WITHIN THE PLOTS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ANALYZING GENDER IN GLOBAL POLITICS

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ABSTRACT
This text intends to present a primary analysis of some of the conditions of emergency for the approach of gender in environmental politics for sustainable development. For that intent we used the tools proposed by Michel Foucault’s genealogy and communicated with Cultural and Gender Studies for the analysis of the documents, which enabled us to identify a certain role of women in sustainable development.

KEYWORDS
Gender; politics; sustainability; discourse; genealogy.

Introductions
Cultural Studies is a heterogeneous field of perspectives and subjects of research that consider culture and, with it, the production of artifacts, relationships, laws, institutions, and politics, among others. Considering its potential to analyze contemporary events, we establish links to that perspective, given that the relationship between gender and environmental events are part of the cultural production of what it means to be man, woman, environment and nature.

In those terms, we use the contributions of Feminist and Gender Studies that, within the scope of Cultural Studies, have destabilized the way women were/are represented and discursively positioned in societies. Thus, we are interested in the emergence of gender as a concept engendered in the feminist movement, which is part of the politics for sustainable development. We also ask: What contributes to its expansion in contemporary times?

From these concerns we aim to communicate through Michel Foucault’s genealogic tools, such as emergency, origin, discourses and enunciations. According to Foucault, documents need to be considered as monuments and not only as something that needs to be deciphered, because they allow us to think the events out and have discussions about them: Some of the monuments that integrate our primary analysis are Agenda 21, Beijing’s Platform, Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Declaration. We do not intend to point out what is right or wrong in the documents or to confirm the effectiveness of those politics.

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What we intend to do is to show the discourses and its effects in the production of social and environmental relations.

To organize the text, we begin by presenting our perspective, followed by the questioning of some historical events, dated from a theoretical revision, and the presentation of some discussions originating from the analysis of the monuments that allow us to identify the power lines and the relationships developed. Because of that, it is nowadays possible to link gender to global politics of sustainability.

**Locating the Theoretical-Methodological Perspective**

The influence of Feminism in Cultural Studies has contributed to the dissemination of different subjects of research, the visibility of masculine interests that sustain intellectual works as well as cultural productions, approaches to social identities, subjectivities and pleasure (2004). Thus, “there are many other things involved besides the original question: “what about women”?“ (JOHNSON, 2004, pp. 15). Feminism brings to discussion the asymmetric and hierarchical relation produced, not being enough to talk about or include women in politics and social spaces, it also aims to destabilize the positions of the subjects in societies.

Accordingly, the feminist movement, characterized by the heterogeneity of its perspectives, resistance and confrontations, developed around the 19th century (LOURO, 2011). It brought to discussion the biological and theological justifications that reinforced the differences between men and women. Thus, the movement destabilized the natural vision of those links highlighting the character built and putting social organizations, hierarchies, and inequalities that come from that vision in a hard spot.

In the first wave of the movement, identified by feminist authors (LOURO, 2011; MEYER, 2003), the fight for the right to vote, for the right to teach, for the right to receive an education and for fair working conditions for women were approached. In the second wave, around 1960 and 1979, the deepening of research and studies about social subordination and politic invisibility emerged, to which women are historically subjected. Thus, the concept of gender is created by Anglo-Saxon scholars as a category of analysis in the scope of theoretical discussions, aiming to demystify the biological determinism theory, which has been the base on which relationships and practices between men and women have been built. This concept provoked the “social order” and it continues to provoke based on new discussions, such as Judith Butler’s (2003) feminist vision, which highlights the trap where Cultural Studies fall when they consider the elements of the binomial sex/gender and establish that the first is natural and the second is cultural. The author makes it possible for us to think that the materiality of sex exists, however, the meanings, names and hierarchies, that is to say, everything that is said about that materiality is a cultural construction and, thus, there is no difference between sex/gender.

We agree with the author and with the post-structuralist perspective of feminist gender studies that focuses in the centrality of the language from the philosopher Michel Foucault, who considers that the relations power/knowledge are historical and culturally built on the

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6 Although we enunciate two waves of the feminist movement, nowadays researchers point out a third and a fourth feminist waves. Marlise Matos (2010) highlights the third one as a mark of the decade of 1990 and the fourth wave as related to Feminisms in the experiences of Latin American countries.
bodies that identify them as masculine and feminine. Thus, the concept of gender includes “all forms of social, cultural and linguistic construction involved with the processes that differentiate women from men” (MEYER, 2003, p.16).

Gender as a category of analysis (SCOTT, 1995) or as a theoretical and politic tool (MEYER, 2003) enables the examination of those relations, approaching the social and cultural aspects, which are intersected by multiple and provisional representations of feminine and masculine that produce and/or give new meanings to those representations. In addition, it points out the recognition of its plurality and intersections with other identities, such as class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, religion, etc. So, as a concept engendered in feminist discussions, does it begin to take part in the politics for sustainable development?

Nowadays, besides being present in areas such as education, health and science, gender is present in the environmental area through programs that are developed from the local to the global for a sustainable development. The concerns with environmental degradation have taken societies to search for a sustainable development, creating debates and government and non-government actions. It is in this context of social, economic, political and environmental effervescence that gender has gained visibility and investments, including actions and politics.

It is by looking with the eyes of the present that we intent the recent emergency of gender in global politics, aiming for sustainable development. According to André Queiroz (2011, pp. 18) “We will have to admit that everything related to this subject of the present is the result of chance and some regularity in the events”. So, how where those events produced?

Inspired by the tools proposed by the philosopher Michel Foucault, we propose a genealogic perspective to study environmental events and gender in contemporary times. By outlining these events we do not intend to find their origin to explain the production of discourses and practices about gender in sustainable development. However, we do intent to question their naturalization and to look at the scattered events that make it possible for a discursive practice to exist in the environmental politics of contemporary times.

In the search for conditions of possibilities we approached one of the objects of the genealogy outlined by Michel Foucault from Frederick Nietzsche’s work, which is the historical emergence of an event. Although it is frequently tried to design the emergence to a final term, Foucault points out that the ends are nothing but an episode in a series. For the author, the emergence is a place of confrontation, always produced in a specific state of forces. Meanwhile, it does not belong to a place or person because it is in a “non-place”. “Nobody is, therefore, responsible for an emergence; nobody can be glorified for that; it is produced in the interstice” (Foucault, 1990, pp. 24). Thus, governments, civil society and social movements are not responsible for the emergency of that object – the gender in sustainable development – because it is produced in its cracks, in its cuts.

Based on this perspective, we inspire our looks for the proliferation of events that enable the emergence of gender in global environmental politics; that is to say, at the moment that the object emerges. Thus, we have to highlight the contributions of the origin, another object of genealogy, because it allows us to “reencounter, under the unique aspect of a character or concept, the proliferation of the events, through which (thanks to which, against which) they were formed” (Foucault, 1990, pp. 21).
So, Foucault states that the origin is not established, “it shakes what was seen as still; it fragments what was thought to be joined; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined in compliance with itself” (idem). With this, we do not intend to find the history of gender in sustainable development; we intend to place in history the events that enable the production of that object, by considering its production between power relations.

**Gender in Global Politics: Analyzing some Events**

When we report to environmental politics of sustainability under the look of gender, we can identify the proliferation of events in the 20th century, since at the end of the post-war period some conferences were created for the environmental development for the future of the generations. Thus, from 1990, we identify the origin of the events that enable the emergence of gender in global politics aiming for sustainable development, in the scenes of power relations.

By highlighting that period we do not intend to say that other events did not have effects in the 19th century, for example; gender in global politics is only the tip of the iceberg, as it is pointed out by Paul Veyne (2008). Meanwhile, at first we noticed that the spread of power relations is intensified after the events of this century. Considering some conditions of possibility as the notion of development that embodies women and peasants since the Second World War; the creation of the UN; as well as the conference known as ECO 92. We identified power games in these events, such as the fight of women, feminist and environmental movements, civil society publications, the economic crisis, globalization, among others.

In this post-war period we see conservationist ideas resurface from organizations constituted by different countries, such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature that, in 1948, brought governmental and non-governmental institutions together to preserve nature. According to Sérgio Tavolaro (2001) a new wave of environmentalism emerges from 1950 and 1960, because it would be the first generation suffering from the influence of the consequences of the war, such as industries, acid rain, lack of resources, nuclear power, among others. Besides that, other concerns integrate environmentalism, constituting it as a multifaceted movement that raises question about animals, plants, populations, species, and ecosystems, among others. These concerns originate the first tendencies of ecofeminism that highlight that women connect with nature differently from men and, thus, they are more capable of identifying ecological processes.

In 1962, Marine Biologist Rachel Carson published her book “Silent Spring”, a world warning about the adverse effects of the use of pesticides, which gave impetus to the environmental movement. By telling the story of a beautiful and alive city with wild flowers and wealthy farms, the author shows how the harmony of the city is silenced by the emergency of the first colonizers. Aiming to understand what silenced the cities in the United States, the author raises discussions in her book, bringing up the consequences of pollution and the interference of men. Thus, the author believed that the war had been resized for the nature.

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7 We understand the power according to Foucault, that is, power is not negative of repression placed in a game of super structural power, it is not conservative either; it is inventive. We arrest the principles of transformation and innovation. A power that is not connected to ignorance, because it can work as a training of knowledge (FOUCAULT, 2002).
In 1968 a group of people met to think about environmental, social and economic problems, formed as a government organization, called the Club of Rome. The Club became known in 1972 when they requested a report about the environment, named “The Limits of Growth”. With the publication of this work we notice the concern about the consequences of the economic growth on the use of natural resources, based on the principle of zero growth. According to Oliveira (2012) “although the term sustainable does not exist, yet, concerns about “balance” and “future” are already noticeable, and they will guide the environmental documents advocated by the UN, especially “Our Common Future” (also known as Brundtland Report) and “Agenda 21”.

Thus, linking the concerns about the future and balance presented in the report of the Club of Rome and in the book “Silent Spring”, we can state that in that period there prevailed an approach that condemned the consequences of economic growth and post-war restoration. In the middle of the degradation and oppression shown by the social movements of women, hippies and students, a dispute between economic development and preservation of the environment was produced, supporting the organization of the Conference of the United Nations about the Human Environment in 1972.

In that period a resection for the oil crisis in the world economy and the defense of the environment emerged. Thus, the United Nations began to organize treaties, reports and conferences between the countries in an attempt to prevent wars and their consequences to happen again. That process can be identified as the beginning of modern globalization that articulates the economic, social and political poles.

Therefore, in the end of the 1980s some sort of development practice is formed, which highlights a concern about the participation of some groups. According to Hairam Machado (2013), in the 20th century the development accompanied the expansion of Capitalism. In addition, its meaning has ranged different perspectives such as the notion of progress or accumulation; meanwhile, the author points out that from the decade of 1970 that term acquires a strategy of intervention in specific groups to satisfy basic needs.

Other Contemporary Events or Monuments

As seen before, gender gained forces in environmental politics from 1990, but, what contributed to the expansion? During that period, the conference of the United Nations about the Environment and the Development in the city of Rio de Janeiro/Brazil was developed. It is identified as the Earth Summit, Eco 92 or Rio 92, because it took place in the year 1992 and it gathered more than 100 world leaders to discuss a recent concept: sustainable development. In that conference, different from the first one developed by the UN in 1972, were established the economic, environmental and social poles for the sustainable development of the planet. In addition, it produced the principal document that would subsidize the actions of the governments, movements and general society in the sustainable development, Agenda 21.

Agenda 21 is constituted by forty chapters that include a group of resolutions for the countries with the objective of reaching the sustainable development for the 21st century. According to the document, it is both a map and a script for a sustainable society and the beginning of a new world association. For some authors (Hernandez, 2010) this document...
was essential for the development of specific actions for women and, based on its analysis, we understood that it was important for the inclusion of gender in global politics. Following the words – women, gender and woman – in that first movement of analysis we identify a certain position of the gender in this sustainable politic. Just before the 24th chapter, the “World action for the woman, aiming a sustainable and equal development”, in the objectives and activities of the agenda we find a reference of orientations for the countries about the condition of women as an especially disadvantaged group or as a vulnerable population group; because of that, it is given special attention to women in all actions: management of lands, heath, education, hydrological resource management, training, environmental sanitation and increasing the proportion of women in decision-making positions, among others.

In the 24th chapter we find a reference to gender with the objective of assessing and implementing the promotion of men and women in the curriculums and educational materials, to measure the role of women in formal education. In addition, some considerations about the difference of gender in politics and programs are highlighted in the implementation of the United Nations organs, governments and non-governmental organizations. In the population data it is pointed out that it is necessary to specify sex and age, which are considered for the division of work by gender and for the management of natural resources. To promote the popular participation, information with gender specification is produced. Another aspect where gender is considered refers to the incentive created so all countries promote equality and strengthen international cooperation to compensate economic, social and gender disparities.

Thus, although the actions are directed to women and there is little mention to gender, what is written allows us to think about the still shy integration of that category in environmental politics aiming for sustainable development. In the document it is pointed out that actions need to be taken up to 1995, when the Fourth World Women Conference on Women took place in Beijing, China. This conference marked the 10th anniversary of the Conference of 1985 that had the theme the Decade of Women, in Niteroi. There they systematized and discussed the theory about the concept of gender, different from woman and its transversal integration in politics.

According to the declaration of the platform of Action of Beijing of the Fourth Conference (1995) three innovations were established: the concept of gender, the empowerment and the focus of mainstreaming. According to the text on the platform, the concept “allowed us to go from an analysis of the situation of women based on the biological aspect for a comprehension of the connections between men and women with the product of patterns socially and culturally established and, therefore, liable to modification” (Beijing, 1995, pp. 149). Thus, this conference transversely enabled the articulation of gender in all political segments from a script for the preservation of conquests already reached and for new advances. In addition, we understand that there is a greater articulation of that concept in the platform of action of Beijing, which is the result of discussions that are developed with the feminist movement and Gender Studies.

In 2000, the Millennium Declaration was designed by the United Nations in New York, which aimed for the development of the 21st century. There we found the promotion of equality between genders in order to fight poverty, hunger and illnesses and to promote a sustainable development. Another objective highlighted to think about gender was the con-
tinuity of the cooperation between the United Nations and the States with gender issues. Thus, we note little mention of gender beyond its equivalence to sex. With that, we identified some resistance to the concept that is either shown or silenced in environmental politics, in addition to theoretical confusions about it.

The declaration of Johannesburg created in the World Summit about Sustainable Development, celebrated in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, confirmed the commitment with gender equality in all activities encompassed in Agenda 21, Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, where gender equality was highlighted in all politics and programs. In addition, the declaration pointed out the dedication to the developing states and the less developed countries.

Based on these documents, it is critical to start an overview of the politics for sustainable development, where gender emerges. With that, we note the recurrence of gender equality for a sustainable and equal development and, for that, it is focused on the agency of particular groups in situations of vulnerability such as the case of women in developing countries.

By giving special attention to the vulnerable group or population of women to reach sustainable development, this politic produces a speech calling those subjects and, thus, highlighting the training to equip or discipline those bodies in an attempt to save the planet for future generations. We understand that by establishing politics for the feminine population in situations of vulnerability of the developing countries to reach sustainable development, narratives or metanarratives of the women in global environmental politics are built, such as “women are more affected by environmental degradation”, “They are in a poorer situation”, “They are responsible for a greater part of resources management”, “Women are the ones that suffer the most with climate changes”. We do not intend to deny the materiality of those facts, but what is said in them about women, their connection with the environment and the others.

Works Cited


