HOW DOES ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AFFECT BLACK WOMEN IN BRAZIL AND HOW IS THEIR INVISIBILITY REPRODUCED AT THE 29TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES AFTER THE PARIS AGREEMENT?

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Abstract

This article proposes a reflection on the impacts of environmental racism on the lives of Black women in Brazil, focusing on the invisibility of this issue in the official discourses of Brazilian government authorities at the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP), which symbolically marked nine years since the commitments established under the Paris Agreement. From an intersectional theoretical perspective, the study seeks to demonstrate the lack of recognition, on the part of Brazilian environmental foreign policy decision-makers, of the intersecting forms of oppression embodied in the figure of Black Brazilian women. Employing discourse analysis as its methodological approach, the research examines the speeches delivered by the Vice President and Minister of Development, Industry, Trade and Services, as well as by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change of Brazil, at the 2024 Conference of the Parties, an annual meeting aimed at discussing the agenda of the international environmental regime. The findings indicate that, although the statements made by representatives of the Brazilian government emphasize the pursuit

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of investments for the country's sustainable development, they nonetheless reveal a lack of centrality in addressing environmental racism and its effects on the lives of Black women in Brazil.

Keywords: Environmental racism. Sexism. Foreign policy. Conference of the Parties. Intersectionality.

COMO O RACISMO AMBIENTAL AFETA MULHERES NEGRAS NO BRASIL E DE QUE MANEIRA SUA INVISIBILIDADE SE REPRODUZ NA 29ª CONFERÊNCIA DAS PARTES APÓS O ACORDO DE PARIS?

Resumo

Este artigo propõe uma reflexão sobre os impactos do racismo ambiental sobre a vida das mulheres negras no Brasil, com foco na invisibilidade da temática nos discursos oficiais de autoridades do governo brasileiro na 29ª Conferência das Partes (COP), marcada por simbolizar os nove anos dos compromissos do Acordo de Paris. A partir de uma perspectiva da teoria da interseccionalidade, o trabalho busca demonstrar a falta de reconhecimento, por parte dos formuladores da política ambiental externa brasileira, das intersecções que se encontram na figura da mulher negra brasileira. Utilizando-se do método de análise de discurso, a investigação centra-se nos discursos proferidos pelo vice-presidente e ministro do Desenvolvimento, Indústria, Comércio e Serviços e pela ministra do Meio Ambiente e Mudança do Clima do Brasil na Conferência das Partes de 2024, reunião anual que busca discutir a agenda do regime ambiental internacional. O estudo indica que as falas dos representantes do governo brasileiro, mesmo preocupadas com a busca por investimentos para o desenvolvimento sustentável do país, demonstram uma falta de centralidade no combate ao racismo ambiental e seus reflexos na vida das mulheres negras do país.

Palavras-chave: Racismo ambiental. Sexismo. Política externa. Conferência das Partes. Interseccionalidade.

¿CÓMO EL RACISMO AMBIENTAL AFECTA A LAS MUJERES NEGRAS EN BRASIL Y DE QUÉ MANERA SU INVISIBILIDAD SE REPRODUCE EN LA 29ª CONFERENCIA DE LAS PARTES TRAS EL ACUERDO DE PARÍS?

Resumen

Este artículo propone una reflexión sobre los impactos del racismo ambiental en la vida de las mujeres negras en Brasil, con especial énfasis en la invisibilidad del tema en los discursos oficiales de las autoridades del gobierno brasileño durante la 29ª Conferencia de las Partes (COP), evento que simboliza los nueve años de los compromisos asumidos en el marco del Acuerdo de París. Desde una perspectiva de la teoría de la interseccionalidad, el trabajo busca demostrar la falta de reconocimiento, por parte de los formuladores de la política ambiental exterior brasileña, de las intersecciones que convergen en la figura de la mujer negra brasileña. Mediante el uso del método de análisis del discurso, la investigación se centra en los discursos pronunciados por el vicepresidente y ministro de Desarrollo, Industria, Comercio y Servicios, así como por la ministra de Medio Ambiente y Cambio Climático de Brasil, en la Conferencia de las Partes de 2024, reunión anual destinada a debatir la agenda del régimen ambiental internacional. El estudio indica que las intervenciones de los representantes del gobierno brasileño, aunque preocupadas por la búsqueda de inversiones para el desarrollo sostenible del país, evidencian una falta de centralidad en el combate al racismo ambiental y a sus repercusiones en la vida de las mujeres negras en Brasil.

Palabras clave: Racismo ambiental. Sexismo. Política exterior. Conferencia de las Partes. Interseccionalidad.

1. Introduction

The concept of environmental racism can be understood as referring to "the social and environmental injustices that disproportionately affect vulnerable ethnic groups [...], as well as populations identified as traditional communities" (Herculano 2008, 16). The term was coined in 1982 by the African American movement in the United States, which demonstrated the existence of a relationship between the spatial distribution of chemical waste sites and polluting industries and the territorial distribution of minority ethnic groups in the country, notably Black and Hispanic communities (Herculano 2008). In this way, the term seeks to synthesize how racial discrimination contributes to the disproportionality of the impacts that extreme climate events, resulting from the increase in global temperatures, produce on racially minoritized and economically more vulnerable communities (Monteiro *et al*. 2023), exposing racism, whether intentional or not, present in the formulation of public policies and environmental legislation, as well as the distancing of individuals, especially Black and Indigenous populations, from decision-making spaces (Castelo Branco 2024). Thus, environmental racism in contemporary Brazil should be understood as a materialization of the power relations present in social structures and presents itself as a result of colonialism and the historical inequalities that mark the formation of Brazilian society (Monteiro *et al.* 2023).

In this sense, discussions concerning the distribution of environmental burdens in the country become even more complex when the category of gender is added to the debate. This occurs since, from the perspective of intersectionality theory, there is an overlapping of oppressions that mark the experiences of individuals belonging to social minorities, such that certain groups simultaneously deal with multiple forms of oppression (Pasquali 2023). From this perspective, Black women from peripheral areas in Brazil, located at the intersection of the categories of gender, race, and social class, in addition to suffering from the burdens of environmental racism, still need to deal with structural gender barriers in spaces of environmental policy formulation (Castelo Branco 2024). Thus, the exclusion and underrepresentation of these women in the construction of alternative development projects that respect the limits of nature (Herculano 2008) should be read as a consequence of the intersection between environmental racism and sexism.

This context becomes even more concerning when analyzing the provisions of the Paris Agreement of 2015. Drafted during the 21st Conference of the

Parties (COP), held annually by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), this document is the most important of the century with regard to climate change, as it demonstrates the commitment of countries within the international system to effectively mitigate the global climate emergency (Milchert and Melo 2024). From this perspective, all 195 signatory countries to the Agreement (Brazil 2015) committed themselves to considering local particularities in the formulation of their mitigation and adaptation policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which are responsible for global warming (Milchert and Melo 2024). However, it is worth emphasizing that, even though Brazil is one of the nations that ratified the document and its premises of seeking equity in the fight against climate change, an analysis of the speeches delivered by representatives of the current government at COP29 reveals that there is no centrality in addressing environmental racism and the impacts of the climate emergency on the lives of black Brazilian women.

Thus, considering the existing literature on environmental racism, such as Herculano (2008) and Monteiro *et al*. (2023), on the relationship between climate change and the category of gender, such as Pasquali (2023) and Castelo Branco (2024), and on intersectionality, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) and Lélia Gonzalez (2020), the present study is relevant insofar as it seeks to understand how the the impacts of climate change on Black Brazilian women become more complex, notably after nine years of commitment by the Brazilian government to promoting a more equitable struggle for climate justice in the country. In this way, analyzing the speeches of government officials at the world's main climate conference demonstrates the real level of concern on the part of those responsible for the country's environmental and climate agenda in promoting meaningful public policies that improve the quality of life of these women. Therefore, as racism, sexism, and the disproportionality of environmental burdens intersect in the experiences of Black women living in urban peripheries in Brazil, the struggle against all these forms of oppression must also be unified (Castelo Branco 2024).

Foreign policy encompasses a set of actions, guidelines, and decisions adopted by a State in its relations with other countries and international organizations. This field can and should be considered a type of public policy, since it shares the same characteristics, from its policy-making cycle to the influence, even if to a lesser extent, of the most diverse actors present in society, in addition to its focus on social problems (Silva 2024). In this sense, it is used as an object of analysis, as the way a country conducts its foreign policy demonstrates its position within international regimes, its diplomatic

credibility, and its global standing and capacity to advance proposals to address challenges such as climate change. Thus, understanding foreign policy allows for a broader analysis of the interconnection between domestic demands and international commitments, a factor that is essential for assessing the impacts of the Paris Agreement on national environmental policy.

According to Gondim and Fischer (2009, 2), "discourse does not obey only the rules of structuring individual thought and language, but also expresses a collective thought constructed from the position that a person occupies in the social world." In this sense, the methodology of this article is based on the discourse analysis method, which seeks to examine speech within its proper context, assisting in the understanding of how individuals think and act throughout history through their discursive productions. Thus, by analyzing the speeches of Brazilian authorities at COP29, this article aims to highlight the absence of recognition, on the part of Brazilian environmental foreign policy decision-makers, of the intersectionality that permeates the experiences of black women in the country. The research question is defined as understanding how environmental racism affects black women in Brazil and in what ways their invisibility is reproduced at the Conferences of the Parties after the Paris Agreement. In this manner, the 29th edition of the COP, the main international forum for debating changes in climate conditions since the 1990s (Milchert and Melo 2024), is selected because it marked nine years since the signing of the Paris Agreement and enabled a broad assessment of advances and setbacks in the construction of public policies in response to environmental damage, linked to the pursuit of gender and racial equity.

To this end, in addition to the introduction, the article is divided into four main sections. The first discusses the concept of environmental racism and how it dialogues with Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality. Subsequently, the second section contextualizes the Paris Agreement and the changes it proposed to the international environmental regime. The following section focuses on the speeches delivered by Brazilian authorities at the 2024 Conference of the Parties and on how there is, in practice, the invisibility of Black women living in peripheral areas in the conduct of the country's external environmental agenda, in contrast to the innovations incorporated during the 21st COP. Finally, the last section presents the study's final reflections, offering recommendations for linking climate justice that encompasses the categories of race and gender to Brazil's positions at the Conferences of the Parties.

2. Environmental Racism and Intersectionality Theory

Environmental racism is understood as the disproportionate way in which climate change and other environmental impacts affect ethnoracial groups in situations of vulnerability, in comparison to those who are more socioeconomically privileged. As mentioned, the term was coined by in the United States in 1983, after cases were identified linking the location of landfills and hazardous waste disposal sites to the presence of black communities. An illustrative example is an investigation conducted by the United States General Accounting Office (GAO), which revealed that, of the four major landfills in the southern United States, three were located near areas with a strong African American presence, even though these populations accounted for only twenty percent of the region's total population (Herculano 2008). From this perspective, debates on environmental racism reveal the existence of discrimination, even if implicit, in the formulation of policies and legislation that unduly expose black, indigenous, and traditional populations to greater environmental risks (Monteiro *et al.* 2023). In this sense, it is observed that a large portion of these populations are forced to live with pollution, environmental degradation, and developmentalist infrastructure projects (Herculano 2008), in addition to facing the impacts of rising global temperatures, such as extreme climate events, including intense rainfall and severe heat waves.

In this regard, it is important to highlight how the fight against environmental racism establishes an extremely important connection with struggles for environmental and climate justice. For Santos (2023, 30), "[...] transformations of nature are carried out to benefit humankind, but not all people who are part of this environment will benefit." From this perspective, considering such inequalities, environmental debates have developed based on the defense of environmental justice, which seeks to guarantee rights to racial and social groups by promoting due recognition of the environmental disproportionalities that affect these populations more destructively, incorporating a defense of government actions capable of producing equity for them (Acselrad 2022, quoted in Santos 2023). As an extension of this struggle, the defense of climate justice also emerges, which "deepens this discussion by pointing out what specific environmental impacts are, how they become disproportionate for certain groups, and by naming who the people that make up these groups are, centering their specificities" (Santos 2023, 30).

In this context, when incorporating environmental racism into the Brazilian reality, it is necessary to understand that Black populations, particularly those living in urban areas, have historically been conditioned to deal with greater environmental burdens. This occurs because the country's economy was sustained for centuries by the enslaved labor of Africans and their descendants, a practice that was only made possible through the dehumanization of these populations. As a result, as a legacy of this period, racism was incorporated and became a structural aspect of Brazilian society, such that even after the end of slavery, Black populations were not granted access to any form of reparative measures or policies (Cunha Jr. 2019).

Thus, subsequent moments in national history were marked by a gradual strengthening of structural racism in social relations, urban formations, and the national state apparatus. In this way, many of the policies aimed at achieving order and progress for the nation carried some type of negative implication for the lives of Black people, notably due to their exclusion from decision-making spaces and from the "formal" environment of the large city, that is, the most developed areas that receive greater attention and investment (Cunha Jr. 2019). According to Cunha Jr. (2019, 76-77), "the systematic removal of Afro-descendant populations from urban centers took place in all Brazilian cities, transferring these populations to remote and difficult areas, deprived of transportation, sanitation, healthcare, education systems, and leisure."

In this way, environmental racism presents itself as a consequence of the racial discrimination that mark the origins of Brazilian society, considering its colonial past, and that persist to the present day as a consolidated structure of oppression that not only excludes individuals, especially black people, from decision-making spaces, but also amplifies their vulnerabilities (Castelo Branco 2020). This reality completely contradicts the Federal Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the document that governs the country's democracy and which, in Chapter VI, Article 225, states that "everyone has the right to an ecologically balanced environment, a good of common use by the people and essential to a healthy quality of life, imposing upon the Public Authorities and the community the duty to defend and preserve it for present and future generations" (Brazil 1988, art. 225).

Recent cases clearly expose the disproportionality of environmental impacts on racialized individuals. During the collapse of the Fundão dam in Mariana in 2015, areas with a greater presence of black populations, such as the rural village of Bento Rodrigues, experienced a more severe degree of destruction compared to other regions, since these spaces were more exposed

to the risks of mining activity (Wanderley 2015). According to Wanderley (2015, 4, our translation),

> Bento Rodrigues, with a population that is 84.3% black, was located just over 6 km from the collapsed tailings dam; Paracatu de Baixo, with 80% of its population being black, was situated just over 40 km downstream from the dam, following the course of the Gualaxo do Norte River; the village of Gesteira, located approximately 62 km from the dam, has a population that is 70.4% black; and the city of Barra Longa, with 60.3% of its population being black, is located approximately 76 km from the dam. Above all, it was these black communities that suffered the most from human losses and from material, symbolic, and psychological impacts.

Similarly, environmental racism in the Brazilian context can also be observed in the episode of flooding that inundated the state of Rio Grande do Sul in early 2024. The regions in Rio Grande do Sul that recorded higher numbers of damage reports and disappearances coincide with areas where there was a greater concentration of black and brown populations. According to *Observatório das Metrópoles* (2024), neighborhoods such as Humaitá and Sarandi, in the Greater Porto Alegre area, as well as Santos Dumont, in Novo Hamburgo, were among the most severely affected by the floods and had the highest proportion of black residents within their respective cities. From this perspective, based on the observation of these cases and the coincidences present in these examples, it is possible to understand the historical and social depth that must be considered by the authorities who influence the institutional aspects of the country's environmental dynamics.

From this viewpoint, the scenario of climate change becomes even more concerning when considering the interactions between race and gender. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) argues that the experiences of black women are shaped by a form of intersection between racism and sexism that goes far beyond a simple addition of these discriminations. In this way, the author demonstrates that the demands of black women in society and within social movements are broader than those made by white women or by black men, since the convergence of oppressions in their lived experiences presents very specific contours (Crenshaw 1989). Thus, Crenshaw (1989) illustrates her argument through an analogy between intersectionality and traffic at an intersection, such that,

> [...] discrimination, like traffic at an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens at an intersection, it may be caused by cars traveling from several directions, and sometimes from all of them. Likewise, if a black woman is harmed because she is located at an intersection, her injury may result from gender discrimination or racial discrimination" (Crenshaw 1989, 149).

From this perspective, the renowned Brazilian author Lélia Gonzalez also exposes in her work the ways in which racism and sexism are articulated to create systems of domination that subordinate black women and exclude them from spaces of power. For Gonzalez (2020), social subordination resulting from racism and the subordination promoted by patriarchy, a system marked by male centrality, are interconnected in order to doubly oppress black women in Brazilian society, excluding them and confining them to stereotyped social roles, such as that of the "sensual mulatta" or the "black mother," thereby hindering their access to positions of greater prestige and power within society.

In light of the above, it becomes evident that the common notion that climate change affects all people equally and that its impacts do not differentiate by social class, race, or gender is demystified. On the contrary, black women, particularly those living in the peripheral areas of Brazilian cities, are the most vulnerable to environmental policies and legislation that unevenly distribute environmental burdens and render them more susceptible to extreme climate phenomena. Moreover, this situation is aggravated in two ways, either due to the distancing of these women from political spaces that shape the country's environmental agenda, or due to the lack of concern on the part of Brazilian authorities in exploring the nuances of the intersection between race and gender. In this way, Brazil's defense of environmental justice abroad becomes an incomplete set of actions when it fails to adequately consider the oppressive and violent dimensions present in the lived experiences of Black women.

3. The Paris Agreement and the Role of Brazil

Despite the existence of an international legal regime on climate change since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which entered into force in 1994, the global scenario prior to the Paris Agreement featured an international agenda in which the environmental agenda was not a priority (Rei *et al*. 2017). The main objective of the Paris Agreement is to keep the increase in global average temperatures well below 2°C and

prevent it from exceeding 1.5°C; to this end, all states were invited to submit their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). In this context and in search of change, a bottom-up strategy is adopted in international climate negotiations. This strategy consists of

> Encouraging countries to reflect on and develop proposals based on their own realities, in order to move toward the definition of global goals; b) conducting negotiations in blocs (bilateral or plurilateral) to reach understanding more quickly with fewer participants; and c) strengthening the processes and mechanisms that involve global civil society in the negotiations (Rei *et al*. 2017, 89, our translation).

This change sought to increase engagement and the feasibility of the targets, recognizing the need for equity and a just transition, that is, one that considers the history, capacities, and differences of each state. In this way, the commitments made in Paris aimed at replacing the rigid logic proposed by the previous agreement, the Kyoto Protocol, with negotiations that promoted a greater balance in the sharing of environmental responsibilities between developed and developing countries (Rei *et al*. 2017). With the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the strategy is consolidated and becomes the new negotiation model between the parties. Among the main innovations incorporated by Paris 2015, it is worth highlighting the defense of the principle of universality, so that the obligations established by the agreement are common to all countries, but with varying degrees of responsibility; equity and climate justice, in which there is the recognition of different national capacities and vulnerabilities; and the linking of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), so that each country presents its own emission reduction targets, revised every 5 years (Rei *et al*. 2017).

In the following years, at COP 24, since mid-November 2015, the UN climate change negotiations have focused on the implementation of the rulebook to ensure greater efficiency for the Agreement. However, "While the rulebook is an important milestone, the political signals from COP 24 were, in other ways, less ambitious" (Peixer 2019, 142).

Thus, in 2015, Brazil assumed important targets such as, for example, mitigation measures that would lead the country to achieve zero illegal deforestation by 2030 (MME 2015).

> Brazil plays a leadership role in global environmental negotiations. The South American country is one of the world's 10 largest GHG emitters, the ninth-largest economy in the world in terms of nominal GDP, and the eighth-largest in purchasing power parity. It is a unique case among industrialized countries, given that the majority of its emissions do not result from energy use. Instead, most of Brazil's emissions come from land-use change and forestry, giving Brazil the position of the world's largest emitter in this regard. It is believed that the deforestation of the Amazon has emitted approximately 200 million metric tons of CO2 into the atmosphere per year (Peixer 2019, 147, our translation).

However, as the years have passed, Brazil, which previously occupied a central and highly prominent leadership role in climate negotiations, has gradually lost its leading role as a result of the loss of priority of the domestic environmental agenda (Rei *et al*. 2017).

Thus, even though the Paris Agreement demonstrates a more realistic pursuit of climate change mitigation through a more balanced approach, the commitment still presented considerable limitations. The voluntary nature of the NDCs and, consequently, the lack of coercive mechanisms for meeting the targets, meant that the most vulnerable countries, that is, those most affected by environmental damage, remained without real guarantees of support. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting the existence of tensions between the nations of the Global North, those with greater responsibility in the international environmental order due to their history of involvement in the exploitation of natural resources for the development of their national economies, and those belonging to the South, which demanded greater engagement and financing from the former (Rei *et al*. 2017).

> Thus, North-South tensions persist regarding historical responsibilities and differentiated capacities, as developing countries continue to demand greater commitment from industrialized nations in the provision of financial and technological resources (Rei *et al*. 2017, 167, our translation).

Furthermore, regarding the issue of environmental racism, there are criticisms of the Brazilian position and the Agreement. According to the IBGE (2022), Brazil has 20,656,458 people who declare themselves black (pretas), representing 10.2% of the population, and 92,083,286 people who declare themselves mixed-race (pardas), representing 45.3% of the population, totaling

approximately 55.5%. As for the indigenous population, it corresponds to 0.8% of the population, with 1,694,836 indigenous people. The study also shows that the Black and Indigenous populations are predominantly female, which reinforces the need to address race and gender in climate policies.

According to Silva and Requia (2025, 4), "Climate change acts as a threat multiplier, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities based on race, gender, and socioeconomic status". Thus, the analysis shows that Black and Indigenous populations are the most vulnerable to environmental risks, which causes concern when noting that both the Agreement and Brazil's own positioning do not effectively incorporate the debate on race and gender. In this sense, the Paris Agreement, which sought to promote debates on just transition, was unable to associate the debates on environmental and racial justice, which, according to Córdova *et al*. (2022), can result in "false solutions" to the climate issue, masking inequalities without effectively confronting them.

Thus, the Brazilian experience highlights a contradiction: although the country possesses great environmental and demographic relevance, its international stance barely engages with internal inequalities. The lack of incorporation of variables such as race and gender into the design of climate policies reveals that the challenge of a just transition goes beyond meeting mitigation and adaptation targets. It is, above all, a matter of redefining who participates in decision-making, who benefits from policies, and who continues to bear the costs of the climate crisis disproportionately.

4. Is Environmental Racism Included in the Agenda of Brazilian Environmental Diplomacy?

Representation is a concept that encompasses a multiplicity of meanings and applications; however, for the development of this article, the modern concept of representation in the political sense will be used. According to Amorim (2018, 5), "In political terms, to represent is, therefore, to make present in the political arena the visions, perspectives, and interests of citizens." In this way, the model of representative democracy is brought into discussion, which is often flawed in including members of social groups historically absent from political decision-making processes, such as women. The study also finds that even with the extension of the right to vote, it was not capable of modifying the distribution of political power, which remains to this day concentrated in an elite composed predominantly of men.

However, in recent years, debates on political representation have moved away from the traditional "politics of ideas," understood as the perspective according to which it did not matter who held the mandate as long as they shared the same conceptions. In its place, the so-called "politics of presence" gains prominence, highlighting that it is not enough for the representative to merely defend certain ideas; it is necessary for them to understand, experience, or even be a part of them (Amorim 2018). Within this logic, the analysis shows that the exercise of political representation functions is influenced by specific political and ideological convictions, that is, they are not neutral actors.

In this sense, when analyzing the speech of Vice-President Geraldo Alckmin at the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) in 2024, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, a shift in the discourse toward a focus on investments in renewable energy and a commitment to reducing illegal deforestation is noted (Alckmin 2024). Discourse analysis, or simply the DA methodology, clarifies that discourse is not a simple speech but rather a situated social act (Gondim and Fischer 2009). In other words, in every discourse, all variables are important: who is speaking, in what place, for which audience, and in what historical context. In this direction, the analysis first considers who is speaking. Geraldo Alckmin is the Vice-President of Brazil and, at the time of the speech, held the position of head of the official Brazilian delegation at COP29; both the venue and his position required him to present the country as reliable within the new model of a global economy that commits to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

> Brazil is recognized as an environmental powerhouse, but also as a leader in food security. We have the largest tropical forest in the world, the cleanest energy matrix among major economies, an efficient and green agriculture, and, above all, the awareness and commitment that there is only a future if it is sustainable (Alckmin 2024, our translation).

Subsequently, when mentioning the "fight against inequality," Alckmin associates the term with the idea of sustainable development, but without explicitly stating the dimension of racial or gender inequalities. The silence regarding environmental racism is not a mere oversight; in the methodology of discourse analysis, it is understood as a significant "unsaid" (non-dit), which reveals the limits of the Brazilian diplomatic agenda (Gondim and Fischer 2009).

> Our NDC is much more than simply an emission reduction target for 2035: it reflects the vision of a country that looks toward the future

> and is determined to be a protagonist in the new global economy, with renewable energy, the fight against inequality, and a commitment to sustainable development (Alckmin 2024, our translation).

Finally, regarding the Vice-President's speech, another element of discourse analysis is mentioned: discursive memory. Brazil's speeches in international forums follow a tradition and, more clearly, are based on presenting the country as a protagonist and proposing ambitious goals, while remaining only in generic terms regarding issues of social justice. This memory prevents the notion of inequality from advancing toward a deeper critique of racialized and vulnerable populations.

Regarding the speech of Marina Silva, a Black woman, representative of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change of Brazil, and with a strong record in international forums defending the preservation of the Amazon, Silva speaks in her capacity as Brazil's environmental spokesperson." Even within the precepts of the politics of presence, there is a tension: Marina symbolizes representativeness, but her discourse does not necessarily incorporate race and gender as a priority. In Silva's speech, one notes a discursive emphasis on attracting investment to the country, aligning with the diplomatic agenda of negotiation between countries (Gondim and Fischer 2009). The word "financing" is used eight times in the speech; in this sense, the discourse constructs the idea that financing is the most urgent and central problem, overshadowing other issues (Silva 2024).

> This is the "Finance COP." Of the NCQG (New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance), which will pave our collective path toward ambition and implementation at COP30. The 1.5°C goal is an inescapable ethical imperative. It reflects what science says is necessary, however much some may also consider it challenging. For financing, as discussed in the G20 and as pointed out by the High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance, trillions are needed, however many may also consider it challenging (Silva 2024).
>
> We need everyone to present ambitious NDCs. However, we need an equivalent alignment in means of implementation and financing, an alignment between substance and finance, Mr. President. This is the COP of means of implementation and financing. We have a process to measure whether our 1.5°C targets are being met. We also need a process that can measure whether financing is up to

> this challenge. In the texts presented so far, we have seen progress in the area of adaptation, in Article 6 (Silva 2024, our translation).

According to Gondim and Fischer (2009), Discourse Analysis stems from the recognition that the subject is not constituted in isolation but is traversed by multiple social voices, carrying in their speech the marks of collective discourses and the society to which they belong. Thus, individual discourse must be understood as the result of an intertwining of personal experiences, institutional norms, and broader power structures. In this sense, the absence of categories such as "environmental racism" and "gender" in official discourses cannot be interpreted merely as a rhetorical choice or a momentary lapse, but as evidence of a structured and reiterated discursive framing that reflects the permanence of a historical system of marginalization. This silencing, by rendering invisible the problems that disproportionately affect certain social groups, acts to maintain inequalities while projecting an image of neutrality and universality that, in truth, masks the selectivity of political and diplomatic agendas. Thus, discourse analysis allows not only for the identification of absences but also for an understanding of how such omissions reiterate forms of exclusion and sustain official narratives that privilege certain interests to the detriment of social and racial equity.

In this way, both Alckmin and Marina, when speaking on behalf of the Brazilian State, mobilize an official discourse of just transition in pursuit of attracting investments to the country, yet they do so in a generic and abstract manner, erasing the markers of race and gender. Therefore, as Amorim (2018) explains, the politics of presence is not always capable of resolving conflicts of representation; in this sense, when discussing Brazil and its diplomatic environmental agenda, we achieve representation but not representativeness. This scenario is exemplified by the fact that women, let alone racialized women, are not mentioned in official discourses. Thus, the silence regarding environmental racism is not neutral: it is a discursive gesture that delimits which social subjects are recognized as legitimate in environmental diplomacy and which remain invisible.

5. Final Considerations

The present analysis sought to demonstrate how the speeches delivered by the Vice President and Minister of Development, Industry, Trade and Services, Geraldo Alckmin, and by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Marina Silva, at the 29th Conference of the Parties, an important event marking

nearly ten years since the signing of the Paris Agreement, reveal an absence of recognition of the vulnerabilities produced by the intersection of race and gender in the lived experiences of black women in Brazil. By bringing together the concept of environmental racism and Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, as well as the theoretical approach of Lélia Gonzalez, which discusses intersectionality while considering the national historical context, it was possible to understand how the effects of climate change affect black women more severely, even as they remain invisible during the formulation of environmental policies and in Brazil's international representation.

From this perspective, this lack of reference to and concern with the reality of black women is the result of a historical process that combines the oppressions produced by colonialism and racism with patriarchy, thereby sustaining inequalities. As previously discussed, the spatial distribution of black communities, usually located in peripheral areas that are more susceptible to extreme climate events such as floods, coincides with political and urban planning choices that marginalize these populations. At the same time, the distancing of black women and their demands from spaces of power, whether in the domestic or international arena, reinforces the existence of a form of climate governance that fails to encompass a multiplicity of experiences.

In this sense, following the Paris Agreement, one of the greatest milestones in the international environmental regime of the twenty-first century, it was expected that there would be a genuine effort to mitigate the effects of climate change while considering the regional and historical specificities of each actor involved in the commitment. In this way, the 2015 Paris Agreement was grounded in the idea of a balanced sharing of environmental responsibilities and in a bottom-up strategy, through which countries proposed targets for improving environmental and climate conditions based on their own realities, through the so-called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Thus, the Agreement advocated greater flexibility in international environmental negotiations in order to achieve increased effectiveness.

However, when analyzing the speeches delivered by Brazilian authorities at COP29, nine years after the Paris commitment, a clear difficulty can be observed in incorporating Brazilian specificities into the country's external environmental agenda. This scenario is particularly concerning, as the country, despite being one of those most affected by climate change, maintains a limited external agenda that fails to effectively consider the social dimensions of the crisis. Thus, even in the face of the profound racial and gender inequalities that structure Brazilian society, official positions have still been unable to

articulate a discourse that recognizes the centrality of the intersection between environmental racism and gender as generators of vulnerability.

From this perspective, with regard to the conduct of the research, the study faced certain constraints in designing the discourse analysis. Initially, the article was intended to be developed based on an analysis of the proportion of Black women in the Brazilian delegation sent to COP29, with a detailed examination of the positions occupied by these representatives within the delegation and the agendas they defended during the conference, seeking to demonstrate the importance of including individuals who are more vulnerable to climate change, in this case Black women, in formal international debates. However, due to the lack of quantitative data on their actual participation, the present study focused on analyzing the speeches delivered by representatives of the Brazilian government at the conference, since these actors are responsible for presenting the country's demands and claims within the international environmental regime.

Therefore, the present work sought to demonstrate how the intersection between gender and race contributes to the heightened vulnerability of black women in the face of climate change. From this perspective, these intersecting forms of oppression not only make these individuals more susceptible to environmental disasters, but also distance them from, and exclude their demands from policy-making spaces of environmental policy formulation in Brazil and globally. Thus, it is possible to observe that Brazil's relevance to global climate governance should indeed be affirmed, particularly with regard to attracting external financing that contributes to the implementation of more ambitious sustainability goals, as advocated by Brazilian authorities at COP29. However, it is imperative to recognize, especially at the world's principal international environmental conference, that any and all measures adopted by the country must consider the singularity of the environmental experiences of black women.

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