

**Religion**

IfS Analyse



Bruna Milheiro

**The promise of a global ethic in the Brazilian context**  
**A short analysis of performance indicators and their perspectives**

**Das Versprechen des Weltethos in dem brasilianischen**  
**Kontext**

**Eine kleine Analyse der Indikatoren und ihrer Perspektive**

**Institut für Sozialstrategie**

Laichingen – Jena – Berlin

Bleichwiese 3, 89150 Laichingen  
[www.institut-fuer-sozialstrategie.de](http://www.institut-fuer-sozialstrategie.de)  
[kontakt@institut-fuer-sozialstrategie.org](mailto:kontakt@institut-fuer-sozialstrategie.org)

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**Abstract [en]:**

This article intends to confront the main principles in the global ethic project and the current data about social performance in Brazil, analysing the possible solutions for social challenges in the country by considering the premises of a global ethic philosophy. Based on the postulate of the golden rule, the principle of humanity and the five commitments, this paper argues the possibility of implementing these ideas in the Brazilian social context in order to improve peoples' standard of living in the country, especially in poor areas usually called slums. This paper supports that by applying ethical principles it is possible to improve the quality of life in these zones and consequently decrease the poverty and social inequality existent in there. To get to this point this article works with the available official data from IBGE, supporting an optimistic view about the future.

**Abstract [de]:**

Dieser Artikel beabsichtigt, die Hauptprinzipien des Weltethos und die aktuellen Daten zur sozialen Leistung in Brasilien darzulegen. Die möglichen Lösungen für soziale Herausforderungen im Land unter Berücksichtigung der Prämissen der Weltethosphilosophie zu analysieren. Basierend auf dem Postulat der Goldenen Regel, dem Prinzip der Menschlichkeit und den fünf Verpflichtungen argumentiert dieses Paper die Möglichkeit, diese Ideen im brasilianischen sozialen Kontext umzusetzen, um den Lebensstandard der Menschen im Land zu verbessern, insbesondere in Armenvierteln. Dieser Text unterstützt, dass es durch Anwendung ethischer Grundsätze möglich ist, die Lebensqualität in diesen Gebieten zu verbessern und folglich die dort vorhandene Armut. Die Soziale Ungleichheit in diesen Stadtteilen wird dadurch verringert. An diesen Punkt zu gelangen, verwendet dieser Artikel die verfügbaren offiziellen Daten von IBGE und unterstützt eine optimistische Sicht auf die Zukunft.

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## Introduction

One of the current discussions in many academic environments is the debate about the loss of values in the modern society. In the human sciences some researchers confront this question and try to explain it in some way, bringing either a positive or a negative view of the process. Zygmunt Bauman, for example, wrote a collection of books (BAUMAN, 2000; 2003; 2008) defending the adage that we experience liquid times, in which human relations suffered significantly changes and become day by day more fluid and frail. People don't consider basic values as they used to be considered before and it makes hard to create safe connections and to enforce real relations, in summary, he believes that the modernity has created the untied man.

On the other hand authors like Hans Küng and Ulrich Hemel are still optimist about human being and believe that it is possible to find solutions for the current lack of values by considering religious teachings, ethical Principals and peoples' conscience. From Hemels' point of view when discussing the global ethic in the 21 century, it has a clear-cut optimistic side. He believes that it invites people to think about the world, working as a bridge term in order to balance potentialities and weakness from coexistence of different religions and cultures (HEMEL, 2019, p. 63). Bringing all that together it is possible to affirm that the global ethic project reinforces the fundamentals of ancient religions and philosophical traditions in order to promote a future of dialog and respect for the human life. Based on the two main principles of *Humanity* and *Reciprocity*, it offers an optimistic approach of human relations and defends that besides all the facing problems, the humanity is walking towards a better world order based on common ethical values. (KÜNG, 1993, p.5 and 6)

Having these two approaches in mind, this paper analyses the social performance in official data in Brazil and how do they indicate the improvement or not of social living conditions in the Country. Furthermore it intends to consider the possibility of applying the principals of a global ethic in the Brazilian scenario in order to provide better living standards for all citizens. The history of this country has some particularities that are hardly seen in other parts of the world: The singular social structure, including native populations, large amount of immigration from different parts of the world, especially from Africa and Europe during the latest centuries. This process results in the plurality of social groups, a population with mixed colors, various religious and cultural backgrounds (PETRUCCELLI & SABOIA, 2013). All these elements make it hard to create a crystallized social categorization, due to the complexity of social relations and the maintenance of social stigmas based mainly on color skin and familiar origin.

The most common tendency in these national surveys is to divide society in economic classes, based on consumer potential and standards of living according to IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística) data.<sup>1</sup> This allocation is normally related to some fundamental ideas considering human being survival such as eating habits, access to potable water, basic sanitation so as basic health and educational services. Besides that, other aspects are considered in these surveys like professional career, incomes, years of education, rent, formal and informal work. All of them indicate the existence of a deep social inequality and highlights the difficult to establish equitable human rights in the country. This is considered one of the biggest issues to be overcome in order to offer basic

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ibge.gov.br](http://www.ibge.gov.br)

needs and dignity to people. Considering these aspects, this article defends that taking into account the available data in IBGE, it is possible to suggest fundamental changes in Brazilian society and they could be strongly improved by the global ethic principles.

### **The Golden Rule, the principle of humanity and the Brazilian case**

After years studying the worlds' religions and writing an extensive literature about this topic, Hans Küng built up the Global Ethic project based in two main pillars: *Humanity and Reciprocity*. He defends that the era of globalization brings together the tendency of lack of values. It represents a powerful challenge not only for individuals but also for religions and ancient traditions, whose roles are interconnected. In the declaration towards a global ethic, he defends that "humankind urgently needs social and ecological reforms, but it needs spiritual renewal just as urgently". (KÜNG, 1993, p.7) It is high time religions and traditional wisdoms reassume their role as guidelines for human dignity and prosperity. Having this aspect in mind, he strongly believes that people already know how to recover from this damaging process. "There already exist ancient guidelines for human behaviour which are found in the teachings of the religions of the world and which are the condition for a sustainable world order." (KÜNG, 1993, p.2) After all as human beings we aren't so different. Individuals share similar needs and fears, diseases and emotions, people need to be aware of their connection to the whole.

In that way the *principle of humanity* is crucial and it reflects the relation between people. Hans Küng believes that the principle of human dignity should permeate unreservedly humans' relations, because "when this is applied, it changes the atmosphere in any office, factory, store, or business: Every human being – man or woman, white or colored, rich or poor, young or old – must be treated humanely and not inhumanely, (or) even bestially." (PIRSON et al, 2014, p. 29) This belief is complemented by the second one called *principle of reciprocity*. It is possible to read it in some distinct forms: In the analects of Confucius, in the bible, in coran and other millenary traditions, so as in the writings of Patanjali in India or in the Buddhist writings. It is important to notice that in the end they all share a similar sense of human interaction and could be considered an updated version of the millenary principle of Golden Rule: "Do unto others what you would have others do unto you".

Taking these two primordial ideas as a starting point and in order to complement them, the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic introduces four commitments or irrevocable directives that are *four basic values and standards*. They can guide people in different situations and more than this: they allow them to reflect about their lives and their relations to others. "We can find them as part of the major religious and nonreligious traditions: People should not murder, not steal, not lie, not commit sexual abuse." (PIRSON et al, 2014, p. 29). These principles exist since early ages in most of societies and they represent analogous worries related to the common living. Taking the idea of humanity as a whole, it is possible to affirm that, despite of the local and cultural differences, people all over the planet meet the same questions and must overcome similar challenges. The intention is obviously not to support them as absolute values, but to recognize in them a solid basis for life and for personal development. As Carlo Martini says it is unlikely to believe that one day it will be a common sense that killing, stealing and lying would be accepted as

normal behaviour, of course taking into consideration what meaning these actions can receive regarding to cultural specificity. (ECO& MARTINI, 2012, p.150).

To start applying these ideas in the Brazilian context, it is important to consider the religious roots in the Country and what they explain about laws and social agreements. Based on the IBGEs' surveys, there is a predominance of religious people with especial highlight to Christianity. According to the latest IBGE demographic survey from 2010, only 8% of all population declared as non-religious people and around 86% declare themselves as Christians, including catholic around 64% and protestant around 22%. Even though the predominance of Christians, the data shows that there was a growth of religious diversity in the country, including spiritualistic and oriental religions. The impact of religious thoughts is also felt in the rules of laws, once they are largely influenced by religious and humanistic ideas. In the federal constitution from 1988 it is possible to find ideas like respect for religious and ethnic diversity, prevalence of human rights, desire for peace and equality between men and women in all situations.<sup>2</sup>

Even people with no religious beliefs are part of a society based on Christianity, once Christians' values are very dilute in the Brazilian culture since colonial times. (LOPES, 2017, p. 17) The existence of such a level of religious people and the predominance of Christians' ideals doesn't avoid the country to confront a deep social inequality. It seems to be a very curious contradiction. Even though the bad scenario, all this information about religions demonstrates that the necessary basis to apply the global ethic principles are still available in everyday life, people in Brazil just need to open their eyes and especially their hearts to embrace decidedly this philosophy.

### **IBGEs' data and the five commitments**

Considering all previous explanation, it is high time to analyse the application of the five commitments in the Brazilian context.

The first directive in the declaration toward a Global ethic is the commitment to a Culture of non-violence and respect for life. Professor Küng explains that this directive is related to the millenary principle of not killing others. According to him the basilar meaning of a global ethic is: "There is no survival at the planet with peace and justice without a new paradigm in international relations, based on ethical standards." (KÜNG, 1993, p. 89). The demand for peace and understanding among societies is also a very old one, once we can find it in different literatures since ancient times. The principle of non-violence is an important part of it and can be recognized in different traditions so as the principle of the golden rule, previously described.

Illustrative examples of non-violence could be seen in several religious thoughts and holy books. In the New Testament Jesus instructed their followers about peace and about never using violence against any living thing. One of the most famous passages showing the importance of avoiding violence is the one from John 18 reporting the night he was arrested to be crucified. Jesus told Peter not to attack the guards who came to arrest him: "Put up

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.planalto.gov.br/>

your sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" A very similar idea is to be seen in Afro-religions. They were born in the Brazilian context of slavery and can be considered as a fusion of ancient religions in Africa and the Catholicism during colonial times. They are based on the worship of ancestors and in the belief of messengers of God, called Orixás, who promote the balance between the earth and the cosmological world. They believe in peace as a way to achieve this harmony in the society, so as the balance of the universe. (BERKENBROCK, 1998)

Although the relevance of non-violence and peace, it is important to consider that these ideas have also particular interpretations and can turn into a polemic topic, if we consider the variety of realities and how each of them understands violence. Hans Küng reports in a book he wrote with Helmut Schmidt that non-violence doesn't mean accepting violence passively, as people usually think. They support that self-defence is also legitimate, especially when genocide and power abuse are used against innocent people with no conditions of defence. (KÜNG & SCHMID, 2001, p. 71 and 72). When considering religious leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King that employed non-violent methods in their particular realities, it was always combined with other strategies. The option of non-violence or self-defence is related to each specific situation and must take into consideration other aspects, such as the probability of success and benefits versus harm for people. (MILHEIRO SILVA, p.126-138, 2018)

Taking into consideration the topic of violence versus non-violence in the Brazilian context, it could be considered as an expressive challenge for the country. According to Lopes, Brazil has a very particular colonial history related to the past of conquest by war and enslavement of native populations and Africans based mainly on the idea of dominance. It has a strong interference in the way the society is organized nowadays, once the past of violence reflects deeply the social inequality and other social problems in general (LOPES, 2017, p. 26). People with dark skin are harmed, they had no chances to find their own way after the end of slavery times. They had neither education nor jobs and there weren't any government policies in order to reintroduce them in the society as free citizens. In that sense they had to do the worse activities to survive and had to live in poor areas, where no basic conditions of housing existed. This past brings as consequence the current social situation, reported by the data collected in IBGEs' surveys. According to it most of the people living in poor areas are originally from this group, it means, people with slavery background. This is just one aspect of the social violence.

Another aspect is related to mortality issue. The numbers of death related to diseases have decreased during the latest decades and the others related to violent reasons have increased. This is much more to be seen in slums, where the violence is part of everyday life, based on drug dealing and weapons illegal trade. The data tell us that in the case of young colored men between 15 and 39 years old, the mortality is very high. (Indicadores..., 2009, p.41) But the violence isn't a gender issue. Information from CEPAL (Comissão Econômica para a América Latina e Caribe) organization related to the United Nations in South America, in the year 2017 Brazil concentrated the larger amount of all femicides in Latin America.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://oig.cepal.org/es/indicadores/feminicidio>

Thus the idea of applying a global ethic seems to be an opportunity to revise the current situation related to the topic violence in the country. By implementing the principle of humanity the differences related to gender, color and social level lose their meaning, because all in all as human beings it makes no sense to divide people in categories. By applying the principle of reciprocity, the violence against others means the violence against me, people must be aware of that reality. "We shall not oppress, injure, torture, or kill other human beings, forsaking violence as a means of settling differences." (KÜNG, 1993, p. 3). In the Brazilian context violence is directly related to social inequality, once it grows faster in poor areas, where people have no access to fundamental living resources and where drug dealing and other illegal trades exists freely. For that reason to solve the issue of violence, it is necessary to solve the issue of misery and social unfairness.

In this sense the first commitment conducts to the second directive, once they both are closely interconnected: The commitment to a Culture of Solidarity and a Just Economic Order. The gap between poverty and richness all over the world is enormous and in Brazil it is possible to see it clearly. It is particularly striking in big cities like Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo where people can realize it at first sight because they exist very close to each other. This large difference can influence a lot on the development of human dignity and the availability of surviving resources, so as the level of living standards in the country. Mostly people with less purchasing power tend to have a more difficult life, because they usually have access to less living resources. Hans Küng supports in the global ethic project and in other literatures about this topic that if peace is desired in the world first people must reach a minimum of a fair economic order or in his words: "where power and wealth are accumulated ruthlessly, feelings of envy, resentment, and deadly hatred and rebellion inevitably well up in the disadvantaged and marginalized. This leads to a vicious circle of violence and counter-violence." (KÜNG, 1993, p.10)

From the millenary religious and ethical traditions we can learn the precept of acting honestly and justly and it can also be applied in regard to the achievement of a fair economic order. In fact that principle can be interpreted in many different ways, depending on peoples' point of view. One option is to consider that people should not wish property from others or even try to take ownership from community goods. In the other way around people should not use their own property selfishly, it means, they should consider the needs of others around them and not always consider their own satisfaction. This worry might include well-being from people so as the preservation of the planet, once nature also suffers the consequences of luxury goods. From Küngs' point of view, the economic models adopted in most countries, the capitalism and socialism -in general terms- emptied important spiritual values on peoples' hearts, imposing most of the time a materialistic way of life based on desire, money and profit.

"We condemn the poverty that stifles life's potential; the hunger that weakens the human body, the economic disparities that threaten so many families with ruin." (KÜNG, 1993, p. 2)

The declaration supports the distinction between conscious consumption and unbriedled material use, so as the balanced use of ownership and natural resources. Hans Küng believes when there are much power and wealth, there will also be a lot of poverty. It conducts to a situation in which people with less survival resources can feel harm, because they are not able to achieve a better life and they see others having what they will probably

never have. It drives to hopelessness and conducts to a vicious circle of violence and hate. Corruption and exploitation are another side of this process, once they tend to occur in a vicious circle deepening social inequality and violent responses. In that way Küng supports "let no one be deceived: There is no global peace without global justice". (KÜNG, 1993, p.10)

According to the data survey from IBGE, the social inequality is to be seen in different aspects of life in Brazilian society. In 2018, for example, the big amount of work force in Brazil had a general characteristic: They had low level of education as the numbers says, 41,3 % from people at the work market wasn't able to finish high school. Most of these people are originally from poor areas and have a slavery background. In this sense the point is the low level of education and consequently opportunities for people with dark skin in comparison to people with white skin. Regarding to the work force in general, data collected in the same year showed that people considered themselves as white have better positions and earn better salaries than colored ones. Besides that the data demonstrate that young people with dark skin receive less payment by doing the same activities as others. Their homes have the worst living standards per capita representing 42,3% from all homes in the country. (Síntese..., 2009, p. 26 to 28).

Brazil has a past of social unfairness based on a slavery system that until today isn't completely solved and the society is still experiencing the consequences of it in different ways. (LOPES, 2017, p. 26) The work market is just one example of it. It brings together no equally access to education and unequally access to basic needs, such as potable water or basic sanitation, once most people can't afford them. Nevertheless it is possible to find some achievements based on some private and public policies and an improvement in social conscience. The illiteracy levels in general have decreased in the last decade and since then the new generation is completing their education, even in bad educational conditions. That outlook indicates in an optimistic scenario an improvement on social performances in a near future. (Síntese..., 2019, p.85)

From the global ethic project it is possible to support that "we must strive for a just social and economic order, in which everyone has an equal chance to reach full potential as a human being". (KÜNG, 1993, p. 3) In order to accomplish it people must have access to basic living resources so as to education. As Amartya Sen explains:

"A child who is denied the opportunity of elementary schooling is not only deprived as a youngster, but also handicapped all through life (as a person unable to do certain basic things that rely on reading, writing and arithmetic). The adult who lacks the means of having medical treatment for an ailment from which she suffers is not only prey to preventable morbidity and possibly escapable mortality, but may also be denied the freedom to do various things – for herself and for others – that she may wish to do as a responsible human being". (KIMAKOWITZ, 2009, p.158)

In that way the reshaping of world economic structures must include the guarantee of dignity and basic education for all people. The cooperation between states and international organizations seems to be fundamental in order to reach a solution for the issue of eliminating poverty. Institutions such as UNICEF operating in global scale as well as social projects headed by isolated groups or NGOs, currently founded in Brazil, are clearly important, but not sufficient if they are not supported by state policies. The government



can't be exempt from their responsibility to protect human beings and to offer minimal survival conditions for all citizens. It shouldn't use the power of their position to reach their own benefit or protect specific groups. States policies must bring together an improvement in different areas, such as in educational and social services, job opportunities and better living perspectives giving citizens the opportunity to reach their full human potential and to live with dignity. Furthermore people as individuals must consider their co-responsibility for their own community and in all the relations they have, taking into account mutual respect and fair relations. As Hans Küng explains in the global ethic declaration "We must not live for ourselves alone, but should also serve others, never forgetting the children, the aged, the poor, the suffering, the disabled, the refugees, and the lonely." (KÜNG, 1993, p. 3)

The previous discussion lead to the third Directive: The Commitment to a Culture of Tolerance and a Life of Truthfulness. There is no peace and no fair economic order if people can't trust each other and feel they have worth as human beings. It means that cultivating truthfulness is much more than just a theoretical concept it might be part of daily life actions. There is no peace if individuals don't hear other peoples' stories and if they aren't honestly open to support them. As advocated during the last Parliament of the world's religion: There is no global peace without truthfulness and humanness. From the ancient religious and philosophical traditions we have the precept: Speak and act with truthfulness!

This third commitment gives people a chance to think about truth in many different ways: By speaking, by acting but especially by being. What a single person has inside her heart and mind says a lot about the way she confronts the reality, once cultivating good feelings will probably engender good actions. The religions can also contribute in that sense once they provide people not only the connection with a supernatural force but can also offer them the sense of community and partnership. (KÜNG, 1993, p.5 and 6). These aspects can be part of other fields of human relations such as at the workplace, family and different social environments. It means that living together in a healthy community means caring about others around listening and exchanging experiences. Not only what people say but also their behaviour can turn into a message to others as a relational living being the acquaintance of collective practices are very important to individuals. According to Hemel trust is a meaningful characteristic of a society, because the more people can trust each other better are the living standards in it. He gives the example of Nordic countries, where in general terms it is possible to find both aspects together in a connected relation. (HEMEL, 2019, p. 63)

The ideas of tolerance and trust conduct to the idea of personal freedom and the relations with others. The liberty of communication is nowadays much bigger than it used to be years ago because day by day much more people have access to technology, media and diverse resources to get in touch with different people and societies enjoying the opportunity to learn from them. In that sense it is high time people benefit from these advantages recognizing in them an opportunity to improve their personal relations, building affiliation based on trust and credibility, creating better connections to others. In fact taking truth as a guideline for life is an ethical approach defended in millennial traditions and religions all over the world.

It is quite important to have in mind that this directive refers not only to individuals it can be applied in regard to states, institutions and groups in general once human beings don't

live alone. It doesn't matter if a single person is being considered or someone as part of a group, the importance of tolerating and being fair has the same meaning. Besides that the freedom of making choices shouldn't mean arbitrariness or relativism but should consider human dignity at first step. From the ancient religious and philosophical traditions we can learn the precept: Speak and act with truthfulness! Thus the idea is to make people aware of the relevance of truth in each small sense and how it can influence the environment around them.

This aspect can be extended to the press and the media in general. In democratic societies the freedom of expression and communication is guaranteed by the rules of laws and they play an important role in the common living because they inform people about their own community or even about the world. What is important to have in mind, according to the global ethic principles, is that freedom of press must be associated with ethical principles. For example, it might not be accepted that they violate the particular sphere of individuals or even manipulate information in order to achieve success. Politicians and religious leaders for instance, have an obligation to hold the truth. Corruption, the achievement of power and search for money are all not compatible to the well-being of the community. Especially in the case of religious leaders, the dignity of human being must lie over religious truths. From Hans Küng's own words: "We must speak and act truthfully and with compassion, dealing fairly with all, and avoiding prejudice and hatred." (KÜNG, 1993, p. 3)

The existence of a good system of communication is fundamental for the development of fair relations because through it people can be aware of their reality and they will be able to make decisions that might be crucial for the common living. In the Brazilian context the IBGE perform an important role in order to provide the population subsidies about relevant issues in regard to all the society. That public institution is responsible for analysing the living standards in diverse fields and to offer the data freely to everyone interested in it. In the year of 2011 the law 12.527 related to the availability of information in general was updated considering the importance of avoiding manipulation and corruption in advertisement and in the information offered by all kinds of media. Moreover it intended to reinforce the role of all people by participating in the public life and highlighted the right to education to make new generations aware of their decisions.<sup>4</sup>

IBGE's analysis related to the topic communication and advertisement reveals that the importance of sharing information with a large audience has increased in the Brazilian society during the 1950 and 1960 decades. Nowadays due to internet and other media the amount of information available is larger than never before and it has changed the profile of its consumers. The emphasis on avoiding misleading advertisement appears very clearly, the media sector developed mechanisms for protecting data and people nevertheless the misuse of it is still a reality. In that sense the global ethic project could be an option to allow citizens to reflect about their role at the society and how their choices contribute to better or worse social interactions. (Pesquisa..., 2009, p. 9 and 10). As it says at the global ethic project "we must not confuse freedom with arbitrariness or pluralism with indifference to truth." (KÜNG, 1993, p. 12)

Following this discussion it is time to introduce the Fourth Directive: The Commitment to a Culture of Equal Rights and Partnership between Men and Women. No patriarchal

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.br/acao/informacao/pt-br>

domination is expected once the relations must be based on cooperation and mutual respect. From the religious and philosophical traditions we can learn the precept: Respect and love your neighbour no matter if a woman or a man, respect their body and their personality! That includes the respect for the individuality and the private sphere of them furthering the freedom of personal development and physical integrity. Nobody should be treated as an object or should lose the own identity in order to satisfy the desire of others. They should be free to live and to discover their own sexuality without the interference of others or the obligation to follow specific rules, if they don't agree with them. As Hans Küng points out "people should always be valued for their humanity and never become a simple object in the hands of others." (KÜNG, 1992, p.54)

If we dedicate a close look to the historical process, we will realize that gender inequality is a very old controversy and it is usually observed since early ages, because in general boys and girls have their social roles delimited since childhood. The traditions and social standards have a meaningful meddling in that point and they usually follow the natural demands related to the function of reproducing the humankind. They consider that women are weaker than men, so they should not hunt for surviving or go to war. These activities are traditionally delegated to men. Historically women are relegated to domestic activities, they are more responsible for educating children and they suffer under social stigmas if they don't find a partner or if they don't have children. This patriarchal model is still dominant in most of the societies, even with some relevant changes in some other directions, women are all in all considered inferior as men in many daily situations.

Religions interfere a lot in the relation between genders. It is especially significant because religious teachings related to women for instance are being propagated without an attention to their current demand in society. Hans Küng believes that we should not reproduce directives from holy books in a sterile way, emulating it without considering the changes in time and societies. (KÜNG & SCHMIDT, 2001, p. 72) In modern urban reality the differences between men and women are to be seen in many specific aspects, because women are still considered not good enough as men on doing a lot of activities. In work places they are hardly in the higher position, also their salaries are usually lower compared to men and in some situations they are simply rejected because they can get pregnant soon. The consequence is the wrong idea that intellectual capacity is determined by the gender and that professionally women can't achieve the same level as men. All these aspects make women more vulnerable to social dependence, because in some parts of the globe they can't find a way to fight for surviving without a man. These challenges are still to be faced in order to promote the gender equality.

By giving a close look to the Brazilian reality, according to the data available in IBGE survey from 2005, pregnancy in early ages (before 20 years old) has increased during last decades especially in less economic social levels, it means in poor areas young girls tend to have a baby earlier than in middle classes or even higher classes. They also have no access to basic education or they leave school before finishing primary school, because they need to take care of the children. Most of the time the mother or the girls' family and not the father take the responsibility for educating and supporting the baby, what suggests a life of less freedom for women. According to the data collected at the previous document, the girls with one to three years of studying had an average of 3,0 children while girls with eight or more years of studying had an average of 1,4 children. (Indicadores..., 2009, p. 12)

The social life from these girls isn't only limited by the pregnancy but also by domestic activities. Until today women in all social levels are more responsible for the house work. Taking into account the data survey, women in Brazilian dedicate an average of 21,3 hours per week by doing domestic activities like cleaning, ironing, cooking and taking care of the children while man dedicate an average of 10,9 hours for the same activities. (Síntese..., 2019, p.33) Out of the domestic world, men are still privileged. An additional information is that man uses to earn 27,1 % more than women even by doing the same work. In summary the statistic says women have less job opportunities, they are low qualified, they receive low salaries by doing the same work as men and they lie under worse working conditions.

This situation related to the gender inequality exists not only in Brazil, but in many different societies all over the world. The global ethic project suggests that people should encourage and develop the sense of companionship between men and women since childhood, by offering opportunities to children and youth to rethink the role of both genders in the society and in the domestic activities. Besides that, it is also important to offer them opportunities to work together and discuss topics like love, sexuality and family, taking into account their religious beliefs and the social environment. Küng says youth might learn that sexuality isn't a negative destructive force, but an originative and breeding one. (KÜNG & SCHMID, 2001, p. 72)

During the last Parliament of the world's Religions in 2018 in Toronto was added a fifth directive, related to the worry about natural resources and sustainable development. The survival of the Planet and the future generations depends on the way children and youth learn to deal with the nature and how much importance they will give to sustainability during their lives. These questions have been recently discussed in a more intensive way because consequences are been felt in most parts of the planet and they are very perverse for the humanity. Global warming, for example, is one of the most famous and dangerous ones and it is followed by other environmental problems like big amount of air pollution, deforestation, extinction of animals and so over. Taking all these worries into account, the fifth directive points the commitment to a Culture of Sustainability and Care for the Earth.

According to Otto Scharmer and Katrin Kaufer "we currently use 1.5 times the regeneration capacity of planet earth. In other words, we actually use the resources of 1.5 planets!" (PIRSON et al, 2014, p. 190) This statistic is in some way scary for obvious reasons. Even if now some people with better living standards don't experience troubles related to food or water, for instance, it is obvious that in a near future they will all suffer if now people don't start to be concerned about how their behaviour influences the nature. Every human being needs natural resources to survive independent from social class, religion or nationality. A crucial point is to create a collective conscience about it and to stimulate old and new generations to find solutions together for the environmental issues in evidence. (KÜNG, 1993, p. 14)

People as individuals so as groups or corporations have an obligation related to the earth once they are all part of a whole with interconnected relations. As it was written in the global ethic declaration people must consider that: "We are interdependent. Each of us depends on the well-being of the whole, and so we have respect for the community of living beings, for people, animals, and plants, and for the preservation of Earth, the air, water and soil. (KÜNG, 1993, p. 2) It means every person shares the same amount of

responsibility related to the environment and consequently they must be aware of their role as individuals so as part of different groups in the society. Institutions, corporations, companies can't make decisions, people who participate in these institutions make choices. They all depend on peoples' conscience.

According to IBGE the sustainable development in Brazil has gain considerable importance during the latest decades. The document related to the topic examines the current statement on preservation of natural resources relating it to 19 topics such as atmosphere, biodiversity, desertification, water, air pollution and others. The review tries to enforce a close look to the actual environmental situation related to these topics considering the influence of human meddling in the nature. (Indicadores..., 2015, p. 13). Regarding the air pollution issue in the Brazilian context it is already known the large amount of it in big cities, especially in industrial zones. It interferes deeply not only in the human healthy but also can cause severe damages in the climate change so as to the survival of biodiversity. Thereat the government in partnership with Universities has developed a particular system to monitor the air quality in main urban areas based on high technological materials and academic studies. By using this information it is possible to improve the living standards, preserve the nature and allow the improvement of industrial production at the same time. (Indicadores..., 2015, p. 29).

A good example of how it is feasible based on legal regulations, social integration and institutional partnership in order to preserve the natural environment is an archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean called Fernando de Noronha. There are very strict rules to access the cluster of islands and because of it tourists need to book their trip in advance, so that the local government can ensure the conservation of local ecosystem. It means a considerable control on the air pollution once no industrial activity is allowed, the amount of waste is also controlled by the local authorities and the interference of human being is really restricted. The local community helps to observe the rules and they participate in some important decisions by organizing group discussions. Fernando de Noronha was considered Natural Heritage of Humanity from UNESCO rating in the year of 2001. (Available in: <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/pe/fernando-de-noronha/panorama>, consulted on: 9 June 2020). It proves that apart all difficulties to preserve the natural environment it is possible if authorities in partnership with all society are really interested in it.

Taking these prior examples from Brazilian context as a starting point to discuss possible improvements in the country during the next years it is possible to affirm that most of global ethic steps are related to personal and social engagement in team play with institutions and governments. When Hans Küng wrote the global ethic project he intended to make it as a guideline to reflect about the challenges of current time and to suggest achievable ways in order to cooperate to a better world order. The Declaration Towards a Global ethic is an effort considering the religious background especially the belief in common ethical values. This effort on discussing and reinforcing a global ethic project gain special highlights when people consider the existence of permanent structural problems: the deep difference dividing developed and developing countries, poverty from wealth, good standards of life from just surviving. This structure might be redefined in order to promote human survival and human dignity at the same time.

## Conclusion

The confrontation between a liquid era according to Baumanns' premise and a society based on solid values such as Küng arguments can take this discussion to a balance between the expected social agreements and the real situation. People as free human beings have the option to decide from which lens they want read the reality: They can head either a positive or a negative view of the future. Hans Küng suggests an optimistic way to exercise peoples' reflection based on his global ethic project and the main aspects presented above. In the end Küng and Bauman are analysing the same world but believing in a different end: While Küng strong defends that the world is walking towards a better world order in which common ethical values will reinforce the human dignity, Bauman believes the world has taken a way with no return to the original fundamentals. Which one is the right answer depends on the way each people see the reality and how they will act believing they are able to improve it or not. As professor Küng says: "The realization of peace, justice, and the protection of Earth depends on the insight and readiness of men and women to act justly" (KÜNG, 1993, p. 6). Following his point of view Ulrich Hemel and other researches working on the global ethic approach believe the link between the future and the fruitful cooperation of religions and states are still possible. (HEMEL, 2019)

By giving a close look to the Brazilian context it is possible to affirm that all the pre-conditions to apply the global ethic principles are still available. Of course it might be considered the meaning of being a developing country in Latin American compared to the diversity of global contexts in the sense of what kind of improvements are really possible to be reached in the short, middle and long time. Hans Küng believes the global ethic is a guideline to be considered in different contexts regarding the particularities of each people and the historical background. Looking to the Brazilian situation it might be relevant to consider the importance of making the living standards of people better in a way that more individuals are able to integrate the public life with dignity and responsibility. It demands the participation of political leaders and the society together to redefine social roles and at the same time revising the historical process owing to reach a more equal society.

Furthermore the option to consider IBGEs' materials and surveys was a try to offer the readers data information to analyse the social, cultural and economic aspects not seeing them as an absolute truth but as a basis to discuss some relevant topics in their relation to the global ethic project. IBGE offers significant information to analyse the social context and the result of an historical process that shows it influences until nowadays. It provides also feedstock to pursue a global ethic in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As Ulrich Hemel explains the global ethic is a learning program not a formula to solve all the worlds' issues in the present. It means the solutions for the current universal challenges might be searched day by day considering each particular reality and the connection to a whole in a globalized context.

In that sense he introduces two possible ways of applying the global ethic project in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: A global ethic for the world and in the world. The first one corresponds to the guidance of people in common and shared values regarding the improvement and cooperation in all parts of the globe. It means the impulse of creating agreements on living together so as fair playing rules for the global community in order to achieve a fairer world order. A global ethic in the World means three forms of globalization: The globalization of economy, the digital revolution and the exchange of goods, norms, values and religions,

they are all interrelated matters. As a learning program it might motivate people to coexist respectfully even if they come from different backgrounds. People must reach a minimum consensus in relation to international rules, because without a minimum of agreement not even economic trades might be possible. The proposal of a global ethic means a continuous learning process of reinvent the own identity in the plurality of worlds' globalization. There isn't a single solution for all the current issues in the global community, it means, the achievement of a better global community is in the hands and aspiration of each human being in the world, by believing they can improve it in some way.

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