

Gender and Nature in the Consumer Society: Ecofeminist practice in the Ecuadorian Constitution¹

Género y Naturaleza en la Sociedad de Consumo: la práctica ecofeminista en la Constitución ecuatoriana

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the existing relationships among gender, nature and power in the consumer society. Thus, it intends to answer to the problem: can the Good Way of Living be considered an ecofeminist practice in the consumer society, where the gender inequality and the exploitation of nature go side by side? To answer the question, the chosen method was the analytical, once that meets the need for analysis of legal-bibliographic references. By way of conclusion, it can be stated that the market power, in the consumer society, has

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remained oppressive in relation to the domination of women and the exploitation of nature. However, new proposals, opposed to the guidelines established by capital, find in Latin American hetero-patriarchal society a productive *locus* to question the maintenance of gender inequalities and the ecological destruction. The Good Way of Living, pillar of Ecuador's Constitution, presents itself as an audacious idea where ecology and feminism begin to meet the projection of a better world.

Keywords: Good Way of Living; Gender Equality; Market; Nature Rights.

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar las relaciones entre género, naturaleza y poder en la sociedad de consumo. Además, es necesario dar respuesta al problema: ¿una sociedad de consumo, donde la desigualdad de género y la explotación de la naturaleza andan lado a lado, o Buen Vivir, puede ser considerado una práctica ecofeminista? Para responder a la pregunta, se eligió el método analítico, ya que responde a la necesidad de análisis de referencias legales y bibliográficas. En conclusión, se puede decir que el poder de mercado en la sociedad de consumo sigue siendo opresivo en relación con el dominio de la mujer y la explotación de la naturaleza. Sin embargo, nuevas propuestas, contrarias a los lineamientos establecidos por el capital, encuentran en la sociedad heteropatriarcal latinoamericana un locus productivo para cuestionar el mantenimiento de las desigualdades de género y la destrucción ecológica. Buen Vivir, pilar de la Constitución de Ecuador, surge como una idea atrevida donde la ecología y el feminismo comienzan a encontrarse para la proyección de un mundo mejor.

Palabras clave: Buen Vivir; Igualdad de género; Mercad; Derechos de la naturaleza.

Introduction

The central theme of the work starts from the idea that gender inequality and the environmental degradation walk side by side in the consumer society. The proposal is to study the relationship among gender, nature and power, under the aegis of market power. To answer the question: can the Good Way of Living be considered an ecofeminist practice in the consumer society, where the gender inequality and the exploitation of nature go side by side? The chosen method was the analytical, once that meets the need for analysis of legal-bibliographic references.

To this end, the article was divided into two sections. In the first, it will be sought to examine the market power in building a model of society that constantly produces the exploitation and domination of women and nature. Based on

consumer relationships, where value was given to just about everything, gender inequality and exploitation of nature, under the speech of inexhaustibility of natural goods, point to the existence of an ethical crisis.

The second section is dedicated to exploring the connection between the feminist struggles and struggles in defense of nature, in the ecofeminist movement. To answer the research problem, it is explored the concept of Good Way of Living applied in the Ecuadorian Constitution, which seeks to build new relationships, through a new social paradigm that respects people and guarantees the right to nature. It is understood that this study can enhance ecofeminist connections and resistance in hetero-patriarchal society, governed by the power of the market.

1. Domination and Exploitation: Destination of Women and Nature in the Consumer Society

Gender equality and environmental protection are key themes to be faced in the 21st Century. Social movements, civil organizations, the extensive use of technologies, played lights to the power relations that women and nature are subjected to and encourage discussions about the need to envision a new paradigm for socio-environmental relationships. It is worth remembering that western culture is focused on capitalism, to the mechanism and the search for exaggerated consumerism. In this social dynamic, which genesis turned to the dynamics of capital, the inequalities self-reproduce and become necessary for the maintenance of the system itself. Therefore, capitalist society is a source that generates and drives exclusion and inclusion because the processes created through the consumer market, of localization or globalization, of movement and circulation of products, are not done for the benefit of the community, but rather, for admittedly privileged individuals.

The culture was shaped by the power of the market. With the constitution of the modern State and the declaration of God's death⁴, the space previously occupied by absolute values, divine essences and foundations, gave way to a

⁴ NIETZSCHE, Friedrich Wilhelm. **A Gaia Ciência**. Tradução de Paulo César de Souza. 2. ed. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2001.

belief in humanity, science and progress, that would guarantee happiness to all⁵. In the wake of technical and scientific development, the society has significantly changed its standard of living.

The modern State built based on equality, freedom and fraternity, incorporated property as a basic principle, a fact that definitely drove people from the land. The relation with natural goods used for survival ceases to be of cooperation and becomes to be of exploitation. Respect and conciliation give way to unbridled exploitation, under the myth of inexhaustibility. This dimension is called by Walsh⁶ as “colonialidade da natureza”⁷. From the fact that there is a binary division between nature and people, follows the exclusion of the millennial relationship established among humans, plants and animals.

In this context, the legitimating of the market as a transcendental entity, that is, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, in the words of Ruiz⁸, with its own rationality, guarantees the concealment of personal interests, of classes, of cooperation, of anonymous society, of governments, that control the market plot and speak on its name. This new reality needs citizens “interligados de modo ativo e colaborador das estruturas do sistema”^{9,10} and no longer subjects¹¹.

To the active performance of people, the desire, previously repressed, starts to be manufactured and this, constituted a strategic space of power, moved from the democratic public space to the market. See it: the displacement consists of reaching desires, stimulating motivations and producing wanting, here sometimes do not become what is needed, include the superfluous, which

⁵ NERI, Regina. **A psicanálise e o feminino: um horizonte da modernidade**. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2005.

⁶ WALSH, Catherine. Interculturalidad y colonialidad del poder. Un pensamiento y posicionamiento “otro” desde a diferencia colonial. In: CASTRO-GÓMEZ; GROSFUGUEL, Ramón (Orgs.). **El giro decolonial: reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global**. Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre-lesc-Pensar, 2007, p. 47-62. p. 106.

⁷ Free translation: “coloniality of nature”.

⁸ RUIZ, Castor M. M. Bartolomé. **Os labirintos do Poder: o Poder (do) simbólico e os modos de subjetivação**. Porto Alegre: Escritos Editora, 2004.

⁹ Free translation: “interconnected in an active and collaborative way of the structures of the system”.

¹⁰ RUIZ, Castor M. M. Bartolomé. **Os labirintos do Poder: o Poder (do) simbólico e os modos de subjetivação**. p. 114.

¹¹ WARAT, Luis Alberto. **A rua grita Dionísio! Direitos Humanos da alteridade, surrealismo e cartografia**. Tradução e organização Vivian Alves de Assis, Júlio César Marcellino Jr. e Alexandre Moraes da Rosa. Rio de Janeiro: Lumen Juris, 2010.

presents itself with necessary clothing.¹² It is the discourse that anchors contemporary social relations, grounding the will and free choice. With advertising, needs are produced and needs to produce products. Need-product as a commodity for the money invested in wage labor and in the means of production result in more goods and, lastly, more money.

To ensure more profitability, the market, according to Dussel¹³, breaks with existing barriers and demonstrates a fantastic and never seen civilizing demiurgical ability of the capital of bourgeois culture: increase its markets until it discover the last corner of the globe; explore hurriedly with increasing speeds to decrease the time of its own rotation; deepen productivity to make even more wishes, more goods and, with that, more profits. According to Pereira and Calgaro¹⁴ the “poder, atrelado aos aspectos econômicos vislumbra no lucro a única opção de vida. Assim, as malhas de redes de poder que circulam como fontes propulsoras da sociedade tecno-consumista não conjeturam ideias desvinculadas do econômico [...]”¹⁵.

Thus, different from what it looks like, the market does not work in a neutral way and does not generate well-being for all indiscriminately. In this context, there is no concern about the methods used in the production of goods-wishes, being only important the mass production, for mass consumption and, the promotion of consumption ensured unbridled exploitation, of people and nature.

The consequence of this cyclical relation, established among market power, manufacturing wishes and consumption, is a logic that explores people, classes and submits entire people to the interests of developed countries,

¹² FARIA, Josiane Petry. **A democratização da inovação tecnológica, para além de manifestação de Poder: o amor como cuidado no núcleo de valores de políticas públicas para o desenvolvimento como liberdade**. 2014. 256 f. Tese (Doutorado em Direito) Universidade de Santa Cruz do Sul, Santa Cruz do Sul, 2014.

¹³ DUSSEL, Enrique. **Oito ensaios sobre cultura latino-americana e libertação**. São Paulo: Paulinas, 1997.

¹⁴ PEREIRA, Agostinho Oli Koppe; CALGARO, Cleide. A modernidade e o hiperconsumismo: políticas públicas para m consumo ambientalmente sustentável. *In*: PEREIRA, Agostinho Oli Koppe; HORN, Luiz Fernando Del Rio. **Relações de Consumo: Políticas Públicas**. Caxias do Sul/RS: Plenum, 2015, p. 13-33. p. 24.

¹⁵ Free translation: “power, linked to economic aspects glimpse into profit the only option of life. Therefore, the meshes of power networks that circulate as propelling sources of techno-consumerist society do not conjecture ideas disconnected from the economic”.

overexploits the Earth, produces scarcity of natural resources, without solidarity with nature and with the rest of the humanity¹⁶. In these relationships, speeches about the existence of lives that are not worth living are legitimized, the subject people.

The fact that there is a possibility to question which humans are recognized as humans and which are not, means that there is a different filed from the human that remains unrecognizable according to the prevailing norms, but which, in its turn, is recognized within the epistemic field by the counter-hegemonic forms of knowledge¹⁷. Therefore, to Sousa Santos¹⁸ “a grande maioria da população mundial não é sujeito de direitos humanos, é objeto dos discursos de direitos humanos”.¹⁹

Society based on consumer culture remains under the promise of happiness in the next purchase. The promise will never be fulfilled because the technology advances in strides and the market is agile when seeking profit in the provision of goods and products. This phenomenon turns people into goods and, the more inserted in the market and in the universe of virtual communication, best presents itself to be desired, acquired.

When the commodity form becomes a carrier of happiness; when access to them is taken as an indicator of social well-being; when the universe of political ideals, the maximum libertarian, egalitarian and of justice aspirations, is drastically reduced to the minimalist aspiration to participate in market consumption is when the direction and even the meaning of life are completely lost. It is, to Lagarde²⁰ “un mundo convertido en el espectáculo de un viaje sin

¹⁶ BOFF, Leonardo. **Sustentabilidade – O que é – O que não é**. 3 ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2014.

¹⁷ BUTLER, Judith. **Corpos em aliança e política das ruas**: Notas para uma teoria performativa de assembleia. Tradução de Fernanda Siqueira Martins. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2018.

¹⁸ SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa. **Se Deus fosse um ativista de direitos humanos**. 2 ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2014. p. 15.

¹⁹ Free translation: “the vast majority of the world's population is not subject to human rights, is the subject of human rights discourses”.

²⁰ LAGARDE Y DE LOS RÍOS, Marcela. **El feminismo en mi vida**: Hiatos, claves e topías. México: Instituto de las Mujeres de la Ciudad do Mexico, 2012. p. 249-250.

objetivos. Una cultura fascinada por las trivialidades, los simulacros y el consumo de un tiempo sin puntos de referencia”²¹.

The social relations exercised with the unique objective of guaranteeing individual autonomy, in a planetary market in which potentially all dimensions of life - individual and social – are traded according to the market price²², consumption, as a fetish institution, establishes an imaginary vision, a dimension of salvation by the grace of the object and guarantees the subjectivity exercised through purchase options.

This leads, to Pereira and Calgaro²³, to the recognition that consumer lifestyles have changed, the happiness in buying products is huge and the consumption of certain goods starts to guarantee social status. The consumer society represents the promotion of relationships in which there is promotion, encouragement and reinforcement for choosing a lifestyle and a consumerist existential strategy²⁴. It is sought the global dissemination of certain absolutely perverse consumption patterns, are infiltrated in the collective imagination even of those groups without economic capacity to rise to that consumption, keeping them attached to the permanent desire to achieve it.

The social construction aimed at capitalism, the mechanism and the search for exaggerated consumerism, where dreaming is necessary, but the most important is to accomplish because of this, the individual understands that the practice of them freedom passes, necessarily, by fulfilling them wishes, thus, the making of desire is confirmed as a strategic space of power. This logic spreads its performative value in “aquele que pode consumir mais e melhores

²¹ Free translation: “a world turned into the spectacle of a journey without goals. A culture fascinated by triviality, the drills and the consumption of a time without reference points”.

²² SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa. **Se Deus fosse um ativista de direitos humanos**.

²³ PEREIRA, Agostinho Oli Koppe; CALGARO, Cleide. A sociedade consumocentrista e seus reflexos socioambientais: a cooperação social e a democracia participativa para a representação social. **Revista de Direito, Economia e Desenvolvimento sustentável**. v. 2. n. 2. Jul./Dez. 2016, p. 72-88. Available in: <https://www.indexlaw.org/index.php/revistaddsus/article/view/1388>. Access in: 10 Aug. 2023.

²⁴ BAUMAN, Zygmunt. **Vidas para consumo: a transformação das pessoas em mercadorias**. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2008.

produtos detém o poder social e econômico sobre os outros”²⁵²⁶. In the consumer society, the act of consuming means investing in a social affiliation and, then

todo mundo precisa ser, deve ser e tem que ser um consumidor por vocação (ou seja, ver e tratar o consumo como uma vocação). Nessa sociedade, o consumo visto e tratado como vocação é ao mesmo tempo um direito e um dever humano universal que não conhece exceção.^{27 28}

Modern society proposes to move away from the assumptions that formed traditional societies, unlinking itself from the past and, therefore, having the new as a propelling element of desires. In this field, consumerism is implemented by the market. When working from a market perspective, it turns out that modernity came as a possibility of satisfying individual wishes, without worrying about the past or the future, where to live in the present, the here and now, are slogans and, the objects of love, are now exchanged for consumer objects.

This social organization implemented through the power of the market, based on the capitalist economic system has repercussions on the distribution of work in families. There is a clear separation between productive and reproductive work. The social changes experienced in the productive and reproductive sphere are the result of the economic needs of the market. While productive work is wage and recognized in industrialized societies and have a salary, according to Federicci²⁹ is “fazer parte do contrato social”³⁰, reproductive work, is recognized neither economically nor socially, besides that, is imposed on women and transformed by capital into a natural attribute of the female psyche and

²⁵ Free translation: “one who can consume more, and better products hold social and economic power over others”.

²⁶ PEREIRA, Agostinho Oli Koppe; CALGARO, Cleide. **A modernidade e o hiperconsumismo:** políticas públicas para m consumo ambientalmente sustentável.

²⁷ Free translation: “everyone needs to be, must be and has to be a consumer by vocation (that is, seen and treat consumption as a vocation). In this society, the consumption seen and treated as a vocation is, *at the same time*, a right and a universal human duty that knows no exception”.

²⁸ BAUMAN, Zygmunt. **Vidas para consumo:** a transformação das pessoas em mercadorias. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2008. p. 73.

²⁹ FEDERICI, Silvia. **O ponto zero da revolução:** Trabalho doméstico, reprodução e luta feminista. Tradução de Coletivo Sycorax. São Paulo: Editora Elefante, 2019. p. 42.

³⁰ Free translation: “being part of the social contract”.

personality, a need, an aspiration, preventing, this way, that women fight against it.

The result is the construction of a modern androcentric mindset that allows men to be valued and supported socially in their work, considered superior, better, more capable than women. That is why, in this model of social organization, it is legitimated for them to have a monopoly on the power of dominance and violence.

Ecofeminist theorists have pointed out that in the hetero-patriarchal system, both the care work performed by women and the goods produced by nature are appropriate without due recognition of their importance. They are invisible because they are considered something inherent to be delivered by women and by nature, although indispensable to human life. Thus, the duality that exists between women and men extends to nature and culture: from a dominant perspective, the dominated services are declared inferior, all dependence and respect for them is denied³¹.

Therefore, the social standard points to the white man, owner, married, Christian, characteristics of the bourgeois citizen³² as being neutral and universal. Not being inserted guarantees the negation and annulment of what the heteropatriarchal culture disregards: the diversity of the ground and of the mind. The peculiarity is that Western colonial capitalist societies manifest different types of domination that go hand in hand with the modes of production, through the accentuation of verticality, dependence and hierarchy in social relations. It causes structural and asymmetric inequalities that are difficult to confront and subvert only with state legal and institutional rules, and that normalizes and becomes invisible at such levels that generate a culture of exception and injustice.

Thus, gender as a category, has political economic dimensions because it structures the division between productive and paid work and unpaid reproductive and domestic work, as well as structures the internal division of paid

³¹ PULEO, Alicia H. **Ecofemismo: para otro mundo posible**. 4 ed. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra Universitat de València, 2017.

³² SANCHEZ RUBIO, David. **Derechos humanos instituyentes, pensamiento crítico y praxis de liberación**. Ciudad de México: Edicionesakal México, 2018.

work between high-paid professional and manufacturing occupations and the “ocupações de “colarinho rosa” e de serviços domésticos, de baixa remuneração [...]”³³³⁴. This fact results in the feminization of poverty and places this population stratum among those “flawed consumers”. The logic of this social model spares no effort to normalize exclusion. Disorganized and elitist consumption guarantees the unrestrained growth of socially excluded and, with the trickery of manipulation, imputes to the excluded him/herself, individual absences that do not allow access to consumption.

Maintaining this model of social relations can only leads to ecological destruction and increased inequality, where the first victims are women and children, because of the vulnerability to which they are subjected. In this context, feminism and ecologism are indispensable concepts for the 21st century, because they allow developing a different view of everyday reality, revaluing practices and subjects that were designated as different and inferior, through praxis to enable a new social paradigm.

2 Rights of Nature and Rights of Women in Latin America: an Ecofeminist Proposal?

Nature designates a field of knowledge and a social movement to redefine reality driven in the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first to the unsustainable contrast of the hegemonic development model. The progressive eruption of the theme in human consciousness requires changes in the social, political, economic and cultural model. To be able to face environmental problems and limit the damage caused by climate change, the search for new technologies is not enough. It is recognized that they are indispensable for achieving more efficient energy management, for example, but technological renewal needs to be accompanied by the development of a sustainable culture in all its dimensions: environmental, economic, social, technological and humanistic. See,

³³ Free translation: ““pink collar” occupations and low-paid household services”.

³⁴ FRASER, Nancy. **Da redistribuição ao reconhecimento? Dilemas da justiça numa era pós-socialista**. Cadernos de Campo, São Paulo, v. 15, n. 14-15, p. 231-239, 30 Mar. 2006. Available in: <http://www.revistas.usp.br/cadernosdecampo/article/view/50109/54229>. Access in: 10 Aug. 2023. p. 233.

Qualsevol teoria política que pretengui ocupar un lloc de consideració i de respecte no podrà ignorar els raonaments que l'ecofeminisme aporta a l'àmbit de discussió. Tampoc no pot obviar les propostes pràctiques que fa, si hom pretén oferir alternatives al model actual d'explotació —en sentit ampli—, el qual està completament deslegitimats pel que fa als compromisos amb la igualtat i justícia.^{35 36}

The relationship between nature and gender, sometimes still questioned, occurs in the understanding that effective equality between men and women, as well as building a sustainable culture for a truly sustainable development model occupies a central place among the outstanding problems of the 21st century. Recognition between the Millennium Goals on the UN Agenda and the impetus for the 2030 Agenda with 17 Goals for Sustainable Development³⁷ demonstrates epistemological, ethical and political motivation and does not limit the linking of problematic *nature* and *gender* on joint inclusion in international documents³⁸.

It is recognized that in contemporary times there is a naturalization of the apogee of market power and hetero-patriarchal domination, which considers man as a measure of value and does not admit diversity, only the hierarchy. It does not intrinsically consider the diversity of nature; it only wants its commercial exploitation in search of economic benefits. The struggle of women, through feminisms, visualizes sustainability as a theme connected with the systemic nature of life based on connection, inclusion and reciprocity in the relationships between living beings and leads to so-called ecofeminism³⁹.

³⁵VILALONGA, Catalina Aparicio. Ecofeminisme: dona i naturalesa. **Revista Taula**. Quaderns de pensament. 2010, n. 42, p. 127-136. Available in: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/autor?codigo=2464364>. Access in: 10 Dec. 2023.

³⁶ Free translation "Any political theory that seeks to occupy a place of consideration and respect will not be able to ignore the reasoning that ecofeminism brings to the field of discussion. Nor can it ignore the practical proposals it makes, if one intends to offer alternatives to the current model of exploitation—in the broadest sense—, which is completely delegitimized in terms of commitments to equality and justice."

³⁷ ONU. **Transformando Nosso Mundo: A Agenda 2030 para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável**. Available in: <https://nacoesunidas.org/pos2015/agenda2030/>. Access in: 10 Aug. 2023.

³⁸ PULEO, Alicia H. El ecofeminismo y sus compañeros de ruta. Cinco claves para una relación positiva con el ecologismo, el ecosocialismo y el decrecimiento. In: PULEO, Alicia H. (org.) **Ecología y género en diálogo interdisciplinar**. Murcia: Plaza y Valdez Editores, 2015.

³⁹ DEBASTIANI, Joana Silvia Mattia; FARIA, Josiane Petry; DEBASTIANI, Valdemir José. Sustentabilidade e igualdade de gênero no paradigma do cuidado. In: **Anais do 14º Seminário Internacional de Governança e Sustentabilidade da Universidade de Alicante**. Itajaí/SC: Univali, 2019. v. 1. p. 236-249.

For Gebrara⁴⁰, the concept was introduced by Françoise D'Eaubonne with the purpose of showing the alliance of the struggle towards the change of relations between men and women with the transformation of our relations with the ecosystem. *“La cuestión planteada por esta autora se sitúa en el nivel político-ideológico, de las luchas sociales y de las relaciones nacionales e internacionales entre los diferentes grupos humanos, ante el creciente desastre ecológico al que asistimos.”*⁴¹ The author emphasizes that:

El ecofeminismo como pensamiento y movimiento social refiere básicamente a la conexión ideológica entre la explotación de la naturaleza y la explotación de las mujeres dentro del sistema jerárquico-patriarcal. Desde el punto de vista filosófico y teológico, el ecofeminismo puede ser considerado como una sabiduría que intenta recuperar el ecosistema y las mujeres. Éstas fueron relegadas por el sistema patriarcal, y particularmente por la modernidad, a ser fuerza de reproducción de mano de obra – vientres benditos – en la naturaleza se tornó objeto de dominación para el crecimiento del capital.⁴²⁴³

The association between women and nature occurs in the process of modernity when witch-hunting begins. Women begin to be seen as symbols of evil and of the violence of nature, since they are capable of provoking storms and illnesses, of killing children. Therefore, women and rebellious nature need to be controlled. This is the social justification for the witch hunts and the execution of thousands of women in Europe because of the culture. In modernity the redefinition of the woman's role begins as housewife, subordinate to marriage relations and her family. Nature, in turn, far from the power of the spirit, stripped of its six secrets, becomes dominated by the male scientific spirit⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ GEBRARA, Ivone. **Instituições ecofeministas**. Colección estructuras e procesos. Trotta: Madrid, 2020. p. 17-18.

⁴¹Free translation: “The question posed by this author is at the political-ideological level, of social struggles and of national and international relations between different human groups, in the face of the growing ecological disaster we are witnessing.”

⁴²Free translation: “Ecofeminism as a thought and social movement basically refers to the ideological connection between the exploitation of nature and the exploitation of women within the hierarchical-patriarchal system. From the philosophical and theological point of view, ecofeminism can be considered as a wisdom that tries to recover the ecosystem and women. Women were relegated by the patriarchal system, and particularly by modernity, to being a force of reproduction of labor - blessed wombs - in nature became an object of domination for the growth of capital”.

⁴³ GEBRARA, Ivone. **Instituições ecofeministas**, p. 18.

⁴⁴ GEBRARA, Ivone. **Instituições ecofeministas**.

In that context, the dialogue between the two approaches - feminism and ecologism - is essential. With propriety, women ecologists have stood out for their contributions to the discussions about gender equity, identity, self-determination and sustainability, which contribute as key elements for a convergence of paradigms to ensure a possible and sustainable future. Such struggles gain space and impulse through a development model different from that associated only with economic growth, but declare that, to effectively achieve real sustainability, that is, sustainability as a noun, it is imperative for a society without hierarchical relations of domination among people and between them and nature, because it is neither ethical nor tolerable for societies to live at the expense of other societies or other regions.⁴⁵

The social marginalization of women and the destruction of nature are processes that continue together in the face of hierarchy, domination and exploitation that permeate relationships. The loss of biodiversity is the price of the hetero-patriarchal and hyper-consumer model of progress, which presses in favor of monocultures, uniformity and homogeneity. In this space, the disappearance of biodiversity is accompanied by the absence of cultural diversity among the peoples of the world⁴⁶.

Ecofeminism has different meanings and composes a fundamental idea, that there is an interconnection between the domination of nature by human beings and female subjection to men, expressing the predominance of patriarchal forms in Western structuring, which refers to the role of women only to social reproduction.⁴⁷ The socio-environmental crisis, observed through exacerbated consumption and unbridled exploitation of nature and affection, has the gender inequality as one of its main supports. Although it is still considered a peripheral subject and treated as an untimely disturbance, the ecofeminist movement points

⁴⁵ BOFF, Leonardo. **Sustentabilidade – O que é – O que não é**. 3 ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2014.

⁴⁶ SHIVA, Vandana. El saber propio de las mujeres y la conservación de la biodiversidad. In: MIES, María; SHIVA, Vandana. **La praxis del Ecofeminismo: Biotecnología, consumo y reproducción**. Tradução Mireia Bofill e Daniel Aguilar. Quito: Desde el margen Editorial Insurgente, 2018.

⁴⁷ SOUZA, Iriê Prado de; RAMÍREZ-GÁLVEZ, Martha Celia. Os sentidos e representações do ecofeminismo da contemporaneidade. In: DONAT, Miriam, IVANO, Rogério. **Anais do VII SEPECH**. Londrina: Eduel, 2008.

lights and shadows to modern thought, which ensured a cyclical social structure that needs exclusion and exploitation to keep up itself.

The final Declaration of the World Conference on Women, occurred in 1995, in Beijing, recognizes that the environmental degradation and the “natural” disasters have a negative impact on the entire population, but girls and women have this suffering increased, given the increase in paid work they do, essential works for the maintenance of the community, but that remain invisible. The ecological crisis difficult and multiplies the tasks that fall on women, exacerbating the traditional sexual division of labor.

In this sense, Rico⁴⁸ emphasizes the socio-environmental impacts produced and the means that different populations use to deal with the wild exploitation of nature, as well as the consequences of the socio-environmental crisis, can be perceived through the debate about the connection between women and nature. The discussion started in the mid-70s in the countries of the North, associated with the participation of women in the ecologist and pacifist movements. There, it was the energy crisis that generated uncertainties on oil supply and costs, with the need to reduce the consumption of firewood as an energy source, programs aimed at women were encouraged to restrict and replace its consumption in everyday tasks, as well as to participate in reforestation projects.

In southern countries, according to the author, the connection of women with the environment has a close relation with the problems arising from forest exploitation and agriculture, demonstrating, then, that rural expansion programs had negative effects on them due to the invisibility of the important role that they play along with family farming and biodiversity conservation. Southern women started to be considered the main victims of environmental deterioration, mainly due to the fact that, in many Third World communities, the dependence on land and natural resources ensure people's livelihood and well-being and biodiversity guarantees the means of production and is an object of consumption.

⁴⁸ RICO, María Nieves. **Género, medio ambiente y sustentabilidad del desarrollo**. Santiago do Chile: Nações Unidas, 1998.

Therefore, the struggle for food sovereignty, the agroecology, the movements of indigenous peoples, the Rights of nature and the Good Way of Living are keys to building a sustainable world in Latin America. Understanding their vital importance for the future of humanity is an ethical imperative for all supportive people and aware of the ecological crisis that plagues contemporaneity.

The environmental crisis and becoming aware that the planet needs to be preserved, to have life, to guarantee life, brought an awakening of ecological values, with a view to preserving nature, the need to live with diversity, questions about the modes of production and, also, new economy models based on solidarity. Ecofeminism offers an alternative to the crisis of values of the consumer society and individualist today. By bringing together the critical contributions of feminism and ecology provide an opportunity to confront sexism in patriarchal society while denouncing the androcentric subtext of domination of nature, linked to the conqueror paradigm⁴⁹. There is an ecofeminist praxis when, one way or another, it is advanced in both objectives. The forms can be very varied and depend on the context and vital trajectory of people.

For this debate, the ecofeminism, in its most varied interpretations and aspects, has contributed by combining feminist debates with issues of preserving and maintaining a healthy and dignified life, in all its forms. Then, to Angelin⁵⁰ the movements converge towards building and proposing forms to enable better coexistence on the planet, opposing the double capitalist and patriarchal exploitation of nature and women.

Ecofeminist criticisms of the patriarchal tradition are presented as one more instrument to help deconstruct crystallized concepts by a tradition marked by dualism and hierarchy⁵¹. With all the diversity of perspectives, proposals were

⁴⁹ LAGARDE Y DE LOS RÍOS, Marcela. **El feminismo en mi vida**: Hiatos, claves e topías. México: Instituto de las Mujeres de la Ciudad do Mexico, 2012.

⁵⁰ ANGELIN, Rosângela. Mulheres, Ecofeminismo e desenvolvimento sustentável diante das perspectivas de redistribuição e reconhecimento de gênero. Estamos preparados? **Revista Eletrônica Direito e Política**, Itajaí, v.9, n.3, 3º quadrimestre de 2014.

⁵¹ SOUZA, Sandra Duarte de. Ecofeminismo: tendencias y debates. Con-spirando: **Revista Latinoamericana de Ecofeminismo**, Santiago (Chile), v. 40, pp. 19-25, 2002. Available in: <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=con-spirando>. Access in: 22 Aug. 2023.

developed for an ethical and political world before the crisis of values of the consumerist and individualist society, standards arising from modernity. In Latin America, the other in relation to the whole of Europe⁵², the keys to building a sustainable world are diverse from those in the geopolitical North, therefore, understand the colonized *locus* is vital for the future of humanity and an imperative of every supportive person and aware of the ecological crisis.

The proposal of the Good Way of Living is a life process coming from the community matrix of peoples living in harmony with nature. It is a qualitative step to overcome the traditional development concept and its countless synonyms, introducing a different view of society, diverse, much richer in content and more complex.

To Acosta⁵³ the discussion is enriched with diverse and plural proposals that bring together elements obtained in the region itself. It is the vision of the marginalized and silenced by history, particularly, of the indigenous peoples and nationalities, presenting itself as an opportunity to build another society based on coexistence, in diversity among human beings and in harmony with nature, from the recognition of the diverse cultural values existing in the world.

These because, the connection among the environmental degradation, the wage exploitation and the sexist violence requires measures that take into account the three elements. Therefore, the Constitution of Ecuador results an important precedent for facing the theme. The constitutional text recognizes the indigenous concept of Good Way of Living as the structure of an idea of a plurinational society, where it seeks to ensure that citizens live in a healthy environment, uncontaminated and ecologically balanced. To this proposal, Segato calls happiness goals from Andean categories

colocan en el centro de la vida las relaciones humanas y con el medio natural; no orientan s existencia por las pautas de cálculo costo-beneficio, productividad en competitividad, capacidad de acumulación y consecuente concentración; y producen así, modos de vida disfuncionales con el mercado global y proyectos históricos que, sin

⁵² DUSSEL, Enrique. **Caminhos de libertação Latino-Americana**. Tradução de José Carlos Barcellos e Hugo Toschi. Tomo IV – Reflexões para uma teologia da libertação. São Paulo: Editora Paulinas, 1984.

⁵³ ACOSTA, Alberto. **El buen vivir: Sumak Kawsay**, una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos. Barcelona: Icaria Antrazyt, 2013.

basarse en modelos y mandatos vanguardistas, son dramáticamente divergentes del proyecto del capital.^{54 55}

It is the existence governed by community value in the center, defended by a vital symbolic density of spiritual beliefs and practices and by ways that excel in the local and regional market, at the expense of the globalized. It is based on an ethics for the whole community and not only for the individual, but that is also why, more than a constitutional declaration, is an opportunity to collectively build a new way of organizing social relations⁵⁶.

It brings as a novelty the recognition of rights for nature, ecological rights that guarantee that, even in cases where there is no direct affect to human beings, restoration of ecosystems damaged by the actions of people is mandatory. To Acosta⁵⁷ “[D]otarle de Derechos a la Naturaleza significa, entonces, alentar políticamente su paso de objeto a sujeto, como parte de un proceso centenario de ampliación de los sujetos del derecho.”⁵⁸

In this sense, according to Wolkmer and Fagundes⁵⁹ the so-called “novos direitos”⁶⁰ break with the paradigms of traditional legal dogmatics, contaminated by excessive formalism, by false political and scientific neutrality and the excessive emphasis on individual rights, of patrimonial and contractual content, of liberal inspiration, on which hegemonically based the model of modern social standard.

⁵⁴ Free translation: “it is placed in the center of life the human relations and relations with the natural environment; do not orient their existence by cost-benefit calculation guidelines, productivity in competitiveness, accumulation capacity and consequent concentration; and thus produce, dysfunctional lifestyles with the global market and historical projects that, without relying on avant-garde models and mandates, are dramatically divergent from the project of capital”.

⁵⁵ SEGATO, Rita Laura. Aníbal Quijano y la perspectiva de la colonialidad del poder. In: QUIJANO, Aníbal. **Des/colonialidad y Bien Vivir: Un nuevo debate en América Latina**. Lima: Universidad Ricardo Palma, 2014. p. 41.

⁵⁶ ACOSTA, Alberto. **El buen vivir: Sumak Kawsay, una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos**.

⁵⁷ ACOSTA, Alberto. **Hacia la Declaración Universal de los Derechos de la Naturaleza**. Sin Permiso. 18 abr. 2010. Available in: <http://www.uasb.edu.ec/UserFiles/369/File/PDF/CentrodeReferencia/Temasdeanálisis2/derechosdelaNaturaleza/articulos/temacentral/Acosta.pdf>. Access in 10 aug. 2023.

⁵⁸ Free translation: “To provide Rights to Nature means, then, politically encourage their passage from object to subject, as part of a centennial process of extension of the subjects of the law”.

⁵⁹ WOLKMER, Antonio Carlos; FAGUNDES, Lucas Machado. Tendências contemporâneas do constitucionalismo latino-americano: Estado plurinacional e pluralismo jurídico. **Revista Pensar**, Fortaleza, vol. 16, nº 02, pp. 371 – 408., 2011. Available in: <https://periodicos.unifor.br/rpen/article/view/2158/1759>. Access in: 10 Aug. 2023.

⁶⁰ Free translation: “new rights”.

These “new rights” are conquered from democratic socio-political struggles, with an emancipatory, pluralist, collective and indivisible nature, and impose other challenges to legal science, both from a conceptual and doctrinal point of view and from the point of view of its implementation. It is necessary to clarify that, the difficulties that are still faced in Ecuadorian praxis are identified, which does not rule out the need to praise and recognize peoples' struggles for the constitutionalization of rights that reflect the break with the previously existing model.

To Puleo⁶¹ to talk about Earth's ecological rights means that economic profitability objectives cannot ignore the cycles necessary for the recovery of the ecosystem. This issue is particularly costly in Latin America that is being devastated by extractivism. The soybean crops, the use of agricultural aircraft for pesticide application, the desertification, the rising poverty, of social inequalities and of the underfed, the loss of biodiversity and of the variety of food production are a warning sign in a region dependent on healthy *Abya Yala*. The proposal of the Good Way of Living

será, entonces, una tarea de reconstrucción/ construcción que pasa por desarmar la meta universal para todas las sociedades: el progreso en su deriva productivista y el desarrollo en tanta dirección única, sobre todo en su visión mecanicista de crecimiento económico, así como sus múltiples sinónimos. Pero no solo los desarma, el Buen Vivir propone una visión diferente, mucho más rica en contenidos y, por cierto, más compleja.⁶²⁶³

The alternative is to continue with changes in hetero-patriarchal conditions for building a new paradigm recognizing that this implies radical changes that reach the way of life of women and men, the culture contents and

⁶¹ PULEO, Alicia H. **Ecofemismo: para otro mundo posible**. 4 ed. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra Universitat de València, 2017.

⁶² Free translation: “it will be, then, a rebuilding/ building task that passes by disarming the universal goal for all the societies: progress in its productivist drift and development in such a unique direction, especially in its mechanistic vision of economic growth, as well as its multiple synonyms. But it not only disarms them, but the Good Way of Living also proposes a different vision, much richer in content and, certainly, more complex”.

⁶³ ACOSTA, Alberto. **El buen vivir: Sumak Kawsay**, una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos, p. 49.

conformation and distribution of social powers among genders and among people. This is Vilalonga⁶⁴.

Per fer aquesta passa endavant, caldrà, d'una banda, integrar les dones en l'univers cultural i, de l'altra, acceptar plenament com a humans els trets menyspreats ancestralment perquè han estat considerats femenins. Dit d'una altra manera, hem de modificar el concepte d'espècie i assumir sense prejudicis que formam part de la naturalesa, la qual cosa implica que hem de respectar la resta de sers vius.⁶⁵

This process demands deep transformations, requires a sustainable and plural process, because it is impossible to continue with the predatory social relations model, based on the struggles among people and between them and nature.

Ecuador's Constitution recognized that culture cannot be invoked to undermine rights recognized in the constitutional text (article 21, 4th section), this point is of paramount importance for the defense of nature and for the defense of women. Still, the constitutional text guaranteed access to security for people who perform unpaid care or housework. See it:

Art. 369 (...) El seguro universal obligatorio se extenderá a toda la población urbana y rural, con independencia de su situación laboral. Las prestaciones para las personas que realizan trabajo doméstico no remunerado y tareas de cuidado se financiarán con aportes y contribuciones del Estado. La ley definirá el mecanismo correspondiente⁶⁶⁶⁷.

⁶⁴ VILALONGA, Catalina Aparicio. Ecofeminisme: dona i naturalesa. **Revista Taula**. Quaderns de pensament. 2010, n. 42, p. 127-136. Available in: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/autor?codigo=2464364>. Access in: 10 Dec. 2023. p. 135.

⁶⁵ Free translation: "To take this step forward, it will be necessary, on the one hand, to integrate women into the cultural universe and, on the other, to fully accept as humans the traits ancestrally despised because they have been considered feminine. In other words, we must modify the concept of species and assume without prejudice that we are part of nature, which implies that we must respect the rest of living beings."

⁶⁶ Free translation: "Article 369 (...) Mandatory universal insurance will be extended to the entire urban and rural population, regardless of its employment situation. The benefits for people who do unpaid domestic work and care tasks will be financed with contributions from the State. The law will define the corresponding mechanism".

⁶⁷ ECUADOR. **Constitución de la República del Ecuador**. Registro Oficial N. 449 del 20 de octubre de 2008. Available in: http://www.oas.org/juridico/pdfs/mesicic4_ecu_const.pdf. Access in: 26 Aug. 2023.

When admitting access to social security, there is confirmation that in that society, productive work and reproductive work have the same importance, reproductive work is constitutionally guaranteed and is no longer invisible. The Constitution goes further and aims to boost the equitable distribution of household chores. The agricultural tasks and knowledge of rural women are (re)valued to give fundamental place to food sovereignty. The Ecuadorian Constitution is outlining a new concept of citizenship that goes beyond the recognition of transition from androcentrism to biocentrism and clearly achieves the precepts of ecofeminism.

The Good Way of Living emerges as an agenda initially taken from a category native to the Andean world, but it expands in the search for what Segato⁶⁸ calls other forms of happiness, derived from other social and economic backgrounds, community and collective, in which use value predominates, in which interpersonal relationships prevail over relationships with their assets, through sociability standards. New relationships that establish alliances to cultural change for assimilation and defense of a sustainable society in all its pillars: environmental, social, economic, technological and humanistic. The construction of this new social paradigm is not utopian; there is already a Latin American praxis which points to the development of new socio-environmental relations through the Good Way of Living.

Final considerations

The research started from the questioning whether in the consumer society, space where the gender inequality and the exploitation of nature go side by side, the Good Way of Living can be considered an ecofeminist practice. It was discussed the role played by the market in the making of desires and in exacerbated consumption. This consumer culture generates disposable products and empowers the citizen as a buyer, fosters their imaginary to them remains consuming.

In order that the wheel of production – consumption – capital rotates, it is necessary that people increasingly consume the products that are placed on the

⁶⁸ SEGATO, Rita Laura. **Aníbal Quijano y la perspectiva de la colonialidad del poder.**

market. When considering that the hetero-patriarchal model of society is based on gender inequality, where women have exploited their workforce in an unpaid way, which guarantees them only to roam the society without any prospect of inclusion. In the same sense, to produce more and more goods, environmental costs are not calculated or, sometimes, the market takes environmental proposals for itself, “greening itself”, demonstrating in a crystalline way the displacement of the democratic public space.

In this context, it is born the ecofeminism, proposal which demonstrates convergence between the categories and that enable recognize that in hetero-patriarchal society, where white man, married, Christian and owner is the measure of the world, but it is also the guaranteed element of the maintenance of the gender inequality and of the unbridled exploitation of nature.

The ecofeminist struggles present the convergences of hierarchization and point the way to a sustainable and possible world: the gender equality and the respect for nature rights. In this sense, Ecuador's Constitution was worked on, to make it possible to respond to the initial question.

In the proposal of the Good Way of Living, founding pillar of the Ecuadorian Constitution, it is possible to recognize ecofeminist praxis. It is Latin American ecological and decrescent activism that acts in the recognition of diversity through agroecological practices, of defense of animals, creation of production networks, ecological and supportive distribution and consumption, struggle for territories and natural assets, recycling, environmental education, dissemination of ideas for formal education, fundamental keys to face and resist in the search for gender equality and the preservation of nature.

It is experienced in contemporary society, the recognition of new categories of analysis that point to the need for construction of new socio-environmental relations of promotion of equality and respect, to increases quality of life for people and environmental preservation. It is not utopian to think of a sustainable society!

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