
THE “COMMON HOME”: FOR AN EPISTEMOLOGY OF CARE AND JUSTICE FOR LATIN AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

The thesis that guides this research is the defense of an epistemology of care about our ‘common home’ in the Encyclical *Laudato Si*. The authors seek to define the meaning of this metaphor and argue that its contents can guide the construction of sustainable solutions to the serious problems in Latin America, specifically, social inequalities, deficiencies of democracy, the exclusion of cultures, the emptiness of the institutions and the incorrect use of environmental and natural resources. The main objective of this study is to inquire how the “common home” becomes the epistemic vector to care actions for a new design of living based on the centrality of qualified life among Man and Nature in Latin America. The approach method was deductive. As part of our conclusions, recognition and development of the “common home” of Latin Americans perpetuates the Common Good among all beings from responsibilities which manifests in a systemic, cooperative and integrated way.

KEYWORDS: Care. Common Home; Democracy; Epistemology; Justice; Recognition.

**A "CASA COMUM":
POR UMA EPISTEMOLOGIA DO CUIDADO
E JUSTIÇA PARA A AMÉRICA LATINA**

RESUMO: *A tese que orienta esta investigação é a defesa da existência de uma epistemologia do cuidado e justiça da "Casa Comum" na Encíclica Laudato Si. Busca-se definir o significado dessa metáfora e defende-se que seu conteúdo pode orientar a construção de soluções sustentáveis para os graves problemas da América Latina, especificamente, as desigualdades sociais, as deficiências da democracia, a exclusão de culturas, o esvaziamento das instituições e o uso incorreto dos recursos ambientais e naturais. O Objetivo Geral deste estudo é determinar como a "Casa Comum" se torna o vetor epistêmico de cuidado, de uma nova concepção para a convivência fundamentada na centralidade da vida qualificada como digna ao Homem e Natureza na América Latina. O método de investigação utilizado foi o dedutivo. Como parte das conclusões, é necessário o reconhecimento e aperfeiçoamento da "Casa Comum" dos latino-americanos para se perpetuar o Viver Bem entre todos os seres a partir de responsabilidades as quais se manifestem de modo sistêmico, cooperativo e integrado.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *"Casa Comum"; Cuidado; Democracia; Epistemologia; Justiça; Reconhecimento.*

INTRODUCTION

The conditions of Social Justice (PASOLD, 2013, page 55)¹ and Ecology (BOSELNANN, 2015, p 133)² in the context of the serious threats to relations between peoples, the environment and cultures, call for new references to guide and structure the environment in a solidarity-based and interdependent way, avoiding exclusion and other forms of domination and exploitation. The publication of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si* - a letter of Christian doctrine in which the Pontiff criticizes the global ecological disinterest on climate change, excessive consumption, high poverty rates that prevents human improvement and the union of peoples - represent the synthesis of this systemic and universal approach with the essential categories to approach these current issues in an interdisciplinary and cooperative way for the good of all.

The 21st Century should be able to construct a set of “concrete utopias” (BLOCH, 2005, v. 1, p. 145)³ not illusory ones, with the ability to unite people and peoples together in order to take care of the “Common Home”. This is an essential dimension to legitimize any form of coexistence in the future, be it between human beings or of those with nature, in its broadest sense. The question guiding this research is asked by the people concerned about the present and a sustainable future: How is it possible to take care of the “Common Home” so that this attitude becomes the identity of this Century?

1 “SOCIAL JUSTICE, in accepting the proposed theoretical framework, is necessary to incorporate itself as an attitude and, consistently, to exercise it in behavior. Thus, when one requests SOCIAL JUSTICE, the naive or malicious appeal can not be made - as if its sole recipient were the State, or another, such as the Government. The real recipient of appeals to SOCIAL JUSTICE is its Agent: - the whole social, that is, the Society. SOCIAL JUSTICE will only present the conditions of an efficient performance if the Society as a whole is willing to the precise and precious task of contributing so that each person receives what is due to him by his human condition. And, on the part of the State, if it exercises an effective, continuous and legitimate Social Function. In this context, I highlight three strategic points: 1º - the notion of SOCIAL JUSTICE can not be attached to schemes fixed a priori and with indisputable rigidity; 2 - the conduct of the State can not be paternalistic towards the needy and protective or conniving to the privileged; 3º - the responsibility for the achievement of the SOCIAL JUSTICE in its condition of destination of the SOCIAL FUNCTION, must be shared by all the components of the Society”. The capitalized expressions are from the original work studied.

2 “[. . .] ‘Ecological’ can be understood as modifying ‘justice’ in much the same way that ‘sustainable’ can be understood as the developmental modification. On this basis, the only possible paths to development are those that are ecologically sustainable. Likewise, the only possible paths to justice are those that recognize ecological sustainability.”

3 “[. . .] The point of contact between dream and life, without which the dream produces only abstract utopias and life, in its turn, only trivialities, presents itself in the utopian capacity placed on one’s own feet, which is associated with the possible real. [. . .] here would take place the concept of utopian-concrete, only seemingly paradoxical, that is, an anticipation that is not confused with the abstract utopian dreaming, [. . .]”.

The Encyclical, through its specific characteristics and its tradition, has a universal character, as its opening paragraph attests: "In this Encyclical, I especially intend to enter into dialogue with all people about our 'Common home'" (FRANCISCO, 2015, p. 10). The thesis that is presented and grounds it develops reflections on the epistemology of care of the "Common Home" as the foundation of human action in the world and its responsibility, as a integrated, interdependent and solidary action with others, whether human or not.

It is stated with equal intensity and objectivity that this understanding is guided by an up-to-date hermeneutics which insists on the necessity of effecting the conditions of justice for the preservation of a symbiotic, cooperative posture between Man and Nature in Latin America.

The dimensions that surround human, be them environmental, democratic and sustainable relations in the continent already mentioned are directly associated with the conditions in which the "Common Home" is situated, that is, the place of all. The appropriation of the natural world in an indiscriminate way (ZARKA, 2014, page 48)⁴, the instrumentalisation of the State with its institutions, the process of social exclusion of cultures, minorities or victims of other forms of violence, social preferences and systems denounce the adulteration of the "Common Home".

One should insist on the argument: the clarification about the expression "Common Home" only develops to the extent that care (BOFF, 2013, page 38/39)⁵ becomes a vector of habitual experience, of recognition of the importance of the Other - human or nonhuman - to consolidate projects for a common life in which to share all adversities in order to overcome these moments and encourage, more and more, conditions of dignity for all people. No "home" welcomes violence, abandonment, oppression, but, on the contrary, identifies the fragility, as Boff says

4 "[. . .] Out of the concept of inappropriateness of the Earth this right extends considerably: it includes not only hospitality but also human rights, the right of peoples to resist political oppression and overproductive exploitation of the Earth, and also the right to enjoy the fruits of the Earth in the place where they meet, as well as the right to a decent life. This set would define the cosmopolitan responsibility towards humanity. It must therefore be possible to infer from the Earth's inappropriateness a principle of universal solidarity and justice which, on the one hand, serves as a normative standard for state rights and, on the other hand, bases resistance, albeit in purely moral terms, on various modes of spoliation exercised by those who let themselves be led by the vertigo of appropriation."

5 "A way-of-being is not a new being. It is a way for the being itself to structure and make itself known. Care enters into the nature and constitution of the human being. The way to be cared for reveals in a concrete way how human beings are. Without care, he ceases to be human. If you do not receive care, from birth to death, the human being degrades, depletes, loses meaning and dies. If, throughout life, you do not carefully do everything you undertake, you will end up harming yourself and destroying what is around you. Therefore care must be understood in the likes of human essence (Which answers the question: what is the human being?). The city will be present in everything".

(2009: 75-76)⁶, of beings and protects them. It is by this criterion that, little by little, the “Home” becomes broader, “Common” among the different *habitats* of Latin America.

In this context, one can visualize innumerable perspectives and simultaneously equal possibilities of reconfiguration of the human condition, the social structure and the nature in the present, as well as the conditions of their existence in the future. That is the approach and concern of this text. The reversal of this scenario, if guided by the thought contained in the *Laudato Si*, contemplates all social actors and claims its “common responsibilities”⁷ (Zarka, 2014, p. 46) to narrow the living bridges between all forms of life manifestation of this continent.

The metaphor of Francis used in the Encyclical *Laudato Si* (2015, p. 9) - the care for the “Common home” - must be understood from its symbolic meaning and from the set of its orientations. This is the basis for a reconfiguration of reality, an alternative to the current body of utilitarian doctrines that associates perverse interests with freedom and reduces politics, economy and culture to the parameters of the exclusionary market, subjecting, especially, the conception of justice and the legal order to moral individualism.

By epistemology it is understood the analytical investigation of the basic foundations that sustain and justify a conception or conviction - be it the world, or a specific area. In a systematic way, it constitutes the nucleus of references on how it is possible to propose an architecture of knowledge that exposes a certain theoretical theme or develops arguments in favor of solutions to problems usually complex and that demand the conjugation of diversified interests and actors with a multiplicity of conceptions about life, the world and the people inhabiting it.

In this line of thought, the General Objective of this article is to investigate how the “Common Home” becomes the epistemic vector of

6 “Life, as we have seen, is fragile and vulnerable. It is at the mercy of the game between chaos and cosmos. The proper attitude for life is care, respect, veneration and tenderness. [...] It is these attitudes that open us to awareness of the importance of life. They imply the change of the current cultural paradigm, based on power-domination, and the introduction of a paradigm of co-operative coexistence, of synergy, of distress for all that exists and lives. Because of this shift, it is urgent to redefine the inspired ends of life and to adjust the means to these ends. Only in this way will the threatened life be saved and promoted.”

7 “[...] The responsibility towards humanity also presupposes a bond, but a cosmopolitan bond this time, and therefore it is universal. It is certainly a common responsibility, imposed on individuals and collectivities, because of the pre-originating bond for it makes us who we are. This pre-originating bond is the belonging to the Earth before any perception, any thought and action. Now this belonging means that it is not the Earth that belongs to us, but that we belong to it: it is something that is on a level above any appropriation, in short, it is inappropriate.”

care, of a new conception for coexistence based on the centrality of life qualified as dignified to Man and Nature in Latin America. To develop this purpose, we chose as Specific Objectives: a) to recognize the importance of all the lives that inhabit the "Common Home"; B) to identify the need for care as a basis for development and clarification of the "Common Home"; C) to propose the need for an epistemic posture about this coexistence vector for the continuous maintenance and improvement of the "Common Home".

This study is based on three areas, that is, first the "care of the Common home" as the structuring nucleus of the references. Second, the care of Latin America that elects the need to update and contextualize the central content of justice in a complex and demanding environment. Third, the conception of Man and his systemic responsibility and solidarity with all beings that inhabit the same time and space.

The method that guides this investigation is deductive (PASOLD, 2015, p. 205)⁸ because the Encyclical *Laudato Si* as the most important reference and, by its character, becomes the nucleus from which it is sought to evaluate and justify the possible solutions for Latin America in its multiple exigencies and conjuncture, as well as to clarify the conception and the human responsibility not dominated by technicalism or radical anthropocentrism.

The efforts of this article as a exploratory research adds force to this project. The techniques employed appear through the use of bibliographical and documentary research (PASOLD, 2015, p. 207)⁹, of the category (PASOLD, 2015, p. 25)¹⁰ and operational concept (PASOLD, 2015, p. 37)¹¹ when necessary, insofar as theoretical references are sought, either to clarify the understanding of the text or to contextualize the original content or to present the domain of concepts in order to clarify certain phenomena.

8 "[...] the logical basis of the dynamics of Scientific Research is to establish a general formulation and then seek the parts of the phenomenon in order to sustain the general formulation."

9 "[...] Technique of investigation in books, judicial repertoires and legal collections".

10 "[...] word or strategic expression in the elaboration and/or expression of an idea". Original highlights of the work studied."

11 "When we establish or propose a definition for a word or expression, with the desire that such a definition be accepted for the purposes of the ideas we present, we are ending an Operational Concept." Original highlights of the work studied.

1 *LAUDATO SI* AND THE CARE FOR THE “COMMON HOME”

The care for the environment (FRANCISCO, 2015, p. 86)¹² for the people, social equity and future generations is a fundamental commitment to preserve minimum conditions for human survival and the natural world's. In this case, the aforementioned author (2015, p. 9) courageously begins his writing denouncing the abuses committed by Man on Earth, the “Common Home” : “This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will.”

The understanding of this statement is fundamental to discover, affirm and guide the construction of an epistemology of the “Common Home” because it asserts the origin of most of the problems found in this area, that is, an absolute anthropocentrism that elected Man and gave him unlimited powers of appropriation of the resources available to meet his goals and interests. In order to make this project feasible, instruments, techniques, strategies and inventions were used, becoming more and more powerful, sophisticated and efficient without any appreciation for the finitude of Nature.

It is noteworthy that in the course of the writing there is an observation which denounces a limited hermeneutic in relation to the understanding of the work of creation and the identity of Man, according to Francisco (2015, pp. 45-47)¹³ . The clarification on the vitality of the “Common Home” suggests, instead, an integral and systemic hermeneutics to recognize and experience which attitudes do not respect the limits of the human being and the natural environment in order to establish, in the course

12 “When we speak of ‘environment’, we also refer to a particular relation: the relation between nature and the society that inhabits it. This prevents us from considering nature as something separate from us or as a mere frame of our life. We are included in it, we are part of it and we understand each other. The reasons why a place is contaminated require an analysis of the functioning of society, its economy, its behavior, its ways of understanding reality. Given the magnitude of the changes, it is no longer possible to find a specific and independent response to each part of the problem. It is fundamental to seek integral solutions that consider the interactions of natural systems with each other and with social systems. There are not two separate crises: one environmental and one social; But a unique and complex socio-environmental crisis. The guidelines for the solution require a holistic approach to combating poverty, restoring the dignity of the excluded, and at the same time caring for nature.”

13 Francis’ understanding looks at the limits of the hermeneutics of biblical texts, especially when it refers to the disposition of the goods of nature and the very mission of man, which he claims leads to a despotic anthropocentrism. On the contrary, it leads to an ethic of care and responsibility towards nature, man and others. The misunderstanding of mastery disregarding its original meaning and its repercussion in different contexts has distorted the sense of human action and the very meaning of nature.

of time, a genuine *universal communion* (FRANCISCO, 2015, p. 58)¹⁴.

The care for the "Common Home", according to the understanding of this author, comprises an action of Man based on the recognition of his greatness and the conscience of the joint and cooperative responsibility towards other men and - in an extended way, with equal sensitivity - to other living beings (REIS and BIZAWU, 2015, p. 50)¹⁵. The "Common Home" is the home of all beings - human and nonhuman - so the awareness of care, associated today with the perception that the natural and environmental resources are finite, sharpens the prerogative of shared responsibility.

"Careful", it insists, does not mean merely looking at oneself and recognizing the limits of the human condition and nature, but also feeling, being complicit in anguish, oppression, misery caused to living beings that do not communicate under the same linguistic and rational human criterion. It is necessary, rather, to develop a keen sensibility to hear the silent cries of the Earth. Care is a disinterested attitude of generous welcome to the Other. But beware; for the Pontiff (2015, 59), caring is an expression of a legal and democratic value in that it favors the proximity between beings and their *interspecies* development¹⁶.

The non-care for the "Common Home" highlights the existence of an injustice that needs to be remedied. In this dynamic, Francisco (2015, p. 50) affirms with equal conviction and serenity: "Therefore, injustice is not invincible." With this conviction, the prerogative to take good care of the "Common Home" is a reality that can be conceived and carried out in different environments and by many agents, whether with expressive recognized leadership or not.

This argument is incisive: without the clarification afforded by care it is not possible even to consider the existence of a "Common Home". It is from the recognition of the "Other Absolutely Other" (LEVINAS,

14 "The creatures of this world can not be considered an unowned good. This creates the conviction that we and all beings of the universe, being created by the same Father, are united by invisible bonds and form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion that impels us to a sacred, loving, humble, respectful. [. . .]. This does not mean equalizing all living beings and taking away from the human being his peculiar value which simultaneously implies a tremendous responsibility. Nor does it require a divinization of the land, which would prove to us our vocation to collaborate with it and protect its fragility. These conceptions would end up creating new imbalances, in the attempt to escape the reality that challenges us. [. . .]. We must certainly be concerned that other living beings are not treated irresponsibly, but we should be especially upset by the enormous inequalities that exist between us because we continue to tolerate that some people consider themselves more worthy than others."

15 "Francisco affirms the need for an integral approach, that is, that takes into account the natural and social aspects. There is an interdependence between the most elementary levels (subatomic and genetic) to the major levels (ecosystems)."

16 "[. . .] Everything is intertwined. For this reason, a concern for the environment is demanded, coupled with sincere love for human beings and a constant commitment to the problems of society."

2000, p. 176)¹⁷, especially in the case of Nature, that the ego dilutes and moves to the Other. The historical projection and consolidation of the “Common Home” as a space of tolerance (ZAMBAM; AQUINO, 2015, p. 382)¹⁸, diversity, acceptance only manifests itself by the action of care for the Other, always precarious, temporary, incomplete and finite.

This is where Francisco’s word (2015, p. 9) makes sense: “[. . .] our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us”. Here is an appropriate question: Who is violent against someone who welcomes him, human or not?

In this environment, simultaneously of perplexity and hope, stands out the question: Who is the Man? What is your mission and social identity? What is the condition of nonhuman animals and nature? Francisco’s conviction (2015, 54) is illuminating: “The biblical accounts of creation invite us to see each human being as a subject who can never be reduced to the status of an object.” This reference contemplates the most sought for democratic tradition since its origin, which enshrines Man as a subject of rights, a prerogative widely contemplated in the Brazilian Constitution of 1988.

This argument is also observed from the Constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia in which Nature becomes subject of rights, protected not because it is merely useful or exists only by the judgments of human values - aesthetic, industrial, economic, technological - whose benefits are directed only to present and future generations, but because it is a “self.”

The “Common Home” only makes sense because **everyone** enjoys their *common goods* (MATTEI, 2013, p. 16-17)¹⁹ from the most vulnerable

17 “[. . .] the Other, absolutely Other - Other - does not limit the freedom of it. Calling it to responsibility, implant it and justify it. The relationship with the other as the healing face of allergy is desire, received teaching and peaceful opposition to the discourse.”

18 “The affirmation of tolerance as a fundamental value for the assessment of the architecture, its operation, guarantees social and political stability, the development policies and relations between cultures or different concepts, many times conflicting; it represents the moral conviction and a historical conquest with conditions to promote the different fields of relationship, organization and functioning of societies characterized by deficiencies and difficulties to understand and make the exercise of praxis (always more) tolerant. The value of Tolerance must integrate what can be called the social imaginary or, also, the understanding of public reasoning of the democratic society. However, the absence of an intrasubjective exercise on the recognition of human and social limitations and deficiencies creates *self deception* about what it is to be human, and therefore, incites increasingly intolerant practices.” Original highlights of the article studied.

19 “[. . .] The theme of common goods, in fact, has to do with the fundamental question about the domain of things and the relation of the person to nature. For this reason, the issue can not be approached or understood without exposing the institutional dimension of power and its legitimacy at the heart of the debate. [. . .] Thinking about common goods requires, above all, a typically global central posture

- including ecosystems - to the person with the highest concentration of economic wealth. No living being is the object of oppression, misery and exploitation for the benefit of another. For this reason, Francisco (2015, p. 54) recalls:

[. . .] Yet it would also be mistaken to view other living beings as mere objects subjected to arbitrary human domination. When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society.

The correction of social and natural dramas presupposes the initiative of man as a protagonist and not as a dominator, just as overcoming the relation of appropriation of natural and environmental resources must also take into account the possibilities of other grave dichotomies: "It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted." (FRANCISCO, 2015, p. 59).

The "Common Home" is the reference of human existence with other living beings. No one can appropriate this "way-of-being" exhaustively without any moral reference of cultural tradition or the limits and orientations of the legislation. The "common" characterization was also clarified in order to avoid contradictions and other inconsistencies: "The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone." (FRANCISCO, 2015, p. 61).

The authentic epistemology of care for the "Common Home", home of all, implies, as Francisco points out, a correct understanding of Man in the exercise of his autonomy and endowed with talents, as well as limitations, that demand a persistent habitual attitude of recognition about the complexity of this network of *interspecies* life. In this sense, the author (2015, p. 74) emphasizes with simplicity and desire for profound transformations: "Instead, our 'dominion' over the universe should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship."

Perhaps from these words it is necessary, following Kant, to propose in this article a *categorical imperative* in order to guide human action to tear the veil that prevents this *being-together-with-the-Other-in-the-world*: "Take care of yourself to recognize the fragility of life and

capable of placing at the center of the question the problem of equal access to the possibilities that the planet offers us. A perspective of this sense raises questions that are difficult to challenge for those who operate in an unshakeable faith about the constant deprecation of natural resources." Free translation of the original in Spanish from the authors of this text.

disseminate, through your decisions, attitudes that preserve the Other in its absolute difference.”

The association of the “Common home” with moral responsibility in the affirmation of the interdependent and complementary relation between all living beings calls for the recognition of the imperative of responsibility (GIACOIA JÚNIOR, 2000, p. 199)²⁰ in order to emphasize the repercussion of the distancing of Man, of Nature, of the exclusively technical mentality (GIACOIA JÚNIOR, 2000, 200)²¹ in the face of moral prerogatives. The care for the “Common Home” needs to integrate individual and collective action.

2 LAUDATO SI: CARE AND JUSTICE FOR LATIN AMERICA

The “Common Home” of the Latin Americans has specific contours considering their cultural formation, natural and environmental riches, the expressive presence of indigenous people, the tragic experience of slavery associated with the massacre of other peoples, economic inequalities and persistent political instability .

In this context, persistent inequalities threaten social balance and cultural and environmental diversity. It is necessary to educate the dear values of the democratic tradition, emphasizing tolerance, justice, solidarity, overcoming prejudices and other forms of classifying people, as well as building other paradigms of relationship with Nature. Francisco’s thinking guides this proposition of a paradigm of Sustainability with an ecological matrix (BOSELNANN, 2015, pp. 50-56) .

The Latin American peoples need to combine efforts so that the care for the “Common Home” represents the just objective that drives and unites the diverse actors, human or not, around common goals looking for equitable human living conditions and environmental. In this effort, Francisco emphasizes special emotion and concern about the Amazon as

20 Considering the contemporary nihilism, Hans Jonas proposed an indicative for moral action in the age of mastery of technical knowledge: “Act in such a way that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of authentic human life on earth.”

21 Giacoia Junior explains how Hans Jonas’s proposition can not be reduced to moral individualism or restricted practices of corporations or to actions of isolated groups: “The new ethical imperative is not directed at the behavior of the private individual but at the collective action, its destination is not, therefore, to the sphere close to the relations between singular, but that of the domain of the public sphere. Jonas claims a new kind of agreement: not the internal incompatibility of the will, nor that of the act itself, but the concordance between the ultimate effects of the act and the permanence of authentic human activity in the future.”

one of the lungs of the planet that needs to be taken care of with special responsibility, which can be done especially from the citizenship expressed by Gudynas (2009, p. 66) as “Florestania”²².

The sensitivity of Gudynas’ writing recognizes the innumerable efforts of a significant portion of the population and of social organizations to mitigate the intensity of human misery. With equal emphasis and concern it denounces the international interests that expropriate their resources driven only by the logic of the market and the economic interests of different leaders and institutions.

This is a prerogative, according to Francisco’s account, which is fundamental to bring people together in search of care and justice for the Latin American “Common Home” (2015, P. 29) . It is necessary, at first, to think about an international policy, a *common project* (2015, P. 99/100)²³ in order to undertake these actions, both in the continental dimension and, later, worldwide. As an example, the efforts made by the Union of South American Nations - UNASUL (2016) - in the second article of its Constitutive Treaty²⁴.

A proposal for the care of the Latin American “Common Home” anchored in the epistemology of the Encyclical *Laudado Si* is associated with the tradition of *living well* (Huananuni Mamani, 2010, 32)²⁵ which, in addition to uniting different goals, subjects and interests, is a conception beyond the current model, denounced by Francisco in the whole of his exposition, which aims at another way of living, as pointed out by the

22 “[...] *Ideas como la de florestania permiten incorporar una perspectiva biocéntrica, aunque el caso actual más destacado es la ya mencionada nueva constitución ecuatoriana, donde se reconocen derechos propios en la Naturaleza, la que incluso aparece bajo la concepción alterna de Pachamama [. . .]. En el caso ecuatoriano coexistirían una ciudadanía ambiental junto a elementos para una nueva meta-ciudadanía ecológica. La postura biocéntrica también sirve como fuente de obligaciones y responsabilidades, tanto frente al resto de la sociedad, como también ante la Naturaleza, y desde allí abordar nuevas estrategias de justicia ambiental*”.

23 “[...] the same intelligence that has been used for an enormous technological development can not find effective ways of international management to solve serious environmental and social difficulties. In order to address the underlying problems, which can not be solved by actions from isolated countries, a global consensus is needed, for example, to plan sustainable and diversified agriculture, to develop renewable and non-polluting forms of greater energy efficiency, promote better management of forest and marine resources, and ensure that everyone has access to safe drinking water.”

24 “The Union of South American Nations aims to build, in a participatory and consensual manner, a space of integration and union in the cultural, social, economic and political spheres among its peoples, prioritizing political dialogue, social policies, education, energy, infrastructure, financing and the environment, among others, with a desire to eliminate socio-economic inequality, achieving social inclusion and citizen participation, strengthening democracy and reducing asymmetries in strengthening sovereignty and independence of States.”

25 “*Vivir bien, es la vida en plenitud. Saber vivir en armonía y equilibrio; en armonía con los ciclos de la Madre Tierra, del cosmos, de la vida y de la historia, y en equilibrio con toda forma de existencia en permanente respeto*”.

author (2010, p. 3):

The communal paradigm of the culture of living to live well, sustained by a way of life reflected in a daily practice of respect, harmony and community balance with everything that exists, understanding that in life everything is interconnected, interdependent and interrelated²⁶.

The innumerable consequences of the lack of care, omission, and exploitation of the natural world in the “Common Home” of Latin Americans intensify the deep-and historical-inequalities in this continent. Understanding an integrated, just, respectful and supportive way of living demands the understanding of the necessary common responsibility that surpasses the limited and dependent vision of human action. However, it is also observed how the current model of development is the first responsible for the chaotic situation in which the common environment is found, as Francisco clarifies (2015, p. 31):

Given that man is also a creature of this world who has the right to live and be happy and, in addition, has a special dignity, we can not fail to consider the effects of environmental degradation, the current model of development and the culture of the discard on people's lives .

In this affirmation, it is possible to emphasize, from the mentioned proposal, the vision of Man situated in a relation of equitable equality with the other beings of the nature and with moral responsibility towards all. An up-to-date anthropological conception makes the action of man as absolute ruler over nature and other beings impossible . It is not possible, according to Bosselmann (2015, p. 129), to work towards a more sustainable life, without justice being understood, also, under the ecological bias²⁷.

The difficulties of formalizing and subsequently concluding agreements at the global level also impact on Latin America due to mostly corporate interests dominated by the voracity of the market or, from another

26 Free translation from the authors of this text of the original in Spanish.

27 “The proximity of ecocentrism to ecological sustainability is the most promising path to a functional theory of ecological justice. [...] To become a truly ecological concept, justice must reach the nonhuman world. [...] It is not enough to care for the human beings who live today and tomorrow when the natural processes that sustain life are at stake. There is a need to identify and recognize the ethical and legal importance of ecological integrity.”

angle, by the dominant political ideologies from distant periods perpetuated in many countries (GUARDINI, 2000, p. 55)²⁸. These deficiencies, when evaluated according to the orientation of the care of the “Common Home”, demonstrate the need for a new way of living built by the participation and commitment of all.

Again, the usual absence of care or sustainability does not favor any stimulus or clarification about the “Common Home” of Latin Americans, but, on the contrary, it isolates nations that, blinded by their interests, do not know how to deal with difficulties, which prevent a more qualitative development for all. For this reason, Francisco (2015, p. 121) reiterates: “We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other. Unless we do this, other creatures will not be recognized for their true worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others[...]”.

This view was also updated by Huanacuni Mamani (2010: 68): “to live better is a consequence of a model, not only an economic one, but a bigger, spiritual one. Therefore, in order to reach the horizon of good living one can not only rethink the structure and the economic model, but has to reconstruct the worldview of culture²⁹”.

The description of this scenario becomes more explicit and coherent with the dilemmas of Latin America when Francisco clarifies the social consequences of this lack of care for available and abundant natural and environmental resources. The Pontiff (2015, p. 33) cites, in an illuminating way, the opinion of the Bolivian Catholic Church:

In fact, the deterioration of the environment and society particularly affects the most fragile of the planet: both the common experience of everyday life and scientific research show that the most serious effects of all environmental aggressions fall on the poorest people ‘.

From this argument, another affirmation of Francisco (2015, p. 132) - “Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world.” emphasizes the scope and capacity of human beings to

28 “Men will increasingly be considered objects, from countless modes of abstraction, administration and statistics to the unimaginable violations of the individual, groups and even peoples. And this not only in the needs and paroxysms of war, but as a normal form of government and administration.”

29 Free translation of the original in Spanish from the authors of this text.

transform complex realities such as those of Latin America. Under the same criteria, the reconstruction of the meaning of the political action of those on whom is the moral and legal responsibility in search for an adequate and responsible way of taking care of everyone's home is encouraged.

3 LAUDATO SI: THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE “COMMON HOME” OF LATIN AMERICANS

The commitment of the Latin American continent to the care of the home of all, according to the principle of responsibility described by Giacóia Júnior (2000, p. 194), is emphasized as: “[...] the idea of duty and responsibility of the human agent regarding the nature and future of the next human generations on earth .”When one considers that the first responsibility is of the Man, he is called to an effective performance according to his identity and mission. In the words of Francisco (2015, p. 79):

We were created with a vocation to work. The goal should not be that technological progress increasingly replace human work, for this would be detrimental to humanity. Work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfilment.

This approach needs to conceive the Man inserted in the network of life, in the set of its relations and capacities to avoid that its action repeats the current model (HUANACUNI MAMANI, 2010, p. 6)³⁰ leading to an isolated and authoritarian anthropocentrism (SARLET, 2011, p. 42-43)³¹, or at times an illusion of equality among all living beings. The

30 “[...] the dominant paradigms of life comprise the individual as the only subject of rights and obligations, establishing it as the only referential of life. Therefore, the legal, educational, political, economic and social systems have been adapted to, and actually respond to individual rights and obligations.” Free translation of the original in Spanish from the authors of this text.

31 “It is precisely in Kant’s thinking that the most expressive juridical doctrine - [...] it still seems to be identifying the basis of a foundation and, in a way, a conceptualization of the dignity of the human person. To what extent, however, such a conception can effectively be adopted without reservation or adjustment in the current stage of social, economic and legal evolution is undoubtedly a fascinating challenge [...]. Thus it may be said [...] that both Kant’s thought and all conceptions which hold that dignity are the exclusive attribute of the human person are at least in theory subject to criticism of excessive anthropocentrism, especially in that they maintain that the human person, in function of its rationality [...] occupies a privileged place in relation to the other alive beings. In addition, there will always be a way of sustaining the dignity of one’s life in general, even more so in a time when recognition of the protection of the environment as a fundamental value indicates that it is not only human life but the preservation of all natural resources, including all life forms on the planet, although it can be argued that such protection of life in general constitutes, in the final analysis, a demand for human life and a human life with dignity, everything to points out to the recognition of what could be

perception of moral responsibility must compose the education needed for preventive care when one can envisage actions that lead to an imbalance between ecosystems, violent social conflicts or other forms of destruction and corruption.

The resources and research available, coupled with up-to-date legislation, are legitimate and effective instruments to ensure that these goals are not forgotten or marginalized by national interests. The search for a common responsibility, for common care is what favors the clarification of the "Common Home". Themes such as sustainability, for example, are fundamental vectors for the historical consolidation of the earthly dwelling, but no single effort on the part of the nation-states is able to bring satisfactory answers to the difficulties experienced in either the continent or the globe. Care, responsibility and sustainability call for transnational efforts (STAFFEN, 2015, p. 22-23)³².

The political deficiencies widely investigated in Latin America portray this context in need of moral enlightenment, up-to-date legal structures and political proposals that preserve the natural and cultural patrimony of societies, contribute to the participation of society and integrate peoples towards common goals and contribute to the good living in the world. Local responsibility can not be dissociated from the commitments of a universal scope (BOFF, 2012, p. 69)³³, on the contrary, it should stimulate the improvement of this coexistence among all beings on Earth.

In Latin America, agreements can be cited - as in the case of UNASUR - and³⁴ laws that are a indicative of a social commitment

called an ecological or environmental dimension of the dignity of the human person".

32 In order to organize and exercise these criteria in a transnational scenario, a Global Law is considered: "[...] the decline of the national Constitutional State and the rise of a global legal paradigm stems substantially from the penetration of criteria of governance in public affairs and public policies, logistically supported by technological advances. [...] Global law, no matter how incipient, is aimed at understanding and regulating the relations that come from globalization flows. These flows are not restricted to the globalization of the second post-war."

33 Boff's position on this dimension stands out in order to avoid the development of new forms of social individualism, as well as to perceive the connection existing in nature whose relationship routes complement, correct and contribute to its vigor and improvement: "To realize these aspirations we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying with the entire earth community as well as with our local community. We are both citizens of different nations and of a world in which the local and global dimensions are linked. One shares responsibility for the present and the future, for the welfare of the human family and the great world of living beings. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence the mystery of existence, with gratitude for the gift of life and with humility considering the place the human being occupies in nature.

34 As an example, Law no. 12. 651, dated May 25, 2012, called the Brazilian Forest Code.

to sustainable living (BOFF, 2013, p. 128)³⁵, of states and institutions (FRANCISCO, 2015, p. 38)³⁶ which reflect the commitment to the care for the “Common Home” of all peoples. Also, countless researches (KUJAWA, 2015, for example), congresses³⁷, seminars³⁸, conferences³⁹ and others⁴⁰ that express the need for up-to-date approaches on the issues underlined in this research.

The richness of the content of this set of references will have legitimacy insofar as they contribute to the construction of alternative policies related to natural and environmental resources, as well as to the improvement of democracy, the exercise of rights, the preservation of cultural heritage and social inequalities.

The inoperability or weakness of both local and international actions implode human, social and environmental relations, as Francisco points out (2015, p. 37): “These situations have caused sister earth, along with all the abandoned of our world, to cry out, pleading that we take another course. Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years.”

This is a metaphor that, when associated with the dilemmas of the “Common Home” of Latin Americans, portrays the difficulties and shortcomings on the continent that call for a new form of organization and care for the assets of all. The insistence of a history founded on oppression and unbridled exploitation - whether of human or the natural world - should not serve as an obstacle to desires, to the hope-filled utopias of a vital integration capable of modifying the false promises dressed as “progress” or “sustainable development”.

The perception of limits and threats must penetrate the imagination and the actions of leaders, authorities, associations and citizens in general.

35 “A society is sustainable when it is organized and behaves in such a way that it, through the generations, manages to guarantee the life of its citizens and the ecosystems in which it is inserted, together with the community of life. The more a society is founded on renewable and recyclable resources, the more sustainable it becomes.”

36 The position of the Latin American Catholic Church is a reference for this theme: “[...] in the interventions on natural resources, do not dominate the interests of economic groups that irrationally destroy the sources of life.”

37 *IV Congreso de Cultura y Educación para la integración de América Latina - “el Buen Vivir”. Democracia, participation and multiculturalism in Latin America. Ozorno, Chile. 2015.*

38 III Seminário Internacional de Direitos Humanos e Democracia: cidadania, justiça e cidadania. Ijuí, RS, Brazil. 2015.

39 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio + 20. Rio de Janeiro, Brasil. Every 10 years.

40 Seminário Internacional “Direito, Democracia e Sustentabilidade”. Passo Fundo, Brazil. Annual event that takes place in the month of August.

Common goals foster relevant and strongly impacting collective positions. These attitudes expand more and more the importance of democratic spaces, projecting them as a transnational phenomenon. A conception that combines human achievement and collective commitment is signaled by Huanacuni Mamani (2010, p. 35):

[...] Everything lives and everything is very important for the balance and harmony of life, the disappearance or destruction of a species is the destruction of life. We understand that we are children of Mother Earth and the cosmos'. Therefore, all forms of relationship [...] must be in permanent balance and harmony with the whole, because when it breaks, the consequences are for all⁴¹.

The care of the "Common Home", as proposed by Francisco, demonstrates the need for structuring sustainable development policies anchored in alternative parameters that contemplate a new vision of man, nature and systemic, cooperative, solidarity and interdependent society. The traditional subject-object relationship is unilateral and supposes the submission of the "Other" before the "I". Instead of this perverse model, it is proposed to care for the "Common Home" as a moral duty and social commitment with the conditions of well-being in the present and for future generations. Here are the genuine "concrete utopias" that carry "sensible hopes" (ROSSI, 2013, p. 85)⁴² among all generations to the maintenance of the life of all beings.

CONCLUSIONS

The care for the "Common Home" as a responsibility of all is a moral imperative for contemporaneity due to innumerable aggressions to people, the environment, social order and future generations. The non-reversal of this embarrassing and chaotic picture will represent the opening of the conditions for environmental, human and social collapse.

The epistemology of the care for the "Common Home" exposed in the course of the document *Laudato Si* represents a political, social and environmental alternative for the construction of a model of coexistence between Man and Nature, the development and relations among peoples guided by references that do not reproduce the performance of Man as

⁴¹ Free translation of the original in Spanish from the authors of this text.

⁴² For Rossi, "sensible hopes" should be able to answer three questions: "[...] do we have reasons for hope before us? Are there reasons that can save us from despair? What do you do with it and continue on the way?"

the center of this network of life, especially in the actions of exploration, submission and elimination of the Other.

This thesis, updated to the context of Latin America, demonstrates the need to bring about a new paradigm of relationship between people and the environment, as well as to establish goals in order to improve living conditions for all people over time. At this point, it is evident that the epistemology of the “Common Home” provides the experiences and clarification needed to develop attitudes founded on care, sustainability, justice and moral responsibility.

Striking social inequalities, democratic instability and the expropriation of natural and environmental resources are at the root of the high poverty rates and the scarcity of resources essential to the quality of life. The foundations of a “Common Home” can not be constituted by ignorance, misery, oppression, submission, elimination, but by the clarification and importance of the vital diversity that inhabits the ecosystems in this continent.

The care for the “Common Home” goes beyond territorial boundaries, circles of corporate interests, cultural groups, institutions and others to establish conditions and commitments that aim at a preservation, admiration and balanced use of available resources. The speech and praxis are essentially characterized by an ethical foundation and justice. In this scenario of difficulties and threats, this approach calls for overcoming indifference and short-term or restricted objectives to the States and tolerance for individual or collective actions that are irresponsible in relation to the environment, cultures and social balance.

The “Common Home” of the Latin American peoples needs to become the place to *live well* with responsibility. The references for this new relationship must first be understood as the need to protect and value cultural traditions in a constant attention to their values, traditions and relationship with nature, as Francisco points out, specifically highlighting indigenous communities.

The continuity of this *common historical project* contemplates the other traditions and cultural formations, institutions with their different goals and vocations, specifically those devoted to scientific and academic research, human promotion and social assistance, education and health, political and cultural development, the organization of urban space and the alternatives of production or coexistence, among others. The *unity* of life - the basic presupposition for founding the “Common Home” - is only

possible as the recognition and care of its *diversity of beings interdependent with each other is practiced*.

In this configuration, guided by the care for the "Common Home", the importance of negotiating structured agreements based on broad social participation and not dependent exclusively on the performance of official diplomacy normally tied to the corporate interests of the National State is highlighted.

Agreements, treaties and other mechanisms that facilitate the integration and protection of people, especially immigrants or persecuted persons, and natural and environmental resources, specifically forests, rivers, lakes and cultural heritages, are vital to the quality of life of living beings and Home of all.

The architecture of the "Common Home" is an alternative proposal of relationship between Man and Nature, whose responsibility for its realization belongs to everyone, despite obstacles to fulfill this purpose as the precariousness of a democratic and cultural integration existing in Latin America.

Francisco's word, associated with the Principle of Responsibility and the Latin American tradition of *Living Well*, are updated universal references to guide and drive long-term actions recognized by the vast majority of peoples. A new social configuration that, over time, does not allow itself to be blinded by the selfish interests which conceal the existence of the Other - human or not human - and make difficult the experience of a *universal communion becomes necessary*.

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