

SUSTAINABLE SOCIOPOLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: A NORMATIVE POLITICAL READING

DESENVOLVIMENTO SOCIOPOLÍTICO SUSTENTÁVEL: UMA LEITURA NORMATIVO-POLÍTICA

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Abstract

This research presents an analysis of the importance and necessity of democracy for the proposition of a sustainable socio-political development project, where the law assumes the function of ensuring the implementation and legality of participatory procedures. The text presents three sections, where it addresses the contemporary scenario, globalization and the meaning of sustainable development, as well as describes the proposal of intensity of democracy to achieve a viable project of sustainable development, which manages to balance economic growth, environmental preservation and promotion of human dignity. In conclusion, it defends the general thesis that there is a need for a participatory arrangement, through which it is possible to think of solutions to social problems, in a collective and solidary way, since there is no development without social justice.

Keywords: democracy; sociopolitical development; social justice; participation.

Resumo

Esta pesquisa apresenta uma análise acerca da importância e da necessidade da democracia para a proposição de um projeto de desenvolvimento sociopolítico sustentável, em que o Direito assume a função de assegurar a implementação e a legalidade dos procedimentos participativos. O texto apresenta três seções, nas quais aborda o cenário contemporâneo, a globalização e o significado de desenvolvimento sustentável, bem como descreve sobre a proposta de intensidade da democracia para alcançar um projeto viável de desenvolvimento sustentável, que consiga equilibrar crescimento econômico, preservação ambiental e promoção da dignidade humana. Como conclusão, defende a tese geral de que há a necessidade de um arranjo participativo, por meio do qual seja possível pensar soluções para os problemas sociais, de maneira coletiva e solidária, pois não há desenvolvimento sem justiça social.

Palavras-chave: democracia; desenvolvimento sociopolítico; justiça social; participação.



Introduction

Two facts continue to greatly concern society researchers in this early 21st century: globalization and social exclusion. As globalization intensifies, amid fantastic technological innovations, social exclusion also increases, especially in the so-called developing countries, as is the case of Brazil. In this context, the question arises: how to promote development and social inclusion in this globalized scenario?

Carrying out this analysis based on democracy is a necessity, since there are no answers to the globalization issues, and it can also be said that all centralized state models are in decay, long doomed to failure, as well as totalitarian regimes, already exhausted. Even liberalism, which survives by keeping its borders open to capital, is totally incapable of resolving the social exclusion issue or promoting sustainable sociopolitical development.

In order to address a proposal for sustainable sociopolitical development, this investigation chose to carry out this analysis from a normative political reading, that is, the investigation seeks to demonstrate that such a proposal or project can only be viable by assigning greater intensity to democratic practices, at the same time that Law, as a social system, is able to guarantee the implementation and realization of democratic procedures.

In order to carry out this approach, this research is divided into three sections: (a) the first describes the contemporary scenario, based on world globalization, and the concept of development; (b) the second deals with the idea of sustainable development, as well as the complexity of its concept, as a theory of justice; and (c) the third and final section presents democracy as a necessary category in promoting inclusive sociopolitical development.

With regard to the investigation method, this study adopts: (a) hermeneutic-phenomenological methods, in which the fundamental epistemological category is the understanding and the goal is the interpretation of facts; and (b) analytical methods, referring to conceptual analysis and the search for the rigorous use of concepts. The methodical procedure of such analysis was characterized by the following moments: analysis and clarification of concepts; identification of the key idea; identification of theses, hypotheses and arguments; identification of argumentative problems and inconsistencies; attempt at a summary and personal reconstruction of the text.

1 The contemporary scenario and the idea of development

Contemporary society is the so-called risk society, pointed out by the German sociologist Ulrich Beck (1998), in which the man-nature relationship itself is affected and, according to which, the transformations of the civilizing threats of nature are turned into social, economic and political threats, which translates into a challenge for the present and the future, justifying the concept of society presented. In this way, the production of wealth is systematically accompanied by the production of risks.

According to Beck (1998), this is the logic of development, in which the risks of modernization itself are consolidated in a game of tensions between science, practice and the public sphere, whose consequence results in an identity crisis, new forms of work organization, new theoretical foundations and new methodological developments. In this context, Beck (1998, p. 210) states that there is a need to assimilate errors, as well as public discussion on modernization, as “public discussion of modernization risks is the route for the transformation of mistakes into opportunities for expansion under the conditions of reflexive scientization”.

Alongside this discussion, Peruvian Oswaldo de Rivero (2002) made public his thesis about the myth of development and unviable countries in this 21st century. Even acknowledging that both capitalism and communism were products made in the factories of the Industrial Revolution, Rivero (2002, p. 162) pointed out the fact that, since the first decade of this century, humanity would face world hegemony of liberalism’s most predatory approach:

[...] This brutal version of capitalism pursues happiness as never before, to be achieved by the highest degree of material accumulation. It spreads environmentally unsustainable patterns of consumption, and uses the market and technology to plunder persons, enterprises and nations. Now that the fear of Communism has faded, the only interest lies in higher profits, quick and easy money, with no thought for the environmental and social costs.

Allied to the version of brutal capitalism, the current model of economic-financial globalization is a predatory process that makes the rich dangerously richer and the poor poorer, dismantling the social progress that capitalism had attained during the 20th century, as well as subjecting democracy and human rights to economic interests (RIVERO, 2002).

As a reflection of predatory globalization and wild capitalism, political and social rights, as well as the environment, are subordinated to the liberalization and deregulation of markets, in a global society with more social exclusion and

disrespect for nature. In fact, the defense of freedoms and democracy seems to have disappeared from the capitalist and liberal agenda, while it only served as a background for its growth. In this sense, there is also a change in the legal-political scenario, a fact that, according to Beck (2018, p. 131), consists of a normative-political metamorphosis: “the imperative of democracy and justice applied to the power relations of definition makes visible a metamorphosis of *revolution*: the ‘revolution’ centered on the power relations of definition does not happen where the Marxist notion of revolution expected it to happen”.

According to José Eli da Veiga (2005, p. 80), “in a world of terrible inequalities, it is absurd to claim that risks need to become even more risks to allow the needy to become a little less needy”. Development is, initially, about enabling people to live the kind of lives they choose, about providing them with the tools and opportunities to make those choices. This means going from the protection of human rights to the further deepening of democracy.

To get an idea, in statistical terms, about development, according to the World Bank Annual Report 2020¹, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the growth of gross domestic product (GDP) in the region (excluding Venezuela, whose data are insufficient) was 0.8% in 2019, and the forecast is for a retreat to -7.2% in 2020. Growth should recover to 2.8% in 2021. The work of the World Bank (2020, p. 34) for the region is based on three pillars, namely,

The first pillar focuses on inclusive growth by promoting greater productivity, competitiveness, transparency, and accountability; engaging with traditionally excluded groups, including Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, and rural communities; and attracting private investment. The second pillar emphasizes investing in human capital to prepare people for challenges and opportunities that come with the changing nature of work. The third pillar seeks to build resilience so that countries can better manage and withstand shocks, such as natural disasters, economic upheaval, migration, crime and violence, and infectious diseases.

The report highlights that, in Brazil, the World Bank’s help came in the largest investment in human capital, helping to reinforce the *Bolsa Família* social program in a conditional cash transfer that reached almost 47 million people. The report also mentions that this program also contributed to the increase in school attendance rates, reaching 91%. It should also be noted that the report mentions the fact that the Latin American and Caribbean region also faces the

¹ The Annual Report, covering the period July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, was prepared by the Executive Directors of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA) – collectively known as the World Bank – in accordance with the by-laws of the two institutions.

highest frequency of natural disasters in the world, a vulnerability that climate change turns into an even greater challenge. To confront this challenge, the World Bank (2020, p. 35) reports that it has focused on building better infrastructure that can withstand storms and other disasters.

For the World Bank (2020, p. 49),

[...] human capital is the health, knowledge, capabilities, skills, and resilience that people accumulate through life. It equips them to realize their full potential and become productive members of society and is a key driver of economic growth, poverty reduction, and shared prosperity. Countries that invest efficiently and equitably in building, protecting, and deploying human capital will be better prepared to compete in a global economy that rewards higher-level cognitive skills.

According to the World Bank Annual Report 2021², Latin America and the Caribbean is the region hardest hit by Covid-19, with a sharp drop in economic activity and significant impacts on health and human capital. This came after several years of slow growth and limited progress on social indicators. Regional GDP dropped by 6.5% in 2020. Poverty has greatly increased in the countries of the region, although regional aid has mitigated the impacts. Ensuring access to quality health and education services remains one of the region's highest priorities. According to the World Bank report (2021, p. 44),

[...] In Brazil, we provided nearly 60,000 medical professionals with training in neonatal and obstetric emergency care, helping reduce maternal mortality from 65.1 to 43.3 per 100,000 women and infant mortality from 12.2 to 10.3 per 1,000 births between 2010 and 2019. Our support also helped increase graduation rates in primary schools, strengthen teacher training, and expand the number of teachers working in Indigenous areas from 437 in 2014 to more than 800 in 2019.

Still with regard to Brazil, the World Bank (2021, p. 45) states that it is providing technical assistance to help reform the energy, gas and mining sectors, which are among the main drivers of the economy, “with the aim of enhancing competitiveness and efficiency, leveraging private finance for sustainable energy and mining infrastructure, and strengthening climate change resilience”. In addition, the World Bank provided US\$1 billion to expand the *Bolsa Família* program to help over 1 million more families cope with the crisis and protect their incomes, with the aim of increasing the protection of human capital in the Latin America and the Caribbean.

² The Annual Report, covering the period July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, was prepared by the Executive Directors of IBRD and IDA – collectively known as the World Bank – in accordance with the by-laws of the two institutions.

Brazil has achieved an extraordinary process of industrialization or productive sophistication since 1930. However, rich countries have shown little economic development since the 1980s, and Brazil since the 1990s. Rich countries, led by the United States, found themselves challenged by developing countries in East and Southeast Asia and abandoned the ideal of social-democratic development inaugurated in the 1930s by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. They abandoned social democracy and entered a radical and aggressive economic liberalism, so that, at the same time that their growth rates declined, financial instability increased and poor workers saw their standard of living stagnate. In the 1990s, Brazil followed the Northern countries, of economic liberalism, and deindustrialized itself, with advances in the social and political field, experiencing, since 2013, a social divide and the loss of republican and solidary values (BRESSER-PEREIRA, 2018, p. 08). In this picture,

[...] Brazil dramatically needs a national project; it needs to overcome the economic quasi-stagnation that has lasted almost 40 years, it needs to reindustrialize or become productively more sophisticated, and it needs, on the political level, to recover the relative social cohesion lost in the last five years (BRESSER-PEREIRA, 2018, p. 09).

As Bresser-Pereira (2018, p. 10) points out, what is expected of a developing country is that it manages to grow faster than rich countries, while its income converges to these countries' income level, a fact which occurred between 1930 and 1979. The author stresses that Brazil went through a serious recession between 2014 and 2016, when it fell by 7.11% and unemployment peaked at 13.7% of the active population, when 6 million Brazilians were thrown into poverty.

Faced with all these issues, one should reflect on the idea of sustainable development, that is, seeking economic, political, social and technological growth, but without giving up the environmental preservation of the planet. Therefore, to develop does not only mean to grow economically, but most of all to preserve and promote the dignity of the human person, so forgotten by predatory capitalism and global liberalism. Facing, then, the challenge of saying and/or sustaining what is meant and what development is requires dealing with its concept, as well as understanding it as a project that has a theory of justice as its backdrop, because without that, there will be no development in the terms thought and proposed here.

2 Sustainable development as a theory of justice

The concept of development begins to take shape after the World War II. To this end, *models, hypotheses, theories and concepts* that guided international public and academic opinions were implemented and improved. From then on, the State was seen as the agent that identifies and systematizes society's demands and, through the implementation of appropriate public policies, meets these needs. This conception, with multiple variations, lasted until the 1980s, when it entered a crisis due to the lack of concrete results in promoting development.

The State, then, comes to be identified as incapable, corrupt and unable to promote societal well-being. The free market is thus rescued, with the idea that economic agents, without limitation by State intervention, could then lead a previously unprecedented development process, stimulating the commercial, economic and financial openness of nations, privatizations and public sector reduction. This proposal also failed to provide the desired results, coming to an end at the late 1990s.

Sustainable development, according to José Eli da Veiga (2005, p. 114), means balancing the difficult relationship between economic growth versus environmental preservation, considering the variants of population explosion and the danger of nuclear war. Sustainability, on the other hand, expresses the equitable satisfaction of present needs without compromising the satisfaction of future needs – also in relation to environmental resources.

In this conception, economic growth and human development are not antagonistic but complementary concepts, as economic growth is a condition for human development. What is required is the need to identify strategies for the implementation of economic growth processes that enable the sustainability of development and popular participation in decision-making processes, that is, not only development for people, but also their development and by them, so that they fully participate in the decisions and processes that affect their lives.

In Dieter Siedenberg's understanding (2004, p. 10), there is a certain tacit agreement about the enormous complexity of any development project, while disagreement reigns over the ways of implementing and conducting development policies. In this sense, it can be observed that, in recent decades, development projects with an essentially economic emphasis have been losing steam in the face of approaches that add such other factors as social and environmental ones, for example. One thereby starts from Siedenberg's statement (2004, p. 23), in the sense that the concept of "development is reserved exclusively to identify the processes

of change in the individual scope of the organization, that is, development occurs when an entity acquires a qualitatively differentiated capacity in relation to its previous condition”.

In this context, it can be said, then, that development goes beyond simple GDP growth, production of consumer goods and investment and capital accumulation. It is necessary to consider people and the way in which development expands their opportunities, since access to better incomes is one of the struggles of human beings, but it is not the only one of their activities.

In view of this conception of development, economic growth is a means to achieve human development, whose purpose must provide conditions for the enrichment of people’s lives, without dwelling on quantitative aspects, disregarding qualitative aspects. As a result of such an undertaking, a conception of development that takes the human into account has to do with the dignity of the human person, in which “the preservation and promotion of the dignity of the human person pass, therefore, through the discipline of concrete relations of coexistence. It is in this dimension that the principle of dignity is implemented, which, in its course, is the task of the State, *of each and every one*” (FACHIN; PIANOVSKI, 2011, p. 19).

To this end, it is necessary to concentrate efforts to avoid proposals for economic growth with the destruction of jobs, without equity, with an increase in disparities between rich and poor, without the voice of communities that are obstructed from the most basic forms of democracy and against the grain of human rights, with the destruction of cultural identities and the roots of belonging of peoples in the desire for homogenization. Any development proposal that perpetuates such inequalities is not sustainable and should not be defended, under penalty of obscuring the human and the environment, which already has scarce natural resources, such as water insecurity, to say the least. In this sense, “‘sustainable development’ must therefore be understood as one of the most generous ideals. Perhaps comparable to the oldest good of ‘social justice’, both express collective desires enunciated by humanity, alongside peace, democracy, freedom and equality” (VEIGA, 2015, p. 46).

At the beginning of this second decade of the 21st century, two facts are of great concern to those who study society: globalization and social exclusion. While globalization intensifies amid fantastic technological innovations, social exclusion has also increased, mainly in developing countries, such as Brazil, for example. In this context, the following question arises: how to develop and, at the same time, promote social inclusion in this globalized scenario?

Carrying out such an analysis from a reflection on democracy is essential, considering that there are no answers to the globalization issues, and it can be said that all centralized state models are in decay, long doomed to failure, as well as totalitarian regimes, already exhausted. Even liberalism, which only survives by keeping its borders open, is utterly incapable of resolving the issue of social exclusion and promoting sustainable development, which has been so debated since the last decade of the 20th century.

In complex societies, as is the case in Brazil, the “majority rule” was created to form consensus. However, as Galuppo (2002, p. 149) points out, “majority rule is not itself a democratic principle, but a democratic *mechanism* or *instrument*, which as such has some limitations”. From this understanding, it can be assured that one of the existing limitations in representative democracy, with regard to public policies in its various sectors, is that it ends up not discussing the collective scope, fragmenting what should reach or benefit all citizens in a given society.

3 The importance of democracy in promoting inclusive sociopolitical development

Democracy as a form, in Kelsen’s (2000) proceduralism, is understood as incapable of corresponding to a precise set of values, since it announced the reduction of the problem of legitimacy, leaving, later, Norberto Bobbio (1986) to transform Kelsen’s proceduralist element into a form of democratic elitism. In other words, the conception of democracy as a form, reducing citizen participation solely and exclusively to direct voting, turns out to be an audacious instrument for legitimizing the governing elite.

Unlike the traditional approach, Habermas’s (2003) analysis of the importance of democracy points to the need for it to be thought of and worked on as a form of social integration. It should also be noted that Habermas (2003) makes his examination linking four points: democracy, morals, law and politics. At this point, one begins to glimpse the importance of Law for the defense of a project of sustainable sociopolitical development, being, therefore, that social system capable of guaranteeing the implementation and realization of participatory democratic procedures.

In Habermas, the mediation of language is what allows communicative reason to be distinguished from practical reason, since the latter is associated with an interpretative standard that is understood from the point of view of singularity, whereas, on the contrary, communicative reason it does not offer models

for action. Not being a rule of action, communicative reason constitutes an enabling condition and, at the same time, a limiting condition of understanding (MOREIRA, 2004).

Practical reason starts from a binding orientation towards acting, whereas, in communicative reason, acting is oriented towards understanding, since, having language as a medium, understanding is coupled to it. Habermas (2003) understands that principle-based morality depends on a complementation through Positive Law. On the one hand, there is the theory of discourse and, on the other, the emergence of the theory of law: “The discourse theory of law and democracy must break away from the conventional paths of legal and political philosophy, even as it takes up their issues” (HABERMAS, 2003, p. 23).

The Habermasian theory of law and democracy is based on language, that is, action that is expressed in speech, and, aiming at the legitimacy of the legislative process, Habermas (2003, p. 53) points out the need to guarantee citizens rights to communication and political participation,

To the extent that rights of political participation and rights of communication are constitutive for the production of legitimate statutes, they must not be exercised by persons who act merely as private subjects of civil law. Rather, these rights must be exercised in the attitude of communicatively engaged citizens.

According to Moreira’s interpretation (2004), the rights of communication and political participation refer to the idea of citizens’ autonomy. The manifestation of a legitimate will, in this sense, emanates from the people, and Habermas (2003, p. 54) says it is “the legitimate will that stems from a presumptively rational self-legislation of politically autonomous citizens”.

Once the legitimate will emanates from politically autonomous citizens, who become partners of the Law and of democracy itself, and not just mere spectators of legal-political issues, the legislative process then becomes a space of social integration. The public space is where women, blacks, workers and racial minorities will expose the necessary social demands, as well as express, before the norms, a rational and free manifestation, also transforming the Law into a source of social integration. However, for this “communicative arrangement” to effectively occur, the possibility of deliberative politics of citizens becomes necessary, through participatory democracy, developing, for this purpose, methods and conditions for debate, discussion and persuasion.

About the decisions of the “majority rule”, it is highlighted that these

[...] have special importance in the case of the legislative process which, in view of its complexity and social extension, uses political representation as a condenser

filter of possible discourses justifying legal juridical norms. For this very reason, the mechanism of political representation presupposes that the discourses that take place in the legislative houses are made in an advocacy way, that they are only legitimate if there is a communicative mechanism that transfers the points of view and, thus, the legitimacy of the represented to the representatives (GALUPPO, 2002, p. 152).

In this way, social participation in the discussion is of fundamental importance for the formulation of the participation process. However, according to Habermas (2003, p. 227-228),

Discourses conducted by representatives can meet the condition of equal participation on the part of all members only if they remain porous, sensitive, and receptive to the suggestions, issues and contributions, information and arguments that flow in from a discursively structured public sphere, that is, one that is pluralistic, close to the grass roots, and relatively undisturbed by the effects of power.

As citizens, through the rights of communication and political participation, formalize the democratic process, exposing the results obtained, the Habermasian concept of “deliberative politics” is configured, which “acquires its legitimating force from the discursive structure of an opinion- and will-formation that can fulfill its socially integrative function only because citizens expect its results to have a reasonable quality” (HABERMAS, 1997, p. 28).

In *Faktizität und Geltung*, Habermas (2003) emphasizes not only the right of citizens to deliberate about their social needs, but also points to the need for public opinion to direct administrative power to certain demands. Thus, the German philosopher shows that the concept of discourse, included in democracy, ends up differentiating society, at the moment when it allows contrasting different opinions, providing the contestation, identification and pointing of possible solutions to the problems existing in the interior of society.

The possibility opens up, then, of collectivization of the social, that is, citizens are given the opportunity to discuss and deliberate on their fundamental needs, and may even participate in the normative elaboration itself, with regard to the discursive theory of Law, which is not the focus of this work. Such a possibility is of paramount importance, as representative democracy has for some time no longer been able to think about the collective and ends up fragmenting public policies, resulting in the failure to meet the social demands arising from the economically less favored strata, thus resulting in social exclusion.

Deliberative politics is fundamental for contemporary and complex societies, and

[...] the discourse-theoretic reading of democracy has a point of contact with a detached sociological approach that considers the political system neither the peak nor the center, nor even the formative model of society in general, but just one action system among others (HABERMAS, 2002, p. 284).

According to Habermas (2002), deliberative politics, being carried out in accordance with the conventional procedures of institutionalized formation of public opinion, passes through the deliberative filter, and its ends can be achieved through political direction.

Habermas (2003) does not present a concept of democracy, but rather points out the necessary observation of discursive procedures in terms of democracy itself, thus characterizing it as a procedural form. In this sense, it seeks to show that the citizens' rights of political participation and communication must be respected and provided opportunities, thus being able to influence the legislative process as participants oriented towards understanding.

The importance attributed by Habermas (2003) to the public sphere is in the fact that it is the space in which all subjects can discuss their problems and inequalities, in which the legislative process has the capacity for social integration, making also collective what was previously fragmented. However, even agreeing with the importance of the public sphere and democracy, it is necessary to rescue the very function of politics in current times, posing the question about what politics is for.

In the midst of contemporary societies, new problems coexist with very old ones, such as the persistence of poverty and unsatisfied essential needs, the wide spread of collective hungers, the violation of political freedoms and basic formal freedoms. Therefore, the expansion of freedom is shown to be the main end and means of development, according to Amartya Sen's central thesis (VEIGA, 2015, p. 56).

For Sen (2000), it is necessary to see democracy as the creator of a set of opportunities, while the use of these opportunities requires an analysis that addresses the practice of democracy and political rights. Political freedoms and civil rights play a constructive role in relation to economic needs. Political rights related to the guarantee of discussion, debate and criticism are central to the processes of well-reflected choices by the community. In this way, "development requires the removal of the main sources of deprivation of liberty: poverty and tyranny, lack of economic opportunities and systematic social destitution, neglect of public services and intolerance or interference by repressive States" (VEIGA, 2015, p. 57).

According to Daniel Innerarity (2017), a modern society is a society of social

systems, including law, economics, culture, etc. These systems respond more and more to their own logic, however, if this logic is not articulated with the others, the possibility of unbalancing the whole is great. Therefore, the task of politics, in a complex society, will be to counterbalance the centrifugal dynamics of these systems, their turbulence and internal threats, considering that

[...] it is not, therefore, a question of arbitrating between more or less State (which is an old debate that we have gotten past), but of conceiving it in another fashion. We should think, for example, about a State that does not deny market forces but stimulates them, organizes them and places them at the service of an improvement in collective well-being. [...] We need a new wisdom about limits and intelligence to understand them as an opportunity to carry out politics in which we once again combine effectiveness and democracy (INNERARITY, 2017, p. 155-156).

Democracy is a key category for sustainable sociopolitical development processes. In this sense, the Habermasian thesis of a deliberative politics, capable of providing discursive procedures, in which the rights of political participation and communication are guaranteed by the Positive Law system, can be thought of as a theory of justice.

The discussion made by citizens about their social needs in the public sphere guarantees citizenship, since “the political process of building citizenship, as previously seen, has the fundamental objective of providing equal access to the public space as a condition for the existence and survival of men as members of a political community” (CORREA, 2002, p. 221).

Understanding the city as a collective represents a leap towards inclusion and development. This leap, however, is only possible based on democratic experimentalism, hence the importance of the most enlightened leaders taking advantage of any enterprise or activity that their group has to implement, to experiment with formulas that encourage the participation of all interested parties.

In fact, an individual who actively participates in the life of their community is an included citizen. A community of participative citizens certainly greatly enhances the democracy in which it operates. The efficiency of a democracy of such intensity constitutes fertile ground, par excellence, for the flourishing of development. From this comes the importance of research on formulas that intensify horizontal social practices, capable of awakening in people a taste for democratic participation and the understanding that this is the least thorny path in the pursuit of sustainable sociopolitical development.

Final considerations

With this research, some concluding notes can be made, the first of which points out that democracy, in addition to mere instrumental utility, has an intrinsic value, since the model of liberal representative democracy cannot claim to be recognized as the only one. This claim alone would reveal a contradiction, since, by claiming to be the only model, it would be moving away from the fundamental principle of democracy, which is respect for diversity.

As a second concluding note, we share the Habermasian theoretical matrix of deliberative politics, reaffirming the need for citizens to effectively deliberate in the public sphere about their needs and social inequalities, being able to guide administrative power to certain demands. For such a participatory arrangement to occur, it is enough for the subjects to exercise deliberative politics through participatory democracy, developing methods and conditions for debate.

The strengthening of horizontally organized social experiences will certainly provide greater awareness of the social responsibility of each individual in seeking, through collective actions, to overcome the ills that affect communities, developing and strengthening the culture of participation and reciprocity as means of seeking social inclusion and development.

The third concluding note demonstrates the important role of Law in this new and promising participatory arrangement proposed by Habermas (2003), as it is up to Law to ensure the implementation of democratic-participatory procedures. In other words, it is up to the Law to guarantee the rules of the democratic game and the viability of popular participation in the choices of their needs, which consequently guarantees both sustainable sociopolitical development and the preservation and promotion of the dignity of the human person.

As a fourth conclusive note, it can be said that the discussion and decision by community members about investment priorities will certainly encourage citizens to understand the problems of the city as a whole, so that, civically, a neighborhood may occasionally give up an investment that would improve its infrastructure in favor of another more needy neighborhood. In the understanding of Corrêa (2002, p. 217), “the democratic realization of a society, shared by all individuals to the point of guaranteeing everyone access to public space and decent survival conditions, having the fullness of life as a source value”.

Finally, the fifth concluding note of this research demonstrates that the defense of a proposal for sustainable sociopolitical development that brings together a democratic-participatory strategy, in which the legal system is able to guarantee

such a procedure, translates into a significant theory of justice. It is opportune to emphasize that there is not any type of development that does not take into account the dignity of the human person and environmental preservation, so that there is no way of thinking or proposing development strategies and processes without thinking about social justice.

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