

ON PUBLIC POLICIES TO FIGHT FOOD INSECURITY: A CURRENT AND NECESSARY REFLECTION FROM THE UBUNTU PERSPECTIVE

SOBRE AS POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS DE COMBATE À INSEGURANÇA ALIMENTAR: UMA REFLEXÃO ATUAL E NECESSÁRIA NA PERSPECTIVA UBUNTU

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Abstract:

This text proposes a reflective study about the current table of concepts and regulations related to food insecurity in Brazil, as well as the relevance of support in public policies adopted by the country in the fight against hunger. The food insecurity phenomenon analyzed in this article aiming to understand its evident occurrence nowadays especially in the ongoing pandemic scenario. By using the qualitative dialectical method, the right to food is presented in Brazilian legislation, public policies, challenges, perspectives, and the strategic axiological support configured by the Ubuntu perspective in the construction of a new comprehension of protection for individuals affected by familiar insecurity.

Keywords: Ethics. Hunger Map. Critical Interculturality. Hungry.

Resumo:

Propõe-se um estudo reflexivo acerca do atual panorama referente aos conceitos e normativas ligadas à insegurança alimentar no Brasil, bem como à relevância do amparo em políticas públicas adotadas pelo país no combate à fome. Analisa-se o fenômeno da insegurança alimentar, pretendendo, sobretudo, compreender a evidente ocorrência na atualidade, mormente, no cenário pandêmico ainda em curso. Pela utilização do método dialético qualitativo, apresenta-se o direito à alimentação à luz da legislação brasileira, as políticas públicas, os desafios, perspectivas e o estratégico apoio axiológico configurado pela perspectiva Ubuntu na construção de um novo olhar de proteção aos indivíduos afetados pela insegurança familiar.

Palavras-chave: Ética. Mapa da Fome. Interculturalidade Crítica. Fome.

Summary: 1. Introduction; 2. On Hunger Seen in the Polite Detail of a Modern Euphemism; 3. The Roots of Ubuntu and the Defense of the Principle of Communalism;

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4. Public Food Security Policies in an Economic Perspective of Humanized Growth; 5. Final Considerations; 4. References.

Sumário: 1. Introdução; 2. Sobre a Fome Vista no Detalhe Educado de um Eufemismo Moderno; 3. As Raízes do Ubuntu e a Defesa do Princípio do Comunalismo; 4. Políticas Públicas de Segurança Alimentar numa Perspectiva Econômica de Crescimento Humanizado; 5. Considerações Finais; 6. Referências.

1 INTRODUCTION

The present work reflectively focus on some of the conceptions, practices and regulations that support national public policies both at the federal and state levels, taking into account the assumption that they are fundamental in the fight against hunger, since it starts from the basic assumption according to which, historically, the so-called food insecurity is considered the result of political and economic choices of societies.

The purpose is to present another perspective of overcoming hunger based on the millenary ideas and practices of peoples of sub-Saharan Africa configured in a community cooperativism, insofar as the objective reality of the more than 33 million hungry people in our country is pointing out the urgency in alternative models for food production and distribution can be established. It is important to highlight that access to these, in our country (as in the world), remains profoundly unequal in terms of economic and geographic distribution.

In this perspective, the work starts from the initial assumption according to which the University plays a key role in contributing to the fight against hunger, by raising discussion among its peers with the objective of elaborating solid public policy guidelines, to be made available for federal, state and municipal agencies.

Taking as a starting point the hypothesis that needy communities are crossed by multiple vulnerability factors, and that each vulnerability brings pain and social consequences, it is necessary that the law as a whole observes these congruences of multiple factors, which culminate in the situation of total need and hunger demanding differentiated and effective state protection.

This is the guiding element of the present essay, which, through the use of a bibliographic and documental review, seeking the application of the hypothetical-deductive method, in a descriptive and explanatory research, seeks at first to reflectively present the doctrine about the Ubuntu philosophy, identifying to what extent this concept contributed to the debate on access and the development of public policies aimed at overcoming social inequalities.

Then, through the application of the dialectical methodology and the use of an interpretation of teleological bias, the authors promote a comparison with the perspective of the principled application of Ubuntu and the possibilities arising from it in the fight against hunger.

In summary, the reader is proposed and encouraged, as a result, to reflect on the need to include the Ubuntu perspective in the Human Rights scenario for the realization of such rights, based on the analysis of food insecurity. Choosing as a theoretical framework the consideration of the notions of Ubuntu exposed by Mogose Ramose, the understanding of social autonomy proposed by Cornelius Castoriadis and the teachings about a critical interculturality along the lines

suggested by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Fidel Tubino and Vera Candau aspires to advance in the conceptual apprehension and in the praxis of the potential of Ubuntu in perspective of give access to the effectiveness of public policies guaranteeing Human Rights in the standpoint of alleviating and overcoming the cruel phenomenon of hunger.

2 ON HUNGER SEEN IN EDUCATED DETAIL OF A MODERN EUPHEMISM

The euphemism is that figure of speech often used to make an utterance softer or more pleasant and less hostile. It is often used in scenarios that determine restraint or to discuss intense and controversial content through more delicate and less boisterous terms. This stylistic device is associated with amenity.

The euphemism is often used to replace a word or term considered politically incorrect or inappropriate, attenuating its meaning. This is why it is possible to perceive the existence of degrees in the use of the euphemism that will not be the same depending on how much the intensity of the meaning of the original term is softened by the substitution made. Thus, prostitution is replaced by “easy life” or the act of dying, due to its negative charge, is replaced by “going upstairs”.

There was a time when there was hunger in Brazil. Not today. It is considered politically incorrect to say that someone is hungry or is dying of hunger. It is correct to say that this individual suffers from “food insecurity”. It is softer for the sensitive ears of economists and stock market investors who may feel affronted by the fact that, nowadays, more than 33 million Brazilians go hungry every day, and more than 125 million do not have guaranteed what to eat daily, according to data from the Brazilian Research Network on Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security – PENSSAN Network (2020).

Hunger showed itself across the country like never before. Impossible to look away. What is so evident with faces, names, is proven by research that makes a frightening observation: today, more than half of the country's population (58.7%) is food insecure. A technical name to explain that out of ten families, six face difficulties in eating. There are more than 125 million Brazilians who do not have food guaranteed every day. Neither in quantity nor in quality. Among them, 33 million live an even crueler reality: they go hungry⁴.

The right to adequate food is part of the list of Human Rights, called the Human Right to Adequate Food (DHAA), which may even seem somewhat obvious, such as the right to air to breathe and not suffocate, or to water to not die of thirst. This being essentially basic, since, like the previous ones, the very right to life depends on it. However, and even so, or perhaps for this reason, this particular right – like the others – unfortunately often goes unnoticed in discussions about public policy priorities.

This work will point out that both at national and state levels, a vast normative role, starting with the constitutional text of 1988, provides ballast to the

⁴ NATIONAL JOURNAL, “More Than 33 Million Brazilians Go Hungry Every Day, Reveals Research”, available at: <https://g1.globo.com/jornal-nacional/noticia/2022/06/08/mais-de-33-milhoes-de-brasileiros-pas-sam-fome-todo-dia-revela-pesquisa.ghtml>, accessed on: Sep. 17 2022.

right of all people to eat in an adequate and dignified way. In addition, alongside the notion of the right to food, it is important to point out the concept of food sovereignty and, no less important, food and nutrition security.

Food sovereignty is

(...) the right of peoples to define their own policies and sustainable strategies for the production, distribution and consumption of food that guarantee the right to food for the entire population, based on small and medium production, respecting their own cultures and the diversity of modes. peasants, fishermen and indigenous people of agricultural production, marketing and management of rural spaces, in which women play a fundamental role (...). Food sovereignty is the way to eradicate hunger and malnutrition and ensure lasting and sustainable food security for all peoples⁵.

On food and nutrition security, it is important to note that under the Organic Law on Food and Nutrition Security (LOSAN, Law 11,346, of September 15, 2006), is understood as the realization of the right of all individuals to regular and permanent access to quality food, in sufficient quantity, without being compromised access to other essential needs, from food practices that promote health, respect cultural diversity and are environmentally, culturally, economically and socially sustainable. These were the commitments made by the Federal Government in 2003, when it proposed to combat hunger and poverty in the country, when the Agenda for Food and Nutrition Security (SAN) was created as a state policy. A lot has changed since then.

In any case, it must be considered that hunger reveals itself as a historical problem in our country, as a result of deep social inequality. However, it had been successfully addressed in recent decades, especially through public policies implemented in the administrations of federal governments (2003 to 2006, and from 2007 to 2011). Just as an example, it is possible to mention that, in 2013, the National Household Sample Survey, carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), pointed out that the share of the population in a food insecurity situation had dropped to 4, 2% – the lowest level recorded to date. Thus, the *Food and Agriculture Organization* (FAO) for the first time excluded Brazil from the so-called World Hunger Map⁶⁷.

However, the problem has worsened recently, not only because of the global economic and political crisis, but with the increase of unemployment, the real loss of purchasing power and informal work, but especially as a result of the dismantling of public policies until then. existing and referred to in the previous paragraph – situation aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is worth remembering that, currently, in the understanding of government policy, the constant disregard of

⁵ WORLD FORUM ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, *Final Declaration Of The World Forum On Food Sovereignty*, Havana, Sept. 2001, available at: <http://redes.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/declaracion-final-del-foro-mundial-sobre-soverania-alimentaria.pdf>, accessed on: 22 Sep. 2022

⁶ BRAZILIAN NUTRITION ASSOCIATION, *National Survey On The Pandemic Points To Epidemic Peak Of Hunger*, Sept. 2021, available at: <https://www.asbran.org.br/noticias/inquerito-nacional-na-pandemia-aponta-pico-epidemico-da-fome>, accessed on: 22 Sept. 2022

⁷ BRAZILIAN RESEARCH NETWORK ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND SECURITY – PENSSAN, *II National Survey on Food Insecurity in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Brazil*, São Paulo, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2022, p. 72.

negative data to the official discourse prevails, something that can be well outlined in the words of the Minister of Economy: “*These are economic facts, it is of no use. The political tactic is noise: 33 million people are starving. It's a lie, it's false. These are not the numbers*”, he stated, without, however, according to the same article, stating what would be the correct numbers in his opinion⁸.

It is also important to point out that the same PENSSAN survey⁹ reveals that about 55.2% of the Brazilian population, estimated at 212.6 million Brazilians, are affected by intra-family food insecurity; which is a setback when compared to the rates recorded in previous years. Even so, this situation could have been worse if in 2020 emergency aid had not been granted by the Federal Congress. It is true that, even though it is relevant to the emergency fight against hunger in the country, welfarism cannot be embodied in public policy, as food insecurity reveals itself as a structural problem and not only at one or another moment of the national scenario, as will be demonstrated throughout this work.

3 THE ROOTS OF UBUNTU AND THE DEFENSE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF COMMUNALISM

The Ubuntu concept to be considered takes into account the interpretation proposed by Mogobe B. Ramose¹⁰, when stating that “*Ubuntu is the root of African philosophy*” and that “*Ubuntu is the fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought of the Bantu-speaking peoples*”, according to which “*I only exist because we exist*”, being this conception related to existence based on the principle of communalism; it is also structured as a pillar in the defense of the preservation of the productive means used to satisfy the common needs of the social group, so precious to the satisfaction of basic needs, able to avoid the phenomenon of hunger and food insecurity.

Conceived from the economic point of view, Ubuntu transcends the commonplace of western production values by seeking sociocultural development in which the value of solidarity is essential for the existence of human beings, abandoning the immediatist and exclusivist idea of economic growth, and more than that, of the latter as the sole propeller of a primitive accumulation of capital, called by Adam Smith as *previous accumulation*¹¹:

This primitive accumulation plays approximately the same role in political economy as original sin does in theology. Adam bit the apple, and thereupon sin fell on the human race. Its origin is supposed to be explained when it is told as an anecdote about the past. Long, long ago there were two sorts of people; one, the diligent,

⁸ BRIGATTI, Fernanda, ‘*It's false, it's a lie*’, says Guedes about 33 million Brazilians going hungry: minister opposes research that shows severe food insecurity in the country, Folha de São Paulo, São Paulo, 21 Sep. 2022, available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2022/09/e-falso-e-mentira-diz-guedes-sobre-33-milhoes-de-brasileiros-passando-fome.shtml>, accessed: 21 Sep. 2022

⁹ BRAZILIAN RESEARCH NETWORK ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND SECURITY – PENSSAN, *II National Survey on Food Insecurity in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Brazil*, São Paulo, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2022, p. 20.

¹⁰ “The Ethics Of Ubuntu”, in PH COETZEE & APJ ROUX (Eds.), *Philosophy from Africa*, Oxford, England, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 123.

¹¹ MARX, Karl, *Capital: Book I*, São Paulo, Boitempo, 2013, p. 959-960

intelligent and above all frugal elite; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance, and more, in riotous living. The legend of theological original sin tells us certainly how man came to be condemned to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; but the history of economic original sin reveals to us that there are people to whom this is by no means essential. Never mind! Thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort finally had nothing to sell except their own skins. And from this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority who, despite all their labour, have up to now nothing to sell but themselves, and the wealth of the few that increases constantly, although they have long ceased to work.

In addition, the adoption of the philosophical concept of Ubuntu as the main basis of human relations, also applicable to the economy, highlights the unequivocal distance from the notion of primitive accumulation in the production process, since the wealth generated will always be reverted to the common benefit, and it is not presented as a presupposition of personalist domination to the detriment of society as a whole.

Ubuntu denotes an old expression apparently linked to the religious bond or African ancestry that means, or implies, that loyalty expands and makes the relationship between coherent people. Its origin comes from an ethical rule of the Zulu and Xhosa languages and, although not dated, corresponds to a state of mind and being that prevails among the natives of southern Africa to this day, according to which *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, which in Zulu means “a person is a person through other persons”. In short, it is important to reinforce that each human being is only human because he belongs to a human collective; a person's humanity is verified by alterity with his fellow beings, resorting to his own humanity towards other human beings; the existence of a person is substantiated by the intervention of the existence of others in an intrinsic relationship with himself, the value of his humanity is completely determined by the way he proactively supports humanity and the dignity of other human beings; a person's humanity is thus delineated through their ethical commitment to others, regardless of who they are: child, youth, elderly, male, female¹².

There are several possible translations for the expression Ubuntu; however, and somehow, none of them manages to adapt to the crazy and insensitive routine of the big metropolises, which unfortunately already affects small towns, where most people live in their own little world, looking only at themselves and aiming only to its own interests. But it's worth thinking that there is potential in everyone beyond their petty selfishness that only reveals unconsciousness.

It is significant to point out that this notion of Ubuntu is not directly related to either politics or religion, insofar as it is a notion, an idea, a way of living, which does not find a strict correspondence in the West. In fact, this concept permeates and takes shape in all areas of existence, from the most intimate and personal relationships (family, friendships, etc.) and our relationship with the environment, to leadership, because to be able to lead any social group from Ubuntu values, it is essential that the manager is an Ubuntu leader.

¹² HOGEMANN, Edna Raquel, *Human rights and ubuntu philosophy*, Rio de Janeiro, Lumen Juris, 2017, p. 90.

Ubuntu is also the living expression of an ecopolitical alternative and the antithesis of materialism capitalist, as it stands against this ideological interpretation of reality through a native spiritual philosophy that is more in line with the Earth, its creatures, and its living forms, and that it concerns all humanity everywhere¹³. Its ability to contribute with techniques that not only take into account the productive capacity of food, but that interpret the phenomenon of hunger – food insecurity – as a humanistic problem, of social treatment, involving the multifactorial field of the political system is also evident. – economic in which it is inserted.

In this sense, thinking about Ubuntu as an alternative is to understand a different cultural perspective from the prevailing one, which, considered in a multicultural context, presents itself as an assimilationist multiculturalism, certainly prescribing the stimulus to integration with its own ideas, contributing, encouraging, and persuading the incorporation of opinions into hegemonic culture. The path of extremes does not seem to bring the best results, as the analysis would focus on a cultural pasteurization that does not show equality, but assimilation, or a true *plural monoculture* that would bring the exclusionary path through difference, creating sociocultural¹⁴ *apartheids* :

One should not confuse, on the one hand, cultural freedom – a fundamental element of the dignity of all peoples – and, on the other hand, the defense and celebration of all forms of cultural legacy, without seeking to know whether the individuals involved would choose these practices of fact if they had the possibility to make a critical examination of them. (...) If, in the UK, a young daughter of a conservative immigrant family wants to date a young Englishman, she makes an almost irreproachable choice in terms of multicultural freedom. (...) On the other hand, the attempt made by her family members to prevent her from doing what she wants is a reaction that is not very multicultural, since it denotes a desire to keep cultures isolated from each other, under which one could call it a “ monocultural plural” way. (...) The history of multiculturalism in the UK is very interesting in this respect. After a positive phase of multicultural integration, a period of separatism and confusion followed¹⁵.

It is understood, therefore, the social practice and the Ubuntu paradigm as an insertion of the positive cultural difference, of wealth, because it does not work the difference in a negative and excluding perspective¹⁶, but as a model that can bring new values to the process of understanding the Other and the community role in the ethics of support. Its matrix is located in the *critical interculturality* that Candau explains as an instrument that challenges differences and inequalities, turning to sociocultural groups that present themselves historically in conflict due to gender, ethnic-racial, religious issues, among many others, directing their efforts to the “*building societies that accept differences as constitutive of democracy and that are*

¹³ SWANSON, Dalene, *Doing Democracy*, Available at: <https://doingdemocracy.ning.com/profile/DaleneSwanson>, accessed: 29 Aug. 2022.

¹⁴ CANDAU, Vera Maria Ferrão, “‘Ideas-Strength’ Of The Thought Of Boaventura De Sousa Santos And Intercultural Education”, *Educação em Revista*, Belo Horizonte, v. 32, n. 1, p. 15-34, Jan./Mar., 2016, p. 19.

¹⁵ SEN, Amartya, “The split of multiculturalism”, *Folha de São Paulo*, São Paulo, 17 sep. 2006, available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/mais/fs1709200604.htm>, accessed on 28 Sep. 2022.

¹⁶ CANDAU, Vera Maria Ferrão, “‘Ideas-Strength’ Of The Thought Of Boaventura De Sousa Santos And Intercultural Education”, *Educação em Revista*, Belo Horizonte, v. 32, n. 1, p. 15-34, Jan./Mar., 2016, p. 22.

capable of building new, truly egalitarian relationships (...) which presupposes empowering those who have historically been interiorized¹⁷:

But interculturality must be understood as a discourse not exclusively linked to the dialogue between cultures, but must be seen as a discourse concerned with explaining the conditions for this dialogue to occur. And these conditions are of a social, economic and educational, as well as cultural, nature¹⁸.

In the search for a new social paradigm, and from the perspective of Ubuntu, one cannot think of economic activity as something dissociated from the life of the individual and his social autonomy in the molds conceived by Castoriadis and the society in which he is inserted, from its historical-cultural references, because precisely from there arises the liberating differential of the concept, in view of its dissemination in the integrated context of the society where it is welcomed.

Thus, the Ubuntu look, by pointing to our humanity in the Other, in a relationship of alterity in which *I am because we are*, provides the necessary ballast for the social autonomy conceived in the *ethos* of the democracy project proposed by Castoriadis by advocating:

The democratic project is the effort, not yet carried out, to incarnate institutions and change them. In philosophical terms, democracy is the regime of reflexivity. This means that democracy presupposes that there is no revelation, but neither does absolute knowledge, the political episteme, as believed by Plato and so many others after him. Democracy is the regime of doxa, of reflective opinion aimed at phronesis¹⁹.

There are no ideal formulas or recipes to succeed in promoting this policy, nor are there any policies of recognition equipped with universal pretension or the virtue of infallibility, but objectively being Ubuntu highlights the importance of agreement or consensus, insofar as the traditional culture of these peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, it seems, have an almost infinite capacity for the search for consensus and reconciliation, which are characteristics of those who are provided with autonomy in an essentially democratic environment. It is a renewed way of understanding the value of the community in the pursuit of the common good, in the fight against social inequalities, in the acquisition of true food security for all. Its field of action is permeated by what has been explained as a critical interculturality that seeks to be provocative and new, as it is not satisfied with the individualist and productivist values of the hegemonic culture and, at the same time, seeks not to be a mere *intercultural translation*, a portrait softened, as Boaventura de Sousa Santos would say, from the abyssal imperialist and colonialist thought²⁰.

¹⁷ CANDAU, Vera Maria Ferrão, “‘Ideas-Strength’ Of The Thought Of Boaventura De Sousa Santos And Intercultural Education”, *Educação em Revista*, Belo Horizonte, v. 32, n. 1, p. 15-34, Jan./Mar., 2016, p. 21.

¹⁸ TUBINO, Fidel, “Critical interculturality as an ethical-political project”, *Encuentro Continental de Educadores Agostinos*, Lima (Peru), jan. 2005, available at <https://oala.villanova.edu/congresos/educacion/lima-ponen-02.html>, accessed on 28 sep. 2022.

¹⁹ CASTORIADIS, Cornelius, *Janela Sobre o Chaos*, São Paulo, Ideias e Letras, 2009, p. 82.

²⁰ SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa, “Beyond The Abyssal Thought: From Global Lines To An Ecology Of Knowledge”, *New Studies*, n. 79, Nov. 2007, available at <https://www.scielo.br/j/nec/a/ytPjkXXYbTRxNJ7THFDBrgc/>, accessed on: 28 Sep. 2022.

However, no exercise of citizenship is possible on an empty stomach. It is necessary to commit everyone to the food safety of the group. This is why Castoriadis' words reveal themselves more and more current, especially when the author claimed:

*The affirmation of society and positive historicity as values of an autonomous society, a choice inseparable from the one that makes us want an autonomous and fair society, where autonomous, free and equal individuals live in mutual recognition. Recognition that is not a simple mental operation, but also, and above all, affection*²¹.

The manifestations of the Ubuntu philosophy follow absolutely different paths from the western tradition²². They also indicate differentiated productive postures, to the extent that they consider both the individual and the collectivity as a universal set, as the real beneficiaries of their mode of production, considering the criteria of production of surpluses in themselves, not as mere accumulators of capital and, consequently, of political and economic power. In this way of thinking offenses against human or non-human beings, ecology and peaceful and harmonious coexistence with societies with historical roots, even if different, are not allowed.

4 PUBLIC POLICIES ON FOOD SECURITY IN AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE OF HUMANIZED GROWTH

Food security largely depends on overcoming inequality, on national income growth and on sustainable development, including household land ownership. Brazil has historical roots from hereditary captaincies through slavery and inflation in the sense of creating and maintaining inequality at very high levels and in a country of large geographic and demographic dimensions, it takes on more dramatic contours.

Faced with the inflationary acceleration of the 1980s, the situation of misery in Brazil bothered even the national elite, so used to living with this barbarism. Thus, the 1988 Constitution, called Citizen Constitution, among other attributes, sought to legally recover equality between all before the law and social assistance as a duty of the State, opening space for various public policies, among them that of promoting food security.

One can affirm that the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 establishes an interventionist economic regime tending to what Myrdal presents when he recognizes that “... *our national economies were becoming more and more regulated, organized and coordinated, that is, 'planned', to an extent unimaginable a century, or even half a century ago*”²³. The State must act, therefore, through public policies in order to know, understand and, if possible, solve the social problems that afflict the population.

This very challenging task has not been easy, either because of the high number of historically underserved people, or because of the low growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or even because of the economic policy adopted in

²¹ CASTORIADIS, Cornelius, *Janela Sobre o Chaos*, São Paulo, Ideias e Letras, 2009, p. 134.

²² RAMOSE, Mogobe B., “The Ethics Of Ubuntu”, In PH COETZEE & APJ ROUX (Eds.), *Philosophy From Africa*, p. 324–330, Oxford, England, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 23.

²³ MYRDAL, Gunnar, *Beyond the Welfare State*, Rio de Janeiro, Zahar, 1962, p. 30.

Brazil since the Real Plan and even because of the welfare and emergency nature of the Programs against hunger that do not have perennial and emancipatory characteristics.

Experience in several poor countries has shown that although food production has increased, hunger has not been solved, but has created other problems and has not significantly affected income distribution. In this sense, the role of the State and its policies is highlighted for the better distribution of incomes and, consequently, of consumption capacity, which encourages and increases the possibility of food insecure people to have access to more food: “*If fiscal policy is used as a deliberate instrument to achieve greater equality in the distribution of incomes, its effect on the increase in the propensity to consume will naturally be all the greater*”²⁴. Put another way, the state policy of confronting hunger, as well as the social and ethical values associated with them, are fundamental in order to build a solid path to the end of this problem.

Since food insecurity is part of a problem that is also a concern of income distribution, the study must rethink how public policies can contribute to build solutions that avoid the errors of the theories of the past and seek new ways and new values – of which the Ubuntu perspective is a possibility – to alleviate this terrible social problem. Just as an example, Piketty²⁵ talks about the determination of the so-called affirmative action policies that, by “...discrimination theory advocates the use of legal provisions capable of fighting against employers' discrimination against discriminated minorities,” of which a well-known instrument are the quota policies that create a kind of “...‘positive discrimination’ adopted by employers towards minorities in order to break the vicious circle of self-fulfilling beliefs and inequality”. But before that, it is necessary to better understand the debate on food insecurity.

According to FAO et al²⁶., the very definition of food insecurity has fostered debates and requires approaches in a broad conceptual and theoretical spectrum. In Brazil, the Brazilian Food Insecurity Scale, EBIA, is adopted²⁷. According to the EBIA, currently, approximately 33% of Brazilian households experience some level of food insecurity.

The concept of food insecurity is not presented in a linear way, its adequate apprehension permeates the recognition of its amplitude and necessarily advocates the sophistication of the examination of its determining conditions, which can be pointed out as decisive for the formulation of adequate public policies. Therefore, the investigation of personal, family and household characteristics, having as a

²⁴ KEYNES, *The Economists: The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, São Paulo, Nova Cultural, 1996, p. 117.

²⁵ PIKETTY, Thomas, *The Economy of Inequality*, Rio de Janeiro, Intrínseca, 2015, position 1477.

²⁶ “The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017”, *Building Resilience For Peace And Food Security*, Rome, FAO, 2017.

²⁷ BRAZILIAN INSTITUTE OF GEOGRAPHY AND STATISTICS, *Household Budget Survey 2017-2018: Analysis Of Food Security In Brazil*, Rio de Janeiro, IBGE, 2020.

spectrum their connection with food insecurity, is an essential objective of this analysis²⁸.

Food and Nutrition Security is the realization of everyone's right to regular and permanent access to quality food, in sufficient quantity, without compromising access to other essential needs, based on health-promoting food practices that respect cultural diversity and that are environmentally, culturally, economically, and socially sustainable (Article 3, Law 11,346/2006 – LOSAN)²⁹.

It is also worth mentioning the evaluation of Amartya Sen and Jacques Drèze in the work *Hunger and public Action*, from 1989, in which the pioneering analysis of hunger is glimpsed from a point of view that takes training into account and that as a mark of its time, still disregards the current concept of food security³⁰:

This approach emphasizes the distinction between means and ends in relation to development. The ultimate goal would be to expand the possibilities for individuals to be and do things, from the most elementary, such as being adequately nourished, to the most complex, such as having self-esteem and being happy (Sen, 2008; 2010; Sen; Drèze, 1989). Thus, the possibility of escaping hunger and the obstacles imposed by it is the central focus of the analysis; access to food per se is only the means³¹.

It is noteworthy, therefore, that food security is linked not only to the abundance of food but also to the effectiveness of institutions in achieving the optimal distribution of food. On the other hand, food and nutritional insecurity is characterized by the population's difficulty in accessing food, whether quantitatively or qualitatively, regularly, or permanently^{32,33}.

The use of nutritional scales helps in the analytical perception of the problem, as emphasized in the text by Burchi and De Muro³⁴, and in the perception of Mattos, Bianchi and Toigo³⁵, the procedure must be understood through three steps: initially, the access to food, as well as the stability of that access; then, the perception of the elementary skills realized regarding the conditions of access is sought, such as being

²⁸ MATTOS, Ely José, BIANCHI, Lorenzo, TOIGO, Camila Horst, “Assessing Food Insecurity in Brazil: The Issue of Non-Symmetric Effects”, *New Economy*, v. 30, n. 3, 2020, available at <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/4004/400466088009/html/>, accessed on 20 Sep. 2022.

²⁹ BRAZIL, *Law 11,346, of September 15, 2006*, “Creates the National Food and Nutrition Security System – SISAN With a View to Ensuring the Human Right to Adequate Food and Other Measures”, available at https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2004-2006/2006/Lei/L11346.htm, accessed on: 21 Sep. 2022.

³⁰ BURCHI, Francesco, DE MURO, Pasquale, “From Food Availability To Nutritional Capabilities: Advancing Food Security Analysis”, *Food Policy*, v. 60, p. 10-19, 2016.

³¹ MATTOS, Ely José, BIANCHI, Lorenzo, TOIGO, Camila Horst, “Assessing Food Insecurity In Brazil: The Issue Of Non-Symmetric Effects”, *New Economy*, v. 30, n. 3, 2020, available at <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/4004/400466088009/html/>, accessed on 20 Sep. 2022.

³² ALENCAR, Thiago Gomes, SILVA, Adriana Ferreira, “Analysis of Food and Nutrition Security in the Municipalities of North Goiás”, *Series of Texts for Discussion of the Economic Sciences Course*, 92, Goiania, 2022, available at https://files.cercomp.ufg.br/weby/up/118/o/TD_092.pdf, access on 26 Sep. 2022.

³³ SEN, Amartya K., *Poverty And Famines: An Essay On Entitlement And Deprivation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981.

³⁴ BURCHI, Francesco, DE MURO, Pasquale. “From Food Availability to Nutritional Capabilities: Advancing Food Security Analysis”, *Food Policy*, v. 60, p. 10-19, 2016.

³⁵ MATTOS, Ely José, BIANCHI, Lorenzo, TOIGO, “Camila Horst, Assessing Food Insecurity In Brazil: The Issue Of Non-Symmetric Effects”, *New Economy*, v. 30, n. 3, 2020, available at <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/4004/400466088009/html/>, accessed on 20 Sep. 2022.

really nourished, educated and healthy; at the end, in an analytical synthesis of the previous phases, the ability to be nutritionally safe.

There are several conditions for food insecurity in Brazil, whether the low level of per capita income (Hoffmann, 2008³⁶), personal, family and household characteristics (Hoffmann and Kageyama, 2007³⁷), household conditions (sewage, sanitation, water piped) and the Brazilian region within which the household was located (Hoffmann, 2013³⁸). Not to mention the absence of family ownership of land at satisfactory and proportionate levels. This reveals the gigantic and multifactorial dimension of the problem of food insecurity, requiring not only the search for more production but the perception of historical failures in the fair distribution of production capacity, in the reduction of social inequality, in the settlement of small farmers, in short, in the search to overcome the technical-political-economic paradigm of the West as the only way forward.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the case of a research that sought to gather possible causes and effects of food insecurity, understanding it as the sad result of a multifactorial panorama that involves not only productive capacity, but, above all, the deep-rooted problems of poverty, poor income distribution, productive and sustainable use of land, government incentives through public policies to adequate income distribution, access to food, access to knowledge and production capacity, what can be concluded is that a new model of resolution needs to be considered. A pattern that escapes the everyday paradigms of current productivist capitalism and seeks in historically persecuted peoples, in the epistemologies of the South, in the Otherness and in Difference, a renewed way of understanding the need for common support among people in the search for an end to poverty and its most ardent consequence: hunger.

To do so it is necessary to understand that public policies historically implemented in Brazil acted as a way of mitigating the results of a political-economic model based on exclusion and exploitation, having suffered a lapse of improvement from the years 2003, launching the country out of the map of hunger in 2013. After that, a succession of negative events that intertwine political and economic crises with the results of a poorly arranged and irresponsible fight against the Covid-19 Pandemic, enhanced by the denialist and elitist posture of the Government and the dismantling of public policies, which led Brazil once again face the stigma of food insecurity.

³⁶ HOFFMANN, Rodolfo, "Determinants Of Food Insecurity In Brazil: Analysis of 2004 PNAD Data", *Food and Nutritional Security*, v. 15, n. 1, p. 49-61, 2008, available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304921906_Determinantes_da_inseguranca_alimentar_no_Brasil_analise_dos_dados_da_PNAD_de_2004, accessed on 20 Sep. 2022.

³⁷ HOFFMANN, Rodolfo; KAGEYAMA, Angela, "Poverty, Food Insecurity And Pluriactivity In Brazil", *Economic Theory and Evidence*, v. 14, n. 29, p. 9-35, 2007, available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268357971_POBREZA_INSEGURANCA_ALIMENTAR_E_PLURIATIVIDADE_NO_BRASIL, accessed on 20 Sep. 2022.

³⁸ HOFFMANN, Rodolfo, "Determinants Of Food Insecurity In Brazil In 2004 And 2009", *Food and Nutrition Security*, v. 20, n. 2, p. 219-235, 2013, available at <https://periodicos.sbu.unicamp.br/ojs/index.php/san/artic le/view/8634599>, accessed on 20 Sep. 2022.

The search for new solutions is done in this study through the analysis of Ubuntu ethics as a perspective that escapes the consumerist individualism that dominates the economic and productivist spectrum and prevents the understanding of the problem of food insecurity as a problem of everyone, of the community. The vision of Ubuntu as an ethic that seeks a true and sincere recognition of alterity and consensus is also based on the constitution of a critically interculturality based on difference, on listening to the knowledge of historically oppressed peoples and on the search for holistic solutions that think people, living beings and the planet Earth as a structure in mutual dependence.

The study, therefore, points to the need to resume public projects and policies that proved successful in the past and to insert mechanisms into these that allow considering the issue of food insecurity as a social scourge, an impasse to be overcome by the community, not as an assistance obstacle that people have to face because of the poverty of others. Only in this way will Brazil be able to grow again as a nation that listens to the weakest and promotes a counter-hegemonic globalization, contributing to the construction of a society concerned with the constitution of a common heritage of humanity, free from hunger, therefore.

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