

# Ecofeminism, rights of nature and climate justice: relational webs and planetary restoration

*Ecofeminismo, derechos de la naturaleza y justicia climática: redes relacionales y restauración planetaria*

*Ecofeminismo, direitos da natureza e justiça climática: teias relacionais e restauração planetária*

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### ABSTRACT

The present work is characterized as a hypothetical-deductive theoretical essay with a bibliographic review, having as a theoretical-conceptual base the contribution of ecofeminism, environmental justice and nature's right to the realization of climate justice. The work points out correlations between ecological crisis and gender inequalities through different dimensions of ecofeminism: distribution, representation, recognition, capabilities and participation. Climate change affects everybody and everywhere in a cross-border way, but with a lot of differences according to birth place, race, gender, age, sexuality, physical and mental health, socioeconomic conditions, among others intersectionalities. Ecofeminism theory and practices rearticulate the feminists identities promoting an equalization of environmental and climate justice. The feminist perspective adopted in this work permitted sociopolitical categories discussions such as ecology, rights of nature, environmental and climate justice as a gender issue.

**Key-Words:** ecological crisis, ecofeminism, nature's rights, climate justice.

### RESUMEN

El presente trabajo se caracteriza por ser un ensayo teórico hipotético-deductivo con revisión bibliográfica, teniendo como base teórico-conceptual el aporte del ecofeminismo, la justicia ambiental y el derecho de la naturaleza para la realización de la justicia climática. El trabajo señala correlaciones entre crisis ecológica y desigualdades de género a través de diferentes dimensiones del ecofeminismo: distribución, representación, reconocimiento, capacidades y participación. El cambio climático afecta a todos y en todas partes a través de las fronteras, pero con muchas diferencias según el lugar de nacimiento, la raza, el

género, la edad, la sexualidad, la salud física y mental, las condiciones socioeconómicas, entre otras interseccionalidades. La teoría y las prácticas del ecofeminismo rearticulan las identidades feministas al promover una equiparación de la justicia ambiental y climática. La perspectiva feminista adoptada en este trabajo permitió discutir categorías sociopolíticas como ecología, derechos de la naturaleza, justicia ambiental y climática como cuestión de género.

**Palabras llave:** crisis ecológica, ecofeminismo, derechos de la naturaleza, justicia climática.

### RESUMO

O presente trabalho caracteriza-se como um ensaio teórico hipotético-dedutivo com revisão bibliográfica, tendo como base teórico-conceitual a contribuição do ecofeminismo, da justiça ambiental e do direito da natureza para a efetivação da justiça climática. O trabalho aponta correlações entre crise ecológica e desigualdades de gênero por meio de diferentes dimensões do ecofeminismo: distribuição, representação, reconhecimento, capacidades e participação. As alterações climáticas afetam a todos e em todos os lugares de forma transfronteiriça, mas com muitas diferenças consoantes o local de nascimento, raça, gênero, idade, sexualidade, saúde física e mental, condições socioeconômicas, entre outras interseccionalidades. A teoria e as práticas do ecofeminismo rearticulam as identidades feministas promovendo uma equalização da justiça ambiental e climática. A perspectiva feminista adotada neste trabalho permitiu discussões de categorias sociopolíticas como ecologia, direitos da natureza, justiça ambiental e climática como questão de gênero.

**Palavras-chave:** crise ecológica, ecofeminismo, direitos da natureza, justiça climática.



## Introduction

The present work comes from researches done in the Research Group of Ecophenomenology, Sustainable Science and Law, registered in the CNPQ/Brazil research directory and, specifically in the following lines: a) Critical Environmental Education and Nature's Right and b) Ecopolitics, Emergents Rights and Fair ecological transitions. It deals with the correlations between ecofeminism, nature's rights and climate justice as part of environmental justice.

It's characterized as a hypothetical-deductive theoretical essay with a bibliographic review, having as a theoretical-conceptual base the contribution of ecofeminism, environmental justice and nature's right to the realization of climate justice. The work points out correlations between ecological crisis and gender inequalities through different dimensions of ecofeminism: distribution, representation, recognition, capabilities and participation.

The injustices, the relations of power and patriarchal domination which influence women, dialogue with the processes that affect the non-human beings compounding ecosystems and biomes. The dominance of the androcentric mentality contributes to the global system of climate injustice revealed by the innumerable geopolitical inequalities.

The connections between gender and climate change could demonstrate many aspects, including: invisibility, vulnerability and the sacred. Not to be considered in the construction of the public policies; participation in the decision-making that affects, directly or indirectly, their health, work, food, and other social and nature rights; as well as not having their specificities as women contemplated in the democratic scenery as well as in citizenship, disturb the achievement of gender equality.

Ecological and climate changes and emergencies accentuate the historical vulnerabilities related with gender, race and social class. In this sense, the contribution of intersectionality on the various local realities points out impacts over women in the historical processes of colonialism, imperialism and development models.

The way of perceiving the planetary house under the bias of care and attention, usually attributed to the feminine is also a reductionist comprehension about the complexity of the relationships. The flows of nature's restoration goes through the knowledges and feminine practices. Therefore, such aspects appear in the demands for climate justice in many parts of the planet through activisms, such as protests and litigation.

Regarding the theoretical-conceptual context in which the research was developed, the main references on the relationships between gender and climate stand out in studies by Majandra R. Acha (2020), Greta Gaard (2015, 2017), Naomi Klein (2021), Mary Robinson (2021) and Vandana

Shiva (1989). Regarding the topic of environmental justice, the works of Robert Bullard (1993) and Joan Martinez-Alier et al (2014, 2016) were brought up. And, on the Rights of Nature, the works of Cormac Cullinan (2019) and Eduardo Gudynas (2020).

## **Ecofeminism and environmental justice**

Ecofeminism is a spiritual, socio-cultural and political perspective to understand the consequences of the patriarchal and economic system operating in the world. It belongs to a moment in which the feminist discussions enclosing theoretical studies, political movements and practices took place, especially since the 1960s. Women in many parts have been defending their territories against pollution, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, nuclear energy, climate changes etc linking the exploitation of women and nature as something associated.

Women present more vulnerabilities because of the climate change and environmental disasters which profoundly affects their physical and mental health, including motherhood. Nevertheless, these inequalities are not something innate, it is caused by gendered position and patriarchy. There are differences between women of the north and south globe. In the north, most of the debates revolve around productivism and overconsumption. The way of life and the well being states taking resources, lands and rights from others to enable this process. In the south, basic human rights such as food security, productive agricultural land, clean water, sanitation, livelihood, urban and rural structures are a priority.

Climate change deepens discrimination and poverty, pressuring the ones who are historically marginalized. As Gaard (2017:3) says: "around the world, women are on the frontlines of climate justice crises as well as climate justice solutions". Then, beyond the women's position as a victim, in many parts of the world, we can observe their protagonism in the leadership to promote mobilizations, resistances and build alternatives in the society throughout creative transitions.

So what is a feminist place in a social and ecological context? There are lots of stories of environmental problems that directly or indirectly affect women and their communities. Historically, women have been a marginalized participant in policy, government and economic systems. In this sense, Gaard (2017:11) asks what defines a feminist issue? And, responds: "when women and those they care about are disproportionately affected, or are the majority of those affected - whether through breast cancer, toxic exposures during pregnancy and lactation, toxic and gendered workplaces, or the siting of polluting industries - these matters become feminist issues."

In a spiritual perspective, it is a principle of connection among all things and beings. It relates to perceptions that go beyond the merely rational, highlighting the sacred aspect of life, in a holistic view of the dimensions that embrace life. It is correlated with the worldview of Earth as a

Mother; or in the Andean view, the Pachamama; and, in the indian rural cosmology, the Prakriti, as a feminine principle of everything that manifest itself through creativity, action, productivity, diversity, connectivity, interrelationship with all beings, continuity between humans and non humans and the sacredness of life in nature (Shiva, 1989:40).

In the feminine principle, nature and women are identified as producers of life. This relationship shows us that it is relevant to be aware of the reciprocal process of the human body in nature, to substitute the perspective of exploration and appropriation of nature to a co-operation among all beings and by doing so renew the social production and the creation of social relations. The productivity view with the panorama of survival is different from the productivity outlook of capital accumulation (Shiva, 1989:42-3). The inheritance of modern western man society and industrial culture demonstrate a similar process of domination and subjugation of nature and women. The destruction of the progress systems since modernity allies the same methods of domination as the history constructed by western masculinity.

In a socio-cultural and political perspective stands out the intersections between Ecofeminism and environmental justice. Both movements converge since the end of the 1990s, when, as said Gaard (2017:13), "women eco-activists recognized that a wider movement for environmental justice needs aliances between ecofeminists and environmental justice activists, making explicit the feminism within environmental justice and the intersectionality articulated within ecofeminism". Intersectionality points out how the interconnection of various systems of oppression are important for a more integral vision of reality. In this reading, there is the intersection of multiple oppressions, involving gender, race and social class. Recent approaches to environmental and climate justice also point to convergences and simultaneities between ecology and feminism.

Gaard (2017) recognizes climate justice and ecofeminism intersectionalities naming and identifying them in the field of gender, race, class, sexuality, age, ability, species and environment. On the main questions extracted from various world realities, women and children are more vulnerable to die during or immediately after an ecological disaster than men. The very elderly and the very young are more at risk in climate crises and in areas affected by an environmental catastrophe, and the majority of elderly populations in the world are women (Gaard, 2017). There is more fragility among people in hospitals, nursing homes and with some disabilities in the case of an environmental disaster. And about environmental speciesism, animals suffer, plants and ecosystems are affected by the contamination of the air, land and water and also in the events caused by extreme environmental changes.

All these intersectionalities reveal interconnections between the movements of ecofeminism and environmental justice. As it highlights Gaard (2017:10), both come from earlier 19th century

movements, "the anti-nuclear movement of the 1970s, the women's spirituality movement, the animal rights movement, the women's anti-toxics and environmental health movements and ecofeminism's first manifestations also occurred in the 1980s".

Since the origin of the movements they have an articulated perspective and have been studied as concepts of political ecology. So, what is environmental justice? Nowadays there are many environmental justice organizations around the world manifesting in different ways against environmental injustice and environmental racism. Since the 1980s the movements have been producing a "political ecology from the bottom up" by civil society organizations and academics.

Environmental justice, in sociological terms, was born in the United States, in the context of the struggles against waste dumping in North Carolina in 1982. Rev. Benjamin Chavis, activist-authors such as Robert Bullard and other civil rights activists realized a disproportionate incidence of pollution in black, hispanic or indigenous communities (Bullard, 1993). Socio-economics inequalities in these communities worsen the access to natural resources and the consequences of pollution. Most of the polluted industries were authorized to work in these areas with the permission of the government.

The disproportion of bad consequences received by these communities according to gender, race and class have been resulting in the fights for environmental justice and against environmental racism. According to Martinez-Alier (2014:21), "environmental racism means the bad treatment inflicted on people in the form of pollution or resource extraction on the grounds of membership in particular ethnic groups, social class or caste."

Environmental justice is related to an intra and intergenerational distribution of fair environmental access. The exclusions deepen the exposure to environmental and health risks, pollution and industrial presence in poor communities, breaking infrastructure, public economic disinvestment, vulnerable livelihoods, low level of school quality, constant unemployment and other absence and/or low quality of municipal services such as sewage, garbage pickup and disposal. According to Bullard (1993:17) "racism plays a key factor in environmental planning and decision making. Indeed, environmental racism is reinforced by governmental, legal, economic, political and military institutions". In this sense, the participatory exclusions in public decision-making contributed to the injustices.

Nowadays, the presence of an environmental justice and ecofeminist global movement in rural and urban localities can be found in many countries. Both terms arised from socio-environmental activism but also came from academic political ecologists who have been studying ecological distribution conflicts, including the ones on resource extraction, transport and waste disposal etc.

Because of the dialogues between eco-social movements and academics, several names have emerged in order to identify environmental justice, such as: environmental racism, popular epidemiology, the environmentalism of the poor and the indigenous, biopiracy, tree plantations are not forests, the ecological debt, climate justice, food sovereignty, land grabbing and water justice, among others. In the new Atlas of Environmental Justice (available at <http://www.ejatlas.org>) it is possible to see other inventories (more than 1.600 cases) "and it is also a good source not yet explored to discover the vocabulary of environmental justice organizations (EJOs), their actions and their networks" (Martinez-Alier, 2016:3).

## **Rights of Nature**

The Environmental Law, built in an anthropocentric worldview, doesn't hold the complexity that the planet faces. Trying to regulate the levels of the destruction of nature by committed countries according to international agreements has not been enough to stop the accelerated process of global warming, loss of biodiversity and socio-ecological inequalities. Ancestral traditions and ecological ethics around the world have been inspiring the construction of the rights of nature, a law based on a eco-centric way of relating with all the beings on Earth and on the respect and careness among each other, including the organic cycles of restoration.

The relations between gender and environmental justice point to a wide scenery of law construction. Legal systems around the world have been recognizing Nature Rights and Earth Jurisprudence since 2008 (Humphreys, 2017). The sources came from ancient wisdom traditions, indigenous cosmologies, environmental and social justice activism in rural and urban areas. Their voices represent contemporary issues in the ecological approaches.

The legal recognition of all aspects of nature reveals an inherent right based on an ecocentric worldview in which all human beings and other beings belong to an Earth community. According to Cullinan (2019:245), "an ecocentric perspective 'development' is understood as the process whereby an individual develops greater depth, complexity, empathy, and wisdom through interrelationship or 'inter-being' with the community of life."

Ecuador was the first country to recognize Nature's Rights in its Constitution in september 2008. Another Andean country that endorsed a Constitution with this view was Bolivia, in 2009, which stipulates that Bolivians should 'protect and defend an adequate environment for the development of living beings' (article 108.156) and a law about the rights of Mother Earth on april 22, 2010 (Humphreys, 2017).

This law identifies seven rights of Mother Earth: the rights to life; to the diversity of life; to water; to clean air; to equilibrium; to restoration; and to pollution-free living (article 7). In these

countries of Latin America nature's rights reflect the world view of Pachamama or Mother Earth that embraces a notion of a community of all species and ecosystems based on the principle of *sumak kawsay* (a Quechua expression translated as 'living well,' 'good life,' or 'good way of living') (Humphreys, 2017).

In the last decade, new laws and judicial decisions recognized nature, ecosystems and rivers as right holders. New Zealand legislation recognized the Whanganui River and the Te Urewera area as legal entities with rights; Courts in India have recognized the Ganga and Yamuna Rivers as entities with rights, similar to that, had the Colombian Court done to the Atrato River (Cullinan, 2019:245).

Earth jurisprudence (known as Earth or wild law) is a philosophy of law and political project that recognizes that nature has rights, redirects human relationship and use of the natural world, stimulating a coexistence based on the care and respect of all ways of living. In this sense, "a river has the right to flow, species have the right to continue to exist in the wild, and ecosystems have the right to adapt and evolve over time" (Humphreys, 2017:3).

So, What are the barriers to implementing Rights of Nature in a perspective of Earth jurisprudence? There are lots of factors that hinder a large operationalization. Specifically in Ecuador and Bolivia the conflicts about property rights and the extractivist models of economic development were not faced. Confronting the contradictions of modernity and economic systems demands a turning point from anthropocentrism to an ecocentric worldview that compounds the intrinsic values of nature and humankind.

To overcome the mercantilization of nature as an object to a nature-subject is a first step towards this ethical transformation. For the Andean countries to comprehend that Pachamama or Mother Earth isn't just a metaphor. The feminine principle identified in many traditional cultures reveals to us a path of interrelationship, connections and a careful web of life. Where the defense of territories is linked to the maintenance of diversity and against the plunder of nature and its socio-cultural relations.

The feminine principle reveals different models of nature rights and good living. Especially in developing countries, the fight for traditional territories and decolonization comes up with the struggles for gender equity and egalitarian use of nature, uncovering connections between women and nature rights.

Human power relations over nature are historically pronounced by male participation in utilitarian and oppressive processes of exploitation, economic growth, consumerism, commodification of nature, reinforced in capitalism through the ideas of development and progress. These patterns of modernity are in crisis and lots of alternatives have been emerging around the world. The radical critique of development includes: ecofeminism; the recognition and

implementation of nature rights; environmental and climate justice; decolonizing power and knowledge; post-development and degrowth discussions.

Nature Rights express a fundamental change in terms of ontological issues, rationality, emotional and spiritual connections between humans and non-humans, relating society and nature. They stimulate an outstanding pedagogy of transformation from personal to social dimension. Nevertheless civil society and governments need to act together in the direction of a common action to protect the Earth. The pathway of nature rights uncovers new learning spaces, actions and struggling fields of movements. Potent remaking walk side by side with equality promoting diversities, decoloniality and depatriarchalization.

Nature rights into an ecofeminism reading walks in the direction of the depatriarchalization, proposing feminist changes toward the care and defense of nature and communities, based on intercultural values of respect, reciprocity, coexistence, complementarity and others models to promote a fair transition to a post-extractivist and capitalistic world. Facing patriarchy is essential to refound ecological politics in all levels of society and governance.

So, why does the deity of Pachamama has been evoked by feminist and indigenous activists as a symbol of a mother? According to Tola, this maternal figure was constructed to resemble the feminine within christianism, in the European's exploration project of the new world. "Although the precolonial Pachamama was usually translated as Earth-Mother or World-Mother and connected to fertility, it was not primarily defined through the qualities of purity and moral virtue that characterized the Virgin Mary" (Tola, 2018:27).

In the ancient Andean world, Pachamama was feminine, however, some parts of the landscape were described as masculine, such as stones and mountains. Furthermore, the positive aspects of generating and nurturing life, co-existing, apparently, with the opposite view of arid soils, illnesses and death (Tola, 2018:27). For the ancients the dualistic logic does not exist between the relations of society and nature, that's why there is a complementary ontology between life and death. The binary rationality makes sense to the western thought throughout the European project of modernity.

To surpass the reductionist understanding of Pachamama as an entity with reproductive and nourishing capacity related to the female gender is required to stand up against patriarchal power. Facing the conflicts of the social systems and its contradictions reflected in the capitalism and colonial appropriation of nature is essential to construct alternative societies guided by nature rights according to the local ecosystems.

Therefore, regardless where the nature rights have been recognised, the legal system should treat nature as a being with an intrinsic value and not as an environmental resource susceptible of being an appropriated, extracted, transformed and discarded thing to serve the economic

development and progress. The advance of gender equity in a process of depatriarchalization stimulates the diversity of legal treatment in the multiple relations performed by humans and non humans in their livelihoods.

## **Climate justice and ecofeminism**

Climate is a topic that has been in the international political agenda since the seventies, conducted by the United Nations, lots of agreements and Climate Law have been constructed to regulate the climate safety on the planet. This is a transnational challenge because it has direct implications in the hegemonic economic system. Climate change deepens systematics inequities and intensifies injustices in an intersectional perspective of class, gender and race.

Climate science, specifically, through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), that since 1988 has been working to articulate interdisciplinary research around the world informs governments, corporations and society about the risks of the increase of the global temperature. Debates about climate change aren't only technical and scientific but also an ethical issue. Therefore, the topic of climate justice is fundamental to face the unevenly and disproportionately consequences of climate change for people as to direct equitable ways of living.

It's important to apply a climate justice approach in policies and law. In this sense, treating in an appropriate way those who are suffering more from the effects of climate change and creating adaptation and mitigation strategies is a matter of justice. According to Sultana (2022: 188-9), "a climate justice approach focuses on who benefits, who loses out, in what ways, where, and why. It is an explanatory tool that helps better explain the relationships at different scales that co-create and maintain injustices."

Climate justice highlights structural inequalities inherent to the capitalistic system including the process of neocolonialism and globalization, especially for the impoverished communities reflecting new ways of violence, including climate denialism and the lack of information about the climate phenomenon.

There are many agents involved in the theory and action of climate justice, including academics, activists from social and environmental movements, non-governmental organizations, grassroots initiatives and alliances from local to global. Due to the interdisciplinary and intersectionality of the issue, climate justice galvanizes different movements around the world.

Climate justice in a feminist perspective presents the complexity of the interconnection between women oppression and socio-ecological crisis in the patriarchy system. That's why it is necessary to give voice to women narratives and resilience stories in a political arena across the global South and North.

The arguments in favor of a systemic and radical change to reach climate justice are fundamental to frame climate change as a symptom of capitalism and patriarchy. Identifying the disproportionate effect of climate disruptions on women is not enough to change things in a gender analysis.

The interconnected relations between capitalism and patriarchal structures include, according to Acha (2020:107), "how the unpaid labor of women to reproduce and care for life is inherently taken as an indirect "subsidy" by our economic system. Women and female bodies create and care for life, often as a primary activity, or as a second or third "job", without monetary remuneration - that is, economically dependent upon habitually male wage-earners". This configures an oppressive position that naturalizes the social, political and economic role of women in the system.

From an intersectional feminist perspective, the climate injustice underlines the interaction of different forms of discrimination and manifests concern about multiple life dimensions. Intersectionality indeed "is an analytic sensibility, a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. Originally articulated on behalf of black women, the term brought to light the invisibility of many constituents within groups that claim them as members, but often fail to represent them" (Crenshaw, 2015). In social science it is a current debate but still not present in the praxis of law, policies and daily actions.

All of the feminist waves and climate justice theory, practices and movements need to work together to reinforce the transformative paths to a more egalitarian society in a planetary level. Highlighting that women are the most affected by climate change is not enough to move forward in a non-discriminative direction. The complexity of power relations points to a deep change in society, including the surpassing of the care work and the housework as essentially women's activities.

As a reflection of the patriarchy, the prevalence of gender-based violence can be felt in all socio, political and economic structures of capitalism. Concerning climate change, alerts Acha (2016): "this gendered inequality of rights, resources and power is expressed most glaringly in stark differences in death rates and vulnerability to natural disasters, particularly of women in rural areas and living under poverty thresholds."

In an analysis about women in Latin America and especially in Ecuador, Gudynas (2020) drafts the importance of "insurgent narratives" to contribute to ecofeminism and climate issues. In the country where the rights of nature were recognized at a constitutional level, the propeller spring of extractivism follows with a huge potency. As a matter of fact women are in the forefront of the struggle against extractive activities and climate change through the manifests of rural and urban activists, academics and politicians. An example of movement with ecofeminist

concernings is "Women against Extractive Activity and Climate Change Meeting" held in Quito in 2014 (Gudynas, 2020:48).

The rural areas are more vulnerable to the environmental destruction due to the historical process of implementation of development projects of extractivism. The rhetoric of economic progress to South America countries through monoculture and the intense use of agrochemicals tries to legitimize this model of territorial dominance. The consequences about women's health and environment negative impacts, for instance, have been perceived by the female's organizations and compound the flags of resistance and demands.

In this region, hegemonic development follows full steam ahead and the management of climate change is a tolerance policy. However, as alert Gudynas (2020:56-7): "in contrast, there are voices within women's groups that have denounced the restrictions on information and civic participation, the state's neglect of social and environmental controls and the proliferation of all kinds of violence in extractive activities, including criminalisation and murder".

Usually the defense of the eco-territories, that are also biocultural lands, is seen by the mainstream governance as an opposing fight to the economic growth and progress. The inheritance of patriarchy is an active presence in the relations of oppression and dominance according to a cutout of gender and nature in an intersectional perspective. The development alternative and the construction of transitions to post-extractivism society have been in the center of ecofeminism debates, in which the perceptions, knowledges, practices and *sentirpensar* indicates new ways of relating between humans and non-humans, through a renewed politic (Gudynas, 2020).

The feminist frontlines of climate justice and climate crises solutions runs through the deconstruction of hegemonic systems framing women as protagonists of the relational life webs and planetary restoration in the path of creative transitions. The field of feminist political ecology contributes to situate women not only as individual but as gender in power relations, covering, according to Gaard (2015:22): "macro-level exploration of the problems of globalization and colonization, a micro-level examination of local institutions for their environmental management, a critique of marriage institutions for the ways these affect women's access to natural resources, and an interrogation of the gendered aspects of space in terms of women's mobility, labor, knowledge, and power".

The use of technologies and social media as devices of information, mobilization and struggles has emerged chiefly after 2012. What can be named as digital feminism has facilitated the communication of various movements, in which one of the ways of propagation on social networks has been the so-called "hashtag activism" through the use of impact words and phrases that quickly spread and promote aggregation around them (McCann, 2019: 294-7).

Thus, information, protests, denunciations, campaigns, injustices, violence etc. are shared in real time. So, the emerging generation of young-women activists has revealed different ways of doing politics, focusing on the diversity of movements and the power of the community with youth leaders.

The variety of youth climate protests has given a creative demonstration of possibilities, such as the day of the Global Climate Strike, including marches or protests with classmates, teachers and parents; the proposal of climate education in the schools to learn about climate studies in an interdisciplinary perspective; the boycott over the consumption of products made by known polluters; writing campaigns to alert about climate change disclosed through digital media; acts against waste and consumerism; transformative actions to make schools more green and tree-planting projects are some of the many toolkit for young activists described by Naomi Klein (2021) in the book "How to change everything: the young human's guide to protecting the planet and each other".

Since the pandemic, there has been an expansion of digital activism through online activities, with the swell of the use of social networks, in particular, Instagram and Twitter; meetings and discussion events through virtual rooms; the use of Youtube and Podcast channels (Klein, 2021). The construction of youth climate communication based on science, on their life and on community narratives has led to the creation of spaces to promote qualified information, critical environmental education, participation and mobilization through the various digital medium. There are also several articulations of speeches and youth testimonies in formal institutions in their respective countries, in public hearings and other spheres within the scope of the legislative and executive powers.

A significant parcel of current female youth activism has focused on the issue of climate change, in which the judicialization of governments and corporations against the climate has been a way of fighting since the 2000s. In these actions, children and adolescents can be found as plaintiffs. Actions on the climate have emerged in several countries, such as Colombia, Pakistan, Norway, Germany, Canada, the United States, among others, a phenomenon called climate litigation (Setzer, Higham, 2021). Most climate lawsuits proposed by children and adolescents or in the interest of future generations, were proposed against governments through the proven argument of omission of the duty to avoid negative effects of climate change and/or insufficiency of public actions to avoid the consequences of greenhouse gases emissions.

The first cases about climate litigation emerged in the United States in the late 1980s, but now, climate actions can be found in all continents. According to Grantham Research Institute's third report about Global trends in climate change litigation based on data: "globally, the cumulative number of climate change-related cases has more than doubled since 2015. Just over

800 cases were filed between 1986 and 2014, while over 1,000 cases have been brought in the last six years" (Setzer, Higham, 2021:4).

This report reveals that: "the databases contained 1,841 ongoing or concluded cases of climate change litigation from around the world, as of may 2021. Of these, 1,387 were filed before courts in the United States, while the remaining 454 were filed before courts in 39 other countries and 13 international or regional courts and tribunals (including the courts of the European Union)" (Setzer, Higham, 2021:4).

Climate litigation is also an activist strategy to sue governments, specifically against financial government institutions; corporate and financial markets; both of them; other institutions and individuals that contribute to climate change by actions or omissions conformed to international and national commitments and climate laws.

There are lots of categorized situations, for instance, promoting deliberate disinformation; failure to disclose and manage climate change risk; cases seeking the recognition of corporate human rights responsibilities; cases that challenge specific projects or developments; government authorisation for third party activities; undermine government action taken to meet climate commitments or obligations; adaptation and mitigation cases (Setzer, Higham, 2021:6).

Most of the arguments brought in the climate actions were based in constitutional, environmental or administrative law; human rights arguments; international obligations and criminal law. In this scenery, the presence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals as plaintiffs is impressive. Bringing the data of Setzer and Higham (2021: 10-2) we have "NGOs (21%), individuals (23%), or both acting together (4%). The reminder was brought primarily by companies (32%) and governments (15%). The past year has also seen several cases filed by other actors, including political parties and public prosecutors (particularly in Brazil)".

Most cases proposed by NGOs and individuals have been supported by crowd-funding campaigns. The recognition of the right to a secure climate system has been evoked by many children and young people as plaintiffs in climate litigation demands against governments and fossil fuels corporations.

## **Discussions**

Ecofeminist approaches grew in the global north aboard the anti-nuclear and peace movements of the 1970s and '80s, together with public concern about environmental destruction. The women's perceptions and actions concerning environmental themes evolved over the following decades, for instance, toxic waste, overconsumption, deforestation, agriculture and food, loss of biodiversity and wildlife likewise the worry about inequalities, power relations and violence.

For the women in the global south the historical process of colonization, dispossession of ancestral lands, commoditized seeds and non inclusive ways of development are added to the general topics that compound the ecopolitics of ecofeminism.

Climate justice has a very diverse human dimension, whose voices and bodies need to be present in the processes of reparation and social transformation, "the climate justice movement draws attention to the fact that women and girls, especially from the Global South, make up one of the most impacted groups" (Gênero e clima, 2022).

The correlations between climate justice, rights of nature and ecofeminism show the importance of political training with the female presence in movements and in the formation of leadership. The vibrant role of women in social and ecological movements is essential.

In the present century, climate change affects everybody and everywhere in a cross-border way, but with a lot of differences according to birth place, race, gender, age, sexuality, physical and mental health, socioeconomic conditions, among others intersectionalities. Ecofeminism theory and practices rearticulate the feminists identities promoting an equalization of environmental and climate justice.

The tool of intersectionality can contribute to this articulation. According to Akotirene (2021: 19), "intersectionality aims to give theoretical-methodological instrumentality to the structural inseparability of racism, capitalism and cisheteropatriarchy – producers of identity avenues in which black women are repeatedly affected by the crossing and overlapping of gender, race and class, modern colonial apparatuses".

Mary Robinson (2021), in her book "Climate justice: hope, resilience and the fight for a sustainable future", presents eleven stories from different parts of the planet about facing the climate crisis. Many of these narratives are from young people and women who, through changes in their places of origin and residence, are experiencing situations of climate injustice, linked to historical processes of poverty, exclusion and inequalities.

Overcoming what Robinson (2021: 21-5) calls "intergenerational injustice of climate change" necessarily involves collective behavior; for governance, science and compassion. And, in this process, the militancy of the new generations is essential: "young people are taking the lead, demanding that measures be put into practice and shaming those who are old enough to influence and promote changes in public policies (Robinson, 2021: 24).

The construction of many ecofeminist world-views based on the cultural and biological diversity of all life forms is in progress. The ways of a pluriverse have manifested in the solidarity economies, regenerative ecosystems, cooperative communities, sharing systems of goods and services, organic agriculture and agroforestry systems, enhancement of common spaces among others creative and courageous transitions that are already happening in the north and south.

## Conclusions

The feminist perspective adopted in this work permitted sociopolitical categories discussions such as ecology, rights of nature, environmental and climate justice as a gender issue. Ecofeminism covers different aspects of the women's diversities and experiences through the capitalism impact on Earth. Ecofeminist studies reinforce the look of historical, material, ideological and spiritual interconnections between the subjugation of women and the domination of nature.

The post-development alternatives seek equality and sustainable ways of living. In this direction the nature rights recognition is fundamental to reorient the extractive export economy and balance the power relations between global north and south. Respecting nature rights is respecting the limits of the Earth and the rights of other species, including an integral appreciation of socio ecological justice and equity.

In this process, the mobilization of diverse women's generations to the path of a real redistribution of power reveals that the search for an environmental and climate justice includes confronting masculine domination from local to global. Many feminine environmental vulnerabilities were identified by academics but also the protagonism to position against the multiple injustice and to create integrative ways of living in the fights for a livable future.

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