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THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON IN THE CONTEXT OF NEOLIBERALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS: A LOOK AT MOZAMBIQUE

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Abstract: Neoliberalism is a political, economic, and social ideology that advocates minimal state intervention in the economy through its withdrawal from the market. This doctrine has been implemented in various countries around the world with the promise of ensuring economic and social development. However, contrary to this, neoliberal practices have brought about a scenario of unemployment, poverty, inequality, and social regression, among other harmful effects that undermine human dignity. According to Professor José P. Castiano in his work *The “Freedom” of Neoliberalism*, neoliberalism is seen as an apparent monster looming over the world, which brought with it the promise of a new or second freedom, but instead, what has been reaped is a new servitude that the author calls “global servitude to financial capital,” that is, freedom that consists of economic freedom for the few and not for all. In our view, this freedom for the few and not for all undermines human dignity in countries that have embraced this ideology, specifically in underdeveloped countries where the consequences are direct in terms of respect, recognition, fulfillment, and guarantee of human rights for citizens. This article reflects on the theme of human rights in times of neoliberalism, analyzing the extent to which it can be considered a “monster” for human rights, especially in Mozambique, as well as the practical implications of this ideology in the formulation and implementation of public policies aimed at human dignity.

Keywords: Neoliberalism; Human Rights; Human Dignity; Public Policies.

INTRODUCTION

Neoliberalism is a political, economic, and social ideology that advocates minimal state intervention in the economy through its withdrawal from the market, defending maximum deregulation of the workforce in the market and the consequent reduction of income and flexibilization of the production process. This doctrine emerged in the 18th century and began to be implemented in various countries around the world in the 1970s, with the promise of ensuring economic and social development. However, contrary to this, what neoliberal practices brought about was a scenario of servitude, which Professor José P. Castiano refers to as global servitude to financial capital. This servitude has a significant impact on human dignity, especially in underdeveloped countries such as those on the African continent, and Mozambique is no exception, presenting serious problems in the effective implementation of public policies focused on human rights.

Public policies, as instruments of government action to respond to collective needs and ensure fundamental rights, have become particularly vulnerable in the neoliberal context. According to Piovesan (2003), human rights are only fully realized when there are consistent public policies that translate into concrete actions, respecting the principles of equality, freedom, and non-discrimination. However, as Castiano (2018) observes, neoliberalism has introduced a market logic that prioritizes economic freedom over social justice, compromising the formulation and implementation of policies that ensure health, education, decent work, and social protection, etc.

Thus, based on the assumption that human rights arise for the purpose of protecting human dignity, recognizing that by their human condition, all are subjects of natural rights, Santos and Chauí (2014) argue that although the strength of this discourse is undeniable, the vast majority of the population is not subject to human rights and, in our view, neoliberalism contributes to this effect.

This article is based on the work “The ‘Freedom’ of Neoliberalism” by Professor José P. Castiano, a Mozambican philosopher with a PhD in Sociology from the University of Hamburg. In his work, the professor seeks to demystify the foundations of freedom in the neoliberal era, reflecting on the ideas of some philosophers who address issues related to freedom and neoliberalism.

In this sense, taking into account the work *The “Freedom” of Neoliberalism*, this article aims to reflect on the theme of human rights in times of neoliberalism, to analyze the extent to which it can be considered a monster for human rights, as well as to reflect on the dignity of the human person in the context of neoliberalism and its impact on the realization of human rights and the implementation of public policies.

This article is based on a qualitative, exploratory, and dialectical approach, adopting a systematic integrative literature review as the main research technique. The selection criteria for sources favored nationally and internationally recognized academic works published between 1990 and 2023 that critically addressed the intersection between neoliberalism, human rights, and human dignity, with an emphasis on African and Mozambican authors, given the relevance of the study’s geographical and political scope. Academic databases, digital li-

braries, scientific journals, and official documents discussing the impacts of neoliberal policies in developing countries, especially in Africa and Mozambique, were consulted.

The choice of Professor José P. Castiano as the main theoretical reference is justified by the critical depth with which the author analyzes the philosophical and social foundations of neoliberalism, especially from an African and decolonial perspective. Castiano is recognized as one of the leading contemporary Mozambican thinkers, with extensive intellectual production on endogenous knowledge systems, modernity, African epistemology, and criticism of neoliberal rationality. His work “*A Liberdade do Neoliberalismo*” (*The Freedom of Neoliberalism*) (2018) was chosen as a central source because it offers a bold and critical reading of the idea of freedom promoted by neoliberalism, which, according to the author, most closely resembles a new form of global servitude to financial capital. This reflection is particularly relevant to the Mozambican context, where the application of neoliberal policies has had direct implications for the realization of human rights and public policies.

Finally, it is recognized that the approach of this article is limited by its eminently theoretical and critical focus, not incorporating empirical data, statistics, or concrete case studies that could more directly illustrate the effects of neoliberal policies on human rights in Mozambique. Furthermore, although Castiano’s work offers a robust theoretical framework, its reading is complemented by other sources to avoid a one-dimensional approach.

Neoliberalism

With its emergence in the 18th century and consolidation in the 20th century, neoliberalism is a political, social, and economic doctrine composed of a set of ideas that advocate for the non-participation of the state in the economy, thus promoting free trade with a view to ensuring a country's economic growth and social development.

Neoliberal ideology mainly combats the welfare state policy. According to Perry Anderson, cited by Leda Pauline (1999), neoliberalism consists of a vehement theoretical and political reaction against the interventionist welfare state.

The outline of the neoliberal plan was verified with the Washington Consensus, through 10 rules that advocated basic ideas of neoliberal economies, with an emphasis on developing economies that wanted to adhere to the aid offered by the IMF and the World Bank. It was these 10 rules that outlined the characteristics of what we now call neoliberalism.

The United States and England were the first countries to implement the neoliberal system, and were also responsible for its spread throughout the world, where in some countries it was imposed by force, through the strengthening of a local dictatorial regime, and in other cases as an alternative for extremely dependent countries with economies in crisis or weakened, as was the case in Mozambique.

Characteristics of Neoliberalism

In general, a preference for markets, economic incentives, and individual entrepreneurship are hallmarks of neoliberalism. Specifically, neoliberalism is characterized

by: (i) Privatization of state-owned companies; (ii) Free movement of international capital; (iii) Economic openness to the entry of multinational companies; (iv) Adoption of measures against economic protectionism; and (v) Reduction of indiscriminate taxes and levies.

Professor José Castiano (2018) identifies two processes characteristic of the apparent monster, the first following Foucault's biopolitical line, in which he indicates that the economy becomes the critical and vigilant mother of politics and the foundation of law, and the second process following Byung-Chul Han's psychopolitical line, which conditioned the emergence of Big Brother, deriving from the globalization of social networks and the emergence of new public spaces (CASTIANO (2018). In the author's view, these processes led to what he calls the subjectivation of the subject, which consists of the continuous disappearance of the historical subject of social engagement and struggles.

The author introduces a very important theme here, globalization, which is closely linked to neoliberalism and its impact on human rights, as many underdeveloped countries have undergone a strong process of globalization imposed by the major economic and world powers. LIPOVES-TKSKY and SERROY (2007) refer to this process called globalization as world culture, which means the end of the traditional heterogeneity of the cultural sphere and the universalization of commercial culture, dominated by neoliberalism, which takes over the spheres of social life, modes of existence, and almost all human activities.

In general, defenders of neoliberalism believe that this system is capable of promoting a country's economic and social develop-

pment, arguing that it makes the economy more competitive, promotes technological development through free competition, and ensures that prices and inflation fall. However, negative aspects are evident, and critics of the system claim that the neoliberal economy only benefits the major economic powers, while poor or developing countries, such as many countries in Africa and Mozambique in particular, suffer from the results of neoliberal policies, which inevitably lead to unemployment, low wages, increased social differences, and dependence on international capital in these countries. According to Mbembe (2014), “economic violence has become one of the privileged forms of domination and exclusion of bodies considered disposable,” reflecting the perverse impacts of neoliberalism on human rights mentioned above.

Neoliberalism in Africa and Mozambique

According to Professor José Castiano (2018), in public debate, Mozambique and Africa in general are usually seen as victims of the supposed monster that, despite coming with the promise of new freedom, but what it has brought since its inception has been criticism of its development model, a model that has radicalized the protection of individual freedom, defending it against state aggression, but whose characteristics have direct consequences for the human condition to this day. For states and governments, neoliberalism would come at a price, which most politicians would not be willing to pay, namely the end of corruption and state schemes, in order to give the middle class easier access to the primitive accumulation of capital (CASTIANO (2018)).

Thus, the emergence of neoliberalism in Africa took place in the 1980s, having been determined by the structural adjustment measures imposed by the IMF. With the accession of several African states to the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), governments continued to fully implement the neoliberal practices proposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with privatization in almost all sectors that had been subject to intervention and nationalization during the socialist era, namely education, health, banking, insurance, and housing, standing out in this process. Neoliberalism in Africa introduced a paradigm of total problematization of the role of the functions and even the essence of the modern state in Africa. (CASTIANO (2018)). Mbembe (2018) observes that neoliberal governance operates through the administration of precariousness, which is a visible reality in African contexts where the state fails to guarantee minimum social rights.

In Mozambique specifically, neoliberalism began in 1984, when the state became a member of the World Bank and the IMF and introduced the PRE, which aimed to replace the socialist model with the capitalist model, based on the Washington Consensus, which would guarantee emergency aid because of the famine caused by the war waged by the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), as well as renegotiating debt rescheduling and access to new credit, thus breaking diplomatic isolation with Western countries (MATSINHE:2011). In this context, several companies were privatized, and the state began to reduce spending on health and education, thus discouraging the approval of policies and strategies aimed at guaranteeing human rights, which at the time coincided with the approval of the

1990 Constitution, which appeared after the armed conflicts between the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and RENAMO. This Constitution brought profound changes in virtually all areas of life in the country, especially in the field of human rights, i.e., fundamental rights, introducing fundamental principles, notably the Principle of the Democratic Rule of Law, which, combined with the introduction of neoliberal practices, laid the structural parameters for modernization.

The PRE and the introduction of neoliberal practices in Mozambique had serious consequences, impacting not only the economic sector but also fundamental rights, i.e., human rights, with the greatest impact on the poor population, and civil servants who saw their salaries reduced, thereby reducing their financial power, which consequently led them to resent securing fundamental rights such as health and education for their families. The country's economy became entirely dependent on foreign capital, which created a favorable environment for corruption and the squandering of public assets, especially by government entities. According to André Cristiano José (2005), the implementation of neoliberalism in Mozambique had serious implications, the impact of which must be analyzed as a whole, taking into account not only economic criteria, but also social, political, and even cultural criteria, which refer to aspects related to the violation of human dignity, with effects on the realization of human rights. It is clear that neoliberalism is not concerned with human rights, but rather with economic freedom, thus ensuring the greater circulation of capital (JONASSE:2022).

Human Rights and Human Dignity

Human rights are a set of basic rights, freedoms, and guarantees inherent to the quality and nature of human beings, constituting, in general, a core of rights that protect human life and dignity. They are natural, universal, immutable, and historical rights that are closely related to the idea of equality, justice, and democracy, being a living expression of the relationship that should prevail among members of society. According to Flávia Piovesan, they are the basic rights of all human beings, comprising civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as diffuse and collective rights (PIOVESAN, 2003).

According to José Melo Alexandrinho, these rights essentially arise as negative rights, as an obligation of omission or abstention on the part of the State in relation to certain behaviors of citizens (ALEXANDRINHO, 2011).

One cannot speak of human rights without mentioning human dignity:

Human Dignity

This is a supreme value of human beings, defined as a set of principles and values whose function is to ensure that every citizen's rights are respected by the State. It is a natural quality that humans possess, a moral and spiritual value inherent to the human condition, and every human being is endowed with this precept (PIOVESAN, 2003). To offend human dignity is to belittle the essence of human beings, and this act attacks the dignity of society as a whole, constituting a true violation of the legal precepts enshrined in the Constitution of the

Republic and in international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This precept places limits on the actions of the State, which means that, in addition to the State having a duty to guarantee people the exercise of their fundamental rights, it must also act with sufficient care so that such rights are not violated. It is the obligation of the State, through the actions of its governments, to take measures to ensure the human rights and well-being of its citizens, as well as to ensure that they are not violated. Thus, human dignity guides the protection of all human rights, since these rights revolve around it and it is the basis of all other rights, thus becoming a fundamental principle not only at the level of the Mozambican State, but worldwide, meaning that it is a universal goal that States must fulfill, so that once human dignity is violated, all human rights are compromised.

Principles of Human Rights

Human rights present a range of principles that guide their application and protection. We bring to this study only those that we consider to be the most relevant to the subject of the work, namely:

a) Principle of Human Dignity

This is the fundamental principle of human rights, since human dignity is at the core of human rights. It is considered by most scholars to be the essential principle that governs all other human rights principles. According to this principle, every person has a natural value inherent to their quality as a human being, and therefore human dignity must be respected by all people and especially by the legal system of the State, which must ensure and protect human

rights so that people are respected with the dignity they deserve.

b) Principle of Equality

According to this principle, all people are equal in dignity before the law and have the same rights and duties regardless of existing differences. It follows that there must be equality between people in the application of the law, which means that “equal” people must be treated equally and “unequal” people unequally, that is, ensuring that people in equal situations have the same rights and obligations. This is considered the structuring principle in the area of human rights, insofar as such rights must be applied without regard to individuals, that is, regardless of social status, race, or gender, and any type of distinction between human beings is prohibited.

c) Principle of Freedom

This is closely linked to the Principle of Equality, since without equal conditions among men, there can be no talk of freedom, much less respect for human dignity. According to this principle, every human being has an equal right to the most comprehensive system of basic freedoms. It follows from this principle that all people are born free, equal in dignity and rights. Therefore, in order for any individual to develop and be conceived as a human being and subject of rights, they must have freedom, both in their relationships with other people and in their relationship with the State.

d) Principle of Non-Discrimination

This represents the expressive manifestation of equality and is also closely linked to the Principle of Equality in terms of equal rights and equal obligations. It is based on the equality of all human beings as a result of equal dignity for all human beings, thus

prohibiting discrimination between people in the sense that people cannot be treated differently, more or less favorably, in particular because of their color, race, sex, ethnic origin, culture, profession, religious, political, social, or economic situation. This principle goes beyond the Principle of Equality in that it goes beyond the idea of equality before the law, because it prohibits unjustified discrimination.

Mozambique and Human Rights

The Mozambican state, especially in its post-revolutionary phase and after the civil war, has positioned itself as a defender of human rights and has made efforts to ensure substantial respect for the principles outlined above. However, systematic violations still occur in our country, highlighting the challenge for the state to achieve the full enjoyment of human rights by its citizens.

The process of incorporating human rights standards into the domestic legal system in Mozambique is achieved through the adoption of international standards which, after ratification, are adapted to government practices and to ensure respect for human rights, there have been advances and setbacks in various areas of human rights, with neoliberal policies leading us to question the effectiveness of their actions with a view to respecting and guaranteeing human dignity.

However, in general terms, the moment that had the greatest impact on the defense of human rights in Mozambique was the introduction of political and civil liberties contained in the 1990 Constitution of the Republic, which introduced a multi-party system, with the protection of human rights and the separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

This event took place during an important period of international diplomatic activity in the field of human rights, which culminated in the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Action Plan in 1993, whose preamble reaffirmed the commitment of the signatory governments to the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. After acceding to the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action of 1993, the consolidation of peace allowed for the advancement of the 2004 Constitution, now revised by the 2018 Constitution, which in turn reaffirmed the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens and introduced new areas of the Principle of Equality. Since then, both the government and civil society and non-governmental organizations have implemented policies and specific concrete measures aimed at ensuring respect for human rights, in an attempt to consign to history the barbaric acts against humanity that took place during the civil war until 1992.

In terms of legislative action, Mozambique considers itself a young state in terms of human rights, as it has transformed itself in a few decades from a single-party socialist state to a multiparty democracy, open to international markets, submitting not only to their harsh laws, which in some ways interfere with the guarantee of human rights, but also absorbing the most popular ideologies in the Western and developed world. According to the Quarterly Report of the Center for Democracy and Development on the Human Rights Situation in Mozambique during the First Quarter of 2023, despite having a legal and institutional framework favorable to human rights, the Mozambican state's implementation of these rights

remains weak, challenging, and far below expectations.

It can thus be said that Mozambique has a robust legal framework for the recognition of human rights, however, certain day-to-day government practices show that the state is not yet exemplary in its recognition and respect for human rights. This is due to repeated violations such as corruption and a lack of transparency in the actions of certain leaders, which in some ways undermine the realization of human rights, among other violations that are frequently reported in the country by the media.

Thus, given the limited scope of this work, it can only be observed that, on the one hand, the application and implementation of human rights protection instruments in Mozambique produces changes, transformations, and social results very slowly. However, on the other hand, this is not what we see when we look at the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of neoliberalism. For example, we have the whole process of hidden debts, as well as the issue of terrorist attacks in the northern part of the country. These facts clearly show that, when neoliberal policies are adopted, the aim is often to secure more and more foreign investment to exploit the country's various resources, which in a way creates a scenario of economic hardship and instability in terms of security for the state, requiring the government to adopt public policies aimed not only at passing laws and ratifying conventions, but also at guaranteeing the enjoyment of human rights.

In this regard, the government has often been urged to adopt attitudes consistent with domestic and international standards of respect for human dignity, because without this change it will be difficult for

the country to improve its performance in the effective implementation of human rights, which are clearly an area of human development.

Human Rights in the Context of Neoliberalism

Having examined neoliberalism and human rights, it is clear that neoliberal ideology was implemented with the aim of promoting economic and social development. However, instead, what we saw were economic and social problems in various countries around the world that followed such neoliberal practices, especially in underdeveloped countries, where the consequences were that they were forced to lose their history, culture, and identity. One of the harmful effects of neoliberalism, which continues to be felt today, is the impossibility of drafting and approving public policies aimed at respecting human dignity, thus hindering the promotion and protection of human rights.

On this point, it is important to emphasize that the limitations on public policies resulting from the reduction of the role of the state, dependence on external financing, and the fragility of social policies reinforce the problems of unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion. Thus, the structural effects of neoliberalism are not restricted to the economic sphere, but extend to the inability of governments to design and implement effective public policies that ensure health, education, social protection, and equality, which are indispensable pillars for the realization of human rights.

Although several countries have a robust legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, as is the case in

Mozambique, in general, its applicability proves ineffective or insufficient and associated with neoliberal ideology. What we see in most cases is a scenario of unemployment, poverty, inequality, and social regression, caused mainly by the fact that developed countries take advantage of the fragility of disadvantaged countries to increase profits and the consumer market, undermining the principles that guide human rights, as mentioned above. In this context, we can thus affirm that neoliberalism in the context of human rights impacts on human dignity and, consequently, on the realization of human rights, with the following impacts being noteworthy:

- ✓ Neoliberal practices advocating the reduction of the role of the state through the concession of state assets and functions to private initiative lead to the weakening of state sovereignty, making it impossible for the state to approve policies and strategies that ensure the realization of human rights such as labor rights, health, education, social protection, among others;

- ✓ Based on competition in the international free market, promoting the pursuit of development and accumulation of wealth, this allows states to act without limits, undermining human relations, which become based on economic interests, leading to discrimination and inequalities, as this process creates the included and the excluded, where the included are those belonging to developed countries and the excluded are those from underdeveloped countries.

- ✓ Neoliberal ideology contributes to the concentration of wealth and power, legitimizing the accumulation of capital and facilitating corruption and the squandering of public finances, which compromises the realization of human rights.

- ✓ In the neoliberal world, individuals are transformed into consumers guided by individualistic rules based on consumption, which boils down to excessive consumption at any cost, causing social exclusion, as individuals with active consumption capacity tend to reject, or discriminate against, those who do not have the same consumption capacity; As Achille Mbembe (2014) states, “neoliberalism transforms life into a business and citizens into entrepreneurs of themselves,” which points to a redefinition of dignity based on market value.

- ✓ The exaggerated pursuit of profit and the absence of minimum social guarantees verified by neoliberal policy violate human rights, as human beings are transformed into objects of labor, without any value, and can be discarded at any time by their employers, thus compromising the right to work;

- ✓ The radicalization of freedom advocated by neoliberal doctrine is based on inequalities, and thus the environment of competition and competitiveness it creates nullifies the institutions and mechanisms created to reduce such inequalities, that is, it makes the realization of human rights impossible;

- ✓ Neoliberal practices are the result of an unequal economic and productive system, causing problems such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, and social regression in a large part of the population, especially in underdeveloped countries.

Practical Implications of Neoliberalism in Public Policy

It is now important to refer to the impact of neoliberalism on public policies, noting that the debate on neoliberalism and human rights only gains relevance in the field of public policies when analyzing the practical consequences of this ideology on the formulation, execution, and evaluation of government actions.

In the specific case of Mozambique, the application of neoliberal policies since the 1980s has left deep marks on the state and society, with direct impacts on the realization of fundamental rights, notably:

a) The reduction of the role of the state, the privatization of public companies, and the reduction of social spending weakened the government's ability to ensure universal basic services. Health and education were directly affected, limiting the reach of public policies aimed at human dignity. According to Oliveira (2008), neoliberalism is a counter-stimulus to the realization of human dignity, placing market logic above social needs.

b) Dependence on external financing, as public policies became heavily dependent on international funds and donors, which compromised national sovereignty. This dependence imposed conditions that did not always favor social justice. Matsinhe (2011) emphasizes that the Structural Adjustment Program in Mozambique introduced a "long walk toward an uncertain future," in which the state ceded its autonomy in exchange for external financing.

c) Increased social inequalities, the flexibilization of labor relations, and market

deregulation resulted in the weakening of policies protecting decent work. Neoliberalism has generated social dualization: an elite with access to rights and an excluded majority, especially in rural areas. Mbembe (2014) describes this reality as a form of "economic violence" that transforms vulnerable bodies into disposable ones, reinforcing social exclusion.

d) The fragility of gender and childhood policies and the limited resources for social programs compromise the implementation of various policies, particularly those aimed at combating early marriage, gender-based violence, and food insecurity, etc., since such policies, when approved, are often insufficient and poorly funded. Jonasse (2022) points out that, under neoliberalism, the utopia of social development has given way to the commodification of public policies, weakening the protection of vulnerable groups.

e) Citizen participation has been weakened, as the logic of economic efficiency and technocracy has reduced the space for democratic participation in the formulation of public policies. According to Castiano (2018), neoliberal ideology replaces the historical and engaged subject with a "self-entrepreneur," which weakens active citizenship. Achille Mbembe (2014) adds that, neoliberalism transforms life into a business and citizens into consumers, diluting the notion of human dignity as a universal principle.

In summary, neoliberalism shapes the field of public policy in Mozambique in a way that limits the realization of human rights. It should be noted that the tension between market logic and social logic is a structural challenge for Mozambican governance, requiring the adoption of public po-

licies that reconcile economic development with the protection of human dignity.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Human life is ancillary to any system that will prevail in a given society, and human rights, as historical rights, are deeply influenced by the social, economic, and ideological conditions of each era. These rights are influenced by neoliberal ideology, which contributes as a political project that serves to legitimize the accumulation of wealth, thereby causing social inequalities that affect human dignity and discouraging the realization of human rights.

In this vein, the fundamental principles that guide human rights, such as the Principle of Human Dignity; the Principle of Equality and, consequently, the Principle of Freedom and the Principle of Non-Discrimination, clash with neoliberal practices that postulate productivity, competitiveness, and the circulation of capital, as well as a true competition for the unbridled pursuit of profit, a competition in which market values are stronger than the internal political force to implement human rights (OLIVEIRA: 2008).

According to Severino Ngoenha, cited by CASTIANO (2018), interculturalism is seen as an alternative to neoliberal governance. Based on Ngoenha's position, we understand that interculturalism is extremely important to ensure respect for human dignity as a supreme value of mankind, because, according to Paulo Hahn (2007), intercultural thinking consists of a new paradigm for finding harmony in the contemporary world, which, in our view, is dominated by neoliberalism. Hence, intercultural thinking is fundamental to restoring human dignity

in the face of advancing economic globalization, as human rights should not be viewed individually, or only in one nation or state, but rather collectively and universally.

Especially in Mozambique, as mentioned above, similar to other developing countries, neoliberal ideology was implemented in the 1980s, promising economic and social development, with a clear impact on improving the living conditions of the population. However, instead of this, the implementation of neoliberal policies had a negative impact on human rights due to the economic, social, and political problems caused by conflicts and tensions between different centers of influence and power, leading the state to face challenges such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to basic services, which continue to this day. This is due to the constant approval of economic projects that often do not take the human component into account, as well as the impossibility of drafting and approving laws, strategies, and public policies aimed at respecting human dignity, thus hindering the promotion and protection of human rights.

In this context, it is important to highlight that the crisis in public policy in Mozambique is marked by the fragility of the health, education, social protection, and employment systems, which is one of the central factors explaining the difficulties in realizing human rights within the framework of neoliberalism. It is therefore extremely important to find a middle ground for the realization of human rights in the context of neoliberalism.

That said, this article concludes that yes, neoliberalism is a MONSTER, constituting a real threat to the realization of human rights and negatively impacting human dignity. However, to face this monster

and overcome its monstrosity, we embrace the position defended by Professor José Castiano regarding the supposed monster, stating that:

"In order to better combat it with alternatives not only of interpretation, but above all of action, it is necessary to know the monster head-on, that is, in its theoretical genesis. You cannot fight someone you do not know!"
CASTIANO (2018:16)

Applying Professor José Castiano's position in the context of human rights, this means that in order to ensure the realization of human rights and guarantee respect for human dignity, it is necessary to know the monster in its genesis, and it is extremely important that we learn to live with it, connecting the economic debate to human rights, thus committing neoliberal ideology to human dignity, imposing on it the limits that are indispensable for the realization of fundamental rights in a given society. To this end, it is necessary, first and foremost, to abandon the concept of individual freedom and prevent the interests of the few from prevailing over the fundamental guarantees of the majority, which is what neoliberalism advocates.

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