

# Bio ethics: crisis of Bioethics or Bioethics of the crisis?

Juan María Cuevas Silva\*  
Giovane Mendieta Izquierdo\*\*

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18359/rfbi.1913>

The editorial process of Latin American Journal of Bioethics has been a dynamic work, characterized by the flow of articles dealing with life and its difficulties traced with the bio<sup>1</sup>-medical, bio-legal, bio-philosophical, among other issues that have concerned to bioethicists, academics and intellectuals interested in disclosing how important is the meaning of the sense of life. Nuance speech from two poles: a moralistic, speculative and dogmatic ethicist who forgets reality; other, skeptical, relativistic (which also falls into disciplinary dogmatism, epistemological and “ethical”), pragmatic and immediatist. Two poles that in bioethical discussions have not allowed to this inter and transdisciplinary field to see its real value and meaning within the anthropological, sociological, ecological, environmental, political and economic fields, operators and drivers of dynamic processes in the constitution of the humanity, subjectivity and contemporary intersubjectivity.

In this typical context of bioethical discourse, the question arises whether it is a crisis of bioethics or bioethics of the crisis.

In this typical context of bioethical discourse, the question arises whether it is a crisis of bioethics or bioethics of the crisis.

The first part of the questioning makes a reference to a process shown in the editorial aspect of this issue: a low production of articles of first order or the result of research in the field of bioethics that contribute to the reality of our continent. Little by little, each time that we call to publish in the Latin American Journal of Bioethics, many articles of reflection and theoretical-conceptual discussion focused on issues that may be of importance in society and bioethical discourse (either speculative ethicist or pragmatic and immediatist), but they do not contribute significantly to the social transformation and understanding of the

\* Masters in Education and PhD student in Social and Political Processes in Latin America. Assistant professor, Faculty of Education and Humanities, Universidad Militar Nueva Granada. Editor of Latin American Journal of Bioethics. Email: [juan.cuevass@unimilitar.edu.co](mailto:juan.cuevass@unimilitar.edu.co); [revista.bioetica@unimilitar.edu.co](mailto:revista.bioetica@unimilitar.edu.co). ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1680-6223>, Bogotá, Colombia.

\*\* Master of Education and Doctor of Science in Public Health. Assistant professor, Faculty of Education and Humanities, Universidad Militar Nueva Granada; coeditor of Latin American Journal of Bioethics. Email: [giovane.mendieta@unimilitar.edu.co](mailto:giovane.mendieta@unimilitar.edu.co). ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5085-3242> Bogotá, Colombia.

<sup>1</sup> The prefix “bio” is understood as the task of an ethical and moral judge that makes bioethics, leaving aside its etymological origin “life”.

current reality in the light of bioethics. Little by little, each time that we call to publish in the Latin American Journal of Bioethics, many articles of reflection and theoretical-conceptual discussion focused on issues that may be of importance in society and bioethical discourse (either speculative ethicist or pragmatic and immediatist), but they do not contribute significantly to the social transformation and understanding of the current reality in the light of bioethics. For example, in Colombia, the voice of bioethicists in the field of armed conflict, or better yet, in a context that sees a peace process with post-conflict, has not been heard in a forceful way, and if there are productions born from research, these have stayed in digital shelves or academic repositories of the essence that it belongs to a few intellectuals, where relativistic tendencies dogmatist or pragmatic moralist are evident. Thus, it loses value that voice that from an inter and trans disciplinary science can give lights to face the crisis of an armed conflict, that in Colombia is lived in an exceptional way, as well as elsewhere in Latin America and the Islamic world, Jewish, American and European.

Bioethics is in crisis because it has created a discursive space of comfort and has not been able to come out to answer what has promised in its essence as discourse and knowledge. Must break the barrier of merely making moral judgments and ethical decontextualized concepts to the prevailing realities in every human geography. The crisis of bioethics is immersed in the midst of social, cultural, political and economic processes which at the same time are linked to actions of structural corruption, actions that are affecting the public health, the concept of “quality of life”, the building of humanity, the care of nature, the capitalist and neoliberal economic paradigm, the evident worldwide displacement, ie, a series of phenomena characteristic of life that go beyond bio-medical, bio-legal and bio-environmental in the traditional bioethics conception, which destabilizes the conceptual and theoretical comfort of Latin American bioethicist. This global crisis is an opportunity for Bioethics and bioethicist to dislocating from their speech and move to investigate social realities for understanding and transformation, and thus lead the ethical-moral speculation from a duty that is not corresponding to a society that seeks survive issues surrounding life. Anthropological, epistemological, sociological, ethical and moral dualisms must be resignified from a contextualized bioethics of the social realities in interaction based on research of the first order.

The previously proposed and developed succinctly makes evident the second part of the question: bioethics of the crisis? Each period of history has its crisis, perhaps at a time some crisis are more complex than others, but in the present historical moment, which has fallen to us to live, is privileged by the dynamics, processes and phenomena that make seeing life as something with interrelationship. The world today is moving in the midst of the technological advances of the mass media; technologization of daily living of Western beings (some Eastern); phenomena of political corruption with economic and structural bias that has become global pandemic; mining development in the Latin American continent with devastating impact on human life, animal, mineral and environmental (in the biotic and abiotic); forced displacement (either by military or economic forces that

appropriate resources and territories); religious and racial intolerance increasingly evident in the XXI century; loss of adult authority and its social value as a reference for other generations; premature aging of children and young people by running life behind the hedonistic economic welfare; proliferation and multiplication of sexual orientation and gender; redefinition of the concept of family, from organizing nucleus of living without being congeners; education as a value driven from the economic and no ideological interests of the sense of belonging to the production of knowledge; sensible and visible presence of narcotics and drugs that allow an escape to this desolate and hopeless world geography; division of the world between first, second and third world, or even worse, between developed and developing countries.<sup>2</sup> In short, it is a crisis in which bioethics must move off of his speech, leaving their theoretical and conceptual comfort of presenting itself as the one assessing whether an action is correct from an ethical-moral paradigm, which ends in one of two trends exposed at the beginning of this editorial.

Bioethics should not turn its backs on the crisis that accompanies us in every human geography and social context; on the contrary, it must land their speeches to phenomena that directly affect human dignity and everything that means life or feeds and allows life to develop. Bioethics in the crisis has been stunned, immobile, it has taken refuge in knowledge that it believes are unique, although it has the flag of inter and transdisciplinary; it has been frozen in paradigmatic and epistemological models that make it looks like a specialty far from critics and actual processes, which also require exceeding the ethicist and moralism (not wanting to say that ethics and morals are no longer valid, on the other hand, are essential but for good measure).

The production of articles in bioethics is expected to be for the most part result of top rated research, without despising those articles of reflection or review. But it is imperative that scientific bioethics writing gives an acute and contextual response to a modern society from its proposals, inquiries and investigations that contribute to the understanding of the phenomena described above from the production of knowledge with respect and social responsibility.

Is the crisis of bioethics and bioethics of the crisis? Is a question that arises, for instance, to an obvious reality in which an action from science and knowledge is required, the investigative Academy and contextual intellectual activity of bioethicists and all those agents producers of science and knowledge, which have as concern contribute to environmental, ecological, political, social, economic, social geography, to exceed the paradigmatic speech of ethical-moral decontextualized judgments, whether dogmatic or skeptical, that do not allow the analysis, interpretation and understanding of the dynamics of current world from a historical awareness and contextual synchronous speech.

<sup>2</sup> The most contradictory are that the called developed countries (mostly) have managed to be due to natural, organic, mineral and environmental resources of those who are called “under-developed”.