

Work as a human, a social value, and a developmental necessity

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Abstract---Currently, a new attitude toward work is emerging, marked by heightened competitiveness, an overreliance on technology, and a dismissive stance toward simpler occupations. This viewpoint neglects the reality that work is fundamentally rooted in essential human and social values, and that every occupation holds a distinct and significant position within society, offering indispensable services to the community. Therefore, reaffirming these values is crucial to ensure that the development process proceeds correctly and remains as sustainable as possible. This imperative is driven by the emphasis on local development, which is intrinsically dependent on work and production. Work represents material resources and encompasses the fulfillment of both essential and supplementary needs for the individual and his family, resulting in a level of satisfaction that enables the attainment of the quality of life required in contemporary times. This article seeks to address this issue by adopting a comprehensive perspective on human economics and by providing an in-depth analysis of the concept of work.

Keywords---Work, Human Values, Social Development, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Since the earliest times, economics has occupied a central position in human thought. Over the ages, economic activity has undergone significant evolution, progressing through various phases, beginning with primitive economies, followed by the agricultural and industrial stages, and culminating in the knowledge economy. Nevertheless, when considering the dimension of social change, it is apparent that

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modernity has not concealed the disparities stemming from the inequitable distribution of wealth—whether among nations and peoples or between central and peripheral regions.

In this context, the role of development is to establish mechanisms that reconcile these differences, ultimately aiming to enhance the well-being of society's members, primarily by raising awareness about the value of work. While some might regard work solely as laborious and strenuous, deprivation of employment results in unemployment and a lack of essential resources. In the technological era, despite the transformation of the concept and components of work, traditional forms of labor continue to serve as the backbone of production, especially in developing countries, where the nature of work is closely tied to the available national and familial resources. Accordingly, the following discussion will address the values associated with work and their significance in light of the historical evolution of labor:

1. Work as a Concept:

Work represents a multifaceted social and human practice, as articulated by the sociologist and anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1872–1950). It encompasses several dimensions: the biological, reflected in the physical effort expended during labor; the psychological, closely linked to the worker's personality, underlying emotions, and their interaction with the work environment; and the social, which pertains to the network of relationships established among individuals within work contexts.

In all its manifestations—whether compensated or not—work can be defined as a collection of activities demanding intellectual, psychological, and physical exertion to produce particular goods or services that fulfill various human needs. Thus, the notion of work extends beyond the narrow concept of a profession or occupation defined by monetary reward, encompassing numerous forms of unpaid human activity, such as household tasks, family agricultural contributions, crafts, and manual labor. These roles are integral to both family life and the broader economy. Furthermore, the definition of work may be broadened to include voluntary and charitable activities performed by individuals in diverse social, economic, and political fields, without anticipation of financial compensation. Such endeavors address psychological and moral needs that vary according to the specific area of engagement.

Despite these distinctions, the most fundamental aspect in defining work is the recognition that it constitutes, first and foremost, the exertion of effort within a particular activity. Accordingly, it is vital to consider the intended objective behind this activity and effort, whether the aim is material or immaterial (Aisha Tayeb, 2011, pp. 15/16).

2. Stages in the Evolution of Work:

Work has long drawn the interest of thinkers who have examined it from multiple angles, evolving alongside societal development and the continual emergence of new forms of human activity. In ancient, medieval, and modern philosophy, human endeavor was considered in its various forms: agricultural, artisanal, ethical, political, and beyond. Throughout these periods, theoretical perspectives on practical activity remained closely linked to the human experience, especially to the unique faculty of “thought.” Even in modern bourgeois philosophy and contemporary sociology, this framework persists in addressing the issue of practical activity. Human practical activity is thus categorized into two principal forms:

- The first involves the relationship between humans and nature.
- The second pertains to human cognitive activity (Bachaynia Saad, 2003, p. 9).

Generally, the evolutionary stages of work can be summarized as follows:

- A. From a sociological perspective, the first stage is marked by the invention of tools and the rise of the factory system in Britain. However, from an anthropological standpoint, it begins with the emergence of the concept of earning a livelihood and ensuring survival.
- B. The advent of factories and the ensuing consequences (industrial development around 1850), such as tailoring workshops, food industries, engineering, and chemistry—including advances in

transportation and communication—led to significant transformations, including the emergence of a middle class of managers and office employees (administration).

- C. The introduction of machines, which supplanted skilled laborers, coincided with the rise of specialized maintenance personnel (engineers). This change was further accompanied by a growing number of consumers, increased production, and market expansion.
- D. The post-industrial era is distinguished by an emphasis on knowledge production and the use of information, resulting in profound changes within organizations, particularly due to the information revolution (Aisha Tayeb, 2011, pp. 16/20).

3. Work as a Social and Ethical Value:

Rokeach Milton maintains that values are perceptions that inform preferential behavior and function as criteria for selecting among behavioral alternatives available to an individual in a given context. Accordingly, when a person embraces certain values, it is anticipated that he will participate in actions aligned with those values. Values act as determinants and guides for behavior, shaping decisions among various possible actions and delineating the preferred mode of conduct when multiple options are present. Furthermore, the variety of life domains and behaviors leads to the proliferation of value systems that influence individual conduct.

Work stands as one of the most significant behavioral values in human life, occupying a predominant share of human activity for the majority. Frequently, work is associated with monotony, prompting individuals to seek to minimize or escape its psychological effects. Nonetheless, the alternative—unemployment—is generally intolerable for most people. Even when working conditions are harsh and repetitive with limited financial compensation, work in its diverse forms and contexts remains the decisive factor in determining life trajectories and psychological well-being. Several characteristics are noteworthy in this regard:

- Financial income: Wages or income derived from work form the primary means of subsistence and represent the main resource enabling most individuals to satisfy their needs. In the absence of such income, daily concerns invariably grow and intensify.
- Level of activity: Work fundamentally allows individuals to develop and utilize skills and abilities and offers a structured setting to channel energy productively. Without this, opportunities for skill acquisition and use are greatly diminished.
- Diversity: Work serves as a conduit through which individuals and groups are exposed to environments distinct from the domestic sphere. Even if characterized by monotony and fatigue, individuals derive satisfaction from engaging in activities that differ from household preoccupations.
- Temporal structure: Those regularly employed spend the majority of their time following a schedule that dictates the pace, intensity, and direction of their activities. While this timetable may introduce elements of exhaustion and psychological stress, it also brings clarity to daily routines. In contrast, the unemployed or those not engaged in work often experience boredom and lack the temporal awareness that others possess.
- Social interaction: The workplace commonly provides opportunities for socialization, enabling the formation of friendships and the pursuit of diverse activities both inside and outside of work. Without such a framework, social circles tend to diminish.
- Personal identity: The character of one's work imparts a stable social identity. For men in particular, self-esteem is frequently intertwined with economic contributions to the welfare of their families.

In light of these work-related elements, it becomes evident that unemployment or the absence of work often leads to a deterioration of self-confidence and a decline in the individual's social value (Anthony Giddens, 2005, 435/437). Given the profound influence of work and its defining characteristics on the individual, the foremost principle affirmed by the noble Islamic tradition is the pursuit of lawful

sustenance through work. Islam further encourages renewal, excellence, and creativity in the performance of work. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, stated: “The upper hand is better than the lower hand,” and also said: “The honor of a believer lies in his independence from people.” Wealth and poverty are relative conditions that arise from the extent to which a person asks others for assistance; these conditions are accompanied by either dignity or humiliation.

A believer may place himself in either position by choice. He may elevate himself to a status that others envy, embodying the Prophet’s saying: “No one has ever eaten food better than that which he earned with his own hands. Indeed, the Prophet of Allah, David, used to eat from the labor of his own hands.” He also said: “No Muslim plants a tree or sows a crop from which a bird, a human, or an animal eats except that it is counted as charity for him.” Anyone who is aware of such merit granted to the working individual and still neglects or shuns work has lost discernment and turned away from righteousness.

It is narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him, once lifted the hand of a laborer worn out by toil, kissed it, and declared: “Seeking lawful sustenance is an obligation upon every Muslim man and woman. Whoever eats from the labor of his own hands will cross the bridge on the Day of Judgment like lightning; whoever eats from the toil of his own effort, Allah will look upon him with mercy and will not punish him; and whoever earns lawfully through his own work, Allah will open for him the gates of Paradise, allowing him to enter through whichever he chooses.” The rank attained by the worker through labor is thus comparable to striving in the path of God, which Islam strongly upholds and promotes, as it represents the vitality, growth, and advancement of society. Work constitutes the foundation of prosperity and the means through which resources are extracted. Without work, life on earth would be inconceivable, and human existence itself would not have been realized. Neglect of work disrupts the natural order of life and is condemned in Islam. Love of ease and indulgence in laziness are firmly rejected so long as an individual possesses strength and energy, which must be invested in productive activity for oneself and for others (Suleiman Yahfoufi, undated, 90/93).

Accordingly, every Muslim individual is required to exert effort and engage in work, seeking sustenance from the depths of the earth and beneath the sky, regardless of the profession pursued—whether agriculture, industry, trade, administration, writing, or any other beneficial occupation—whether undertaken independently or in service to others. Through such effort, the individual provides for himself and his family without reliance on any person, institution, or authority.

By doing so, he shields himself from poverty and contributes, even in a modest way, to the enrichment of society as a whole. If opportunities within his homeland are restricted due to limited resources, overpopulation, or widespread unemployment, he is encouraged to seek God’s provision elsewhere, as the world is vast. The Muslim community holds the responsibility to support capable individuals in finding dignified means of livelihood, in accordance with the divine command: “And cooperate in righteousness and piety” (Al-Ma’idah / 2). Similarly, the Muslim ruler is tasked with facilitating employment opportunities to the fullest extent, for Allah has entrusted him as a shepherd responsible for his flock (Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, 1991, 53). Through adherence to these Islamic principles concerning work, nations are safeguarded from poverty, provided there is honest striving and diligence in earning a living, which guarantees dignity, psychological well-being, and the achievement of the desired levels of development.

Work should not be viewed solely as a matter of material resources and investment; it also encompasses the cultural, social, and religious dimensions unique to each society. Economics, at its essence, is a human discipline, centered on well-being and the fulfillment of comprehensive human needs—not only those met through private market exchanges, but also the need for public goods such as education, security, and a healthy environment, along with intangible benefits like dignity. Such needs cannot be reduced to an individual’s share of financial expenditure, particularly as market mechanisms—always shaped by social structures—continue to expand into new areas. As a result, an anthropological

approach to human economics must embrace a wider perspective on living standards, addressing the full spectrum of human needs and motivations (Chris Hann & Keith Hart, 2014, 24).

Discussion of living standards essentially revolves around the different levels of work. The livelihood of a worker or employee differs markedly from that of an unemployed, impoverished, or disabled person; likewise, the life of a manager or employer is distinct from that of the workers under his supervision. These interactions are regulated by a set of ethical standards applicable to both individuals and groups. On the individual level, social responsibility obliges a person to assume personal accountability before himself, his community, and God. This deepens the sense of social obligation and the capacity to fulfill it, naturally enhancing self-confidence and productivity—manifested in dedication to work, integration within the group, and increased self-awareness and understanding of one's behavior.

Employers, for their part, must adhere to specific ethical standards in the workplace, including compliance with labor laws and social security requirements, fair treatment, and clarity concerning job roles, rights, and responsibilities. Perhaps the most direct and comprehensive exposition of the economic process within its social and human context is found in the work of Ibn Khaldun.

4. Ibn Khaldun's View on Work:

Ibn Khaldun presented an especially significant understanding of work and its resources, recognizing that a range of economic resources form the basis of human labor:

1. **Hunting:** This involves securing sustenance by hunting, whether on land or at sea, utilizing various skills to capture animals and benefit from them.
2. **Animal husbandry:** This activity consists of raising domesticated animals, benefitting from their meat, milk, wool, hair, fur, skin, and even bones. It also includes certain insects, such as bees, from which honey is obtained, and silkworms, which produce silk threads for clothing, among others.
3. **Agriculture:** Initially, humans collected grains, vegetables, and fruits provided by plants. Over time, they became farmers, gathering seeds, planting, cultivating the soil, and eventually harvesting crops. Ibn Khaldun considered these resources foundational for life itself, as they provide the essentials for existence and the raw materials later used in industry and trade. Should agriculture vanish, industry, commerce, and all associated activities would cease, resulting in widespread poverty and hunger.
4. **Trade:** Trade entails the movement of goods from one place to another and their exchange for other goods or money.
5. **Industry:** In this sphere, humans convert raw materials into tools and products for everyday life. This includes trades such as blacksmithing, carpentry, weaving, tailoring, construction, papermaking, writing, medicine, obstetrics, and encompasses all forms of art and science.
6. **Taxation:** Societal needs for certain public goods and projects require taxation, imposed on individuals in accordance with established law, and deposited into the state treasury from which public employees are paid and collective projects are funded.
7. **Various professions and jobs, including social roles and artistic crafts:** These represent fields from which individuals derive their livelihoods. However, natural resources remain the primary foundation, while other resources are secondary. Those engaged in the primary sectors are the true producers, as these yield tangible outcomes. Secondary resources, such as political roles, industry, and trade, depend on the former, even though they are vital for social life. Their role is supplementary, supporting activities that interact directly with nature and deliver its products—animals and their derivatives, plants and their produce (grains, vegetables, fruits, cork, rubber, wood, minerals, etc.)—to society, thereby providing considerable benefit (Idris Khudair, 2003, 206/208).

Thus, when agriculture—including hunting and animal husbandry—is recognized as the foundation of human existence and the key to survival, it becomes clear that it provides the essential materials

necessary for life, without which survival would not be possible. Agriculture stands as the first resource upon which humanity relied, which explains its association with nomads, who represent the earliest phase of human society, while the professions of settled urban populations emerged later as supplementary and dependent branches.

As Ibn Khaldun states: “Agriculture is the oldest of crafts, for it provides the food essential to human life. One can exist without everything else, but not without food. This is why this craft is linked to nomads, as we established that nomadism preceded urban settlement, and thus their craft preceded those of settled people, which are secondary and dependent on it.”

Each of these sectors relies on the others, but agriculture remains the most fundamentally productive form of work. Despite this, the farmer often endures the harshest conditions due to his simplicity, the heavy burdens he carries, and exploitation by intermediaries. Trade, which involves the exchange and transportation of goods for profit, is regarded as an honorable occupation but remains subordinate to agriculture. When traders build their commerce on deceit, usury, or trickery, their activity becomes unlawful and must be condemned.

If the Arab sociologist views the natural order in economic life as inherently self-regulating, he does not object to state intervention in supporting, regulating, and establishing appropriate rules, especially when the system declines or its balance is disrupted, such as during significant price fluctuations. Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldun’s economic theory is rooted in natural necessity, supply and demand, competition, and the survival of the fittest as foundational principles within the economic sphere. These principles govern the economic system, and when the state intervenes, it should do so in accordance with these fundamentals—supporting and empowering them to establish favorable conditions and achieve equilibrium in supply and prices. Saint-Simon expresses a similar perspective to Ibn Khaldun in his conception of industry, considering all productive and beneficial activities to fall within its scope.

Anyone participating in any productive sector—agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting, commerce, weaving, or other fields—is, according to this view, engaged in industry. Thus, both manual and intellectual labor are considered forms of industry, and those engaged in them are producers. Excluded from this classification are capitalists and privileged individuals who employ others for wages and tend toward idleness and comfort; these contribute nothing, as they subsist on the labor of others. This aligns precisely with Ibn Khaldun’s position. The physiocrats, such as the Russian Jean Graft, the Frenchman Quesnay, and the Englishman Adam Smith, also drew inspiration from Ibn Khaldun’s economic thought and concurred with him on several significant points (Idris Khudair, 2003, 212/216). Of course, in referencing Ibn Khaldun’s precedence, it is also important to recognize the contributions of Protestantism and its pioneers, who clarified the meaning of secular work. Beginning with Martin Luther’s emphasis on worldly labor as a duty benefiting both the individual and society, and extending to Max Weber’s analysis of Protestant work ethics—particularly the Calvinist doctrine—this doctrine, with its focus on discipline, hard work, and sincerity, played a central role in shaping the capitalist mentality in Europe. The doctrine viewed material success as evidence of divine favor and predestined salvation. It encouraged followers to be productive rather than merely consumers and to reinvest their profits to create further employment opportunities for the needy, enabling them to contribute to a productive and dynamic society.

It is equally evident that the Chinese have distinguished themselves through adherence to Confucian work ethics, which prioritize virtue, sincerity, diligence, and social harmony, alongside a strong commitment to integrity, loyalty to the institution, and continuous personal development. Confucianism aspires to cultivate the ideal personality (the noble man—Junzi), dedicated to serving society by fulfilling duties, respecting hierarchy, and practicing compassion and honesty. It also promotes the “golden rule”—“Do not do unto others what you do not wish done to yourself”—as a fundamental principle for achieving prosperity and social harmony.

5. Work: From Individual Planning to Development Planning

In its initial phases, human thought was confined to planning at the individual and family levels; however, as societies evolved, so too did the concepts of planning and development. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, was less concerned with individual variations in natural abilities and more attentive to the artificial inequalities of wealth, honor, and the authority to command obedience, all of which arose from social conventions. To conceptualize human equality, Rousseau envisioned a pre-social “state of nature”—a stage in human history where individuals lived in isolation, yet remained healthy, content, and, most importantly, free. This “noble savage” enjoyed a form of metaphysical, anarchic, and personal liberty: these original humans possessed free will, were unbound by rules, and existed without hierarchical distinctions.

At a certain juncture, humanity progressed to what Rousseau termed “nascent society,” a stage characterized by hunter-gatherers residing in huts and lasting for an extended period. Rousseau speculated that it was calamities and economic scarcity that led people to abandon the natural state. The decline commenced with the advent of agriculture—or, as Rousseau phrased it, “wheat and iron.” The cultivation of land brought forth primitive property institutions, necessitating the emergence of political society. The Hobbesian condition—marked by the war of all against all and the absence of law—preceded the formation of civil order, or the state. Rousseau believed that this new social contract, based on the rule of law, may have been established by consensus, but in reality, it functioned as a deceptive agreement through which the wealthy legitimized their claims and preserved unequal property rights. From this problematic origin, political society generally advanced through three revolutionary stages:

Tracing the trajectory of inequality, the first stage is represented by the creation of law and property rights; the second, by the establishment of political authority; and the third and final stage, by the replacement of legitimate authority with arbitrary rule. In the initial phase, the distinction between rich and poor was formalized; in the second, the division between strong and weak; and in the third, the separation between master and slave. This final stage represents the culmination of inequality, the ultimate result toward which all distinctions trend, until upheavals either entirely overthrow the regime or bring it closer to genuine legitimacy.

The rule of a single individual completes this cycle, rendering all people equal once more, but only as subjects governed by the will of the master. Rousseau interpreted the growth of inequality as an aspect of alienation experienced within civil society, advocating a return from division of labor and dependence on the opinions of others to a state of self-sufficiency (Chris Hann & Keith Hart, 2014, 27/29). As such a vision is impractical, the solution is found in the application of development as an integral component of human economics.

6. Development as a Synonym for Human Economics:

Development is best understood as a comprehensive process of political, economic, and social emancipation. Its aims and objectives are challenging to attain without deliberate political management. It constitutes a process of simultaneous transformation in social, economic, political, and cultural domains, signifying civilizational advancement rather than merely an economic change measured by increased per capita income, especially when this ignores essential aspects such as equitable income distribution and the fulfillment of basic population needs. Ramzy Zaki emphasizes that development should be “independent, self-reliant, inwardly oriented, and focused on meeting basic needs, while guaranteeing a degree of popular participation.

Development must not rely on market mechanisms, which have failed to provide fair distribution. It must be economic, social, and political at the same time.” For this reason, it is necessary to move away from conventional models and imitation. Anouar Abdel-Malek cautions against “imitating the West without fostering creative capacity, and inflating parasitic economic activity without developing productive, scientific, and technological forces through long-term strategic development.” Thus,

development should be regarded as the product of an internal process that cannot be imported or replicated. It is, at its core, neither borrowed nor transplanted; it is a complex social phenomenon achieved through conscious planning, internal intellectual, organizational, and material effort, and genuine creativity. Accordingly, the fundamental challenge lies in selecting the correct path to achieve the desired development, identifying potential obstacles, and formulating methods to overcome them. This process demands intense intellectual engagement originating from within developing nations themselves, aimed at defining appropriate developmental goals and strategies (Rabah Kaabache, 2007, 29/30).

Over the past half-century, development studies have provided a multidisciplinary field characterized by an increasingly formal academic division of labor. The theories driving this field have evolved in step with global historical changes. In the 1950s and 1960s, the dominant approach was “modernization,” based on the idea that the poor should become like the rich. This meant that “traditional” institutions would be replaced by “modern” ones, embracing a “bourgeois package” of cities, capital, science, technology, democracy, rule of law, and universal education. Increasing inequality was seen as acceptable, given the belief that the benefits of progress would eventually be shared widely, raising general living standards.

Around 1970, it became evident that this notion was not progressing as intended, and Marxist theories gained broader acceptance. These theories held that underdevelopment and dependency resulted from the participation of poor countries in a global system dominated by wealthy capitalist nations. Accordingly, development in such circumstances required those countries to withdraw from what was essentially a zero-sum game redistributing the wealth of the periphery to the core. (Chris Hann & Keith Hart, 2014, 147)

The studies produced by anthropologists have proved to be deeper and more authentic than quantitative sociological studies. Thus, the need for an anthropological perspective that relies on a holistic approach to development remains the most effective methodology, as it highlights the cultural and social dimensions—encompassing values, social relationships, traditions, references, resources, lifestyles, behaviors, systems, languages, arts, kinship, and family structure. This perspective plays a fundamental role in shaping processes of transition and social change within the specificities of each society. Anthropologists do not see development as a series of incremental changes in technological and economic methods but as a comprehensive process encompassing the entire sociocultural system (Bouhassoun Al-Arabi, November 2019, 69).

It is undeniable that anthropology has produced studies that have revealed much about local communities, their cultural changes, and the developmental challenges they face, as well as the obstacles that may become stumbling blocks for development programs in these societies. The role of anthropology has always included providing insight to facilitate the implementation of development programs, investigating the reasons for their failure, and, at times, anticipating their impediments in advance.

In this way, anthropology can serve as a strategic discipline that aims to provide and anticipate genuine plans for the development of both local and rural communities. The contributions of anthropology—as a social and human science—to development plans can be identified through the application of the diagnostic tools of economic anthropology in development programs. From an economic perspective, applied anthropological studies are beneficial in tracking the evolution of production technologies and modes of utilization within culturally familiar models and patterns, thereby raising the material and economic level of a given project. Yet, these outcomes fundamentally rely on the human factor—that is, the individuals working within the project.

The importance of applied anthropology thus lies in its ability to assist both investors and business owners in selecting the most suitable workers for productive sectors at the lowest cost and wages. Additionally, these studies offer value in marketing manufactured goods (Hussein Abdel Hamid Ahmed Rashwan, 2003, 72/73). Anthropological studies have thus emerged as a model for providing information closely aligned with the lived realities of each local community, and they have alluded to the concept of sustainable local development.

Many countries design economic and social development plans with clear objectives, to be executed over specific time frames. The purpose of these plans is to advance the national economy, secure self-sufficiency in food production, strengthen the industrial sector, and achieve similar goals. Such interim objectives are ultimately intended to serve a broader aim: to provide citizens with improved living standards, to bridge the gap with technologically advanced societies, and to raise the community to the level of modern nations.

In this respect, development in its comprehensive sense is intimately linked to social change. At its essence, development signifies the process of unleashing all the dormant material and spiritual capacities of a society from the dominance of natural and social constraints. This process results in a transformation from a prevailing social reality—marked by underdevelopment and imbalance—toward a more advanced and equitable state (Mohamed Al-Suwaidi, 1990, 97).

While the initial understanding of development (post-World War II) concentrated on economic growth, it gradually expanded to incorporate both growth and distribution, thereby including social dimensions such as addressing poverty, unemployment, and inequality. This evolution was reflected in the adoption of basic needs strategies and popular participation in both the formulation and implementation of development plans from the late 1960s through the mid-1970s.

The concept was further refined from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s to embrace comprehensive development, which addresses every aspect of society and life, focusing on improving the condition of ordinary people rather than simply increasing economic growth rates.⁴ Subsequently, the idea of sustainable development emerged in the early 1980s, emphasizing the fulfillment of current needs without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development seeks to improve the quality of human life, always within the context of environmental stewardship and socio-economic realities, and never at the environment's expense (Othman Mohamed Ghoneim and Magda Ahmed Abu Zant, 2006, 19/27).

The principle of sustainable development was also embodied in Islamic culture centuries ago. The noble Islamic tradition is rich with verses from the Holy Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, that directly and indirectly reflect the concept of sustainability in all its dimensions. Examples include:

- a. The limitation of earthly resources: This is affirmed by the words of the Almighty: "And there is not a thing but that with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down except according to a known measure" (Al-Hijr, verse 21).
- b. The obligation to preserve resources and prevent their corruption and depletion, given their limited and exhaustible nature: This is regarded as a religious duty in Islam, as stated: "And do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order" (Al-A'raf, verse 56), and "And do not seek corruption in the land; indeed, Allah does not like corrupters" (Al-Qasas, verse 77). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said in a noble Hadith: "If the Hour comes while one of you is holding a palm seedling, if he is able to plant it before the Hour comes, let him do so." (Al-Albani, Al-Ahadith Al-Sahihah)
- c. The prudent and rational management and use of resources: Moderation is a foundational principle in Islamic conduct. In response to the words of the Almighty: "And those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but hold a medium (way) between those

- (extremes)” (Al-Furqan, verse 67). Likewise: “And do not make your hand (as) chained to your neck nor extend it completely and (thereby) become blamed and insolvent” (Al-Isra, verse 29). The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: “O Aisha, if you wish to join me (in the hereafter), let what suffices you from this world be like the provision of a traveler. Beware of sitting with the wealthy, and do not replace a garment until you have patched it.” (Sunan al-Tirmidhi). Another Hadith states: “The food of one suffices for two, and the food of two suffices for four, and the food of four suffices for eight.” (Sunan Ibn Majah)
- d. Satisfying needs without waste or extravagance: Islam instructs that needs should be fulfilled from available resources without falling into excess or waste. The Almighty declares: “And it is He who produces gardens trellised and untrellised, and date palms, and crops of different shape and taste (its fruits and its seeds) and olives, and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar. Eat of their fruit when they ripen, but pay the due thereof (its Zakat) on the day of its harvest. And do not waste (resources), for Allah does not love the wasters.” (Al-An’am, verse 141). Also: “O children of Adam! Take your adornment at every masjid and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.” (Al-A’raf, verse 31).
 - e. The environment and resources are a shared right and responsibility: Both the environment and natural resources are collective rights, imposing a duty upon everyone to protect and preserve them. The Almighty states: “And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression.” (Al-Ma’ida, verse 2). According to the noble Hadith: “The Muslims are partners in three things: water, pasture, and fire, and its price is forbidden.” (Sunan Ibn Majah).
 - f. The utilization of resources must be based on justice and equality: The Almighty commands: “Eat of its fruit when it yields and give its due (Zakat) on the day of harvest.” (Al-An’am, verse 141) and “And give the relative his right, and (also) the poor and the traveler, and do not spend wastefully.” (Al-Isra, verse 26). Also: “Eat of the good things which We have provided for you and do not transgress therein, lest My anger should descend upon you.” (Ta-Ha, verse 81). And: “Eat and drink from the provision of Allah, and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.” (Al-Baqara, verse 60). The noble Hadith states: “Whoever has extra mount should give it to one who has none; and whoever has surplus provision should give it to one who has none.” (Sunan Ibn Majah).
 - g. The future is the present of tomorrow: Every person is required to look ahead and act in consideration of the future. The Almighty says: “O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow.” (Al-Hashr, verse 18).
 - h. Renewal and environmental compensation: The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated: “No Muslim plants a tree or sows a crop from which a man, a beast, or anything eats, but it will be counted as charity for him.” (Sahih Muslim) (previous reference, 91/93).

In all circumstances, community development is a movement directed at improving the overall living conditions of society, grounded in the positive and active participation of the community itself. This is evident through various development indicators:

- Development depends on local grassroots efforts.
- It requires persistent effort to transform unfavorable conditions into favorable ones.
- It involves transitioning from one state to a more advantageous one.
- It requires attention to all segments, sectors, and fields.

Nelsen, Ramas, and Frent maintain that community development is, above all, an educational and guidance process that enables society’s members to acquire the skills necessary to address their own problems. Jackson considers the core of development to be the manner in which a society confronts its challenges. Dixon outlines several aspects that characterize development:

- Development centers on the human being.
- It is an ongoing process rather than a single event.
- It necessitates organization by all stakeholders involved.

- It is a dynamic, adaptive approach to problem-solving (Rashad Ahmed Abdel Latif, 2007, 19).

Development is no longer restricted to economic growth, nor even to the idea of comprehensive development alone. In the modern era, two concepts have become dominant:

1. Human development, which highlights the importance of the social dimension in development, recognizing that the human being is both the agent and beneficiary of development, guiding its direction and shaping its outcome.
2. The concept of improving quality of life as an alternative to conventional development models, since previous approaches have yet to produce the intended results. As a result, the focus has shifted toward enhancing the quality of life within society.

Thus, the concepts, assumptions, and frameworks of development theories and models have shifted—from adaptation, to transformation, and ultimately, to empowerment—culminating in a focus on elevating the quality of life (Talaat Mostafa El-Sarouji, 2009, 55).

The modern citizen does not simply aspire to improved living conditions, but seeks what is now described as “quality of life.”

7. The future of work in the age of artificial intelligence:

Current projections suggest that artificial intelligence will profoundly influence employment and the labor market in the years ahead, introducing radical transformations in the nature of jobs and industries. These shifts will bring a range of challenges and concerns. As robots achieve exceptional capabilities and perform a wide array of tasks with high precision, public concern has grown, leading to divided opinions. Some maintain that artificial intelligence is set to eliminate much of the human workforce, while others argue that it will positively shape the future of work by simplifying tasks and providing immediate solutions to many human challenges.

Proponents with a positive perspective emphasize that artificial intelligence has fostered creativity, enhanced productivity, and created opportunities for skill development, particularly benefiting employees who face difficulties in their current roles. Conversely, critics contend that artificial intelligence represents a genuine threat to certain professions and sectors. According to a report by Goldman Sachs Investment Bank, artificial intelligence could potentially replace nearly 300 million full-time jobs. Forbes references a report from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Boston University indicating that by 2025, artificial intelligence will have displaced close to two million manufacturing workers. Numerous other roles are predicted to vanish, including customer service representatives, receptionists, accountants, sales officials, analysts, warehouse and inventory staff, insurance underwriters, and retail employees (Iman Mohamed Khairy Tayel, 2022, 749).

The impact of artificial intelligence on the labor market centers around several key issues:

1. Labor demand: Artificial intelligence applications have the potential to save time and increase productivity in specific sectors, which reduces the demand for routine jobs that can be automated. AI is expected to have the greatest impact on positions characterized by repetitive tasks, such as administrative and clerical roles. In contrast, fields that demand complex human interaction, such as healthcare and education, may experience less disruption or may even benefit from these advancements.
2. Enhancement of labor supply efficiency: Artificial intelligence raises both the quality and efficiency of the workforce by advancing education and healthcare. In education, AI can provide personalized materials suited to individual students’ needs, while in healthcare, it facilitates early diagnosis and tailored treatments. These advances contribute to a more productive and healthier workforce, ultimately expanding economic potential.
3. Work experience: Artificial intelligence can improve working conditions by automating and streamlining routine tasks, cultivating a more attractive and productive workplace. However, it

may also lead to increased surveillance of employees and higher stress levels due to elevated performance expectations.

Future scenarios for the impact of artificial intelligence on the labor market:

There are four principal scenarios regarding how artificial intelligence might affect the labor market, each depending on the pace of technological adoption and the potential impact on unemployment and economic growth.

- The first scenario: Favorable winds. In this case, artificial intelligence is adopted at a moderate rate, resulting in improvements in productivity and economic growth, but with minimal effects on unemployment as workers are gradually shifted into new positions. This is the most positive scenario, demonstrating the labor market's capacity to adapt and capitalize on artificial intelligence without substantial disruption.
- The second scenario: Strong current. In this optimistic scenario, artificial intelligence is adopted rapidly and widely, producing substantial economic gains but also causing a temporary increase in unemployment rates. Nevertheless, workers are progressively absorbed into newly created jobs as a result of economic expansion fueled by artificial intelligence adoption.
- The third scenario: The storm. This scenario entails the rapid deployment of artificial intelligence leading to significant job losses, as technology is implemented before adequate new employment opportunities can emerge. Consequently, unemployment rates surge, generating short-term economic and social crises, although stability is anticipated to return in the longer term.
- The fourth scenario: The breeze. In this scenario, artificial intelligence is adopted gradually and on a limited scale, resulting in only modest economic effects and minimal changes to unemployment rates. This is the scenario with the least overall impact, illustrating how the influence of technology may remain limited if adoption does not become widespread.

There is no doubt that artificial intelligence represents the future of the labor market, carrying significant potential to boost productivity and stimulate economic growth. Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize that such technological progress is accompanied by economic and social challenges that demand careful and deliberate management. Policymakers should focus on guiding the transformation process, ensuring that the advantages of artificial intelligence are equitably distributed across all segments of society, and minimizing social risks through the development and implementation of thoughtful policies (<https://www.aljhood.com/blog/103>).

Conclusion

The economy may have transformed into a knowledge economy, but its essence remains fundamentally human. Likewise, work has evolved from manual labor to remote and digital forms, yet it continues to retain its human character. Human beings consistently seek improvement, both individually and collectively, highlighting the importance of the social sciences in analyzing and describing the realities of local communities and actively engaging in the development plans that seek to advance these communities and their populations. This role becomes even more vital in light of the accelerating integration of artificial intelligence into the labor market, which emphasizes the enduring need to preserve the human element—even when it may not always match the efficiency of machines.

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