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## DECOLONIZATION AND FEMINISM INFLUENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE AGENDA IN BRAZIL

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# DECOLONIZATION AND FEMINISM INFLUENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE AGENDA IN BRAZIL

## *L'INFLUENCE DE LA DÉCOLONISATION ET DU FÉMINISME SUR L'AGENDA ENVIRONNEMENTAL ET DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE AU BRÉSIL*

### ABSTRACT

As humanity has been gradually exposed to the severe effects of climate change, public policies have been urged to cope with these threats and their social impacts. Southern democracies, such as Brazil, seem to be experiencing an intensified integration of the previously neglected feminist agenda, which can lead to affinities and conveniences being anticipated in public policy dynamics. Delving into this hypothetical bias, this article also aims to explore historical and current facts from feminist, decolonial, and critical perspectives, enabling a more harmonious empirical understanding of Brazilian ecofeminism.

**Keywords:** Decolonialism; ecofeminism; Brazilian studies; empowerment.

### RÉSUMÉ

*Alors que l'humanité est progressivement exposée aux effets sévères du changement climatique, les politiques publiques ont été poussées à faire face à ces menaces et à leurs impacts sociaux. Les démocraties du Sud, comme le Brésil, semblent connaître une intégration intensifiée de l'agenda féministe précédemment négligé, ce qui peut conduire à des affinités et des commodités anticipées dans la dynamique des politiques publiques. En explorant ce biais hypothétique, cet article vise également à examiner des faits historiques et actuels sous des perspectives féministes, décoloniales et critiques, permettant ainsi une compréhension empirique plus harmonieuse de l'écoféminisme brésilien."*

**Mots-clés:** Décolonialisme; écoféminisme; études brésiliennes; autonomisation."

## 1. Introduction

Since January 1st, 2023 when a new administration has taken place in Brazil, political and social science researchers have seen some deep changes in the process of conceiving, elaborating and conforming public policies. In certain areas such as environment and climate change, the federal administration has shown a faithful compromise with feminist claims and an enhanced political articulation with the global South, which are, comparatively in many ways, a complete repositioning of public policies undertaken by the previous policy orientation.

The climate change agenda has been led by a well-known female politician and environmental activist, Mrs. Marina Silva, who has endeavored new internal criteria within her ministry to prioritize the conduction of talented women to leading positions. This initiative opposes frontally against a recent situation where most heading functions were by male professionals occupied.

Indeed, a substantive part of these professionals were even brought, during the rule of the extreme rightist predecessor, from the national military staff, predominately formed by men yet.

Along the last few months, as women have been reaching higher positions in the ministerial structure, the environmental and climate change policies have been contradicting hegemonic and mainstream interests, such as when the ministerial delegates to the United Nations on Climate Change Conference stood still to negotiate further financial participation of the more industrialized western economies to support sustainable projects in developing countries.

Bearing these initial evidences in mind, this article aims at observing the intrinsic aspects and subjectivities taken place in a concrete experience in a Latin American country, where progressist trends seem to be remolding public policies in order to netter adequate them towards more independent decolonization intents while increasing the participation of women in strategic managing roles.

Thus, moved by the effort to understand better how women are increasingly involved in climate issues a qualitative research project has been carefully planned, drawing inspiration from a perspective. This method is based on the idea that gaining an understanding of gender dynamics, in decision making requires qualitative analysis along, with challenging the colonial viewpoints and theories shaping the analysis..

The overall methodology embraced incorporates both direct and indirect sources in order to ensure a multifaceted examination of the studied subject. The direct sources include personal interviews administered to self-identified feminist environmentalists who are currently involved in one of the following five actors' networks herein identified as Politicians, Governmental Agents, Civil Society Activists, Scientists, and Entrepreneurs. These women are at the vanguard of advocating for and implementing policies that seek to integrate feminist perspectives into environmental decision-making processes.

As indirect sources, this study encompasses a wide array of materials such as governmental reports, academic literature, and media facts that could contribute toward ontext and background accounts.

Under an analytical framework it is assumed that the examination of public policy focusing on a decolonial perspective best fulfil the outlined objectives. This is due to the fact that decolonial views in Social Sciences are in the center of debates when they turn to the necessary intellectual autonomy, high standard scientific contributions and imminent local suitability of the knowledge been produced outside the European-USA axil (ZERAI, MUPAWOSE & MOONSAMY, 2023).

Once been rooted in historical evidences mostly associated with the evolution of Environmental and Feminist agendas, and the corresponding parallelism, the decolonial prism can unfold the

layers on which these themes might be interconnected with similar social movements off the borders (ZERAI, MUPAWOSE & MOONSAMY, 2023) of Brazil.

Moreover, it was established a critical policy analysis approach is privileged as this viewpoint is well suited for exploring the real dimensions and complexities behind the power dynamics, discourses and practices (BOULLOSA, PERES & BESSA, 2021) that have historically silenced women's voices. The critical approach is herewith seen as a key strategy to question and redefine the influences that shape these mentioned dimensions and complexities.

At last, it is expected that this article will collaborate with the general objectives and directions established by this IPPA workshop organizers, particularly in what concerns the possibilities to observe thru the lens of the critical studies on Public Policies Sciences, some nuances of a phenomenon in which decolonial and feminist perspectives seem to be clearly evidenced.

## **2. Intersections linking Decolonization, Feminism and Environmentalism in Brazil**

The decolonization discussions, particularly in Social Sciences, have been upscaling over the last decades in the Global South. Intellectual ties of the academic and scientific arenas have been criticized for maintaining former colonies of European Empires still dependent to the same group of countries (AHUJA, 2021).

In response, countries such as Brazil have been into process of self reorganization of knowledge produced that are more connected to their local realities, peculiarities and needs. Decolonization has become then, not only a manifest for intellectual independency but much beyond, a rational measure to better address the local challenges presented. Furthermore, it is clearly more beneficial to the scientific progress to count on multiple perspectives and research sources.

Thru the lens of Decolonization, some misinterpretations can be avoided even when its concept is applied literally to infer hierarchic, economic or cultural domination (ZERAI, MUPAWOSE & MOONSAMY, 2023). As a practical example, Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss found out a coincidental humankind endogenous symmetry when he has studied the analog "Santa Claus" mythologies in societies that had no common historical backgrounds or any previous cultural contact before. (LÉVI-STRAUSS, 2016).

Therefore, decolonial processes of investigation and analysis within Social Sciences' have been stimulated as positive outcomes are counted under either scientific legitimacy and overall contributive epistemological approaches. This way, when focusing to indicate eventual ties in the historical episodes that seem to be linking Feminism and Environmentalism either in Brazil as in the rest of the world, one can initially notice coincidences in the periods both movements were born.

To start with, Feminist claims have arisen in many countries around the end of the 19th century. After periods of advances and resilience it was in the middle 1960s when it gained more visibility, especially in Western Europe and in the United States. (MOLYNEUX, 2016)

Nevertheless, as Celi Regina Pinto states in her work entitled "A History of Feminism in Brazil" (2003), some equal rights' revindications were intensively defended by women in Latin America.

Likewise, their counterparts in Europe and in the US, Brazilian women intensified their trenches on voting rights, but also embraced other inequality complaints on labor, marriage and inheritance rights. In Brazil, Pinto mentions how some women who gained relevant protagonism for arguing against common public problems and also prevailed over gender oppression mechanisms. Among those brave women, the author describes the legacy left by Maria Lacerda de Moura, a countryside former elementary school teacher who fought to eliminate analphabetism rates both on behalf of men and women in the early 1900s.

On her historical transcripts, the author also identifies the influence of European universal suffrage claims as she demonstrates how wealthy women who were sent to study abroad by their families, spread their words on gender rights discrepancies when they returned. Pinto reveals the example of Bertha Lutz, whose voice could be widely heard within political and decision-making spheres during her active lifetime.

These two excerpts found on Celi Pinto's remarks evidenced how tough can be the establishment of straight correlations, influences and affections might be. If on one hand it seems particularly clear the autonomous nature of the advocacy performed by Maria Lacerda, on the other, the comparative discomfort that moved Bertha Letz might be oblique to be inferred as either a sufficient proof of a direct multinational and interconnected engagement or barely as an inspirational spark. Then, based on the information provided on Pinto's historical research, it is adequate to be said that some level of influence between the European and the Brazilian Feminist movements could have happened during the first decades of the last century. Further beyond, Pinto's findings uncover how Brazilian women were standing still for equal rights mostly influenced by local specificities and as result of a self-awaking collective attitude.

Later, in the 1960s, while Western societies experienced a more representative wave of women mobilization, Brazil was passing through general civil rights constraints under a military dictatorship. The period in which the Brazilian dictatorship ruled the country, there was an especial concern against foreign influence that would be considered hazardous to internal social order (LAMOUNIER, 1989).

Military dictatorship would then make its best to avoid any internal influence from the civil movements that were on streets of other countries back in those times, what can be relevant to consider the authenticity of the feminist waves that occurred few years ahead (KAPLAN, 2012).

Coincidentally in timeline, the raise of feminism shares much in common with environmental issues. Also, with its roots in the middle 18th century, initial environmental concerns started to reach a larger number of minds. Differently from Feminism, though, environmentalist criticism was more indulgent within Sciences than Activism, though (HARPER & SNOWDEN, 2017)

Indeed, the connections between Feminism and Environmentalism go much beyond and deeper than barely finding coincidences of when these movements emerged. For Feminist Historian Carolyn Merchant on her book "The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution", from 1980, she explores the differences of genders and sinuates affinities of the feminine natural trait that enriches the environmental history. Merchant saw the alleged intrinsic characteristics of women were directly attributed to the 1970's Nature Conservationist booming.

Few years later, in 1983, Lisa Vogel published her book "Marxism and the Oppression of Women", launching another current of thought that paved the ways to reaching wider acknowledge of mutual affinities linking Feminism and Environmentalism. Vogel's inferences conduce gender's discussions underneath critical perspectives of Political Economics. Her Theory of Reproduction ponders that Capitalism was successful to divide the post Industrial Revolution societies into two logical macrostructures: Production and Reproduction. The first is associated with the goods' productive chains, labor, capital and profit dynamics. The second structure encompasses the human activities attained at reproductive and subsistence purposes. While Capitalism privileged the first set of socioeconomic mechanisms, where men play prestigious role, the second group of duties were left for women, having no kind of remuneration or social recognition.

Nature as women had received a likewise disrespectful treatment by mainstream Capitalism. Classic and Neoclassic theorists kept somehow enhancing exploratory approaches for achieving higher economic standards, what caused then, a massive use of available natural resources. Thus, women and Nature were placed in the same unconformable and indifference social spot.

Capitalism chose to prior production instead of reproduction and when so, also reinforced patriarchic, exploratory and oppressive systems. Once that functional architecture is in place, time can turn different depreciated social values into same side reasons to fight for. (SIDANIUS & PRATTO, 2001)

In Brazil these two important movements cooperated along the years, occasionally in close alignment with other critical social clamors as was the redemocratization episode of early 1980's. As results of these forces, the elaboration of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, had the active participation of two nationwide well-known Eco-Feminists Magda Renner and Giselda Castro, whose legends started to flourish in 1960. (TORRES, 2022)

The evolution of the ties established within the trajectories performed by the feminist and the environmentalist movements in Brazil grew and empowered both causes. The country perceived in forging new paradigms of social values that positively impacted the national public opinion, increased the range of rights involved and reverberated in the country's image in the following decades.

As above mentioned, historical convergences noticed in social movements often have more to be uncovered than a superficial staring can infer. A more profound glance at the interlays between Feminism and Environmentalist movements reveal stronger arguments for understanding the ties that gather these two neglected agendas. As for a decolonial prism, the Brazilian paths that ended up converging aspects of mutual beneficiary standing positions were unique, at the same time they were influenced and certainly influenced other movements elsewhere.

### **3. Recent Period of Environmental Denialism and Feminism Setbacks**

After 2016, Brazil has entered into a spiral of political, environmental and human rights backlashes when an extreme-rightist counter wave affected some historical progresses conquered over the last decades (BUARQUE, 2023). More precisely, during the 2019-2022 federal government term, Brazil's public policies on environmental, gender and other minority



related institutional and social frameworks were upfront attacked. Aside the deep consequences felt internally, the sequels reached the long Brazilian attempt to play a relevant role on environmental global debates.

2 Damages due to a series of controversial reforms on ecological policies or intentional lack of actions ruined a certain austerity status until then fairly recognized. One of the most prominent issues was the drastic increase in deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. The National Institute for Space Research (INPE) reported that deforestation rates surged to their highest levels in over a decade, with a 30% increase in 2019 alone (INPE, 2020). This rapid destruction of the Amazon attracted global criticism, particularly from countries and organizations committed to combating climate change. The international community viewed Brazil's lax enforcement of environmental regulations and the dismantling of conservation policies as a direct threat to global biodiversity and climate stability.

The Brazilian government's handling of the Amazon fires in 2019 further exacerbated its tarnished environmental reputation. Satellite images revealed an alarming number of fires, which led to an international outcry.

6 Rather than addressing the crisis promptly, former President Jair Bolsonaro initially downplayed the severity of the situation and accused non-governmental organizations of setting the fires to discredit his administration (ESCOBAR, 2019). This baseless accusation was met with skepticism and outrage from global leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron, who labeled the Amazon fires an "international crisis" and threatened to block the EU-Mercosur trade agreement unless Brazil took concrete action (Watts, 2019). Such diplomatic confrontations highlighted Brazil's increasingly isolated stance on environmental matters.

Brazil's position on international environmental agreements also contributed to its damaged diplomatic image. The Bolsonaro administration openly criticized the Paris Agreement, a crucial global pact aimed at reducing carbon emissions and combating climate change. Although Brazil ultimately remained a signatory, its reluctance to commit to the agreement's goals and its contradictory domestic policies significantly undermined its credibility (BASTOS LIMA, 2021). The reduction in enforcement of environmental regulations and funding for environmental agencies, which exacerbated illegal logging, mining, and land grabbing in the Amazon, further highlighted Brazil's deviation from international environmental norms and commitments.

The international community reacted negatively to Brazil's weakened environmental governance. European countries, in particular, expressed concern over Brazil's environmental policies. Germany and Norway, major contributors to the Amazon Fund, suspended their financial support due to the Brazilian government's failure to curb deforestation (Londoño, 2019). This withdrawal of funding underscored the international community's lack of confidence in Brazil's commitment to protecting the Amazon and combating climate change. It also signaled a broader diplomatic rift between Brazil and its traditional environmental allies.

Additionally, Brazil's new environmental orientation affected its trade relations. Several European Union countries, led by France and Ireland, blocked the EU-Mercosur trade deal, citing Brazil's inadequate environmental policies as a major concern (DARBY, 2019). This blockage argument highlighted the growing link between environmental policies and

international trade and economic agreements. The international community's insistence on environmental standards as prerequisite of trade negotiations placed Brazil in a checkmate position as the EU-Mercosur episode might have marled the outset of a trend to risk losing important economic partnerships based on environmentalist criteria. (APRILE, 2021).

Other international economic repercussions derived from relevant third sector mobilization. Environmentalist Greta Thunberg publicly criticized Brazil's environmental policies, amplifying global awareness and condemnation (PHILLIPS, 2019). This widespread international criticism climbed up to put pressure on multinational investors to reconsider their ventures in the country. Simultaneously, companies with commitments to sustainability faced growing demands from stakeholders to ensure their operations did not endorse environmental degradation in Brazil. (WÜNSCH & MOROSINI, 2021)

The consequences of the international community's response, characterized by criticism, withdrawal of financial support, and threats to trade agreements, underscored the profound impact of Brazil's environmental stance on its global standing. This period highlighted the intricate connections between environmental policies, international diplomacy, and global trade, demonstrating that environmental stewardship is integral to maintaining a positive and cooperative international image.

Domestically, the previous federal term emerged the nation into social chaos by lashing consolidated standard thoughts on sustainability along with race, poverty, LGBTQAI and gender issues. Upon the widely spread "God, Motherland and Family" motto, there was a series of measures put into practice to reestablish conservative values, behaviors and lifestyle. Some of these measures included a historical revisioning to persecute the legitimacy of minorities' revindications, to diminish the importance of scientific scientific postulates on the efficiency of Covid-19 vaccination or to refuse the climate changes phenomena (ALMEIDA, 2023).

Gender issues in Brazil experienced significant setbacks, characterized by regressive and discriminatory approaches that undermined the feminist conquests, mostly by redeeming submissive womens status based on religious dogmas. The 2019-2022 administration adopted rhetoric and reformed human rights policies that marginalized women's rights and disregarded gender equity also using stereotype premises, frailty-feminine association, or even recalling 18th century's stigma of a natural women hysteria. Some of the measures passed almost unnoticed by public oopinion as when substantial cutoffs on women protection services' funding, leading to increased vulnerability and discrimination (CALASANS & SILVA, 2021). During this time period the Brazilian Forum, on Public Security (FBSP) noted an increase in reports of violence against women highlighting a lack of government intervention and support (FBSP, 2020). This setback starkly contrasted with advancements made in addressing gender based violence in Brazil.

Furthermore, the governments position on rights displayed trends. Bolsonaro and his administration strongly opposed abortion rights expansion instead pushing for restrictions on rights. Legislative proposals introduced during this period aimed to limit abortion access in cases where it is currently allowed by law, such as in instances of rape risk to the mothers life and anencephaly (CARNEIRO, 2019). This regressive approach to rights posed a threat, to womens autonomy and well being. In addition to legislative attacks on women's rights, there were

numerous instances of discriminatory rhetoric emanating from high-level officials, including President Bolsonaro himself. Bolsonaro's derogatory comments about women, including making light of rape and dismissing the importance of gender equality, set a troubling tone that permeated through various levels of government (GOMES, 2020). This rhetoric not only normalized misogyny but also emboldened discriminatory attitudes and behaviors in broader society.

Restructured social policies during the 2019-2022 term also disproportionately affected women, particularly those from low-income communities. Cuts to social programs and a lack of targeted economic support exacerbated existing gender inequalities. For instance, the renamed Bolsa Familia Program, besides its funding cuts, gradually started to benefit men, although consolidated statistics have driven that education-linked public policy on behalf of women.

The labor market presented a widening gender pay gap and saw unemployment rates increase, particularly within Afro-Brazilian women. In this segment, higher rates of unemployment and lower wages worsened also when compared to their male counterparts (NERIS, 2021). ravated by the administration's policies.

Furthermore, the disregard for considering the intersection of gender with aspects like race and sexual orientation has resulted in heightened discrimination, against Afro Brazilian women and LGBTQ+ individuals. The government's failure to incorporate perspectives in policymaking has led to the ineffectiveness of programs in tackling the specific hardships experienced by these groups (BARRETO, 2020). This oversight underscores a inability to grasp and tackle the intricacies of discrimination and disparity.

Altogether, evaluations of the 2019-2022 administration brought certain consensus on how Brazil had some of its most relevant public policies obstructed by willful regressions that affected many areas, been environmental and women's rights, those one that seem to be emphasized. The actions and communication of the government not set back progress made before. Also worsened current inequalities and unfair treatment. This period of time is an alert of the need, for support and watchfulness in defending and promoting environmental values, gender equity, social and minority rights against any backward political attempts.

Despite of the deliberated damage on policy standards, particularly on those related to feminism and environmentalism, amongst other preferred targets, it is important to notice how determined Brazilian net of public actors proved resilience. Non-governmental organizations, Academia, eco compromised Businesses, Specialized Politicians and Government Personnel made their best to stand still against the regressive institutional and social media campaigns.

Reactions mobilized important sectors of society as the results of the subversive far-rightist campaigns kept gathering more adepts. Such circumstances paved the way to turn the 2022's general elections the toughest political dispute since redemocratization.

Old rivals and other democratic forces formed a wide alliance to oppose the far-rightist candidates, whose main strategy was based on moral panic, fake news and the ideological set of conservative references, including the submissive role of women and environmental denialism. At the end, as the votes came out of the ballot boxes, and the democratic alliance was

pronounced winner, feminist and environmentalist movements could finally feel relief, particularly when prestigious environmentalist Marina Silva was announced the next Minister of Environment and Climate Change Authority.

### **1. Reestablishing Feminist and Environmental Public Policies**

Since the new administration has started ruling the country in January 2023, there has been a substantial effort to identify the real dimensions of the policy reforms to be undertaken. Today, bearing in mind that time has passed long enough for partial evaluations on how tangible have the expected realignment of policies gone.

This section is then defined to ponder and measure the depth of changes as noticed by the main resistant net of public actors involved with both the feminist and environmentalist movements.

As per saying, the evaluation proposed focus on those segments in the public arena in which feminism and environmentalist players meet, conflict, and prevail. Therefore, this article will count on a qualitative documental research as well as on personal interviews with leading women from Business, Politics, Government, Sciences and Civil Society.

Nevertheless, a series of theatrical arrangements had to be assessed prior to either planning the general study scope, sourcing, instrumentalization and analysis. As previously stated on the historical section of this article, a particular approach was taken in search of critically comprehend decolonial and approximation hypophesis between feminism and environmentalism from their initial references in the 18th century until the recent oppressive period under the 2019-2022's term.

From herein, once this article enhances its analysis on Public Policies effectiveness along with the same decolonial and feminist approaches, some more room has to be found for additional perspectives. Hereby, it is relevant to cite that Public Policy Sciences have made their way to strengthen critical approaches, reaching higher enthusiastic implications over public policies analysis. The concepts and methodological architectures have been developed as complexity, multidisciplinary interconnections and other subjectivities were identified in public problems and dilemmas mainly after 1950s. Since then, social scientists, scholars and intellectuals are producing critical theories and methodological instruments to cope with daily empirical collective phenomena, whose effects might impact collective interests and overall public demands.

Frequently, the reality observed and the objectives of the analysis present specific characteristics, in which one or another approach shall be more adequate. For instance, considering the variables herein presented, there was a concern to gather a set of appropriate methods to cope with the complexities deriving from intersectionality's of feminism, decolonial patterns and socioenvironmental agenda.

These theoretical guidelines were applied to sharpen the accuracy expected for opinion research as the interview scripts contain substracts of what Nancy Naples classified to be a feminist approach (2007, 2013 & 2016a) Inspired by how her method highlights the significance of grasping power dynamics, subjectivity and the socio political backdrop. This method suits well for qualitative research techniques, like interviews and surveys to delve into the complexities of

gender and power within organizations, networks of public actors or in the public arena where the conflicts are developed. public.

Additionally, the open queues presented to the interviewers were also conceived to capture the subjectivities hidden behind the rationality commonly recalled in interventions of the kind. Varying considerably in the time elapsed to answer each of the ten points set of questions, the five reference women converged in content for most of the impressions collected. Although the same questions were identical, four out of ten were posed to look after the viewpoints on their own fields of activities.

1 In line with Naples (2007, 2013, 2016a), this entails structuring a conversational interview style that encourages participants to express their viewpoints and experiences in their words. The objective is to comprehend how gender influences decision making processes and the execution of gender quota policies. Interviews were also designed to encompass a range of participants holding leadership positions that conveniently place them in an austerity status to speak up for their counterparts. Such qualitative orientation for selecting the interviewees meets representativeness criteria, also embracing national geographic coverage since they were either established and raised in different regions of the country. Altogether, the 5 macroregions could be represented, what can function as an attempt to mitigate socio, political and cultural interferences in the outputs.

Yet, in accordance with Naples feminist perspective, the set of questions contains reflexive and positionality aspects to acknowledge the biases and recognize the power dynamics in which the interviewees are inserted. When conducting interviews, with individuals it's important for researchers to consider how their own personal background, gender and role could impact the interview process and the data they gather. This self-awareness helps maintain transparency in the research process and ensures that participants perspectives are accurately reflected. Creating an respectful environment is essential for encouraging participants to share their experiences and viewpoints.

To start with the most coincidental perceptions, they all agreed to state that a clear difference of policy conductions on both feminist and environmental spectra are recognized. In the case of the woman representing the Government, it was possible to notice a further domain how deep and detailed the reforms have been implemented, since herself was direct and daily involved in the process as she holds a high managerial post in the Ministry of Development, Industry and Commerce, coordinating actions toward green production transformation policies. As she asked not to be namely identified for professional discretion, this interviewee described a general government consensus on profound the administrative mechanisms were used to lose regulation to facilitate the exploitation of natural resources in massive scales. During the previous 2019-2022 term, the retrograde moves had an immediate correlation with gender policies as more than six thousand top positions in the Brazilian ministries were occupied by male military personnel.

7 On the other hand, Cristina Leal (2024), the representative of the Business sector defined herself as being intentionally apart from national politics, what she does in a scope of her personal decision to move from the chaotic city of Sao Paulo to a bucolic and peaceful small town by the Atlantic in south Bahia, where she founded an eco-hotel. Been away from national political news did not isolated her from perusing solid opinions on the sinusitis impacting her day-to-day



business routines. Mrs. Leal points out her perception that, although under a leftist closer orientation of the government, she regrets to say that a railway project conceived under Dilma Rouseff's last term and interrupted during the far-right period, is now restarted. In this regard, the businesswoman complains that the execution of the project will negatively resonate on local preserved forests and the lives of sustainable villages. For her, the case reinforces a dilemma in which the coalition initially more identified with feminist and environmentalist ideas, still finds difficulties when balancing these values over traditional development demands.

Similarly, feminist and environmentalist Natalia Lobo (2024), representative of civil society entities, criticized the current administration for being ambiguous, citing the consistent federal compromise to reduce deforestation in the Amazon basin, meanwhile it allows the state-owned company to drill oil off on the North shore, near the Amazon River's mouth.

Natalia Lobo, who has been notably recognized for her advocacy in favor of countryside small properties' female farmers at the *Sempreviva Organização Feminista* – SOF (Always Alive Feminist Organization), expresses her acknowledge on how some progressive ecofeminist claims can hardly be implemented as she sees the conservative forces dynamics in the Brazilian national congress. In her saying, demands for a general agrarian reform, for instance, are far from having any chance of being moved forward.

Beholding the position of National Chairwoman on Environment and Animal Protection Rights of a government allied party, the interviewee speaking up for the Politics related network, sees a "big push" towards the environmental agenda, in which the increase of participation of women is absolutely necessary to counterbalance the last period of policies backwardness. With her name also saved from exposition, the experienced Politician emphasizes that measures in course to establish quotas for hiring women in executive functions shall also observe merit criteria. In this direction, she adds up that the country counts on expressive number of high qualified women, who are ready to permeate the careful feminine touch throughout the demanding conflictions environmental arenas.

In accordance with the impressions mentioned above, Thais Santos recalls the educational statistics revealing Brazilian women reach higher formal academic levels, and also are proportionally more present in the public sector, whose access require proof of technical knowledge in very competitive selective processes. Raised in the southern state of Parana and currently working at the Federal University of South Bahia as Associate Professor and Fulltime Researcher on Environmental and Feminist issues, with particular emphasis on Original Peoples and gender, Professor Thais Santos manifests her main concerns on how capitalist propels have been advancing against vulnerable social groups. On that, Santos refers to the constitutional amendment project (PEC 03/2022), nowadays under debates at the National Congress that, if approved, will extinguish the Federal Union ownership of terrains on the seacoast and along interstate rivers, where natural reserves and traditional communities are settled.

When argued about possible reasons why women became attracted to environmental causes, the interviews confirmed the affinities suggested by the feminist historians mentioned previously and also inferred by Naples (2016b). In essence, they identified the proximity to environmental as women are frequently in charge of the family maintenance, feeding, housing, education of

their children, amongst other activities that are closer to being in contact with nature and sustaining concepts.

In this regard, Natalia Lobo, from the Civil Society, explains that this female sensitive approach does not come accidentally. Instead, The group of stereotypes and behavior associated with women is actually derived from mechanisms of the social division of labor, whose basis matches Vogel's ideas. (2013)

Professor Santos added her views in which the Brazilian State is historically patriarchic. As a result, there is a prevalence of aggressiveness, violence and warlike interpretations and interactions. Women, instead, are acquainted with opposite behavior, unfolding then, more preservative and holistic stands.

They all shared converging evaluations on how the increase of women participation in sustainable subjects and in public policies. Altogether, there is a sense of general awareness against gender discrimination. Women seem to be finally noticing themselves trapped in a patriarchic system, undermining their self-esteem and their lives perspectives, in inspite of the oppression they are submitted, modern society extended the female duties beyond former "housekeeping" attributions. Today, women have to study, work, be financially and motherly successful and yet accumulate the same behaviors and social functions from the past.

Professionally, women have to exacerbate almost to their limits "to prove they are worthy and do not correspond to the persistent stereotypes" they are daily exposed to. As mentioned by the Academic representative, women are statically more qualified and they are already present in places recently only occupied by men.

Meanwhile, women still face unfair access to higher hierarchic positions or wages. Because the environment positions and opportunities are not financially attractive, this fact was referred to explain the relative success of professional female environmentalists and ecofeminists within the nation. If in one hand it relies on certain optimism for women participation in the environmental agenda, in the other hand this trend might be threatened as Capitalist interests have been significantly enhancing attention towards ecological matters. As cited by Professor Santos, the evidences of the growing capital attention to environmentalism appears in the establishment of carbon markets, R&D in sustainable technologies and when considering the profit expectations from massive investments demanded for adopting greenhouse mitigation policies or to cope with post catastrophes reconstruction.

As they spoke about the participating of women in their own acting fields, common impressions of expansion wdfd reported. In Politics, the interviewee expressed her concerns on the continuity of the legacy built by political icons such as the current Minister of Environment, Marina Silva. Indeed, it is one of her objectives as Chairwomen on Environment and Animal Protection Rights of one of the major parties in Brazil, to identify and empower future environmentalist leaders.

By using Naples' feminist method (2007), this research turns to look for patterns in the data that reveal how gender shapes decision-making and leadership within the spectrum of this Brazilian environmental public policies. This involves not just counting responses but interpreting the underlying meanings and implications of the participants' answers. For instance, if many

respondents report feeling that the gender affirmative policy has improved gender equity, it leads to the investigation of the specific ways this improvement manifests and any remaining challenges or resistances.

For eco businesswoman Cristina Leal, there is a long term balance between men and women trend to happen in eco business, already noticed even in the small town where she owes her venture. In her words "*I have seen women playing more protagonist roles even when men are in higher formal hierarchic situations*". In many cases, she also notices more women starting and managing their local business. As the most positive outcome she observes from this scenario is that the decision-making processes reflect more multiple views, and thus, are more inclusive and effective.

In line with those forward female inclusion bias in all sort of functions and decision-making processes, Professor Santos, grounded on her field studies in local Original Peoples, appraises that women has increased their engagement even in duties ancestrally occupied by men as principal chiefs and shamans.

The representative of the Government personnel take the opportunity to emphasize the relevance of affirmative policies in favor of women such as the quota for management public functions been undertaken, what will minimally correct the discriminatory discrepancy put into practice along the decades and reinforced by the 2019-2022 administration. In her viewpoint, the decision-making debates still reflect the common-sense concept, according to which professionalism antagonizes specific regular women's routines such as having to leave the office on lunch time to pick up her kid, as the reproductive deriving tasks should never bother any productive agenda, even when it exceeds itself in demands placed in the very last minute prior to a lunchtime break. Much beyond a flexibility imposed for women in general, the same do not usually happen when male chiefs need to stick to timing restrictions because of a variety of private excuses,

Once again, the nuances shown on the example given, seem to match the conclusions reached by Vogel (2013) and Silvia Federici (2018) about the social stigmas evolved from the disconnection between humanity reproduction and production, unfolding oppressive mechanisms aimed at maintaining the gender power's *status quo*.

At risk of affecting the assessment of the increase of women participation in the labor markets related to the environments, Natalia Lobo pointed out at a phenomenon she describes as "purple makeup", according to which organizations announce affirmative management policies more as an institutional marketing campaign than as a real recognition internal guideline. It is particularly more appealing in transnational corporations with ruined reputation, such as the mining companies responsible for environmental disasters happened in the last few years.

Apart from these "purple makeup" practices to fraud the real goals behind affirmative policies on behalf of women, interviewees indicated a list of gender influences in the decision-making processes that vary from an improved sense of care, passing through an adequate feeling of preservation, until a legitimate, multifaceted, dialogical, and more constructive deliberation. Besides, chances of achieving higher standards of environmental justice, taking into consideration a variety of layers that a decision-making process involves. **It is important to**



highlight that the participation of women not necessarily has to reveal a tradeoff relation, as their presence is simply expected as a natural inclusion in all structures and environments.

Based on the personal interviews and the information collected and analyzed, there are consistent changes on either the feminist and the environmentalist agendas after January, 2023 such as the reduction of deforestation in the Amazon forest, the implementation of affirmative policy in leading positions of the federal administration, the increase of participation of women within the Brazilian delegations to negotiate international agreements, resumption of environmental law enforcement, creation of a Ministry for Original Peoples, resume of dialogs with environmentalist and feminist public actors, establishment of sustainable economy programs, amongst other measures. These optimistic advances do look even more enthusiastic if the conservative and far-rightist National Congress is considered.

The hearings yet demonstrated relevant concerns about the remaining development dilemma, in which environmental issues can still be ignored when some twisted economic interests are in place. Critics were also heard from the dichotomy shown when hazardous ventures have been reset, whereas traditional communities and Original Peoples keep their revindications for landing demarcation.

The Brazilian Environmental arena where public, private and third sectors interact, seem to be finally absorbed into a defeating mood to eradicate gender inequities and discrimination. This phenomenon itself shall be also considered one of the most substantial paradigm break through as the previous ideological values spread about historical women revindications were systematically banalized and pejorative stereotypes reinforced (NASCIMENTO, 2023).

Furthermore, the five feminist and environmentalist persons interviewed blamed the 2019-2022 term for having ruined Brazil's international reputation of a committed democracy with both environmental and feminist agendas. In their words, many were the ways that environmental and feminist issues were severely damaged due to a series of controversial policies, contradictory attitudes, and absolute negligence took place. Thus, present initiatives tending to merge these both impaired policies can be seen as a necessary and immediate rebalancing bound for justice, dignity and rationality.

Concretely, when the last national elections in Brazil revealed the majority's desire to reestablish the policy trajectories in opposition to conservative and radical rightist administration, it brought up many adjustments to either internal and international policy strategies. The ongoing policy realignments include the environmental and the gender agendas, and they also have been used as a pragmatic opportunity to perform multifactorial and integrated public-solving attempts. The democratic coalition that won 2022's elections in Brazil is still dealing with environmental denialism and with the sequels of the backward foreign policies of the recent past nationwide but as results start to be noticed, some practical convergences along policies' execution might be particularly effective.

In the case of the Brazilian environmental internal and foreign policies, the raise of leading positions been occupied by women might simply indicate a natural consolidation of these two political trenches.

The involvement of women, in leadership roles in governance has introduced viewpoints and priorities. Public policies that consider gender differences in matters have been crafted to cater to women's needs and contributions. These policies encourage women's engagement in decision making processes facilitate their access to resources and technologies and ensure that environmental efforts are fair and inclusive (UN Women, 2020). As a matter of fact, women play roles as knowledge holders of practices and their active participation, in scientific discussions enhances the comprehension of ecological systems and sustainable resource management (CUNHA, 2009).

As per what could be observed from the interviews about decolonial aspects, answers agreed with the historical remarks connecting feminist and environmental movements in Brazil with similar social trends overseas, whereas regional perspectives shaped the Brazilian trajectory in a very unique manner. In common with other global Southern countries, in Brazil, ecofeminism and overall women influence on socioenvironmental matters concentrated on food sovereignty, original peoples' advocacy, and socioenvironmental justice, differing from Northern analogous drives. Instead, ecofeminism in the Euro-US axis is particularly inclined towards internal preservation keeping measures. The split is also noticeable on how these groups deal with climate change issues. While Global-South shows a sense of climate change urgency, the North maintains a long-term implementation rhythm (SANTOS, 2024).

Delimitating these differences can help to achieve a random comprehension of the decolonial aspects involving the analysis of the parallelism between the Brazilian and the corresponding ecofeminist development outside its borders. The set of queues along with the technical references collected successfully disclosed the originalities brought when the feminist movements caught very specific local environmental challenges to work with. Actually, comparisons could rather be thought if the analysis is done in relation to other Global Southern societies, creating a scientific paperwork's profusion.

Relevant for a proper decolonial analysis is taking into consideration the intersections of this perspective with modernity and argues for a more inclusive understanding that goes beyond Euro-American centrism. Recognizing the Global South as a source of theories and explanations, for events is crucial rather than just viewing it as a data supplier. The authors argue that modernity isn't exclusive, to the West. An intricate phenomenon influenced by historical, social and cultural elements. Contemporary world historical processes are shifting the geographies of core-and-periphery, with the driving impulse of current stage of capitalism coming from the Global South (COMAROFF & COMAROFF, 2013).

The evolution of the Feminist agenda in its affection to sustainability do not reveal an important characteristic of a border thinking. The evidences miss a subaltern or a depending architecture, consisting of a domination interaction (MIGNOLO, 2000).

Attained to the belief that coloniality is intertwined with the rise of modernity and must be understood as a global phenomenon (MIGNOLO, 2000), sooner or later the world ecofeminism might so be assessed.

In addition, Southern ecofeminists from the third sector have been active enough to, perhaps, reach improved degrees of self-determination of the movements. Within the prestigious names

Global-South names reminded are: Tithi Battacharya, Vendana Shivam, Mary Mellor, Giselda Castro, Magda Renner, Alicea Puloa, Sonia Guajajara, Catia Xakriaba, and Txai Surui, among others. T

The spotlight on these Global-South environmentalist women confronts any possibility of interpreting a "subaltern knowledge" in relation to the "dominant centers". So far this study has been far from assuming a marginalized neither silenced forms of knowledge produced by subordinated groups in Brazil, and in its Southern counterparts. Actually, the outcomes contend that these knowledges these women symbolize, provide alternative perspectives that challenge dominant Western narratives (MIGNOLO, 2000).

Finally, as this section could assertively attest, the converging agendas of feminist and environmentalist commitments can optimize the outcomes involved in the public policies but also consist of a natural process of recognition, recently over attacked. Although the horizon presents lots of challenges, compromised stakeholders, scientists, businesspersons, civil society organizations, politicians, and government agents have enormous power to reestablish a recovery trajectory leading to better gender equity and sustainable standards of living.

#### 4. Conclusion

With the increasing awareness of the consequences of climate change and other socioenvironmental disorders, on society there is a growing call for policies to address these challenges and their societal impacts.

Countries like Brazil are showing a focus on integrating issues that were previously overlooked potentially leading to anticipated alignments and benefits in public policy development. This article delves into the implications of this shift examining historical and present day's realities through decolonial and critical lenses to foster a more holistic understanding of ecofeminism, in Brazil.

As per critically analyzing the agendas' convergences with the legacies of a probable (de)colonial intersection with analogous social biases elsewhere, the outcomes were more consistent with a cooperative than a subaltern interreference, with benefits to the international improvement of both feminist and environmentalist causes..

Internally, as it could be demonstrated in this article, historical advents linking sustainable and feminist intents in Brazil performed long lasting affinities that were put to proof in recent period of time, when a series of deliberated methods to undermine the conuers obtained until then. Despite of the reasons why of these attacks, ecofeminism and the overall women resemblance with environmental subjects resisted and are reassuming relevant evidence in public policies, since January 2023.

Signs of the realignment in Brazilian environment and women's synergies started with the designation of a worldly-known prestigious female Politician who stands out as an advocate for sustainability and preservation of the Amazon rainforest, meanwhile privileging dialogical and participative policies (SILVA, 2010).

The findings corroborate with positive pointviews about a tendency to integrate gender into policies and in all kinds of decision-making processes. Global agreements like the Beijing Platform for Action and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have progressively included gender perspectives, recognizing the impacts of equity between women and men (UN Women, 2015). The active engagement of women and the incorporation of feminist perspectives have profoundly influenced the evolution of the environmental agenda.

Finally, this study conveyed that there is still a long horizon full of obstacles to strive through. Besides, a continued advocacy for gender equity in all aspects of environmental commitments, recognizing that the fight for a sustainable planet is inherently linked to the fight for gender justice.

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