



# Covid-19 and its Paradoxes: An Economic-Bioethical Analysis of the Brazilian Reality

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## Abstract

Brazil was one of the countries that was most impacted by the pandemic, both in the epidemiological aspect and in the economic causes. The federal government's lack of social responsibility in dealing responsibly and seriously with the effects of COVID-19 has thrown Brazil, one of the largest economies in the world, down a slippery slope. Our work makes a bibliographical review in the light of numbers and economic data from the beginning of the pandemic that portray how a country marked by a large gap of social inequality, the irresponsibility of the federal government only increased the gap between social classes, that is, excluded even more millions of people from the market of goods and services. Bioethics allied with economic thought showed itself to be a great intellectual tool, in order to show perspectives so that Brazil can overcome this unfair reality aggravated by the pandemic.

## Introduction

The year 2020 will certainly be marked, sadly, in the history of humanity as a key year. One of those that will be obligatorily inscribed in the history books. With the emergence of the most serious health problem after the Spanish Flu of 1918, and with economic impacts similar or even greater than those of the Second World War (1939-1945), the now globalized world will face many gigantic challenges to regain its economic dynamism. Besides making it possible to rethink about what remained unsolved, economically and politically, after the great economic crisis of 2008/2009, coincidentally, the year that marked the outbreak of the H1N1 virus epidemic. Definitely, infectious agents are interfering in the life of countries beyond the merely epidemiological data, greatly changing the macroeconomic scenarios. The COVID-19 virus is the clearest evidence of this.

Due to the severity of the symptoms caused by the disease and its mortality rate, which affects, above all, the older sectors of the population. COVID-19 has been declared

a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), and there is a direct link between the spread of the disease and its catastrophic impact on the world's manufacturing sector. The philosophical, ethical, bioethical, and economic issues that have arisen this year are likely to remain as models of challenges to be faced for the future. Through this article, it is intended, aware of the limitations of these few pages and without wishing to exhaust the subject, to analyze through an economic-bioethical bias the impact of the pandemic, already so present in the daily lives of humanity, and especially in Brazil, since the virus was reported in China in late 2019.

It is known that the Brazilian case is aggravated, greatly, because of the deep economic-political crisis that dates back to 2015/2016 and that has only worsened in the following years, in which social inequality has increased, vertiginously, coupled with a poor economic growth that was unable to insert young workers in the labor market, not to mention the increased precariousness of labor laws that threw millions of Brazilians into informality.

In recent years, labor and social security reforms of a clearly neoliberal nature were implemented, maliciously and hastily, to please the big bankers and the rentier elite. Add the approval of the Expenditure Ceiling Law [1], through Constitutional Amendment 95 of 2016, which greatly limited the State's investment capacity, and we have a catastrophic scenario for the people's quality of life, that is, the Brazilian welfare state was already mitigated, historically, and now becomes even more fragile and weak, to cope with the huge and just demands for social inclusion and rescue of citizenship for a large portion of the people.

The precariousness of labor - with the weakening of the CLT (Consolidation of Labor Laws) and its historical achievements [2] - means fewer labor rights, atomization of society's relations, and decrease of the state presence. This reform allowed the outsourcing of labour, flexible working hours, consensual dismissal, among others. It is emphasized that these strongly neoliberal policies were the result of choices made with little or no consultation with civil society, by a National Congress mostly represented by the owners of capital and landowners, with little concern for social justice and the distribution of income and opportunities. The Parliamentary Front for Agriculture and Livestock (FPA), called the "ruralist caucus", formed by representatives or owners of large landholdings, has consolidated its role as the most powerful group in the Brazilian Congress with 40% of the members of the legislative power.

The representatives of the workers are an overwhelming minority in the Brazilian Parliament and, by the way: the higher courts, especially the STF - Federal Supreme Court - which, in theory, should be the guardian of the 1988 Federal Constitution, turned a blind eye or, at least, connived with the enforcement of laws that favor big capital to the detriment of salaried work. Thus, making the capital/labor relationship in Brazil, which is already one of the most unfair and exploitative in the world, even more exploited, condemning millions of people to the misery of informal work, unassisted of income and decent jobs that can give them full citizenship, and without prospects of future welfare assistance.

While the Brazilian citizen, through the media and the press, sees countries in Europe and even South American countries, such as neighboring Argentina, having an effective state role, sparing no efforts to stimulate the economic activity with powerful fiscal stimuli and the release of large sums of money from the budget, to increase and foster the economic sector, the Brazilian government, in the opposite direction, seems to be betting on the consolidation of failure, by means of passivity and inert attitudes when creating only timid economic policies, such as employment and income generation in face of the serious and urgent needs to boost

consumption and production and activate, quickly, the entire economic chain.

In this article, questions about the world of work, population health, economics, and bioethics will be addressed, so that there is an understanding of why some political reactions to this crisis, or the lack of them, with emphasis on Brazil. The first questions to be answered with the emergence of this immense health, social, and economic crisis that devastates the world in this beginning of 2020 are, in the following lines: what is the value of human life inserted in a world that demands more and more production, and which Brazilian society do you want when the crisis is over, having as background the Brazilian government's performance before the pandemic.

Then, we will analyze the vision of classic authors of economic literature when facing crises and pandemics already seen in the history of humanity and capitalism, as well as aspects that demean the value of labor in moments of great crises. We will analyze the false ethical dichotomy that certain sectors wish to impose when they argue that the economy prevails over life from an ethical-bioethical perspective.

### **The Chaos of Government Inertia and the Value of Labor**

At a time when the economic situation is worsening, with the real impacts of COVID-19 on the economy, little is known about what the role of the State will be, to help the population and which instruments should be used, to avoid social ruin. But, given that the current government of Brazil - elected for the period 2018-2022 - defends a worldview of extreme right, non-secular, science denial, as well as evidently fascist and the banners of an extreme liberalism in which any action or policy induced by the state to benefit its citizens is frowned upon, it is not difficult to conclude that the role of the Brazilian state in the face of the current pandemic will be inert, more passive, or, at the very least, will stand by with its arms crossed in the face of the enormous humanitarian and economic demands that are urgent. Thus, the provocation arises: What really is the role of the State? If a State has no power of mobilization and active force in cases of health collapse and economic depression, why does it have its *raison d'être*? These are questions that mobilize us practically and theoretically, and we do not want to go down the path of political skepticism.

One does not yet know when the psychological shock of thousands of deaths caused by COVID-19 will end and concern about economic recovery will begin, especially after most nations begin the quarantine protocol, closing stores

and industries. Wouldn't stopping production, stopping work, be more dangerous for the poorest people, for businessmen, or for the state's finances, than isolating only vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, and letting everything remain with some degree of normality? After all, the wheel of the economy cannot stop turning. Before we can address the ethical dilemmas that arise, we must first understand the problem of the value of work from the philosophical point of view, in order to better situate ourselves within the current problem; we will even take a short trip back in history to the time of the Black Death, where the economic consequences were felt in a short period of time.

The economy can only be understood from the value of work that is inherited from philosophy and religion, although today it seems to be detached from the work of individual men and women. One has in part the idea that work would be a curse after the first disobedience, as we read in the Holy Bible (Genesis, 1), that man has all things at once, and then has to struggle, to get them all, with his sweat. However, in Hesiod's Greek thought there is already the notion of ennoblement through work, and manual labor (*Works and the Days*, 310), because valuing what is intellectual over what is manual is a direct heritage of the biblical tradition, criticized by Engels (1978, p. 24) [3].

Another question comes even from a question of physics: is the universe losing strength, with increasing disorder in the system (entropy), or is it increasing strength through more and more intense organization and differentiation with concentration in small spaces (syntropy). Hans Jonas believed in this Law of Entropy the impossibility of circumventing this causality in any technical invention - that is, having one thing and avoiding another, separating abundance from energy consumption and its thermal consequences - is ultimately similar to the impossibility of constructing a perpetual mobile: the inflexible law of entropy, according to which energy is "lost" every time it is consumed, all energy degenerates in the end into heat, and heat dissipates, composing with the environment an average value. For the law of thermodynamics, these terms are non-negotiable (2006, p. 306).

Are the resources at hand scarce or not, and how large is the potential (dynamis) generated by human labor? These are questions that have had a number of approaches over time. Before even mentioning the economist Thomas Malthus (1766-1834), who has resurfaced with force in recent weeks, it should be noted that the Spending Ceiling Law [1], as established by the Brazilian Congress, also known as Constitutional Amendment 95 is the most acute symptom of a system's loss of strength, because it limits the increase in spending and investment to that of the previous year, except that the rather obvious problem is that if spending has

already been cut in the year that has passed, the following year's will necessarily be smaller.

This disinvestment goes against what economics should preach, which is confidence in economic entrepreneurial activity, as Engels stated that "no society disappears before it has exhausted all its productive forces" (1978, p. 61), which is contrary to the belief of the kind that Brazil invented and enshrined in its Magna Carta. This kind of thinking, which does not believe in the power of production and science, is derived from the English economist Thomas Malthus, so much fought by Marx and Engels and which has resurfaced, now, with the impacts of COVID-19.

The main Malthusian thesis is that production does not keep pace with population growth, however, the scientific aspect of this thesis has not been proven, and it has always been subjective and questionable to say what the appropriate size of the population would be at any time in history, "the Earth would be overpopulated by now" (p. 63) [3]. Engels, differently, always believed that science would accrue to man with the fruit of his labor, so there would be no lack of resources or food (1978, p. 61).

Covid-19 can be classified as a Malthusian positive check, which would limit population and economic growth by means of a disease. But there is no evidence of a high population growth; on the contrary, today the developed world, such as Brazil, is facing a high level of population aging and increasing social security expenses; Brazil, in 2016, had the fifth largest elderly population in the world, and by 2030, the number of elderly people will exceed the total number of children between zero and 14 years old. And in European countries this problem is more pronounced. Concerns about the level of population are already present in Aristotle, who defends property as freer than population growth, the latter should be limited, but not private property [5]. But how does the economic literature understand the phenomena of crises and pandemics?

### Crises and Pandemics in the Light of Economic Reflection

It is known that at the time of Malthus, one of his disciples celebrated the death of the poorest so that resources would be released for other areas. Wouldn't that be the reason to consider that now, because the new virus has a much higher mortality rate among the elderly, spending on social security will decrease? To speak irresponsibly that it is the duty of families, and not of the State, to support the elderly in a pandemic, while absolving oneself of responsibility, is to have no notion that the State's economy is the result of the accumulation of the work done by previous generations, a gain in strength that is left to younger people, including new

governors.

What kind of economic calculation and ethical justification is there to let part of the population die, besides not taking into account, in the case of an early return to work, the costs involved in the time that the younger people contaminated by COVID-19 will spend in emergencies or ICUs. The increasing disinvestment in health care by the Spending Ceiling Law [1] will be a tragic legacy of our time for future Brazilians, and a more than perfect example of the loss of strength of the universal social protection system.

One of the most cited examples of what would be a Malthusian catastrophe was the Black Death of the 14th century. The economic effect that was evident after millions of people died was that wages went up, and the survivors did not want to work for cheap; social relations changed (2006, p. 260). One can hardly think that the big businessmen of the world would like to see wages going up after this current crisis, because it is notorious that the rush for workers to get back to production is more explicit in many cases than some health concern.

This haste is reminiscent of a very specific critique by Marx of Plato's philosophy, (2011, p. 1291) [6]. To hurry the worker, lest the work fade away, which is nothing more than to place production and the product as more important than the one who produces. What we can infer from this haste for the resumption of economic activities is that the owners of capital do not want to allow the worker time to think, and this includes thinking about where we are going with so much production and consumption, because if the activities start right away, thinking will not have had time to mature.

One of Marx's (1985, p. 273) [7] most important theses on the realm of freedom is about the control that each person has over his or her own time, and that if the individual wants to exercise more than one activity, he or she can do so; which is different from the worker specialized in a single task, subjected to the time of the work, defended by Plato. The chief economist of the Austrian school, Ludwig von Mises, ironized this attempt by Marx to liberate the worker, because he would be driven only by immediate satisfaction, in what can be compared to Pavlov's dog reward reflexes (2010, p. 174) [8].

The explanation of the value of work is the defense of its main aspect, which is the human being. Some have seen in the beginning of everything in history, the creative activity of the Gods, which human beings would imitate, and Mises, a liberal theorist, even without being a theologian, denies this kind of activity (2010, p. 99). Very different is the Greek poet Arato, in his work *Phainomena* (Phainomena), in which he praises the creative activity of Zeus by the rays of the

sun, which allow the daily gathering of human beings in the markets and who, through daily work, illuminated by the rays of the sun, which are the herald of the Gods, by practice and thought (πράξεις καὶ τὰς νοήσεις) are on earth the heralds of the new thoughts of the day (p. 220) [9].

Engels' belief in human productive science can be equated with that of Philoon of Alexandria (2020), who sees in the potential of the materials available in the world the wonderful divine calculation that has arranged everything for us, with nothing lacking. The moment you assign a perverse calculation of population decrease so that resources will not run out, economic science ceases to serve human beings. Hans Jonas could not accept this kind of thinking

Much later, and not at all childishly, Malthusianism was officially "condemned" as a doctrine of the bourgeois class, and Moscow proclaimed - well before China - that a socialist science and technique, aimed at food production, would be able to keep up with any population growth. In fact, it explicitly repudiated the idea that there was a natural limit imposed on human ingenuity (2006, p. 255).

Contrary to Kelly's (p.357-365) [10] assertion, after the great devastation that the Black Death caused, advances in technology can hardly be credited to a shortage of workers, because the theoretical basis of technological-scientific advances predates the pandemic. The technologies - gunpowder and mills - existed before the pandemic in the Middle Ages, and were used. Furthermore, Kelly does not explain why there has not been the same explosion of science and technology in other parts of the world, especially in Asia, which was as devastated as Europe by the pandemic.

The release of this dynamis should be the obligation at this time when the problems generated by the fall in activity will once again have to be bailed out by the state. Unlike what is being done by Brazil since the Expenditure Ceiling Law [11], Keynes strongly recommended increasing aggregate demand through private means, with the lowering of interest rates, and through public investment (2007, p. 94). Through increased consumption of the population, the demand for private health services arises; through public works, one invests in sanitation (2007, p. 95). After all, the physical and mental well-being of the population is the starting point of work and productivity.

Investments can only arise because of the studied possibility of increased demand, and this does not go against the Marxist view of time control, because with the increase of this dynamis, in the differentiations that will arise, each one will find a space, generating more energy, [11] and with the new needs "each one gains more social status because of his human potential" (1975, p. 234).

The investments suggested by Keynes in the health area had as a lasting effect the growth of the chemical and pharmaceutical industry and increase in the manufacturing of hospital equipment (2007, p. 98). Keynes' initiatives could be described by Diego García as examples of Utilitarianism, which, from a search for the greater good of all, became motivated by the greater good of all and of each one individually, that is, there is the principle of universalization (2007, p. 113) [12]. Therefore, in Brazil, it is impossible to admit the need to open trade ahead of time, for the benefit of a few owners of capital to the detriment of the majority of the population, and much less that the most vulnerable parts of the population be sacrificed in the name of a supposedly well-functioning economy.

Nothing indicates that a return to the labor market, accelerating the economic process before the discovery of a cure for the disease or a vaccine, as well as the death of thousands of people will not mean, as happened in the Middle Ages during the Black Death, that workers will have gains in their wages. Today, the so-called owners of the means of production have political weapons that protect them from this type of workers' claim, because the fall of the world economy as a result of COVID-19 is certain and undeniable, having alongside it, as a corollary, unemployment; and when everything returns to normal, in no way will wage workers be able to demand higher wages, because unemployment can be controlled, as Mises taught, by placing the blame on those who make too many demands to work, such as decent wages (2010, p. 658).

Brazil is already facing a very accelerated population aging process, and a large part of the municipalities depend on the INSS and on programs such as Bolsa Família, i.e., direct income transfer from the federal level to the states and municipalities. On the other hand, there is an incentive for young people to enter the job market faster, while retirement is delayed, which doesn't make any sense in economic terms.

Young people should enter the job market later, with emphasis on university education, retirements would be facilitated and, what is fundamental, there would be investments in health care, to decrease mortality among the elderly, of course, without neglecting the other age groups, but for Brazil it is necessary that the elderly live longer and with more quality of life, given the income transfer mentioned above; at the same time, since youth has decreased, it is inexplicable to emphasize work more than preparation for work. To do this, while transforming the death of the elderly and most vulnerable into something cheap, that is, costing little to capital, is to give the Brazilian economy a death sentence.

In a normal situation, if real science, both political

and economic, was applied, these decisions would have to be reviewed. The cost of the death of an individual, as an economic agent, should be high, if they are elderly, and very high, if they are young in full productive capacity, in which it would be ridiculous, for example, to expose them to an early opening of trade, because then there would be losses at both ends. To raise the level of the productive population with more educational capacity, while avoiding unnecessary deaths, in the Brazilian case more than ever among the elderly, is to accomplish what is called the maturation of society, which can be understood as a control of time (1975, p. 138) [11]. The goal is to allow time for education, to avoid deaths and trips to hospitals, and the loss of strength in the economy because of the epidemic, which if it severely affects young and old, will throw our country into a chaotic situation financially.

Another factor that must be taken into consideration is that one is not dealing with numbers, because people are not statistics. Marx (2011, p. 494) observed that the difference of individual labor at a narrower level of production became more diffuse when industry employed more workers [6]. In an economy, which in recent times has placed so much importance on entrepreneurship, much to the Liberals' liking, therefore on the individual, what is the solution and the calculation one makes, if many of these entrepreneurs die or become ill? The difference of self-employment should be much more evident than on a state level, with various employees and reserve cadre. If the dynamism of Brazil's production framework is going to be transferred to individuals, with fewer state agencies and public tenders, any death of these economic agents, more than ever, must be seen as worrying, and if thousands die, or get sick at the same time in the pandemic, as the worst of all catastrophes.

Another problem, and this one more serious, is what family, economic and psychological problems would be triggered if an elderly person, who for the most part, perhaps the majority, supports children and grandchildren with the help of the INSS, were to die from the virus? The preparatory maturity of the new generations would be destroyed, and no one can know in advance the consequences for the future of our society, but from what has been addressed, these are individuals who should be protected by the government in the interest of economic return, and the death of any of them should be analyzed by this bias.

We don't know yet how long it will take to get out of this pandemic, but in the coming months a deep debate about investments in health will be necessary, and above all, what will be the relationship between workers and employers? There may be some kind of retaliation, even if it is the increase of working hours, which may become exhausting, to recover the losses with the quarantine. It can be seen that the

perspectives for those who see their labor force as a means of subsistence are not at all encouraging, given the political pressure that the owners of capital exert in the centers of decision-making power.

Next, we will analyze, bioethically, the implications arising from the current Brazilian policy - at least from the Executive Branch - in favor of economic activity and profit of the owners of capital at the cost of sanitary collapse and exhaustion of the health system, with literally mortal consequences, that is, in the increase of the number of deaths due to the negligence of health protection policies for the people.

### Dignity X Price: Deadly Paradox

The history of philosophy has been trying for 2500 years to justifiably build a discourse that defends the sociability of humans, seeking to build a social fabric in which dignified life is an achievement for all people. It is known that the human being is a political animal [5]. There is no human life with ethical perspectives, if not thinking of the common good and rules that protect everyone. The overcoming of the state of savagery and barbarism happened as men became more complex and solidified their social ties, either by the division of tasks or by the implementation of legal rules.

There have been many challenges that ethical reflection, this science that seeks to justify through reason human actions so that there may be justice and well-being, has faced in human history since its emergence in the Greek polis. Challenges not only political and warlike, but also health challenges have been on its radar. This is clear from the famous Hippocratic oath (460-377 B.C.) in which those caring for people's health had to follow certain norms and interdict practices harmful to human life. It can be said that the legacy of Hippocrates is a millennial document that shows how ethics from its very beginning was concerned with the issue of human health and sought to regulate medical and curative practices.

Given that the field of medical science has been growing and increasing the challenges for a good decision making or a well-supported ethical-moral judgment in the 20th century, a new field to debate issues involving science and health has been born: Bioethics. A very important work to raise awareness about the limits of science and the importance of human life within the economic context is the work *Bioethic: Bridge to the Future*, published in 1971 by the American oncologist Van R. Potter, which, for many, is the beginning of bioethics [13]. Potter, through this work, tried to combine principles and theoretical gains from the humanist tradition within the great technological revolutions that were

reformulating science and medicine, defending life and its principles against practices that only focused on profit and the economic results of large pharmaceutical companies.

From that point on, bioethics started to spread around the world, first in academia, then in parliaments, and, gradually, in people's lives. It is recognized that there is still a long way to go, but practical results can already be seen, and when facing the bioethical dilemmas posed by COVID-19, one can see how important bioethics is as a reflexive instrument, to curb the impulses of capitalist sectors that put profit and the results of their work in detriment of people's lives.

What is most important in this hour of total chaos, caused by the pandemic, is the clear presence of ethical principles that protect human life from all forms of degradation, above values and positivist conceptions. Habermas argues that norms and principles have a greater force of justification than values, since they can claim, in addition to a special dignity of preference, a general obligation, due to their deontological sense of validity; values have to be inserted, case by case, into a transitive order of values (1997, p. 321) [14].

We learned from Kant, the greatest exponent of deontological ethics, since the Enlightenment, that ethics and epistemology have in the human being and in the use of his reason, whether in its theoretical or practical use, the guiding center, in order to make judgments, here, in the case of judgment, the moral dimension. The dignity of the human person is not a theoretical or rhetorical resource, but has its foundation in the use of reason. The human being, and here, one does not get into the debate whether Kantian ethics is too anthropocentric. The focus is on using the richness and potentiality of the ethical thought of the philosopher from Königsberg and showing that the human being is priceless, unlike things. The pillar of Kantian ethics is the good will,

The good will is not good by what it promotes or accomplishes, by the aptitude to achieve any proposed end, but only by the will, that is, in itself, and, considered in itself, must be evaluated in a much higher degree than anything that through it can be achieved for the benefit of any inclination, or even, if you like, of the sum of all inclinations (p. 29) [15].

Facing the life of human beings, one cannot make cost x benefit calculations, so fashionable in the neoutilitarian inspired currents of our time. The human being has dignity which cannot be exchanged or be object of commerce with any other form, because by the categorical imperative one must act under the judgment that the maxims of actions only have an ethical-moral value if they can be universalized. "Act as if the maxim of your action should become, by your will, a universal law of nature" (2005, p. 50) [15].

## Conclusion

We sought to analyze the Brazilian reality under the impact of COVID-19, highlighting the economic and bioethical consequences resulting from the public policies implemented by the executive power of Brazil in order to minimize the harmful effects on the health and welfare of the population. Moreover, it was intended to focus on the causes why the labor market and the national economy quickly entered a crisis without historical precedent, showing the direct relationship between increased vulnerability and job insecurity and the major labor and social security reforms, of a markedly neoliberal nature, recently implemented. To justify the thesis, a literature review of the main economic theories about the value of labor in times of crisis and the lessons learned from the pandemics that have occurred in history, such as the Black Death, was conducted. Finally, the political choices of the Brazilian state in the face of the pandemic were seen from the perspective of the bioethical tradition and its principles.

The conclusion is that the ethical and bioethical values and principles of life protection are being challenged by the economic sectors, and especially by the executive power of the Brazilian state, which, either by conviction or pressure from the owners of capital, is hesitating to take preventive measures against COVID-19 in line with international protocols, especially the World Health Organization (WHO). This shows the fragility and timidity of the speeches in favor of life that, many times, emanate from the social groups with more power to impact the life of society.

It was seen that the actions taken by Brazil are very timid in the face of the melting economic activity and that this scenario worsens as the Brazilian internal market resents the major reforms - labor and social security - which have significantly altered the capital x labor relationship, leading to a weakening of the bargaining power of the working class. Moreover, the nation was already immersed in a scenario of deep retraction of economic activities since 2015, originating from the political instability experienced in this period until the appearance of the pandemic. Then, the economic-political macro-scenario, which was already deteriorated by the internal crises, worsened even more mercilessly.

The classical lessons of economics in moments of great economic crises point in the direction of strong state intervention as a response to get out of the crisis. Keynes continues to be unsurpassed when he precepts the increase in demand driven by state action as a motor to get the economy out of the quagmire. This wise lesson is being ignored by the economic policy makers in Brazil during the COVID-19 period. As we have seen, Constitutional Amendment 95 (BRAZIL, 2016), which imposes a spending cap on the public

budget for a period of 20 years and was enacted in 2016, practically freezes the power of countercyclical policies. The period in which we are immersed demands the formulation of very aggressive government policies that stimulate the economy, either with public works or by expanding credit.

The negligence of the managers of the economic crisis during the pandemic leads Brazil, and consequently its population, to bitterly suffer very bad rates socially. The weakness of Brazilian policies in the COVID-19 era can be clearly seen when compared to the role that European states are playing at this moment - being strong inducers of economic activities, to avoid the worst possible scenario. The value of labor with more recession will be further degraded and exploited, creating a negative cycle of loss of income and consumption power of the vast majority.

Economic policy and ethics and bioethics cannot be separated. They are sides of the same coin: the welfare of the entire population and social justice. Since when the conditions of employability and work valuation are not given, conditions are created to degrade human life and everything that concerns a life within ethically acceptable standards. The 2020 pandemic shows, once again, that the values and principles derived from the humanist tradition of our culture are a protective barrier in favor of those who are not privileged within the system of goods and rights. In a country with enormous distortions in the distribution of income and existing resources, privileging economic activity over the health and life of the people will ultimately mean condemning the economically weakest to death.

COVID-19 is imposing a new economic agenda on all countries and, domestically, labor relations are already being changed as well. It is known that the weakest link in this chain is the value of salaried labor and the value of labor as the recession deepens will be flattened even further, as taught by the masters of economic doctrine. In light of this, it is increasingly important that all sectors of society and national life unite in favor of development and the implementation of anti-cyclical policies fostering the entire productive chain, in order to value the need for more labor. Public managers must be statist in these difficult times of human history. At this moment it is not appropriate to hide behind the philosophical convictions of a pusillanimous neoliberalism, especially in a country that historically has the power of the state as one of its main inducers of economic growth and development [16-18].

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