

## Environmental citizenship: liberalism, cosmopolitanism and sustainability

### Cidadania ambiental: liberalismo, cosmopolitismo e sustentabilidade

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#### ABSTRACT

The debate about the concept of environmental citizenship in the literature of the Social Sciences is currently marked by a conceptual dispute. Against this background, the text develops a critique of the concept of liberal environmental citizenship, using the concept of cosmopolitan environmental citizenship as the basis for this critique. The text examines the meaning of the concept of liberal environmental citizenship and then compares it to the cosmopolitan interpretation of the concept. Unlike other works that address these issues, this text allows us, among other things, to examine the connections between liberal environmental citizenship and national liberalism. Through this analysis, we hope to clarify some of the limitations that affect the concept of environmental citizenship, while exploring the possibilities that the cosmopolitan perspective offers for our understanding of the concept of environmental citizenship. Examining the concept of environmental citizenship proves to be fundamental to the analysis of environmental public policy, where the pursuit of sustainability is generally viewed as a process of public participation. This is particularly evident in areas such as environmental education, where environmental citizenship is generally seen as an essential dimension that constitutes it.

**Keywords:** citizenship, environmental citizenship, liberal environmental citizenship, cosmopolitan environmental citizenship, environmental problems.

#### RESUMO

O debate sobre o conceito de cidadania ambiental na literatura das Ciências Sociais é marcado atualmente por uma disputa conceitual. Frente a esse quadro, o presente texto desenvolve uma crítica do conceito de cidadania ambiental liberal tomando como referência o conceito alternativo de cidadania ambiental cosmopolita. No texto, o significado do conceito de cidadania ambiental liberal é explorado e, em seguida, comparado com a interpretação cosmopolita do conceito. Diferente de outros trabalhos que abordam essas questões, o presente texto permite examinar, entre outras coisas, os vínculos existentes entre a cidadania ambiental liberal e o nacional-liberalismo. Com a presente análise, espera-se esclarecer algumas das limitações que atingem o conceito de cidadania ambiental e, simultaneamente, explorar as possibilidades que a perspectiva cosmopolita oferece para nossa compreensão do conceito de cidadania ambiental. O estudo do conceito de cidadania ambiental mostra-se fundamental para a análise de

políticas públicas do meio ambiente onde o anseio de promoção da sustentabilidade é geralmente visto como exigindo um processo de participação pública. Isso se evidencia especialmente em áreas como a educação ambiental onde a cidadania ambiental geralmente é vista como uma dimensão essencial que a constitui.

**Palavras-chave:** cidadania, cidadania ambiental, cidadania ambiental liberal, cidadania ambiental cosmopolita, problemas ambientais.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Environmental citizenship is currently a central concept in ecological political thought. The concept is associated with the expectation that citizens can help promote environmental sustainability through their political participation. This expectation stems from the vision that environmental citizenship can provide an incentive for behavior change that is different from traditional public policy tools. People do not develop ecological practices only for fear (punishment) or economic gain (profit), but they can also develop them based on their ecological virtues. (BECKMAN, 2001). Given the current tensions between the economic system and environmental concerns, we can assume that progress in many areas of environmental policy will not result from a spontaneous harmony of all interests around sustainability, but from the democratic struggle for environmental rights that sustainability implies as a political ideal.

The late appearance of the concept is surprising, considering that environmental discourse since the 1970s has been linked to the issues that lead us to the public participation that the concept of citizenship proposes. The debate on the strengthening of public space or the commitment to the political participation of citizens can be considered as constituting elements of contemporary environmental discourse since its emergence (DOBSON, 2005). One of the reasons for this paradox lies, perhaps, in the very history of environmentalism. The vision that projected itself into the most radical wing of the contemporary environmental movement has not been shaped by the liberal vision of individual rights, but by the vision of small ecological communities based on solidarity and social cohesion (KENNY, 1996, p. 22). To the extent that liberal citizenship is defined by these very rights, it is understandable that it has been neglected by an alternative discourse on public participation. And if it is true that contemporary environmental thought has brought a vision of more active citizenship into the social imagination, it has done so from a critical perspective vis-à-vis the very liberal conception of citizenship.

There is no consensus on the best way to define environmental citizenship. Nor is it certain that current disagreements about the concept will disappear in the short or medium term. The various arguments in defense of environmental citizenship arise from theoretical orientations that have their origins in different traditions of political thought. And this can be easily seen in some classifications that try to capture the different meanings attributed to the term. While Bell (2016) classifies the different models of environmental citizenship as individual, local, and global, Dobson (2003) classifies these different models as liberal, republican, and cosmopolitan. This means that the debate on environmental citizenship is influenced by theoretical orientations that long predate its recent birth. This text examines some of the existing controversies involving the first and last models in Dobson's (2003) classification. To this end, the first part of the text examines the relationship between the concept of liberal environmental citizenship and issues related to environmental rights and the nation-state. Building on this, some arguments for global environmental citizenship are analyzed. In the end, the text offers a summary of the criticisms that the cosmopolitan model of environmental citizenship offers against the national liberal perspective.

## **2 LIBERAL ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP**

In the 20th century, the concept of rights became central to the idea of citizenship. This was expressed in the approach of T. H. Marshall, a thinker who became a reference in the debate on the concept in the social sciences. Marshall (1967) defined citizenship in terms of three types of rights: civil, political, and social. In the 1990s, one of the first attempts to define the concept of environmental citizenship took up the same structure and applied it to the environmental context. This effort is found in Bart van Steenbergen's argument that stated that environmental citizenship should be seen as an expression of an "addition, but also as a correction, to the three existing forms of citizenship: civil, political and social". (VAN STEENBERGEN, 1994, p.141). In his vision, environmental citizenship would take shape alongside civil, political, and social rights through the addition of environmental rights.

This proposal has become clearer in recent work in which environmental rights are an important dimension in defining the concept of environmental citizenship. This intellectual elaboration can be found in the works of Bell (2005) and Dobson (2003). The former is a leading proponent of the liberal definition of the concept, while the latter is

critical of this approach. In any case, we will adopt Dobson's (2003) definition of liberal environmental citizenship, as it allows us to capture some of the essential elements of definition. According to Dobson, a liberal environmental citizenship is:

"it is a citizenship that deals in the currency of environmental rights, that is conducted exclusively in the public sphere, whose principal virtues are the liberal ones of reasonableness and a willingness to accept the force of the better argument and procedural legitimacy, and whose remit is bounded political configurations modelled on the nation-state. For the most rough-and-ready purposes, it can be taken that environmental citizenship here refers to attempts to extend the discourse and practice of rights-claiming into the environmental context" (2003, p. 89).

As Dobson himself notes, the liberal model is premised on the assumption that "issues of environmental rights and citizenship are intimately linked" (2003, p.92). It can also be seen as a type of citizenship that aims to "extend the discourse and practice of rights-claiming into the environmental context" (2003, p.89). This interpretation offers us a familiar insight into the concept of environmental citizenship. The citizen in this concept is the one who claims his or her environmental rights within the public sphere of a nation-state. The definition of environmental citizenship that Bell (2016) offers for the concept follows this exact orientation, arguing that environmental citizens have three types of political duties. These include the duty to obey and promote environmental laws and some 'non-enforceable civic duties' (Bell 2005, p. 189).

A first complicating factor in this definition emerges when we consider environmental rights. Environmental rights can be defined and implemented in different ways. And this difference can have obvious implications for what environmental citizenship might mean. According to Shelton (1991), environmental human rights can be understood as (a) environmental rights or represent a (b) reformulation and extension of existing human rights. In the latter case, environmental rights are oriented toward "procedural guarantees [that] could be provided against arbitrary action likely to significant deterioration of the environment" (SHELTON, 1991, p.117). Environmental rights in this case act as assets to promote and defend basic needs associated with the functions of the environment for humans. Note that in the first case (a) the environment is perceived as an intrinsic value, while in the second case (b) it is tied to the idea of human well-being. Thus, if environmental citizenship reminds us of the claiming of environmental rights in the public sphere of a nation-state, its profile may differ because of the moral issue that separates these assumptions. One could attribute a more

anthropocentric environmental citizenship bias in one case while glimpsing a more radical approach in the second<sup>1</sup>. In addition to this separation, there are a number of other conceptual, moral, and political issues that the idea of environmental rights may raise. Let us consider just a few of them:

"The notion of an environmental right raises a number of vexed issues. What, for example, does it entitle the right-holder to? Is the right-holder necessarily an individual, or can there be group environmental rights? If there are environmental rights, who is to be accountable for their implementation? (The complex nature of environmental degradation clearly entails problems for the proof of environmental harm and the location of its source.) Most importantly, can an environmental right be held to trump the right of a nation to make use of its own resources? And is the language of rights the most appropriate conceptual language to employ in addressing this problem? Or can we employ some other kind of moral claim by which to limit the right to national self-determination with regard to the exploitation of natural resources, and thereby protect the environment? (BATTY and GRAY, 1996, p.154).

Environmental rights are not a panacea that can solve all environmental conflicts. But at the same time, it would not be reasonable to neglect their importance for environmental policy in many circumstances. In situations where the causal links associated with environmental problems can be established and a principled responsibility for existing environmental impacts can be assigned, environmental rights appear to be important in environmental policy. In such cases, environmental rights can be viewed as a means by which legal safeguards are created to provide the political security that individual freedoms require. Rights should be viewed as tending to produce important environmental obligations. As Nickel (1993, p.284) states, a "right is not merely a claim to some freedom or benefit; it is also a claim against certain parties to act so as to make that freedom or benefit available." (1993, p.286). Therefore, "persons, organizations, and corporations have a duty to refrain from activities that generate unacceptable levels of environmental risk" (NICKEL, 1993, p.284). But if environmental rights are to play a role in environmental policy, they must be enshrined at the constitutional level. In this case, environmental citizenship is not only linked to environmental rights, but also to the nation-state in which these rights are enshrined in law.

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<sup>1</sup> Batty and Gray (1996) point out the anthropocentric orientation of environmental rights when they are defined in terms of an "adequate" or "healthy" environment for humans. If environmental rights are defined in this way, they would prove to be decidedly anthropocentric. In this definition, a rather rigid moral dividing line is drawn between humanity and the rest of nature. Humans are still seen as the only source of value in the world. Non-human nature, on the other hand, tends to be seen as purposeless, as it satisfies only human needs. For a brief examination of these controversies, see also Woods (2010).

### 3 NATION STATE, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

Citizenship is usually associated with a "political body" or "political community." Something that can be found in some definitions of the concept. Bellamy (2008), for example, defines it as follows: "It consists of membership of a political community where all citizens can determine the terms of social cooperation on an equal basis" (BELLAMY, 2008, p.17). In this case, liberal citizenship is tied to a bounded community with identifiable cultural, political, and geographical boundaries. In modern times, the nation-state became the most visible expression of this political community for many liberals. The term "bounded community" refers to the social, political, and territorial closure implied by the concept. In this way, citizenship is perceived as a kind of political participation with very clear territorial and political boundaries<sup>2</sup>. As a result, the central question defining the concept of citizenship has been reduced almost exclusively to the question of the citizen's attachment to the nation-state (DOBSON, 2003, p. 70). As Heater (1999, p.23) notes, citizenship loses its political meaning when it is viewed as divorced from territoriality, sovereignty, and a shared nationality. This view assumes that citizenship must operate in a "defined and often contiguous political space" (DOBSON, 2010, p.101). For this reason, liberal environmental citizenship is seen as addressing environmental rights within the configurations designed by the nation-state (DOBSON, 2003, p. 68). If it is a type of citizenship that involves the use of language and the practice of claiming environmental rights, this process is seen as occurring within the territorial boundaries that define the nation-state and its institutions. From this perspective, liberal environmental citizenship can be seen not only as a citizenship centered on environmental rights, but also as a citizenship that is both national and territorial.

This link between environmental citizenship and the nation-state can have several positive effects on environmental policy. Environmental rights provide a legal guarantee of environmental citizenship by creating institutional support for political action that takes place within civil society. In this way, environmental interests embodied in the form of rights can more effectively guide public policy. They provide legal support for the development of a more consistent environmental policy agenda. At the same time, as Christoff (1996, p. 165) notes, in this process the state can provide more guarantees for the democratic deliberative processes required for environmental policy decisions. This creates concrete material conditions for participatory processes (referenda, forums, etc.).

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<sup>2</sup> For a defense of citizenship as bounded citizenship, see Miller (2000).

As well as greater guarantees for participation in terms of freedom of expression and access to environmental information. Elements that can be considered essential for the exercise of an environmental citizenship that develops in the national public sphere.

If the above arguments point to the institutional support that the state can provide for the exercise of environmental rights, there are liberals who offer cultural arguments to understand this relationship even more deeply. This can be explored by looking at some of the arguments made by thinkers associated with what is known as national liberalism in contemporary political theory. For those who belong to this current of contemporary liberal thought, freedom and nation represent values that reinforce each other. According to Tan, for thinkers who subscribe to this type of political thought, "all states, including liberal ones, should promote and inculcate a sense of shared nationality among their respective citizens" (TAN, 2004, p. 87). This is because they believe that a shared national identity is a necessary element for the emergence of virtuous national citizenship. This is important for them in the context of the liberal democratic state, where individuals pursue different and sometimes incompatible goals<sup>3</sup>.

This type of argument is not entirely new. In *Considerations on Representative Government* Mill (2018) argued that democracy tends to require a national culture expressing, in a way, some of the arguments associated with national liberalism. For Mill, for example, "Where the sentiment of nationality exists in any force, there is a primâ facie case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart". (MILL, 2018, p.280). At another time it states that "it is in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities" (MILL, 2018, p.283). Likewise, for important liberal thinkers such as John Rawls (2000) it is the nation-state that represents what a "well-ordered society" can mean and where a policy based on justice as equity can be implemented<sup>4</sup>. Marshall's own liberal definition (1967) of citizenship presents this relationship. In *Citizenship and Social Class, and Other Essays*, he will state that the citizenship whose history I wish to trace is, by definition, national" (MARSHALL, 1967, p.64). Hence Kymlicka argues that when liberal theorists "discuss what 'political community' can or should mean, they are asking in what sense nation-states can be seen

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<sup>3</sup> National liberalism can be found in the work of contemporary thinkers such as Kymlicka (2002), Miller (2016), Tamir (1993) and Moore (2004). On the main theses of national liberalism, see the works of O'Kelly (2003), Kymlicka (2001) and Tan (2008).

<sup>4</sup> For Rawls, "a well-ordered society is a society that perpetuates itself, a self-sufficient association of human beings that, as a nation-state, controls a given territory." (RAWLS, 2000, p. 80)

as political communities" (2001, pp. 221-22). At the same time, when these same theorists, he says, "develop an account of the appropriate virtues and identities required for democratic citizenship, they ask what it means to be a good citizen of a nation-state" (KYMICKA, 2001, p. 221). From this perspective of liberal thinking, the nation is seen as offering the cultural foundations for the promotion of values associated with individual freedom that, for an author such as Kymlicka (2001, p. 228), emerge within a national culture. The latter creates the compromises that citizens make with each other in order to solve the problems that are common to them. According to Kymlicka (2001, p. 220), it is nationality that allows citizens to make efforts to promote, for example, distributive social justice policies within the (national) political community to which they belong<sup>5</sup>.

Hiskes' work (2009) offers an example of the implications of these arguments for our understanding of the existing links between citizenship and the nation-state. Hiskes (2009) considers national identity as a key element in the promotion of environmental rights and environmental justice itself. Promoting environmental justice, he says, "compels us to view ourselves and our rights always within the context of the group to which we – and our successors – belong" (HISKES, 2009, p. 150). We possess, he says, "environmental human rights as members of our national community". This condition "differs in important ways (...) from other national communities" (HISKES, 2009, p. 150). This ethical selectivity, in which our rights and duties with respect to the environment are seen as limited to the relationships we develop with our fellow citizens, rather than as an expression of a particular prejudice, would be the primary means of moving citizens toward an active and communal political life. Therefore, not only freedom and rights, but also environmental justice and human rights "requires the sharing of political identity" (HISKES, 2009, p.144). This identity is, for Hiskes (2009), a national identity. Through it citizens recognize each other and develop a "shared obligation to preserve their environment as part of a duty to maintain their own authenticity or group identity". (HISKES, 2009, p.144). In a sense, then, the processes of environmental care are a

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<sup>5</sup> As Manson writes: "The rights of citizenship are owed as a matter of justice and the duties of citizenship are understood primarily as the means through which a person discharges the duties of justice that she owes to her fellow citizens" (MANSON, 2014, p. 320). Kymlicka's arguments in the passages we have just seen make this very point. However, the justice in question in her arguments is basically national. Thus, the arguments in this vision differ from those made on behalf of global environmental citizenship, which we will discuss in a moment, and in which citizenship is linked to a kind of cosmopolitan environmental justice. For an exploration of the applicability of (national and global) justice principles in the citizenship debate, see Armstrong (2021).

projection of the political identity bonds that arise in the territory of the nation-state and are reproduced through the exercise of a national citizenship.

This argument offers a cultural vision that links environmental citizenship to the nation-state in a fundamental way. It suggests that environmental rights that underpin the exercise of environmental citizenship require a shared national identity. Only through it do the rights and duties associated with the ideal of citizenship find a real way to emerge in the life of a concrete political community. For Hiskes, therefore, "all humans therefore possess environmental rights as (and only as) citizens of their own transgenerational national communities" (2009, p.143-4). Citizenship, then, does not refer to a global environment, but only to those recognisable elements of that environment that are in some way connected to national identity. Although man's natural environment is obviously global, he notes that "each society considers its natural environment to be that which extends to its own borders, and in relationship to which aspects of national identity are defined" (HISKES, 2009, p.101). All nations define their image through this physical environment in which the relations between citizens take place. And national identity itself tends to create, in some way, this binding relationship between citizenship, environment, and identity.

Although Hiskes (2009) does not elaborate a definition of environmental citizenship in these passages, we can see from his arguments how environmental citizenship is derived from these assumptions. Environmental rights generally apply only within the political community to which we belong as citizens. At the same time, this political community is itself a strictly national community. In this context, our environmental rights and the duties associated with them are exercised in the context of the relationships we establish with our fellow citizens. Finally, the ethical preference that unfolds in our relationship with the environment becomes visible. Our environmental rights are exercised with respect to the environment that the national community considers "its" and which, as Hiskes (2009, p.144) notes, encompasses the aspects that define national identity.

Dobson (2003) suggests that the liberal model of environmental citizenship tends to establish a necessary relationship between citizenship and the nation-state. However, he and other works in this literature do not inform how this connection works in cultural and moral terms. Hiskes' (2009) arguments are detailed here because they illustrate precisely this kind of connection assumed in the liberal model. Hiskes' (2009) liberal

argument allows for a look at how citizenship, environmental rights, and the nation-state are integrated into a liberal yet national imaginary. After considering some of the elements that make up this vision, I will explore some of the arguments in defense of a cosmopolitan model of environmental citizenship in the following section.

#### **4 GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP**

The concept of global citizenship is generally seen as the redemption of the Stoic ideal of a cosmopolitan citizen. The concept expresses the expectation that the ethical concerns of citizenship can transcend the limits of the ethical particularism of nationalism. When applied to environmental issues, the concept has been given various names. To refer to it we will find the terms "post-cosmopolitan environmental citizenship" (DOBSON, 2003), "global environmental citizenship" (JELIN, 2000; ATTFIELD, 2003) or "post-national environmental citizenship" (CHRISTOFF, 1996). A more detailed examination of the literature might reveal other possibilities for classification. While global environmental citizenship may be viewed only as a political ideal, other works view it as an evolving reality. The concept is primarily used to describe the dynamics of environmental awareness within a globalized civil society. In what follows, we will use the term global environmental citizenship when considering these different uses of the concept, as we will explore the consistent arguments associated with these different uses. We will consider some of the arguments that we believe are essential to understanding the political justifications that are made in defense of this model of environmental citizenship.

#### **5 COSMOPOLITAN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

O'Neill (2009, p.29) defines global environmental problems as those that "cross national boundaries or affect global commons." Global commons include the atmosphere, oceans, and other resources not subject to national sovereignty. Transboundary environmental problems explain how pollution tends to cross national boundaries, making it impossible to manage within the territory of a nation-state. Globalization of the environment is characterized by the fact that global environmental changes cross geographic and political boundaries between countries (GOLDBLATT, 1997). Global environmental interdependence suggests that the place of production becomes separated from pollution and its effects. In this process, polluters and victims of pollution are

separated in global geography. This type of interconnectedness may be due to the biological and physical conditions that constitute the environment, but it also results from the social processes involved. Thus, a chain of causal effects may exist in the way pollutants are transported from one place to another across the globe<sup>6</sup>.

The origins and consequences of global environmental problems interact with economic, political, and cultural institutions and processes. This is the case when environmental changes are not only caused by the global economy but also transported by international trade. An example is the export of hazardous waste to the poorest countries, which is promoted by rich countries. The same is true when industrial plants are moved from rich countries to the poorest countries, increasing the total amount of global pollution. As a result of all these processes, a cultural phenomenon can be identified that is related to the globality of environmental problems, and through which people from different parts of the planet are linked together (YEARLEY, 1996).

Global environmental problems exist because their effects are caused by actors located in different parts of the world. And also because the policy responses we must provide to them require coordinated action by these same actors in different policy areas (DOWER, 2003, p. 04). Problems of this nature cannot be addressed by the citizens of one country alone, but require cooperation that goes beyond the territory of the nation-state. This kind of perception, however, seems to be missing from the liberal vision of environmental citizenship we saw earlier, which limits the dynamics of citizenship to the national space. This view assumes that "citizens situated in a demarcated territory constitute a shared political community of destiny" (GOLDBLATT, 1997, p.80). Solutions arise from the choice of national governments, which must then take into account the narrow interests of their own constituencies in international negotiations. For Goldblatt (1997), the ecological globalization we saw above leads to an implosion of these kinds of assumptions, because:

"First, the existence of the global commons and its collective ecological decline has generated an environmental community of fate far bigger than any single Nation-State. This point is enforced by the existence of transboundary pollution and environmental interdependence. Thus both the rightful scope of the democratic political community and the extent of reciprocal obligations, responsibilities, and rights can no longer be located exclusively at the level of a nation alone. Second, even if we restrict ourselves to national political communities, the geographical scope of ecosystems and environmental degradation easily evades the sovereign reach of the largest nation-state. No

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<sup>6</sup> We must also keep in mind that, as Goldblatt (1997, p. 79) suggests, national environmental problems can lead to migration processes that eventually cause tensions at the borders between countries.

state has the autonomous capacity to control the quality of its atmosphere or to prevent pollution arriving on the wind. Third, the sovereign legal entitlement to rule in a given domain has been compromised by the web of commitment, treaties and international legal obligations that states have acceded to. Fourth, the capacity of a polity to pursue an autonomous public policy is constrained by its necessary involvement in international environmental regimes where a meaningful political community of environmental fate can be represented - international institutions - democratic accountability is particularly difficult to achieve". (GOLGBLATT, 1997, p. 80).

This democratic deficit is seen as a prerequisite for the defense of cosmopolitan citizenship. At the same time, it is recognized to have ethical implications for environmental citizenship that put it in a new perspective. Attfield (2003, p.109) argues that the global nature of many environmental problems requires a cosmopolitan global ethic in which human actors recognize themselves as global citizens belonging to an emerging cosmopolitan order. Advocates of global environmental citizenship like him criticize the ethics of nationalism<sup>7</sup>. National citizenship leads to a kind of ethical particularism with serious consequences for global environmental governance. This view leads the citizen to evaluate the environment selectively. He tends to favor the local or national environment to the detriment of the global environment. This then leads to a consequent "exclusion of nature beyond the national limits and also of the planet's natural systems" (ATTFIELD, 2005, p. 40).

The territorial bond that citizens create within the nation-state thus becomes a cultural filter for evaluating existing environmental problems. For Attfield (2005, p.40), this view leads to a preference for certain territories, environments, and ecosystems over others. At the same time, this selective nature can lead citizens to treat with indifference those elements of the environment that appear to lie outside the boundaries of their territory. From this ethical standpoint, there are few critical objections that a citizen can raise to the harmful environmental practices that his or her own country produces for foreign territories. As we have seen above, there are examples of this kind when richer countries export wastes that their citizens consider undesirable to the poorest countries of the world. For Attfield, these cases express "a form of communitarianism that cares little about the people of the third world, their environment, and their descendants" (2005, p.41). For Attfield (2005), the term communitarianism here denotes the same ethical particularism found in nationalism. In fact, he sees both communitarianism and nationalism as expressions of ethical particularism that prioritises the interests of their

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<sup>7</sup> For an analysis of the ethics of nationalism, see Tamir (1993).

respective political communities. The ethical particularism found in both nationalism and communitarianism, according to Attfield (2005, p. 40), asserts: "that responsibilities always arise from our relationships, and that there are no responsibilities for people or beings with whom we do not interact." At the same time, a "person's relationship with their country and their fellow citizens are important enough for the resulting responsibilities to outweigh or exceed any others" (ATTFIELD, 2005, p. 40). Thus, if the export of hazardous waste to poorer countries strikes us as strange and immoral, we can hardly criticize such a process on the basis of this moral particularism. If these practices are to be criticized, it seems to require a judgment based on some kind of ethical cosmopolitanism. To judge situations like these as unjust, we must be in possession of cosmopolitan principles that allow us to place the same value on people and environments from other countries as we do on people and environments that are close to us. It proposes a broader view of justice that says that pollution itself should not be distributed around the world as a mere result of commercial bargains, when economic power tends to prevail in political decisions.

If the ethical particularism of a national citizenship leads us to take a selective view and make our territory more important than others, for Attfield (1999, p.44) "There is nothing incoherent or absurd about loyalty to the planetary biosphere, or simply to our home, the planet Earth, and no need to be ashamed of such loyalty." In fact, this cosmopolitan bond that we can create with the planet would already be occurring with those who are currently concerned about the global commons or the extinction of animals that have no nationality. The cosmopolitan critique that authors like Attfield and others make in this context, then, suggests that the solidarity formed by national identity is proving to be more of an obstacle than a solution to problems of this kind. Citizens who are satisfied with their local solidarities, as Thompson suggests, "people who think that they are justified in their loyalties are likely to regard themselves as entitled to refuse to sacrifice national or local interests for the sake of global objectives" (2001, p. 138). Moral particularism leads citizens to be unwilling to accept ethical responsibility beyond the territorial boundaries of their nation-state.

The liberal environmental citizenship we examined in the first part of this text could be seen here as induced by a state morality. In international relations theory, state morality suggests that states are the decisive ethical actors in the global context (HUTCHINGS, 1999, p.31). Ethics is thus subject to the principle of national sovereignty.

It would be strange, therefore, for citizens to be concerned with ethical issues in the context of global environmental problems if, from this perspective, states, rather than individuals, are seen as the moral actors par excellence. Even if the interest of the state is seen as an expression of the interests of the citizens themselves, such a perspective suggests that the interests of the latter are linked to the authority of the former. Within this framework, the ethical concerns of citizens must be managed in such a way that they do not betray or transgress the political authority of the nation-state itself<sup>8</sup>.

Advocates of global environmental citizenship point out that environmental problems depend not only on coordinated action by governments, but that this response also requires building a solidarity that goes beyond the authority of the nation-state and, for the same reason, is not limited to it. That is, it should not be reduced to a conflict of interests between national governments. These problems require citizens from different parts of the world to cooperate with each other and create a lasting culture that will make these actions sustainable in the long run. If it is true that there must be global coordination and that such a process is fed by the cooperation of the citizens of a globalized civil society, then at the same time this scenario requires that these same citizens develop a sense of solidarity that goes beyond their local ties. And which also sees the global environmental problems in question as expressions of common interests among people living in different places on the planet. This picture suggests the need:

"... values must be capable of motivating individuals to cooperate for the sake of solving global problems. They must be the basis for a transnational solidarity that would make individuals willing, when they have good reasons, to sacrifice personal, local and national interests for the sake of people of the world as a whole. And they must give rise to, or encourage, the development and maintenance of institutions that provide political and economic means for resolving global problems, but at the same time do not undermine the particular and local relations that people value". (THOMPSON, 2001, 138-9).

Where the lines of cause and effect of environmental problems cross the boundaries of the nation-state, we must also act in a morally responsible manner (DOWER, 2007). Ethical cosmopolitanism can be defined as a type of philosophy that assumes that all "all human being are members of a single moral community and that they have moral obligations to all other human beings regardless of their nationality,

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<sup>8</sup> This assessment is consistent with Saiz's (2005, p. 167) diagnosis when he states that the lack of cooperation in international environmental governance is due to the resistance of states to the establishment of global coordination mechanisms for global governance. The origin of this resistance is to be found in etatism, which he believes leads to realist diplomatic practices based solely on national interests.

language, religion, customs, etc" (Kleigeld *apud* TARRABORELLI,2015, p.01)<sup>9</sup>. Cosmopolitanism presupposes that all human beings have equal value.

This principle leads to universal moral responsibility. Cosmopolitanism leads us to this ethical horizon because its concern goes beyond a particular political community. It excludes the possibility of ascribing supreme value to particular collective entities such as nation-states. It also excludes the possibility of ascribing higher value to certain kinds of people to the detriment of others (Brock *apud* HARRIS, 2010, p.102). And for all that, it is an alternative to ethical nationalism, which assumes that our obligations are limited to those who share a national identity with us.

Global environmental problems lead us to this kind of cosmopolitan ethic because they involve global distributional conflicts. Thus, concepts of global environmental citizenship in some cases include a desire for environmental justice that incorporates planetary scale. Global problems such as climate change suggest cosmopolitan justice because problems of this nature bring home to us the fact that all people in the world depend on certain environmental conditions for their well-being, while the cooperative system aimed at promoting this environmental performance ultimately requires the inclusion of all people on the planet (VANDERHEIDEN, 2008, p.104). For this reason, Dobson's (2003) defense of global environmental citizenship highlights global environmental justice as one of its first virtues. For Dobson, in his vision of postcosmopolitan environmental citizenship, "the first virtue of ecological citizenship is justice. More specifically, ecological citizenship virtue aims at ensuring a just distribution of ecological space" (DODSON, 2003, p. 132). Being an environmental citizen means, first and foremost, working for an environmental justice that is no longer just national, but global.

From the perspective of national environmental citizenship, it is states, not citizens, that conduct the global distribution negotiations. There is a danger, then, that global distributional issues will be interpreted simply as a conflict of interest between national governments. However, as Jamieson notes, the notion that governments should negotiate with each other in these circumstances with only their national interests in mind is problematic for advancing global environmental justice. Global environmental justice should be complemented by a broader perspective of duties and obligations (Jamieson

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<sup>9</sup> Jones defines ethical cosmopolitanism as the perspective that views individuals as basic units of moral interest and their interests must be considered from an impartial point of view. (JONES, 1999, p. 102). The principles of individualism and universality are seen as its integral elements.

apud HARRIS, 2010, p.111). For the relationships that exist between people, institutions, and organizations, and that manifest themselves in inequalities in global environmental problems, cannot always be resolved by the interests of nation-states.

## 6 ENVIRONMENTALISM AND GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

Human rights play an important role in various definitions of global citizenship. In these approaches, human rights eventually take on a similar meaning as civil and political rights when examined in the context of national citizenship (ALLEN, 2011, p. 294). Certain definitions of global citizenship therefore presuppose a change in the scope of rights. It would be human rights, rather than national (civil and political) rights, that would constitute the basis of global citizenship. This shift in emphasis is also evident in the defense of global environmental citizenship in some works. This is because with ecological globalization, where environmental risks tend to be diffuse and have no discernible spatial and temporal logic, states would increasingly reach their limits in guaranteeing the environmental rights of their citizens. Also because national rights would fall into the problems of ethical particularism that we saw above. The question raised by Batty and Gray (1996) in the previous part leads us in some ways to this dilemma. For the question they raise (Can an environmental right trump a nation's right to use its own resources?) points to the limitations of environmental rights when viewed from a global perspective: "The complex nature of environmental degradation clearly entails problems for the proof of environmental harm and the location of its source". (BATTY and GRAY, 1996, p. 154). But it is in the context of ecological globalization that we will find this situation. How important and effective can the demand for an "adequate" or "healthy environment" be when it comes to problems like climate change? What about when this demand is made within the boundaries of a city or country? We can hardly be optimistic about the effectiveness of environmental rights in this context.

For this reason, Jelin's (2000) proposal for global environmental citizenship suggests shifting the focus of environmental rights to bring them closer to human rights. Issues such as climate change or the depletion of energy reserves, she argues, require us to move beyond the liberal vision of citizenship and embrace a more global vision of our own rights. "How do we interpret environmental claims", Jelin asks, "within the

framework of the struggle for universal human rights?" (2000, p. 54)<sup>10</sup>. Not much differently, Faulks (2003, p. 139) notes that in cases like these, nation-states can no longer guarantee the individual rights of their citizens unless they also take into account the rights of citizens of other countries. If environmental rights still matter in such a scenario, then it would not be unreasonable to suggest, as Jelin (2000: 54) does, that they raise a cosmopolitan outcry, much as human rights do at the level of international politics in other areas such as violence and poverty. This is also because environmental issues are in many cases not divorced from such problems: migration processes triggered by climate change can lead to situations of extreme poverty and violent conflict<sup>11</sup>.

The limitations on the effectiveness of environmental rights in the national sphere may have important consequences for thinking about the role of the nation-state in international environmental governance. As Christoff (1999) notes, "environmental sustainability in a one country" becomes impractical, so the state itself must become a facilitator of global environmental citizenship. And as a facilitator of deliberative democratic processes that strengthen international environmental cooperation. The nation-state must be constitutionally strengthened to act as a space for discussion and debate about global (not just national) environmental problems, and to find democratic responses to these challenges at both the national and international levels.

Although many see global environmental citizenship as an abstraction or ideal, for many it is an emerging real citizenship. The most important sign of this is the environmental activism that is developing on a global scale. For Carter, global environmental activism today is an expression of the construction of "a global civil society and a cosmopolitan citizenship" (2001, p.93). Thompson (2001, p.136) similarly argues that in the scenario of cosmopolitan citizenship, there is a "capacity to share this responsibility and institute forms of governance that facilitate cooperation." The criteria used to define a civil society include: (a) existing forms of associational life, (b) norms that define the "good life," and (c) arenas of public deliberation. Jordan defines global

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<sup>10</sup> The relationship that Jelin (2000) establishes between human rights and environmental rights is not new, as this relationship has also been considered in other works. His contribution is to suggest that this type of interpretation should be made within the definition of environmental citizenship itself. For an analysis of the relationship between human and environmental rights, see Boyle (2007), Anton and Shelton (2011), and Shelton (1991).

<sup>11</sup> Global environmental problems are generally associated with poverty when the poorest countries, in order to increase their productivity at any cost, disregard more sustainable economic practises because they are less profitable in the short and medium term (FALKS, 2000). On the relationship between climate change, conflict, and human rights, see the work of Christiansen (2015).

civil society as the sphere of ideas, values, institutions, organizations, networks, and individuals that rally around an ideal of civility. These actors are located in groups that transcend familial relationships, the state, and the market and operate beyond nation-states (JORDAN, 2011, p. 95).

If global citizenship presupposes collective responsibility in the face of planetary environmental risks, then global civil society is seen as the means by which cosmopolitan environmental citizenship might develop. A process that is already underway in some of the works examined here. In short, for those who advocate global environmental citizenship, the possibility of shared global responsibility, along with the ethical orientation that characterizes it, may already be found in the associative networks that make up global civil society. These networks not only change the public agenda of international politics by directly influencing global agreements, but they also help strengthen participants' own perceptions by seeing themselves as members of global society (STEWART, 1992). A process that is followed by the creation of organizations, spaces and forums that help to strengthen the solidarity that these groups tend to promote. According to Jordan (2011), global civil society should be understood as a political force that itself stimulates struggles and demands for global citizenship<sup>12</sup>.

## **7 ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP: THE COSMOPOLITAN CRITICISM**

For cosmopolitans, the globality of environmental problems expands the community of fate and empties the national political space, creating a democratic deficit within the nation-state. For this vision, the idea of a national community of fate loses meaning when people from around the world connect with the environmental problems they produce. As Goldblatt asserts, the global commons and their destruction create an "environmental community of fate far bigger than any single Nation-State" (1997, p. 80). Moreover, in this process, all the elements that make up the practice of national citizenship, the set of responsibilities and mutual obligations that we have, including our own rights, change. The bonds of solidarity formed within the national territory usually prove to be an obstacle to the emergence of a global solidarity that can be considered necessary to address these problems. In the cosmopolitan vision, the danger here would

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<sup>12</sup> For Falk (1994), the debates that have developed around the Brundtland Report and its concept of sustainable development are also examples of a trend that points to new configurations of global governance that in turn have implications for global citizenship itself. Depending on how these new institutional configurations evolve, political participation at the global level could be further strengthened by this process.

be that liberal environmental citizenship itself, with its strongly national orientation, would overshadow solutions to environmental problems on a larger scale. National solidarity, which for authors such as Hiskes (2009) is the only way to engage citizens in their political community, risks perpetuating rivalries and tensions at the global level with its national ethic, which tends to favor certain environmental sectors to the detriment of others.

There is also the danger of selective ethical orientation within liberal environmental citizenship. If national identity is formed from the environment that each national community considers its own, and that environment is located within the territorial boundaries of a national society, what reason would citizens have to direct their concerns to aspects of the environment that are not close to them? Or that are not integrated into their national identity? As Attfield shows, there is a danger that the cultural bond that environmental citizens form with their national territory may favor some areas, environments, and ecosystems to the detriment of others. This can lead to the exclusion of environmental issues that transcend national boundaries. Similarly, the national attachment that accompanies liberal environmental citizenship can foster citizens' indifference to harmful environmental practices that their own country produces for other places. Taking the richest countries as an example, Attfield draws attention to the risk, as we have seen, of a "form of communitarianism that cares little for Third World peoples and nothing for their environments and for those of their descendants" (ATTFIELD, 2005, p.41). The criticism we can make of such practices can only come from a cosmopolitan point of view. For why should citizens criticize such practices when they not only benefit from them but also find themselves deprived of a vision that informs them of their potential injustice?

Moreover, there is the possibility that liberal environmental citizenship does not offer answers to questions of global ecological inequality. If it bears the hallmarks of a national liberalism for justice, there is a great danger that this approach to the concept of environmental justice will be seen as a purely national phenomenon. As Tan (2003, p. 86) indicates, from the perspective of national liberalism, it is within the framework of a "national community *within* which liberal principles of justice are to apply". In this view, the "liberal ideal, that the individual is entitled to equal respect and concern, is thus exposed to be more parochial than it was once thought to be" (TAN, 2004, p.86). In the national-liberal imaginary "it is meant primarily to apply to individuals qua fellow

nationals, and not necessarily to all individuals as such" (TAN, 2004, p.86). However, as we have seen, global ecological inequalities require a cosmopolitan ethical perspective based on impartiality. There is no evidence in the literature that the concept of liberal environmental citizenship departs from the particularist orientation mentioned above, and the work of Hiskes (2009) on this concept confirms this tendency. His conception of environmental justice based on human rights presupposes that "we possess environmental human rights as members of our national community" (HISKES, 2009, p.150). Finally, the liberal environmental citizenship approach, which confines the practice of environmental citizenship to the boundaries of the nation-state, involves a kind of methodological nationalism that tends to neglect institutional trends that point to the emergence of the practice of citizenship beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. If the changes in global governance highlighted by Falk (1994) signal the possibility of citizens influencing the decision-making processes that take place in international arenas, a liberal environmental citizenship would tend to remain indifferent to processes of this kind, recognizing only the influences that environmental citizens can exert within a national public sphere. The concept also offers no support given that these changes tend to occur under the influence of global environmentalism.

Finally, consider that Bell's (2016) definition of liberal environmental citizenship presupposes the existence of environmental obligations for foreign citizens. However, this type of ethical commitment tends to develop within a concept of citizenship that is still national in all its aspects. In any case, this would suggest that this definition of liberal environmental citizenship can set a precedent so that certain cosmopolitan issues can be partially included. Thus, a more detailed analysis of the models of environmental citizenship examined here would require us to consider the scope of these environmental obligations. This means that the difference between one model and the other in some aspects seems to be too small in this particular case.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

Some analyses of cosmopolitan citizenship tend to see it as a substitute concept for the concept of national citizenship. However, many proponents of cosmopolitan citizenship see it as merely a complementary and mediating concept. This means that when we consider these different models (national/global), we do not necessarily have to make a unilateral choice between them. For Held, the cosmopolitan citizen will be able

to "encompasses dialogue with the traditions and discourses of others with the aim of expanding the horizons of one's own framework of meaning and prejudice" (2001, p. 399). The global citizen thus presents himself as a political actor "who can think from the point of view of others" and equip himself with the necessary tools to deal with the new global problems. On the other hand, the critique that the cosmopolitan vision makes of liberal environmental citizenship raises important questions that we should take into account when trying to imagine the ethical and political scope of the concept when applied to the national level. This, in turn, would require a reexamination of the assumptions we make about environmental citizenship and its connection to the nation-state. If global environmentalism is a reality today, it is possible to examine global environmental citizenship on the basis of what Giddens (1991) calls utopian realism. This is because it offers insights into pathways to desired social change based on institutionally immanent possibilities. Even if these possibilities are seen as nascent, they would not be irrelevant to thinking about the connection between citizenship and the environment in the 21st century.

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