



Critical reflection on ethics in scientific research

Reflexión crítica a la ética en la investigación científica

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ABSTRACT

Ethics in scientific research faces tensions between traditional models and contemporary challenges, such as structural inequality, the urgency of epistemic transformations, and the need to integrate critical perspectives. In this regard, the objective is to analyze and critically reflect on ethics in scientific research, seeking to reveal the apparent neutrality and objectivity of this relationship, accepted as a general norm, which has produced current productive relations. To this end, a qualitative approach, analytical and critical method, and hermeneutical and dialectical documentary techniques of the sociohistorical context were adopted. The following are revealed: 1) Universally accepted ethics establish power and social norms; 2) Conflicts between capital and labor are a product of ethical precepts; 3) Environmental degradation results from the assumed ethical conception. Therefore, it is concluded that conservative positivist ethics, rooted in historical structures of domination, has perpetuated a hegemonic way of thinking that prioritizes scientific neutrality and institutional stability over social justice. However, in the current global context marked by environmental crises, structural inequalities, and social movements demanding transformation, this model lacks practical viability. Its continuation would not only perpetuate oppressive systems but also threaten humanity's legacy by ignoring the urgent needs of a world crying out for equity and sustainability.

Keywords: Sociohistorical context; Contemporary challenges; Positivist ethics; Scientific research; Traditional models; Hegemonic thinking.

RESUMEN

La ética en la investigación científica enfrenta tensiones entre modelos tradicionales y desafíos contemporáneos, como la desigualdad estructural, la urgencia de transformaciones epistémicas y la necesidad de integrar perspectivas crítica. En tal sentido, el objetivo es analizar y reflexionar críticamente sobre la ética en la investigación científica, buscando revelar la aparente neutralidad y objetividad que tiene esta relación aceptada como una norma general, y que ha producido las relaciones productivas actuales. Para ello, se asumió un enfoque cualitativo, método analítico y crítico, con técnica documental hermenéutica y dialéctica del contexto sociohistórico. Revelándose: 1) La ética aceptada universalmente instituye el poder y las normas sociales; 2) La conflictividad entre capital y trabajo son producto de los preceptos éticos; 3) La degradación ambiental es resultante de la concepción ética asumida. Por lo que se concluye que, la ética positivista conservadora, arraigada en estructuras históricas de dominación, ha perpetuado un pensamiento hegemónico que prioriza la neutralidad científica y la estabilidad institucional sobre la justicia social. Sin embargo, en el contexto global actual marcado por crisis ambientales, desigualdades estructurales y movimientos sociales que exigen transformación, este modelo carece de viabilidad fáctica. Su continuidad no solo perpetuaría sistemas opresivos, sino que amenazaría el legado de la humanidad, al ignorar las urgencias de un mundo que clama por equidad y sostenibilidad.

Palabras clave: Contexto sociohistórico; Desafíos contemporáneos; Ética positivista, investigación científica; Modelos tradicionales; Pensamiento hegemónico.

INTRODUCTION

Ethics in scientific research has emerged as an essential pillar to guarantee methodological integrity and the validity of results, ensuring that scientific processes are carried out with transparency and responsibility. This approach, far from being limited to complying with regulations, implies a critical reflection on the values that guide each research stage, from the formulation of hypotheses to the dissemination of findings (González et al., 2024). For example, honesty and integrity not only protect participants but also strengthen trust in the scientific community, allowing other researchers to rigorously validate or replicate studies (Ventura and Oliveira, 2022).

Violation of these principles such as data manipulation or plagiarism not only compromises the credibility of the findings, but undermines the legitimacy of science as a whole (Rosas, 2023). In this sense, ethics committees and institutional regulations act as control mechanisms, although their effectiveness depends on an ethical culture rooted in institutions, beyond bureaucratic compliance (Santana López et al., 2024).

Research ethics transcends mere regulatory compliance, positioning itself as a structural axis that regulates the interaction between researchers and society. This ethical dimension fosters values such as multidisciplinary collaboration and public trust, which are essential for the sustainability of scientific knowledge (Armond et al., 2021). In line with

this, the Singapore Declaration on Scientific Integrity (Resnik & Shamoo, 2023) emphasizes that ethics must translate into practices such as methodological transparency and equitable recognition of authorship, avoiding plagiarism and data manipulation. These actions not only protect participants, but also legitimize science in society, ensuring that its results are applicable to real problems (León-Correa & Beca, 2023).

In the field of social sciences, ethics acquires complex nuances due to its focus on human and collective dynamics. Theories such as Kantian deontological ethics, which prioritizes moral duty and rational autonomy, find relevance in the protection of the rights of vulnerable communities (Armond et al., 2021). For example, Kant argued that research subjects should be treated as ends in themselves, never as means to other objectives (Fajardo, 2022). Complementarily, Bentham's utilitarianism (Villegas Aleksov, 2021) provides a pragmatic perspective, evaluating actions according to their capacity to maximize social well-being, although this requires balancing collective benefits with individual risks.

Virtue ethics, inspired by Smith, emphasizes the importance of cultivating moral habits in researchers, such as intellectual humility and empathy, which facilitate intercultural cooperation in participatory studies (León-Correa & Beca, 2023). These approaches, articulated with normative frameworks, consolidate an institutionalized ethical rationality that guides everything from

methodological design to the dissemination of results.

This study adopts a dialectical-critical framework to examine ethical systems, highlighting how power structures shape social norms and institutionalize ethical foundations that perpetuate contemporary productive systems. Drawing on critical theory (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2023), it argues that dominant groups have historically configured ethical principles to legitimize exploitative capital-labor relations and environmental degradation. For example, the Marxist critique of capitalism reveals how the commodification of labor and the extraction of surplus value is justified by moral narratives that naturalize inequality (Ferrare & Phillippo, 2021; Wiedmann, 2023). These dynamics are reinforced by state-backed moral regulation, where elites propagate myths of meritocracy to blame marginalized groups for systemic poverty, obscuring structural oppression (Corrigan & Sayer, 2022; Halewood, 2023).

Environmental destruction arises as a direct consequence of a capitalist ethic that prioritizes profit over planetary boundaries. As the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Chen & Marquis, 2022) point out, current economic systems externalize ecological costs, creating a “sustainability imperative” that demands redefining the core principles of capitalism. This aligns with critiques of surveillance capitalism, where technological oligopolies manipulate moral discourse to consolidate power while evading accountability (Kneuer,

2022; Keegan, 2024). In Latin America, these dynamics are intertwined with colonial legacies, as Eurocentric ethical frameworks suppress Indigenous epistemologies that emphasize communal resource management (León-Correa & Beca, 2023).

The analysis advocates for a critical epistemology rooted in a participatory ethic. This requires dismantling the “moral hypocrisy” of power holders who impose strict standards on marginalized groups while exempting themselves and prioritizing social movements in ethical decision-making. For example, collectives’ Labor reforms in Argentina and Brazil have challenged neoliberal narratives by redefining productivity through solidarity economies (Ferrare & Phillippo, 2021). These efforts underscore the urgency of replacing an extractivist ethic with frameworks that prioritize intersectional justice and the ecological regeneration (Chen & Marquis, 2022).

Research praxis must reflect on how knowledge is historically constructed, influenced by two fundamental dynamics: first, the social historicity of knowledge, shaped by universally accepted ethical paradigms that reflect current productive relations (Artigas & Casanova, 2020); second, the reciprocal influence of political and economic powers that control the means of production, generating a “mass culture” that naturalizes inequalities (Cook, 2020). These powers, exercised by dominant elites, institutionalize an ethic that serves their interests, protecting their hegemony through moral narratives that legitimize labor

exploitation and environmental degradation (Wiedmann, 2023).

Ethical paradigms are not neutral, but emerge from power structures that prioritize the interests of dominant classes. For example, Capitalist ethics justify the commodification of labor through myths of meritocracy, concealing the extraction of surplus value (Ferrare & Phillippo, 2021). This is reflected in studies that analyze how the Declaration of Helsinki has been adapted to balance scientific advances with the protection of human rights, although tensions persist between universal ethics and local contexts (Rodríguez Puga, 2025).

The "mass culture" described by Adorno (del Arco Ortiz, 2023) materializes in practices such as surveillance capitalism, where technological oligopolies manipulate ethical discourses to consolidate control (Kneuer, 2022). In research, this is evident in the pressure to publish, which can lead to data manipulation or plagiarism, phenomena that ethics committees try to mitigate through protocols such as the Publishing Ethics Resource Kit. However, its effectiveness depends on a deep-rooted ethical culture, not just regulations (León-Correa & Beca, 2023).

In summary, we would propose the following question: How has the relationship between ethics and scientific research been historically configured in productive social contexts far from the current paradigm? Therefore, the objective is to analyze and critically reflect on ethics in scientific research,

seeking to reveal the apparent neutrality and objectivity of this relationship, accepted as a general norm, and which has produced current productive relationships. The analysis begins with an approximation of the notion of classical Greek ethics, passing through Modernity and the present day, where various conceptions of ethics have been prescribed.

METHOD

This study is based on a qualitative systematic review with a bibliographic-documentary design, integrating an analytical-critical approach and the dialectical method to approach the object of study. From the paradigm of critical theory, the relationship between ethics and scientific research is analyzed, contextualizing its historical evolution and its application in productive social relations far removed from the current context, with an emphasis on Latin America and its universal relevance.

For this purpose, scientific articles and academic books were reviewed and Historical documents that address ethics in scientific research, its theoretical development, and its application in productive social contexts. Critical studies on epistemological paradigms and their impact on knowledge production. Ethical regulations (Declaration of Helsinki, Nuremberg Principles) and their adaptation in Latin America are also discussed. The use of databases (Scopus, PubMed, SciELO) and bibliographic managers (Zotero, Mendeley) as digital tools to organize and analyze

information.

Systematic search was carried out in academic databases (Scopus, SciELO, PubMed) using MeSH descriptors and free terms: such as Keywords: "ethics in scientific

research", "critical theory", "productive social relations", "Latin America", "colonialism", "bioethics", Filters, studies published between 2015-2025, in Spanish, English or Portuguese and inclusion and exclusion criteria. Table 1

Table 1. *Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Type of study	Article, books, historical documents with critical or theoretical analysis.	Descriptive studies without an analytical or contextual approach.
Approach	Explicit link between ethics, research and social relations.	Works that do not address the historical or social dimension.
Geography	Studies with an emphasis on Latin America or applicable universal contexts.	Research focused on regions without comparative relevance.

Dialectical method was applied to contrast contradictions between universal ethical models and their implementation in unequal historical contexts. Findings were integrated through qualitative metasynthesis, prioritizing studies that demonstrate tensions between scientific knowledge and social justice (Tefera & Yu, 2022). For validation and methodological rigor, Primary sources (historical documents) and secondary sources (theoretical analyses) were crossed to validate interpretations and biases were recorded during the analysis using research diaries, aligning with principles of critical theory (Habermas, 1984).

RESULTS

Classical Greek ethics Table 2, based on reflection on virtue and reason, laid the foundations for a knowledge that, as Stadler et al. (2024) point out, is historically constructed

through theoretical and practical learning shaped by institutions and cultural contexts. In Plato's Republic, the Allegory of the Cave (Book VII) illustrates how subjectivity, conditioned by individual experiences and power structures, distorts reality, reducing it to shadows of objects that are assumed to be absolute truths. This approach anticipates modern critiques of the relativity of knowledge, where ethics is linked to conditioning values that guide the approach to knowable objects (Aguilera-Amaro et al., 2019).

Table 2. *Evolution of the notion of ethics from classical Greece to the present day*

Aspect	Classical Greek Ethics	Modern ethics	Contemporary ethics
Main focus	Virtue and reason: Search for <i>eudaimonia</i> (happiness) through moral excellence (Aristotle) and justice (Plato) (Pozón-López et al. , 2020).	Autonomy and duty: Emphasis on individual reason (Descartes) and the Kantian categorical imperative (Fajardo, 2022).	Global Justice and Sustainability: Human Rights, Intersectional Equity, and Ecological Regeneration (Chen & Marquis, 2022).
Theoretical basis	Arete (virtue) and phronesis (practical wisdom) (Aristotle). Education for the common good (Chang et al., 2022).	Rationalism (Descartes) and deontology (Kant). Separation of ethics and religion (Pozón-López et al., 2020).	Pluralism ethical: Ethics of care, pragmatism and criticism of power structures (León-Correa & Beca, 2023).
Main figures	Socrates (maieutics), Plato (Allegory of the Cave), Aristotle (Holst, 2024).	Descartes (individual reason), Kant (universal duty), Marx (materialist ethics).	Kierkegaard (existentialism), Stirner (egoism), critical theories (Cook, 2020).
Relationship with society	Polis: Ethics linked to political participation and the collective good (Chang et al., 2022).	Individualism: Ethics centered on the rational subject (Descartes) and the social contract (Hobbes).	Criticism to power structures: Ethics as a tool to dismantle inequalities (Wiedmann, 2023).
Legacy today	Virtue and justice: They persist in debates on applied ethics (e.g. euthanasia) (Gómez-Lobo, 1999).	Kantian duty: Basis of regulations such as the Declaration of Helsinki (Rodríguez Puga, 2025).	Environmental Ethics: Critique of Extractive Capitalism (Chen & Marquis, 2022). Ethics of Care: Focus on Vulnerabilities (León-Correa & Beca, 2023).

Various conceptions of ethics have been proposed to give meaning to individual and social life. For example, Socrates and the Sophists conceived of ethics as a science. Whereas the Sophists defended doctrines characterized by skepticism, relativism, and subjectivism, Protagoras, one of the renowned Sophists, stated: "Man is the measure of all things"; "Things are to me as they seem to you." In the field of ethics, this refers to the

fact that concepts and values are relative. Socrates did not share this way of thinking, arguing that if the validity of knowledge is not accepted, there will be no science or morality, because science is the basis of morality.

Protagoras defended an epistemological relativism that denied the existence of universal truths, arguing that "man is the measure of all things" (Bett, 2018). This subjectivist approach maintains that phenomena are perceived

differently depending on the individual's perspective, rejecting absolute objectivity. However, Delcomminette (2025) in recent analyses expanded by Bett (2023) qualifies that Protagoras moderated his stance towards a practical utilitarianism: although all opinions are equally valid, some are more advantageous for the individual or society. This shift introduces a functional hierarchy within relativism, where social or personal utility determines the relevance of beliefs, without invalidating their subjectivity. This tension between relativism and pragmatism reflects an eternal debate: is it possible to reconcile the diversity of perspectives with criteria of effectiveness or justice? Protagor's response suggests that, although truth is relative, its practical application requires evaluating consequences, opening a space for ethics and politics.

Another position on ethics and knowledge is expounded by Epicurus, proposing another approach, later transformed into a philosophical movement called Epicureanism, based mainly on empirical epistemology, atomic physics inspired by the teachings of Leucippus and Democritus and hedonistic ethics. His school lasted seven centuries. However, in the Middle Ages it was outlawed, because the Greek philosopher's arguments were destroyed because Christianity could not adapt them to its context. Christian views on pain (Delcomminette, 2025).

However, the Greeks provided the foundations of ethics that are currently

universally in force. One of the most influential philosophers is Plato, who postulates virtue ethics in the Republic, considering four main virtues: 1) wisdom, 2) courage or fortitude, 3) temperance, and 4) justice. "Instituting a correspondence between each of the virtues and the different parts of the soul and the social classes of the ideal city" (Delcomminette, 2025). Affirming that,

The highest part of the soul, the rational part, possesses wisdom as its own virtue; but justice, the general virtue that consists in each part of the soul fulfilling its own function, establishing the corresponding harmony in man, imposes the limits or the proportion in which each of the virtues must develop in man. In Plato's ethics, like Socratic ethics, the good can be identified with knowledge, and is characterized by a marked intellectualism (Delcomminette, 2025).

For the Greeks, this translates to the fact that epistemology in scientific research has a strong component of wisdom, being, in turn, an attribute of formal knowledge, where reason comes to play a determining role. However, for Aristotle, it is not possible to affirm the existence of "good in itself," of a single type of good: just as being is expressed in many ways, there will also be many types of good. All art and all scientific research, as well as all action and choice, seem to tend toward some good; and for this reason, those who said it is that to which all things aspire defined good with great precision (Holst, 2024).

The Nicomachean Ethics begins by stating that all human action is performed with an end in view, and the end of action is the good sought. The end, therefore, is identified with the good. If this is so, the goal of a researcher when conducting

scientific research is to do good. However, is this good found in relation to social needs or for personal satisfaction that pursues happiness as its ultimate goal? (Delcomminette, 2025).

Following Holst (2024), there are therefore two types of virtue: intellectual and moral. Intellectual virtue owes its birth and development above all to the teaching profession, and therefore requires experience and time, while moral virtue (ethics) is the fruit of custom (ethos), from which it takes its name by a slight inflection of the word (ethos). In this sense, a symbiotic relationship is established between ethics and intellectuality.

Delcomminette (2025) states that at this point, the contemplative or theoretical functions, proper to scientific knowledge, (Mathematics, Physics, Metaphysics); the virtue that corresponds to them is wisdom (sophía). Wisdom represents the highest degree of virtue, since its object is the determination of what is true and false, of good and evil. The habit of grasping the truth through demonstration, wisdom, represents the highest level of virtue to which man can aspire, and Aristotle identifies it with true happiness. This gives virtue ethics the supreme category of happiness, the end of human existence.

Indeed, theoretical knowledge does not "serve" anything further, it is not a means to any other end, but rather an end in itself that has its own pleasure; however, as we have seen when analyzing the ethical virtues, man must attend to all the facets of his nature, so he must necessarily enjoy a certain degree of material well-being if he wants to be able to access wisdom (Delcomminette, 2025).

The integrity of scientific knowledge is revealed in virtue ethics; theory and praxis are like oxygen and hydrogen to water.

In short, virtue ethics is conceptualized as the ability to do things. It is part of achieving human happiness, as expressed by Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC) according to García-Jiménez & Herrero (2025), it is argued that virtues are not an innate character, they must be worked on. The most important thing in life is to achieve happiness. For Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC), it is necessary to work on ethics through positive habits, which are virtues, and avoiding negative habits, which are vices.

In modernity, ethics became secularized, prioritizing individual reason (Descartes) and Kantian duty, although tensions between elite interests and collective needs persisted. For example, Renaissance humanism recovered Aristotelian principles, integrating Stoic *recta ratio* to harmonize faith and reason. However, these ethical norms, as Marx points out, legitimized structures of exploitation, naturalizing the commodification of labor through "free market" narratives (Wiedmann, 2023).

During the Enlightenment (18th century), Modernity consolidated the ethics of reason as a central axis, prioritizing rational analysis over religious authorities and laying the foundations for the distinction between philosophy and science. Descartes, a precursor figure, founded reason as a method to access the truth through methodical doubt, while Kant developed an ethics based on the autonomy of the will, where

moral duty arises from respect for the universal rational law (categorical imperative). For Kant, morality does not reside in results, but in the rational will that guides actions, this being the only source of absolute moral value (Sauerbronn et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the ethical and moral conception of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a sociopolitical doctrine that promoted equality, justice, and freedom, was also relevant. One of his main works is the "Social Contract" (1762), or the "Principles of Political Right." It is a work on political philosophy and deals primarily with the liberty and equality of men under a state instituted through a social contract. This text served as a doctrine to argue the French Revolution, due to its political ideas. Much of liberal philosophy, especially classical liberalism, is based on the theory of the social contract, with a philosophical vision of the individual as fundamental, who then decides to live in society and therefore requires the rule of law to ensure freedoms in order to coexist. Similarly, the principles of political philosophy are expounded, partly based on the concept of the general will, which is part of our current context.

In the Modern Age (5th–18th century), utilitarian ethics, known as utilitarian politics, was conceptualized, presented by Jeremy Bentham. It argued that all human actions are motivated by a desire to obtain pleasure, well-being, and avoid suffering. On the other hand, there is the ethics of language, which focuses on the analysis of the use of concepts and

propositions of moral theories to refute or accept their coherence. The meaning of ethical terms is reviewed to evaluate the viability of ethics and human praxis. This corresponds to the semantics of language. The ethics of language and pragmatic use are also conceived.

Today, ethics faces challenges such as the crisis of morality, where paradigms such as surveillance capitalism manipulate moral discourses to consolidate power (Kneuer, 2022). Applied ethics, from euthanasia to artificial intelligence, demands redefining classical principles (Aristotelian virtue) in contexts of structural inequality and environmental degradation (Chen & Marquis, 2022). As in Plato's Cave, subjectivity remains a filter: researchers, consciously or not, reproduce epistemological biases rooted in their life history, which demands deep-rooted ethical cultures to balance scientific rigor and social justice (León-Correa & Beca, 2023).

DISCUSSION

Universal ethical models, such as principlism (autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice), emerged in Western contexts of secularization and scientific rationality, prioritizing individual and abstract principles. In contrast, according to Martínez (2022), Latin America has developed a socially critical bioethics, focused on structural inequalities, poverty, and exclusion, where distributive justice and solidarity take priority over individual principles. For example, in the area of universal accessibility, the region

prioritizes policies that guarantee equity in environments natural and tourist areas, integrating people with disabilities through inclusive designs that overcome physical and social barriers, aligning with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This approach contrasts with Western models that, while promoting accessibility, often focus on technical standards without considering local socioeconomic realities.

In this sense, Biscioni et al. (2023) argue that the application of universal ethical models in Latin America faces tensions between principles abstracts and realities specific. On the one hand, Western bioethics prioritizes individual autonomy, while inequalities that limit the exercise of this autonomy persist in the region, such as unequal access to health services or the exclusion of vulnerable groups. On the other hand, the ethics of solidarity Latin America demands state policies that guarantee basic rights, such as access to recreational or tourist spaces, where the State assumes a central role in social inclusion. Furthermore, models such as universal design are being adapted in the region to integrate cultural and socioeconomic perspectives, overcoming reductionist views that ignore historical and structural contexts.

Furthermore, bioethics in Latin America is oriented towards a committed ethic, which combats discrimination and prioritizes social justice. For example, policies such as Ecuador's Law 42 (1999) and Executive Decree No. 88 (2022) seek to equalize

opportunities for people with disabilities, integrating recreational and socioeconomic components. This approach, according to Fonti (2024), reflects a contextualized ethic, where state responsibility and community participation are pillars to overcome inequalities, in contrast to liberal models that prioritize individual autonomy without considering structural barriers. The region thus offers an alternative model for global bioethics, integrating social, economic, and environmental dimensions into its ethical framework.

Therefore, knowledge production in contexts of social inequality faces tensions between hegemonic models and critical perspectives, where power structures determine who participates and how knowledge is validated. For example, in Latin American higher education, university models persist that prioritize specialized research, ignoring the voices of marginalized communities and reproducing epistemological hierarchies. As the OEI Diagnostic Report (Salinas-Navarro et al., 2024) points out, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these inequalities, as institutions with advanced technological resources were able to adapt to scientific production, while others were relegated by limitations in connectivity and access to databases. This scenario reflects how material conditions (infrastructure, financing) condition participation in knowledge generation, perpetuating historical exclusions.

In this context, power relations also influence the legitimization of knowledge. The

horizontal production of knowledge proposes intercultural dialogues that confront opposing views, generating new conceptual frameworks. However, in traditional academic practices, institutional authority often imposes limits on innovation, as occurs in Social Work, where professional training faces tensions between hegemonic theories and emancipatory practices. For example, in higher education, public policies designed to guarantee inclusion collide with realities of racial discrimination and gender inequality, highlighting how unequal social structures limit equity in the production of knowledge (Fonti, 2024).

Hence, Cuevas (2024) states that Latin American epistemological criticism questions these models, proposing approaches that integrate social justice and community participation. Social bioethics, for example, prioritizes state responsibility and solidarity over individual principles, recognizing that access to basic services (such as health or education) is a condition for autonomy. However, the implementation of these proposals faces resistance, such as institutional inertia that prioritizes international standards over local contexts, or the lack of funding for projects that do not align with global agendas. These contradictions reveal how structural inequalities are naturalized in evaluation systems and research policies.

Furthermore, methodological tensions are central: while Western models value objectivity and specialization, critical approaches such as popular education promote

the articulation of theory and practice and the active participation of social actors. Equitable management in companies, for example, seeks to measure gender inequalities through quantitative indicators, but it collides with the complexity of contexts where discrimination is reproduced in everyday practices. These examples illustrate how unequal relationships not only affect access to knowledge, but also its validation and application, underscoring the need for models that decolonize scientific production and prioritize social justice.

Finally, ethics in scientific research faces complex challenges that require adaptation to dynamic contexts and balancing technological advances with fundamental principles. Digitalization and the use of intelligence Artificial intelligence raise unprecedented ethical dilemmas. For example, automating investigative processes can improve efficiency, but also creates risks such as bias algorithmic or violation of privacy in the handling of sensitive data. In addition, research in human genetics faces challenges such as protecting predictive information that affects not only participants but also their families and communities. These advances require updated regulatory frameworks that balance innovation and rights protection.

CONCLUSION

Conservative positivist ethics, rooted in historical structures of domination, has perpetuated a hegemonic way of thinking that prioritizes scientific neutrality and institutional

stability over social justice. However, in the current global context marked by environmental crises, structural inequalities, and social movements demanding transformation, this model lacks factual viability. Its continuation would not only perpetuate oppressive systems but would threaten humanity's legacy by ignoring the urgent needs of a world crying out for equity and sustainability. Epistemic change is imminent: ethics must evolve toward critical approaches that deconstruct the world system, integrating marginalized voices and prioritizing liberation as a transformative axis.

Ethics for liberation, inspired by thinkers such as Dussel and Freire, emerges as a tool to dismantle the logics of power that sustain oppression. Its proposal is not abstract: it seeks to transform social, political, and economic structures through collective action and distributive justice. By resisting this transition, oppressors not only perpetuate their domination but also risk their very existence, since inaction in the global crises such as climate change or inequality could lead to collective suicide. The urgency of this epistemic change lies in its capacity to build a less polluted, just, and free world, where the life of all species, including humans, is not threatened by unsustainable systems.

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