

Ethics and economics in light of wealth and vulnerabilities



<https://doi.org/10.56238/interdiinovationscresce-064>

Odirlei Arcangelo Lovo

Federal University of Rondônia, Brazil
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0576-9284>
E-mail: oalovo@gmail.com

Eleonice de Fátima Dal Magro

Universidade Federal de Rondônia, Brazil
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0234-0282>
E-mail: eleonice@unir.br

Gustavo de Souza Costa

Universidade Federal de Rondônia, Brazil
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3214-9462>
E-mail: gustavodesouza.yt@gmail.com

Cleberon Eller Loose

Federal University of Rondônia, Brazil
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0119-4807>
E-mail: cleberonloose@unir.br

Liliane Maria Nery Andrade

Federal University of Rondônia, Brazil
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5049-2280>
E-mail: lilianenery@unir.br

Mateus Dal Magro Oliveira

Federal University of Rondônia and UNINASSAU, Brazil
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0271-6550>
E-mail: mateuscacro@gmail.com

Robinson Francino da Costa

Federal University of Rondônia, Brazil
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3072-6860>
E-mail: robinson.francino@unir.br

ABSTRACT

This article proposes to reflect on human action as a uniqueness that promotes sustainable development in the perspective of participatory and shared progress. In this sense, the question that guides the reflection is: why ethics and economics have distanced themselves in such a way that there is an economy without ethics and an ethics without economics? The research aims to describe human action as the necessary praxis for sustainability. As for the methodology, the research is exploratory and analytical, with a qualitative approach and was carried out through a literature review using the deductive method. It is concluded that it is necessary that the praxis be guided in the perspective of an ethical economy, which gives sustainability to human dignity, for this to occur, it is necessary to overcome the dichotomy and the Manichaeism that relativizes the unit of sustainable, participatory, shared and integral development. Income distribution helps to mitigate hunger and abandonment scenarios, however, it is necessary to adopt subsidiarity and solidarity processes, oriented to the formation of the common good, in order to mitigate vulnerability scenarios.

Keywords: Sustainability, Economy, Ethic, Economics, Sociability.

1 INTRODUCTION

Fostering the discussion about human action as a source of economy and ethics, reflecting on the dichotomy of the aspects that involve ethics and economics is necessary in order to understand the human person himself, his attitudes and the praxis that presents himself as a form of survival. The human being is invited to a profound reflection on how to live! And why live the way we do! Reflections of this nature cannot be made abstract to the way in which the human sciences develop.



Economics has been defined in various ways throughout its maturation process as a social science, but on almost all of these occasions it has been approached as a branch of knowledge that studies the way in which humans manage the *limited* and scarce resources available to them for the production of goods and merchandise, as well as for logistics for the benefit of *unlimited* human needs. In this scenario, it is necessary to point out that "it is necessary to admit from the outset that moral rights or freedom are not, in fact, concepts to which modern economics pays much attention" (Sen, 1999, p. 87).

Ethics, on the other hand, evaluates human behavior in the face of the ends, values, and principles that condition actions. Ethical thinking is a search for virtue, for the true meaning of the good, beautiful and true, moving towards the construction of collective happiness. In view of this, relevant ethical debates involved around the economic proposals that are or can be adopted in the arduous task of managing these conflicting data – limitation of resources and unlimited human needs – prescribe paths more in tune with the ideals of social justice embodied in the happiness, freedom and fulfillment of all.

To deepen the relationship between economic and ethical issues, it should be noted that economics was studied in the

It was highly influenced by Aristotelian ethical thought and Platonic thought, and therefore carried within it the considerations of the search for virtue as an essential factor for the common good and also aimed to place itself at the service of human happiness. However, under the imperative of modern societies, humanity experiences a distance between ethics and economics in the search for efficiency and accumulation of wealth. It is noteworthy that this is an important period in which the sciences acquire autonomy and specialization among themselves, however, as it has a side effect, ethics is removed from the domains of economic studies.

It is in this path that the economist Amartya Sen (2010) proposes a movement that brings together the search for human well-being, responsibility, economic interests and ethics. In this endeavor, it is emphasized that development should no longer be seen as the mere progress of economic markers, but, before that, it is necessary to promote the expansion of human substantive freedoms, since these are the ends of development.

Approaching the scenario based on economic dichotomies in the light of social achievements and results is justified in the face of the mismatch of human action, which generates the distance that is installed between economic progress and the markers of people's quality of life. Economic opulence and dizzying technological progress in the world must mean the expansion of human freedoms, but hunger and poverty demonstrate that, by themselves, they are not capable of promoting the integral development of humanity, wealth therefore generates vulnerabilities.



According to Wood's (2011) approach, in the face of crisis contexts, capitalism – predatory exploitation – has always been presented as a promise to solve social problems with a view to economic exclusivity, leading humanity to the accumulation of wealth and consequent monetary prosperity, guided by the principles of 'individual freedom and autonomy', under the pact that everyone will enjoy the fruits of the system. However, the 'self-regulating' laws of the market have not proved to be sufficient to solve the problems linked to hunger, malnutrition, misery and finally deaths from structural misthansasia that lead to death due to vulnerabilities. According to the author:

Capitalism, driven by the logic of profit, has no necessary correspondence between productive and quality of human life. A society with the most advanced productive forces, with the capacity to feeding, closing, sheltering, educating, and caring for the health of its population to a degree that is not even the most visionary of utopias would dare to dream, may, in spite of everything, be punished by poverty, decadence, homelessness, illiteracy and even malnutrition diseases. (Wood, 2011, p. 126-127)

On the other hand, predatory exploitation – modern capitalism – results in the wounds and social ills that are embodied in violations of human and fundamental rights, destruction of an ecologically balanced environment and the very subversion of economic values. Costa (2019) emphasizes that, in addition to destruction, the current structure of predatory exploitation has prevented people, institutions, and science itself from manifesting, studying, and applying knowledge and techniques that can recover scenarios degraded by the thirst for power, according to

The 'subject-victim' of this reorganization of the post-industrial and post-slavery world has become an excluded being for what is considered worthy of life, and even in precarious conditions, with rights suppressed, continues being the very foundation of support of this exploitative model, selling a large part of its life to the organizations that make history by becoming centennial, rich and multinational with the endorsement of the State (Costa, 2019, p. 124).

It becomes imperative that ethics was not considered in economic studies after Adam Smith (Cougo, 2016; Capita, 2021), since the beginning of the third decade of the twenty-first century, the consensuses linked to sustainable development, justice, and social well-being are ignored or partially applied in the conceptions of national economic development, since spending time, resources, and personnel to conform productive practices to ethical consensuses represent a relevant burden for private interests that constitute competitive operations.

Let us remember that John Paul II (2004, no. 546) advocates that human beings do not live two parallel lives "for a long time."

On the one hand, the so-called 'spiritual' life, with its values and demands, and, on the other, the so-called 'secular' life, that is, the life of the family, of work, of social relations, of political commitment and of culture", however, in the face of economic asymmetries, inequalities in relation to income and irreparable impacts on the environment, it is possible to affirm that there is a relevant



distance between what is prescribed by economic values and that which is actually accomplished. For Francisco (2015, n° 95) "The environment is a collective good, the heritage of all humanity and the responsibility of all. Whoever owns a part is only to administer it for the benefit of all."

In the light of '*parallel lives*', the term dichotomy is recalled to observe that, "It is not enough to understand that the world's poor need globalization as much as the rich; It's also important to make sure they actually get what they need. This may require extensive institutional reform, even when advocating globalization" (SEN, 2010, p. 24)

In this context, we dare to reflect on life and the experience that brings us closer and closer to themes of economics and ethics, not as antagonistic dimensions, on the contrary, by the need to understand the uniqueness that involves values, principles, economics and other dimensions that dialogue with praxis so that one can overcome "the *parallel lives*" to which people are inclined to live, so the question that remains is: why have ethics and economics become so far apart? That we create an ethic without economics and an economy without ethics?

2 METHODOLOGY

The method used to guide this research is the deductive one, which comprises the rationalization of ideas in an interpretative sense using deduction, which is the reasoning that starts from the general to the particular, as explained by Chizzotti (2017). As for the nature, the research is classified as applied; as for the objectives, exploratory; As for the method of approach, qualitative and as for the procedures, it is a bibliographic research, elaborated from published material on the subject. It can be said that this category of research consists of a literature review or bibliographic and documentary survey (Gil, 2017).

Thus, given the basic nature adopted, bibliographies and documents explored by the authors were used to support the critical narrative that is the product of this study. The development of the research is based on the dialectical approach, reflecting realities in perspectives to the contents of a given social context, the qualitative answers demonstrate concepts about a complex and comprehensive problem. The research aims to answer the question that justifies and guides this study, which is: why have ethics and economics become so far apart that we have created an ethics without economics and an economy without ethics?

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Human action is erected through a set that involves needs, possibilities and subsidies, in this light sets of moral values are elucidated with which praxis is predisposed, definitively encompassing reason, ethics, economy, parenting and sociability as forms of social organization. The different



socioeconomic models and structuring that human beings propose to live in society say a lot about praxis – the theoretical wisdom that feeds people's actions.

Overcoming the dichotomous aspects, promoting the uniqueness of the dimensions, means understanding the relations that are intrinsically present, overcoming the dichotomous perceptions is necessary so that one can think about the praxis of economics in all its ethical extension. Here it is salient to state that the economic system cannot annul the economy of the person, thus, an economic system must, due to its reason for existing, promote human economy in an ethical, sustainable and global environment. Thus, ethics as a systematic arrangement of rational and objective knowledge about moral human behavior focuses on human action in common and real life, in individual actions, in institutional activities, in political and administrative life, therefore, in the places where it is possible to materialize the established ethical objectives (Vázquez, 1984).

3.1 DISTANCE BETWEEN ETHICS AND ECONOMICS

The knowledge of ethics is usually formulated and systematized from the historical efforts of scholars, researchers, and theorists. However, ethics is only complete when it reaches the places of human coexistence, as it is integrated into the action and administration of reality. There would be no reason to strengthen the theoretical content of ethics if it were not applied to the attitudes of individuals and institutions and, consequently, to the relationships arising from them.

From this perspective and from an anthropological conception, we wish to reflect on the human being administrator, the *homo administrator*. It is clarified that "societies are not mere historical accidents, behind them are conditions of life and existence superior to those found in a state of nature" (Lovo et al, 2021, p.02), as there is an underlying purpose of the social order and the social systems that integrate it, which is the pursuit of human happiness conditioned by virtues. Along these lines, ethics, along with other social sciences, works as compasses to point out the ideal ways to achieve the ends of human coexistence.

However, ethics and economics have not always walked together throughout history, on the contrary, a considerable part of the time this relationship has been one of antagonism, since exploitation, in order to be predatory, needs to be opposed to ethical experience, thus arriving at the allegation of incompatibility or denial of ethics. For a better understanding of the theme, it is necessary to look at this relationship of mismatch between ethical reflections and analyses and economic issues.

Until the eighteenth century, economics, as structured knowledge, was studied in the fields of Moral Philosophy and theological studies (Kamphorst & Zambam, 2014; Vaz, 2000) alongside contents such as Politics, Natural Jurisprudence and Ethics. According to Vaz (2000), in this period the economy was focused on the teachings of using and conserving for economic purposes, but at the same



time it was highly influenced by the conceptions of Aristotelian ethics, while it aimed at the development of virtues that are indispensable for society.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they corroborated this order of reflection since the conceptions of natural law in force at the time influenced all branches of knowledge, especially the moral sciences, so disciplines such as Economics and Politics were strongly conditioned by *jusnaturalism*¹, a set of intersubjective norms inherent to the human condition, with a strictly ethical content. which differed from the norms imposed by the State. Added to this is the fact that the human desire and inclination to live in society is a fundamental law of natural law and is also the basis and foundation of civil society. Thus, in this simultaneously Aristotelian and naturalist view, the economy and commerce perform the social function of promoting and reinforcing social bonds in order to multiply the benefits for society (Vaz, 2000).

In this sense, the pursuit of wealth, solely for wealth's sake, was seen as immoral, since economics is the discipline by which one is taught to manage and govern resources prudently. For Lovo (2021, p. 13), "it is not what one has, but how many live well with what one has, without others having lived, live or will live badly.", from this it is possible to extract that immorality does not rest on wealth, what really matters is the attitude one can have towards money and material goods and this attitude starts to consider that goods are indifferent and only The uses we make of them can be classified as good or bad. From this perspective, the desires for accumulation could be put at the service of the common good (Vaz, 2000).

Cougo (2016) reinforces that after Adam Smith, the economic sciences sought to move away from ethical themes in their analyses, aiming to construct morally neutral and, as far as possible, purely descriptive theories. This time, according to the author, the economist when studying economic phenomena should not be concerned with the well-being of society from a qualitative point of view, and it is the function of economics only to find the best means to achieve economic and financial ends.

However, in this stage of modernization of mercantile society, economic-legal institutes emerge that result from the supplanting of the feudal economic model, which in turn remain relevant since they are timeless. In the sphere of private relations, there is the strengthening of individual will and the power to contract, necessary elements for the idea of autonomy, which in this phase of modernity is based on the precepts of legality.

In this sense, no one could be compelled to do or refrain from doing anything except as a result of the Law, as established in article 5, item II, of the Federal Constitution (BRASIL, 1988). In this context of economic ferment and expansion of markets, private contracts have come to have the important function of providing business with greater predictability and legal certainty, and it is

¹ ius naturale



possible, as a result, for the parties to coercively request the services agreed upon under the aegis of the principle and legal formula *pacta sunt servanda*.

It is also relevant to consider that after the liberal revolutions, especially after the French Revolution (1789), the process of positivization of modern law is accentuated and continues to define the modus of action of contemporary law. In this scenario, it is possible to point out that the person stops observing, analyzing and deciding – managing his own environment – to obey the Law, if he arrives at the maxim that what is not forbidden by the Law can do.

The development of the market itself was possible due to the phenomenon of codification of civil laws that brought together the rights and duties of citizens in their private relations, since the former requires economic and legal security³ and these, in turn, are achieved by the process of positivization, so that the State becomes responsible for the solution of social conflicts and those that have not been resolved. privately by the private individuals themselves.

However, along with progress in various fields of knowledge, especially productive technological advancement, modernity created paths in which ethics was a matter to be dealt with only in the individual conscience – from this follows an ethics without economy – because the nascent sciences did not admit methods that were not capable of being reproduced anywhere and that had the same results. It should be noted that ethics escapes these requirements.

Production and the market are turned to the factors of optimization and maximization of individual profits, as a requirement of the capitalist model, which requires the economy to constantly improve technique – the origin and source of technicism. The ethical unconcerns underlying modernization have also left as a legacy economic inequalities, class contradictions, human and environmental exploitations. The antagonistic paths of ethics and economics have made human experience difficult, promoting 'islands' of wealth as a result of exploitation, vulnerabilization and misthanasia that settles in 'non-isolated' environments. For Costa (2019, p. 126), "contrary to any justification, one can dare to say that the economy is capable of choosing those who eat among those who do not. Those who will live longer and better than those who will die earlier in worse living conditions."

Thus, after acknowledging the role that the predatory economy has imposed on the modernization of knowledge and sciences, it is imperative to recognize that "abuses are immediately felt as distortions of the original idea of equality" (Bittar, 2019, p.206). For the author, this is seen as a pillar of the democratic models inherited from the liberal revolutions. Subsequently, industrialization, the globalization of trade, and the desire for gain were decisive in strengthening the idea that the market

² From Latin: pacts must be observed, fulfilled.

³ Bittar, Eduardo C.B. Introduction to the Study of Law: humanism, democracy and justice. (2019, p. 197)



under the influence of capitalism would be sufficient to bring society and its members to a permanent condition of prosperity.

Thus, an awareness is built that although the reality in which one lives does not have optimal living conditions, it is enough to keep going, working hard, that the effort will be rewarded in the future and/or even an internalization of guilt in case of not achieving 'financial success' as a consequence of failures or little commitment. However, it must be emphasized that in this ideological arrangement there is a mistake that has become evident over the last few decades: there is no intrinsic ethics in an economic model that presupposes the radicalization of self-interest to the detriment of the real individual capacities to satisfy oneself.

As a result of the antagonism of ethics and economic issues, the economy began to be based on ideals of efficiency, exploitation, pragmatism, development of countries' Gross Domestic Product, development of various competitiveness strategies, and expansion of the need to gain and accumulate wealth (Kamphorst & Zambam, 2014).

Furthermore, it can be grasped that the central element of the discourse of the capitalist project brings together perceptions that "the face of power does not always hold the beauty of a group work, because, although the plantation is collective, the harvest is almost always individual, when referring to the logic of work and capitalism" (Costa, 2019, p. 121). From the perspective of those who exploit, inequality has become naturalized by the economic system, culminating even in the feeling of guilt of the exploited themselves when they are unable to respond to productive demands.

The centralization of power in capital – submission to productivism – and the possibility of infinite accumulation of wealth has made individualism become a method of functioning of economic activities, and has become the very *raison d'être* of the human way, thus, the ethics that in the past delineated the limits of these activities is secondary, and remains. at most, at the level of formal declarations without a relevant materialization.

However, the catastrophic events of the twentieth century, as well as the political, ethical, philosophical, social and legal discussions resulting from such tensions, promoted a re-examination of the purposes of the sciences and of human reason. It is after the breakdown of expectations in the face of science and the consequent perception that the technique far from ethical values can be counterproductive that the debates on human rights and the need to put ethical content back in a prominent place are inaugurated.

That said, it should be noted that the various facets of ethics have pretensions to guide human actions towards common satisfaction and raise, at some level, the condition of solidarity and fraternal agent as a means and end for a social economy, in the perspective of the human person being the protagonist of an economy, sociability and subsidiarity that elevate the human being to develop in a sustainable way.



3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ETHICS

It is possible to intuit that for the philosophical doctrines represented by Plato and Aristotle, happiness occupies a central place in their ethical discussions. For the former, the supreme good (happiness) was conquered when the individual incorporates in himself practices of virtuous actions, and through the practice of virtues the wise human being rises from the good he practices to the supreme good. For the second, Aristotle, the purpose of human life was the pursuit of happiness through ethics. Aristotle (1979, p. 71) points out that "by the practice of just acts the just man is generated, and by the practice of temperate acts; the temperate man; Without this practice, no one would even have the possibility of becoming good," thus presenting a perspective of what he considers ethical to be a set of actions that leads man to the sense of justice that makes him good.

Aristotelian ethics has as its starting point a teleological approach, in which everything that exists tends towards an end and the end of all human actions is the sovereign good. For the human being, this supreme good is happiness, an end in itself through which nothing else is sought, on the contrary, the other sciences move towards this common place, because the supreme good, "*happiness*", is "*for its own sake*" and "*for its own sake*", the *telos*. In this sense, for the author, the individual has in himself the potentiality to accomplish good and reach the *telos* of human existence. It is through the cultivation of good habits that the morality necessary for happiness and the fulfillment of society in virtues is built (Kamphorst & Zambam, 2014).

For this very reason, on the economic level, actions should not be detached from the pursuit of general happiness and conceptions of virtue. The ideals of virtue are achieved through an education directed to the being in its essence, so that it learns to find the path of balance that promotes the notion of human family. It is suggested, therefore, to think of the human being as a responsible administrator, in general it is to think about the anthropological meaning of the human being and to describe him as *homo administer*.

It is intended that individual, egocentric interests can be shifted in the direction of universal and social interests so that the median is reached and the point of equilibrium is established. In this way, human beings cannot, by virtue of their own and/or parental benefits, compromise the environment in which they live. Finally, the virtues given by nature are attained by exercise and habit, human nature is, by essence, endowed with the potentialities and capacities that need to be properly conceptualized and taught so that each person can perform virtuous and perfect attitudes with practice, forming the praxis necessary to administer the common home, so that "Rational choice has to demand something at least with respect to the correspondence between what one tries to obtain and how one seeks to obtain it" (Sen, 1999, p. 29).

On the other hand, for Immanuel Kant, ethical understanding rests on the sense of duty and of acting through imperatives provided by the reason to act morally. The individual endowed with reason



exercises his autonomy to the extent that he finds in himself the praxis of morality and not by heteronomic determinations⁴, so that our ability to think and reason "transforms us into something more than mere creatures with appetites" (Sandel, 2019, p. 140). The author also asserts that rational beings are expected to be educated and to educate themselves in the search for an ethics that raises the dynamic link between responsibility and authority.

For Kant, humans should not be treated as mere instruments for achieving individual satisfactions or be seen as mere means that perform utilities. On the contrary, humans are worthy of themselves and are endowed with absolute importance. Therefore, a society will be morally fulfilled to the extent that its structures and institutions serve the universal criteria of human dignity, and this dignity is the responsibility of homo administer. Francis (2020, no. 22) elucidates that "When the dignity of man is respected and his rights are recognized and guaranteed, creativity and audacity also flourish, and the human person can explain his or her many initiatives in favor of the common good."

Going through these philosophical views, although in a very synthetic way, it is evident that the usefulness of ethics goes beyond the instrumental function of evaluating human behaviors, since it also exercises the function of conditioning the acts of life for the pursuit of happiness, fulfillment and social well-being. According to Kamphorst & Zambam (2014), human action, conditioned by ethics, supports fundamental aspects of human life such as virtue and duty.

We live in a world of unprecedented opulence, and yet this same world is crisscrossed by abysmal deprivations and inequalities that lead us to conclude that economic and social crises are also motivated by ethical crises. In societies marked by social inequality, ethical weakness serves to make the degradation of people's quality of life even more acute, in this regard it is ponderable that "Countless forms of injustice persist in the world today, fueled by reductive anthropological visions and by an economic model based on profit, which does not hesitate to exploit, discard and even kill man" (Francis, 2020, no. 22).

It is possible, therefore, to assess that, for a participatory and shared development, it is necessary to advance in the direction of anthropological understanding, that is, to evidence a cosmology that allows immersion in the praxis on which all human life is called to cultivate and guard, that is, to manage its own environment without exploring other environments.

3.3 ASYMMETRIES BETWEEN ETHICS AND ECONOMICS

The technological advancement and accumulation of world wealth in the last 100 years are extraordinary, we live in a world of unprecedented opulence (Sen, 2010). On the contrary, the data on people's lives do not seem to keep up with the dizzying development in the techno-productive sciences,

⁴ Heteronomy is a concept created by Kant to designate the subjection of the individual to the will of others or a collectivity. It is thus opposed to the concept of autonomy where the entity has agency and can express its will freely



in agriculture and in the area of health. In this sense, a relevant contradiction is revealed when the function of the economy, the potential of the planet and daily life marked by poverty are placed on the same plane.

For Sen & Kliksberg (2010), these asymmetries and contradictions have to do with the low priority given to the disadvantaged and this is revealed in political and economic mistakes that throw the poor into the vulnerable group, significantly worsening the situation when health crises, natural disasters. It is notorious that the way of life, the world we have created, has become a disaster for nature, a way where human beings are made to compete with each other, where the other – the neighbor – is someone to take advantage of, and nature is regarded as an inexhaustible source of resources. Ethical conscience can be approached in two generic instances: the first at the individual level, which is manifested in the conscience and action of each person, and the second at the institutional level, which are manifested in universal declarations and treaties, Constitutions, sciences, codes of professional practice and in the Statutes of the various organizations.

Sen (2011) evaluates society in the light of capacities, since it is through people's ability to do things that they have reason to value and that justice and injustice in society are judged. This approach focuses on human life rather than sparse aspects like income, which at best are part of the path to human success. There is, therefore, in this approach "a serious shift from the concentration on the means of life to the real opportunities of life" (SEN, 2011).

In his work *Development as Freedom*, Sen (2010) sought to demonstrate that the main problems that affect humanity in terms of development are not necessarily incomes. He believes that it is more appropriate to see the process of development as an expansion of substantive freedoms, which "directs attention to the ends that make it important, rather than restricting it to a few of the means" (2010. p. 16). Individual incomes and Gross National Product are relevant means that lead to integral human development, but they should not be seen as an end, because the ends of development are human freedom itself.

Francisco (2015, no. 116), in the light of anthropology, emphasizes that "the correct interpretation of the concept of the human being as

The Lord of the Universe is to understand Him in the sense of responsible stewardship." In this sense, Lovo, (2020, p. 205) points out that, "The invitation to the human being to manage Creation, submits him to make decisions in order to unveil good and evil, in each of the situations that impels him to act in Creation" and despite the capacity of the human being to act, he suggests that "there has always been and will be a distance between our ability to diagnose/plan/predict and our ability to do/accomplish/hope; It is, therefore, a developing kingdom, and therefore contingent."

In this order of ideas, the expansion of people's real freedoms is considered the primary and principal end of development. Reflection on the constitutive role and instrumental role. Constitutive



because these freedoms are part of the very essence of development, and instrumental because they are also useful for pursuing the development that one desires.

Human freedoms are classified as ends of our development, despite having an instrumental function, so that improving people's health and education conditions certainly plays an instrumental role in economic growth, however, they must always be seen as constitutive of development, that is, the end itself. Of particular note is family rural production that aims at sustainability for families to remain in the countryside with dignity, producing what is necessary for their subsistence, respecting other forms of life, as highlighted by Leite et. al. (2021), according to which "it is essential that the search for sustainability be established through agroecological transition strategies, since agroecology estimates human life and other forms of life", and biodiversity is its intrinsic condition. The authors also argue that large-scale monocultures are unacceptable because they destroy the natural chains that sustain life itself.

It is noticeable that this approach is constructive for economic ethics by differentiating between means and ends. Economic means have a utility that has a reason to exist only when it is directed towards the ends, which is the recognition of the dignity of human life. In the writings of Sen (2010), public and national institutions should promote the expansion of many other substantive freedoms alongside income, such as individual and political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency of institutions, and social security. Because, according to him, these freedoms are themselves the ends of development and cannot be established through their indirect contributions to other characteristics of development such as the growth of the Gross National Product (GNP), since freedom is intrinsic to the condition of being human.

However, it should be noted that the instrumental function of freedoms in the development process is not dispensable, so that "the effectiveness of freedoms as an instrument lies in the fact that different types of freedoms are interrelated with each other, and one type of freedom can contribute immensely to promoting freedoms of other kinds" (Sen, 2010, p. 10). For, for Sen, these freedoms present a relationship of complementarity: they are empirically linked.

It is interesting to note that this perspective of development is focused on the agent's view, since in contexts where freedoms are guaranteed, people can shape their own destinies and seek happiness in their own way. There is, therefore, an important appreciation of the condition of human freedom and agency, so that people should always be seen as stewards of their own environment. Behind this perspective there is a strong ethical endorsement, insofar as the implicit motivation for capabilities is the overcoming of economic technicality, which can contribute little to the proper use and distribution of economic resources.

It is highlighted that human dignity is duly conditioned by the way we live, in a scenario where wealth is useful in itself and not in the promotion of the common good, solidarity and subsidiarity, it



is observed that human life is despised to give way to the predatory accumulation of possessions and monetary figures. It is as if the desire for possession had to subtract and make vulnerable environments, people, cultures, and families, in order to benefit other environments, people, cultures, and families. It is about building islands of goodness and development at the expense of impoverishment and predatory exploitation of environments, movements such as these make it impossible for human beings to manage their own environment, making them vulnerable and submissive to political power.

The conception underlying development as an expansion of freedoms with a focus on capabilities is the valorization of people's condition as agents and is fundamental to deal with the various forms of deprivation. However, the condition of agent is "inescapably restricted and limited by the social, political, and economic opportunities available to us" (Sen. 2010, p. 10). In other words, even the condition of agent and individual freedom itself require social commitment, since the degree and scope of these freedoms are dependent on social forces.

The humanism reformulated and radicalized by the philosophical discussions of the twentieth century and widely disseminated by international organizations has transformed the theme of the dignity of the human person into a global concern, it has raised a considerable framework of theories and formulations that concern universal and human rights, these theories are still presented in a dichotomous way, it is necessary to overcome the "parallel lives" of economics and ethics.

The conception of parallel lives denounces, to some extent, the pricing of human essentiality, not for its natural fulfillment, but for the subcondition imposed by an ongoing economic project, as addressed by Costa (2019, p. 120), when he states: "as it is predominant, capitalism does not assume ethics as the basis of its actions, but substantiates it in an element of convenience and circumstantial choices, Thus, it becomes a market ethic even if to the detriment of the human condition." In other words, according to his perception, the human condition travels a path on the margins of social dignity and yet driving (consciously or unconsciously) the complex functioning of this project.

In fact, it is observed that an environment that is capable of generating islands of goodness, wealth and blessings, has its counterpoint in the non-isolated environment, and it is necessary to reformulate the way we live and this intrinsically passes through the way we think about life, the way we think about individual and financial achievements – the economy and ethics. To overcome enrichment due to impoverishment is truly to break with the ethical and philosophical concepts that predict how we should live in society. At the institutional level of declarations, rights and legal norms, there is a universal consensus on the intrinsic value of the human person, which means that the human being has already overcome the phases in which he sought to justify the universal ethics of human rights, thus moving on to the challenge of making it effective.

The historical character of human rights attributes to the debates, principles and values that are indispensable for a given historical moment, in such a way that freedom, autonomy, otherness,



development, identity, responsibility and social justice are issues frequently addressed in the national and international scenario, which is linked to the need for assistance and subsidiarity, that is, the distribution of income and guarantee of minimum conditions of existence for vulnerable people. by predatory exploitation, so that they can develop their capabilities.

The conception of justice, according to Sen (2010), escapes the formulation of a transcendent institutional justice model, because he believes that before that it is more important that it meets real human needs. Lovo (2020, p. 212) corroborates by stating that "Work, when disassociated from the praxis of family life and experience, ends up leaving the human in need of relationship, and consequently develops egolatry, nationalism, and ends in a hostile individualism", so that in order to speak of an authentic and real development of human life, it is necessary.

In the same vein, Sen (2010, p. 16 – 17) states: "That the main sources of deprivation of liberty be removed: poverty and tyranny, lack of economic opportunities and systematic social destitution, neglect of public services, and intolerance and excessive interference by repressive states." Sharing this precept, Costa (2019) points out that the problem is not necessarily in the economic development of a nation or a people, but rather in the inability of the capitalist project to reverse this 'supposed development' in conditions of social well-being and enhance the experiences of human life.

It is necessary to move away from the idealism that economic development is enough to bring about improvements and equity in human life, leaving aside other socially relevant aspects such as the indices of inequality, poverty, decent work, education and a sense of belonging to the human family. According to economist Sonia Rocha (2019), democratic and republican principles contained in the 1988 Federal Constitution determine that social assistance should be institutionally recognized as a social right, as opposed to what used to happen, in which welfare was often the responsibility of philanthropic institutions.

National economic growth has restricted capacities to promote universal social well-being, it is dependent on conjunctural factors such as the expansion of access to goods and fundamental rights, as well as improvements in the dynamics of income distribution and redistribution, as an economically developed country will not necessarily be a humanly developed country (Rocha, 2019). In this sense, when a nation structures itself in such a way as to take advantage of economic development to develop people's capabilities, it will result in people who are able to manage their environments and not people who are eternally dependent, this is the basic difference between welfare and subsidiarity.

The transfer of income enters as a praxis of an ethical, cordial and solidary awareness that individuals need a minimum so that they can be seen as subjects and exercise the freedom that is proper to them, at the same time that conditions are created so that people can carry out their citizen praxis. This also implies the minimum for you to be able to see the possibilities, because people's freedom, here also considered the freedom that income – goods, rights, obligations and sense of belonging –



promotes, is a constitutive part of the idea of development theorized by Sen (2010) and adopted in this article. According to this view, civil, political and social liberties, despite having an instrumental function of promoting economic development, have such importance in themselves that they should be valued even if they were not capable of interfering in the economic growth of a country, since they are integral parts of the broad and inclusive concept of development.

For Sen (2010), the market, as a place of exchange and performance of individual autonomy, is not, by itself, the cause of inequalities, injustices and abuses with the environment, it comes to occupy this position when the economy and the accumulation of wealth become the objective of people, institutions and nations. Sen (2010, p. 20) further points out that "The contribution of the market mechanism to economic growth is obviously important, but it comes after the recognition of the direct importance of freedom of exchange – of words, goods, gifts". According to this approach, it is insufficient for human value to be recognized only by the declarations of nation states, while politics remains tied to the interests of the unethical market, thus creating more contradiction in which ethics would be supported by the state while the market would continue to pursue economic ends uncommitted to humanity.

Next, the author describes this relationship as pathological, because, according to him, the economic system overlaps with the political system, even affecting democratic relations by removing ethics from its decisions at the same time that there is the abduction of its institutions for the pursuit of private interest. For Sen (1999, p. 46), "The typical propositions of modern welfare economics depend on combining self-interested behavior, on the one hand, and judging social achievement according to some utility-based criterion, on the other."

Political institutions cannot be expected to be subject to the interests of the individualistic economy and this relationship to result in the development of capacities and freedoms. Human needs are urgent and cannot be expected to be spontaneously met without the exercise of the social function of the State and its positive policies to overcome the deprivation of freedoms.

Thus, for Kamphorst & Zambam (2014), development as the expansion of capacities is a way of demonstrating that a guide engendered by ethics can feed significant changes in the relations between citizens and societies with the market, in an ascending process of reducing inequalities and consequently in the construction of an environment conducive to the experience of human liberation.

4 FINAL THOUGHTS

Human freedom is not attained on the basis of the wealth one has. This freedom is not the fruit of human action, even though it is profoundly affected by human action, whereas freedom, as well as dignity, are realized as people realize themselves in a social way, since the human being is a social being by nature. The socioeconomic phenomenon caused by the spread of poverty and the



concentration of wealth ends up intensifying human suffering to the extent that it narrows the possibilities of weaving policies that ensure the construction of their dignity and access to social welfare.

Capitalism provokes an asymmetry between living experiences to the extent that, at one pole of the relationship, wealth is concentrated, at the other, poverty in such an antagonistic way that ethics occupies a secondary plane in the perceptions of life. Supposedly, life becomes less valuable due to the severe and outdated socioeconomic relationship, since the poor are deprived/limited of essential rights to health, safety, education or housing.

In the analytical perspective, it is assessed that capitalism, as a rule, does not promote dialogue with ethics, given that occupying the same social arrangements in different countries, the dichotomy and conflict (capitalism x ethics) is persistent. This prospectus presents themes that should be observed in future research, because the example of Brazil, which, among the richest countries in the world, has a population of hungry people and people constantly included in the food insecurity group, as stated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in a survey published in 2021⁵.

Still as future research, it is pointed out that, in view of the reflection carried out here, it is highlighted that ethics is required of the poor not to steal, not to be absent from work, as well as a disciplinary subservience in labor relations, as a matter of monitoring and punishing in Foucault⁶. Without the same disposition on ethics to guarantee dignity to the person in their work, mitigation of housing precariousness, food security. Therefore, one can infer the construction of a pseudo-ethics for the convenience of the capitalist project, which contradicts any perspective on a social and humanitarian ethic.

⁵ Search available at <https://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/fr/c/1392789/>

⁶ For a deeper knowledge, reference is made to the complete work *Vigil and Punish: Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault. Editora Vozes; 42nd edition (1 January 2014).



REFERENCES

- Aristóteles. (1979). *Metafísica: livro 1 e livro 2; Ética a Nicômaco; Poética*. Seleção de textos de José Américo Motta Pessanha. Tradução de Vincenzo Cocco et al. Abril Cultural.
- Bittar, E. C. B. (2019). *Introdução ao estudo do direito: Humanismo, democracia e justiça*. (2 ed.). Saraiva.
- Capita, F. L. (2021). *A Decadência Da Relação Ética-Economia Como Fundamento Da Crise Econômica E Social Em Angola*. Revista Científica Multidisciplinar Núcleo do Conhecimento. Ano 06, Ed. 03, 10, 100-22. ISSN: 2448-0959. <https://www.nucleodoconhecimento.com.br/administracao/eticaeconomia>
- Chizzotti, A. (2017). *Pesquisa em ciências humanas e sociais*. (12. ed.). Cortez.
- Costa, R. F. (2019). *A ética na perspectiva da teoria das representações sociais e a filosofia da libertação*. Fragmentos de Cultura, Goiânia, 29(1), 120-134. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18224/frag.v29i1.6595>
- Cougo, F. F.. (2016). *O enfoque das capacidades em Amartya Sen*. Revista Enciclopédia de Filosofia, Pelotas, 5, 150-177. <https://periodicos.ufpel.edu.br/ojs2/index.php/Enciclopedia/article/view/9349>.
- Francisco. *Fratelli tutti*. (2020) Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/pt/encyclicals/documents/papafrancesco_20201003_encyclica-fratelli-tutti.html.
- Francisco. (2015). *Laudato Si'*. Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/pt/encyclicals/documents/papafrancesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si.html.
- Gil, A. C. (2017). *Como Elaborar Projetos de Pesquisa*. (6. ed.). Atlas.
- João P. II. (2004). *Compêndio da Doutrina Social da Igreja*. Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_po.html.
- Kamphorst, M. A.; Zambam, N. J. (2014). *Ética e Economia: reflexões a partir de Amartya Sen*. Clareira: Revista de Filosofia da Região Amazônica, v. 1, n. 2, p. 90-109. <https://scholar.archive.org/work/huv3uiod2nbyhemv1bbviyerlm/access/wayback/http://www.revistaclareira.com.br:80/index.php/clareira/article/download/29/22>.
- Leite, E. S., Santos, A. C. M., Freitas, C. O., Loose, C. E., & Piacentini, M. T. S. (2021). *Geração de Renda com Sustentabilidade para Permanência da Propriedade Rural Familiar: uma proposta agroecológica*. International Journal of Development Research, 11(6), 48008-48013. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.22121.06.2021>.
- Lovo, Odirlei Arcangelo. (2021). *Administrar o reino ou a torre de Babel*. RECIMA21 - Revista Científica Multidisciplinar - ISSN 2675-6218, [S. l.], 2(4), e24268. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47820/recima21.v2i4.268>.



Lovo, Odirlei Arcangelo. (2020). *Potência da razão e as limitações do ato humano: ciência é esponsalidade com o Criador*. Numen: revista de estudos e pesquisa da religião, Juiz de Fora, 23(2), 202-215. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34019/2236-6296.2020.v23.30874>.

Lovo, Odirlei Arcangelo; Costa, Gustavo de Souza; Magro, Eleonice. de Fátima. Dal; Belete, Nicolás Alessandro de Souza. (2021). *Razão e ética: práxis e governança global*. Research, Society and Development, [S. l.], 10(16), e298101623817, 2021. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33448/rsd-v10i16.23817>.

Rocha, Sonia. (2019). *Transferência de Renda no Brasil: o fim da pobreza?*. Alta Books.

Sandel, Michael J. (2019). *Justiça: o que é fazer a coisa certa*. 27. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira. Tradução: Heloísa Matias e Maria Alice Máximo Sen, Amartya. (1999). *Sobre ética e economia*. (L. T. Motta, Trad.), Companhia das Letras.

Sen, Amartya & Klisberg, Bernardo. (2010). *As pessoas em primeiro lugar: A ética do desenvolvimento e os problemas do mundo globalizado*. (B. Ajzenberg, & C. L. Silva, Trads.), Companhia das Letras.

Sen, Amartya. (2011). *A ideia de justiça*. Companhia das Letras.

Sen, Amartya. (2010). *Desenvolvimento com liberdade*. Companhia das Letras. Tradução: Laura Teixeira Motta.

Vaz, Francisco António Lourenço. (2000). *Instrução e economia: as ideias económicas no discurso da ilustração portuguesa (1746-1820)*. 616 f. Tese (Doutorado) - Curso de História da Cultura Moderna e Contemporânea, Universidade de Évora, Évora. <http://hdl.handle.net/10174/11228>.

Vázquez, A. S. (1984). *Ética. Tradução de João Dell'Anna*. (7. ed.). Civilização Brasileira.

Wood, Ellen Meiksins. (2011). *Democracia contra o Capitalismo: a renovação do materialismo histórico*. Boitempo.