

# Bioethics of intervention, inter-culturality and non-coloniality

## Bioética de intervención, interculturalidad y no-colonialidad

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## **Abstract**

The proposal of Intervention Bioethics (BI), which arose in the 1990s as a response to the Anglo-Saxon perspective of four universally presumed principles, which though necessary are insufficient in the Latin-American context, has continued its collective construction process. The article shows the common points between this proposal and Latin-American perspectives of inter-cultural and non-colonial issues. Simultaneously, the utilitarian perspective of John Stuart Mill opens the possibilities of approximation between utilitarianism and individual rights, ethically opposing positions for many authors. In addition, we show that BI has consonance with three Unesco declarations on culture, genetic heritage and human rights. All of these elements allow progress towards an epistemological statute of Intervention Bioethics, one of the more important proposals towards a Latin-American vision of this new interdisciplinary territory of knowledge.

**Keywords:** Bioethics; Inter-Culturality; Coloniality.

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## Resumen

La propuesta de Bioética de Intervención (BI) surge en los años 1990 como respuesta a la mirada anglosajona de la bioética centrada en cuatro principios pretendidamente universales - que aunque necesarios son insuficientes al contexto latinoamericano - ha continuado su proceso de construcción colectiva. El artículo muestra los puntos comunes entre esta propuesta y perspectivas regionales latinoamericanas acerca de interculturalidad y no-colonialidad. A partir de la mirada utilitarista de John Stuart Mill, abre posibilidades de aproximación entre el utilitarismo y los derechos individuales, posturas éticas contrarias para muchos autores. Igualmente, muestra como la BI está en consonancia con el contenido de las tres declaraciones de la Unesco en asuntos relacionados con la cultura, patrimonio genético y derechos humanos. Todos estos elementos permiten avanzar hacia un estatuto epistemológico para la Bioética de Intervención, una de las propuestas más difundidas en la contextualización latinoamericana de este territorio interdisciplinar del conocimiento. **Palabras clave:** Bioética; Interculturalidad; Colonialidad.

## Introduction

Several years ago Noam Chomsky, perhaps the most significant philosopher in the United States, wrote: “The democratic ideal in our country and abroad is simple and honest: you are free to do what you want, as long as that’s what we want you to do.” (Chomsky, 2001, p. 331). The Anglo Saxon perspective of Bioethics, centered on four supposedly universal principles: Autonomy, Beneficence, Non-maleficence, and Justice, and essentially confined to hospitals and research centers, especially of humans, perhaps continues to be the most widely spread in the West and the most widely practiced, having colonized the world from North to South. It is, however, not the only one. The supposed universality of such a view began to be debated very early on and even VR Potter himself, credited with introducing the term in the early 1970s, criticized it when the broad perspectives that he suggested were, in practice, reduced to exercising commissioned democracy in the scenario of care or health research ethics (Potter, 1998; Pessini, 2013<sup>1</sup>). These committees, while certainly interdisciplinary, which, however, does not mean intercultural, as the disciplines of which they are made and which engage in dialogue in the search for solutions to ethical conflicts in the health field, continue to be specialist knowledge and continue leaving out other forms of knowledge, other ways of understanding life on the planet, other perspectives of health or welfare, other possible ways of organizing human societies, other visions of democracy.

In 1995, the Encyclopedia of Bioethics defined this material as “The systematic study of human behavior in the ambit of life sciences and health care, examining this conduct in the light of moral values and principles” (Reich, 1995). Returning to Chomsky, it is a simple and honest view of bioethics which, however, tries to deal with the world showing it as Bioethics itself, the only, the best, the universal<sup>2</sup>. Of course, as often happens with things sent or coming from the center, it encounters followers on the outskirts as well as others who criticize, in essence,

<sup>1</sup> In this text, Leo Pessini refers to Potter’s statement: “my own vision of bioethics demands a much wider vision.”

<sup>2</sup> The preface of the seventh edition of Tom Beauchamp and James Childress’s classic text, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* (2013), begins by stating “Biomedical ethics, or bioethics,…” (p.vii), which highlights its insistent view that there is only one type of bioethics in the world, others not being bioethics, is not bioethics.

going to a reality that certainly differs from the reality of the core countries that view the peripheries to some extent as their children, who, following in their footsteps, growing and achieving the correct way of thinking and doing things, but still their children and never coming of age. It is, then, about being obedient and seeing bioethics from the same point of view as the north in order to apply it judiciously in seeking to answers problems in their business, except in the south, as if the problems here were similar and the rationality searching for solutions the same as there, thus similar problems, similar rationale, similar solutions. A particular form of democracy; where the center proposes the issues of the periphery, how to address them and what solutions should be reached. If that is democracy, there is no way of knowing how it differs from subjection, or blind obedience, which it was supposed to counteract.

The fact is, as Sotolongo argues, “(...) bioethical reflection and practice are being constrained by - and are an integral part of - a broad and deep qualitative change that is taking place in the thinking and practice of our time (...)” (Sotolongo, 2005, p.95) It must be added that, as has happened with the great scientific, social and political transformations in the history of mankind, which exercise and have exercised power, they will not give up easily. Bioethics is no stranger to the exercise of power and while some bioethicists, many or few, do not like political affairs, they have to be in contact with them if we want to move on to a different, and necessary, perspective of bioethics from and for Our America.

## Bioethics of Intervention (BI) in the Latin American context

By the 1990s, some proposals for bioethics from Latin America had begun to be aired, and today there are three clear positions, which, as usual, have had limited distribution in the center and are unlikely to spread in the immediate future. This is Protection Bioethics whose most well-known authors are Schramm and Kottow, whose thinking revolves around the concept of vulnerability; Bioethics focusing on Universal Human Rights, the most well-known representative of which is Tealdi and, finally, so-

call Intervention Bioethics (hereafter BI), focused on justice and public health, whose proponents are Garrafa and Porto.

It can be said, without fear of error, that protection, human rights and intervention, are part of the history of bioethics and its exercise, even from the Anglo-Saxon perspective of *scientific inter-discipline*, as it is known by some. It is no exaggeration to say that bioethics subverted the order of hospitals and research centers placing patients and subjects, investigated for the sake of science, at its core. The job of Bioethics was and is to protect the vulnerable and assert their rights, just as it has and should continue to do, to intervene when the dignity of human beings is passed over, in care or in research. It is the primary task in such scenarios.

For BI, however, the principalist perspective of bioethics, turned out to be

insufficient to advance a contextualized analysis of the conflicts that require a certain amount of flexibility and cultural adaptation “also in order to” deal with persistent or daily macro-problems, frequent in societies with significant levels of social exclusion (Garrafa, 2005, p. 127).

Insufficient here signifies that it may be necessary for some kind of approach in the above contexts, but it falls short when it comes to issues that go beyond the scope of health care or health research ethics committees. Even in the field of health, public health practice faces problems beyond the capacity of these committees because, especially in the case of justice issues, they are very different from those presented in the scenarios mentioned above, since it addresses for example, social determinants and social determination of disease, far from the intentions of those committees. What might be deemed ethical conflicts in the field of public health are different from those in the individual practice of medicine, which are also of interest for BI although their analysis does not fall (at least not exclusively) within any of the four principles of Anglo-Saxon clinical bioethics. Issues such as exclusion, discrimination, solidarity and cooperation, as well as social vulnerability, are fundamental issues, at the very center of BI interest. These issues are also the focal points of reflection from the perspective of Bioethics of Pro-

tection and Bioethics of Human Rights. These are the so-called macro, or “persistent”, problems common in Latin American countries which, of course, require inter-disciplinary attention highlighting social responsibility and health in accordance with Article 14 of the Unesco Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (DUBHR) (UNESCO, 2005) and sees this issue of health as a right and not merely as a commodity which can be accessed via the market and is governed by the vagaries of supply and demand like any other commodity.

BI is also about reflecting and proposing responses to moral problems or conflicts appearing in recent times, to so-called “emergency situations”, associated with scientific and technological advances such as genomics, stem cells, new reproductive technologies and transplants, to name a few. However, in order for this new way of interpreting and applying bioethics to arise from Latin America, “The benchmark framework for analysis, however, will be the verified growing inequality - especially after the consolidation of the so-called ‘globalization phenomenon’- between the North and South of the planet” (Garrafa, 2005, p. 130). Such a clearly political stance has given rise to much criticism from other perspectives of bioethics, even in Latin America, these are not, however, the central subject of this article. Explicitly, BI “makes a concrete alliance with the historically more fragile side of society” (Garrafa, 2005, p. 130). It assumes that the State has a responsibility “towards the citizens, especially the most vulnerable and needy... and to preserving biodiversity and the ecosystem itself, heritage that should be preserved in a sustainable manner for future generations” (Garrafa, 2005, p. 132).

Four additional criteria underlie the ethical policy attitude of Bioethics of Intervention (BI): prudence in front of scientific and technological advances, prevention of iatrogenic harm, precaution in the face of the unknown and protection of excluded, fragile and ignored people (Garrafa, 2011; Garrafa; Porto, 2003).

Although had been brewing since the 1990s as an anti-hegemonic epistemic proposition that claims a militant political identity, it was only in 2002, when the Sixth World Congress of Bioethics took place, presented under the specific name of Intervention

Bioethics. For this reason, this date became the inaugural BI framework, meaning it has had concrete existence for little more than a decade.

Considering the brevity of its existence, we must recognize the significant impact of its theoretical contribution to the field of regional and international bioethics. In this sense, we should consider the influence of the BI, in collaboration with other Latin American bioethical positions, in the process of drafting the above mentioned DUBHS. Unanimously approved by 191 countries, though not without overt differences in the process of constructing the text, this Declaration is an important signal on the historical possibilities, in other words, an example of a bioethical consensus constructed historically from the perspective of universal Human Rights, one of the paradigms on which the theoretical structure of the BI is anchored.

## BI and the dialogue with utilitarianism and human rights

One of the weaknesses of the proposed BI - still under construction, as recognized by its initiators, Garrafa and Porto - lies in having put together utilitarianism and human rights, although the former assumes the protection and guarantee of social groups’ rights without minimizing the importance of individual rights.

John Stuart Mill, one of the biggest advocates of utilitarian ethics in history, offers a perspective of utilitarianism position on rights, clearly stated in his text entitled Utilitarianism. Mill says: “(...) having a right, therefore, is to have something whose possession has to be defended by society. If someone objects and keeps asking why this should be so, I can give no other reason than general utility” (Mill, 2012, p. 123). Speaking of justice, although his work is primarily focused on the individual and on individual moral, rather than political matters in the sense of inflicting injury upon another, ultimately a moral feeling and right, Mill says:

Justice is the name of certain classes of moral rules which relate to the essential conditions of human welfare more directly and are therefore absolutely binding more than any other type of rules that

guide our lives. In fact, the idea that we have found that is the essence of justice, namely, a right possessed by an individual, implies and testifies that more binding obligation (Mill, 2012, p. 131).

In this passage we see that the notion of justice is not connected with its content but with social utility. Similarly, his vision of justice is linked both with its view of happiness and with what for bioethics principlists are the principles of Beneficence and Non-maleficence. To demonstrate this position the following excerpt is useful:

An individual may never need help from anyone, but always requires them not to hurt him. Thus, the morals protecting all individuals from damage caused by others, either directly or by impeding their freedom to seek their own good, are at once the most esteemed and those which have greater interest in enjoying publicity and that they are sanctioned in word and deed. (Mill, 2012, p. 132).

For Mill, therefore, there is a clear rapprochement between the perspectives of happiness, justice and dignity, an approach that is also shown when he says that, in terms of happiness “(...) the current unfortunate education as well as the unfortunate current social conditions are the only obstacle to it being the heritage of the whole world” (Mill, 2012, p. 60). Which it becomes still more obvious, but also in force, in the next paragraph of **Utilitarianism**:

All steps taken to make political progress possible, eliminating the causes of conflicting interests and leveling inequalities in the privileges between individuals and classes that the law protects, because of which there are large sections of mankind whose happiness it is overlooked in practice (Mill, 2012, p. 90).

If we replace the word happiness with dignity or rights, the meaning of paragraph remains the same. And dignity is one of the pillars on which the recent Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights rests: “a) Human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected in full; b) The interests and welfare of the individual should have priority over the sole interest of science or society” (UNESCO, 2005).

BI is in line with the Declaration and also with the utilitarian perspective of John Stuart Mill. Therefore, respect for human rights will become the basic rule, that individual minimum into which we can all fit, in other words, a social maxim. If the minimum to respect every human being within a society is their right, it would be a social maxim covering us all. Such a line of thought suggests that certain utilitarian positions, including that of Mill, may be sustained in human rights, which, in turn, can save - at least until something better is found - the apparently insuperable conflict between these two ethic. For its previous construction, strongly supported by the theoretical framework already mentioned in this text, and the discussions held at the Sixth World Congress of Bioethics, organized by the International Association of Bioethics (IAB) held in Brazil in 2002 (Garrafa; Pessini, 2003), from which it went on to play an important historical role in the development and acceptance of the Unesco Declaration, the fact that BI is supported by the benchmark of Human Rights is part of the consistency of its epistemological proposal and practice.

One of the ways used by BI to alleviate tension between utilitarianism and human rights is to direct utilitarianism towards reducing inequality, politicizing the utilitarian calculation agenda so that it relies on “a proposal which, in breaking down existing paradigms, reopens a utilitarianism oriented towards the search for equity between segments of society” (Garrafa, Porto, 2002, p. 14). The encounter between utilitarianism and equality occurs through the principle of solidarity, constructed by BI as a parameter for evaluation. In this regard, Mill states that “(...) all social inequalities which are no longer considered convenient, take on the character not merely of inconvenient, but unjust, and appear so tyrannical that we wonder how they could ever have been tolerated (...)” (Mill, 2012, p. 137). In this context, solidarity appears “committed, interventional - pursuing social transformation in the search for democratic and equitable public policies - and produces changes at individual and collective levels” (Selli; Garrafa, 2006, p 249), with a critical character, which gives the agent the ability of discernment, with criteria able to help him assimilate the social and political dimensions in the relationship

of solidarity. As long as the tension between ethical theories that seek to deal with general principles related to protecting and promoting human dignity and others which seek the best consequences based on social assessments remains unresolved, BI favors solidarity and voluntary and critical engagement as strategies to offset the typical vulnerabilities of countries brought to the periphery by the dynamics of colonialism, currently exercised not only from the center. Sève refers to social solidarity relying on the common good, the good of the community, stating:

Thus, mutual par excellence, the corollary of respect is not simply charity toward other individuals, but social solidarity, which includes concern for the common good... anybody cannot respect the rights of the individual without also respecting the good of community to which he belongs. (Sève, 1994, p. 184)

Implicit in the perspective of this French author is the need to combine individual rights and the rights of human communities, cultures and identities, which are, ultimately, the source of the colorful morals that must be dealt with by any bioethical vision, including the perspective focused on the four principles.

## BI and the concept of Living Well

In line with the above, one contribution originating in Latin America, recovering “old news” in the debate on development, is the concept of Living Well, an ancient philosophy of life of indigenous societies in the Andean region, particularly Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, and included in the constitutions of the first two countries. In this concept what is important is not material or riches, things that people produce, but specifically what things produced contribute to people’s lives. In formulating the philosophy of Living Well not only material goods, and other references such as knowledge, social and cultural recognition, ethical and spiritual codes of conduct,

relationships with nature, human values and visions of the future are considered (Garrafa, 2009).

Although Living Well or Sumak Kawsay (Quechua), Suma Qamaña (Aymara), TekoPorã (Guaraní) is a proposal for living originating from the Amerindians, it presents a concrete alternative for humanity, as opposed to the neoliberal development model that subjects nature to the interests of capital, legitimizes the domination of the countries considered central of those considered peripheral, concentrates wealth in the hands of a few and expands the social gap between the rich and the poor. Living Well promotes a paradigm shift based on an epistemological break with hegemonic Western thinking. Unlike capitalism, which imposes capital as a reference center, and socialism, which places the human being at the center, the central benchmark of Living Well is the life of all beings on the planet where the human species is understood as part of nature as well as other species.

Within this concept, nature (Mother Earth, Pacha Mama) is also constituted of rights and those rights are guaranteed by the constitution and ordinary legislation, as is currently the case in Ecuador and Bolivia<sup>3</sup>. There is, then, an innovation in the field of law incorporating a cosmic dimension, recognizing and legitimizing a model of harmonious living between nature, the human species and other species. “The global suffering from the environmental crisis caused by climate change, imposes the search of legal proposals and innovative policies. Recognizing the Rights to Nature is at the forefront of these, globally” (Melo, 2008).

The epistemic and conceptual breaks translate into ethical guidelines and principles expressed in several dimensions: social and economic justice, participatory democratic justice, inter-generational and interpersonal justice, inter-racial and inter-ethnic justice, environmental justice, transitional justice, justice as fairness.

Albó and Galindo draw attention to the fact that Living Well “is opposed to living better’, understood

<sup>3</sup> From a theoretical (conceptual) point of view, the closeness between the understanding of Living Well in Ecuador and Bolivia is evident, although there are differences in application when it comes to developing and implementing government policies. Notions about the dimensions and practical application of the values of Living Well presented here were systematized from reading official documents of the Bolivian government and the National Plan for Living Well (2009-2013) prepared by the Ecuadorian government through consultation with the population.

in the social sense that the few who live better do so at the expense of others who continue living worse” (Albo, Galindo, 2013). Living better is a proposal based on the capitalist model that involves increasing consumption of goods that cause ecological and social imbalance.

The Living Well life project implies a form of community and intercultural social organization without asymmetry of power, gender or ‘race’. To live in harmony, it is necessary to respect differences. Respect extends to all beings that inhabit the planet (animals, plants). Respect goes beyond tolerance. Accepting difference also means accepting similarities.

Multiculturalism is a tool to guarantee cultural equity, enabling dialogic processes needed to build consensus. To resolve conflicts, a point of neutrality on which all agree is sought. The aim is to deepen democracy without submission. Subjecting the minority to the majority is not Living Well (Suess, 2010). Again, Mill’s utilitarian perspective allows progress to be made in the search for the encounter between BI and the Living Well philosophy when he stated that “(...) the basis of all happiness (is) not to expect more from life than life can give (Mill, 2012, p. 60). To become a proposal that seeks to indicate a new global paradigm, Living Well becomes an important reference for bioethics, especially considering the original perspective by Van Rensselaer Potter in **Bioethics, bridge to the future** (1971).

It is because it is a “powerful idea”, a project under construction, an open concept that can always be re-signified, enhanced and updated, that can be easily assimilated and incorporated into the epistemological status of BI by always being open to the various theoretical constructs that have ideological affinity with its principles because of its libertarian dimension and its epistemic and intellectual pluralism. Garrafa, one of the proponents of BI, envisions the possibility of using the prospect of Living Well in the context of Latin American bioethics, guiding a relationship with nature that is not merely one of use and exploitation, but rather of solidarity and seeking reciprocity (Garrafa, 2010).

## Modernity and coloniality

According to Duran, bioethics arises from the intersection between different disciplines: the techno-sciences such as medicine or biology and specialties; the human sciences such as sociology, psychoanalysis, political science; and others such as law, ethics, philosophy, theology, etc. (Durand, 1994). Even if we are dealing with- as mentioned by Duran, among others - an interdiscipline, it is nonetheless expertise, an ultimately modern knowledge, essentially a colonizer for the modern, when what is at issue is the interaction of no less expert knowledge, including ancestral knowledge. As Acosta mentions:

One of the main tasks lies in the permanent and constructive dialogue of knowledge and ancestral knowledge with the most advanced universal thought, in an ongoing process of decolonizing society. (Acosta, 2010, p. 12).

Thus,

(...) Latin American bioethics, especially Intervention Bioethics, took on a leading position in the perception of modern colonial logic, moving towards the proposal of providing decolonizing tools to resolve bioethical issues. (Nascimento, 2012, p. 164).

It

(...) undertook to expose and demystify the colonized image of life, claimed by various orders of imperialism (political, economic, moral, biomedical, etc.) and which chooses not only to structure social inequalities, but to contribute to maintaining them. (Nascimento; Garrafa, 2011, p. 188).

It is aiming for a bioethics that is more than interdisciplinary or intercultural, as although cultures exist behind the disciplines, the latter are not necessarily disciplines, cultures are also visions and non-disciplinary knowledge, but, ultimately, knowledge that can bring tools and views towards finding solutions to problems beyond those aired in the “natural settings” for bioethical dialogue, ethics committees for health research or health care. BI should be heading towards multiculturalism, a knowledge of knowledge, much closer to Potter’s initial, definitively reductionist proposal focused

on four principles applied to the study of human behavior in the field of life and health care science. Inter-disciplinary knowledge is not the same as cross-cultural. An intercultural knowledge such as the one proposed pursues intercultural actions targeted at solving these macroproblems which have constrained BI since its inception.

Such problems, of course, include environments that seriously endanger all life on the only living planet we know of. However, it seems that the issue is not merely knowledge, it is also ignorance. For the sake of prudence and responsibility to the future, the ignorance of today takes on importance. We have become accustomed to reveal the progress of expert knowledge and ironically disdain what could be called “encyclopedic ignorance” to which the accelerated race for patentable knowledge subjects us. An expert can be seen as an ignorant of anything beyond their expertise, nothing more than a connoisseur of what he dominates. If the different types of ethics committees bring together experts from different areas, not only knowledge, but also ignorance, can increase not necessarily resulting in good decisions.

If disciplines founded on reason should be discussed in bioethics, objectivity and dominion, which can be achieved with so-called interdisciplinary may follow the same path, that of reason now converted into reasons, objectivity transformed into objectivities and domain turned into domains i.e. coloniality. After interdisciplinary there is nothing other than the colonizing thinking of modernity, we thus seek to overcome it. Perhaps there are other ways of deciding together than those councils of experts, and bioethics limited to closed committees may be denying itself the chance to explore these ways. Latin America is immensely rich in non-expert knowledge that has been underestimated for centuries and that can open up possibilities if we open our minds to them, if we allow it to come to us without trying to subjugate it, as has been done so far. A bioethics from a Latin American perspective cannot be simply interdisciplinary, it must advance multiculturalism, otherwise, it will remain exclusive even while talking of democracy and pluralism.

## BI and International declarations

Not long ago, UNESCO produced two further significant declarations; in 2001, the Universal Declaration of Cultural Rights and, in 1997, the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and on Human Rights. The former mentions that “...*culture is at the heart of contemporary debates on identity, social cohesion and the development of a knowledge-based economy*” (UNESCO, 2001, p. 1), as well as that “*respect for cultural diversity, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of trust and mutual understanding, are one of the greatest guarantees of international peace and security*” (UNESCO, 2001, p. 1). It also emphasizes that:

Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations. (UNESCO, 2001, p. 3).

The points listed above, and other elements in the document, are clear positions to which the proposal of BI has leaned in its short career and which is still in undergoing a building process, but it need to be made explicit here and in the future, towards a more solid foundation of its approach both ethically and politically. The second of the above mentioned declarations states that the human genome is a common heritage of humanity, which in its natural state shall not give rise to financial gains and not justify discrimination by violating the dignity of human beings (UNESCO, 1997). Obviously this declaration contains statements that BI has defended since its inception in the 1990s.

## Final considerations

To summarize, on the rights and dignity of human beings, Intervention Bioethics is not only explicitly and fully consistent with two different UNESCO declarations, but also manages to introduce its social and political perspectives into the Univer-



sal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, showing consistency and commitment to a social context like that in which we now find ourselves, necessarily of plurality, that is, in societies where there are several ways to consider in the deliberative and decision-making processes. It is clear that our societies are multi-moral. Furthermore, it is down to BI to incorporate the philosophy of Living Well, while promoting its dissemination. Everyone has the right to a decent life, to ensured health, food, clean water, pure oxygen, adequate housing, sanitation, education, work, rest and leisure, physical education, clothing, pension, etc.

For Latin American bioethics, that modern look based on knowledge to submit, brings nothing precisely because it is a continent subjugated for so long. It is about constructing a non-subjugated bioethics and BI lies precisely on that line - resistance. Our America is a clear example that not everything can be understood, predicted or manipulated. Much of the African continent and also that of Asia, sharing problems with Latin America, now have a different perspective of the "official bioethics". BI opens up the possibilities to perspectives of exercising bioethics from the periphery of the world and, as it is enriched by contributions from our diverse Latin American cultures it may also be enriched by the contributions of African and Asian cultures as to ways of seeing and understanding life, techniques and sciences that affect it, in light of their own values and moral principles. In short, rather than an epistemological proposal exclusive to Latin American countries, BI is shown to be perfectly able to serve applied to other peripheral countries of the southern hemisphere of the world model.

The Bioethics touted by the center has ignored us but it is far from predicting the paths by which we will continue walking, although it tries to manipulate us. We have many opportunities to build a bioethics that highlights the emancipation of individuals and peoples, and we address ourselves to that, because a bioethics that focuses its theory and its practice on issues which, in the end, are reduced to norms of good clinical practice and research with living things, as if these were our major problems, is not enough although we have to and should also occupy ourselves with them.

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#### Authors' contribution

Rivas-Muñoz and Garrafa participated in conceiving, organizing, drawing up and reviewing the final work. Feitosa participated in drawing up the work (the concept of Living Well, culturality and in reviewing). Nascimento participated in drawing up the work (dialogue with utilitarianism, modernity and coloniality and reviewing).

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