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On the Social Progress and Sustainability: will Exist Buenos Aires when the Today Youth People are Old?

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Objectives: Analyze and discuss the concepts of sustainability and social progress in an article by Goin and Goñi on sustainable development, published in the journal “Salud Colectiva”.

Methodology: Analytical Interpretative

Results: The author presents and questions an article published by Goñi and Goin, who draw a conceptual framework for sustainable development. To these authors there are two basic notions of sustainability: one, provide by the environmentalists, who are embedded in neo-Malthusian ideas, and another, that they adhere to, which sees in human misery a social evil which must be removed and taken into account by decision-makers for economic and social development. Goñi and Goin, supporting ideas assumed in the Bariloche report of 1977, indicate that certain successive stages of development arose from the concept of long-term sustainability. This concept gives priority to planning according to preset progress goals measured in units of social progress. For Tapia, the vision of these authors has no definition, and such key concepts like development, progress and sustainability should not be taken lightly as "postmodern" jargon. They do not take into account some recent scientific contributions that are fundamental to understanding environmental and ecological problems. Tapia analyzes the conditions of health, comparing the gross domestic product with mortality rates of children under 5 years old. He finds little data consistent with the hypothesis that a higher rate of economic growth corresponds with a higher rate of social growth. He produces as evidence the research of Abdala where it is reported that mortality begins to decrease when economic growth is low or negative—not when it is high. Finally, the author takes into account some scientific predictions that warn about the effects of climatic change and health consequences.

Conclusions: For the author, Goin’s and Goñi’s proposal, despite being interesting, lacks definition and does not take into account some scientific inputs that are essential to addressing environmental and ecological problems. He also questions the concepts of sustainability and social development that Goin and Goñi use.