

DEVELOPMENT REVEALED: THE REAL ECONOMIC FACE AND THE SUSTAINABLE MASK

DESENVOLVIMENTO REVELADO: A VERDADEIRA FACE ECONÔMICA E A MÁSCARA SUSTENTÁVEL

DESARROLLO REVELADO: LA VERDADERA CARA ECONÓMICA Y LA MÁSCARA SOSTENIBLE

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ABSTRACT

The context: The discourse about sustainable development gradually loses its expressiveness, mainly because it is a normative concept that gives scope for the construction of several definitions and innumerable interpretations. Despite the conciliation of economy and environment, sustainable development can be seen as a mask of economic development.

Objectives: The primary goal of the research is to verify sustainable development as a disagreement discourse in relation to social reality, which contributes to the minimization of the space destined to other strategies of environmental preservation and that hides a secret

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goal (the economic character that does not deviate from development).

Methodology: The methodology was developed through reading by the hypothetical-deductive method. This is basic, exploratory and bibliographical research, structured in three fragments.

Result: The initial part identifies economic development and differentiates economic development from economic growth. The following fragment broach sustainable development, giving emphasis to the difficulties of interpretation. Finally, the sustainable disguise of economic development is examined, and the suggestion of a progressive abandonment of the term sustainable development is presented, presenting alternatives to harmonize the economy and the environment.

Keywords: Growth; Development; Economy; Environment; Sustainability.

RESUMO

Contextualização: O discurso sobre desenvolvimento sustentável perde gradativamente sua expressividade, principalmente por ser um conceito normativo que dá margem à construção de diversas definições e inúmeras interpretações. Apesar da conciliação entre economia e meio ambiente, o desenvolvimento sustentável pode ser visto como uma máscara do desenvolvimento econômico.

Objetivo: O objetivo básico da pesquisa é verificar o desenvolvimento sustentável como discurso discordante em relação à realidade social, que contribui para a minimização do espaço destinado a outras estratégias de preservação ambiental e que esconde um objetivo secreto (o caráter econômico que não se desvia do desenvolvimento).

Metodologia: A metodologia foi desenvolvida por meio da leitura pelo método hipotético-dedutivo. Trata-se de pesquisa básica, exploratória e bibliográfica, estruturada em três fragmentos.

Resultado: A parte inicial identifica o desenvolvimento econômico e diferencia o desenvolvimento econômico do crescimento econômico. O fragmento a seguir aborda o desenvolvimento sustentável, enfatizando as dificuldades de interpretação. Por fim, examina-se o disfarce sustentável do desenvolvimento econômico e apresenta-se a sugestão de abandono progressivo do termo desenvolvimento sustentável, apresentando alternativas para harmonizar a economia e o meio ambiente.

Palavras-chave: Crescimento; Desenvolvimento; Economia; Meio ambiente; Sustentabilidade.

RESUMEN

Contextualización: El discurso sobre el desarrollo sostenible pierde paulatinamente su expresividad, principalmente porque es un concepto normativo que da lugar a la construcción de varias definiciones e innumerables interpretaciones. A pesar de la conciliación entre economía y medio ambiente, el desarrollo sostenible puede verse como una máscara del desarrollo económico.

Objetivo: El objetivo básico de la investigación es constatar el desarrollo sustentable como un discurso discordante en relación con la realidad social, que contribuye a la minimización

del espacio destinado a otras estrategias de preservación ambiental y que esconde un objetivo secreto (el carácter económico que no desviarse del desarrollo).

Metodología: La metodología se desarrolló a través de la lectura por el método hipotético-deductivo. Se trata de una investigación básica, exploratoria y bibliográfica, estructurada en tres fragmentos.

Resultado: La parte inicial identifica el desarrollo económico y diferencia el desarrollo económico del crecimiento económico. El siguiente fragmento trata sobre el desarrollo sostenible, enfatizando las dificultades de interpretación. Finalmente, se examina el disfraz sostenible del desarrollo económico y se plantea la sugerencia de abandono progresivo del término desarrollo sostenible, presentando alternativas para armonizar la economía y el medio ambiente.

Palabras clave: Crecimiento; Desarrollo; Economía; Ambiente; Sustentabilidad.

INTRODUCTION

The discourse about sustainable development gradually loses its expressiveness, mainly because it is a normative concept that gives scope for the construction of several definitions and innumerable interpretations.

Despite the conciliation of economy and environment, sustainable development can be seen as a mask of economic development. Economic development involves a social and environmental character, which is not sustainable, regarding to sustainable, it is not provided in a singular way in practice, so that there are more adequate terms to link the economy and the environment.

Thus, the general objective is to verify that the gradual abandonment of the term sustainable development is an alternative to expand environmental preservation strategies. The investigation is divided into parts.

The first part addresses economic development as the tangible side, in addition to engendering a differentiation in relation to economic growth. For that, it addresses what is development, inequality as a driving force of research on development, among other interesting aspects.

The intermediate fragment portrays the sustainable development as a mask used by economic development in order to appear less fearful regarding the use of natural resources. In this section, the emergence of the term sustainable development and its elements is pointed out, in addition to currents of interpretation of an economic basis that include the relationship between limits of natural resources and technical progress.

The last part examines the sustainable disguise of development and presents arguments that instigate the abandonment of the expression "sustainable development" since it is an impractical idealization; furthermore, it is proposed to substitute other terms, such as sustainability or sustainable economic growth, which are more compatible with human nature itself.

In this investigation the textual language is put via systematic reading. The hypothetical-deductive method is used. Furthermore, the research can be classified as basic, exploratory and bibliographic; was based on the study of doctrines that aim to improve the observed issue.

1. THE FACE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (WHICH IS DIFFERENT FROM ECONOMIC GROWTH)

When making an inaugural approach to the term development, it is reflected and inferred that this word refers to the sphere of growth, progress, evolution, advancement, expansion, creation, among other elements that can be related, all of this without even defining development with adjectives.

It is evident that the concept of development is complex and constantly investigated, so that nowadays, frankly, development can be seen as the “connection of several economic, social and cultural aspects.”⁴

In a verification made from the observation of the etymology of the word development, it is possible to notice the formation of “something that could be expressed as: “without movement to reverse the action” or even “without involvement”. This leads us to a conclusion that it takes something to generate movement and/or involvement.”⁵

Thus, the economy, which propels an attribute to (economic) development, is a field clearly capable of activating the metamorphosis procedure in order to trigger the mentioned flow, that is, to conceive the referred movement.

This recognized, the economic development is approached in this fragment as the prevailing face of the development, that is, as the clearest externalization of an ingrained progression in the global society, especially in the last two centuries, that endures in the contemporary reality.

It should be noted that research on economic development emerged from a verification of inequality: in one perspective were the countries that industrialized and, consequently, reached considerable levels of material well-being shared with a significant portion of the population; on the other hand were countries that did not industrialize and, in turn, were in a situation of poverty, culminating in high social discrepancies.⁶

In other words, the approach to development, seen as an obstacle, gained emphasis from the economic fluctuations of the 19th century, because the “concentration of income and wealth in the world, aggravated by the appearance of a few industrialized countries, made the disparity between rich and poor nations more evident.”⁷

In this sense, the fact is that during the 19th century, the industrialization of several countries in Europe and North America

it reduced the other countries to the condition of political and/or economic colonies of the former. The shift to development, which took place after the

⁴ Original text: “conexão de diversos aspectos econômicos, sociais e culturais.” OLIVEIRA, Carina Costa de. **Desenvolvimento Sustentável e biossegurança**. In: BARRAL, Welber; PIMENTEL, Luiz Otávio. Direito Ambiental e Desenvolvimento. Florianópolis, SC: Fundação Boiteux, 2006, p. 159.

⁵ Original text: “algo que poderia ser expresso como: “sem movimento para reverter a ação” ou ainda “sem envolvimento”. Isso nos remete a uma conclusão de que é preciso algo para gerar o movimento e/ou envolvimento.” SANTOS, Elinaldo Leal; BRAGA, Vitor; SANTOS, Reginaldo Souza; BRAGA, Alexandra Maria da Silva. **Desenvolvimento**: um conceito multidimensional. DRd. Desenvolvimento Regional em debate, v. 02, n. 01, 2002. Disponível em: <<http://www.periodicos.unc.br/index.php/drd/article/view/215>> Acesso em: 21 mar. 2019, p. 46.

⁶ SANDRONI, Paulo (Organização e Supervisão). **Novíssimo Dicionário de Economia**. São Paulo, SP: Editora Best Seller, 1991, p. 169-170.

⁷ Original text: “concentração da renda e da riqueza em nível mundial, agravada com o surgimento de alguns poucos países industrializados, tornou mais evidente a disparidade entre nações ricas e pobres.” SOUZA, Nali de Jesus de. **Desenvolvimento econômico**. 5 ed. rev. São Paulo, SP: Atlas, 2005, p. 02.

Second World War, was almost always preceded by profound political changes (especially the achievement of political independence and the formation of governments that placed national development as the main objective).⁸

It is from this situation that the development plan was strengthened as a process of structural transformation to overcome the historical slowness of many countries, in the shortest possible time, in order to obtain the degree of well-being of the countries that were already in major conditions.

In general, it is possible to conclude that the transformations that characterize economic development constitute an increase in industrial activity to the detriment of agriculture, the migration of labor from the countryside to cities, a decrease in imports of industrialized stuffs and exports of primary products and less need for external assistance. It appears that development is not primarily driven by the domestic market, but the level of dependence on the external market and the economic powers.⁹

That said, although they are close terms, so that one refers to the other, it is worth noting that development and growth, both glimpsed from the economic perspective, do not represent a single element, but this is not a unanimous opinion among researchers. First of all, it is important to clarify that the theme of economic growth

emerges vigorously with Adam Smith. The author seeks to identify the factors that make up the national wealth; explains how the market operates and why it is important to increase the size of the markets to reduce average costs (scale effect) and allow profitable production. Expanding markets, income and employment increase. Development occurs with an increase in the proportion of productive workers in relation to unproductive workers; by reducing unemployment and raising the average income of the population as a whole. Schumpeter, later, wrote differences between growth and development, development is brought about by the innovations adopted by the businessman, with the help of credit.¹⁰

Thus, it appears that a current of economists, which have a more theoretical character, considers growth as a synonym for development. On the other hand, a second current, whose view is more related to the empirical reality, understands that growth is a vital condition for development, but it is not a sufficient situation.

In detail, this second trend sees economic growth as a simple quantitative variation of the product, while providing that development encompasses qualitative changes in the

⁸ Original text: “reduziu os demais países à condição de colônias políticas e/ou econômicas dos primeiros. A guinada para o desenvolvimento, ocorrida a partir da Segunda Guerra Mundial, foi quase sempre precedida por mudanças políticas profundas (especialmente a conquista da independência política e a formação de governos que colocavam o desenvolvimento nacional como objetivo principal).” SANDRONI, Paulo (Organização e Supervisão). **Novíssimo Dicionário de Economia**. São Paulo, SP: Editora Best Seller, 1991, p. 169-170.

⁹ SANDRONI, Paulo (Organização e Supervisão). **Novíssimo Dicionário de Economia**. São Paulo, SP: Editora Best Seller, 1991, p. 169-170.

¹⁰ Original text: “emerge com vigor com Adam Smith. O autor procura identificar os fatores da formação da riqueza nacional; explica como o mercado opera e qual a importância do aumento do tamanho dos mercados para reduzir os custos médios (efeito escala) e permitir a produção com lucros. Expandindo-se os mercados, aumentam a renda e o emprego. O desenvolvimento ocorre com o aumento da proporção dos trabalhadores produtivos em relação aos improdutivos; pela redução do desemprego e elevação da renda média do conjunto da população. Mais tarde Schumpeter diferenciou crescimento de desenvolvimento, sendo este provocado pelas inovações adotadas pelo empresário, com a ajuda do crédito.” SOUZA, Nali de Jesus de. **Desenvolvimento econômico**. 5 ed. rev. São Paulo, SP: Atlas, 2005, p. 02.

way of life of people, institutions and productive structures.¹¹

Thus, in spite of the fact that it is hard to choose an understanding, it is necessary to explain that economic development can be defined

due to the existence of continuous economic growth, at a higher rate than demographic growth, involving changes in structures and improvement of economic, social and environmental indicators. It comprises a long-term phenomenon, involving the strengthening of the national economy, the expansion of the market economy, the general increase in productivity and the level of well-being of the population as a whole, with the preservation of the environment. With development, the economy acquires greater stability and diversification; technological progress and capital formation progressively become endogenous factors, that is, generated predominantly in the interior of the country, although international integration constitutes a gradual and irreversible process.¹²

In a virtuous view, economic development comprises economic growth in an extensive temporal project, without disregarding the social and environmental element. It turns out that, in addition to the economic adjective, development can receive so many other attributes, including the insignia of sustainable.

However, it is understood that the majority face of development is economic, that covers social aspects and care for nature, which does not mean that the attention to the environment present in economic development necessarily implies a sustainable character, which is appreciated below.

2. THE MASK: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As noted, sustainable is a widely used predicate when it comes to development. The fact is that the elucidation of sustainable development is not exactly a recent debate, considering that since the 1990s there has been several discussions on this topic. In a panoramic view, the sustainable development involves social concern with the future supply of essential goods and services for humanity to survive.¹³

Enrique Leff informs that the sustainable development discourse was being legitimized,

made official and widely disseminated based on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, what happened in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992. But environmental awareness emerged in the 1960s with Rachel Carson, which wrote *Silent Spring*, and expanded in the 1970s, after the

¹¹ SOUZA, Nali de Jesus de. **Desenvolvimento econômico**. 5 ed. rev. São Paulo, SP: Atlas, 2005, p. 05-06.

¹² Original text: "pela existência de crescimento econômico contínuo, em ritmo superior ao crescimento demográfico, envolvendo mudanças de estruturas e melhoria de indicadores econômicos, sociais e ambientais. Ele compreende um fenômeno de longo prazo, implicando o fortalecimento da economia nacional, a ampliação da economia de mercado, a elevação geral da produtividade e o nível de bem-estar do conjunto da população, com a preservação do meio ambiente. Com o desenvolvimento, a economia adquire maior estabilidade e diversificação; o progresso tecnológico e a formação de capital tornam-se progressivamente fatores endógenos, isto é, gerados predominantemente no interior do país, embora a integração internacional constitua um processo gradativo e irreversível." SOUZA, Nali de Jesus de. **Desenvolvimento econômico**. 5 ed. rev. São Paulo, SP: Atlas, 2005, p. 07.

¹³ OLIVEIRA, Gilson Batista de. **Uma discussão sobre o conceito de desenvolvimento**. Revista da FAE, v. 5, n. 2, Disponível em: <<https://revistafae.fae.edu/revistafae/article/view/477/372>> Acesso em: 20 mar. 2019, p. 38.

United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, what happened in Stockholm, in 1972.¹⁴

It should be added that the term sustainable development is a normative definition

which came up with the name of ecodesvelopment in the early 1970s. It arose in a context of controversy over the relationship between economic growth and the environment, exacerbated mainly by the publication of the Club of Rome report that preached zero growth as a way to prevent environmental catastrophe. It emerges from this context as a conciliatory proposition, where it is recognized that technical progress effectively relativizes environmental limits, but does not eliminate them and that economic growth is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for the elimination of poverty and social disparities.¹⁵

In this line of reasoning, it is worth clarifying that the idea of combining development with sustainability came from international economic law, although it has been trained and improved its principles with international environmental law. As reported, the expression says it deals with an “ethical reflection of development subordinated to a social purpose, with solidarity between the present society and the future ones.”¹⁶

In addition, it is important to add that for sustainable development to exist there is a requirement for some indispensable situations: a political system of representative democracy, an economic system capable of sustaining development, a society prepared to deal with the consequences of such economic growth and the balanced use of natural resources in order to meet present and future generations.¹⁷

In this first moment, it is clear that it is not simple to implement the matrix of sustainable development, given that its idealization is mixed with many economic elements. Although the idea of preserving natural resources is valuable to guarantee transgenerational well-being, the requirements described above for sustainable development are not easily realized.

It is urgent to agree that time has favored a wide acceptance of the proposition of sustainable development, but, because it is basically normative signifier, it has not had the capacity to eliminate its interpretative differences. In this way, the ailments of understanding present themselves not only in the countless definitions of sustainable development, but also in the dissimilarities in the interpretation of the same definition. As an explanatory mention,

¹⁴ Original text: “oficializado e difundido amplamente com base na Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre o Meio Ambiente e o Desenvolvimento, celebrada no Rio de Janeiro, em 1992. Mas a consciência ambiental surgiu nos anos 60 com a Primavera Silenciosa de Rachel Carson, e se expandiu nos anos 70, depois da Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre o Meio Ambiente Humano, celebrada em Estocolmo, em 1972.” LEFF, Enrique. **Saber ambiental: sustentabilidade, racionalidade, complexidade, poder.** Tradução de Lúcia Mathilde Endlich Orth. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2001, p. 16.

¹⁵ Original text: “que surgiu com o nome de ecodesenvolvimento no início da década de 1970. Ele surgiu num contexto de controvérsia sobre as relações entre crescimento econômico e meio ambiente, exacerbada principalmente pela publicação do relatório do Clube de Roma que pregava o crescimento zero como forma de evitar a catástrofe ambiental. Ele emerge deste contexto como uma proposição conciliadora, onde se reconhece que o progresso técnico efetivamente relativiza os limites ambientais, mas não os elimina e que o crescimento econômico é condição necessária, mas não suficiente para a eliminação da pobreza e disparidades sociais.” ROMEIRO, Ademar Ribeiro. **Economia ou economia política da sustentabilidade.** In: MAY, Peter H. (Org.) *Economia do meio ambiente: teoria e prática.* 2 ed. Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Elsevier, 2010, p. 08.

¹⁶ Original text: “reflexão ética do desenvolvimento subordinado a uma finalidade social, com solidariedade entre a sociedade presente e as futuras.” OLIVEIRA, Carina Costa de. **Desenvolvimento Sustentável e biossegurança.** In: BARRAL, Welber; PIMENTEL, Luiz Otávio. *Direito Ambiental e Desenvolvimento.* Florianópolis, SC: Fundação Boiteux, 2006, p. 159.

¹⁷ OLIVEIRA, Carina Costa de. **Desenvolvimento Sustentável e biossegurança.** In: BARRAL, Welber; PIMENTEL, Luiz Otávio. *Direito Ambiental e Desenvolvimento.* Florianópolis, SC: Fundação Boiteux, 2006, p. 164.

it is noted that in the Brundtland Report,¹⁸ sustainable development is defined essentially as "one that meets current needs without sacrificing the ability of the future to meet yours".¹⁹

In the discussion on environmental economics, experts are divided between two main interpretative currents. The first one is marked especially by the so-called Environmental Economics. This line of understanding considers that natural resources do not represent, in the long run, an absolute limit to the expansion of the economy. Precisely, they defend the opposite, so much so that initially natural resources were not even included in the analytical representations of economic reality. In direct terms, the economy functioned without natural resources.²⁰

Over time, natural resources started to be included in economic representations, but it was still suggested that the limits imposed by the availability of natural resources could be overcome by the technical progress that replaces them with capital or labor. In other words, it means that the economic system would be large enough that the lack of natural resources would be able to restrict its expansion, it would only be a relative contention, which could be overcome by scientific and technological progress.²¹

To condense, it can be said that this first vision can be identified as "weak sustainability", has its roots in the neoclassical economy and has two basic characteristics: "the complexity of functions that natural heritage has tends to be diluted in an aggregate that is natural capital, and there are enormous possibilities of substituting natural capital for 'manufactured capital'".²²

This seen, the other interpretative current is marked, above all, by the call Ecological Economy, which appreciates the economic system as a

subsystem of a larger whole that contains it, imposing an absolute restriction on its expansion. Capital and natural resources are essentially complementary. Scientific and technological progress is seen as fundamental to increase efficiency in the use of natural resources in general (renewable and non-renewable) and, in this respect, this current shares with the first the conviction that it is possible to establish a regulatory structure based on incentives able to increase this efficiency immensely. However, there remains a fundamental

¹⁸ About the Brundtland Report: "In 1983, the UN Secretary-General invited Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, master of public health and former Prime Minister of Norway, to establish and chair the World Commission on Environment and Development. Brundtland was a natural choice for this role, as his vision of health transcends the medical world for environmental and human development issues. In April 1987, the Brundtland Commission, as it became known, published an innovative report, "Our Common Future" - which brings the concept of sustainable development to public discourse. Original text: "Em 1983, o Secretário-Geral da ONU convidou a médica Gro Harlem Brundtland, mestre em saúde pública e ex-Primeira Ministra da Noruega, para estabelecer e presidir a Comissão Mundial sobre o Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento. Brundtland foi uma escolha natural para este papel, à medida que sua visão da saúde ultrapassa as barreiras do mundo médico para os assuntos ambientais e de desenvolvimento humano. Em abril de 1987, a Comissão Brundtland, como ficou conhecida, publicou um relatório inovador, "Nosso Futuro Comum" - que traz o conceito de desenvolvimento sustentável para o discurso público. ONUBR. **A ONU e o meio ambiente**. Disponível em: <nacoesunidas.org/acao/meio-ambiente/> Acesso em: 21 mar. 2019.

¹⁹ Original text: "aquele que satisfaz as necessidades atuais sem sacrificar a habilidade do futuro satisfazer as suas." ROMEIRO, Ademar R. **Economia ou economia política da sustentabilidade**. In: MAY, Peter H. (Org.) *Economia do meio ambiente: teoria e prática*. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Elsevier, 2010, p. 08.

²⁰ ROMEIRO, Ademar R. **Economia ou economia política da sustentabilidade**. In: MAY, Peter H. (Org.) *Economia do meio ambiente: teoria e prática*. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Elsevier, 2010, p. 08.

²¹ ROMEIRO, Ademar R. **Economia ou economia política da sustentabilidade**. In: MAY, Peter H. (Org.) *Economia do meio ambiente: teoria e prática*. 2 ed. Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Elsevier, 2010, p. 09.

²² Original text: "la complejidad de funciones que tiene el patrimonio natural tiende a diluirse en un agregado que es el capital natural, y se suponen enormes posibilidades de sustituir capital natural por 'capital fabricado'." MARTÍNEZ ALIER, Joan; ROCA JUSMET, Jordi. **Economía Ecológica y Política Ambiental**. 2 edición corregida y aumentada. Textos de Economía. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001, p. 374.

disagreement in relation to the capacity to overcome indefinite global environmental limits. In the long run, therefore, the sustainability of the economic system is not possible without stabilizing levels of consumption per capita according to the carrying capacity of the planet.²³

This second trend can be identified with the phrase “strong sustainability”, “it highlights the diverse, and in many respects irreplaceable, functions of the natural heritage. It is from this position that the physical indicators of sustainability are generally discussed.”²⁴

It is clear that this second position, when considering the natural limits of the planet in economic debates, brings sustainability and economy closer together; however, when it comes to the relationship with development, the existence of robust economic features is marked, evidently more concerned than before with the question of the finitude of natural resources and with environmental preservation for present and future generations, but that it is not enough to print the realization of a sustainable development according to the matrix suggested in the first manifestations on the theme.

Thus, it is possible to ask whether there is a mask in economic development to communicate a sustainable feature, taking into account that sustainable development comes from an ideal archetype, but apparently but apparently with a fictional action.

3. AN EXAMINATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DISGUISE

There is no denying the relevance of the discussions on sustainable development held over the past almost thirty years. In fact, such debates are precisely what demonstrates that the topic should never be neglected. However, it is axiomatic that sustainable development is still an impractical idealization, while sustainability and sustainable economic growth are doable sentences.

Firstly, it is incumbent to resume that sustainable development implies the ideal of sustainable development

harmonic of the economy and ecology that must be adjusted in a correlation of values where the economic maximum also reflects an ecological maximum. In an attempt to reconcile the limitation of natural resources with unlimited economic growth, changes in the state of the art and in social organization are conditioned to achieving sustainable development..²⁵

Thus, it can already be seen that this conciliatory proposition is somewhat abstract, it

²³ Original text: “subsistema de um todo maior que o contém, impondo uma restrição absoluta à sua expansão. Capital e recursos naturais são essencialmente complementares. O progresso científico e tecnológico é visto como fundamental para aumentar a eficiência na utilização de recursos naturais em geral (renováveis e não renováveis) e, nesse aspecto, essa corrente partilha com a primeira a convicção de que é possível instituir uma estrutura regulatória baseada em incentivos econômicos capaz de aumentar imensamente esta eficiência. Permanece, entretanto, a discordância fundamental em relação à capacidade de superação indefinida dos limites ambientais globais. A longo prazo, portanto, a sustentabilidade do sistema econômico não é possível sem estabilização dos níveis de consumo per capita de acordo com a capacidade de carga do planeta.” ROMEIRO, Ademar. **Economia ou economia política da sustentabilidade**. In: MAY, Peter H. (Org.) *Economia do meio ambiente: teoria e prática*. 2 ed. Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Elsevier, 2010, p. 12.

²⁴ Original text: “destaca as funciones diversas, y en muchos aspectos insustituibles, del patrimonio natural. Es a partir de esta posición desde la que generalmente se discuten los indicadores físicos de sustentabilidad.” MARTÍNEZ ALIER, Joan; ROCA JUSMET, Jordi. **Economía Ecológica y Política Ambiental**. 2 edición corregida y aumentada. Textos de Economía. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001, p. 374.

²⁵ Original text: “harmônico da economia e ecologia que devem ser ajustados numa correlação de valores onde o máximo econômico reflita igualmente um máximo ecológico. Na tentativa de conciliar a limitação dos recursos naturais com o ilimitado crescimento econômico, são condicionadas à consecução do desenvolvimento sustentável mudanças no estado da técnica e na organização social.” DERANI, Cristiane. **Direito Ambiental Econômico**. 2 ed. rev. São Paulo: Editora Max Limonad, 2001, p. 132.

involves natural resources and economics, in addition to involving knowledge movement and social structuring. It is still necessary to clarify that sustainable development should not be treated as a dimension of economic development.

It is understood that within the current understanding of economic development there is a notion of environmental responsibility, preservation and care for nature that tends to expand so that the legacy of today is not the extraordinary destruction of the ecosystem, but this perception does not mean that attention to the environment is the same thing as sustainable development inserted in economic development.

As previously mentioned, from the beginning of the term sustainable development to contemporary times, despite the fact that there are enough arguments about the assertion, there is still no sign of a concept and its interpretation capable of implementing the practice of what would be sustainable development.

It can be said that sustainable development does not belong to economic development, but it can be considered like a masked economic development, in order to appear to be a sustainable structure. What is the reason for not abandoning an expression taken by doubts?

It is worth noting the existence of provisions stating that "sustainable development has become a *trompe d'oeil* that distorts the perception of things, circumvents critical reason and launches our action in the world."²⁶ Thus, the fact is that sustainable development needs to stop being the imprecision that causes illusion and confuses those who use it. We can observe James Lovelock's incisive comparison: "trusting sustainable development to continue as if nothing is viable policies like expecting a lung cancer patient to cure simply by quitting smoking."²⁷

Enrique Leff adds that the dominant discourse of sustainability promotes a "sustainable economic growth, bypassing the ecological and thermodynamic conditions that set limits and conditions for the capitalist appropriation and transformation of nature."²⁸ It is observed, therefore, that it is more plausible to speak of sustainable economic growth than of sustainable development, in particular because the complexity of the elements that orbit development is considerably greater than the fundamentals of growth.

In order to illustrate, a simple comparison is presented: when a living being grows, the consequence is a physical increase in size, when a living being develops, many other transformations beyond the stature happen. So, growing up is part of developing. Economic development is more intricate than economic growth, the same is true when it comes to the sustainable adjective.

That said, it is still worth mentioning that when comparing sustainable development with sustainability, it is observed that sustainability is a natural phenomenon and sustainable development

²⁶ Original text: "o desenvolvimento sustentável converteu-se num *trompe d'oeil* que distorce a percepção das coisas, burla a razão crítica e lança à deriva nossa atuação no mundo." LEFF, Enrique. **Saber ambiental**: sustentabilidade, racionalidade, complexidade, poder. Tradução de Lúcia Mathilde Endlich Orth. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2001, p. 24.

²⁷ Original text: "confiar en el desarrollo sostenible o continuar como si nada son políticas tan viables como esperar que un enfermo de cáncer de pulmón se cure simplemente dejando de fumar." LOVELOCK, James. **La venganza de la Tierra**: Por qué la Tierra está rebelándose y cómo podemos todavía salvar a la humanidad. Traducción de Mar García Puig. Barcelona, ES: Editorial Planeta, S.A., 2007, p. 20.

²⁸ LEFF, Enrique. **Saber ambiental**: sustentabilidade, racionalidade, complexidade, poder. Tradução de Lúcia Mathilde Endlich Orth. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2001, p. 23.

it is a construct of the human psyche. If this is correct, in terms of binary logic the idea of sustainable development can be considered to some extent incompatible with human nature, which, according to Freud, is both sustainable (includes Eros, the pulse for life²⁹) and unsustainable (includes the pulse of death).³⁰

Thus, the sustainability would not be something invented by human species, as is the case with sustainable development. Sustainability does not exist through coercion, but through a survival character. This delimited, it is evident that the gradual abandonment of the discourse on “sustainable development opens space to other rationalities to face the environmental crisis, and these new rationalities start to guide new strategies for environmental preservation.”³¹

For Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, the expression sustainable development was a kind “of consolation, useful only to divert attention from real problems, such as the difference between rich and poor countries, pollution problems and the future survival of the human species”.³²

Sustainable development ends up being a disguise of economic development so that it appears less ferocious. Therefore, whether adopting the idea of sustainability or sustainable economic growth, it is crucial to take a more tangible position than the discourse offered by sustainable development for the real protection of the environment and guarantee of the ecosystem for the present and future generations.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Economic development involves, in addition to the economy, social and

²⁹ “In O Ego eo Id, Freud states that the drive for life needs to find ways to maintain life in the face of the deadly tendency of the opposite drive. One of the solutions punctuated by him is to divert the death drive out of the organism so as not to cause internal destruction. Thus, a good part of this drive would turn to the outside and present itself there, at least partially, in the form of destruction. As for the part of the death drive that remains in the ego, Freud said that it could reach discharge through merging with the life drive as well. In this format, healthy forms of discharge are developed in exchange for the solutions that the death drive finds when defused, which would be the establishment of severe neuroses. When defused, the death drive would find an ally in the superego and be responsible for the exhibited harshness and cruelty of this instance, as well as for an exaggerated and excessively punishing action aimed at the ego. The death drive is also responsible for the feeling of guilt installed in the ego, which makes the subject deem himself worthy of suffering.” Original text: “Em O Ego e o Id, Freud afirma que a pulsão de vida precisa encontrar formas de manter a vida ante a tendência à mortífera da pulsão oposta. Uma das soluções pontuadas por ele é o desviar da pulsão de morte para fora do organismo para não provocar a destruição interna. Assim, boa parte desta pulsão se voltaria para o exterior e se apresentaria aí, pelo menos parcialmente, em forma de destruição. Quanto à parte da pulsão de morte que permanece no ego, Freud dizia que ela poderia chegar à descarga por meio da fusão à pulsão de vida também. Neste formato, formas saudáveis de descarga são desenvolvidas em contrapartida às soluções que a pulsão de morte encontra quando desfusionada, que seria o estabelecimento de neuroses graves. Quando desfusionada, a pulsão de morte encontraria no superego um aliado e seria a responsável pela dureza e crueldade exibida dessa instância, e também por uma ação exagerada e excessivamente punidora voltada ao ego. A pulsão de morte é responsável ainda pelo sentimento de culpa instalado no ego, que faz com que o sujeito se julgue merecedor de sofrimento.” AZEVEDO, Monia Karine; MELLO NETO, Gustavo Adolfo Ramos.” **O desenvolvimento do conceito de pulsão de morte na obra de Freud.** Rev. Subj. vol.15 no.1 Fortaleza abr. 2015. Disponível em: < http://pepsic.bvsalud.org/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2359-07692015000100008> Acesso em: 21 mar. 2019.

³⁰ Original text: “é um construto da psique humana. Se isso é correto, nos termos da lógica binária a ideia de desenvolvimento sustentável pode ser considerada até certo ponto incompatível com a natureza humana que, segundo Freud, é ao mesmo tempo sustentável (inclui Eros, a pulsão de vida) e insustentável (inclui as pulsões de morte).” MARIOTTI, Humberto. **Complexidade e sustentabilidade:** o que se pode e o que não se pode fazer. São Paulo, SP: Atlas, 2013, p. 124.

³¹ Original text: “desenvolvimento sustentável abre espaço a outras racionalidades para enfrentar a crise ambiental, e essas novas racionalidades passam a orientar novas estratégias de preservação ambiental.” ALTMANN, Alexandre. **O desenvolvimento sustentável e os serviços ambientais.** In: RECH, Adir Ubaldo; ALTMANN, Alexandre (Orgs.) Pagamento por serviços ambientais: imperativos jurídicos e ecológicos para a preservação e restauração das matas ciliares. Caxias do Sul: Educus, 2009, p. 78.

³² Original text: “era um tipo de consolo, útil apenas para desviar a atenção dos verdadeiros problemas, como diferença existente entre os países ricos e pobres, os problemas da poluição e a futura sobrevivência da espécie humana.” CECHIN, Andrei. **A natureza como limite da economia:** a contribuição de Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen. São Paulo: Editora Senac São Paulo/Edusp, 2010, p. 215.

environmental aspects. It is a coalition resulting from increased concern for the future of humanity. Even though it is not the basic guideline for economic development, today it involves greater responsibility for the issue of the environment, in view of the awareness of the finitude of natural resources. What is meant is that the concern with the ecosystem within the context of economic development exists, but it is not sustainable.

Then, the advent of the discourse of sustainable development (taken for lack of certainty and for interpretive confusions) emerged in order to establish a process of changes to reconcile the economy and the environment. However, it is evident that sustainable development cannot be a consequence of economic development, because they are different premises. Thus, sustainable development ends up acting as a disguise that masks the economic development that, par excellence, has in its true face predominantly economic intentions.

It is worth saying that more than a theoretical conceptual discussion, it is a debate that has practical consequences, since the abandonment of an indefinite expression (sustainable development), which causes doubts, can leverage ideas about strategic alternatives for effective environmental preservation.

From the above, it is noted that growth belongs to development, but it is only part of an entire complex. Thus, sustainable economic growth is an option that involves fewer elements than sustainable development and, therefore, has a greater chance of success when employed when addressing the custody of natural resources.

Furthermore, the idea of sustainability is also better adopted when it aims to achieve a fruitful relationship between the environment and economic interests, since, as seen, sustainability is a natural phenomenon, while sustainable development was elaborated by the human mind and, thus, is more hermetic, with greater margins for meanings.

Thus, sustainable development can be explained as a mask that mitigates the impact of economic development on natural resources. The safest solution is to discard the term sustainable development, for bringing incompatible elements and, often, offering different interpretations, and seeking to trigger sustainable economic growth or sustainability as more appropriate words because they have less divergences in understanding.

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