
A BRIEF ESSAY ON *BUEN VIVIR*: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE WAY OF LIFE INSTALLED BY CAPITALISM IN MODERNITY?

BREVE ENSAYO SOBRE BUEN VIVIR: ¿UNA ALTERNATIVA AL MODO DE VIDA INSTALADO POR CAPITALISMO EN LA MODERNIDAD?

DEILTON RIBEIRO BRASIL

Post PhD in Law at Università degli Studi di Messina, Italy. PhD in Law at Gama Filho University-Rio de Janeiro. Scholar at Master and Doctorate's degree in Protection of Fundamental Rights at the University of Itaúna (UIT), Saint Augustine Law Faculty (FASASETE-AFYA), Faculty of Law of Conselheiro Lafaiete (FDCL). Visiting scholar at the University of Caxias do Sul (UCS). Brazil, South America. CV Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/1342540205762285>. Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7268-8009>. Email: deilton.ribeiro@terra.com.br

MARCONI SPÍNOLA NAZARETH

Doctorate student in Protection of Fundamental Rights Program at the University of Itaúna-MG. Master in Law from the Post-Graduate Program in Law at the Faculty of Law of the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Bachelor of Laws from the Faculty of Law, Administrative and Economic Sciences, University of Vale do Rio Doce. Professor at the Institute of Applied Social Sciences of the Advanced Campus of Governador Valadares, Federal University of Juiz de Fora-MG, Brazil, South America. CV: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/1083138311406072>. Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3686-9424>. Email: marconi.s.nazareth@gmail.com



ABSTRACT

Objective: This work presents a brief essay on the ancestral life project of the indigenous people of *Buen Vivir*, exposed by Alberto Acosta in his inspirational and inspiring text entitled: “*Buen Vivir: an opportunity to imagine a new world*”.

Methodology: Thus, within the approach of hypothetical-deductive method using historical method procedures, we propose this brief essay so that, at the end of this text, imagine the possibilities of rescue and (re)cognition of the multiple facets of human dignity from the proposal of *Buen Vivir*, which proposes a more humane, more balanced and more austere project of life.

Results: Our reflections are anchored in elements of K. Marx's Critical Contributions to Political Economy and also in its development in Latin America based on Ruy Mauro Marini's dependency theory. We intend to demonstrate how the capitalist economic model installs an entire culture, including political-legal, and even artistic, that structures society from the logic of infinite accumulation that exploits natural and human resources in the name of an autophagic development model. We also intend to point out how this capitalist discourse on development unfolds in countries called peripheral, especially those in Latin America.

Contributions: In this capitalist way of life, a two-dimensional alienation of the human person is installed: because it occurs when the person is expropriated from their work force and when the person only enters society as a consumer. Therefore, an alternative to the way of life installed by capitalism in modernity.

Keywords: Marxism; Dependency Theory; *Buen Vivir*; Indigenous peoples.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Este trabajo presenta un breve ensayo sobre el proyecto de vida ancestral de los indígenas del *Buen Vivir*, expuesto por Alberto Acosta en su inspirador e inspirador texto titulado: “*Buen Vivir: una oportunidad para imaginar un mundo nuevo*”.

Metodología: Así, dentro del abordaje del método hipotético-deductivo utilizando procedimientos del método histórico, proponemos este breve ensayo para que, al final de este texto, imaginemos las posibilidades de rescate y (re) cognición de las múltiples facetas de la dignidad humana desde la propuesta del *Buen Vivir*, que propone un proyecto de vida más humano, equilibrado y austero.

Resultados: Nuestras reflexiones se basan en elementos de las Contribuciones críticas a la economía política de K. Marx y también en su desarrollo en América



Latina a partir de la teoría de la dependencia de Ruy Mauro Marini. Pretendemos demostrar cómo el modelo económico capitalista instala toda una cultura, incluso político-legal, e incluso artística, que estructura la sociedad desde la lógica de la acumulación infinita que explota los recursos naturales y humanos en nombre de un modelo de desarrollo autofágico. También pretendemos señalar cómo este discurso capitalista sobre el desarrollo se despliega en los países llamados periféricos, especialmente los de América Latina.

Aportes: *En esta forma de vida capitalista se instala una alienación bidimensional de la persona humana: porque se da cuando la persona es expropiada de su fuerza laboral y cuando la persona solo ingresa a la sociedad como consumidor. Por tanto, una alternativa al modo de vida instalado por el capitalismo en la modernidad.*

Palabras clave: *Marxismo; Teoría de la Dependencia; Buen Vivir; Pueblos indígenas.*

1 INTRODUCTION

As a product of the historical process of industrialization of European economies, Political Economy sought to understand the transformations in the social relations of production and in the structure of modern society. Capitalism was understood as a particular socioeconomic formation, historically defined and with its own characteristics.

In its classic form, capitalism would have emerged in England, as a product of the Industrial Revolution, at the end of the 18th century. The Marxist tradition understands that capitalism is a product of big industry. During the nineteenth century, some economies in continental Europe experienced a process of industrialization, which took place later than England.

The transformations that took place within these economies enabled the formation of an industrial working mass, which changed the structure of social classes, income and consumption patterns, as well as all cultural institutions, especially the political-legal ones, highlighted in this essay. It was the process that installed the urban-industrial model.

In an attempt to understand capitalist society, Political Economy represented



the evolution of all previous economic reflection and tradition, which would result in its revolutionary character, being “(...) the nascent political economy an unfolding of the Enlightenment's philosophical reflection, in response to questions posed by the development of production and exchange” (COUTINHO, 1990, p. 10).

Karl Marx broke with the classical tradition and proposed a new approach to understanding socioeconomic phenomena based on typically capitalist social relations of production. According to Lessa and Tonet (2008), Marx conceived the history of men as a broader process than mere biological reproduction.

Dependence Theory, in turn, is understood as a scientific movement, whose maturity occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, of heterogeneous character, whose orientation was to understand the particularity of capitalism in Latin America, by characterizing it as a structure peripheral, since its internal dynamics and its relations with the capitalist center would be defined by the conditions of dependence on the center of capitalist accumulation.

These authors broke with the arguments that related the insufficiencies of dependent capitalism with the lack of capitalism and surpassed the theses of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/ECLAC, by demonstrating the limits of national-developmentalism. Dependency Theory managed to create a consistent theoretical framework, capable of explaining the fundamental determinations of peripheral capitalism, with reference to the Marxist tradition, with regard to the notion of totality and social relations of capitalist production.

Thus, the general objective of this article is to imagine the possibilities of rescue and (re)recognition of the multiple facets of human dignity from the proposal of *Buen Vivir*, which proposes a more humane, more balanced and more austere project of life. Therefore, an alternative to the way of life installed by capitalism in modern, industrial and urban society, which founded the human-nature dichotomy.

This paper presents a brief essay on the ancestral life project of the indigenous people of *Buen Vivir*, exposed by Alberto Acosta in his inspirational and inspiring text entitled “The *Buen Vivir*. an opportunity to imagine a new world”. Our



reflections are anchored in Marxist theory and in its development in Latin America from the emergence of dependency theories. We intend to demonstrate how the capitalist economic model installs an entire culture, including political-legal, and even artistic, that structures society from the logic of infinite accumulation that exploits natural and human resources in the name of an autophagic development model.

We also intend to point out how this capitalist discourse on development unfolds in countries called peripheral, especially those in Latin America. In this capitalist way of life, a two-dimensional alienation of the human person is installed: because it occurs when the person is expropriated from their work force and when the person only enters society as a consumer.

The choice of this theme is justified on the basis of three main aspects: i) understanding the capitalist economic model as a historical phenomenon; ii) (re) know the reality of the so-called peripheral countries within the world capitalist order; iii) read the inspirational and inspiring text by Alberto Acosta entitled “O *Buen Vivir*: an opportunity to imagine a new world” through the lens of Marxist theories.

In this sense, the hypothetical-deductive approach was used, which makes it possible to establish the conceptual premises applied to the chosen theme. The historical methodological procedure was also used to demonstrate the impossibility of conciliation, based on the specific categories of the contributions of criticism to the political economy of K. Marx and the dependency theory of Mauro Ruy Marini, between the capitalist economic model and the *Buen Vivir*.

This work is divided into four parts in addition to this introduction. Secondly, it presents elements of the contributions of the critique to political economy that will serve as a theoretical framework for the article, as well as Ruy Mauro Marini's theory of dependence on a Marxist bias in sequence. Fourthly, a reading will be proposed, based on the theoretical framework mentioned above, of the inspirational and inspiring text by Alberto Acosta entitled: “The *Buen Vivir*: an opportunity to imagine a new world”. And, finally, the final considerations are presented.



2 ELEMENTS OF K. MARX'S CRITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLITICAL ECONOMY

The advance of industrial capital represented the incorporation of new territories into the logic of valorization and reproduction of properly capitalist relations, by breaking with previous forms of production and establishing social relations that are new to it. Historically, such social relations acquire a universal character, but in each country, they would be presented in a unique and particular way.

Arrighi (2006) understood the centrality of the role of the State in this transposition of the old economic regime to the capitalism model in Europe, due to the historical function of public debt and competition between national States. This process would represent the expansion of capital and the political hegemony of industrial elites.

When explaining the nature of the Industrial Revolution, Landes (1998) understood that, in addition to a radical change in the production system, it was a general transformation. This process represented a new balance between the dominant forces, which historically was configured as a multifaceted revolution that reached the structure of the social order.

In this way, man is an "(...) animal with ever-changing and growing needs, aimed at obtaining material comfort and spiritual delight" (COUTINHO, 1990, p. 109), therefore, "(...) all Smith's system of Political Economy – involving production, division of labor, exchange – anchors in a constitutive psychological characteristic of human nature, the search for benefit" (COUTINHO, 1990, p. 111).

According to Lessa and Tonet (2008), Marx's thought is based on the assumption of the existence of a relationship between human existence and work, that is, the transformation of nature into useful goods. Through the historical category of work, man would become an authentic social being (LESSA; TONET, 2008).

Therefore, in Marx, the difference of the human species in relation to other living beings would be through the human mind's capacity to idealize before creating



and “all objectification is a transformation of reality” (LESSA; TONET, 2008, p. 9), in which the construction of the objective world and the constitution of the individual would be processes that would walk together.

In other words, work has a social dimension because it is the cause and result of societal development and evolution, based on the assumption that the product of work generates changes in the historical situation, since “the evolution of the ax (...) cannot never be absolutely controlled by its creator” (LESSA; TONET, 2008, p. 17).

According to Lessa and Tonet (2008, p. 47-48), Marx pointed out that

(...) capitalism, by developing its inherent bourgeois individualism, gave rise to a society in which collective needs are subordinated to the needs of private enrichment, and in which human needs (collective and individual) are subordinated to the complex process of capital accumulation by the bourgeois.

In the Marxist conception, bourgeois individualism would represent a new stage in the development of society and would be the result of this historical process, as “the needs that drove the previous ideas are no longer human needs, but needs that spring from the reproductive dynamics of capital” (LESSA; TONET, 2008, p. 51).

For Paulani (2000), Marx's criticism of the classics is based on the analytical process of naturalization of the social, as “(...) classical economics tends to take as ahistorical and as attributes of human nature a series of behaviors and phenomena that they are only justified and explained in the social context that produced them” (PAULANI, 2000, p. 102).

Bueno (1997) concluded that, in Marx's conception, there would be a clear relationship between the implantation of the capitalist mode of production and the rupture with previous modes of production. The system's objective would be the production of surplus value, given by the exploitation of work, based on a particular work organization, since it would be based on general wages and on the clear separation between production and circulation. For Coutinho (2010), the process of destruction of the feudal division of labor by capitalism constitutes a new form of



sociability,

This social life becomes an inhuman “thingified” object, which can no longer contain any authentic subjectivity; this subjectivity, in turn, disconnected from its concrete objectifications, in which and through which it is constituted and gained content, also becomes an empty fetish. This simultaneous fetishization of subject and object, parallel to the rupture of the immediate ties between individual and community, is the most evident social consequence of the capitalist division of labor in its mature phase (COUTINHO, 2010, p. 37).

For Lessa and Tonet (2008, p. 47), “(...) capitalism has transformed everyday life into a mere struggle for wealth. Individuals started to consider all other individuals as adversaries and society has become the arena in which this struggle takes place”. For, “(...) the essence of the alienation of capitalist society is that it treats what is human as a commodity” (LESSA; TONET, 2008, p. 60).

Marx (1996, p. 246) concluded that the “accumulation of capital is, therefore, multiplication of the proletariat”. With the expansion of income and consumption levels, due to the systemic expansion of capitalism, in its development process, “(...) they do not overcome the relations of dependence and exploitation of the slave, nor do they surpass those of the wage earner” (MARX, 1996, p. 251).

The thesis of capitalist accumulation, in Marx, has as its theoretical consequence the result of two concepts. The first concerns the idea of concentration. This is the process that Marx (1996, p. 257) “[identified as the] expropriation of capitalist by capitalist, transformation of many smaller capitals into few larger capitals”.

The second mentions the idea of centralization, as the result of the expansion of competition, productivity and credit expansion, since “(...) the progress of centralization does not depend in any way on the positive growth of greatness share capital. And especially this differentiates centralization from concentration, which is just another expression for reproduction on a larger scale” (MARX, 1996, p. 258).



3 DEPENDENCY THEORY IN RUY MAURO MARINI

In a sense, it is not possible to speak of a single dependency theory. For Amaral (2012, p. 27), some ideas from dependency theory as a whole are a complement to the theory of imperialism, by inserting the periphery within the analysis of the capitalist system as a whole.

For Amaral (2012), the central ideas of dependency theory are part of a context of criticism of the import substitution process and the US imperialist advance, methodologically opposing the traditional view of underdevelopment, both in its traditional version based on evolutionism, as in the CEPAL definition. Because both do not understand the dialectic expressed in the antagonism and complementarity between development and underdevelopment.

Viewed as a whole, some ideas in common between the different authors can be pointed out: a) underdevelopment as a product of industrial expansion in the center of capitalism; b) the concepts of development and underdevelopment as part of the same process; c) opposition to evolutionism; d) the concept of dependence is not expressed solely in an external element (AMARAL, 2012).

Marini's work as a whole seeks to understand the social relations of peripheral capitalist production, which in Latin America are presented in a particular and specific way, as a result of the process of socioeconomic formation of the region in a dialectical relationship with the historical process of expansion of the capital at the international level.

The central ideas of the Dialectic of Dependence (1973) can be grouped into two parts. In the first, Marini describes dependent Latin American capitalism from the insertion of independent Latin American countries in international capitalism as agro-export nations, within the framework established from the Industrial Revolution and that dominated the world until the crises of the 1870s(?).

In the second one, Marini analyzes these relationships from the development process of the capitalist mode of production at the international level, when it reaches its maturity, that is, the author seeks to understand dependence from the perspective



of imperialism.

The main objective of Marini (1973) was to contribute to the debate about dependency, outlining considerations that revolutionized the approach to dependency. At that specific moment, Latin American Marxism was centered on the criticism of ECLAC thought and national developmentalism, mainly due to the intensification of both contradictions and the class struggle across the continent from the end of the 1950s onwards.

Marini's great contribution was to rescue the essentially Marxist Latin American thought, advancing from the formulation of a Marxist theory of dependency, through the conception of new categories that could explain the relations of production in dependent capitalism within a theoretical framework. and Marxist methodological, which is the outline of his critique of the notion of absence of capitalism (or pre-capitalism) on the continent.

For the Marxist theory of dependency, the unequal relations between dependent nations and hegemonic centers are based on the increased exploitation of labor in the periphery, as a factor that enables the generation of surpluses, as the market tends to favor the central countries in the international exchanges.

For Santos, this is the key to understanding the limitation of domestic markets in dependent countries (AMARAL, 2012) and the elements that determine uneven development. According to Osório (2004), André Gunder Frank, in a vision of totality, views Latin America as essentially capitalist, because its production contributes to the expansion of the capitalist mode of production as a whole.

Because the overexploitation of work, that is, greater exploitation, is a product of unequal relations between countries and it gives dynamics to dependent capitalism, being a need for peripheral accumulation, which gave certain characteristics to peripheral industrialization and separation between production and circulation (AMARAL, 2012).

As the foundation of dependence, overexploitation is a consequence of unequal relationships in the world market (AMARAL, 2012), constituting the only way out for the possibility of accumulation in the periphery, as this is an integral part of



central accumulation, note the centrality of overexploitation to understand the process of systemic capitalist accumulation.

Another important concept to understand the Marxist theory of dependency is the concept of sub-imperialism, also elaborated by Ruy Mauro Marini. For Amaral (2012), sub-imperialism is a policy of integration with imperialism, at the same time as its historical development, as it is a way to compensate for losses in unequal international exchanges and assumes a national industrial development that ensures a minimally autonomous expansionist policy (AMARAL, 2012).

For Martins (2013), the concept of sub imperialism needs to be understood from the political and economic situation of dependent countries, in a situation characterized by exports of both manufactures and capital (an expression of the level of capitalist development these economies reach after its historical processes of industrialization) and for the regional control of raw material sources, cheap labor and markets for the realization of a national production that is not internally demanded due to overexploitation.

In other words, sub-imperialism is the product of the monopolization of the dependent economy and its dynamism is given by overexploitation, and its autonomy is determined by the action of imperialism, where the role of the State acquires centrality in this process.

Marini (1973) understands the socioeconomic formation of Latin America as a constituent part of the dynamics of capital at the international level, determined by the international division of labor/DIT, established after the industrial revolution in Western Europe. The insertion of the continent in the capitalist world market took place through the subordination of these economies to the process of capital accumulation in the central countries (which industrialized during the 19th century), with dependence being a relationship between nations that are politically independent and configures from the DIT impositions. Even if there is continuity, the dependency situation is not the same as the colony situation, due to the character of the international capitalist market, which took shape after the bourgeois revolutions in Western Europe.



In this way, the increase in the exploitation of the worker establishes itself as an element that compensates for the unequal exchanges of the agro-export economies that are inserted in a dependent way in the capitalist market. The inclusion of the concept of overexploitation of labor is, in order to explain the historical character of unequal exchanges between peripheral and central nations, the great advance and overcoming of ECLAC's unequal trade theory by Marini.

From that it results the concept of overexploitation of labor as a new category capable of explaining the particularity of social relations of capitalist production in the periphery, being "(...) a mode of production based exclusively on greater exploitation of the worker and not on the development of their productive capacity" (MARINI, 2005, p. 126).

Based on the intensification of work and the extension of the working day (similar to the concept of labor exploitation as found in Marx), the big news in this category is to understand that the workforce in Latin America is paid below its value, for Consequently, it is denied the minimum conditions for the replacement of that productive force.

The overexploitation of labor introduces a specific character to dependent capitalism, since its accumulation is determined by overexploitation, that is, the capital-labor contradiction taken to its ultimate consequences creates a mode of circulation that is its own, since overexploitation is the essence of dependence (MARINI, 2005).

Agro-export, based on the overexploitation of labor, has historically constituted the dominant sector of Latin American economies, created the conditions in which these formally independent countries are inserted within the international division of labor and determines the specificity of dependent capitalism, because all its other sectors are closely subordinated to agro-exports, and the dynamics of these economies as a whole are determined by the foreign market. Hence the central importance of exports as guarantees for the realization of peripheral production and the possibility of subordinate capitalist accumulation.

First, the bases for a Latin American industry were given by agro-export, in a



subordinate relationship to the latter. Only from the 1930s onwards and due to the intensification of contradictions among the international bourgeoisie itself, there was a tendency for industrial production to be centralized towards the domestic market, in order to achieve an established demand, but not sufficiently supplied (due to the international situation of the after 1929) and founded on the tripod national private capital, state capital and foreign capital.

With the advance of industrialization in Latin America, foreign capital predominated, as a result of a new international division of labor/DIT after World War II and of technical-scientific transformations in central countries. But this predominance only accentuates the dependent character of capital accumulation in Latin American economies, which continues to be based on the overexploitation of labor, now as a compensatory mechanism for the remittances of profits abroad and the remuneration of foreign capital that dominates the national economy.

However, in Marini's work, the category of overexploitation of labor is not only a compensatory mechanism, it is the foundation of dependent capitalism and the element that gives rise to the dynamics of capitalist accumulation in the periphery. Industry in Latin America is based on overexploitation, because it was on the basis created by this that peripheral industry developed. The historical process of development of productive factors on the periphery of capitalism has accentuated the contradiction between the capital-labor relationship, in favor of capital, where its dynamic is determined by overexploitation.

4 THE *BUEN VIVIR*: THE ANCESTRAL LIFE PROJECT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Buen Vivir is the life project of ancestral cultures of those that have maintained their way of life for more than thousands of years, and which nevertheless resisted the emergence of new social models, especially the capitalist



one, maintaining their distinct way of life within a culture community, characterized above all by solidarity, reciprocity and correspondence.

What does *Buen Vivir* mean? In different languages it is a life project. It is recognizing what comes together in human existence and giving it meaning from the most commonplace events. The ancestral way of life of indigenous peoples shows us a simple, sensitive and beautiful way of life. And not so much because of the importance of the number of the indigenous population or its supposed underdevelopment.

The habitual life of indigenous peoples is centered, on the one hand, on the fulfillment of mythical demands and, on the other, on community-based activities. It is a very active way of life that matters daily in meeting the demands of the community, since for them in the universe everything has a meaning and direction: there is in their culture the awareness that we are the evolutionary fruit of nature itself.

If we take the modern way of life, it converts human beings into urban beings, because in a very short period of time, the majority of the world's population will live in cities. It is to say that it happened with the installation of the capitalist economic order and the industrialization process: the urbanization of life, taking human beings away from contact with nature.

However, facing this reality posed by the modern western order implies promoting *Buen Vivir*. For the idea of the good life is not confined to the rural world. This proposal aims to reach cities, as most people live in them. The urbanized world demands its own responses, especially from socially marginalized and exploited human groups.

It is worth stressing that modernity, from the Industrial Revolution onwards, promoted the urban revolution. And that means that we have gone from a rural society to an urban society. In this way, a completely different new model of life is installed, which implies a new way of reproducing life, which confronts the project of good life that has been reproduced for centuries.

So, we have the modern reality that is installed amidst the asphalt and buildings of all kinds. The original way of life of indigenous peoples, which is a



secular way of life that could be exercised for thousands of years in an integration of human being nature, is now threatened by the modern way of life of capitalist, industrial, urban and individualistic.

In modernity there is the emergence of a new civilizational framework centered on the modern European model. This paradigm will present its own life reproduction project. This project was coined by great thinkers who managed to make explicit the bourgeois individualism that opposes the model of community life. In this project, the human-nature dichotomy remains marked.

In turn, nature for native peoples is harmoniously integrated with human existence. Air, water, mountains, plants, animals and human beings are recognized as beings that necessarily shape the world. The human being is an evolutionary fruit of this very nature. So, nature is not an object but a whole within which we live and are a part.

This is the *Pachamama's* conception of the original peoples: nature is its mother. It is not a metaphor but something from the philosophy of life of these peoples because Mother Earth produced human beings and they are fruits of that nature. And if she suffers negative effects, they too will suffer immediately.

Modern man conceives nature as a mechanical, objective reality and not a being in itself. This experience presents itself right at the beginning of modernity. So we have to rescue this origin to understand another kind of life of our indigenous peoples who already experience the *Buen Vivir* in which life in nature integrated with the life of human beings is possible, promoting their survival.

So, modernity installs an individualistic, capitalist and urban logic, in which the exploitation of nature destroys it and destroys human life. Here we have the objectification of reality. Here, *Buen Vivir* stands as an experience and a vision totally distant from reality, considering the totality of life for the understanding of these phenomena.

So, the original cultures with their *Buen Vivir* immediately appear not as an example of folkloric life approaching nature. If they are not for us now the only existing experiences of a way of life that does not call into question the conditions of



the pattern as it is called, the reproduction of the same life only on earth. And the hegemonic model is producing the earth's death.

Because in modernity, but especially in its capitalist economic system, the economy is what most directly affects nature. Because in the process of producing goods, what is produced seems to require the exploitation of natural resources until they are exhausted. It is worth noting that in this infinite accumulation system there is no limit to the exploitation of the environment.

On this belt, the best technology will produce the merchandise with the lowest value, so having the lowest value will have the lowest price. Soon the cheapest merchandise will be the one manufactured with the best technology. This technology began to develop surprisingly during the industrial revolution of the century XVIII, when the fundamental ecological problem begins.

The logic is that capital always has to increase its production using technology that degrades the environment. On the other hand, we have the option of a good life in which traditional peoples use other technologies to harm nature to a minimum, allowing them to live for centuries in this growing rhythm in which production is dominated and subjected to the level of minimal consumption.

In this way, this alternative project of thinking about another civilizational landmark, however completely different, is plausible. A future that presupposes new processes of reproduction of life, especially the consumption of goods, as well as community sharing of technological resources. It is imperative to understand the risks, especially ecological, of the modern western model.

Carrying out this civilizing process, which comes after modernity, implies transforming the whole way of life, especially with regard to the economic-based institutions that determine the political-legal ones. Thus, there will be an opportunity to establish another economic and political organization that is more community and participatory.

In these tunings, we will have the possibility of recovering historically unequal and excluding relationships such as race, ethnicity, color, origin, gender, sexual orientation and all other differences that within the State structured by the capitalist



model ignore the dignity of these people, especially workers and even people living in conditions analogous to slavery.

The indigenous peoples' project of good life points us to another way of life that is much more human, much more balanced and much more austere. For happiness is not measured by the quantity of goods consumed, nor by the development in the model advocated by capital, but by the intensity that subjectivity lives communally allowing each person.

Thus, the *Buen Vivir* project suggests the establishment of a new order: imagining a new order in which the accumulation of wealth is not the main thing, but the main thing is the good life. Walking in the park, taking a walk in the late afternoon, walking hand in hand with the ones you love, walking with your children, being with your children.

Because the capitalist economic order is imposing itself in a perverse way, and as we have already pointed out, the pandemic has already revealed the impacts of capitalism even more ferocious in our daily lives, as we mentioned, labor relations expose the cruelest side of the capitalist model with the increasing exploitation of workers.

The author points out the irreconcilable conflict between good living and the logic of infinite accumulation of the established economic order, which, he warns, is autophagic because it will certainly lead to the consumption of all natural and human resources. Progress, economic development and economic growth always at the expense of the exploitation of natural and human resources.

The pandemic is already marking this logic of exploitation even more. The basic is the idea of alienation that, in the model of a consumer society, it is dual, it is two-dimensional, it occurs when the person is expropriated from their work force and when the person only enters the society as a consumer. The person only exists if he consumes in this model if he is a consumer.

You cannot think or imagine a new world because the structure put in blunts any possibility of disruptive assault. Hence the difficulty in thinking about the ancestral life project of indigenous peoples called by *Buen Vivir*, in which human



beings and nature are not isolated. On the contrary, humanity is an integral part of nature.

This project can only be understood if dissociated from the structure of modern, capitalist and urban society, in order to rescue values that are also ancestral to us, including exposing the contempt of this society in dealing with nature, as well as with human beings in its logic of labor exploitation and infinite accumulation that destroys nature, consuming its resources.

The (re)cognition of human dignity is an undeniable construction of Western history. And we have it as a fundamental guarantee of our legal order, national and international. In addition, it is human dignity that we are dealing with when, based on this logic of *Buen Vivir*, the framework of life is affirmed that, on the one hand, a) rescues identities and, on the other, b) (re)cognize new identities.

After all, the steps of history narrate the advances and setbacks in the struggle to promote human dignity. In short, all of this that constitutes us as human beings, and we can think about how much the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed our social relations, for example, promoting faster progress in the process of precariousness in our work relations.

We can think about how this pandemic promoted an even greater exploitation of workers, especially in peripheral countries. There is a whole reality “given” by an order, which implies an organization and support of life in society. Therefore, an analysis of the economic order presented in this work is crucial for us to understand our reality.

And in this circle of infinite accumulation and overexploitation of labor, the social fabric seems incapable of being torn: points of rupture seem very unlikely. But it is exactly in this apparent remote possibility that the text by Alberto Acosta entitled: “The *Buen Vivir*: an opportunity to imagine a new world” is inscribed.

It is important to note that Brazil, the country with the largest population and economy within the regional bloc, is not included within this Latin American identity, as it reproduces the logic of a hegemonic power figure such as the US. Dependency theory, as we saw above, explains the reasons for this arrangement.



The central point is in the concept of development that reflects on the (re)cognition and guarantee of human dignity within the *Buen Vivir* project. Thus, we started to build alternatives: they can redirect the social structure, readjusting our idea of industrial and consumption economy to a way of life that is more sustainable, egalitarian, fair, free and certainly more human.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This brief essay imagined during the classes of Professor Deilton Ribeiro Brasil aims to promote, based on K. Marx's Contributions to the Critique of Economics and its developments in Ruy Mauro Marini's theory of dependence, a reflection on the possibility of approximation between the *Buen Vivir* of the ancestral indigenous peoples of Latin America with the capitalist economic model.

For this, at first, we saw that Marxism proposes a critical theory to classical Political Economy. Thus, value is a determination that only human work, in its abstract form, that is, wage labor, is capable of producing. Thus, the wealth of capitalist society resides in the exploitation of the labor force through wage labor.

The labor force is the power that put into motion as a commodity, which has use and exchange value, is the only one capable of producing many other commodities and, thus, generating more value. It is a way of organizing social life in capital that, in order to reproduce itself, requires wage labor, and this labor requires capital.

After all, the advance of industrial capital represented the incorporation of new territories into the logic of valorization and reproduction of properly capitalist relations, by breaking with previous forms of production and establishing social relations based on capital and work.

Capitalist social relations deepen forms of alienation. For it is under the aegis of the capitalist economic model that labor and worker expropriations spread: labor



exploitation, domination, violence, alienation, etc., taking on increasingly complex forms.

In these terms, Marx's legacy constitutes a reference to elucidate the foundations of capitalist society and its contemporary trends in the present time, by attributing centrality to work and to man as creator and transformer of his own history.

Next, we present dependency theory as a heterogeneous scientific movement, whose maturity occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, whose orientation was to understand the particularity of capitalism in Latin America, by characterizing it as a peripheral structure., since its internal dynamics and its relations with the capitalist center would be defined by the conditions of dependence on the center of capitalist accumulation.

Dependency Theory managed to create a consistent theoretical framework, capable of explaining the fundamental determinations of peripheral capitalism, with reference to the Marxist tradition, with regard to the notion of totality and social relations of capitalist production.

The central point is to understand how historically the development of certain national economies took place, to the detriment of the constitution of obstacles to the development of others, and how the process of capitalist accumulation of these are controlled by the hegemonic centers.

Marini's category of overexploitation of work is conceptually developed based on Marx's theory of surplus value and capitalist accumulation, in an approach that analyzes the accumulation process within the framework of the totality of the capitalist system at the international level.

In the wake of these theoretical considerations, we took up the *Buen Vivir* project, brilliantly exposed by Alberto Acosta in the text now being worked on. This is because the proposal of the ancestral indigenous peoples breaks fragrantly with the modern way of life of bourgeois individualism, especially with regard to human dignity.

For even though, in the Western world, constitutional charters, as well as international treaties, declare human dignity and guide policies for its promotion.



Within a capitalist society, social relations are constituted, as we have seen and reviewed, in a logic of alienation.

An alienation of the human person that is now installed in a two-dimensional way: because first it happens when the person is expropriated from their work force and then when the person only enters capitalist society as a consumer.

All this logic opposes the *Buen Vivir* project of the good life, as it requires an understanding of the human being as an inseparable part of the world, including nature, a dimension par excellence of its existence, as well as its inexorable belonging to the community that recognizes and affirms its intrinsic dignity.

When it also welcomes, supports and guarantees the (re)cognition and rescue of identity, promoting a way of life in which individual and collective expressions are guided by solidarity, correspondence and reciprocity. A free, fairer and more fraternal life: undoubtedly more human.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ACOSTA, Alberto. *O Buen Vivir: uma oportunidade de imaginar outro mundo*. In: **Um campeão visto de perto: uma análise do modelo de desenvolvimento brasileiro**, editado pela Heinrich Böll Foundation, na Série Democracia, em 2012.

AMARAL, M. S. **Teorias do Imperialismo e a dependência: a atualização necessária ante a financeirização do capitalismo**. Tese de Doutorado FEA-USP. São Paulo, 2012 (mimeo).

ARRIGHI, Giovanni. **O longo século XX**. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto/Unesp, 2006.

BUENO, Newton Paulo. **Um critério de demarcação para a abordagem de economia política**. Pesquisa e Debate, São Paulo, vol. 8, n.1-10, p. 126-148, 1997.

COUTINHO, Mauricio Chalfin. **Lições de economia política clássica**. Tese (Livre Docência), IE/Unicamp, 1990.

PAULANI, L. *Modernidade e Discurso Econômico: ainda sobre McCloskey*. **Revista de Economia Política**, vol. 19, nº 4 (76), outubro-dezembro de 2000.



FRANK, A. G. *A dependência de Theotônio*. In: **Comunicação & política**, n. 1, 2011.

LANDES, David. **A riqueza e a pobreza das nações: porque algumas são tão ricas e outras são tão pobres**. 7 ed., Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 1998.

LESSA, S.; TONET, I. **Introdução à filosofia de Marx**. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2008.

MARINI, R. M. *Dialéctica de la dependencia (1973)*. En: **América Latina, dependencia y globalización**. Buenos Aires, CLACSO, 2008.

MARINI, R. M. *Dialética da Dependência*. In: TRASPADINI, R., STEDILE, J. P. (Orgs.). **Ruy Mauro Marini: vida e obra**. São Paulo: Editora Expressão Popular, 2005.

MARINI, R. M. *Las razones del neodesarrollismo (Respuesta a F. H. Cardoso y J. Serra)*. In: **Revista Mexicana de Sociología**. México: UNAM, 1978.

MARINI, R. M. *O ciclo do capital na economia dependente*. In: FERREIRA, C, OSÓRIO, J., LUCE M. (Orgs.) **Padrão de reprodução do capital**. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2012.

MARTINS, C. E. *O pensamento de Ruy Mauro Marini e a sua atualidade para as ciências sociais*. In: **Desenvolvimento e dependência: cátedra Ruy Mauro Marini** / Organizador: Niemeyer Almeida Filho. Brasília: IPEA, 2013.

MARX, Karl. **O Capital**. Livro I São Paulo: Ed. Nova Cultural, 1996.

OSÓRIO, J. **Crítica de la economía vulgar: reproducción del capital y dependencia**. México: Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, Miguel Ángel Porrúa, librero-editor, 2004.

