become a part of the state policy in Ecuador and Bolivia.

Many researchers and politicians readily refer to models of economic management and social change experiences that, in their opinion, can be found among Latin American rural communities. However, there is a lack of studies that would investigate those grassroots solutions in practice, show how they function, and at the same time verify the applicability of the post-development theories to describe those solutions. There are also no studies that would compare those grassroots strategies of change in Latin America with the economic alternatives emerging in Europe. The aim of this project is to fill in this gap through implementing ethnographic research and comparing the studied cases with the European alternatives.

After the recent globally reported disappointment with the neoliberal model of capitalism based on economic growth and with its inability to solve the problems related to social inequalities and to the conflicts around natural resources in Latin America, the following questions arise: 1) Can local strategies of social change based on local narratives be an alternative to the neoliberal development policy? 2) How can they accomplish it? 3) What is the favourable socio-political context for them to emerge? 4) How do Latin American narratives and strategies that reject development relate to other world alternatives, especially to the ones implemented in Europe? In order to search for answers to these questions we intend to study four rural localities in Peru and Bolivia. In the case of Bolivia we deal with a very strong ideology that promotes alternative concepts of change, inspired by indigenous tradition. In Peru there is no such official state ideology but the political system is decentralized and the local administration offers people opportunities to implement their own ideas regarding their future. Our aim is to explain the dimensions of and the conditions for functioning of the grassroots initiatives of social change. We also want to verify to what extent these solutions, rooted in particular places, culture and people's experiences, are comparable with strategies functioning elsewhere, for example in Europe.

The project will result in the publication of research articles and conference presentations. Thanks to the interdisciplinary and collaborative research methodology new theoretical-methodological approaches will be disseminated in Poland and abroad.