Environmental citizenship – an inquiry into the engagement of citizens in responsible environmental behaviour

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ABSTRACT

One of the principles of sustainability is developing initiatives that are effective in engaging citizens in environmental behaviour. This research provides insights into the adoption of responsible environmental behaviour as a means for promoting engaged environmental citizenship. It examines some of the principles underpinning responsible environmental behaviour and its relation to the concept of environmentally responsible citizenship, in accordance with the Tbilisi Declaration objectives. In this thesis, I consider the relationship of environmental citizenship rights with political and social citizenship rights and discuss it in light of T.H. Marshall’s citizenship model. I argue that the societal nature of social citizenship rights and their evolving character, arguably evolving into environmental citizenship rights, is a crucial element. The research presents an analysis of factors determining the adoption of environmental behaviour and how these are linked to dimensions of social dynamics. It investigates factors influencing social diffusion and the relevance of this approach in promoting responsible environmental behaviour throughout society. I adopt the agenda-setting model developed by Dearing and Rogers to further the understanding of why certain issues are addressed by society and not others, how public opinion is shaped, as well as how policy actions towards mitigation of problems are motivated. I argue that environmental problems become social problems as the result of a process of collective definition, not as the product of its objective malignancy affecting society. This process of collective definition of a problem is responsible not only for the emergence of an environmental problem, but also for influencing behaviour towards it. By integrating the responsible environmental behaviour model developed by Hines, Hungerford and Tomera with the agenda-setting model, I explore the role the media play in promoting environmental citizenship. Through a discourse analysis of articles related to environmental issues in the Brazilian press, I explore how media in that context usually frames those issues. I also investigate the role the school system plays in raising awareness about, and engaging citizens in, responsible environmental behaviour and how this process has been advanced in Brazil. In addition, the development and activities of a youth environmental movement is analysed. By using a case study approach, I explore the dynamics influencing the uptake of environmental behaviour and the relationship of such practices to the promotion of environmental citizenship. Overall, the multidisciplinary approach adopted in this research indicates that the consolidation of engaged environmental citizenship in Brazil requires the reorientation of public policy actions with the reformulation of the media and educational environments.

Keywords: agenda-setting, Brazil, environmental citizenship, environmental communication, media, responsible environmental behaviour, social diffusion, social movements
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I certify, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that this dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the dissertation itself. This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university.

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Tiago E. G. Rodrigues    Date
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>Campaign Against Climate Change</td>
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<td>CJMA</td>
<td>Coletivo Jovem de Meio Ambiente (Environmental Collective of Youth)</td>
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<td>CJMA-GO</td>
<td>Coletivo Jovem de Meio Ambiente de Goiás (Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth)</td>
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<td>COM-VIDA</td>
<td>Comissão de Meio Ambiente e Qualidade de Vida na Escola (Commission of Environment and Quality of Life in School)</td>
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<td>CWG</td>
<td>Chiswick Wildlife Group</td>
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<td>EDAG</td>
<td>Environmental Direct Action Group</td>
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<td>EEJMA-GO</td>
<td>Encontro Estadual de Juventude pelo Meio Ambiente (State Conference of the Goiás Youth for the Environment)</td>
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<td>FoE</td>
<td>Friends of the Earth</td>
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<td>Responsible Environmental Behaviour</td>
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<td>REBEA</td>
<td>Rede Brasileira de Educação Ambiental (Brazilian Environmental Education Network)</td>
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<td>RECID</td>
<td>Rede de Educação Cidadã (Citizenship Education Network)</td>
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<td>REJUMA</td>
<td>Rede da Juventude pelo Meio Ambiente (Youth Network for the Environment)</td>
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<td>REIA-GO</td>
<td>Rede de Educação e Informação Ambiental de Goiás (Environmental Education and Information Network of Goiás)</td>
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<td>SISNAMA</td>
<td>Sistema Nacional de Meio Ambiente (National Environmental System)</td>
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RESEARCH PROBLEM TO BE EXPLORED

The role of responsible environmental behaviour as a right and duty of citizenship in the long-term sustainability of environmental behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

In an era of globalization, the reference point of the nation-state is being reformulated as the territorial and spatial limits of the phenomena that define this entity are fast being undermined. In this context, we have witnessed the growing reconceptualisation of social themes and problems (Jelin, 2000). Environmental issues are part of this trend. The threat posed by pollution that respects no boundaries and climate change that affects communities worldwide poses new challenges to the well-being and development of society (Newby, 1996). These challenges can be related to a shift in the definition of the units for collective and common goals, as the incapability of individual states to overcome the challenges of our time clearly becomes more apparent (Dobson and Bell, 2006). At the same time, national governments have been pushed to commit themselves to bring issues such as environment and social inequalities to their national agendas as well as pursuing their debate in the international arena, mostly through the formulation of international agreements (Frank, 1994; Jelin, 2000).

Economic changes, technological innovation and globalization have transformed the nature of society. In response to the logic of economic globalization, neo-liberal policies have forged a redefinition of the political sphere based on a minimalistic conception of the state, advancing a new type of relationship between the state and civil society (Nash and Lewis, 2006). In this context, as citizens increasingly have been viewed as being responsible for pursuing their needs through “their own private bootstraps”, civil society has been charged with the social responsibilities increasingly neglected by neo-liberalism’s contracting state (Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar, 1998:1). The three routes to effective citizenship (civil, political and social rights), as depicted by T.H. Marshall (1977), are no longer enough to guarantee a social framework within
which citizenship can be enjoyed. Those rights are still relevant but the debate has moved to a different level. The scope of the nation-state-based citizenship model is not compatible with the social tensions created under global free market tenets. These tensions are related to social issues connected to global pressures and, according to Turner (1993), are driven by a central problem for modern society: the human-environment relationship. Since social problems have increasingly become part of a global order and do not fit adequately into the current political framework (Turner, 2001), the set of human rights is evolving. A set of rights that more adequately secures the well-being of citizens is being debated under the banner of environmental citizenship. This new regime for citizenship still carries the societal nature of social citizenship rights as a crucial element, however, it expands the focus from the individual to the collective and the universal rights and responsibilities of people (Jelin, 2000; Turner, 2001).

As expressed by Newby (1996), the negative consequences of global capitalism on the natural environment have gained space in contemporary politics. Most recently, the universal dimensions of climate change and its impacts on citizens’ well-being and nations’ economic stability have driven social and political actors to place a new emphasis on the effects of global economy as it has been developed and to pursue more sustainable alternatives. This trend can be observed in the outcomes of the Stern Review of the Economics of Climate Change (Stern, 2006) which is perhaps the largest and most widely known and discussed report of its kind. Stern states that: “Climate change is the greatest market failure the world has ever seen, and it interacts with other market imperfections [such as aggravated social and economic inequalities]. [In this light] …to inform, educate and persuade individuals about what they can do to respond to climate change…” is recommended by the review as a policy element “required for an effective global response” (Stern, 2006: viii).

The promotion of responsible environmental behaviour seems to adequately fit within this economic and socio-political scenario. The present study adopts the concept of responsible environmental behaviour (REB) since it is argued that this notion, as formulated by authors such as Sivec and Hungerford (1989-1990) and Kurtycz (2005),
best reflects the desired relationship between society and the natural and built environments: the idea that we are responsible for the effects of our actions upon the natural environment and, in turn, upon ourselves. Furthermore, it expresses principles pertinent to the consolidation of environmental citizenship. Environmental citizenship implies not only rights (such as those conceptualized by T.H. Marshall), but also the duty of every citizen to guarantee such social environmental rights. I argue that the promotion of responsible environmental behaviour – a perspective which reflects the importance given to the consciousness of taking environmental actions within society, taking into account the lasting relationship between these actions and the environment (Kurtycz, 2005) – is a means through which to engage society in the processes of environmental citizenship. The idea of responsible environmental behaviour can be clearly related to the idea of responsible citizenship behaviour as described by Hungerford and Volk (1990), which links environmentally-responsible citizenship to the understanding of, sensitivity to, concern for, and active involvement in, environmental issues.

In this context, an analysis of the social dynamics involved in constructing meaning is imperative for the understanding of factors that determine how people perceive the environment around them (Morgan, 2003; Kurtycz, 2005). The interaction between individuals and the way they relate to their environment have been argued as having a determining influence on shaping behaviour (Morgan, 2003; Kurtycz, 2005). Here, the scholarly study of agenda-setting can shed light on focal points for the promotion of responsible environmental behaviour as it provides an understanding of why certain issues and not others are addressed by society. According to Dearing and Rogers (1996), the agenda-setting process is primarily one of collective definition where different agendas (public, political and media agendas) influence one another to come to define what the current social problem is and how to solve it. Here, the agenda-setting role of the media is pivotal as it can provide society with a public sphere where public opinion can be openly and transparently formed, enabling the promotion of citizenship engaged in solving our urgent social-environmental problems.
However, the media – which definition, for this thesis, is related to mass media – are failing to provide citizens with relevant civic information (which is vital for the development of a just and equal governance model capable of engaging citizens in responsible environmental behaviour), as well as failing to contribute to a democratic public sphere (Hackett and Carroll, 2006). The media’s democratic deficit does matter for the promotion of engaged environmental citizenship because it profoundly influences political and social life, directly affecting our behaviours, and this must be addressed within the frame of environmental citizenship.

Social movements are a key to the promotion of environmental citizenship, as they have the capacity to bring issues to the public sphere and broaden the scope of democratic decision-making. The importance of understanding the rise and spread of social movements is crucial for the consolidation of environmental citizenship. Global and national social movements that have diverse social memberships are observed as frequently influencing the expansion of social rights, and environmental movements in particular, are performing a pivotal role in bringing attention to environmental rights (Turner, 2001). In addition, unified by a collective identity, social movements define solutions for their problems and attract support from other influential groups in society, in this sense framing issues and potentially influencing policy outcome (Lemos, 1998).

The thesis draws on all of these theoretical debates to define environmental citizenship as a framework for the achievement of a more equitable and sustainable society, and to express the relevance of this approach to achieve such an end. Central to this analysis is the notion that the engagement of citizens in responsible environmental behaviour requires the reorientation of public policy actions and the reformulation of the media and educational environments.

THE AIMS OF THIS THESIS

This research is concerned with the social dynamics influencing citizens’ engagement in behaviour more consistent with environmentally-sustainable practices. I
will argue that to promote environmentally-engaged citizens, the process through which a given environmental problem becomes a social problem is as important as an understanding of the factors that have formative effects on developing responsible environmental behaviour in the individual (Hungerford and Volk, 1990; Hines et al., 1986-1987). Central to the arguments that organize the discussion is the proposition that to consistently promote environmental citizenship in society, it is necessary to analyze the social interplays which influence the adoption of environmentally responsible behaviour.

By investigating how an environmental problem becomes a social problem, as well as how the individual adoption of a desired behaviour towards solving an environmental problem becomes a collective behaviour, my investigation intends to advance the debate on the promotion of environmentally engaged citizens. The strength of this study is that in offering a broader multidisciplinary understanding of the social dynamics underpinning responsible environmental behaviour, the research will contribute to the development of knowledge of the processes and relationships involved in the construction of an environmentally engaged citizenry.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

An analysis of the individual or collective nature of rights, as well as a debate over the universal nature of rights of people is required for the consideration of environmental issues within the perspective of human rights and citizenship (Jelin, 2000). As Jelin (2000: 57) argues: “The challenge lies in how subordinate populations can build their capacity to control life circumstances, in other words, the process of empowerment”. Environmental citizenship deals not only with the rights of people to clean, safe environments, but also – and arguably most importantly - it deals with the exclusions and inequalities of society that make the prospects for an environmentally sustainable world unlikely. If environmental rights are seen as an evolution of social citizenship rights, meaning that the struggle for those encompasses the struggle for these (an idea that can be expressed under the concept of social environmental rights), then
environmental rights are more likely to be meaningful and therefore achievable in diverse socio-economic contexts.

The entitlements for societies and global humankind are conditional upon political and social disputes regarding the recognition of legitimacy of those claims as well as their contents (Jelin, 2000:53). In this thesis, I will explore the hypothesis that pragmatic acceptance (where the individual complies with the ruling class stratification because he/she perceives no realistic alternative) and manipulative socialization assist the ‘legitimation’ of liberal democracies (conferring them stability), instead of value consensus among citizens (Mann, 1970). By investigating the agenda-setting process through which public opinion is shaped towards specific outcomes, I seek to express the importance of such phenomenon to the attainment of solutions for environmental problems. As discussed by Mann (1970), the absence of consensus (on beliefs and values such as social justice and democracy) among lower classes is what keeps them compliant with the ruling order. In his discussion, he highlights the role of the school and the media in forwarding pragmatic acceptance and manipulating citizens towards legitimization of interests that do not correspond to the needs and rights of the majority. In this investigation, I will explore such dynamics and their actors, shedding light on their relevance for the promotion of environmental citizenship.

Implications for the development of public policy actions more aligned with the frame of environmental citizenship were expected to emerge. According to Lemos (1998:77), most policy studies in the Brazilian literature “fail to consider the possibility of the policy-making arena as a place where state agents and social movements can interact to their mutual benefit”. For Lemos, the literature pays little attention to two points: how the state can positively influence social mobilization; as well as the role social movements can play in strengthening policymakers’ actions towards policy enactment and implementation. In addition, research on this topic has ignored to some extent how the issue-framing process can influence the policymaking process, as the common focus on state capacity highlights implementation over agenda development. In brief, I argue that in democratic contexts, the way policy actions are carried out by
Attention to how problems and needs become social issues is a research direction I will pursue in this investigation which makes use of the agenda-setting approach to explore such social dynamics in light of the earlier propositions of Blumer (1971). An analysis of the social dynamics involved in constructing meaning is imperative for the understanding of factors that determine how people perceive the environment around them (Morgan, 2003; Kurtycz, 2005). The interaction between individuals and the way they relate to the environment have been argued as having a determining influence on shaping behaviour (Morgan, 2003; Kurtycz, 2005). As pointed out by Hines, Hungerford and Tomera (1986-1987) in their responsible environmental behaviour (REB) model discussed in more detail in the literature review, cognitive and personality variables are the main determinants of a person’s intention to act, affecting overall behaviour.

If the school and media are important socializing agencies in modern society, their influence on those variables is of crucial importance for the adoption of responsible environmental behaviour and the promotion of environmental citizenship. Their agendas, as well as their relationships to other socio-political actors such as the state and the church, must be understood. Here I mention the church due to the powerful institutional role it plays in Brazil, as for much of South American countries. Historically, the church has influenced to a great extent social behaviour in Brazil, by indicating what is appropriate to do or not. Also, different churches have in the last decade bought TV channels and other communication media exerting deeper influence on people’s information, attitudes and behaviour. The challenge in translating the REB model – along with the factors and variables identified as the predictors of responsible environmental behaviour – into strategies resulting in practical actions from the part of the environmentally-responsible citizen is a research direction the present study will focus on, proposing to include insights from the communication field which may contribute to the development of such citizenry.
This research is driven by a constructivist research paradigm since it seeks to identify the varied processes and relationships affecting the construction of social meaning and behaviour. It will attempt to recognize patterns in them that may lead to understanding the social dynamics and interactions involved in the adoption of responsible environmental behaviour. This study is designed to provide recommendations for improving public policies in Brazil aimed at fostering responsible environmental behaviour. In this research, I seek to present a framework that may aid the promotion of environmental citizenship by investigating how citizens can be engaged in responsible environmental behaviour. It addresses a number of points raised in previous research, providing new insights into the issue by employing a range of different approaches.

This study, in part, is a response to recommendations in my earlier work to explore factors influencing the uptake of responsible environmental behaviour (Rodrigues, 2007). Under the umbrella of the broad research problem to be explored, this research seeks to address the following hypotheses using a multi-disciplinary approach:

**Main Hypothesis**

If REB is seen as a right and duty of citizenship, then it is more likely to be enduring and to match the long-term nature of environmental problems.

**Supporting Hypotheses**

If environmental problems are reported in the media (local, regional, national) as social problems, then they will set local, regional, national (political and educational) agendas.

If agendas are set around environmental problems, then they will become recognized as social problems, being more likely to be addressed by citizens and influence social behaviour (in the short-term).

If citizens’ perception of the relative advantage and compatibility of REB to existing
needs is strengthened, then it will lead to the popular conceptualization of REB as a right and duty of citizenship (in the long-term).

If the popular conceptualization of REB as a right and duty of citizenship is developed, then under the spectrum of civic commitment, REB is likely to be diffused as a civic behaviour model.

If REB is disseminated by the media and schools as a civic behaviour model, then it will support the diffusion of REB in society.

I used the following research questions to direct the trajectory of my fieldwork:

- How do environmental problems become recognized as social problems?
- What are the agents and forces influencing the adoption of REB?
- How does the individual adoption of a desired behaviour towards solving an environmental problem become collective behaviour?
- To what extent are environmental rights meaningful, and therefore achievable, for citizens who are still struggling for social citizenship rights?
- How can communities be oriented towards responsible environmental behaviour?
- How can broader society with multi-organizational actors be mobilized towards environmental citizenship?

METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

According to Neuman (2003:17), social research is conducted for reasons such as to answer practical questions, to make informed decisions, or to change society. This
research study recognizes those as indirect reasons for the development of this project. However, the main reason for conducting this research is to build knowledge about society. In this sense, it is knowledge about the social dynamics underpinning the adoption of responsible environmental behaviour and how they can be oriented towards achieving environmentally engaged citizenry.

In determining the appropriate methodology for environmental communication research, the three dominant research paradigms: positivism; interpretivism (or constructivism); and critical research have been critically examined (Neuman, 2003; Yin, 2003; Sarantakos, 2005). Neuman (2003:77) asserts: “The interpretive approach holds that social life is based on social interactions and socially constructed meaning systems.” The literature review I have conducted supports the argument that different understandings of the natural environment exist and socially meaningful realities exist in the shared understandings of what is real (Eisenhauer and Nicholson, 2005). The methodology I adopt is built on the principles of the sociological perspectives of constructivism and contends that reality is socially constructed through human interaction (Burr, 2003; Berger and Luckmann, 1967). According to this approach, reality is conditional upon human experiences and interpretation.

I use a social scientific method of inquiry in analysing primary and secondary source materials to explore the hypothesis that if responsible environmental behaviour is seen as a right and duty of citizenship, then it is more likely to be enduring and to match the long-term nature of environmental issues. My approach is inter-disciplinary and draws on environmental education, social psychology, political science and social communication.

This research adopts qualitative methods of collecting and analysing data because they allow for the presentation of interpretations that are sensitive to specific social contexts. The qualitative methods of collecting and analysing data provide the researcher with “rich information about the social processes in specific settings” (Neuman, 2003:139-140). This choice is relevant to address the supporting research question: to
what extent are environmental rights meaningful for citizens who are still struggling for the consolidation of social citizenship rights? In addition, this research focuses on shared social experiences in a Brazilian context as sources of learning about and changing behaviour towards the environment. Therefore, qualitative methods present the best means by which to identify patterns in social communication that are consistent with engaging citizens in responsible environmental behaviour.

An interpretive case study is the methodology that fits best with the objective of this project, as it provides the means to understand the complex social dynamics underpinning the communication processes through which environmental behavioural change occurs, that is, to understand more closely this interactive construction of meaning. Meaning is socially construed through human interaction (Eisenhauer and Nicholson, 2005; Berger and Luckmann, 1967), so collective responsible environmental behaviour can be analyzed as a communication process developed around shared meanings. To understand the relationships underpinning such process is an objective of this investigation.

An interpretive case study permits the investigator to perceive the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 2003; Robson, 1993). As Yin (2003:13) suggests: “...you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study.” And they are for this study, as I test the hypothesis that if environmental problems are reported in the media (be it in a local, regional or national context) as social problems, then they will set agendas (political, educational) becoming recognized as social problems, influencing social behaviour towards mitigation of the problems (in the short-term). Since it has been argued that social dynamics have a determining influence in the adoption of new behaviour, the case study method will allow for an examination of the contextual conditions under which responsible environmental behaviour is adopted.
In case study research, the researcher carefully chooses a case to illustrate an issue and uses an analytic logic to study it in depth, focusing on different factors but looking for patterns (Neuman, 2003:33). To elaborate on the crucial points I have outlined, the thesis will detail the case study of the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth. Investigation of the “Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth” (CJMA-GO) movement helps us to understand the changing dynamics of social movements. This particular social movement started with a Brazilian federal government initiative, organizing national conferences that bring young people together every two years. Originally the aim was the formation of groups of young environmental leaders to take part in these conferences that debate and collect information for the formulation of national public policies towards youth and the environment, such as the National Program of Youth and the Environment, as well as participation in the implementation of Agenda 21 at schools – under the umbrella of the COM-VIDAs project.

In the state of Goiás, since the first national conference took place in 2003, the young people involved in the process have created an independent social movement. Outside Goiás, every state of the federation now has at least one central collective responsible for coordinating the process which elects delegates (young people) to participate in the national conferences of youth and the environment. In some cases, there are more than one collective within a state and they assume different roles in the regional environmental movement. Research data was gathered through interviews with participants involved with the CJMA-GO movement; participant observation of meetings and workshops organized by the CJMA-GO; as well as participation in the annual state wide conference of youth and the environment organized by the CJMA-GO. The research identifies and examines the dynamics and complexity of the relationships among those actors and how they have influenced the process of social mobilization towards collective behaviour that is more consistent with socio-environmental challenges.

Secondary source methods of inquiry for this research include extensive reading of a body of relevant literature including journal articles, governmental documents and survey reports, as well as analysis of newspapers and Internet material. Discourse
analysis of an influential Brazilian newspaper is conducted considering how environmental issues are portrayed. This analysis includes moments such as the United Nations’ COP15 summit and the launch of the Third National Program of Human Rights. Both events took place during the November 2009 to March 2010 period chosen for analysis.

Analysis of the Brazilian environmental education school curriculum is undertaken initially based on the main document elaborated by the Brazilian government on the matter the ProNEA “Programa Nacional de Educação Ambiental” (the National Program of Environmental Education) (Brasil, 2005d). To investigate the practical context in which environmental education takes place at schools in Brazil, interviews with teachers and students of a public school were conducted. This focused on their experience in implementing an environmental education course since 2009.

Overall, a case study approach will allow me to examine the correspondence between theoretical propositions raised by the literature review and the practices of an environmental communication program. A case study will provide rich data that will enable the analysis of the development and outcomes of an environmental communication program aimed at promoting environmental behaviour in the community. This process is expected to enable me to identify patterns that support the establishment of strategies for the engagement of citizens in responsible environmental behaviour as well as the formulation of recommendations for the development of environmental citizenship.
1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Responsible Environmental Behaviour

Changing behaviour through environmental education has shown itself to be difficult. In attempting to understand how to engage citizens in environmental behaviour, educators and researchers have been confronted with the complexity of behaviour change. Along with the complexity of the issue has come an array of terms to describe similar phenomena - environmental behaviour, environmentally friendly behaviour, responsible environmental behaviour and pro-environmental behaviour are some of the terms. The present study adopts the concept of responsible environmental behaviour (REB) since I argue that this term best reflects the desired relationship between society and the natural and built environments. It is not only a matter of being ‘friends’ with the environment, or acting in favour of it. Rather, it is a matter of realising that we are responsible for the effects of our actions upon the natural environment and, in turn, upon ourselves.

Cottrell and Graefe (1997) and Sivec and Hungerford (1989-1990) define responsible environmental behaviour as individual or group actions towards what is appropriate to protect the environment. Kurtycz defines it as (2005: 37):

… the whole of actions of an individual within the society, that take into account, in a conscious way, the perennial and harmonious relationship between these actions and the environment.

The perspective reflects the importance given to the consciousness of taking environmental actions as well as the interest in a more holistic perspective not centred in isolated practices. Furthermore, this definition of responsible environmental behaviour emphasizes that the relationship between our actions and the environment is constructed historically through interactions in the changing environment (Kurtycz, 2005; Morgan, 2003). These are the reasons why this perspective has been chosen for the development
Researchers have developed an array of theoretical frameworks to explain the factors and connections underlying environmental behaviour change mostly focusing on the individual (Kurtycz, 2005). The first approaches, which focused on raising environmental awareness to modify behaviour, and on linking knowledge to attitudes and attitudes to behaviour, proved incomplete in practice (Kurtycz, 2005; Clover, 2002; McKenzie-Mohr and Smith, 1999). However, many environmental organisations (be they non- or governmental organisations) continue to develop education and communication campaigns and strategies based on these simplistic assumptions.

According to Kurtycz (2005), research in the field of environmental education regarding responsible environmental behaviour has taken two main directions. One front focuses on the predictors of responsible environmental behaviour within the individual; and the other pursues an understanding of the connections between the behaviour change process and its practical outcomes. Hines et al., (1986-1987) and Hungerford and Volk (1990) argued that developing environmentally responsible and active citizens is the ultimate goal of environmental education. However, strategies focused on this goal (mostly based on the linear knowledge-attitude-behaviour approach), have been pointed out as not having achieved the expected outcomes (Hungerford and Volk, 1990). The lack of clarity about the factors that have formative effects on developing responsible environmental behaviour has been indicated as the major barrier (Hines et al., 1986-1987; Hungerford and Volk, 1990).

Even though a variety of studies from different disciplines had identified different variables in relation to environmental behaviour change, an agreement on which of them most influenced the development of responsible environmental behaviour was missing. In the pursuit of overcoming such a drawback, Hines, Hungerford and Tomera (1986-1987) undertook a meta-analysis of responsible environmental behaviour based on 128 empirically based studies on it reported from 1971 up to the time of their research. The prediction of responsible environmental behaviour was highlighted as a complex process
involving a number of interconnected variables. Nevertheless, based on the results of the meta-analyses and data from the original research from Hines (1984), a responsible environmental behaviour model was proposed [see figure 1]. This model presents factors most related to the adoption of such behaviour from the individual perspective and indicates areas amenable to change at which environmental practitioners can direct their efforts (Hines et al., 1986-1987).

![Figure 1. The Responsible Environmental Behaviour model (Hines et al., 1986-1987)](image)

The variables identified as strongly related to responsible environmental behaviour through that research are knowledge of issues, knowledge of action strategies, locus of control, attitudes, verbal commitment, and personal responsibility (Hines et al., 1986-1987). Along with those, a third cognitive component, action skills, was added based on evidence from study by Ramsey (1979). These studies showed that knowledge about an issue alone has restricted connection to action. However, they emphasized that knowledge about an issue, combined with access to the skills necessary to apply the action strategies to the issue provided individuals with the abilities to act (Hines et al., 1986-1987).

Cognitive and personality variables were argued to be the main drivers of the intention to act. In accordance with the psychological approach of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), the intention to act is viewed as the most direct determinant of behaviour. However, according to the REB model, it does not necessarily mean responsible environmental behaviour as a result. Rather, intention to act can be affected positively or negatively by situational factors such as economic and political
factors (Hines et al., 1986-1987). Overall the model presents the cognitive and affective variables strongly connected to responsible environmental behaviour.

For illustrative purposes, the variables emphasized by the REB model can be divided into *ability*, *desire* and *opportunity*. For instance, if a Brazilian citizen has the will (desire) to reduce his/her ecological footprint by adopting a waste recycling practice, having learnt how to properly separate the waste items to be recycled (ability), but does not have a selective waste collection system in his/her locality, he/she is unlikely to adopt the responsible environmental behaviour.

In a follow up research project Sivek and Hungerford (1989-1990) assessed the connections between eight selected variables, all predictors of REB. This research attended to the recommendation of the meta-analysis developed by Hines et al., (1986-1987) that suggested further research be concentrated on the factors influencing environmental behaviour as a whole. This was replicated by the research of Sia, Hungerford and Tomera (1985-1986). Through these studies, perceived skills in using environmental action strategies was identified as the variable which most contributed to predicting responsible environmental behaviour, followed by level of environmental sensitivity and locus of control. This reinforced the findings of previous research. The importance of the research from Sivek and Hungerford (1989-1990) does not stem from its conclusions alone, but more from the fact that it looked at the implications of some of the most significant studies developed on REB in cohort.

At this point, the idea of responsible environmental behaviour can be clearly related to the idea of responsible citizenship behaviour as described by Hungerford and Volk (1990). In accordance with the Tbilisi Declaration objectives, the environmentally responsible citizen is said to be the one who:

... has (1) an awareness and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems [and/or issues], (2) a basic understanding of the environment and its allied problems [and/or issues], (3) feelings of concern for the environment and motivation for actively participating in
environmental improvement and protection, (4) skills for identifying and solving environmental problems [and/or issues], and (5) active involvement at all levels in working toward resolution of environmental problems [and/or issues] (Hungerford and Volk, 1990: 9).

The challenge lies in translating the model, along with its factors and variables pointed as the predictors of responsible environmental behaviour, into strategies resulting in practical actions on the part of the environmentally responsible citizenry. The present study takes this direction, attempting to bring insights from the social communication field to facilitate the development of such citizenry. As highlighted by Hines et al. (1986-1987), the personality factors from the REB model are not as readily amenable to influence from educational efforts as the cognitive variables influencing responsible environmental behaviour. An analysis of the social dynamics involved in constructing meaning is imperative for understanding the factors that determine how people perceive the environment around them (Morgan, 2003; Kurtycz, 2005).

**Environmental Citizenship**

T. H. Marshall presents a historical progression of citizenship using the development of the English nation-state as a scenario. Marshall divided citizenship into three parts: civil, political, and social, following their historical progression (Marshall, 1977; Marshall and Bottomore, 1992). First, came the civil component, based on the need to guarantee individual freedoms and comprised elements such as the right to own property, freedom of speech, and the right to justice (related to the right to fair trial). In a second stage, came the political element comprising the rights to participate in the exercise of political power, in particular the right to free elections. Finally, came social citizenship rights. Based on the idea of social ties and political community, Marshall conceptualises this set of rights in terms of citizens’ right to a respectable standard of living within a community (Marshall, 1977). The social component included the right to economic welfare and the right to share to the full in the socio-cultural tradition of the community (Turner, 2001).
For Marshall, citizenship has a dynamic character with its three components evolving throughout the recent centuries. They became recognized and generally accepted through a process of institutionalization where special agencies were established to express these rights such as the courts of justice, parliament, councils of local government, the educational system, the welfare system, and the health system. The importance of Marshall’s contribution to the citizenship debate and theory is the idea that “citizenship is a status position that mitigates the negative effects of economic class within capitalist society” (Turner, 2001: 190). In this light, it is responsible for a redistribution of resources based on principles of equality among citizens within the frame of the nation-state.

According to Marshall (1977), citizenship is a principle of equality. In its early forms, citizenship rights did not conflict with the inequalities of capitalist society: they were, on the contrary, necessary to the maintenance of that particular form of inequality. The explanation lies in the fact that the core of citizenship at this stage was composed of civil rights, in this sense, the rights necessary for individual freedom: liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith; the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice. Civil rights were necessary to a competitive market economy because they gave each individual the power to engage as an independent unit in the economic struggle and to sell his labour. At the same time, it made possible to deny social protection to that individual, on the ground that he or she was equipped with the means to protect themselves (Marshall, 1977).

However, economic changes, technological innovation and globalization have transformed the nature of society. The three routes to effective citizenship as depicted by Marshall are no longer enough to guarantee a social framework within which citizenship can be enjoyed. Those rights are still relevant, but the debate has moved to a different level. The scope of the nation-state based citizenship model is not compatible with the social tensions created under global free market tenets. These tensions are related to social issues connected to global pressures, and according to Turner (1993) are driven by a central problem to modern society - the human-environment relationship. Since social
problems have increasingly become of a global order (such as air pollution which cannot be solved by individual governments), and do not fit adequately into the current political framework (Turner, 2001), the set of human rights is evolving. As expressed by Newby (1996), the negative consequences of global capitalism on the natural environment have gained space in contemporary politics. Most recently the universal dimensions of global warming and its impacts on citizens well-being and nations’ economic stability have driven social and political actors to place a new emphasis on the sustainability of the global economy as it has been developed.

While the framework of citizenship rights developed by Marshall sought to protect citizens from the tensions of the market place, the new framework of global rights (including environmental rights) seeks to protect society from the negative consequences of economic growth on their safety and health (Jelin, 2000; Turner, 2001). In this scenario, a set of rights that more adequately secures the well-being of citizens is being debated under the banner of environmental citizenship. This new regime for citizenship still carries the societal nature of social citizenship rights as a crucial element, however, expanding to the collective rights of people, rather than centred on the rights of individuals (showing the dynamic nature of the concept of citizenship as evoked by Marshall). This generation of rights comprises notions such as the right to a clean and safe environment. For the new framework of citizenship, nature has become an entitlement of humanity (Jelin, 2000). Environmental citizenship is shaped by an anthropological as well as a sociological dimension, considering the impact of global capitalism on the environment as a direct threat to the well-being of present and future communities (Turner, 2001).

This shows the shift of concern centred on nature - from the early environmentalism movement to a human-centred dimension of the environmental debate, as Jelin (2000: 49) argues: “The introduction of the human dimension implies the convergence of the environmental movement and issues of human rights.” With the progressive social acceptance of such link since the 1970s (the historical time of the rise of environmentalism), new meaning in relation to citizenship rights and duties cannot be
disregarded.

In this context, I argue that the development of engaged environmental citizenship reserves two great challenges: social equality and social duty. Environmental rights build upon the consolidation of social rights. And social rights are based on social equality that contradicts the social class inequalities of global capitalist society (Marshall and Bottomore, 1992). So we are talking about an anti-systemic movement, as environmentalism has provoked a much sharper recognition of the fact that economic well-being in itself does not promote civility or social cohesion (Newby, 1996). Secondly, environmental citizenship implies not only rights (such as those conceptualized by Marshall), but also the duty of every citizen to guarantee such socio-environmental rights. In the framework of environmental citizenship, “sustainable development at the local level also requires a collective (though local) responsibility for the control of local resources” (Jelin, 2000: 56). In light of this, the promotion of responsible environmental behaviour - as previously discussed, a perspective which reflects the importance given to the consciousness of taking environmental actions within society, taking into account the perennial and harmonious relationship between these actions and the environment (Kurtycz, 2005) - is argued as a means to engage citizens in environmental citizenship and develop the long-term sustainability of environmental awareness and behaviour. If REB is seen as a right and duty of citizenship, then it is more likely to be enduring and to match the long-term nature of environmental problems.

Nevertheless, a third challenge to the consolidation of environmental citizenship must be addressed. As discussed, issues related to sustainable development do not consider clearly defined state boundaries. However, what is also not clear is the existence of legal, political and juridical mechanisms which correspond to environmental issues and rights (Turner, 2001). As previously mentioned, Marshallian citizenship rights became recognized and generally accepted through a process of institutionalization through which special agencies were established to express and enforce these rights (such as the courts of justice). Also, the school system has been crucial in the process of socializing people into their roles as citizens (Mann, 1970). Yet, no precise institutional
arrangements that match environmental rights (collective on its nature) have been consolidated apart from recommendations and ‘soft’ commitments arising from different UN conferences. It is argued that this is the arena where “the state and international organizations are key actors, since what is at stake is the creation of institutional (legal, political, juridical) mechanisms pertaining to environmental issues, and effectiveness in their implementation in cases of conflict between social actors” (Jelin, 2000: 51).

According to Marshall (1977), with a system of mass production, social integration became the result of material enjoyment and this idea guided the progress of citizenship. Under a free market regime, the spread of consumer capitalism became a precondition for citizenship (Rees, 1996). “The citizen is confused with the consumer” (Baierle, 1998: 123). When talking about the political crisis and new notions of citizenship in Brazil, Baierle states that this view of citizenship is based on the sale of individual labour and is guided towards satisfying the needs of the individual, with “demands become[ing] collective only through the vantage point of individual cost-benefit analysis through the market” (1998: 123).

Environmental citizenship requires the ideological shift from individual freedom ultimately expressed through consumption power, forwarded by global capitalism, to a more holistic perspective centred on the idea that the whole of actions of an individual (including his/her consumption habits) directly affects other social members locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. Within the framework of environmental citizenship, the individual is part of a broader societal process historically constructing the harmonious (or not) relationship between these actions and the environment. I argue that if we are to achieve the goal endorsed by the Tbilisi Declaration “to create new patterns of behaviour on individuals, groups and society as a whole towards the environment” (UNESCO–UNEP, 1978: 3), these socio-economic and political dynamics must be addressed. In this context, the school system would seem to be crucial to this process.

The school system would be an integral part of the process of ideological shift from individual freedom to the idea that the whole of actions of an individual directly
affects other social members, and in turn, him/herself. If responsible environmental behavior is the desired social behavior to match the long-term nature of environmental problems, then education that attends this social need is a social duty. “The duty to improve and civilize oneself is therefore a social duty, and not merely a personal one, because the social health of a society depends upon the civilization of its members” (Marshall, 1977: 90). Education has a direct relation to citizenship because the objective of education is to shape the future adult, directly affecting social life. “Fundamentally it should be regarded, not as the right of the child to go to school, but as the right of the adult citizen to have been educated” to match his/her needs as well as society’s (Marshall, 1977: 89).

A significant amount of research exists on the individual factors that shape behavior but, in spite of its usefulness in guiding environmental education practice, it has considered to a minor extent the fact that it is not isolated from those social dynamics (Clover, 2002; Kurtycz, 2005). According to Newby (1996), environmental change is a socio-economic issue. While the lack of clarity about the factors that have formative effects on developing responsible environmental behavior has been indicated by Hines et al. (1986-1987) and Hungerford and Volk (1990) as the major barrier in developing environmentally responsible and active citizens, I argue that the clarity of the process through which a given environmental problem becomes a social problem is as important. Here, I agree with Blumer’s contention that social problems are projections of collective sentiments rather than simple mirrors of objective conditions in society. “A social problem exists primarily in terms of how it is defined and conceived in society” (Blumer, 1971: 300).

Social Problems

According to Blumer (1971: 301) “a social problem does not exist for a society unless it is recognized by that society to exist”. Likewise, an environmental problem will not exist for a society if it is not recognized by that society as an existing social problem. The implication of such line of thought is that if a society is not aware of an
environmental problem as a social problem, it will not address it nor act about it. Therefore, to extend the environmental education approach to ensure consistent environmental behaviour change throughout society, it is necessary to analyze the social interplays which influence the adoption of a desired behaviour by the individual as well as how the individual adoption of a desired behaviour towards solving an environmental problem becomes a collective behaviour.

Instead of being an objective condition, a social problem initially exists in terms of its definition and conception in a society. It is the societal definition of a given condition faced by members of a society that determines whether the condition exists as a social problem. As Blumer (1971) puts it: “The societal definition gives the social problem its nature, lays out how it is to be approached, and shapes what is done about it.” Problems become social problems as the result of a process of collective definition, not as the product of its objective malignancy affecting society. For Blumer (1971), the process of collective definition of a problem is responsible for the emergence of the problem and how it is approached and tackled. For the mobilization of action with regard to the problem to take place, the problem must go through the stages of emergence and legitimation within society (1971). For instance, if environmental problems are reported in the media (local, regional, national) as social problems, then they will set local, regional, national (political and educational) agendas. And if agendas are set around environmental problems, then they will become recognized as social problems, being more likely to be addressed by citizens and influence social behaviour towards mitigation of the problems.

Different phenomena and players take part in these two stages: the role of agitation and violence in getting recognition for a problem; the play of powerful organizations and interest groups to shut off and others to foment recognition of a problem (some foreseeing material gains); the role of events that influence public sensitivities; the role of political figures in promoting concern in regards to the problem; the role of the educational curricula in bringing the problem to debate; the role of religious agencies in connecting the problem to social behaviour; and the role of the
media in forwarding social problems - all influence and shape the social definition of a problem. As Blumer (1971: 301) suggests: “A social problem is always a focal point for the operation of divergent and conflicting interests, intentions, and objectives. It is the interplay of these interests and objectives that constitutes the way in which a society deals with any one of its social problems.” In this regard, the agenda-setting approach offers valuable insights into the processes and relationships affecting how an issue becomes a public issue, in other words, how a problem becomes a social problem, or for the focus of my study, how environmental problems become recognized as social problems.

**Setting the Agenda**

As individuals we face a variety of problems throughout the course of our life. On an every day basis we are confronted with problems that may hinder attaining our objectives, being them financial, professional, personal. However, in order to overcome such problems/obstacles, we are constantly prioritizing the problems that deserve more attention at that moment in life to achieve that certain objective. This is a logical process we undergo to tackle and solve problems, allowing us to move on, and not be ‘drawn’ into action paralysis due to the number of problems we may face.

This process of setting problems to be focused on and solved, as an individual, also happens in society. Like every individual, every social system must develop an agenda which prioritizes problems facing it, allowing the identification of areas to work on towards handling such problems. If individually we face a myriad of problems, as a society we are confronted with an infinite number which underlines the importance of such prioritization of problems/issues by a community, a society. Agenda-setting is a societal process which drives social change, directly affecting social stability (Dearing and Rogers, 1996).
According to Dearing and Rogers (1996), the study of agenda-setting\textsuperscript{1} seeks an understanding of why certain issues are addressed by society and others are not, how public opinion is shaped, as well as how policy actions are motivated. For those authors, “the agenda setting process is an ongoing competition among issue proponents to gain the attention of media professionals, the public, and policy elites” towards action (1996: 1).

In this sense, there are three agendas which constitute the main components of the agenda-setting process: those influenced by the media, the public, and policy [see figure 2]. The agenda setting process is primarily a process of collective definition where all those agendas influence one another to come to define what the current social problem is and how to solve it. This occurs, of course, with different levels of the influence of power.

\textbf{Figure 2.} The Agenda-Setting model (adapted from Dearing and Rogers, 1996).

Real-world indicators alone rarely put a problem on the agenda. Agenda-setting is a process of social construction where meaning is gradually conferred to an issue/problem through dissemination and interaction. It is mostly a communication process taking place at mediated and interpersonal levels, as Dearing and Rogers (1996: 71) suggest: “Perceptions, not real-world indicators, count.” This is a concept related to the classic diffusionism approach. However, the operation of divergent and conflicting

\textsuperscript{1} Agenda-setting is a scholarly topic that has its origins within the field of mass communication research, with the term dating from an original article by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972).
interests, intentions, and objectives from the different interest groups and parts involved, certainly constitutes the way in which a given society deals with a given social problem (Blumer, 1971).

According to Rabelo (2003), the big and urgent environmental problems of our time took all social sectors to rethink their posture and practices, provoking an understanding that there are no possible solutions without integrated cooperation. In this sense, my study proposes an intersection across research fields which may allow a more comprehensive understanding of how environmental problems become recognized as social problems and how these social problems are translated into social actions towards mitigation of the environmental problems. This can, in turn, lead to actions that truly address the ultimate goal of developing environmentally responsible and active citizens as argued by Hines et al. (1986-1987) and Hungerford and Volk (1990).

The integration of research efforts from the environmental education and communication fields provides us with a greater picture of the challenge of promoting an environmentally responsible citizenry. If we combine the conceptual framework developed in the responsible environmental behaviour model with the one from the agenda-setting model, it becomes clear how the focus on the individual factors influencing behaviour change as a means for promoting responsible environmental behaviour (the REB model approach) is incomplete. Figure 3 shows that the cognitive and personality variables predictor of the intention to act - which in turn is the variable most related to the adoption of responsible environmental behaviour (by the REB model) - are the agenda-setting conceptual framework points of influence mostly falling within the scope of the public agenda. The agenda-setting model from Rogers and Dearing (1996) illustrates other ‘forces’ interfering with the adoption of responsible environmental behaviour: the media agenda, policy agenda, as well as an interest group influencing the media agenda (and therefore, the process as a whole). This allows us to visualize different points of concern that deserve further investigation.
The media role in setting the agenda is a by-product of our collective dependence on mass media for providing information we do not directly experience (Hackett and Carroll, 2006). Through their own agenda-setting process, the media have the power of directing public attention to some issues at the expense of others. By influencing public perceptions of what is important and valuable (above all, what is connected to what), the media directly interfere with the societal definition of a given condition faced by members of a society, which as we previously discussed, determining whether the condition exists as a social problem, a precondition for social mobilization and action. The media represent an autonomous institutional sphere with its own logic (Foucault, 1984), therefore its own relations of power dictate its own agenda, and thus, public opinion, through the practices that orient the production of statements. The power of the
media stems from their concentration of society’s symbolic power, which is ultimately the capacity to define reality (Hackett and Carroll, 2006).

This role of the media is expressed through my model under the need for orientation on the part of audience members to control their informational environment. It refers to the need to become oriented about an issue due to an individual’s lack of experience and therefore high uncertainty over that issue, and this need is most frequently fulfilled through the media (Dearing and Rogers, 1996; Weaver, 1984). This need for orientation will allow the mainstream media greater influence on public opinion formation with resulting greater agenda-setting effects and behavioural influence. The implications here for the promotion of responsible environmental behaviour is that citizens better informed about environmental issues (with more direct experience with the issues) will be less likely to rely solely on the mainstream media for determining what is important. This highlights the importance of developing those cognitive variables present in the model as well as fostering the involvement of all stakeholders on the environmental decision-making process, above all, a democratic principle of citizenship.

My approach also expresses the media influence on the other set of variables involving personality (which, along with the cognitive variables, are the main determinants of the intention to act, according to the REB approach). In this regard, “[m]edia-inspired perceptions can in turn affect attitudes – especially when such representations mobilize longstanding dispositions…” (Hackett and Carroll, 2006: 30-31). For instance, if anti-environmental behaviour is labelled by the media as anti-social, then citizens’ perception of the relative advantage and compatibility of REB to existing values and needs will be strengthened. In agreement with those authors, I believe that agenda-setting offers a more useful way to think about the media’s impact on public orientations towards socio-political (including environmental) issues.

Nevertheless, agenda-setting also considers the fact that policymakers frequently make use of the media to forward their agenda and accomplish their goals, expressing the circularity that better defines the total agenda-setting process (Dearing and Rogers,
 recursivity within this approach, which means that the policy agenda, for instance, influences the public agenda and the by-product public behaviour (at the same time that it is influenced by the public and media agendas). The policy agenda concerns the prioritization of policy actions regarding issues, in part as response to the media and public agendas. These policy actions directly affect situational factors that may hinder or motivate certain behaviours. To illustrate, a citizen who is aware of the importance of recycling to reduce environmental degradation and is willing to reduce his/her ecological footprint by adopting a waste recycling practice, having learnt how to properly separate the waste items to be recycled (learning the required skills), will ultimately rely on public policy actions which may or not provide him/her with a selective waste collection system in the locality. If the policy outcome is negative, then he/she is unlikely to adopt the responsible environmental behaviour. This is the conclusion that Derdsen and Gartrell came to with their study of the social context of recycling behaviour in Canada, observing (Dearing and Rogers, 1996: 97): “Usually, an end goal of an agenda-setting process is individual-level behaviour change.” This would include recycling, for example.

As we can see from that account, situational factors interfere with behaviour change, and here lies an important role for state governments in promoting responsible environmental behaviour, be it at the national or local level. Public policy actions can be designed and implemented to best mobilize citizens to perform desired environmental behaviours. This can happen in the form of infrastructure, incentives as well as penalizations for anti-environmental behaviour. Furthermore, this discussion points to the overall need for policy actions which address the role of the media in contributing to a democratic public sphere. Responding to public demand of social movements, policy actions may lead the media to comply with its social duty of providing citizens with relevant civic information - which is vital for the development of a just and equal governance model capable of environmentally engaging citizens. In this case, if REB is disseminated by the media as civic behaviour model, then it will support the diffusion of REB throughout society. And here, we start to address another question guiding this research:
How does the individual adoption of a desired behaviour towards solving an environmental problem becomes a collective behaviour?

**Social Diffusion**

Social diffusion can be understood as a special type of communication which deals with the question of how new ideas spread throughout society (Rogers, 2001). According to Rogers (1995: 5), “diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system”. An innovation is perceived as an idea, concept, object or actual practice which is viewed as new by an individual or social group. In this sense, the four main elements in the diffusion of new ideas are: 1) the innovation; 2) the communication channels through which the innovation is disseminated; 3) the time that is taken for its adoption; and 4) the social system within which the whole process takes place.

New ideas are messages that represent a certain degree of uncertainty to the individuals involved (Rogers, 2001). Thus, the characteristics of the innovation, as perceived by the members of a certain social system, directly affect the rate of its adoption (Rogers, 1995). In addition, Rogers (2001: 7541) highlights the importance of uncertainty in the diffusion of innovation process by affirming that “uncertainties [such as the advantages and disadvantages of adopting the innovation] are gradually overcome as an individual obtains technical information, subjective impressions, and social support concerning the new idea”.

At this point, it becomes important to observe how some points of the conceptual framework underlying the diffusion of innovation approach developed by Everett Rogers overlap with those of the theory of planned behaviour developed by Ajzen (1985) (regarding the importance of perceived behavioural control and subjective norms), and those of the responsible environmental behaviour model developed by Hines et al., (1986-1987) (regarding the importance of knowledge of issues, knowledge of action
strategies, and action skills, as well as subjective norms and locus of control). The variables indicated by each of these perspectives are recognized as influencing the intention to behave: for those approaches this is the main predictor of behaviour. This, among other facts, allows the recognition of those three perspectives (the responsible environmental behaviour model, the theory of planned behaviour, and the diffusion of innovation approach) as integrative and complementary approaches towards understanding the adoption of responsible environmental behaviour, in light of the research efforts in the environmental education, social psychology and human communication fields.

As previously observed, the relative speed with which an innovation is adopted depends on how members of a social system perceive the characteristics of an innovation (Wejnert, 2002; Rogers, 2001). The principal characteristics are relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, observability and trialability (Rogers, 1995). Even though other authors suggest variables affecting the characteristics of an innovation such as benefits vs. costs (Wejnert, 2002), I acknowledge that the main characteristics observed by Rogers encompass these variables. In this sense, Rogers asserts (1995: 15-16):

“relative advantage [refers to] the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes… compatibility [to] the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters… complexity [to] the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use… trialability [to] the possibility to experiment on a limited basis… [while observability refers to] the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others.

Although all five characteristics have an important influence on the diffusion of innovation process, research has indicated that relative advantage and compatibility are stronger determinants in the speed of adoption (Rogers, 2001). In some cases, such as restructuring production units to comply with sustainable practices in farming, perceived
complexity proved to be an important determinant (GreenCOM, 1996). It is important to observe that relative advantage may be comprehended variously in economic terms, social prestige, convenience, and satisfaction. Thus, the degree to which an individual perceives the innovation as advantageous prevails over the objective advantage of it (Rogers, 2001). So, the more the new behaviour is comparable to current norms, values and needs – with its adoption becoming advantageous in terms of social prestige, satisfaction, convenience - the quicker, broader and deeper will be its adoption in society. In this case, the perception of REB will be strengthened and consolidated to the degree that anti-environmental behaviour is labelled and prosecuted as deviant and anti-social. If anti-environmental behaviour is labelled by the media, the schools and religious agencies’ as anti-social, “the violation of commonly held values and sentiments [such as doing what is good for the common well-being] – may unite people in an expression of common outrage and contempt” (Liska and Messner, 1999: 38). As the media publicize the anti-environmental behaviour as anti-social, deviant, and as people talk to each other about it, people’s common values about what is good and bad are reconfirmed. The deviant behaviour, in our case anti-environmental behaviour, becomes the common enemy who unites and possibly mobilizes the community, in our case towards REB.

In line with Kai Erikson, Liska and Messner (1999) argue that the identification of deviant behaviour serves the important purpose of affirming and reinforcing the cultural identity of social groups. The perception of anti-environmental behaviour as deviant would provide an opportunity for members of that community, society, to come together in pursuit of a common goal of developing actions which could prevent such behavioural pattern. This, in turn, could influence policy agendas, with possible infrastructural, legal and educational actions as outcomes. This functional perspective of deviance reminds social members of what they share in common and strengthens social cohesion, in our case towards REB. In sum, if anti-environmental behaviour is labelled by the media and schools as anti-social, then citizens’ perception of the relative advantage and compatibility of REB to existing values and needs will be strengthened, assisting the process of adoption of REB in society. If citizens’ perception of the relative advantage and compatibility of REB to existing values and needs is strengthened, then it will lead to
the popular conceptualization of REB as a right and duty of citizenship (in the long-term).

To apply the diffusion of innovations approach to the object of this study, responsible environmental behaviour, one important observation must be made. Since REB seeks to provide a conscious, perennial and harmonious relationship between human actions and the environment (Kurtczy, 2005), so as to avoid degradation of natural resources and unwanted future consequences, it can be considered as a preventive innovation. Since the unwanted event to be avoided is not existent at the present time, the absence of the unwelcome situation hinders an individual’s ability to perceive the advantages of adopting such behaviour. In this sense, due to its uncertainty and time delay, preventive innovations (such as responsible environmental behaviour) are observed as having a slow rate of adoption (Rogers, 2001).

Here, we must make reference to Thurow (1996) and his ideas on the role of the state in shaping today’s economic forces that shape tomorrow’s world. In capitalism, the private sector is driven by the immediate possibilities of profit, working within a short-time horizon (corporations tend to think of the future as the next three to five years). In this context, the state is the institution that must intervene to guarantee long-term future. As degradation of natural resources has unwanted future consequences to the well-being of citizens, it is the role of the state to secure the rights of citizens of present and future generations (such as the right to safe and healthy environments) through present policy actions that restrain the destructive long-run future consequences of short-term consumption – specially the role of the state in shaping the school system, as school curricula are likely to be particularly significant for long-term change and definitions of citizenship.

In summary, innovations that are perceived by individuals as having greater relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, observability, and less complexity will be adopted more rapidly than others (Rogers, 1995). Table 1 provides an overview of the process of social diffusion as approached by the diffusion of innovations theory.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Innovators</td>
<td>Early adopters</td>
<td>Critical mass</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What happens?</td>
<td>People who are oriented outside of their local system and are open to taking risks venture first in adopting a new idea</td>
<td>As innovators adopt a new idea they start spreading awareness-knowledge of it paving the way for people such as opinion leaders to begin using the new idea</td>
<td>At this point, the norms of the system change, so as to support the adoption of the innovation allowing further people to adopt the new idea</td>
<td>Once a critical mass is reached, those who have already adopted talk about the innovation with other individuals over time, who then tell yet others about the new idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crucial component</td>
<td>Actors have sufficient resources so that uncertainty of innovation is not an important barrier to its adoption</td>
<td>Spread of awareness-knowledge</td>
<td>Norms of the system change</td>
<td>Subjective opinions of the innovation passed via interpersonal channels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – The social diffusion of innovations (based on data from Rogers, 2001: 7541)

For the diffusion of innovations approach, channels of mass communication are more effective in generating knowledge of new ideas (indirectly influencing the adoption of a new idea), while interpersonal channels are more effective in influencing attitudes and behaviour towards new ideas (directly influencing the adoption (or not) of a new idea) (Wejnert, 2002; Rogers, 1995). Here I can relate these propositions to the argument raised by Michael Mann (1970: 435) in his research on the ‘Social Cohesion of Liberal Democracy’, where he argues that the social relations of an individual are mostly confined to a narrow segment of society, with an indirect relation to the broader society through primary and secondary groups. It is on an everyday level that his meaningful life is characterized. This can be connected to Blumer’s (1971) argument that it is the societal definition of a given condition faced by members of a society that determines whether the condition exists (not its objectivity). In this case, if the popular conceptualization of REB as a right and duty of citizenship is developed, then REB is likely to be diffused as civic behaviour model, as at this point the norms of the system in regard to the compatibility of
REB will have changed to support the adoption of the new behavioural pattern, allowing further people to adopt the new idea under the spectrum of civic commitment.

The diffusion of innovations theory shows the essentially social nature of the adoption of new ideas. These new ideas (or in our case, behaviours) spread in a social system (in our case, the community) mainly through a process of people communicating with others, especially those around them. For this approach, interpersonal communication, especially within a certain social system, provides the most favourable context for the sharing of meanings regarding new ideas/actions (in this case responsible environmental behaviour), generally leading to its adoption and practice (Rogers, 2001). Nevertheless, the consolidation of environmental citizenship rights also requires the mobilization of the broader society, be this within the public, private or political sphere. Here we can ask ourselves:

How can the broader society with multi-organizational actors be mobilized towards environmental citizenship?

**Media and Environmental Citizenship**

The promotion of responsible environmental behaviour can be perceived as the means for the construction of a more sustainable society. However, how can we transcend the local and mobilize the broader society towards that end? According to Bernardo Toro (1996), mobilization requires the creation, circulation and sharing of information and meaning, and this can only take place through communication strategies and processes. In our case, we are then dealing with the construction of new networks of signification that enable the production of meaning which results not only in new attitudes, but also in new public policies and practices. In this sense, it is impossible to think of a sustainable society without dealing with issues such as the strengthening of participatory channels in the administrative sphere, the formulation of policies more aligned with social environmental rights and the revitalization of the public sphere (Rabelo, 2003: 37).
According to Hackett and Carroll (2006: 2), media are failing to provide citizens with relevant civic information (which is vital for the development of a just and equal governance model capable of environmentally engaging citizens), as well as failing to contribute to a democratic public sphere. The public sphere is a conceptualization of social and institutional interactions (not necessarily a physical space), where citizens debate and can be convinced to act by the rationality of argumentation rather than by suppression or distortion of information (Ó Siochrán, 2005). It is the domain where public opinion is formed. According to Schulz (1997), contemporaneously, the public sphere is to a great extent mediated by mass communication. In our discussion, the concept of public sphere holds a central place because a distorted public sphere can obfuscate injustice, leading to social tensions and inequities, along with all they entail (Ó Siochrán, 2005), such as the aggravation of the consumerism-environmentalism paradox. According to Jelin (2000: 53), “justice has to be grounded in the existence of a space for public debate and participation in the public sphere becomes a right and a duty”.

Social development is connected to the “formation, reproduction and contestation of cultures, ideology and politics… the latter in turn are inextricably interwoven with the exercise of power by and through the dominant institutions of public communication… which act as the gatekeepers of the public sphere” (Hackett and Carroll, 2006: 1). With the capacity to define reality to a broad audience, mainstream media can make some futures more likely than others. Mainstream media have the power to direct a course of action. They directly influence the agenda of public discussion and political decision-making. They help to validate and legitimize particular ideologies in face of others, and through exposure and repetition mechanisms ground these ideological constructions as the real (Hall, 1982). By considering the conceptual framework developed by Michael Mann (1970), media can be said to have developed into agents of manipulative socialization, assisting the legitimization of the dominant order, instead of serving as a public sphere where value consensus among citizens can be reached. For not being able to provide a medium for civil information exchange and debate, the media have promoted the pragmatic acceptance on the part of citizens, where the individual complies with the
ruling class stratification and aspirations because he/she perceives no realistic alternative. In this context, progressive alternatives are marginalized. Corporate power and socioeconomic inequalities are ignored and implicitly legitimized on an everyday basis at the expense of a positive social role for democratic governments (Hackett and Carroll, 2006). For all this, the media can be perceived as an important part in constructing a sustainable society.

However, it is argued that media have become a significant threat to sustainable democracy by failing to make reality of values as participation, equality and civic engagement (Hackett and Zhao 1998). The poorly-regulated activities of media corporations have led to the promotion of an unsustainable way of life that promotes a worldview revolving around monocultural consumerism and free markets. This direction can be observed as developing in alignment with their economic and political interests (Ó Siochrú, 2005). The constant and unending promotion of consumerism by media undermines the sense of community by disseminating an idea that people have to have every desire posed to them immediately gratified (McKibben, 1999), not considering the implications of such behaviour to other members of society (locally, regionally, nationally or globally).

But how can media freely exert such negative controlling power over society? Theoretically, state legislation and agencies are in charge of defending the public interest in media activities. However, critics such as McChesney and Nichols (2002), Hackett and Carroll (2006), and Dearing and Rogers (1996) argue that the state and media corporations have developed a symbiotic relationship. This relationship often undercuts the public interest, even to the point of corruption. As politicians want favourable publicity, media companies want regulatory favours, with both having the intent to turn public attention away from policy outcomes, policies that should protect society from rhetorical appeals, suppression and/or distortion of information. The media generate profits as well as meanings, and this must be taken into account when understanding the power forces operating through and within the media field (Hackett and Carroll, 2006). In the era of globalization, media corporations have committed themselves to their
shareholders pursuit of profit, rather than helping to build a global civil society. In addition, market forces can interfere with the flow of public information because in a media system that has a great extent of its revenues coming from advertising, the attention is given to affluent consumers who are the preferred target audiences of advertisers (2006: 25). This means that the norms, values and needs of the affluent will be the ones shaping the media agenda. Their needs and interests are more frequently served, as Hackett and Carroll (2006: 35) suggest:

In the era of market liberal hegemony and state- and corporate-driven globalization, all fields have become more subject to direct determination by the economic field, and more specifically the untrammelled logic of capital accumulation. But [the media] are especially vulnerable, because they are so heavily integrated into processes of generating political and economic capital.

I argue that the mass media’s democratic deficit does matter for the promotion of engaged environmental citizenship because it profoundly influences political and social life, directly affecting our behaviour. This research, however, does not intend to fully present the democratic deficit of mainstream media, which has been well documented by others. Rather, it explores the role the mainstream media plays in the process of promoting behavioural change (in this case towards responsible environmental behaviour). The commercial framework of the mass media reinforces rather than changes hegemonic beliefs and behaviours (Hackett and Carroll, 2006). Concepts like agenda-setting offer an alternative way of understanding the influence of the media on how the public deals with social issues. The agenda-setting role of mainstream media is a “by-product of our collective dependence on mass media for information beyond our direct experience” (2006: 30) - an idea that can be linked to the concept of ‘need of orientation’ expressed by Dearing and Rogers (1996), in relation to the influence of the media on public opinion (see figure 3).

Nevertheless, mass media can provide society with a public sphere where public
opinion can be openly and transparently formed, enabling the promotion of citizenship engaged in solving our urgent social-environmental problems. In this sense, Lemos (1998) expressed the important role the media played in bringing environmental problems (high levels of air, water and soil pollution) to the policy action agenda in her case study of environmental policy in Cubatão, Brazil. She argues that even though environmental conditions in Cubatão had reached a severe stage, the enforcement of environmental regulations faced fierce resistance from industries, local government, and economic sectors of the state of São Paulo (where Cubatão is). However, things started to change as a large São Paulo newspaper published a series of articles on the environmental crisis faced by dwellers of Cubatão, as Lemos (1998: 80) explains: “Through the media, affected residents voiced their grievances and denounced violations of environmental laws.” Afterwards, the São Paulo State Assembly appointed a special inquiry commission to examine the environmental problems affecting that locality and draft solutions.

Even though media have not created by themselves this system of individualistic values that is undermining our well-being, “it is the anchor and central idol of this system of values that dominates us” (McKibben, 1999: 46). In alignment with Hackett and Carroll (2006), I believe that the media are not self-correcting (either through political or market logics), and that change to media practices requires logical and consistent collective action. In this context, social movements can be a key to media’s revitalization as they have the capacity to bring issues to the public sphere and broaden the scope of democratic decision-making. As stated by Jelin (2000: 53) “… the public sphere might be ‘smaller’ or ‘larger’ than the state, or may even be different.”

Social Movements

… contemporary human rights are frequently the result of social movements that have diverse social memberships. Global and national social movements, rather than social class conflicts, appear to be relatively successful in bringing about the expansion of rights (Turner, 2001: 205).

Class conflict and mobilization for warfare were the causal mechanisms of Marshall’s citizenship model. However, they have been substituted by new causal
processes more related to identity, status contradiction and social movements (Turner, 2001). The tensions created by global capitalism are certainly challenging national governments as international boundaries have become permeable to the globalization of production, commerce, finances, culture and environmental problems. At the regional level, supranational alliances and blocks, such as the European Union, have resulted in further loss of control of the destinies of nation-states. In this context, at the national level, social movements have been generating their own identities and solidarities, competing with the state for loyalty of the population (Jelin, 2000). With the increasingly incapability of state governments to attend to the social needs of their population, citizens are identifying themselves with those alternative social visions provided by social organizations and movements. Social activism is motivated by those collective identities (Hackett and Carroll, 2006). Examples of such phenomenon are the APAEANO and AfroReggae social movements in Brazil.

The APAEANO movement – born from the reference to its official name APAE (association of the parents and friends of children with intellectual deficiency) is considered the world’s biggest social movement in its field of work, looking after 250,000 people with such deficiencies being present in more than 2,000 municipalities nationwide. As stated by the movement (http://www.apaebrazil.org.br/artigo.phtm?l=a=2 retrieved on the 14 of April/2009), it has its historical roots in the uniting force of families, who in face of the inefficiency of the state to promote social policies which secure the social inclusion of people with intellectual deficiency sought alternative solutions for their children with intellectual or multiple disabilities to achieve social inclusion, as a guaranteed right of any citizen. Symptomatic of an absent state that did not care about the needs of the members of the movement, its members have carried forward the mission of providing basic needs for their children - education and medical assistance - as well as “fighting for their rights within the perspective of the social inclusion”.

AfroReggae is a Rio de Janeiro-based social movement, born in the slum of “Morro de Vigário Geral”, well known as one of the city’s most violent areas, under the influence of drug trafficking. It provides the local community with music and dance
lessons as well as related social events. Most of all, it provides the community with a forum for social encounter and an alternative to their tough reality, as per their slogans, “music to combat violence” and “art to transform reality” (http://www.afroreggae.org.br/sec_historia.php retrieved on the 14 of April/2009). The movement has recently extended its activities to other communities in the slums of Rio. Both movements mentioned here bring citizens and communities together with the objective of supplementing the absence of the state in providing social inclusion and services that correspond to communities’ needs, such as health, education and culture – social citizenship rights secured by the Brazilian constitution (Brasil, 2006a).

Hackett and Carroll (2006: 42) argue that social movements are carriers of a *reflexivity* which “includes the imagining of alternative ways of life as well as the collective learning processes that occur as activists experiment with strategies for social change”. Movements have challenged exclusionary practices by reaching into the social and cultural fields, forcing aspects of society to undergo discussion and debate, questioning established ways of life, such as the challenge by the environmental movement to consumer capitalism (2006). Social movements became “carriers of new learning capacities, proto-public spheres which offer potential solutions to systematic crises in that they presage more fluid and democratic types of organization” (Ray, 1993: 73).

Social movements include a great variety of causes, interests and identities arranged within a multi-organizational field. However, the pursuit of an alternative social vision is present in all of them and this can be a point of convergence with the potential of providing a common ground that goes beyond each group’s immediate interests, setting an inclusive frame for the pursue of social rights and the dignity of humankind (Hackett and Carroll, 2006). Even social movements that do not identify themselves as environmental will carry convergent social values of humanity and solidarity. This convergence of values and practices is central for the consolidation of environmental citizenship. As the promotion of a sustainable model for development within the frame of citizenship rights also requires at the local level a collective responsibility for the control
of local resources, connections between international and local organizations and movements have become reference points for bringing environmental issues to the agenda, and important agents for the dissemination of environmental concern as well as the enforcement of environmental protection (Jelin, 2000).

Unified by a collective identity, social movements define solutions for their problems and attract support from other influential groups in society, in this sense framing issues, potentially influencing policy outcomes (Lemos, 1998). I argue that in democratic contexts, the way policy actions are carried out by policymakers hinges on incoming support to those as well as responding to demands from societal groups and here, social movements can play a significant role. In her study of environmental policymaking in Brazil focusing on a successful program to control air, water, and soil pollution in Cubatão, Lemos (1998) argues that social movements, particularly neighbourhood associations, may play a significant role in the context of policy actions. For her, social movements form a collective identity and consciousness among their members, developing a solidarity considered to be the basis for their mobilization. She concludes (Lemos, 1998: 78):

> These groups usually mobilize around issues related to the improvement of their living conditions and favour autonomous and voluntary organization, grassroots direct democracy, and a strong confrontational discourse against the authoritarian state.

However, defining environmental problems and bringing them to the agenda in terms of the paradigm of citizenship is a historical process of social struggles between social movements, institutions (be they national or international) and the media (Jelin, 2000). In order to materialize an alternative social vision, activist movements must engage with capital, the state and the media as well as with civil society and everyday life to gather popular support. Movements for social change need to communicate broadly with society to expand their base of support and develop their perspectives. Social movements seeking broader support for socio-political change cannot ignore the mass
media, which affect their emergence and maintenance as well as their chances of achieving their goals. In this sense, mass media can work towards the emergence of activists’ movements (by publicizing events that may stimulate discontent and mobilization for change) as well as restricting their development (by fragmenting or ignoring connected processes which threaten the status quo). According to Hackett and Carroll (2006), activist movements need the media for three main purposes: 1) to mobilize followers; 2) to validate their existence; and 3) to enlarge the scope of conflict in order to gain support and bring relevant publics into the conflict.

The new social movements that grew out of the wave of intense social activism of the 1960s and 1970s influenced each other’s opportunities, and their combination enabled the redefinition of the political, to include the social, the cultural and the environmental (Boggs, 1995). The dynamism of the environmental movement is reasonably evident, as is its links to other social movements, such as the feminist movement (Jelin, 2000). Global and national social movements that have diverse social memberships are observed to frequently influence the expansion of social rights (Turner, 2001).

I argue that as social citizenship rights are associated with social movements and their agenda-setting activities, so are environmental citizenship rights. The importance of understanding the rise and spread of social movements is crucial for the consolidation of environmental citizenship. Global and local environmental movements are performing a pivotal role in bringing attention to environmental rights. However, their potential for promoting responsible environmental behaviour within the frame of environmental citizenship rights is still to be fully explored, and this is a direction my research takes. The capacity of social actors to express in a concise way their demands and to articulate and expand the range of their environmental concerns, combined with the capacity of national and international agencies to transform the institutional scenario, with effects on the global political community, is defining a significant sphere for the social construction of environmental citizenship (Jelin, 2000).
In similar way in which Hackett and Carroll (2006: 41) describe hegemony – “social relations, practices and cultural codes through which popular consent to an unequal social order is secured, and the ‘system’ thus stabilized”, Nash and Lewis (2006) discuss the notion of “Dominant Social Paradigm” (DSP) in relation to the disruption between people’s stated attitudes toward the environment and their everyday practices. According to the authors, “attitudes that can be linked to environmental citizenship are determined to greater or lesser degrees by the cultural values of the society pertaining to technological, economic, and political institutions” (Nash and Lewis, 2006: 153). In this light, adherence to the DSP can lead to decreasing environmental concern, as people will rely on those dominant institutions for solutions for environmental problems.

Based on statistical analysis of responses to a greenfield development in the UK, Nash and Lewis (2006) arrived at the conclusion that the DSP does strongly influence behaviour at the general level of environmental issues, however, its effects are less strong at the local level, as local environmental problems seem more amenable to action and collective identity is stronger. Their recommendation is that attempts to promote environmental citizenship should be focused at the local level where the grasp of the DSP is less secure. Michael Mann (1970) arrived at similar conclusion in relation to the weaker influence of general dominant values. Based on his research on the social cohesion of liberal democracy, that author argues that as the social relations of an individual are commonly restricted to a narrow segment of society, his/her meaningful life is characterized on an everyday level. This means that his/her normative connections with the majority of citizens can be extremely tenuous. In this context, the individual’s “commitment to general dominant and deviant values may be irrelevant to his compliance with the expectations of others” (1970: 435).

The transition to new lifestyles is often the result of social diffusion. It occurs primarily through the informal sharing of information (Rogers, 2001; McKenzie-Mohr and Smith, 1999; Rogers, 1995). One's understanding of the environment is based on one's relationship to the environment in which one lives (Morgan, 2003). In order to have community participation and for this to become effective, communication and education
processes aimed at changing environmental behaviour should take into account the different perspectives diverse stakeholders have regarding the environment. It is argued by Kurtycz (2005) and Morgan (2003) that this will be most effective by adopting a communication perspective, which enables the understanding of social interactions as factors that determine how people perceive the environment around them and affords the analysis of the social dynamics involved in constructing meaning.

Based on the idea that individuals belong to communities and rights stem from the social relations within the community (Jelin, 2000), it is of great importance to further explore the social dynamics influencing the collective behaviour of communities if we are to achieve the ultimate goal of consolidating environmental citizenship – here perceived as condition for promoting sustainable development. The importance of the sense of belonging to a community for the development and consolidation of human rights was already expressed by Marshall (1977), who conceptualizes social citizenship rights in terms of a respectable standard of living within a community. However, while the original idea of social rights reflected a view of rights of an individual part of a community (an individualistic view of rights), it now pivots on the very idea of communities (a collective, communal view of rights) (Jelin, 2000). If environmental communication can mobilize communities to adopt REB, then those communities are more likely to engage in environmental citizenship.
2. METHODOLOGY

**Introduction**

The previous chapter provided the context for this study by presenting the significant theoretical ideas involved in this research. First the literature review focused on responsible environmental behaviour to explore the variables identified as related to behaviour change. It also investigated how the concept of citizenship has been developed, elaborating on its relation to environmental practice. Further, the agenda-setting approach was investigated and the intersection between this approach and responsible environmental behaviour approach was established, allowing for discussion on how environmental problems become recognized as social problems. Then, the discussion on social diffusion and the role of the media in relation to the promotion of environmental citizenship was developed, with an exploration into the role of social movements in forwarding social change.

This chapter explains the research approach adopted for this inquiry. This discussion is structured according to three distinguishing dimensions: research methodology, method and techniques. Methodology describes the philosophical framework within which inquiry is conducted, while the research method signifies the range of techniques applied to the task of framing the research question then gathering and interpreting relevant information: in this case, about responsible environmental behaviour and its related agenda-setting processes. A final dimension of this relationship includes the techniques, procedures and the range of practical research strategies useful for gathering and analysing data relevant to objectives and approaches of this research.

**Research Methodology**

Social research is conducted for reasons such as answering practical questions, making informed decisions, or changing society (Neuman, 2003). This study recognises those as indirect reasons for the development of this research, however, the main reason
for conducting this research is to build basic knowledge about society. In this sense, it is knowledge about the communication processes underpinning the adoption of responsible environmental behaviour and how they can be oriented towards achieving environmental responsible citizenry.

Warren and Karner (2010) advise researchers to situate their concepts, methods and techniques within social and philosophical contexts, to consider traditions that influence their studies and to acknowledge their social and cultural circumstances, as research reflects a researcher’s intentions and backgrounds. Lincoln and Guba (1986) advise researchers to consider their values as these influence decisions about what and how to study. By considering these issues throughout the research process, researchers can improve the consistency between their methodology and the topic of inquiry. What follows addresses these considerations and identifies the research traditions that have influenced this inquiry.

This research is based on the conviction that humankind has arrived at a definite moment in its history which demands that new policies be formulated to assist the construction of a more sustainable way of life. We are dealing with, above all, a conception of a participative model with emphasis on the integration of social, economic, political, and environmental issues. Within this context, this project has the potential to contribute positively to the collective effort towards that end. This orientation toward knowledge raises difficult research questions. For instance, I cannot claim to be independent or impartial while orienting my research toward specific objectives and remaining intimately involved. Researchers committed to research approaches that challenge the status quo and who contribute to a more egalitarian social order have made an epistemological break from the positivist insistence upon researcher neutrality and objectivity (Lather, 1992). This break from orthodoxy in research is a significant feature of Brazilian author Paulo Freire’s political literacy projects (2005), which seeks to engage community members in dialogue generating consciousness of the political context, allowing for the prospect of changing oppressive situations. Inquiry and
reflection can lead to heightened understanding, changed practices and subsequent reflection.

Methodologists such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Seale (1998) challenge the assumption that research neutrality is desirable. Others go so far as to suggest neutrality is not practically achievable and that a neutral or objective stance is pretence on the researcher’s part. Researcher neutrality is a difficult position to defend. Neutrality may imply both a dispassionate viewpoint and a lack of interest in change. Research is motivated by a curiosity that is practical in nature. Bulmer (1984) considers practical curiosity to be oriented towards answers that will support values other than knowledge itself – for example, values of efficiency and justice. The research interest reflected in this study acknowledges an inherently practical curiosity.

My literature review conducted by this research study supports the argument that different understandings of the natural environment exist and socially meaningful realities exist in the shared understandings of what is real (Eisenhauer and Nicholson, 2005). In this light, this section briefly discusses the research paradigms and underlying interests that frame this inquiry.

Research paradigms involve beliefs about, and ways of doing, research. Increasingly, research methodologists have argued that the act of constructing and interpreting reality depends on ways of seeing that are influenced by values, culture, experiences and assumptions. According to Habermas (1972), three underlying cognitive interests can be detected in human knowledge claims: technical, practical and emancipatory. A technical interest is reflected in control and management of the environment and, for instance, experimentation and prediction. A practical interest orients researchers toward understanding and interaction, recognising values and considering how meaning is interpreted. Research shaped by an emancipatory interest or orientation strives to promote autonomy, insight, self-reflection and heightened consciousness. These cognitive interests are associated with corresponding research paradigms.
Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Lather (1992), Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe paradigm shifts in social science research as a process by which one paradigm breaks down and is replaced by another. Relevant to this study, was the paradigm shift considered to have occurred during recent decades from positivist approaches which reflected an interest in prediction and control, toward an interpretive or constructive paradigm which aims to generate understanding. Contemporary methodologists interested in these transitions suggest that positivist social inquiry declined in dominance during the late 1990s for several reasons. In particular, it came to be viewed as a research approach that tended to support the status quo. Positivist research was also considered to assume passivity and to foster instrumental rationality through non-reflective, a-historical and a-critical approaches (Smith et al., 1990).

As positivist quantitative research declined in dominance, qualitative research emerged during the 1970s and 1980s as an acceptable and popular approach. This trend is considered by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) to reflect shifting research values and purposes. Emerging research paradigms tend to reject the positivist notion that knowledge is determined by nature and propose instead that people are active agents and shape their worldviews by engaging with the lived world. Post-positivist research responds confidently to the apparent weaknesses of positivist research and offers a less rigid research approach (Lather, 1992). Personal accounts are treated as meaningful and informative, and collaboration between researchers and participants is encouraged (Banister et al., 1996; Rowan and Reason, 1981).

Interpretative Methodology

The research methodology informing this study is interpretive, also recognized as constructivist. The interpretive dimension of this study is evident in the attempt made here to comprehend how citizen’s awareness and behaviour in relation to environmental issues are influenced by the media, public policies and social movements. Neuman (2003:
Central to the interpretive research approach is a focus on the social rather than natural world: a focus on meanings, discourse, culture, consciousness, ideas, relationships, values, action and interaction. Interpretive researchers seek to become familiar with relative or socially-created knowledge, and accept the co-existence of multiple legitimate interpretations of realities. This reflects the disinclination to accept the notion of absolute truth (Seale, 1998). Interpretivists seek to develop a form of knowledge or understanding that requires empathic identification with people in order to come to terms with their subjective experience. This sort of knowledge may require extended field work (Bulmer, 1984). An initial challenge for interpretive researchers seeking this form of understanding is to comprehend how people define their situation. To this end, researchers’ participate in groups to identify patterns of meaning (Smith et al., 1990). This approach demands interaction rather than detachment in order that researchers can begin to develop explanations and generalisations.

A criticism of interpretive research methodology is the risk that researchers who fail to examine and critique factors that limit and shape behaviour and beliefs may ideologically contribute to the transmission of false consciousness. However, Smith et al. (1990:103) assert that interpretative approaches need not be limited in this way: “Focusing on fine-grained detail of participants’ meanings does not necessarily involve a consequential blinkering to the wider structures of influence within which these meanings have evolved.”

Research methods

From this point, I turn from the philosophical to the practical dimension of the study to describe and explain the design and conduct of the study. The following sections introduce the research methods that were utilised during this study, the techniques
adopted to collect and analyse data and to ensure its reliability and validity. The qualitative research method used in this study was ethnography.

**Ethnography**

Ethnography was the method adopted for its suitability in a study with interpretive research interest. As previously noted, interpretive researchers seek to develop an understanding of complex social situations. In this manner, ethnographers seek to describe social settings in great detail and in a manner consistent with the perspective of the inhabitants. This is often referred to as rich description (Seale, 1998; Smith, 1990).

Ethnographic research often involves a series of stages during which data collection and analysis techniques become progressively more focused and strategic. Starting with an initially broad focus, ethnographers gather information from sources including case studies and informers. These sources and the observation and analysis of actions and interactions, identify possible explanations of social behaviour. Subsequent research stages tend to focus on these issues and data collection and analysis becomes more purposeful (Seale, 1998).

The form of ethnographic research incorporated in this study is anthropological. As the contemporary Brazilian youth environment movement and its educational dimension are under-represented subjects in academic and popular literature, a descriptive approach provides a useful depiction to contextualise this inquiry.

**Data Collection**

The introduction to this chapter suggested three inter-related dimensions of the research project: methodology, method and technique. This section attends to the third of these dimensions. This study used the following techniques for data collection: document analysis, interviews, participant observation and discourse analysis.
Document Analysis

An initial stage of research commonly involves accessing existing information, which usually helps develop following data gathering strategies. Qualitative research approaches often incorporate a multitude of data sources, and draw on both pre-existing information and new data generated through the researcher’s observations and interactions. Pre-existing data sources can include journals, survey reports and online material. The analysis of pre-existing data can provide evidence to corroborate information provided by other sources and vice-versa (Yin, 2003).

Apart from Brazilian federal government documents related to my chosen themes – youth, environment, citizenship, education and the development of the Environmental Collectives of Youth – data sources utilised during this search included a newspaper (Folha de São Paulo), brochures, email correspondence, websites, blogs and social networking lists. Participation in the networking email list of the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth (CJMA-GO) as well as of the Youth Network for the Environment (REJUMA), proved to be a valuable source of data informing this inquiry and a measure of data validity. Participation in these email lists allowed me to continue observing communication dynamics and relationships among members of these groups and between the groups (as some members of the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth, based in the State of Goiás, were also members of the Youth Network for the Environment, a nationwide network). This continuous observation permitted me to verify to some extent the coherence of what was said during interviews and what was generally said by the same participants in the network lists. In addition, it was an interesting strategy to continue to observe the different debates taken place in these spheres post-data collection.

Interview Techniques

Interviews are commonly associated with research methods that seek to explore subjective meanings and issues (Banister et al., 1996). An interview is essentially a form
of conversation that involves the exchange of meaning. Such conversations may be structured or informal. For research purposes, however, it is important that the exchange of meaning involves a degree of rigour.

A researcher’s interview technique should be consistent with his/her intentions and purposes, as interview approaches ideally correspond to underlying methodology. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) describe a variety of interview approaches, including structured and unstructured, exploratory, directive and nondirective, group interviews and oral history. The main interview technique applied in this study was semi-structured interviews.

Open questions that invite descriptive responses are one tool to promote flexible and responsive disposition. Closed questions such as that invite a yes/no response are considered to lock respondents into arbitrarily limited alternatives (Seale, 1998). Open questions are well suited to the early stages of research projects that precede the development of conceptual categories and relevant at later research stages to provide opportunities to elicit unexpected or contradictory information. A practical shortcoming of open questions is that the interview may not remain focused on the phenomena of specific interest to the researcher. However, it is up to the researcher to address such issue through a careful design of interview topics and questions.

In addition to face-to-face interviews, this study made considerable use of email communication to clarify points dealt with during interviews as well as to ask respondents further questions arising during later stages of the research process. Email enhanced my access to many informants after the completion of the field research stage of this study which took place in Brazil. Similarly, transcriptions of interviews that had been conducted were emailed to participants to facilitate checks as a measure of validation.

Empathy and identification with interview respondents can result in research conclusions that are limited or biased or prevent the study from achieving critical
objectives such as the identification of hegemonic and oppressive dynamics and the facilitation of emancipator change. However, that is a risk faced in establishing identification with participants who can contribute to the development of shared understandings. It appears to me that there is no simple resolution to these issues. In general, interviewers are urged to acknowledge that they are neither neutral nor unbiased (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). They are alerted to the significant influence the act of interviewing may have on respondents’ “patterns of awareness of their situation” and on their realities (Reason and Rowan, 1981: 379).

A further significant issue for researchers utilising interview techniques is the questions of consistency between what interviewees say and what they do (Bulmer, 1984; Seale, 1998). In this regard, a multi-method research approach provides the additional strength of seeking consistency between conclusions derived from interviews, participant observation and other data sources, such as discussion email lists, also utilized by this study in relation to the debates developed by the youth environmental social movement under study. The benefits of this form of triangulation are discussed latter in this chapter.

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with the following: six key members of the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth (CJMA-GO); three incoming members of the movement; two previous members of the movement who are no longer active; the Secretary of Education of the town of Pirenópolis; the coordinator of environmental education of the Secretariat of Environment of Pirenópolis; three public school teachers in Pirenópolis; five students of the same public school; and three members of the Educational Community of Pirenópolis. This looked for evidence related to factors that affect the dissemination of environmental awareness and behaviour. Also, it aimed at identifying communication interactions that are meaningful to promoting environmental behaviour change. Interviews occurred face-to-face and involved discussing a list of topics and answering open-ended questions. The topics included:

- Citizenship;
- Environmental issues;
- Responsibility;
• Community;
• The role of the State;
• The role of youth.

The interview questions utilised a funnel interviewing strategy that “start with straight forward questions, [then] move to abstract and reflective questions” (Dunn, 2000: 59), before progressing towards specific points dealt with in this research. Questions were divided into two groups: (1) related to the participant’s experience and perspectives in accordance to the questions asked by this research; and (2) related to the participant’s specific connection to the object of study, in this case either the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth movement or the environmental education project in a high school of the town of Pirenópolis. What follows is a sample of questions utilised:

1) The most frequent questions asked about participant’s experiences and perceptions:

• What is citizenship?
• Do you consider the environment a citizenship right? If so, how can it be guaranteed?
• Whose responsibility is it to act to solve environmental problems?
• What community do you belong to?
• What influences people in your community to take a more responsible attitude in relation to environmental issues?
• How can your community be prepared to solve environmental problems?

2) Some questions to members of the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth:

• How did you become involved with the youth environmental movement?
• What are the reasons that made you take part in the movement?
• How does the movement engage the community proposing lines of action in face of their socio-environmental challenges?
• Where does support come from to develop non-formal education?
• What are the difficulties/obstacles faced by the movement to reach its objectives?

The interviews were recorded (with the consent of the participants) and a transcript generated for analysis. After coding the information obtained with interviews, data to be used in the writing of the thesis, such as quotes from interviewees, was translated. Regarding translation, quotes deriving from the news media articles used in this thesis
were also translated. All translations occurred from Portuguese to English and were performed by this researcher.

**Participant Observation**

A second technique for data collection integral to this study was participant observation. Observation involves describing people and their contexts and describing and interpreting their actions. It can incorporate both passive techniques such as note taking and photography, and active techniques such as dialogue, interviews and feedback. Potential shortcomings of observation as a data collection technique include its potential to generate findings that are overly subjective, its lack of external validity and reliance on the abilities of researcher, and the fact that observation tends to be time-consuming and labour-intensive (Banister et al., 1996). Notwithstanding these limitations, observation served as a particularly useful technique to collect information concerning the relationships and behaviour of people involved in community environmental engagement processes.

What follows is a list of occasions when participant observation as a research tool was applied for this study:

- Eight general meetings of the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth (CJMA-GO);
- One facilitator’s workshop in preparation for the Fifth State Conference on Youth and the Environment, organized by the CJMA-GO;
- One workshop on sustainable consumption realised by the CJMA-GO in partnership with the Citizenship Education Network (RECID) at a local university; and
- The Fifth State Conference on Youth and the Environment, organized by the CJMA-GO;

In addition, to observe further agenda-setting dynamics in relation to environmental issues and their influence on citizen’s behaviour, participant observation took place at:
• Two classes of Environmental Education at a public school in the town of Pirenópolis, Goiás; and
• The annual meeting of the Department of Environment of Pirenópolis;

**Discourse Analysis**

Text is the basic means of communication, be it spoken or written. Discourse is a more embracing term that calls attention to the situated uses of text, comprising both, text and context (Paltridge, 2006). Discourse analysis is the discipline concerned with the systematic study of discourse. The focus of discourse analysis is not on the ideas, thoughts, plans, goals etc. which exist independently of language, it is, instead, both on what is said, that is, the total of the language mechanisms and strategies that operate in discourse. Paltridge (2006: 2) concludes: “It looks at patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used... it considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings... It considers how views of the world, and identities, are constructed through the use of discourse”.

The view of discourse as the social construction of reality sees texts as communicative units embedded in social and cultural practices. What we write and speak shape and are shaped by these practices (van Dijk, 1991). Researchers who take discourse as a social construction of reality believe discourse is both shaped by the world and is shaping the world. There are many different ways to describe the same event or talk about the same information. Different selections from the same information base may be organized in differing ways, giving rise to different forms of expression. Emphasis on different aspects, different selections from the material available and different organising principles allow for an extremely large variety of text structures, affecting understanding in different ways (Paltridge, 2006).

Between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, discourse analysis emerged as an interdisciplinary field of study in disciplines such as anthropology, ethnography, social psychology, rhetoric, linguistics and semiotics, being of especial interest to researchers in
the humanities and social sciences (van Dijk, 1991). One of the most influential traditions of research, the critical paradigm as van Dijk has named it, also focuses on the articulation of substance and its socio-political and ideological constraints. It has studied the subject matter of discourse and the social relations, assumptions and ideological complexes informing it. A rational which affirms that language substance always depends on the prevailing ideologies and the socio-political context.

Discourse analysis has especially become an important research tool in media research, as an alternative or addition to classical content analysis. Its application in this discipline has emphasized the fact that media messages are specific types of text and talk (van Dijk, 1991), making the study of news report in the press one important task of discourse-analytical media research. According to van Dijk (1991: 110), “Most of our social and political knowledge and beliefs about the world derive from the dozens of news reports we read or see every day.”

My analytical view of news articles was informed by van Dijk (1991), adopting global coherence and superstructures approaches, both focusing on the overall semantic unity of the text. Global coherence relates to what we intuitively know as themes or topics, which summarize the text and specify its most important information. Such topics can be described as semantic macro-propositions. The hierarchical set of topics or macro-propositions forms the thematic or topical structure of the text. Language users employ such macro-propositions so as to understand globally and to summarize a text. Meantime, the superstructures approach is related to the abstract schema through which topics are organized in the text. According to van Dijk (1991), news articles follow a hierarchical schema, consisting of conventional categories such as Headline, Lead, Main Events, Context and History. van Dijk (1991: 115) continues: “Typical for news stories is that these categories, as well as their global semantic content, are expressed discontinuously, as ‘instalments’, throughout the text: of each category the most important information is expressed first, a top-down strategy which assigns a so-called relevance structure to the text.”
Once news articles related to environmental issues were identified (see a summary of such articles in Appendix 4 p. 199), data was collected using a framework (reproduced below) developed for this study based on the two approaches informed by van Dijk, enabling a more systematic analysis of such texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper section/page:</td>
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<td>Headline:</td>
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<td>Context:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macro-propositions:</td>
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1) How is the environment portrayed?
2) How is responsibility over environmental issues approached?
3) Is the environment treated as social right?
4) The newspaper coverage seeks to engage and educate the reader in environmental issues proposing lines of action?

**Sampling**

The research techniques adopted in this study also guided the purposeful selection of people with whom to conduct interviews and from whom to collect accounts. Sampling techniques adopted here were drawn from Strauss and Corbin (1990) and involved open, theoretical and discriminate sampling.

Initial sampling was open, but soon became more deliberate. For example, I actively sought interviewees whose experience and previous statements suggested they may either support or contradict generalisations or categories that were apparent in other accounts. This shift suggests the benefits of theoretical and discriminate sampling. The former involves the selection of locations for observation and interviews that offer particular relevance to concepts that have proven theoretical relevance to the evolving theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This approach is cumulative in the sense that it builds on prior research processes, is well thought out and planned, and remains responsive to emerging insights. The latter, discriminate sampling, involves the selection of sites,
participants and documents that maximise opportunities for verifying the storyline, relationships between categories and for filling in poorly developed categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The case study method and its associated tools for data collection and analysis influenced the selection of participants for this research (Yin, 2003). Due to the fact that important evidence for this research derives from the semi-structured interviews, participation involved key members of the youth environmental movement under discussion, teachers involved in environmental education as well as students willing to talk about their experiences in such projects. In addition, the role of the State in environmental education at the local level was analysed by interviewing government representatives directly connected to the development of environmental education at school. In this case, the choice of participant took place focusing on his/her role in the development of such educational projects.

This study analysed the environment related news articles of every Sunday issue of the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper for a period of five months (November/2009, December/2009, January/2010, February/2010, March/2010). This procedure focused on observing how environmental issues were portrayed during that period. The choice of that period of time coincided with two events relevant to approaches applied in this study: internationally, the realization of the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and nationally, the approval of the third National Plan of Human Rights. Even though the main reason for conducting this analysis was to understand how environmental issues are portrayed and to explore the associations made with them, this represented an opportunity to observe empirically the role of “triggering events” in setting agendas, a concept present in the agenda-setting approach informing this study (Dearing and Rogers, 1996).

I have focused on Sunday issues of the particular newspaper because of the high circulation on that day – representing an influential “moment” in the agenda-setting process – and also because of a need to limit the sample. The *Folha de São Paulo*
newspaper currently has the second largest circulation of all newspapers in Brazil with an average of 330,000 issues sold every Sunday and an average of 290,000 on weekdays (Circulation Verifying Institute, 2012). Along with the newspapers *O Globo*, *Correio Brasiliense* and *O Estado de São Paulo*, the *Folha de São Paulo* (owned by the Grupo Folha) is one of the most influential newspapers in Brazil (Motter, 2008). It is the newspaper with the greatest circulation out of its state of origin, with 23 percent of its circulation out of the state of São Paulo, compared to 6 percent of *O Globo*’s circulation (from Rio de Janeiro) and 4 percent of the circulation of *O Estado de São Paulo* (from São Paulo) (Circulation Verifying Institute, 2012).

**Data analysis**

The previous section outlined techniques of data collection. A distinct but related set of techniques were adopted to guide and facilitate the analysis and interpretation of data collected during this study. These techniques are described in this section.

Analytical procedures generally follow data generation and collection phases. They are utilised to identify and validate patterns, categories and theories. The analysis of interviews, for instance, involves searching for commonalities across and within interview transcripts (Warner and Karner, 2010). Techniques adopted for data analysis are influenced by research intentions and objectives. For example, the interpretive interest motivating this inquiry predisposed me to adopt techniques of data analysis that would generate a detailed description of the processes and relationships underlying youth environmental engagement in the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth, as well as a description of how environmental issues are portrayed by the media in Brazil, in the case of the discourse analysis of environment-related news in the *Folha de São Paulo*. This interest meant I was also interested to ensure data analysis took the inquiry beyond description to generate hypotheses in order to account for emerging findings and justify proposals for action or intervention.
This tension between description and analysis presents a dilemma for qualitative researchers. How researchers resolve this tension between focus and portrayal may be influenced by factors such as their audience and purpose. In response to questions concerning the degree of interpretation necessary or desirable in qualitative research, Strauss and Corbin (1990) present three differing views. One approach is to let informants speak for themselves: to faithfully record and present informants’ views of reality as reflections of the truth. A second approach might call on the researcher to present a more accurate description by reducing and ordering data. A third possibility is that researchers might extract from data the building blocks of theory in order to provide a framework for action.

Data analysis for this research makes use of techniques which correspond to each of these three possibilities. Personal accounts and explanations of concepts enlisted are presented in more detail in the next chapter to provide first-person accounts from participants of the youth environmental movement under study. Reduction and ordering of data provides the study with a description of agenda-setting outcomes of media influences, being especially significant in the analysis of discourse developed in this thesis. The analytical techniques employed to reduce and order data and extract data to inform hypotheses in this study have been influenced by an analytical procedure referred to as the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), a method similar to that known as pattern matching (Yin, 2003). The pattern matching strategy allows the study to draw conclusions from the relationship between the theoretical propositions and the empirical data (Yin, 2003:26). This procedure is an important part of the presentation and interpretation of data in the chapter that follows.

In the first instance, data is collected through techniques associated with ethnography research, including interviewing and observation. Data analysis then involves the development of conceptual categories to explain the processes and relationships involved in the agenda-setting of environmental awareness, which directly influences social recognition of environmental problems (what and how), setting certain behaviour response. Some of these categories were thought of beforehand, through the
development of this study’s initial hypotheses. However, as the study progressed, other recurring themes became evident in responses to interview questions. Explanatory categories were developed during the study, rather than being appropriated from elsewhere. Evidence drawn from interview transcripts and observations are then used to illustrate the suggested categories.

The interpretive phase that follows involves the development of concepts and core concepts that reflect and explain social action and interaction. As categories and concepts emerge, procedures to verify these conclusions are utilised. Evidence is used to test emerging propositions. In contrast with quantitative data analysis techniques, hypotheses and explanations are accepted on the basis of “evidence enough only to establish a suggestion – not an excessive piling up of evidence for a proof” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:39).

Other data analysis techniques associated with qualitative research also applied in this study are related to the processing of data and were informed by Warren and Karner (2010). Through open coding, data was classified and labelled using key concepts as guide. As I code data, I also use the technique of memoing, writing notes that describe processes and relationships. These memos become part of the data analysis, being especially significant in explaining agenda-setting processes.

What follows is an overview of how data is handled and analysed in this study:

**Data Processing Technique:**
- Open coding (classification and labelling of data having key concepts as guide)
- Memoing (writing notes that describe processes and relationships)

**Data Analysis Technique:**
- Pattern matching > variable oriented analysis > explanatory patterns
  (I search for explanatory patterns through a method of comparison of data collected in the case study against theoretical propositions raised by the literature review)
The processed data is related to the theoretical propositions developed through the literature review. Evidence collected with the case study is used to inform hypothesis building. The explanatory pattern matching strategy allows the study to draw conclusions about the relationship between the actors involved in the agenda-setting process and the dynamics and complexity of those relationships. With the justification of data collection and analysis techniques adopted, the next section addresses issues of ethics, validity and reliability, before proceeding to those chapters.

**Ethical Considerations, Validity and Reliability**

The range of ethical issues described by research methodologists includes power imbalance, confidentiality, anonymity, accountability, consent and privacy. Appropriate strategies were developed and adopted during this study to address these issues. For all research, the investigator must also give attention to ethical issues regarding the consent of subjects to participate in the study as well as keeping their confidentiality (Berg, 2001). These are common issues in conducting interviews. To address these issues I established informants’ consent to include their accounts in this text. An informed consent was obtained from participants related to the permission to record the interviews as well as to include direct quotes and participants’ titles in publications resulting from these interviews. Participants were given an information sheet about the study and the implications of their participation and, after reading, were asked to sign an interview consent form (see the Information Sheet to Interviewees in Appendix 2 p. 197 and the Interview Consent Form in Appendix 3 p. 198). As an additional ethical check, this research has undergone scrutiny by the clearance process conducted by Griffith University’s Human Research Ethics Committee and is based on nationally-approved research ethics’ guidelines – approval reference number: HUM/10/09/HREC.

Another set of considerations is required in order to enhance the validity of qualitative research findings and procedures (Reason and Rowan, 1981; Seale, 1998). Validity involves checking that the research approach actually measured what it intended to and did so accurately. One measure of validity considered relevant to this research
project is face validity, which involves asking some or all participants to examine transcribed data and tentative conclusions and provide feedback to assist in refinement (Reason and Rowan, 1981).

This strategy does not necessarily guarantee validity. Although transcripts and analyses draw validity from the perspectives of both researcher and respondent, both parties may perceive the situation in distorted ways. Lather (1986:76) argues that the “reciprocally confirming nature of hegemony” requires that analysis “not be limited to the actor’s perception of their situation”. That author perceives limits to the “degree to which member checks... can help establish data validity” and argues that few appropriate mechanisms exist to validate subjective knowledge, as this “is new territory” (Lather, 1986:77). Therefore, I chose to use a second method of validity in this study, “construct validity” (Yin, 2003; Lather, 1986). This form of validity refers to the degree of alignment between the constructs and categories defined in research review findings and those articulated by participants. Construct validity in this study involved the identification of reference points that may define categories emerging from data derived from sources such as participant observation, document analysis and interviews.

In case study research the investigator ‘infers’ that particular phenomenon resulted from a specific occurrence based on evidence. This leaves space for bias towards an expected or desirable result. Being aware of such risk already constitutes a move towards avoiding this flaw. It is also argued that a research design that has anticipated all these ethical issues has already begun to deal with the overall risks of the research practice, hence, raising the trustworthiness of the study (Berg, 2001).

Whereas validity is a measure of the coherence between research conclusions and phenomena under investigation, reliability is an indicator of the extent to which research findings can be replicated through repeated studies (Sarantakos, 2005). A high degree of reliability suggests research findings can be generalised to other contexts and that research conclusions are “unrestricted as to time and space... assertions that are of enduring value, that are context-free” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:110). Qualitative research
approaches typically place less emphasis on reliability and generalisability than quantitative approaches. Accordingly, the emphasis in this study is on depth and specificity. The validity and reliability of this study’s findings have been established through the use of multiple research methods, data sources and theoretical frameworks, a strategy referred to in qualitative research literature as triangulation (Warren and Karner, 2010; Banister et al. 1996; Lather, 1986; Bulmer, 1984).

Triangulation is a process through which the researcher uses different sources of evidence aimed at corroborating facts (Neuman, 2003: 138; Yin, 2003:99). The findings in a case study research are likely to be more consistent if based on multiple sources of information. In addition, “the use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioural issues” (Yin, 2003:98). Another advantage from using triangulation is the fact that the use of multiple sources of evidence allows the development of “converging lines of inquiry” (Yin, 2003:98), contributing towards increasing the construct validity of the research. In this sense, triangulation took place in this research by using evidence derived from theory review, interviews, observation as well as discourse and document analysis.

Qualitative researchers make use of data triangulation procedures in order to maximise their convergence upon truth, to cancel out bias inherent in any single approach and to neutralise liabilities (Warren and Karner, 2010). Research findings reached through procedures of triangulation are arguably more potent than single-method studies. Asking research questions in different ways, looking at phenomena from different angles and utilising different data collection and analysis tools ideally minimises distortions created by subjectivity and bias in non-quantitative approaches (Mathison, 1988).

Although convergence may be the desired outcome of the multiple data sources and methods utilised, inconsistency and contradiction are also possible outcomes. Contradictions that become evident through these processes may compel researchers to seek a more holistic or critical understanding of the situation (Mathison, 1988). Methodological triangulation refers to “the use of multiple methods in the examination of
a social phenomenon” (Mathinson, 1988:14), applied to avoid the inherent limitations and distortions of any one approach. Theoretical triangulation as applied to the analysis of data “embraces multi-theories and breaks through the parameters and limitations that invariably frame an explanation which relies on one theory” (Banister et al., 1996:148). While a single social theory may serve to understand attributes of a social situation, reference to multiple theories during interpretive stages arguably provides greater insight (Warren and Karner, 2010).

**Conclusion**

This is a qualitative study oriented toward interpretive methodology. The research objectives concerning analysis of processes and relationships involved in the agenda-setting of environmental awareness and behaviour related to concepts of citizenship correspond to the research traditions that emphasize understanding. Data to inform this inquiry has been collected through academic literature as well as participant observation, interviews and discourse analysis of news articles. In this chapter, I have explained the research design in order to justify the decisions made during the inquiry concerning both data collection and data analysis. I have also elaborated on measures that have been utilised to ensure the validity of my observations and conclusions.
3. THE ENVIRONMENTAL COLLECTIVE OF GOIÁS YOUTH

This Chapter analyses the development of the Environmental Collectives of Youth *Coletivos Jovem de Meio Ambiente* (CJMAs) in Brazil, detailing a case study of the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth (CJMA-GO). Research data for this chapter was gathered through interviews with participants involved with the CJMA-GO movement; participant observation of meetings and workshops organized by the CJMA-GO; as well as participation in the annual state conference of youth and the environment organized by the CJMA-GO.

**Introduction**

Today’s youth faces two contemporary phenomena, a connected world and an unprecedented environmental debate. Environmental issues have been widely disseminated, contributing to the social recognition of the degree of environmental degradation and the need to address such issues. Beyond political use and commercial abuse, the environmental debate has a great potential to produce critique of consumption patterns as well as to reaffirm important social values and behaviour, which presupposes new relationships with the environment. Notwithstanding inequalities and differences, the quick networked propagation of certain values allows youth groups to share their reactions to dominant trends and paradigms. Within this context, youth becomes a potential source of social change.

In this interconnected and green world, we must have a clearer idea of the processes and relationships that influence the way social meaning and behaviour in relation to environmental issues are shaped. We ought to identify the new spheres of public debate being constructed as well as how the relationships involved are organized. Also, we need to understand the extent to which this process is influencing the overall
agenda-setting process regarding environmental issues and collective behaviour towards these issues. These are the reasons for conducting this research.²

To elaborate on the points I have outlined, data was gathered during a field trip to Brazil which took place over a 10-month period (between August/2009 to June/2010), opening the way for in depth investigation³ of the Environmental Collective of Youth movement and the impact it has generated within its particular context. This strategy allowed me to observe how the movement is organized, its objectives, its initiatives, who participates, where support comes from, the extent to which it influences behaviour towards environmental issues, and how communication takes place at an interpersonal level, as this level of communication has been identified by the literature as being of great importance for the diffusion of new behaviour (Rogers, 1995; Wejnert, 2002).

Youth, the Environment and the Brazilian State

Public policies in the field of youth and the environment start within the government sphere, but may unfold in diverse directions. Even though, there were already government initiatives and projects in place related to youth and the environment, one benchmark was the realization of the First National Conference of the Environment, which carried the slogan Vamos cuidar do Brasil (Let us take care of Brazil). It included the integrated organization of the 2003 Children and Youth National Conference for the Environment which took place in November of that year. Beyond that single event, there was youth mobilization and an organization process towards raising awareness of socio environmental issues, involving delegations of young people between 11 and 15 years of

² According to Neuman (2003), social research is conducted for various reasons, including to answer practical questions, to make informed decision, or to change society. My research study recognises those as indirect reasons for the development of this project. However, the main reason for conducting this research is to build knowledge about society.

³ Participant observation took place at events organized by the Environmental Collective of Youth of Goiás (a central state of Brazil). These events included: eight general meetings of the movement; one workshop on sustainable consumption in partnership with the Citizenship Education Network; one workshop focused on preparing ‘facilitators’ for the Fifth State Conference of the Goiás Youth for the Environment; and the Fifth State Conference of the Goiás Youth for the Environment. In depth interviews occurred with previous and incoming members of the movement seeking personal insights on the relationships being developed and the importance of the processes taking place.
age, from schools from all states of the federation. In addition, young people aged between 16 and 29 participated in the Youth Councils part of the Organizing Committees in each state.

The National Conference for the Environment in 2003 included two elements: adult and youth. For the youth conference, sixteen thousand schools were enlisted to have a school-based conference for the environment. The participants of the school conferences elected a male and a female delegate (and a substitute), and defined a proposal around the question, “How are we going to take care of Brazil?” Each produced a poster about the proposal for their community. For this first phase, the federal government claims that the schools mobilized nearly six million people, creating spaces of debate about socio-environmental issues and the construction of proposals for environmental policies (Brasil, 2005b). The next stage of the process, at state-level, selected a minimum of eight delegates (four boys and four girls) and a maximum of fourteen delegates (seven boys and seven girls) to participate in the national conference. This variation is proportional to the participation and total number of completed proposals forwarded by the schools. This state-level process is coordinated by State Executive Commissions (mostly made of officials from the state-level education secretariats) along with EnvironmentalCollectives of Youth.

The National Conference of the Environment was an initiative of the Ministry of Environment, with the support of the Ministry of Education for its children and youth version. This represented a new way of conceiving and implementing public policies on environmental education through the educational system itself. It was developed by the General Environmental Education Coordination and the Ministry of Education in schools and education secretariats, also originating other programs and projects.

In 2004, a set of continued systemic actions called Vamos Cuidar do Brasil (Let us take care of Brazil) was implemented involving the mobilization and training of environmental educators (teachers, youngsters and community leaders) and the constitution of two new spaces for youth action: the Commissions of Environment and
Quality of Life in Schools, Comissões de Meio Ambiente e Qualidade de Vida nas Escolas (COM-VIDAs), and the Environmental Collectives of Youth, Coletivos Jovens de Meio Ambiente (CJMAs) (Brasil, 2006). While the COM-VIDAs seek to involve and integrate students in their initial years of high school with their teachers and the local community in the construction of the Agenda 21 in the school, the CJMAs aggregate young people between 15 and 29 years of age who are members or not of youth movements or organizations which incorporate the environment topic in their activities. The general objective of both projects is to act, intervene and construct socio environmental actions and projects from a youth perspective (Brasil, 2006).

This process, started in 2003, has unchained a series of interesting initiatives within Brazilian society. Two important initiatives stemming from this process were:

- The organization of the CJMAs in a network: the Youth Network for the Environment, Rede da Juventude pelo Meio Ambiente (REJUMA). This is an initiative which strengthens the continuous participation of youth in the Brazilian Environmental Education Network, Rede Brasileira de Educação Ambiental (REBEA) and in the National Council of Youth;
- The implementation of the Youth and the Environment Program by the managing agency of the National Environmental Education Policy, Órgão Gestor da Política Nacional de Educação Ambiental, with the objective of contributing to skill building for young members of the CJMAs. This program evolved based on research which sought to identify the profile, demands, concerns and potentialities of the CJMAs all over the country.

Both initiatives sought to attend to the needs of youth organized around the CJMAs, identified through the 2004/2005-survey research on the CJMAs. However, other results originating from this conference process do deserve further investigation, especially in relation to the extent to which this process is influencing the overall agenda-setting process regarding environmental issues as well as collective behaviour towards environmental issues.
The Environmental Collectives of Youth (CJMAs)

The Environmental Collectives of Youth originated from an initiative of the Brazilian Ministry of Environment with the support of the Ministry of Education in the organization process of the 2003 First Children and Youth National Conference for the Environment in Brazil. The youth were co-responsible for the organization of the conference within their states, working in accordance to the principles of “youth educates youth” and “youth chooses youth”.

The Environmental Collectives of Youth were initially a way of guaranteeing the participation of young people in the organization process of the First Children and Youth National Conference for the Environment, allowing for interaction and partnership among youngsters and institutions that make up the organizing committees in the states of the federation. From the beginning, this initiative has sought to:

- Broaden the scope of the socio environmental theme in youth organizations which work with the environment;
- Bring the environment topic to several youth organizations;
- Strengthen the youth theme in the collectives and the organizations related to the environment, such as the environmental education networks, the SISNAMA\(^4\) entities, among others; and
- Mobilize and strengthen the participation of youth in the National Conference of Environment (adult version), electing delegates and inserting their proposals and themes of interest in this debate (Brasil, 2006; Brasil, 2005b).

\(^4\) The SISNAMA, *Sistema Nacional de Meio Ambiente* (National Environmental System) was created by law in 1981 (law n.6.938). The foundational idea of this system is to share among government actors (federal, state and municipal) the environmental management in the country. In this way, responsibilities have been divided among the national environmental agencies, the state level environmental agencies and the municipal agencies. According to the federal government (Brasil, 2005b), even though the SISNAMA has been built since 1981, by 2005 many of the Brazilian municipalities still did not have specific agencies for environmental management.
These collectives are informal autonomous spaces of youth dialogue and action, interested in the development of environmental education. Their participation is voluntary. Some initiatives developed by these youth collectives are the elaboration and development of workshops, promotion of gatherings, creation of Internet based social networks for debating issues relevant to the movement, creation of educational resources and sharing of information. According to the Environmental Education Directing Board of the Ministry of Environment (Brasil, 2005a), the CJMAs participate in events, develop environmental education actions and implement projects of importance to the consolidation of Brazil’s Environmental National Policy.

The development of these youth collectives is an interesting example of the involvement of the youth in a civic engagement process in the socio-environmental arena. Besides involving young people who already develop work in the environment field, the CJMAs favour the entry of others in this process following their principles of “youth educates youth” and “youth chooses youth”. These collectives operate like local networks that articulate people and organizations, circulate information, disseminate ideas, plan and develop initiatives.

Originally, twenty-seven CJMAs were formed in the organizing process of the First Children and Youth National Conference for the Environment, one for each state of the Brazilian federation (twenty-six states) plus one for the Federal District. After that conference, all twenty-seven CJMAs remained active. However, their degree of engagement in environmental activism varies from one to another. This due to a combination of factors such as different levels of personal commitment of members as well as different levels of support from local governmental agencies. The influence of the latter can be perceived in a statement from a member of the CJMA in the Amazon state of Pará, who raised the issue of power shift (in specific 2010’s general elections) affecting the continuity of the CJMA’s projects in that state:

Here (in Pará), the PT lost (the labour party which was in power in that state as well as in the federal government since the start of the CJMA initiative under President Lula’s government) and the PSDB is going to
assume the state government (a neoliberal party); we do not really know what is going to happen… (CJMA-PA member, 2010).

The CJMAs have been partners in federal programs such as the initiative of the Ministry of Education *Vamos Cuidar do Brasil com as Escolas* (Let us take care of Brazil with the schools), the Youth and Environment Program and the Children and Youth National Conference for the Environment (the first in 2003, the second in 2006 and the third in 2009). The CJMAs also developed their own mobilizing actions and collaborate in projects in their states. As expressed by a member of the CJMA-Cuiabá (2010), in the state of Mato Grosso:

The Secretariat of Education is our partner since 2006, they recognize our work, sometimes they call us to deal with young people even when the issue is not environment related, above all, in recognition for what we do with the youth at schools.

Throughout the organizing process of the First Children and Youth National Conference for the Environment, the federal government perceived the CJMA’s potential for mobilization and engagement of the youth in environmental debate and action. They believed it could open channels for political action and possible cultural and socio-environmental transformation (Brasil, 2005b). So, with the intention of gathering subsidies for the elaboration of public policies which strengthen the CJMAs, the federal government, through its Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Education, developed a survey research project entitled *Perfil e Avaliação dos Conselhos Jovens de Meio Ambiente* (Profile and Evaluation of the Youth Councils of Environment) (Brasil, 2005c).

The research was elaborated and delivered with the support of the Youth Network for the Environment and the Brazilian Network of Environmental Education. It was a quantitative/qualitative survey involving participants of the then Environmental Councils of Youth of all states of the federation during a two-month period between 2004/2005. After the initial period (from the beginning of 2003 to the beginning of 2005) and the completion of that survey, the Councils started to be institutionally recognized as Environmental Collectives of Youth (CJMAs).
The Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth (CJMA-GO)

The Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth, *Coletivo Jovem de Meio Ambiente de Goiás* (CJMA-GO), was created in 2003 during the process leading to the First Children and Youth National Conference for the Environment. In the state of Goiás, youth were co-responsible for the organization of the three conference processes in the state (2003, 2006, 2009), contributing to the engagement of other young people through its election of delegates to attend the national conference, following the principle, “youth chooses youth”.

According to the CJMA-GO (2007), the Environmental Collective of Youth is a social movement that gathers in informal groups of young people concerned about socio-environmental issues. The CJMA-GO claims to have as its objective to promote and broaden the socio-environmental debate which refers to the theme “youth and the environment”, contributing to the mobilization of children, youth and people of all ages. Some of the themes applied by the CJMA-GO in its activities are: sustainable consumption; youth and political participation; sensitisation in environmental education; principles of Agenda 21; and edukommunication.

Central to the organization and articulation of the CJMA-GO is the use of applications that facilitate interactive information sharing and collaboration on the World Wide Web. The movement makes use of social-networking sites, blogs, wikis, video-sharing sites and other web applications that establish spaces for public engagement and networked participation. Networking is an essential part of the everyday of this collective. The CJMA-GO is part of the Youth Network for the Environment (an important space for national articulation of the youth organised around the CJMAs), the Environmental Education and Information Network of Goiás, *Rede de Educação e Informação Ambiental de Goiás* (REIA-GO), the Environmental Education Network of the Cerrado, *Rede de Educação Ambiental do Cerrado* (REACerrado), and the Brazilian Network of Environmental Education. The collective also takes part in different spaces of environmental education articulation in Goiás, such as the State Executive Organizing
Committee – responsible for the children and youth conferences for the environment processes within this state, and the Inter-institutional State Commission of Environmental Education in Goiás. In addition, the CJMA-GO runs its own network, based on google.groups e-mailing list.

Through participation in the CJMA-GO’s (as well as in the Youth Network for the Environment) google.group for nine months (from March/2010 to November/2010), I observed the importance of on-line networking applications (the so called Web 2.0 applications) to the organization and development of this youth social movement. I would argue that without web based communication tools such as google.groups, the youth environmental movement that arose from the CJMAs initiative would have not reached the level of articulation and mobilization they have.

The CJMA-GO participation in the Program *Vamos Cuidar do Brasil com as Escolas* (Let us take care of Brazil with the schools) is also a highlight. Within this initiative, the CJMA works directly with school students towards the creation of the Environment and Quality of Life Commissions in the Schools, known as COM-VIDAs. The COM-VIDAs draw from the constitution of Agenda 21 in schools, ideally contributing to participation of youth in identifying the needs and demands for developing healthier socio environments within schools and where possible beyond (Brasil, 2004). It is an initiative based on the participation of students, teachers, directors, other school employees and sometimes other members of the broader community to transversally integrate environmental education with actions developed at school.

The CJMA-GO – and another eighteen CJMAs around the country – has participated in the COM-VIDAs project along with the managing agency of the National Policy of Environmental Education (Brasil, 2009). In 2008 alone, the CJMA-GO had the opportunity to develop a project entitled *Formando COM-VIDAs em Goiás* (Forming COM-VIDAs in Goiás), with the objective of implementing Agenda 21 in twenty-two state schools in Goiás (Brasil, 2009). However, a leader of the CJMA-GO expressed that it is not an easy process to instigate change in the school community, but when that
happens, results are more satisfactory. When asked about the difficulties in instigating change in the school community, this interviewee relates this difficulty to the internal organization of schools and their *Projeto Político Pedagógico* (Political Pedagogical Project). By law, educational institutions are responsible for elaborating and executing their own pedagogical proposals (Brasil, 1996). However, as this requires only the presentation of a formal document, not stating the due processes through which it must be constructed, many times it is done only for fulfilling the law, thus becoming merely a bureaucratic instrument which lacks the participation of the broad school community.

… there is the school organizational factor, whether the school is already well organized, has a well elaborated PPP which allows for projects like this (the COM-VIDAs), whether the educators and directors provide openness to new experiences in the school… there are schools which do not have a clear organization, for example, they have not properly defined their mission in the PPP, they have not defined what the working philosophy of the school is, what educational line to follow and this hinders not only the formation of COM-VIDAs, but any other project to be created at the school (Interview B CJMA-GO, 2010).

Nevertheless, another member of the CJMA-GO gave a positive example of the initiative developed at a school in the town of São Luis de Montes Belos (GO), where broad participation of the school community took place: apart from students, the Environment and Quality of Life Commission was made up of teachers, the school director and one of the school cooks, who became a leader of that COM-VIDAs. According to this interviewee, more than 400 schools have been involved in socio-environmental activities since 2003 in the state, mainly through the formation of COM-VIDAs. Also, the member emphasized that a lot of work takes place through the construction of Environmental Collectives of Youth in the interior of Goiás, and continued (Interview E CJMA-GO, 2009): “Each local CJMA has been autonomously organized, following its own tracks, realizing or participating in environmental education projects in its community, getting involved with the socio-environmental discussions of the locality it pertains to.”
One example of the CJMA’s local ramifications is in the town of Ceres, where the CJMA was a partner in the project, *Nossos Rios Nossas Almas* (Our rivers, our souls) – developed by the regional office of IBAMA\(^5\) in Ceres-GO, in partnership with the CJMA-Ceres and other local entities linked to the environmental debate. This project’s aim was to sensitise the diverse segments of local society and government officials to the importance of preserving and recovering the *Rio das Almas* (the Soul River) hydrographical basin. This was done by strengthening inter-institutional partnerships and emphasising the concept of shared environmental management (Augusto and Damasceno, 2007).

Another example is the case of the CJMA-Pirenópolis, which was once involved in a discussion of the town’s Agenda 21 project, which this researcher had the opportunity to personally investigate. Unfortunately, the Agenda 21 project in the town of Pirenópolis (which received funds from the federal government) was interrupted due to lack of accountability by the local secretariat of environment. Data I gathered through interviews with local government officials of that town, indicated that funds which should have been spent on Agenda 21 initiatives were actually directed to other ends. This shows that even when social mobilization is achieved towards promoting socio environmental initiatives, obstacles such as weak governance of public resources can hinder social development and motivation for continuous public participation.

Another member of the movement in Goiás I interviewed mentioned that the number of activities developed (including the formation of COM-VIDAs) has decreased in the past year and a half. The member observes that this due to the fact that the movement has lost connection with participants in the interior of the state by not maintaining a continuous contact with them. In addition, the interviewee (Interview E CJMA-GO, 2009) stated that many of those involved have moved to different locations, concluding “some entered the movement and others left and we have not been able to always engage new members, because of lack of time”. Several others mentioned another

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\(^5\) The Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources, *Instituto Brasileiro de Meio Ambiente e Recursos Naturais Renováveis*. 
factor, particularly in 2010, which contributed to this decline in activities realized by the CJMA in Goiás – it was the only year which they did not hold a CJMA annual meeting which provides space for strategic planning and usually brings together at least one member of each local CJMA in the state. It is usually a time when they establish activities for the whole year in localities and update the remainder of the group on what is happening.

One interviewee indicated that 28 CJMAs had been implemented throughout the state of Goiás since 2003. However, the movement member highlighted that some CJMAs have a discussion focus while others are action-focused. This is due to reasons such as the numbers of members in that locality, the existence of local support to develop actions and the availability of those members in dedicating time to the movement. He/she claimed that there are currently 13 active CJMAs in the state and concluded (Interview A CJMA-GO, 2010):

Some members apart from studying, they work too, or perhaps are involved with other personal projects which only allow them to participate in the debates in our network or in the annual state conference we organize. Others have more time and are willing to dedicate beyond the participation in discussions, developing local initiatives such as the COM-VIDAs. That is not rigid either. Some members did not have time for developing initiatives at a certain moment, but did latter. Others did before, but are now involved with university, work… so are dedicating less time.

This also indicates that vulnerabilities such as a lack of stable income and professional initiation do influence their engagement in socio environmental debate and action. This in turn highlights the need for public policies which better address such social vulnerabilities faced by youth, if the underlying reasons beneath their level of participation in environmental debate and actions is to be addressed.

According to that member of the CJMA-GO there are currently 66 CJMA members in the state, taking into account the whole of CJMAs in Goiás, which have the CJMA-GO as the central articulating cell of the movement based in the capital city,
Goiânia. Regarding the articulation among the different CJMAs in the state, the member expressed his/her discontent with the disarticulation among the different CJMAs. He/she mentioned that (Interview A CJMA-GO, 2010):

Since last year, we started to construct the next State Conference of the Goiás Youth for the Environment, and since I became a member, this has been the most horizontal construction I have ever witnessed in the CJMA, but even with many attempts to involve the maximum number of local CJMAs in the process, that is not what has been happening. I can remember a maximum of six local CJMAs working in the construction of the event and some not even participating that directly.

By now, it is worthwhile analysing how the CJMA-GO movement is internally organized as this process reveals its evolving character. According to a member of the CJMA-GO, “horizontality, belonging and autonomy are principles of the CJMA-GO, which seeks in its organization, new ways of viewing and facing the world” (Interview E CJMA-GO, 2009). I had the opportunity to see these processes in action when I participated in the annual general meeting of the local Environmental Collectives of Youth of Goiás, on 2 July 2010, during the Fifth State Conference of the Goiás Youth for the Environment, Quinto Encontro Estadual de Juventude pelo Meio Ambiente de Goiás (V EEJMA-GO), in the city of Rio Verde – GO.

Since the Third State Conference of the Goiás Youth for the Environment in 2008 (an initiative organized by the CJMA-GO), the movement has voted for collegial coordination (instead of a single coordinator, as from the previous years) which seeks to structure and organize the CJMA-GO through the institution of three action axes: communication; management; and formation. During the meeting in which I participated, the collegial coordination in charge reported its experiences in the front of the movement for the previous one year, pointing out advances as well as difficulties faced along the way, with a positive balance which culminated in the realization of the fifth state conference, the movements main event. Among other demands, members elected three members to be responsible for each one of those areas for the next one year.
This account shows not only the democratic character of the movement, but also the role that the CJMA initiative (as public policy) can have in promoting civic engagement of youth through participatory governance processes. It can be perceived as an ‘initiation’ process towards how democratic systems of governance work. This can also be said about the election process for the Children and Youth National Conferences for the Environment, previously detailed in this article. Here, the role of the CJMAs in each state is, along with the State Executive Commission, to: define criteria for the selection of state delegates for representation in the national conference; promote workshops about the school-level conferences; mobilize and capacitate youngsters to act as facilitators in the school conferences; and select state delegates (minimum of eight and maximum of fourteen, divided in equal numbers for boys and girls).

The permanent articulation and construction of this youth environmental movement has made possible the realization of the annual State Conferences of Goiás Youth for the Environment (EEJMA-GO). From its first occurrence in Goiânia in 2006 (which gathered 150 people from 13 municipalities of the state) to its latest in 2010, in Rio Verde (which gathered 70 people from 12 municipalities), this event offers a sphere for mobilization, learning and debate of issues related to youth and the environment. At the last conference, I was able to interact with young people participating in workshops, discussion groups and lectures on such topics as environmental education, political participation, entrepreneurship, educommunication, social organization in networks, organizational strengthening, and sustainable consumption.

According to a member of the CJMA movement in Goiás, “the EEJMA-GO is important for the articulation and maintenance of communication within the movement” (Interview F CJMA-GO, 2009). In addition, as highlighted by another member in relation to the fifth occurrence (Interview K CJMA-GO, 2010), “the V EEJMA-GO has been important to strengthen the articulation bases of the movement.”

Another interviewee, who was 17 years old and worked as an apprentice for a Youth Rights Council, indicated the mobilizing character of the event by saying, “I saw
that it is not only a matter of me changing. With the event here, I learnt that we have to mobilize others” (Interview H CJMA-GO, 2010). In addition, an interviewee mentioned that apart from his/her participation in most annual versions of the event, he/she brought a brother along for the past two events and his/her sister for the last one. This shows that the methodology used by the CJMA-GO to promote environmental education also has the potential for diffusion of environmental awareness and behaviour beyond its visible boundaries. One aspect that can have greater social impact is the role of the CJMA initiative to form environmental leaders, such as in the case of a CJMA-GO member who after participating in the movement in its early stages has developed work for the Ministry of Environment.

I could also verify the importance of the organizing process for the event in the development of a planning methodology by the CJMA-GO, based on identifying demands in advance to make actions possible. This process started six months before the event took place and led to a relatively successful event. In addition, one of the focuses of the event was the debate of a State Program of Youth and the Environment proposal to be forwarded to legislative authorities. The State of Goiás does not yet have any sort of state government policy directed to this theme and this initiative by the CJMA-GO movement indicates its intention to participate in the elaboration of public policies, showing the potential of this movement to influence the political agenda. Other initiatives that indicate this potential (which deserves further investigation) included:

- A letter to candidates – an action born within the Youth Network for the Environment to prepare and disseminate (especially among the presidential and governor candidates) information about the work done by youth in community environmental engagement, their beliefs and their expectations of the government. This took place during the general federal and state elections in October/2010. The letter was replicated by the CJMA-GO, who sent it to the candidates in Goiás; and
• An open letter of the catalão youth – a document stating what the youth from the city of Catalão, in Goiás, expect from their local government in relation to policies directed to the young people in that locality. They claimed the document was to serve as “an informational, political and mobilizing tool for the Catalão society” (Conferência Infanto-Juvenil, 2010).

This initiative took place during the Infant-Juvenile Conference “With the word the youth”, which had as facilitators members of the CJMA-GO and was held during the First National Meeting and Fourth Symposium of Childhood and Education. It was promoted by the Centre for Research in Childhood and Education of the Federal University of Goiás (Catalão Campus), in partnership with the local council for childhood affairs. It was an initiative that shows the potential of the CJMA movement to converge with other movements based on the ideal of civic engagement and social development as preconditions to achieve sustainable development.

Discussion

The collective identity of the CJMA movement is built around its “youth” character, the principles, “youth chooses youth” and “youth educates youth”. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily imply stronger internal solidarity within this social movement collective to the point of resulting in exclusivity, as found in some reformist and radical environmental groups (Saunders, 2008). The CJMA’s principle, “one generation learns with the other”, is indicative of a broader approach. These are the three guiding principles of the CJMA movement as defined by the federal government initiative. It raises the point that initiatives to promote the development of social movements should take into account the paradox observed by Saunders and develop a methodology which addresses the issue:

The paradox is that a greater degree of internal solidarity within a social movement organization may result in a proclivity for exclusivity and that the process of collective identity and resultant sectarian solidarity can actually divide rather than unite movements (Saunders, 2008: 234).
This is not the case for the CJMA-GO. Evidence is in the fact that it developed a partnership with the RECID, Rede de Educação Cidadã (Citizenship Education Network) which does not have ‘youth’ as its central focus. The movement might exclude people from membership on the basis of age, but that does not apply in the case of establishing bonds with other groups. In her case study of three organizations in Britain’s environmental movement, Saunders (2008) argues that collective identity (the result of group rather than movement level processes) is not always beneficial to the broader social movement.

She also observed that “participation in Friends of the Earth (one of the environmental organizations under study) has generally permeated the lifestyles of its members of staff and activists, beyond their working day/group meetings” (Saunders, 2008: 238). I would argue that this is also the case for the CJMA-GO, based on different members’ statements that their participation in the group has influenced how they perceive environmental issues and their social role in promoting change. As indicated by one interviewee (who has been with the group for more than two years), when asked if his/her participation in the CJMA has influenced the way he/she behaves in relation to the environment (Interview H CJMA-GO, 2010):

It [his/her participation in the group] has changed a lot the way I think, now I look at the environment in a different way… I try to change my attitudes, I try to pass on to other people what I know too.

The CJMA movement has its own specificities. It is a movement originating from a government initiative, not a grassroots social movement. However, in the state of Goiás it has developed into a social movement of its own with some dependency on government initiatives and support, especially in relation to national networking and financial support (such as the organization of national conferences and resources from state level agencies towards realization of initiatives).

Supporting resources usually come from government, mostly from state level and
some local level agencies, frequently secretariats of education. There is rarely financial support neither from private sector nor from members of philanthropic foundations. This indicates the importance of government support to the development of social movements as an alternative source of funding which allow movements not to fall into corporate elites' co-option, as pointed out by Barker (2008), taking place mainly through the links established by donation from philanthropic foundations.

According to Saunders (2008: 236):

If there is a collective identity in the group (in relation to the conservationist Chiswick Wildlife Group [CWG] movement), it is defined by the Committee, which is responsible for working out what the “we” will do. To some extent, it is questionable whether CWG volunteers share a collective identity.

The CJMA groups’ idea of what “we” will do (according to that author, strongly related to the definition of the collective identity of a social movement group) was originally defined by the federal government initiative. Furthermore, the CJMAs’ guiding principles were not formulated within the groups’ roots, rather, they were assimilated from top to bottom (from government to movement groups). In this regard, the federal government has created an Orientation Manual for Developing an Environmental Collective.

Despite Saunders’ observation in the CWG case study, I argue that the volunteers of the CJMA-GO share a collective identity around: 1) the importance of youth in society; 2) the role of the youth in promoting social change; 3) the strength in unit. The latter could be clearly observed during the state level conference, where I perceive a feeling of empowerment amongst because it was an event organized by youth for youth.

The local CJMA groups, apart from participating in federal government initiatives such as the development of the COM-VIDAs within schools, also work on local issues, often using their own knowledge, capabilities and local partnerships. In agreement with Saunders’ (2008) observations in relation to the reformist environmental movement Friends of the Earth, I argue that it is more accurate to suggest that the CJMAs around the
country have a shared concern for environmental justice, while the local CJMA of Goiás has its own collective identity.

The CJMA-GO’s active members also commit a generous amount of personal time to it, evidenced by their constant presence in the google.group discussions and the establishment of shared tasks during their general meetings. Solidarity is evident amongst those members who are more active, to the point of establishing emotional bonds. The CJMA-GO members do show rather strong affective bonds with one another, different from Saunders’ observation in the reformist FoE movement in Britain. She concludes (2008: 238):

… although there is a fair deal of solidarity amongst FoE staff and activists, it is difficult for them to build strong affective bonds with one another because of the sheer size of the organization and the work demands placed upon them.

I argue that the CJMA movement has a shared identity, mostly because the “we” identity (Saunders [2008:234] sees collective identity as a definition of the “we”) was defined and filtered down from the federal government organizational initiative for the movement. This attracted to the movement people who share those environmental concerns and who identify themselves with the unique niche of the CJMAs within the broader environmental movement - the youth component. Furthermore, the local CJMAs develop similar initiatives to those originally crafted by the federal government. This includes participation in the Youth Network for the Environment, organization of the state level processes of the national conferences, and development of the COM-VIDA projects within schools. However, they also developed their own projects, based on their knowledge and local partnerships, which have contributed to the formation of a local group level concept of “we”.

Even though the federal government originally set the agenda for the CJMAs (including important activities developed by them, in this case the formation of COM-VIDAs), the CJMA-GO culture of organization has been to some extent independent.
from the federal government influence. It looks more like an organization based on participatory principles and horizontality. Decisions on what to do and how to do it (in relation to campaigns, workshops, partnerships and their state conference) are frequently made by consensus. This is perhaps because without collective support, one has little chance of progressing an activity within the CJMA scope. Besides, as previously mentioned, the CJMA-GO has moved from a single coordinator to a collegial coordination system, showing a tendency to evolve into consensus decision-making processes. The CJMA-GO follows a horizontal organizational chart. This differs from what Saunders (2008: 246) found in the reformist environmental group Campaign Against Climate Change. She argues (2008: 246) that the “CCC (Campaign Against Climate Change) has a hierarchical decision-making structure dominated by a single leader, whereas EDAG (Environmental Direct Action Group) is run by consensus decision-making”, putting the CJMA-GO’s principles of organization closer to those identified by Saunders (2008) in the radical EDAG group. This points out to an underlying evolutionary process within the CJMA-GO group that can lead to greater autonomy as a social movement.

The concept of “we” as well as the guiding principles of the movement have originally been set by the federal government initiative (through the Ministries of Environment and Education), in spite of being crafted on an idea based on youth participation (perhaps consultation) through the processes of the national conferences (Brasil, 2006). Even though local groups have autonomy and may campaign on different issues in different ways, their concept of “we” was filtered by the federal government initiative. This was the case for the beginning of the CJMA movement, under the federal government initiative, however, as we are dealing with young social actors undergoing development in their critical thinking, would the influence of the state in shaping their attitudes to equip them to face socio environmental challenges not be relevant? Could this not be seen as the state’s educational role?

The educational system has been crucial in the process of socializing people into their roles as citizens (Mann, 1970). The educational system is an integral part of the
process of ideological shift from individual freedom to the idea that the actions of an individual directly affect other members of a society, and in turn, him/herself. If responsible environmental behaviour is the desired social response to counter the long-term nature of environmental problems, then education that addresses this need is a social duty. As Marshall (1977: 90) argues: “The duty to improve and civilize oneself is therefore a social duty, and not merely a personal one, because the social health of a society depends upon the civilization of its members”. Education has a direct relation to citizenship because the objective of education is to shape the future adult, thus directly affecting social life. As Marshall concludes (1977: 89) “fundamentally it should be regarded, not as the right of the child to go to school, but as the right of the adult citizen to have been educated” to match his/her needs as well as those of society.

Such outcomes can be observed in an account by a member of the CJMA-GO who at a recent annual general meeting of the movement became a coordinator of the movement in the state (within the collegial coordination system):

The people I have met, the paths opened up to me, the broadening of my world vision, the evolution of my critical thought, I owe all this firstly to the CJMA-GO, which always imposed me new challenges and obstacles that as I advanced through made me grow within the movement and my social life. And for this, I am always going to see the CJMA as a door which appeared in my life to benefit and put me on the right path (Interview L CJMA-GO, 2010).

I argue that the CJMA initiative of the Brazilian federal government, as a complimentary initiative to what has been developed within the education system, addresses the educational role of the state in relation to socio-environmental issues.

Different from radical groups, reformist groups “have a collective identity that is often not systemically challenging, and whilst their activism shapes their lifestyles, it dictates it to a lesser extent” (Saunders, 2008: 249). The CJMA-GO fits more into this description, rather than being considered as either conservationists or radicals. From my observations, considering Saunders’ (2008) conceptual framework based on three types
of environmental movement groups - conservationist, reformist, and radical - I conclude that the CJMA-GO is a reformist group (perceived as moderate). The CJMA-GO works at creating a climate of opinion to mobilize youth in the public sphere to act responsibly in relation to environmental issues, by equating their behaviour to socio environmental challenges and engaging in the debate and development of public initiatives which seek the achievement of solutions to socio environmental problems, as well as into alerting decision makers to the role of youth in this process.

The young members of the CJMA-GO I had the opportunity to talk to and interview, frequently disagree with the opinion expressed by Araya and Kabakian (2004: 604) who argue that “they are the next generation – the future, and therefore, they are keen to guarantee sustainability: their own survival”. The young activists involved in Brazil’s environmental movement do not perceive themselves as the future or next generation. This can be observed in one of the interviewees' comments in relation to what influences environmental behavioural change: “when one says the youth is the “future”, no, the youth is the “now”, we have to act now. It is necessary to act now so things do not get worse latter.”

Even though I agree with Araya and Kabakian (2004: 605) that the image that young people have of the future influences their present actions, I would argue, from the experience with the CJMA-GO, that the way they perceive current life-styles and the social system are the main drivers of their concern for social change. They usually express their discontent in terms of the current socio environmental context and a lack of participatory governance processes as their main reasons for acting.

Conclusion

The future scenarios drawn by the scientific community point out to current youth as a strategic generation in facing the challenge posed by what some call the socio environmental crisis. Due to their potential to learn, mobilize and produce social changes, public policies focused on this generation can be perceived as strategic to match society’s
life-styles to more sustainable standards. This panorama demands better conditions of
development and social participation by young people. As expressed by one youth leader
during a CJMA-GO meeting, “youth is not indifferent [to social issues], actually, they are
easy to be mobilized. What is lacking is a catalyst to lead them to get organized”. And
this can come from the state, responsible for developing long-term initiatives such as
education to prepare young citizens to face the inevitable socio environmental challenges.

The results of the CJMA initiative are that in engaging young citizens in
participatory processes of environmental education, it contributes to the development of
social responsibility as well as responsible environmental behaviour amongst its
members. In addition, this initiative has worked as an avenue for the dissemination of
environmental awareness as well as highlighting the importance of civic engagement in
social issues, particularly amongst those who participate in activities developed by the
CJMAs. In this sense, I argue that the work developed by the members of the CJMA-GO
has sensitized other young people to the relevance of environmental issues and
contributed to the mobilization of youth to participate in this debate. The young members
of the Environmental Collectives of Youth can act as multipliers of principles related to
civic engagement and socio environmental responsibility.

Also, there is a great potential for the CJMA movement to converge with other
movements based on the ideal of civic engagement and social development as
preconditions for achieving sustainable development, as in the case of the partnership
between the CJMA-GO and the Citizenship Education Network. The relevance of
guaranteeing the continuity of this process of collective construction lies in the influence
it has in the dissemination of civic engagement and the promotion of responsible
environmental behaviour.
4. THE ROLE OF BRAZILIAN YOUTH

Introduction

Latin American countries are young societies. In many of these countries, their youth makes up a substantial portion of their populations. This is certainly true in the case of Brazil. According to the year 2000 census, Brazil had a population of 47 million in the age of 15 to 29 (corresponding to about a quarter of the population); this parameter being established by the National Youth Policy, instituted in 2005. Projections are of 51 million in 2010. The increase in both, the birth rate amongst young women and the mortality amongst young men, occurring in a context of declining birth-rate and mortality for the overall population, contributed to giving youth highlighted position in public policy debate in Brazil (Juventude e Políticas Sociais no Brasil, 2010). However, the way youth is perceived in light of public policy development and how they, as stakeholders, participate in this process needs to be understood, and its implications addressed.

The high percentage of children and youth has continuously attracted interest from government reformers, military regimes, and social welfare organizations as a potential source of political and social unrest. Youth movements such as the democratic protests of the 1960s and 1970s have played critical roles in the shaping of modern history in the region. From the 1960s to the 1980s, military regimes in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile specifically targeted young women and men for persecution and disappearance. A generation of youthful participants in the region’s political culture was devastated in these nations (Wolseth and Babb, 2008).

Despite clear examples in which age has been a defining point of reference for particular cultural and political agendas, youth are rarely prominent in scholarly investigations in Latin America (Wolseth and Babb, 2008). Nevertheless, the attention on

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6 In 2007, approximately 71% of babies were born of women between the age of 15 to 29, with half concentrated among women up to the age of 24. In 2006, approximately 77% of deaths among men aged 15 to 29 were due to transport accidents, suicides, and specially homicides (Juventude e Políticas Sociais no Brasil, 2010).
youth has increased in Brazil in the past two decades by the media, academics as well as political actors and governmental and non-governmental institutions which provide social services (Abramo, 1997).

In the mass media, we have witnessed an increased presence of products directed at youth as well as increased news coverage about this demographic. According to Abramo (1997), there is a division in these two different ways of thematizing youth. In the case of products directed to this sector, the themes are normally focused on culture and life style: music, fashion, sport, leisure. On the other hand, when youth is the issue in news articles directed to adults, the common themes relate to “social problems”, such as violence, crime, sexual exploration, drugs, or the measures to combat such problems.

This is also observed by Sposito (1997), based on her paper which considers some results of her investigation examining the production of knowledge with regard to the youth theme, considering dissertations and theses by pos-graduates in the field of education from 1980 to 1995. This author concludes that historically and socially, youth has been perceived as a life phase marked by a certain instability associated with certain social problems at a given historical moment, as these problems change over time. This conclusion is supported by Melucci (1996) who argues that young men and women are key actors in relation to the issue of time in complex societies. In a society that is heavily constructed by symbolic cultural investments, time is one of the basic categories through which we construct our experience (Melucci, 1996). Therefore, time becomes a key element of social conflicts and change. The idea of youth, which is biologically and culturally situated in close relation to time, represents a crucial theme, interpreting and translating to the rest of society one of its basic conflictual dilemmas.

If in the 1960s, youth was a problem in terms of being recognized as protagonist in a values crisis and in a generational conflict - especially in the terrain of ethical and cultural behaviour -, in the 1970s, it was the problems of employment and engagement in active life that predominated in youth studies. As pointed out by Pais (1990), this tendency almost transformed youth into an economic category. And this is a tendency
still present in the mass media, as is evident in coverage by an important local newspaper in the state of Goiás, under the alarming headline “162 thousand young men and women do not work nor study in Goiás” (O Popular, 2010):

The current Brazilian youth generation aged between 18 to 24 face a cruel reality linked to the work market and school. In Goiás, a contingent of approximately 162.2 thousand young men and women within this age group do not work nor study (approximately 5% of the State’s population). Considering the total of the state’s population in this age group – around 714 thousand – this means that two out of ten young Goianos are out of school and without a job… This scenario kills any perspectives of the youth, leading to underemployment, exclusion and marginalisation of this population.

**Youth as Problem**

The thematization of the youth as social problem is historical and has been identified by various authors (Cardoso and Sampaio, 1995; Flitner, 1968; Foracchi, 1971; Pais, 1990; Sposito, 1997; Veloso, 2008). Youth most frequently becomes the object of attention while it represents a threat of rupture with social continuity, a threat to the youth themselves or to society (Abramo, 1997).

In the academic realm, after years of almost total absence (during the 1970s and 1980s), only in the 1990s has youth once again become a theme of investigation. However, most reflection is done in terms of discussing the systems and institutions present in the lives of youth - or even the social structures which present problematic situations for youth - few focus on the way youth live and elaborate on these situations (Abramo, 1997). Only since the mid 1990s has there been an increase in the volume of studies considering youth, their experiences, their perceptions, and their socialization.

In relation to public policies, it is necessary to note that, in Brazil, differently from other countries, there has never been a tradition of policies specifically oriented to target youth, as a differing target from children, beyond the formal educational system.

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7 The *O Popular* newspaper is the second in print numbers for the state of Goiás and is owned by the biggest media organization in the state, *Organização Jaime Câmara.*
In Europe and the United States, the formulation of policies for youth and the establishment of governmental institutions responsible for their implementation have been developed throughout the 20th century. In the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America, this phenomenon has arisen since the 1980s, stimulated mainly by agencies such as the United Nations and the Spanish Government, generating some initiatives including regional and Ibero-American cooperation (Wolseth and Babb, 2008). However, Brazil was not involved in this movement (Abramo, 1997).

Only since the 1990s has youth slowly become a theme in the Brazilian political agenda, with local councils and state governments formulating policies specifically for this segment of society. Initially, most initiatives involved programs of professional development and specific services in health, culture and leisure (Abramo, 1997; Zaluar, 1994). Only recently, have we witnessed the implementation of measures by the federal government to insert the youth in the formulation of policies.

However, for longer and in a greater number than is evident in government actions, there has been increased number of projects and programs designed for youth from social institutions and agencies. The majority of these projects aimed to provide assistance to young people in situations of “social disadvantage”, such as those originating from low income communities, or “at risk”, such as those forced into sexual exploitation or who have been involved with drugs trafficking. According to Abramo (1997), the NGOs most frequently concentrate their programs for youth in two blocks: re-socialization programs; and programs that build young people’s professional capacities. It is necessary to note that in spite of the good intentions of these projects, what is sought is

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8 In 2005, the **Conselho Nacional de Juventude** (National Council of Youth) was created by law (Law 11.129), the same law that instituted the **Secretaria Nacional de Juventude** (National Secretariat of Youth), tied to the **Secretaria-Geral da Presidência da República** (General Secretariat of the Presidency), and the **Programa Nacional de Inclusão de Jovens – Projovem** (National Program of Youth Inclusion). The council is responsible for formulating and proposing lines of direction which contemplates public policies for youth, develop studies and surveys about the socio-economic reality of youth and promote the exchange between national and international youth organizations (Secretaria Nacional de Juventude, 2012). Since 2011, the Youth Statute has been under the scrutiny of the National Congress. The Law Project 4529/04, besides creating the Youth Statute, regulating the rights specific to youth (there already is a Children’s Statute in Brazil) and establishing lines of direction to elaboration of public policies focused on youth, also creates the National Network and System of Youth (Senado Nacional, 2012).
the identification of real or potential risk for these young people. It can be said that most programs are centred on social problems which affect youth, but, in reality, taking youth themselves as a problem, calling for intervention to save them and to reintegrate them into the social order.

Nevertheless, NGOs are still an important channel for youth social and political participation as well as representing their aspirations supported by one finding of a 2008 survey by the MTV Brazil channel that concluded that youth perceives NGOs as the ones who care and contribute most to environmental issues. This surpasses the importance that youth gave themselves - second - followed by the media, the population, government and businesses, in that order (MTV, 2008).

Furthermore, there has been an increased concern in relation to youth on the part of political actors (such as political parties, labour unions and some social movements). However, it is more a preoccupation with the absence of youth in the spaces and channels of political participation rather than political matters related to them (Zaluar, 1994). This absence is more in relation to the nonexistence of young actors in political spheres, such as the low membership of young citizens in political organizations and movements (Abramo, 1997).

It is curious to note that, even though the student youth sector had a remarkable presence in the democratisation processes and the combating against conservative structures during the so-called modernization period of the country from the 1930s to the 1970s, there has always been some caution in relation to the efficiency of their actions - for the conservatives, the suspicion of commotion and radicalism; for some leftist sectors, the suspicion of alienation or bourgeois radicalism (Foracchi, 1971; Martins Filho, 1987). However, since the 1980s, the weakening of these student actors was evident, with the disappearance of the youth from the political scene. Even their participation in the rallies calling for the impeachment of President Fernando Collor, in 1992, was largely disqualified for being spectacular, with dimensions of party (Abramo, 1997; Mische, 1995). On the other hand, youth groups which act in the behavioural and cultural spheres
have not been considered as possible interlocutors by political actors, with few exceptions, due to their diffuse character with a low degree of formalization and the issues raised by them being considered not relevant to the political agenda (Mische, 1997).

In a broad way, there is a prevailing view of generalized disqualified youth public action and fear related to the insertion of youth in the processes of construction and consolidation of democracy (Abramo, 1997; Foracchi, 1971; Wolseth and Babb, 2008; Zaluur, 1994). There appears to be a great difficulty in effectively considering youth as subjects, in terms of their thematization as well as in the actions directed to them. Even when this is the intention, there is a difficulty in going beyond considering them as a social problem and incorporating them as being capable of formulating meaningful issues, proposing relevant actions, sustaining dialogue with other actors, contributing to solving social problems, beyond simply suffering from those problems or ignoring them. This can be observed in the discussion related to “citizenship”, as this theme has assumed an important role in the Brazilian context, related to issues of right and participation of different social actors. However, every time the youth theme is related to citizenship, be it by political actors or institutions that formulate actions for them, the problems are often the focus (Veloso, 2008; Mische, 1995).

According to Abramo (1997), many seminars and publications related to these two themes (youth and citizenship) raises the themes of drugs, prostitution, early pregnancy, sexual diseases and violence. The issues brought to the debate are usually those which constitute youth as problem (for themselves and for society), and rarely matters enunciated by them, also because there has generally not been space for common dialogue between youth groups and political actors. In this regard, the central focus of debate is on denouncing rights denied, from the adult perspective, as well as the matter of participation which usually appears through the observation of absence.

Youth is related to the theme of citizenship in terms of privation and denouncement (Veloso, 2008), rarely as subjects capable of participating in the processes
of definition, invention and negotiation of rights. This difficulty is connected to specific factors related to the formulation of social rights in Brazilian society, such as the idea of gift or favour over the idea of rights and the way in which spaces of political conflict and negotiation are constituted in Brazilian society (Mische, 1996; Telles, 1996; Sales, 1994). This is an indication of clientelism and patrimonialism rather than citizenship.

Parallel to this dimension, the difficulty is broadly connected to the way in which youth has been thematized in Western contemporary society. The current concept of youth in sociology, generally disseminated as social notion, is profoundly based in the concept that the functionalist sociology is constituted as a category of analysis: as a transitional moment in the life cycle, which corresponds to a specific and dramatic moment of socialization, in which individuals process their integration and become members of society (Peralva, 1997; Sposito, 1997; Melucci, 1996; Sposito, 1994). Youth is a crucial moment for social continuity. It is in this moment that the integration of the individual takes place or not, bringing consequences to him/herself and to the maintenance of social cohesion. In agreement with Melucci (1996) – a key researcher in this theme – youth is perceived as a development process of social and personal capabilities and an adjustment to adult roles. It is the failures in this development and adjustment which constitutes the themes of social preoccupation (Foracchi, 1971).

According to Abramo (1997), throughout the second half of the 20th century, the thematization of youth has always carried a certain degree of fear, as youth has been perceived as the social category in face of which intervention measures should be taken, but with which it is difficult to establish a relationship of exchange and dialogue. In the 1960s and 1970s, the problem appeared to be of a whole young generation threatening social order, politically, culturally and morally, for a critical attitude towards the established order, and for the development of concrete acts in search of transformation, such as the students’ movements, and the opposition movements towards authoritarian regimes, pacifist movements, counter-culture movements. Youth seemed to be a category carrier of the possibility of profound transformation, instigating in most of society the panic of revolution (Martins Filho, 1987; Madeira, 1986; Foracchi, 1971).
In Brazil, it is particularly in this moment that the youth issue has more visibility, exactly because of the engagement of middle class young people in the fight against the authoritarian regime taking place in Brazil, through the mobilization of student groups and the engagement of leftist parties. But it has also been influenced by cultural movements which questioned behaviour standards: sexual, moral, and in relation to property and consumption (Madeira, 1986). It is worthwhile remembering that such fear generated at that time provoked violent responses to defend the order. Youth was chased by the repressive apparatus for their behaviour, ideas and political actions (Martins Filho, 1987). Even to people from the left and promoters of the counter-culture, to whom these youth movements could mean hope for transformation, youth seemed to be more a source of utopian energy rather than something capable of effectively carrying out such transformation. The fear was that youth actions could get in the way of possible effective transformation (Abramo, 1997:31).

The Individualistic View of Youth

In contrast to this radical, revolutionary image, the youth of the 1980s became recognized as individualistic, conservative, indifferent to public issues and driven by consumption (Abramo, 1997; Mische, 1997), a generation which rejected the role of cultural innovation that since the 1960s has been attributed to them. The problem with youth shifts to their incapability of resisting or offering alternatives to the social system. Individualism, moral conservatism, pragmatism, lack of idealism and political commitment are perceived as problems which limit possible change or even an ability to correct negative tendencies of the system. This is a view that is still current in the media.

The MTV Brasil channel has conducted since 1999 a survey entitled Dossiê Universo Jovem (Youth Universe Dossier), which has as its objective “to know the values, attitudes and behaviour of the Brazilian youth” (MTV, 2008: 5). It deals with themes such as family, religion, education, sex, consumption, media habits, and recently, environmental issues. In its fourth edition, in its final considerations, it states: “The youth
still see their generation as marked by vanity, consumptionism, individualism, inertia, impatience and stress” (MTV, 2008: 64). Furthermore, the dossier states (MTV, 2008: 66):

... they are young men and women who seek individual solutions, trying to improve his/her surroundings and quality of life... They still do not show tendencies to generate great mobilizations...

In the 1990s, the way youth is perceived changes a little when compared to that of the 1980s. The image of demobilization and apathy was replaced by that of young figures on the streets, involved in diverse types of individual and collective actions (Abramo, 1997). However, much of this action is still related to traces of individualism, fragmentation, and now, more than ever, to violence and deviant behaviour (gangues, galeras, vandalism, street kids) (Guimarães, 1997). In a certain way, there is a return to some characteristics of the 1950s, in the concentration of attention on behavioural problems which lead to deviant situations in the process of social integration of youth (anti-social behaviour, drugs, violence, involvement with criminality).

Youth are perceived as victims and promoters of a social dissolution, the incarnation of the dilemmas and difficulties with which society itself is facing. In this manner, as incarnation of impossibilities, youth can never be seen, heard or understood as subjects who present their own issues, beyond the fears and hopes of others. So they remain politically invisible in spite of growing visibility within the media (Abramo, 1997), perhaps revealing their growing economic relevance. Relevance made clear in the MTV dossier’s final considerations (MTV, 2008: 64):

The objective would be to conclude this one more dossier talking about the behaviour and the fantastic potential of the Brazilian youth as consumers of goods and services...

While in the 1960s, the youth in evidence was from the middle class, engaged in the prospects of political and cultural change, taking part in student movements and cultural and counter-cultural movements (hippies, tropicalistas, etc), the youth of the 1990s in evidence is the poor on the streets, divided between hedonism and violence.
Youth in situations of risk out of which the ones involved in drug trafficking, killing and dying early, are some of the most dramatic and threatening images of our time (Abramo, 1997; Sposito, 1994).

In her analysis of how youth is portrayed in two different movies, one whose story takes place during the dictatorship period of the 1960s and another taking place in the 1990s, Abramo (1997: 33) reflects that “the two images of the youth are opposing equations built in relation to exclusion and citizenship, and that this generally influences the social construction of the youth in Brazil”. On one hand, the politically engaged students of the 1960s are idealistic and engaged with social and political issues, on the other, the poor youth are involved in criminality. Through her film analysis, the author emphasizes how there is a common angle through which these two opposing images of youth are viewed which, she argues, is related to the general way through which the youth issue is dealt with in society (Abramo, 1997: 34):

In both films, there is the same idea of the youth as victims of the system’s logic, and in this way manipulated by the fate, never as real actors of their actions.

That author observes that the accentuation of the attention in the dimensions of victimization and heteronomy in relation to the logics of the system, leads to maintaining invisible positive images of the youth. By focusing on the youth as social problems, we cannot view and understand them properly. Consequently, we cannot free ourselves from a posture of disqualifying the youth as subjects (Abramo, 1997). If youth from the 1960s, such as the leftist militants, are in the end disqualified as incapable of real, effective actions, the youth of the 1990s are regarded as acting in cultural and behavioural plans associated to hedonism on one side and violence on the other. Nevertheless, that decade started with an impressive demonstration of youth collective action.
The 1992 Impeachment Rallies

The dramatic convergence of the *caras pintadas* (painted faces)\(^9\) on the streets of the main Brazilian cities in August 1992 has generated contradictory interpretations (Sousa, 1999; Mische, 1997; Mische, 1996; Dagnino, 1994) from an enthusiasm with a possible resurgence of student resistance of the 1960s, to the media manipulation to sell goods and services using the “trend” of the painted faces.

When thousands of young Brazilians, mostly middle-class, took to the streets to protest against corruption in the government led by President Fernando Collor de Mello, they took many Brazilians by surprise (Dagnino, 1994). Articles in the mainstream media portrayed this as the political skepticism and disinterest of the sometimes called “shopping centre generation”. This was the generation born during the dictatorship period and raised amongst growing expectations and successive disillusions during the slow and conservative transition to democracy (Zaluar, 1994).

When the 1988 constitution extended voting rights to young citizens at the age of 16, a survey conducted by the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* indicated that even though most young people in Brazil agreed with ideals of liberty and participation, many doubted that Brazilian democratic institutions constituted the best means to achieve such ends (Mische, 1997). Due to the predominant perception of apathy and individualism of youth, the unexpected political enthusiasm of young citizens in 1992 generated significant debate.

Even months after the demonstrations took place, the media, educators, government representatives, political parties, social movements and student organizations were still battling to make public interpretations of these unforeseen events. Comparisons to the student opposition movement of the 1960s were made. The nostalgia of that time also influenced later interpretations of the events, to the extent of critics relating the

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\(^9\) The youth that took part in the 1992 rallies became recognized as the “painted faces” due to the fact that many of them would paint their faces with the colours of the Brazilian flag during the protests.
screening of the TV series remake “Rebel Years” (which portrayed a romantic view of
the 1968 student movement) as inspiring youth in the weeks leading up to the events in
August 1992 (Mische, 1997).

Although the connections were made to the 1968 movement, there were strong
differences between both episodes of youth mobilization. While the previous
mobilizations were conducted in a political field polarized between the military state and
the student opposition, the “painted faces” were privileged actors in an ample
mobilization of civil and political society against Collor’s government (Sousa, 1999).
After the revelation of an extensive sponsoring network within the government, the
government itself became more and more isolated, with the banners of public morality
and ethics gaining further strength in the media, civil organizations and opposition
parties. In this context, the enthusiastic participation of youth in street protests asking for
the president’s impeachment (these organized by student organizations, supported by
civil organizations and political parties, and broadcast by mainstream media) cannot be
called spontaneous or independent, because they received ample forms of support,
official or not (Mische, 1997).

The Citizenship Discourse

Another remarkable difference in relation to the 1960s mobilization was the
subordination of the traditional leftist discourse by the more expansive and universalistic
discourse of citizenship (Mische, 1996; Telles, 1996; Zaluar, 1994). This new discourse
treated youth participation not as radical or conservative, socialist or liberal, or even as
student-related, but rather focused on “citizens-in-formation”. This reorientation of
discourse towards the universalistic ideal of citizenship is evident in the declaration of the
president of the student club XI de Agosto of the Law Faculty of the University of São
Paulo (Folha de São Paulo in Mische, 1997: 134):

The student movement reassumes its political role, representative of the
students’ interest, reinstating the paths towards the concretization of
citizenship in our country. The president’s impeachment is a matter of
honour to any citizen, independent of any ideology.
The multivalence of the notion of citizenship subjects it to multiple, and sometimes contradictory interpretations (Veloso, 2008; Telles, 1996). In this manner, various actors, from militants and leftist intellectuals to conservative politicians and the military, could make enthusiastic affirmations about the “new citizenship” of youth, with diverging implications (Mische, 1996).

In contrast to the political minimalism and the ethical indignation of the conservatives’ comments, student entities led by young militants of left parties tried to tie up youth participation as citizens to a wider critique of social injustice, economic crisis and neo-liberal tendencies during president’s Collor government (Mische, 1997). With so many contradictory interpretations about youth mobilization in 1992, the understanding of this new citizenship posed a challenge to analysis and research, as does the ideal of environmental citizenship and its implications. I argue that the diverging implications in using such a multivalent term is also the case in relation to the ideal of environmental citizenship, which has been used by political actors and institutions in the environmental debate. As we shall see in a following section of this thesis, its use is more related to compliance to a world environmental regime rather than the establishment of democratic forms of public governance which considers more socially and environmentally sustainable practices.

If there were manipulation from different sides, there was also a relevant experience indicative of cultural and structural changes, both in the lives and perspectives of the youth as well as in the social and political organization of Brazilian society (Mische, 1997; Mische, 1996; Telles, 1996). I argue this is also the case in the more contemporary environmental debate, which indicates the important role of Brazilian youth in environmental education as well as its potential to push for more participatory forms of governance. These cultural and structural changes in the lives and perspectives of youth can be observed in the answer of a member of the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth (CJMA-GO) movement when questioned about the importance of that youth
movement in education and social change in the state of Goiás (Personal communication A, 2012):

There is no movement in our state with a more organic, youthful and democratic character, which talks about and defends a sustainable environment than the CJMA-GO. During its seven years of existence, this movement, which has never had financial support or affiliation with any political party, has opened the doors to young environmental activists. Until it, there was nothing in this sense in the state of Goiás. We have constructively worked in the realization of state conferences (now in its sixth edition) paving the way for discussion and empowerment of new leaderships.

Even though the point made about the financial support as well as affiliation can be questioned - as some initiatives that led to the formation of the movement originally came from the federal government - the level of independence and penetration of the movement into local society is indicative of cultural changes in the perspectives of the youth and the structural organization of the local society10.

Furthermore, we can observe that youth recognizes conservative cultural and structural patterns which affect their lives, however, their perception of those is indicative of their awareness in relation to their role in social change:

Youth has a spark that we cannot find in other age groups. Perhaps because of lack of experiences (commonly presented as a reason for disregarding youth participation), but exactly these experiences, many times solidify ideals and kill dreams… the youth, even without much experience, but full of dreams, potentialize their ideals and increment participatory and collective processes, bringing innovation and providing

10 When asked about the spaces that the CJMA-GO movement occupy in the local society, young members listed that they currently have a seat in the Inter-institutional Commission of Environmental Education; have collaborated, in the last two editions, in the construction of the Environmental Symposium of the Cerrado; taken part in the State Organizing Committee of all the National Youth Conferences for the Environment; participate in the Citizenship Education Network; and receive support from independent organizations such as the Educational Commission of the town of Pirenópolis, the Family Agriculture Cooperative of the town of Itapuranga, and the Cultural-environmental Project in the town of Anápolis. Apart from those, the member mentioned that they are often called upon by local councils throughout the state to take part in environmental education initiatives and that they have ties with the Environmental Education Nucleus of the State Education Secretariat.
opportunities for new visions for politics and social life (Personal Communication A, 2012).

An analysis of such changes requires a theoretical reformulation of the social relations and dynamics in the formation of new identities and behaviour patterns of the youth.

**The Diversification of Youth Mobilization**

Four decades after the brutal dismantling of the student movement of the 1960s, Brazilian youth faces a different configuration. A critical change is that the universities – and the student movement – are not the centre of the cultural and political life of the youth. The end of dictatorship as a unifying factor and the opening of alternative spaces for political participation led the student movement to lose the monopoly over youth mobilization (Mische, 1997). In contrast to the 1960s, youth now spends their formative years in more dispersed networks (Novaes, 2007; Sousa, 1999), formed at public and private schools, at the work place, in shopping centers, in different places for leisure and culture and on the Internet.

According to Madeira (1986), the 1970s and 1980s brought a series of changes which extended youth identity throughout society, such as the rejuvenation of the labour market, an increment in study opportunities, the penetration of mass communication, and the diffusion of the credit system which facilitated access to consumption by youth of lower classes. Youth is not restricted to the role of student, with identity shifting beyond universities, embracing other meanings highly related to consumption and cultural styles.

Since its reappearance in the democratization manifestations of the 1970s, the student movement has engaged in a reconstruction process, though it remained politically marginalized during most of the 1980s (Mische, 1997). During this period the *Pastoral de Juventude da Igreja Católica* (Catholic Church’s Youth Pastoral) strongly contributed in channelling the aspirations and hopes of the wider poorer part of the population, forming important community (and to a lesser extent political) leaderships. However, in
the beginning of 1990s it also entered a revaluation crisis, distancing itself from the wider youthful portion of the population.

Nevertheless, the church influence in the constitution of public spaces for youth is still present. The 2005 survey of national scope\textsuperscript{11} entitled *Juventude Brasileira e democracia: participação, esferas políticas e públicas* (Brazilian Youth and democracy: participation, political and public spheres), identified that in relation to spaces for youth participation, the majority of groups are linked to the church (42.5%), followed by sports groups (32.5%) and artistic groups (26.9%). These are followed by the less cited: student groups (11.7%), neighbourhood groups (5.8%), environmental groups (4.5%), political parties related groups (4.3%), and voluntary work groups (0.8%). According to that survey (IBASE and PÓLIS, 2005), it is possible to identify a lack of preparation of youth in relation to the political sphere, as according to interviewees, participates in politics those who “know how to do it” and the ones who “are into it”, in other words, those who have political access to this arena without undergoing manipulation. The survey states: “there is recognition of the importance of politics, along with the distrust in the institutions and their agents and representatives” (IBASE and PÓLIS, 2005: 51). Even though only 8.5% of interviewees considered themselves politically engaged, the majority demonstrated interest in political issues, revealing the feeling of lack of spaces for participation.

As Caldeira (1996) has argued, inhabitants of Brazilian metropolises are faced with a threefold anxiety: increasing urban violence, deep economic restructuring, and the limitations of an unfinished democratization process. These anxieties, she argues, have contributed to an erosion of the public sphere that is reflected both in the increasing privatization of urban space and in the limited venues for political association that this segregation allows. The result is the creation of a new sociability.

\textsuperscript{11} The survey’s scope reached seven Brazilian metropolitan regions and the Federal District, reaching 913 young men and women through the use of questionnaires and focus groups.
The diversification of the networks of study, work, and sociability exposes youth to diverse influences and pressures, demanding a certain level of coordination and segmentation among them (Mische, 1997). We have also witnessed an increased complexity in the forms of social and political participation, even though these networks continue to be dense and intertwined. The young with some sort of political interest can now choose among various alternatives of militancy, including political parties, popular movements, anti-discriminatory movements, non-governmental organizations, neighbourhood associations and environmental movements. The different networks of movements crisscross many times, creating new opportunities arising from the superposition of different projects and intervention styles. Here, the use of the citizenship discourse has been a powerful tool in bridging movements. The CJMA-GO movement for example has as strong partner the Citizenship Education Network. In addition, they count on support from the Family Agriculture Cooperative of the town of Itapuranga, and the Cultural-environmental Project in the town of Anápolis. The three groups have citizenship as a strong group value and line of direction.

Nevertheless, the relationships among varied groups can also create tensions as well as difficulties in attracting more young members to take part in organized political participation (Mische, 1996). It was a phenomenon I observed also influencing the youth environmental movement of the CJMA-GO, as one leader concluded (Interview A CJMA-GO, 2010):

… older members do not have much time for the movement, as they are usually involved in other activities and groups which they give priority, like … (a member of the movement) who puts her/his participation in the youth church group in first place… the younger members have difficulties in participating because many parents do not like their children to get too involved.

The negotiation of such tensions was a common point expressed by members of this movement, who see this scenario as a relevant challenge to the movement’s expansion.
From this brief analysis, we can see how the interactive youth networks diversified during the 1990s for both militant youth as well as wider youth in Brazil. For many young men and women, the perplexity in face of this context was intensified by the uncertainties and frustrations of democratic transitional democracy. Youth witnessed recurrent crises and scandals surrounding the civil government, along with the contradictions of seeing democratic formalisms and discourses (including a new constitution in 1988) sided by authoritarian remains. These remains were especially visible to students in the resistance of many schools’ ruling bodies to the formation of grêmios estudantis (students’ groups) and the repression of teachers’ strikes by the end of the 1980s. At the same time, they lived in a climate of anxiety generated by chronic inflation along with economic recession, which suffocated the aspirations of many young people from diverse social classes. These factors supported a strong scepticism about the possibility of institutional changes and a tendency to political paralysis (Mische, 1997).

However, this does not mean that the youth were uncritical. It actually points to a lack of centralizing spaces and/or of unifying public identities, capable of transforming their social critique into collective action. The potential to mobilize towards social change is still present, and the protests for impeachment in 1992 showed that. In that regard, the MTV dossier (MTV, 2008: 69) states:

Beyond basic changes, such as recycling, saving energy, they (the youth) realize that alone they will not change the current reality and they suggest more collective attitudes and movements. Many suggestions were put forward in a repetitive way, demonstrating that the youth does not know well what to do besides what they hear about at school, on TV and the Internet… Five out of ten young men and women believed that only the population, acting in a collective way, could turn the game around in favour of the environment and Brazil.

So there is awareness of the importance of action, especially in a collective way, but adherence to it is still low. Why? I suggest it is an absence of education which privileges the collective may be one reason. The CJMA initiative does that to some extent, as participation in the Youth National Conference of the Environment (an important event for articulation of the youth organized around the CJMAs) is decided by
consensus decision with participation of the youth. The contrary is done in schools, where social segregation is promoted by the current educational system (something I will further explore in a following section of this Thesis entitled “Education and Citizenship”). The need for such education based in a collective mentality is expressed by the MTV dossier (MTV, 2008: 68):

The basic notion that it is necessary to take care of the planet they (the youth) already have, as the environment is a transversal theme in schools since the 1990s. The notion of community they already have as well, thanks to the Internet. What is missing now is a link between the two things and showing the youth, in a simple, creative and constant way, how to act. In this manner, understanding that the preservation of the planet and sustainable development depend on the collective, lays the great challenge to the youth generation, which was not accustomed to think in the collective. Information and good will many young men and women already have, the issue for them is to learn to act in group.

The CJMA is an initiative which promotes youth gathering, in some cases, unfolding into collective actions, such the organization of their annual conference of youth and the environment, entirely organized by them, which constitutes an important sphere for the youth of Goiás to debate environmental issues (for more on this see previous section of the Thesis). With the repression of collective youth action and dismantling of youth collective organization during the 1960s and 1970s by the military state, the youth of the 1990s and 2000s spent a great deal of effort re-organizing themselves collectively. This youth grew up in the 1980s with limited collective youth movements in which to participate. The CJMA initiative (though it was not the original intention of the federal government) is a form of initiation in this process. It is not by chance that members of the movement in the state of Goiás went on to engage in other collective movements, such as the Citizenship Education Network.

Multiple Militancy

Although this analysis of the youth configuration in Brazil explains the fragmentation of the youth movement in the 1990s and beyond, it still does not explain why the “citizen” category emerged as an effective alternative. To understand this
dynamic, we need to examine how the articulation of identities and projects crosses distinct networks, both interpersonal and organizational. Here it is essential the role of social interlocutors, positioned at the crisscross of different social contexts.

In a context marked by the consolidation of alternative spaces of political participation, the phenomenon of “multiple militancy” appears (Mische, 1997) - young men and women who are simultaneously leaders of student movements, church groups, environmental movements, and who carry citizenship aspirations as their main drive for action in these different groups. This is a trait I observed in a number of young men and women participating in the CJMA-GO movement. Many of them, besides being members of that particular youth environmental movement, were also active members of school groups, neighbourhood groups, church groups, and feminist groups.

With the diversification of youth networks and the great dispersion of identities and in-formation projects, it would be difficult to delineate the various manifestations assumed by this new awareness of citizenship. It is important to analyse the existence of new ways of articulation of personal and collective projects, maybe without the great utopian scale of past decades, though showing other ways of connecting the personal preoccupations and aspirations with wider views of society and problems (Mische, 1997). For Novaes (2007), an indication of the new forms of participatory organization of the contemporary youth is related to a combination between personal and collective motivations, a combination between categories such as self-esteem and solidarity.

… observing the whole of the forms of youth participation, we note that matters related to sexuality (in another time restricted to private life) are today taken to public spaces by both, the combat to sexism and homophobia, as well as through the categories of rights (2007: 15).

The possibility of refocusing political discourses in the more embracing citizenship sense has been created. The incorporation of this discourse into emerging styles of participation has taken place, especially among young men and women going through their first formative experiences in the public sphere. In this manner, the
introduction of multiple in-formation projects in the ambiguous universalism of citizenship served to create bridges between dense networks of militants and more dispersed youth networks, contributing to the mobilization of collective action as well as to subsequent interpretations of this action in the public debate. The maintenance of these bridges and their substantial meanings to the future of the country pose as challenges in the complex contemporary youth environment.

Conclusion

The trajectory of civic discourse in Brazil since its resurgence in the trade unions and popular movements of the end of the 1970s, and the following expansion of the anti-dictatorial and anti-discriminatory movements and the most recent environmental movement, reveals its capacity to propagate diverging projects within the universalistic language of rights and duties. The divergences in this point appears amongst the organized groups, and is evident in the lack of uniformity in the adoption of the civic identity: in some contexts, youth embraces this identity with conviction and energy, even though in others, they have great ambivalence and ideological dispute about the reach and limits of the concept. However, an aspect of the universalizing concept of citizenship deserves more attention: how this discourse has been mobilized to articulate connections with more ample sectors of the youth and society in general.

Under the banner of citizenship, youth mobilization towards social change has diversified in the last two decades in Brazil. In this context, it is necessary to highlight two principles which are constituting parts of the current youth movement: its intense fragmentation and strong heterogeneity. From my experience with the CJMA-GO movement, they are young men and women who project within their groups their search for solutions to their personal dilemmas, trying to improve their surroundings according to their beliefs. They still do not demonstrate intentions to generate great mobilizations, but they start to influence their families and their groups.
Even though, in a general way, Brazilian society has an ambiguous view of disenchantment and fascination about youth, a range of sources suggest that they are subjects with belief in their capabilities, who aspire to the opening up of participatory channels for them to be heard and equal opportunities for them to live in the transformation today, and not in an intangible future. This attitude is embodied in a comment by a CJMA-GO member in relation to what influences environmental behavioural change - “when one says the youth is the ‘future’, no, the youth is the ‘now’. We have to act now” (Interview G CJMA-GO, 2010).

In this panorama, a background question is posed: what are the substantive projects that are gaining space in relation to the political and economical future direction of the country?
5. A WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL REGIME

Introduction

Today, society is filled with communication, associations and organizational structures concerned with the relation of society and the natural environment. Since the 1970s, a great expansion of organization and activity around environmental issues has taken place (on both non-government and government levels), with increased global discourse and communication about environmental issues.

Furthermore, evidence of increasing domain structure regarding the human-environment relationship includes: 1) significant world-level scientific discussion of environmental issues; 2) many international non-government associations focusing on the environment; and 3) much activity of an official sort, principally intergovernmental treaties and formal intergovernmental organizations concerned with the environment (Meyer et al., 1997; Frank, 1994). This scenario constitutes what Meyer et al. (1997: 623) called a world environmental regime:

We define world environmental regime as a partially integrated collection of world-level organizations, understandings, and assumptions that specify the relationship of human society to nature.

Within this world environmental organization the influence of dominant actors such as nation-states and economic interests came late to the scene, and therefore, they cannot be used to explain the rise of mobilization in relation to environmental issues. In fact, as argued by those authors, it is a process starting from the rise of non-government associations and discourse, leading to international treaties and intergovernmental organization.

The expansion of rationalized and authoritative scientific interpretation and the rise of world associational arenas (mainly the United Nations system) are two important forces contributing to the development of this process (Meyer et al., 1997; Frank, 1994).
By taking the international environmental treaty system as a whole, Frank (1994) identifies the conditions of the rise and transformation of this system. These conditions are based in a group of institutional processes of modernity: namely rationalization, scientization, globalization, and liberalization. In modernity, these four shifts have reconstituted nature into the global ecosystem and world society into the world system of nation-states. These reconstitutions have fostered the rise of the world environmental regime.

By considering Frank’s (1994) analysis of the rise of organized collective action in world society, Meyer et al. (1997) present a question related to how this process took place within a context that lacks a strong central actor - a central acting role which has been discussed in preparation to the RIO+20 summit of the United Nations, due to take place in Brazil in June 2012, with debates in relation to the creation of an United Nations Environmental Agency (O ECO, 2012a). Their core answer is a strong stateless polity increasingly integrated around a rationalistic and scientized culture.

The overall rise of environmental organization takes place within a context marked by the expansion of worldwide scientific culture and the creation of a broad world organizational structure. Arguably the character of the environmental regime changes over time from informal international discourse and association to official intergovernmental activity and organization (Frank, 1994; Meyer, 1997). This indicates the important role of liberalization in the rise of the environmental movement, as liberal world society is organized around the decentralized cooperation of individuals (Frank, 1994).

Liberalization, in short, reconstitutes the meanings and organizations of nature and world society according to the vital contributions of individual members (1994: 17).

Not surprisingly, environmental discourse is quite often based on the idea of people’s responsibilities in relation to the environment: the idea that each individual’s actions influence the whole. Within this frame, the voluntaristic cooperation of
individualized participants is perceived to be crucial to success of achieving sustainable societies.

Without a strong centralizing actor, it becomes difficult to explain the extraordinary profusion of world-level collective action in a generalized sphere of activity such as the environment. The origins of modern environmentalism do not lie in state action and purpose. Also, the claim that the urgency of the problems generated by degradation of the environment makes collective mobilization functionally necessary is unconvincing, as potential environmental problems still do not receive due attention on the global agenda. This functional explanation based on degradation can explain why environmental action to counteract problems is needed but not why it happens in the absence of a collective actor (Meyer et al., 1997).

The point is that no matter how dire or widespread, environmental problems do not automatically generate organized solutions, nationally or internationally (1997: 627).

Instead of being an objective condition, a social problem initially exists in terms of its definition and conception in a society. It is the societal definition of a given condition faced by members of a society that determines whether the condition exists as a social problem. As Blumer (1971: 301) puts it “a social problem does not exist for a society unless it is recognised by that society to exist… The societal definition gives the social problem its nature, lays out how it is to be approached, and shapes what is done about it.” Problems become social problems as the result of a process of collective definition, not as the product of an objective malignancy affecting society. For Blumer (1971), the process of collective definition of a problem is responsible for the emergence of the problem and how it is approached and tackled. For the mobilization of action with regard to the problem to take place, the problem must go through the stages of emergence and legitimation within society (1971). For instance, if environmental problems are reported in the media - local, regional, national, international - as social problems, then they will set agendas at the corresponding local, regional, national and international level. And if agendas are set around environmental problems, then they will become recognized
as social problems, being more likely to be addressed by citizens and influence social behaviour towards mitigation of the problems.

**World Polity**

Meyer et al. (1997: 628) argue that “the world environmental regime derives fundamentally from changes in the wider polity rather than from changes in the interests and capabilities of individuals and states as prior natural actors”. Environmental issues were not a focus of intergovernmental relations until scientific as well as associational developments created an appropriate sphere in world political culture (Frank, 1994). The explanation lies in world society and polity culture, whereby modern individuals, organizations and nation-states have been deeply placed in a wider world polity and rationalistic culture. Rationalization, scientization, globalization, and liberalization imbue entities such as nature and world society, reconstituting them culturally and organizationally. As Frank (1994: 19) argues: “Rationalization provides both nature and world society with a purpose – respectively, sustenance of life and oversight of the world collective good”. He extends on this concluding:

> World society becomes the nation-state system, in which each nation-state is motivated to pursue generalized collective purposes according to universal laws and definitions (1994: 17).

This system defines, legitimates and supports the identities of these entities, constructs relevant purposes and contributes to enforcing their responsibilities and control capabilities. This system sets up the context for a phenomenon outlined in Brunsson’s (2002) classic theory on the organization of hypocrisy. It details how global standards influence internal behaviour of organizations, sometimes leading them to hypocritical endorsement of standards, which are not achievable. I argue that hypocrisy is inevitable and that it operates in organizations which try to implement high macro-standards. And for a nation-state to become a full member of the system, it must adhere to universal laws and definitions.
The sociological conception of a world polity refers to the idea that much international behaviour is structured by organized regimes and important components of these regimes are rooted in discourse and rationalized knowledge within the frame of a world civil society. The sociological conception of a world polity highlights the underlying cultural base that enables certain organizational structures such as regimes. This broader conception of regimes traces the formation of an international system and knowledge community, with diffused effects on states’ policies and actions. According to Meyer et al. (1997), the world environmental regime originates from shifts in this wider polity, not from changes in the intentions of individuals and nation-states as prior natural actors.

In fact, environmental activity from nation-states can be associated with a hypocritical endorsement of standards (Brunsson, 2002). Nation-states’ environmental policies are perceived as stemming from their involvement in world society (Frank, 1994). Thus, decision-making processes in relation to the environment can be understood as a strategy to gain support without necessarily resulting in actions. Global standards influence internal behaviour of organizations (such as nation-states) that continuously seek credibility.

In sum, within world civil society, knowledge communities – through scientized discourse - influence regimes, which in turn influence collective international behaviour. Over a long period of time, this socially constructed process generates certain world society and world polity cultures.

**National State-level Environmental Organization**

Long-term degradation of the environment and the absence of strong collective actors with agendas oriented by environmental issues are recognized as conditions that specify the environmental regime (Meyer et al., 1997). Environmental degradation is a continuous source of issues for collective association, which can generate further discourse and possible development of spheres of debate, as well as action. The recent
push for the creation of an United Nations Environmental Agency in preparation for the RIO+20 summit (O ECO, 2012b), and the late implementation of environmental ministries is indicative of the late development of world and national state-level agencies in the structure of the world environmental regime. In reality, national environmental ministries came relatively late to the world environmental regime, with the rate for initiation of national environmental ministries being highest in the beginning of the 1970s (Meyer et al., 1997), with the genesis of international environmental associations at the end of the nineteenth century.

The late occurrence of national environmental ministries is also indicative of the legitimisation process outlined by Brunsson (2002: 188), who argues that “if decisions reflect external norms, they can also serve as independent instruments for external legitimation and support”. In this sense, environmental ministries are created in response to increasing demand for the establishment of strong national state-level agencies specialized in dealing with environmental issues. This progressively becomes a norm for a nation to gain representation and support to take part in international associations related to the environmental domain. The fact that national ministries were mostly created after the emergence of the world-level United Nations Environmental Program in 1972 supports that argument (Frank, 1994). For Meyer et al. (1997) the development of the world environmental domain has caused the rise of national structures which institutionalises environmental issues.

However, the extent to which this represents development of actions oriented towards effective handling of such issues is questionable. Brunsson (2002: XII) reminds us: “Modern organizations are confronted not only by consistent demands but also by others that are inconsistent, conflicting or contradictory, and this applies to demands about what is done and how to do it”. Thus, demands can be positive in generating action, but it is a difficult task attending to them all. This is certainly the case for the environmental domain, where problems are identified at a faster rate than are solutions, putting overwhelming pressure on organizations to comply with norms that cannot be readily fulfilled. As Meyer et al. (1997: 647) conclude:
A sector (referring to the environmental sector) arising out of highly legitimated but essentially unlimited discourse and association, rather than fixed and limited state interests or a fixed and limited world order, is a factory that creates and defines problems at a rate faster than that at which feasible solutions can be organized.

So how can organizations gain support without actions which attend to the expected environmental norms? Organizations handle conflicts by reflecting them, by incorporating within themselves elements corresponding to the conflicts. Conflicting demands are reflected in organizational structures, processes and ideologies, which then also become conflict-based and inconsistent (Brunsson, 2002). These incorporated inconsistencies define “the organization of hypocrisy”. Hypocrisy is a way of handling several conflicting values simultaneously, a response to a contradictory world where norms, values and ideas are in conflict. This same hypocrisy generates inconsistency between talk and action, presentation and results.

**The Role of Science and the United Nations System**

International environmentalism is embedded in the rise of modernity, particularly its recent liberal version, which has redefined nature as the ecosystem and world society as the nation-state system (Frank, 1994). The two conditions that specify the environmental regime reflect two changes to world society that explain the development of the current environmental domain: the expansion of rationalized scientific analyses of nature - which can be considered a legitimising actor for the relevance of environmental issues to public interest - and the growth of an international associational framework, principally the UN system (Meyer et al., 1997). These two processes generate an international frame for discourse and association about environmental issues which is recognized as important in stimulating collective action and the development of social movements, as world-level talk is conducted by social-movement activists as well as scientists. These are changes in world society that took place during the twentieth century that can explain the rise of the contemporary environmental regime.
The scientific view of nature which acknowledges the existence of a globally interdependent ecosystem encompassing human beings and disseminating a universalised conception of interdependence provides a stronger frame for international discourse as well as for association and action in relation to environmental issues than views based on sentimental attachment to nature or nature as resource supplying material wealth (Meyer et al., 1997; Frank, 1994). Viewed scientifically as an ecosystem, nature lacks national boundaries. Furthermore, an organization (such as a nation-state) can gain understanding and support by structuring itself along lines that are generally regarded as rational and efficient (Brunsson, 2002). As most countries are organized around rationalistic models of state and society, a scientific view of nature involves the legitimate interests of nation-states. The expansion of the world science system contributed to the establishment of a frame in which environmental issues can be treated as universally significant and in which policy activities can be perceived as rational.

An obstacle to the early development of a world environmental regime in the first half of the twentieth century was the absence of an international organizational frame. However, after World War II, there was a rapid growth in intergovernmental organizations - most importantly the United Nations system -, and this increasingly provided platforms for environmental discourse and activity (Meyer et al., 1997; Frank, 1994). The forms of world environmental organization are seen as an evolutionary sequence. The rise of intergovernmental organizations occurs later than the growth of international association in this domain (Frank, 1994).

Expanded scientific rationalization legitimates expanded international organization. In the environment domain, nongovernmental discourse and association preceded the formation of formal structures of organizations (such as national agencies for the environment) (Meyer, 1997; Frank, 1994). Worldwide social mobilization regarding environmental issues started with decentralized, nongovernmental associations.

In sum, expanded scientific rationalization about environmental issues along with a frame which set up the basis for open international association has allowed for
expanded informal international environmental organization, which has led to more formal intergovernmental associations – which, in turn, has resulted in the expansion of more permanent intergovernmental as well as governmental organizations in relation to environmental issues.

**Negative Effect**

The institutionalisation of environmental concerns in formal world organization has also affected the character of the environmental movement. As Meyer et al. (1997: 633) suggest: “With heightened official attention to the environment, nation-states were eager to prove their credibility.” At the same time that increased level of official, governmental environmental organization helped to consolidate the environmental domain, authorizing governmental associations as well as strengthening nongovernmental associations which already existed (enhancing their legitimacy), it slowed the proliferation of new nongovernmental associational activity. Centralization seems to decrease the occurrence of new nongovernmental environmental associations even though it increases the strength of older ones.

This eagerness by nation-states to prove credibility in relation to environmental issues can be explained in light of Brunsson’s (2002) discussions in the book *The Organization of Hypocrisy*. The theme of the book is on how organizations produce ideology, and how ideology and action can systematically conflict with one another to the benefit of organizational legitimacy and survival. That author argues that organizations in modern societies ultimately depend on public acceptance for survival. They base their legitimacy on society’s perception of their contribution to the public good (2002), a concept which explains their eagerness to prove credibility. More contradictory than it seems, credibility in many times is built upon hypocrisy – the inconsistency between talk and action, presentation and result. Hypocrisy is a solution to paradoxes.

The theoretical framework present here – within which the environmental domain developed – suggests a top-down process: increased universalistic discourse and
organization has led to the development of nation-states’ aims and responsibilities. This top-down process challenges the more often bottom-up political processes of influence and interest. The result is that state-level development of policies to comply with international standards quite often are not balanced by corresponding actions. Frank’s (1994) macro world polity, or world society approach has been applied at the micro-levels to organizations by Brunsson (2002). Brunsson's perspective is very useful in linking Meyer's and Frank’s ideas about the development of global environmentalism to the organizations that I examine in my dissertation. This offers a conceptualisation of a process of macro agenda-setting influence on internal agenda-setting (internal to nation-states).

Facilitated by the broader world structure, the structure and discourse involved in this associational system clearly led to an expanded wave of intergovernmental treaties and then to an official world intergovernmental environmental system. Only at that point did nation-states begin to formalize environmental issues as central to their internal agenda-setting structures (Meyer et al., 1997: 647).

In this light, I argue that the Brazilian federal government initiative of fostering the realization of the Children and Youth National Conferences for the Environment and the creation of the Environmental Collectives of Youth throughout the country (discussed in detail in a previous section of this thesis) complies with an international standard set through the UN system. One can find the initial reasons why the Brazilian government developed such initiatives – to involve youth in the environmental debate – in the recognition of the role of youth in the environmental domain under the UN system. Brazil is one of more than 178 signatory nations to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21. Both documents, originating from the RIO 92 summit, indicate the relevance of youth in achieving sustainable development and ensuring a better future for all. Principle 21 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (UN, 1992a) states:

The creativity, ideas and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all.
Agenda 21 – a framework for sustainable development outlined at the summit – provided environmentalists with hope of a political awakening to sustainable development, and governments with a framework for understanding and implementing the policies that will put our planet on a path towards sustainability. This framework can be understood as a set of norms for nation-states to follow to become recognized as genuine stakeholders in the environmental domain, conferring on them international legitimacy and credibility. So the more one country is committed to those norms and goals, the more likely it is to receive political as well as financial support from the international system. In this document, one can find a whole chapter devoted to “children and youth in sustainable development”, considered by the document as a major group in this process. The document starts by stating (UN, 1992b):

25.1. Youth comprise nearly 30 per cent of the world’s population. The involvement of today’s youth in environment and development decision-making and in the implementation of programmes is critical to the long-term success of Agenda 21.

25.2. It is imperative that youth from all parts of the world participate actively in all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their futures. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account.

Based on the above recommendation the Brazilian federal government should have youth engaged in areas of decision-making as well as in developing initiatives of Agenda 21. Also important is the recommendation to take into account youth’s perspectives. The organization of the Children and Youth National Conferences for the Environment sought to address that recommendation from the onset of the programme, while the creation of the Environmental Collectives of Youth sought to organize young men and women to work on the development of the COM-VIDAs project (a project based on the development of Agenda 21 in schools), as well as to mobilize support (Brasil, 2006b). However, an important item in those lines has not gained as much focus: the involvement of youth in environment and development decision-making.
Therefore, an important point can be formulated. The Brazilian government sought to partially attend to the norms proposed by the UN system. The important initiative to include youth in decision-making processes, which can be seen as a more relevant step towards public governance and social change, has not been addressed to the same extent as has the symbolic inclusion of youth in consultation processes. This illustrates the organization of hypocrisy outlined by Brunsson (2002), the hypocritical endorsement of global environmental standards by nation-states.

Section 25.7 and Section 25.9 of Agenda 21 are very important parts of the chapter as well as they clearly state the involvement of youth in government delegations representing the country’s interests at international fora. Also, it states that governments should incorporate “into relevant policies the recommendations of international, regional and local youth conferences and other forums that offer youth perspectives on social and economic development and resource management” (UN, 1992b). This is another reason for youth to be engaged in the environmental debate in Brazil. This has occurred to some extent through the realization of the Children and Youth National Conferences for the Environment and the creation of the Environmental Collectives of Youth. However, after two decades of negotiations progress towards the inclusion of the youth in decision-making processes by the Brazilian federal government has only more recently taken place (as we saw in the earlier section, “the role of Brazilian youth”). This is at a slower pace than that of the recognition of the relevance of the youth in the environmental domain. As Brazil is presently implementing policies that are resulting in rapid socio-economic and ecological transformation of the country, it is certain that the decisions being made today are going to impact on the future of the current youth, creating a contradictory situation for which hypocrisy is the solution.

In addition, during interviews I conducted with young members of the Environmental Collectives of Youth, a common point raised concerned a lack of government support for the development of their initiatives, including those formulated by the federal government, such as the COM-VIDAs project. This indicates the tendency
of the Brazilian federal government in relation to the environmental domain to give more attention to presentation rather than to results: to talks rather than consistent action.

The same lack of continuous government support for the activities of the Environmental Collectives of Youth has greater implications for the development of an environmentally engaged citizenry in light of the theoretical frameworks of the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1995) and the responsible environmental behaviour model (Hines et al., 1986-1987). Though it was not necessarily the focus of the federal government with the development of the Children and Youth National Conferences for the Environment, this initiative produced a very positive behavioural outcome, which was the development of environmentally engaged behaviour amongst young citizens in different parts of the country. This could result in even greater mobilization through processes of diffusion of knowledge and behaviour from the young men and women who participated in the federal government initiatives to others in their communities. However, a lack of follow up initiatives (by the federal government) focused on maintaining and fostering environmentally engaged behaviour amongst those young citizens (extremely important to the continuation of such behaviour, as identified in previous research – for this see Rodrigues, 2007) limits the opportunities offered by the original initiative to develop into a movement resulting in greater social change.

So, we have a good outcome – the development of environmentally engaged behaviour amongst young citizens – stemming from a presentation-focused federal government initiative (the development of the Children and Youth National Conferences for the Environment). However, this positive outcome has a limited impact on encouraging greater social change due to lack of follow up initiatives by the federal government to enable the continuation of such behaviour.

The Citizenship Model

Frank (1994) delineates the aspects of the modern world institutional setting and discusses the ways in which the rise and diffusion of these have reconstituted nature and
world society. His analysis reveals the importance of world-level factors. Issues frequently come to nation-states from world society, rather than being geared bottom-up – as has much of the literature on social movements portrayed with a focus on local or national-level activism. The point is that the human-nature relationship is variably framed, changing over time. These changes reflect a shift in international environmental discourse; a shift geared by underlying institutional changes in world society. And contemporaneously, world environmental discourse has consolidated around a model of nature as a global ecosystem.

This model of the human-nature relationship has become an influential model in world society because it articulates with modernity’s institutional changes, reconstituting the meanings of nature, thus producing a transformation in discourse. As Frank (1994: 41) puts it:

Globalization favours models of the human-nature relationship that are constructed to have worldwide meaning and relevance. Liberalization favours models of the human-nature relationship that are constructed to depend on the individual actions of mutually benefiting entities. Rationalization favours models of the human-nature relationship that are constructed around functional means-ends schemes. Scientization favours models of the human-nature relationship that are constructed within universal physical systems.

Nevertheless, another model of nature seems to be gaining strength: a citizenship model, which considers nature as a right of citizens – and caring for it, a duty of citizens. Once again, this model has advanced because it articulates with those processes set in motion by modernity. A citizenship model is strongly rationalized, liberal and universalistic. The models that emerge and are institutionalized in world society are the ones that best articulate with the culture and organization of world society. However, as these models follow a top-down trajectory – originating from macro (international) processes of definition, then influencing micro (nation-state level) agendas – the resulting impact of such models in specific social contexts can vary.
In addition, a citizenship model will be more likely to be assimilated in contexts where liberalization is more significant. That is probably why a citizenship model will be more significant to more liberal societies. Liberalization is becoming more influential in Brazilian culture and organization. World concerns (in the form of discourse and association) in relation to human rights have transcended the limited national interests of the Brazilian state in this area, leading to movements, informal associations and mobilizations which can make meaning out of a citizenship model of nature within that particular context. This cultural and organizational shift highlights the relevance of this model for bringing about not only environmental awareness and behaviour, but also a recasting of the relations between citizens and the state, which could lead to improved public governance and greater levels of social change.

Conclusion

The expansion of rationalized scientific analyses of nature and the growth of an international associational framework generated an international frame for discourse and association about environmental issues. These are recognized as important in stimulating collective action and the development of social movements, as world-level talk is conducted by social-movement activists as well as scientists. The environmental domain is a sector arising out of highly legitimated but essentially unlimited discourse (Meyer et al., 1997). Environmental degradation is a continuous source of issues for collective association, which can generate further discourse and the possible development of spheres of debate, especially when linked to issues of quality of life of citizens.

The sociological conception of a world polity refers to the idea that much international behaviour is structured by organized regimes, and important components of these regimes are rooted in discourse and rationalized knowledge within the frame of a world civil society (Meyer et al., 1997). When focusing on explaining the organizational side of the world environmental regime, discourse enters as an explanatory factor (1997).
The reconstitutions of nature as the global ecosystem and of world society as the system of nation-states gave rise to the whole system of international treaties, and later, an increase in governmental environmental agencies such as environmental ministries. This process is argued by Frank (1994) to have begun with world-level talk about the reconstructed concept of nature (perceived as an ecosystem, an integrative view of the human-nature relationship) and its relationship to the recoded world society (the nation-states system). The more talk there is, the more nation-states are motivated to act. But how does talk and scientific discourse arising from specific knowledge communities reach broad sectors of society?

According to Schulz (1997), the public sphere is to a great extent mediated by mass communication. So, if discourse has been central to the development of the world environmental regime, what role do the media play in this process? Even though media have not created this system of norms by themselves “it is the anchor and central idol of this system of values that dominates us” (McKibben, 1999:46). The power of the media stems from their concentration of society’s symbolic power (Hackett and Carroll, 2006).

The media role in setting the agenda is a by-product of our collective dependence on mass media for providing information we do not directly experience (Hackett and Carroll, 2006). The media have the power of directing public attention to some issues at the expense of others. By influencing public perceptions of what is important and valuable (above all, what is connected to what), the media directly interfere with the societal definition of a given condition faced by members of a society, which as previously discussed, determine whether the condition exists as a social problem, a precondition for social mobilization and action.
6. MEDIA AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Introduction

A recent forty-seven-nation survey indicates that concerns about environmental issues have increased on a global scale (Pew Research Center, 2007). In a report comparing 2002 survey results with 2007 survey results, the Pew Global Attitudes Project indicates an increase in the percentage of people citing pollution and environmental problems as a top global threat with evidence of concern rising sharply in Latin America. In Brazil, a series of survey conducted since 1992 has also identified the growing relevance of environmental issues for the population, with deforestation, water and air pollution being perceived as the main environmental problems affecting the country and the world (Crespo, 2001), and climate change being considered by opinion leaders as one of the most crucial contemporary issues for Brazil and the world, with deforestation being recognized as the number one issue affecting climate change (Crespo, 2008). Opinion poll surveys at both national and global level seem to confirm that public concern about the environment is here to stay and remains among the major issues on public agendas, with considerable signs of increase since the year 2000.

Reflecting this trend, in the last two decades, research in the field of communication and environmental issues has come a long way, becoming a distinctive subfield of media and communication research. An important achievement is the growing understanding of complex processes and dynamics involved in the social construction of the environment as an issue for public concern. The environment has gained key position in public and political concerns and media has been central to this process (Hansen, 2011).

Due to our need for orientation in relation to issues for which we lack personal experience, something well discussed by Dearing and Rogers (1996) agenda-setting model, media (which in this thesis relates to mass media) have been responsible for much
of what citizens know about the environment. As Macnaghten and Urry (1998: 97-98) conclude:

As risks transcend the boundaries of sensory perception, and as the contours of risk extend to the very distant and the extraordinary long term, we become dependent on national and increasingly global systems for information, knowledge, images and icons to enable such processes to be interpreted.

It is not just our knowledge about environmental issues that relies heavily on media, but also how we perceive and relate to the environment (Hansen, 2011). Especially since the rise of international associational frameworks in relation to the environmental domain (after the Second World War) – which contributed to the legitimisation of existing informal environmental associations as well as scientific discourse about the environment (Frank, 1994) – mass media have been a key public arena for publicizing environmental issues and for contesting opinions about our relation to the environment. When translating scientific discourse into popular discourse, media are important actors in public perceptions of the environment (Carvalho and Burgess, 2005). Citizens’ awareness, attitudes, and actions toward environmental issues are shaped by mediated information. Similarly, much political decision-making with regard to environmental issues has been increasingly influenced by how these issues are presented to and perceived by the public (Hansen, 2011). While the media shape public perceptions and interpretations about environmental issues, they influence public opinion, which play an important role in policy making.

As we have seen in the literature review with regard to agenda-setting, issues compete with each other for prominence in the public agenda, meaning that when one issue moves up on the agenda, others have to move down as these arenas are characterised by a limited carrying capacity (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). In this sense, trying to map the interaction of different agendas (public agenda, media agenda, political agenda) is a more complex problem than trying to determine the interaction of different issues on the public agenda (Hansen, 2010).
Much research into media representations of environmental issues indicates that these play a role in shaping and influencing public understanding and their opinion as well as political decision-making in society. In spite of that, the role of the media is often construed in relatively simplistic terms which assumes a simple relationship between media coverage and general public belief, attitude and behaviour (Hansen, 2010). This ignores the diverse chains of influence that characterise the media’s role and function in society.

Communication about the environment and the problems related to the human-environment relation is one of the main sources of public understanding of definitions associated with the environment. Carvalho and Burgess (2005: 1458) conclude: “The mass media play a central role in the social construction of risk (in relation to environmental issues).” In that regard, Hansen (2011: 9) affirms:

Communication is central to how we come to know, and to know about, the environment and environmental issues, and the major communications media are a central public arena through which we become aware of environmental issues and the way in which they are addressed, contested and resolved.

This chapter examines the role of mass media as a public arena for definitions regarding the environment. The mass media are not simply an open arena. They are actually key gatekeepers and influential in the process of communicating ideas and assumptions about the environment. Therefore, the role of news values and organizational practices must be examined in order to help us understand the broader social and political roles of environmental communication.

According to Hansen (2011), the main approaches used in the analysis of media, communication and the environment pay attention to discourse in public communication about the environment. This suggests that discursive practices are key components of how issues are construed as well as how certain meanings are framed for public understanding regarding environmental issues. These discursive practices that frame environmental communication influence in turn how people react to those issues. The
Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has become an important research tool in media research, as an alternative or addition to classical content analysis. Its application in this discipline has emphasized the fact that media messages are specific types of text and talk (van Dijk, 1991), making the study of news reports in the press one important task of discourse-analytical media research. According to van Dijk (1991: 110): “Most of our social and political knowledge and beliefs about the world derive from the dozens of news reports we read or see every day.”

Discourse analysis seeks to understand the links between texts and social relations. Within this framework of analysis, discourse is viewed as a form of social practice, influenced by distribution of power, dominant values and ideas. Media texts provide certain points of view relating to the social world, shaping people’s readings of and acting upon the world (Carvalho and Burgess, 2005). For instance, research on media coverage of environmental issues has contributed considerably to our understanding of why some environmental issues are successfully constructed as issues for public concern, while others – seemingly equally serious or important – are absent in the media agenda and public view (Hansen, 2011).

In agreement with Carvalho and Burgess (2005), this analysis is based on a cultural-political perspective which recognizes the profound significance of mass media in contemporary life. As these authors assert (2005: 1458): “Traditional print and broadcast media (embracing new informational communicational technologies)... play a central role in modernity through the selective provision of social knowledge, including that of science...” In this sense, the choice of an influential newspaper for this analysis results from interest in examining developments in the arguments and perspectives of
various social actors on environmental issues. Debate is excessively simplified or excluded in other media. In addition, the choice of the newspaper is aligned with the findings of Walgrave et al. (2008) which demonstrate that the strength of influence of media coverage on government agendas varies with the type of medium, with newspapers exerting more influence than television. Furthermore, the selected newspaper has an important agenda-setting influence for decision-makers, politicians, and other media in Brazil (Motter, 2008).

**Discourse Analysis – Folha de São Paulo**

This study analysed the environment related news articles of every Sunday issue of the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper for a period of five months (November/2009, December/2009, January/2010, February/2010, March/2010). This procedure focused on observing how environmental issues were portrayed during that period. The choice of that period of time coincided with two events relevant to approaches applied in this study: internationally, the realization of the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and nationally, the approval of the third National Plan of Human Rights. Even though the main reason for conducting this analysis was to understand how environmental issues are portrayed and to explore the associations made with them, this represented an opportunity to observe empirically the role of “triggering events” in setting agendas, a concept present in the agenda-setting approach informing this study (Dearing and Rogers, 1996).

I have focused on Sunday issues of the particular newspaper because of the high circulation on that day – representing an influential “moment” in the agenda-setting process – and also because of a need to limit the sample. The *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper currently has the second largest circulation of all newspapers in Brazil with an average of 330,000 issues sold every Sunday and an average of 290,000 on weekdays (Circulation Verifying Institute, 2012). The newspaper is also a leader in digital subscriptions selling 40 percent more than its nearest rival, the *O Estado de São Paulo* (in second position). Along with the newspapers *O Globo*, *Correio Brasiliense* and *O Estado*
de São Paulo, the Folha de São Paulo (owned by the Grupo Folha) is one of the most influential newspapers in Brazil (Motter, 2008). It is the newspaper with the greatest circulation out of its state of origin, with 23 percent of its circulation out of the state of São Paulo, compared to 6 percent of O Globo’s circulation (from Rio de Janeiro) and 4 percent of the circulation of O Estado de São Paulo (from São Paulo) (Circulation Verifying Institute, 2012).

Twenty-one issues of the newspaper where considered for this analysis (every Sunday issue from November 2009 to March 2010). Twenty-eight articles that dealt with environmental issues were identified for analysis. A list of issue dates, the number of articles identified and their headlines as well as themes are presented below:

November 8th 2009  4 articles
  1- “Beyond Copenhagen” – The environment and the economy
  2- “Timber from Pará has 89% of its origin illegal – Inefficient state control over exploration of natural resources
  3- “Uncertainty still dominates climate agreement” – COP 15
  4- “China advances in renewable energy” – Renewable energy

November 15th 2009  1 article
  5- “Looking at the Amazônía” – Development model for Amazônía

November 22nd 2009  2 articles
  6- “The Climate Conference” – COP 15
  7- “The drivers of decarbonization” – Transition to low carbon economy

November 29th 2009  1 article
  8- “Encouraging climate” - COP 15

December 6th 2009  3 articles
  9- “Not now, not never. But soon” – International agreement over targets to combat climate change
 10- “Green Equation” – The environment and social development
 11- “Polluter dogs” – Consumption patterns and environmental impact

December 13th 2009  4 articles
 12- “Moral Desert” – State’s enforcement role in relation to environmental issues
 13- “Copenhagen is the turning point for the climate – COP 15
 14- “Climate conference stops under protests” – COP 15
 15- “Christmas inspires sustainable consumption” – Sustainable consumption

December 20th 2009  4 articles
 16- “Indefinite Climate” – COP 15
 17- “Human beings and nature” – Human/Environment relationship
 18- “Science and the dangers of global warming” – Climate change science
19- “Climate conference ends divided, with a fragile agreement – COP 15

December 27th 2009 none

January 3rd 2010 1 article
20- “Copenhagen, the deceptions and the law” – Environmental issues and the legal system

January 10th 2010 none

January 17th 2010 none

January 24th 2010 1 article
21- “Sufferable Anniversary” – Urban environmental problems

January 31st 2010 none

February 7th 2010 1 article
22- “Middle-west looses more with hot climate, says study” – Global warming and local economy

February 14th 2010 1 article
23- “Brazil entering the climate” – Federal government initiatives to mitigate environmental problems

February 21st 2010 none

February 28th 2010 1 article
24- “Brazil lags behind in green economy race” – Green economy

March 7th 2010 1 article
25- “Foreign and rich environmental NGOs run over local ones” – Environmental NGOs

March 14th 2010 3 articles
26- “Marina builds ‘sustainable liberalism’” – Environmental issues in the 2010 Presidential Election
27- “Green Party project includes a lot of green investment and subsidies” – Green economy
28- “Growth Acceleration Program runs over environmental counteractions” – Economic growth and the environment

March 21st 2010 none

March 28th 2010 none

The sample of articles to be analysed was gathered by selecting those where environmental issues were mentioned in the headline and first paragraphs; where reference to the topic made up a significant part of the article; and where issues related to the environment were presented as central themes.
The subsequent discourse analysis was informed by van Dijk’s (1991) global coherence and superstructures approaches, which focus on the overall semantic unity of the text. Global coherence relates to what we intuitively know as themes or topics, which summarize the text and specify its most important information. Such topics can be described as semantic macro-propositions. The hierarchical set of topics, or macro-propositions, forms the thematic or topical structure of the text (for a list of articles, their core themes and macro-propositions, see Appendix 5 p. 208). Language users employ such macro-propositions to understand and to summarize a text. Meanwhile, the superstructures’ approach is related to abstract schema through which topics are organized in the text. According to van Dijk (1991), news articles follow a hierarchical schema, consisting of conventional categories such as Headline, Lead, Main Events, Context and History.

Typical for news stories is that these categories, as well as their global semantic content, are expressed discontinuously, as ‘instalments’, throughout the text: of each category the most important information is expressed first, a top-down strategy which assigns a so-called relevance structure to the text (van Dijk, 1991: 115).

Once news articles related to environmental issues were identified (see a summary of such articles in the Appendix 4 p. 199), I collected data using a framework (reproduced below) developed for this study based on the two approaches informed by van Dijk, enabling a more systematic analysis of such texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper section/page:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headline:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main Event:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macro-propositions:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) How is the environment portrayed?
2) How is responsibility over environmental issues approached?
3) Is the environment treated as social right?
4) The newspaper coverage seeks to engage and educate the reader in environmental issues proposing lines of action?
The analytical framework used here addressed the following issues at the textual level: structural organization of texts (what is chosen for the headline and the first few paragraphs; what is left for the end of the text); objects (themes); and ideological standpoints (the ideas, values, and worldviews associated with particular forms of “talking” about reality).

The data obtained with the application of this framework can be observed in the analysis of article 1:

Date: Sunday, 8th of November 2009.
Newspaper section/page: Editorial/A2
Headline: Beyond Copenhagen
Lead: Lula has the rare chance to project Brazil in the world scene by adopting tangible targets to combat global warming
Main Event: Brazil’s participation in Cop 15
History: Brazil as an environmental leader country. Few countries have so favourable conditions to make a contribution to the issue and gain from that. Brazil perceived as the world’s biggest natural based economy
Context: Conference likely fiasco due to no commitments/agreements from countries
Macro-propositions:
   1) Cop 15 as a chance for Brazil to project itself internationally if Brazil adopts tangible targets to combat global warming that go beyond the commitment to hold back deforestation
   2) Engage the productive sector in the national objective of redirecting the economy towards a type of development in which the effort to cut down carbon emissions is translated into increased efficiency and yield

1) How is the environment portrayed?
The environment is portrayed as a source of resources which provides economic development

2) How is responsibility over environmental issues approached?
As a matter of efficiency and profitability

3) Is the environment treated as social right?
No. It is treated more like a ‘commodity’

4) The newspaper coverage seeks to engage and educate the reader in environmental issues proposing lines of action?
Yes. In this case by engaging the actors in economic practices which are more efficient as well as environmentally friendly, and that still allows for profitability.
By looking at how a particular choice of concepts, for instance, recurs in relation to a certain issue we can start to identify the discursive strategy with regard to that issue (for example, either legitimatising or discrediting it). More generally, we have to pay attention to the overall “meaning effect” created in the text in relation to an issue (Carvalho and Burgess, 2005)

Subsequently, articles were coded based on a core theme assigned to each one. For instance, article 1 (above) was coded “economy”. Out of the twenty-eight articles identified for analysis, twelve presented a relationship with the environment and environmental issues in economic terms, as listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of articles</th>
<th>Core theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>International Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>State Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Legal System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It became clear from my analysis of news articles in this influential newspaper in Brazil, the Folha de São Paulo, that the right wing press produces (or reproduces) and further emphasizes an approach to the environment and socio-environmental issues based on economic terms. It does this through the discursive construction of environmental problems being tied to an initiative to situate environmental issues within a neo-liberal economic program. This shows that a long-dominant resource model – in which nature is depicted as supplying material wealth – is still strongly present in news reports about environmental issues in Brazil. This is despite the fact that the model has undergone relative decline with the rise of the more contemporary ecosystemic model, which along with international organizational frameworks such as the UN system, afforded the rise of the world environmental regime (Frank, 1994). However, it is rarely observed in the Brazilian press articles which associate the environment, sustainable development and predatory models of economic development (Loureiro et al., 2003). By promoting the reification of market logics, media corporations superficially deal with environmental
issues, thereby marginalizing other conception of the relationship between the environment and society, excluding environmental citizenship discourse and consideration of a broad portion of the population who suffers most from the effects of environmental degradation (Loureiro et al., 2003).

My critical discourse analysis (CDA) reveals that international organizations and economic interests play a powerful role in shaping environmental issues in the public sphere in Brazil, with their frames being mediated through the newspaper’s preferred ideological worldview. Also, there is a clear downgrading of the environment in relation to other more traditional economic and social concerns.

The second most present theme among the articles under analysis is related to influence of an international agenda on environmental news reports, with most articles (eight) discussing issues related to the realization of the COP 15 and one dealing with the influence of powerful international NGOs in the regional relationships with local NGOs. This indicates the influence that an international organizational framework about environmental issues – which afforded the rise of the environmental regime (Frank, 1994) – has in domestic processes of meaning and motivation to act. This is an agenda-setting process of macro influence on national agendas.

Nevertheless, the international influence is also present in news articles with different topics than those coded as “international agenda”, such as article 5 (below), which was coded “economy” and is based on a stereotype of the concept of environmental sustainability in Brazil being directly linked to issues of development in the Amazônia region – an international perspective of environmental issues in Brazil relates to the preservation of Amazônia.

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**Article 5 – November 15th, 2009**

Section: Editorial
Headline: “Looking at the Amazon”

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12 This article uses the Brazilian native name Amazônia to refer to what the international community calls the Brazilian Amazon basin.
Macro-propositions: With the end of the financial crisis, the challenge of sustainable growth in Brazil depends primordially on environmental matters. A critical factor is the Legal Amazon, the part of the country covered by the world’s biggest tropical forest

Quote: “How to explore, without putting at risk a patrimony which is mostly Brazilian, but that impacts the whole of humanity?”

This tendency was already reported by Villar in Becker (1997), who observed that media channels, knowing that they cannot ignore the growing environmental debate, make concessions placing the environment in headlines and gaining space when there are disasters (something also observed by Lemos, 1998), or when issues resonate internationally, as environmental discussions in Brazilian media is strongly guided by international press agencies (Villar in Becker, 1997). The Brazilian press seldom treats environmental problems in depth. For instance, it does not investigate the promiscuous relationships between environmental governmental agencies and industries, and avoids debating Brazilian themes such as the lack of sanitation in different parts of the country (Villar in Becker 1997). Through such reductionist and fragmentising processes, journalistic discourse ignores the plurality of environmentalism.

In addition, it is interesting to observe how two elements which afforded the rise of the world environmental regime – scientific discourse and an international associational framework (most importantly the UN system) – influence the media agenda in Brazil in relation to environmental issues. The United Nations conferences about the environment have served as important mechanisms to insert specific issues of international concern into the Brazilian media agenda (sometimes to the detriment of more important local environmental concerns). For instance, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (known in Brazil as ECO 92) is indicated by many authors as a benchmark in the rise of the environmental movement in Brazil, and so is its influence on the media agenda in relation to environmental issues. Loureiro et al. (2003) argue that for the majority of Brazilian journalists, the history of the environmental movement starts with the ECO 92. One year before that UN conference, journalist Washington Novaes argued that the Brazilian press was either absent or ignorant in relation to environmental issues, focusing on catastrophes and reluctant to
absorb new themes or innovative solutions in the environmental domain (cited by Loureiro, 2003: 141).

As the context for this discourse analysis was provided through reference to the key environmental event of the COP 15, it became clear how the UN system influences the Brazilian agenda concerning environmental issues. In the weeks leading to the event, we see the highest rate of environment related news reported in the newspaper, Folha de São Paulo, with eight articles having as themes those set by the COP 15. A decline in the number of environment related news articles was observed in the three months after the COP 15. This pattern was also observed by Hansen (2011) who tells us that several studies have noted how significant peaks in news attention to climate change have been related to the occurrence of international meetings – such as the Conference of the Parties (COP) international meetings – and the publication of major reports – such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report. In this regard, the recognition by opinion leaders in Brazil of the 2008 IPCC report – broadly disseminated by the media – as a benchmark in the formation of “consistent opinion” about climate change (Crespo, 2008: 6) is indicative of agenda-setting dynamics triggered by increased media attention over the publication of major reports.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is considered to be essentially an interpretive work, backed up by quotes from the texts (Carvalho and Burgess, 2005; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this sense, here are some quotes which indicate the type of themes disseminated in relation to international agreement over mitigation of environmental problems:

*Brazil should arrive at Copenhagen with a target that goes beyond the obvious commitment to contain deforestation. A feasible program that engages all productive sectors in the national objective of redirecting the economy towards a new type of development, in which the effort to cut down carbon emissions is translated into increased efficiency and profitability* (article 1 – November 8th, 2009)

*...What will mostly influence the direction towards global decarbonization will be the possibilities opened up to these Second World countries so that they do not remain dependant on perverse technology transfers. That they can, on the contrary, benefit on*
cooperation schemes in the building of their own science systems, technology and innovation (article 7 – November 22nd, 2009)

...[A] conference full of bilateral agreements or restricted to few participants, marked by divergences and domestic interests (article 19 – December 20th, 2009)

These quotations give us an idea of the ways that media texts relate to the wider socio-political context in which they are produced. By developing a global coherence analysis procedure (informed by van Dijk, 1991) of such news articles related to the occurrence of the COP 15, we can notice a strong emphasis on defining mitigation actions in economic terms as well as an orientation towards responsibilities of the parties involved, something also observed by Dirikx and Gelders (2009) in their study of Dutch and French newspapers. Those authors found an emphasis on framing the environmental issue of climate change within consequences and responsibility frames. The consequences frame highlights how the issue will economically affect people while the responsibility frame attributes responsibility for the cause of, or solution to, climate change to political authorities, individuals and groups.

Framing

The application of the concept of framing in media content has been a useful approach to analysing media coverage of environmental issues. Studies of media and environmental issues have demonstrated how key interpretive perspectives – frames – are manipulated in public environmental debate, with significant potential implications for both the nature of media coverage and the mobilization of public understanding (Nisbet, 2009). Framing in media content may contribute to the structuring of public and political responses by directing attention to various outcomes: what the issue/problem is; who/what is responsible; and what the solution is (Hansen, 2011).

It was repeatedly observed in this discourse analysis that the framing of environmental issues was in terms of economic consequences and of responsibility for cause and solution. Article 6, for example, which deals primarily with expectations about
discussions related to the realization of the COP 15, is clearly framed by a consequences as well as a responsibility perspectives as the quote from the article suggests:

*It is imperative that, in one hand, the voter exercise his/her pressure power demanding and confirming through the vote his/her choice for candidates really committed with the cause and, on the other hand, real forms of compensation are adopted, stimulating measures necessary to the construction of low carbon emission economy, so as to minimize the economic and financial losses related to these measures* (article 6 – November 22nd, 2009)

Furthermore, a consequence frame highlighting how environmental issues economically affect people was observed in 10 articles. Here are some examples from different articles suggesting that tendency:

*Similar opportunity opens up to Brazil: by doing what is good for the planet, the world’s biggest natural based economy will continue in the avant-garde of the coveted clean development, guaranteeing better conditions of life and competitiveness for the future generations* (article 1 – November 8th, 2009)

*The difficulty in agreement is due to the perception that limitations [over carbon emission] are perceived as possible obstacles to economic growth* (article 3 – November 8th, 2009)

*...[O]n the contrary from what happens in the First World, the so called emerging cannot trust in their own generation of innovations necessary to the decarbonization. For this, there are still to come sacrifices to their own economic development instead of possible competitive advantages in new businesses and markets* (article 7 – November 22nd, 2009)

*Nowadays, economic development is strictly connected to practices that involve large amounts of green house gas effect emissions. Many governments and companies have great interest in continuing with these practices, and this fact can lead them to delay action or develop insufficient ones* (article 18 – December 20th, 2009)

*The environment is the kingdom of social externalities. This means that there are few economic incentives to correct environmental behaviour* (article 20 – January 3rd, 2010)

*The middle-west region of Brazil will suffer greater economic loss in the country, in proportional terms, with global warming... We will need very big investments to compensate for the negative effects of the hydrological resources reduction* (article 22 – February 7th, 2010)

*The real economy must enter the climate debate. If mechanisms such as interest rates, taxes and financial credit are divorced from climatic and environmental principles, those will only be unrealised utopias... State governments, entrepreneurs, scientists and citizens are starting to mobilize, positively responding to the necessary changes in our production and consumption standards* (article 23 – February 14th, 2010)

*Without carbon emission reduction, we cannot talk about development, because it would not be a sustainable one. This is the criterion which will define the success or failure of the whole national economy; therefore, every economic debate must be guided by it* (article 26 – March 14th, 2010)
The idea is to make use of taxes to stimulate a change in carbon intensive activities or activities which degrade the environment (article 27 – March 14th, 2010)

In addition, a framing strategy attributing responsibility for the cause of or solution to environmental issues was observed in 11 articles. What follows are some quotes which indicate this pattern:

*It is clear that the State government has not enough fiscal control over the extraction [of timber]… It cannot monitor and ends up working only with denunciation. There is also evidence of people registering data inappropriately, doing it with bad intentions* (article 2 – November 8th, 2009)

*Unoccupied as it is today, the [Amazônia] region is under risk, risk potentialized by the absence of the State, in the case of Brazil, so quick in creating laws and regulations and so slow and absent in the enforcement and monitoring* (article 5 – November 15th, 2009)

*[W]hat will mostly influence the direction towards global decarbonization will be the possibilities opened up to these Second World countries so that they do not remain dependant on perverse technology transfers. That they can, on the contrary, benefit on cooperation schemes in the building of their own science systems, technology and innovation* (article 7 – November 22nd, 2009)

*We already now that there will be no strong treaty, with legal commitment from countries to reduce greenhouse effect emissions. This was the previous expectation: something more ambitious than the Kyoto Protocol (1997), a failure, which determined average cuts of 5.2% in emissions only from developed countries* (article 8 – November 29th, 2009)

*For researchers, environmental impact of a domestic animal can be greater than that of a car… Forget about scratched furniture: your pet suddenly has to respond to more serious accusations, and involves nothing less than the planet’s environmental future* (article 11 – December 6th, 2009)

*We have the technology and, though the recession, the necessary transformation of our energy system is feasible. The question is if we will have enough collective political will* (article 13 – December 13th, 2009)

*[I]t was clear the indisposition of countries to assume their parcel of responsibility. In interviews during the week, the negotiators tried to push the fault to one another…* (article 14 – December 13th, 2009)

*Time urges and does not admit a passive law system, merely reproducing decisions taken in other spheres. A set of norms, originating not necessarily from the State, but from the activism of organizations and aware citizens and the courage of judges and regulators, needs to take place* (article 20 – January 3rd, 2010)

*In this and other cases, we ought to remember the contribution brought about by citizens’ indifference. The city’s rivers and streets are treated by many as open waste landfill, and the rainwater drainage pipe system as sewage* (article 21 – January 24th, 2010)
Scientific Discourse

Much international behaviour is structured by organized regimes, and important components of these regimes are rooted in discourse within the frame of a world civil society (Meyer et al., 1997). When focusing on explaining the organizational side of the world environmental regime, discourse emerges as an explanatory factor (1997).

The reconstitution of nature as the global ecosystem and of the system of nation-states as the world society gave rise to the whole system of international treaties, and later, an increase in governmental environmental agencies such as environmental ministries. This process is argued by Frank (1994) to have begun with world-level talk about the reconstructed concept of nature (perceived as an ecosystem, an integrative view of the human-nature relationship) and its relationship to the recoded world society. The more talk there is, the more nation-states are motivated to act. But how does talk and scientific discourse arising from specific knowledge communities reach broad sectors of society?

My analysis indicates that the communication medium under study builds particular images of scientific knowledge on environmental issues in order to sustain political preferences regarding the role of states (such as the responsibility of developed countries in technology transfer), and the general economic status (science providing the means for a green economic efficiency). It emphasizes the fundamental relevance of scientific knowledge to solve environmental problems on one hand, and, on the other hand, a level of uncertainty assigned to scientific knowledge in relation to forecasts of impacts, especially of climate change (see quotes from articles 9 and 18 below) – the latter also observed by Carvalho and Burgess (2005) in their analysis of UK broadsheet newspapers. In this sense, scientific knowledge and information are ideologically constrained. Furthermore, science is framed as a source of regulatory parameters for human actions, which indicates how it is also politically defined by media as an authoritative actor (see quote from article 10 below). Out of the 28 articles analysed, four presented a science frame that indicates such orientations:
Article 7 – November 22nd, 2009
...What will mostly influence the direction towards global decarbonization will be the possibilities opened up to these Second World countries so that they do not remain dependant on perverse technology transfers. That they can, on the contrary, benefit on cooperation schemes in the building of their own science systems, technology and innovation.

Article 9 – December 6th, 2009
...The science that emphasizes climate change is highly uncertain... Given the risks, we must be very sure that science is wrong before following the sceptics...

Article 10 – December 6th, 2009
The association between the social and the environmental is the focus of diverse social scientists who converge in the necessary regulation of human actions in the environment since the end of the 20th century. From this point, there is a series of theoretical and methodological possibilities to help interpret the current world from an environmental perspective.

Article 18 – December 20th, 2009
Scientific development will be necessary to inform all that...[in relation to projected consequences and intensity of global warming as well as to measures to reduce the atmospheric concentration of green house gases]... Some degree of uncertainty characterizes IPCC analyses...

These ideological constraints established by communications media generate definitions which provide consumers of those communications media with certain standpoints that influence how meaning is shaped in the contexts of social interaction at the local level as media texts are re-embedded in daily life and people’s values. As Carvalho and Burgess (2005: 1467) argue:

Values and ideological cultures are key to explain variations in the media’s reinterpretations of scientific knowledge... which in turn may either sustain or annihilate the space for particular options for policy making and individual action.

The result of such complex process can be observed in the case of the stereotype of environmental issues in Brazil being historically related to issues of development of the Amazônia. This specific framing of environmental issues in Brazil – “imported” from the international environmental agenda – has overshadowed the importance of the Cerrado, the second largest bioma in South America. The Cerrado is key in providing agricultural land (which afforded the agricultural boom in Brazil in the past three
decades) and fresh water flow to three of the most important hydrological basins on the continent. Though it might appear to be highly relevant to Brazil’s environmental debate, the devastation of the Cerrado has been poorly reported and has only recently become the subject of research (for more on this issue involving the Amazônia and the Cerrado see Rodrigues (2009)). The Cerrado has experienced quick devastation of its original vegetation in the past 30 years as it has become the agricultural powerhouse of Brazil, contributing to its leading position as the world’s biggest net agricultural exporter (Rodrigues, 2009). Nevertheless, the Cerrado is still the only bioma not recognized by federal law (along with the Caatinga). This indicates the influence of the international agenda on the orientation of Amazônia in the Brazilian media and as a result, on the political agenda.

The reliance on international sources of environmental communication, along with the importance given to scientific knowledge and technological know-how, poses a further challenge to processes of power balance and social equality. Scientific and technological know-how have historically being concentrated within developed and wealthy countries, which means that other countries rely on them for solving some of their own environmental problems. In addition, the fact that national agendas are influenced by international ones – and that these are strongly shaped by developed countries which have concentrated decision-making power within international associational frameworks such as the United Nations – affords further power imbalance. This can be supported by evidence such as that collected in the analysis of article 13, written by Ed Miliband, the then UK Minister of Energy and Climate Change, and published in the Folha de São Paulo newspaper section “Tendencies/Debates”:

_We have the technology and, though the recession, the necessary transformation of our energy system is feasible. The question is if we will have enough collective political will._

As the article deals with the theme of international cooperation (in the face of the realization of the COP15) the unclear definition of the “question” of “enough political will” posed by the article leaves room for different interpretations. Is it enough will on
the part of developing countries in accepting the technological transfer methods long exerted by developed countries or the will on the part of developed countries in reviewing their technological transfer activities? The exclusion of relevant information on this issue might result in an incorrect or biased deduction, possibly leading to definitions which reinforce power imbalance and inequality, as the exclusion of information can silence topics relevant to that society (Loureiro et al., 2003).

The Diffuse Character of Environmental Issues and the Environmental Movement

One other point in relation to science-oriented discourse in relation to the environment which deserves analysis is related to the diffuse character of such issues. As suggested by Carvalho and Burgess (2005: 1459): “The complex and ‘diffuse’ nature of the problem leaves scope for media sources to have a very influential role in shaping media agendas and discourses on this issue.” Here, of particular importance, are the producers of news articles’ authoritative sense of how stories should be presented. Thus, communications media apply specific procedures to the selection of events that will figure as news as well as to encode the source material, and the way scientific discourse has been framed has served this purpose. In addition, the high degree of heterogeneity of the environmentalist domain, which includes social movements, political parties and organizations with different ideological affiliations, provides this domain with a multiform characteristic (Carvalho, 2001; Carvalho, 1998), which has made it difficult to frame environmental issues within a single reference frame among those traditionally selected by the press (Loureiro et al., 2003).

As I was able to observe through this discourse analysis, the correlation of environmental issues with science has become a strong ideological framework to the point that even when an article did not deal with themes related to scientific knowledge, it was still published in the “Science” section of the newspaper. That occurred in articles 14, 19, 22, and 28. For instance, articles 22 and 28 were strongly economics-oriented, whereas articles 14 and 19 had as their core theme the COP15. This is a quite confusing
context of which readers have to make sense, thus affording misconceptions and conflicting meanings.

For Loureiro et al. (2003), the framing of environmental problems as a scientific issue is directly related to the “complex knowledge” required for its understanding as well as to the common sense about science as an explanatory body for the natural world. The latter is an argument which can be related to Frank’s (1994) ideas about the contemporary rationalization of information and processes to suit an increasingly liberal context (discussed in depth in the previous chapter). In addition, Hansen (2011) informs us that different studies have shown media reporting on environmental issues to be typically authority-oriented, with prominent use of scientific and government sources, something I also observed in this analysis of news reporting discourse in the Brazilian press.

**Media, Environmental Issues and Citizenship**

For this discourse analysis, contexts were addressed through reference to two key events. The analysis was focused on critical discourse moments marked internationally by the occurrence of the COP 15, and nationally by the approval of the third National Plan for Human Rights (*Plano Nacional de Direitos Humanos* – PNDH3). As previously argued, this procedure sought to identify the agenda-setting influence of triggering events in the media agenda. Specifically, I wanted to investigate whether the occurrence of both events at about the same historical moment would generate a correlation between environmental issues and notions of citizenship through the media coverage. Using the same sample of newspaper issues (every Sunday from November 2009 to March 2010), only one article was identified as making such a connection, and this was rather weak (highlighted in the quotes below):
December 27th, 2009

Section: Editorial
Headline: “Dependency and Citizenship”
Macro-propositions: The need for the private sector to recognize its social role in assisting the social inclusion of those who live at the margin. Dependency on social welfare seem as negative, but the State role in assisting the poorer observed as important for social development. Access to work perceived as precondition for citizenship.
Quotes: “For those men and women [in relation to an account of people who were admitted in the work force and stopped receiving social welfare], two doors were opened: the exit from dependency and the entrance to citizenship”, “The historical omission started to be corrected when it was realized that the support to the unassisted people is a moral obligation of the nation and imperative to its insertion in the group of developed countries”, “The entrepreneurs must mobilize and contribute to the qualification of public programs in development, as we cannot run away from the spirit of our time, sustainability, which presupposes equilibrium in economic, social, environmental, political and cultural development”. [my bold]

The newspaper remained silent about the deeper social implications of environmental problems, not only leaving unquestioned the social practices that generate environmental problems but also omitting references to the role of political institutions in confronting social problems which aggravate environmental ones, such as sanitation. Nevertheless, it was interesting to observe that there were only five articles that carried citizenship as a theme, even though the third National Plan for Human Rights was under the scrutiny of the Brazilian congress at that time. In relation to this theme, the discursive construction is tied to the initiative to situate citizenship within a neo-liberal economic program13, as per the example bellow:

January 17th, 2010

Headline: “False Dichotomy”
Macro-propositions: If before the crisis (2008 financial crisis) the risk that prevailed was the ultra-market, now the constant threat of ultra-state ought to be combated.
Quotes: “More public investments, more efficiency and less cost expenditure that benefits a few. This is a citizenship program: it does not presuppose big State, rather an efficient State”.

13 It is worthwhile highlighting that the only article which made correlation between citizenship and environmental issues (article from December 27th above) was written by Emílio Odebrecht, who frequently writes for the editorial of that newspaper and whose family is owner of the Odebrecht Organization, a powerful Brazilian organization which operates mainly in the construction and petrochemical industries.
Conclusion

The media frames reviewed in this chapter suggest a set of storylines that can be used to bring diverse audiences together on common ground, shape personal behaviour, or mobilize collective action. Research has demonstrated that media representation is an important agenda-setting factor for audiences and a significant influence in shaping people’s knowledge and perceptions of issues.

By influencing public perceptions of what is important and valuable (above all, what is connected to what), the media directly influence the societal definition of a given condition faced by members of a society, which – as I previously discussed in the literature review in light of Blumer’s (1971) observations – determines whether the condition exists as a social problem, a precondition for social mobilization and action. The media are an important element in the public arena, where definitions framed by different interested parties compete for prominence. The broad media provide an important cultural context from which citizens absorb frames of understanding for making sense of the environment and environmental problems.

To better understand the contribution of the contemporary news media to the possible emergence of environmental citizenship we must attend to media discourse and examine how it enters into the public representations, elaborations, and contentions of environmental issues (Lester and Cottle, 2009). Discourse analysis and framing analysis engage with questions about how journalistic practices and media organizational arrangements interact and impact on whose definitions are projected and are afforded legitimacy in the media (Hansen, 2011).

As it became clear from my analysis of news articles of this influential newspaper in Brazil, the Folha de São Paulo, the right wing press produces (or reproduces) and further emphasizes an approach to the environment and environmental issues based on capitalist economic terms, a discursive construction of environmental problems tied to the initiative to situate environmental issues within a neo-liberal economic program.
My analysis reveals that international organizations and economic interests play a powerful role in shaping environmental issues in the public sphere in Brazil, with their frames being mediated through the newspaper’s preferred ideological worldview. Also, there is a clear downgrading of the environment in relation to other more traditional economic and social concerns.

By developing a global coherence analysis procedure (informed by van Dijk, 1991) of articles related to the occurrence of the COP 15, I detected a strong emphasis on defining mitigation actions in economic terms as well as an orientation towards responsibilities of the parts involved.

My analysis shows that the communication medium under study builds particular images of scientific knowledge on environmental issues in order to sustain its political preferences regarding the role of states (such as the responsibility of developed countries in technology transfer), and the general economic status (science providing the means for a green economic efficiency). It emphasizes the fundamental relevance of scientific knowledge to solve environmental problems on one hand, and on the other, a level of uncertainty assigned to scientific knowledge in relation to forecasts of impacts, especially of climate change.

This investigation indicates that the effect of spectacular events in triggering issues and boosting them to the top of the agenda stands, as outlined by the agenda-setting model proposed by Dearing and Rogers (1996). My analysis shows that the United Nations’ conferences about the environment have served as important mechanisms to insert specific issues of international concern into the Brazilian media agenda (sometimes overshadowing more important local environmental concerns). This points to the influence an international organizational framework about environmental issues – which afforded the rise of the environmental regime (Frank, 1994) – has on domestic processes of meaning and motivation to act. This is an agenda-setting process of
macro influence on national agendas with consequences resonating in local debate, policy formulation and social action.

Also important for the framework of this study, I observed that the newspaper remained silent about the deeper social implications of environmental problems, not only leaving unquestioned the social practices that generate environmental problems but also omitting references to the role of political institutions in facing social problems which aggravate environmental ones. The absence of the correlation between the environment and daily problems faced by the population creates a false idea of dissociation between the environment and the public – the absence of a social correlation. The news articles seen in the communication medium under analysis rarely explain the reasons for the problems, and seldom indicate solution-oriented actions that common citizens can put into practice to avoid them.

The media are a dynamic part of the current capitalist expansion process, but carry an intrinsic contradiction by presenting themselves as social actors with idealistic principles, committed to truth, plurality and public interest (Loureiro et al., 2003). The media themselves make use of hypocrisy as an integral part of their corporative strategy by assuming a hypocritical endorsement of ethical and social responsibility.

The flow of environmental information should be permanent, as we are dealing with increasing environmental problems resulting from currently aspired life-styles based in consumption values. This makes necessary the continuous provision of relevant information that addresses such problems. However, I observed that this flow in communications media is fragmented, discontinued and non-linear. Different studies have noted this episodic rather than thematic framing of environmental issues (Lester and Cottle, 2009; Hansen, 2011). There is a narrow focus on these as individual issues, rather than a focus on the wider context and history that may be crucial to understanding the interconnectedness of environmental issues and problems. A consequence of this pattern is the weak correlation of facts and decisions about environmental issues to the everyday
lives of the population, leading to a lack of concrete alternatives within the reach of common citizens.

To promote the emancipation of people to exercise citizenship, environmental communications need to propose alternative ways of facing problems. Information must go beyond denouncing problems to disseminating alternative long-term perspectives and communication needs that go beyond the common sense built around public opinion to promote transformations in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour.

Real-world indicators alone rarely put a problem onto the agenda. Agenda-setting is a process of social construction where meaning is gradually conferred to an issue/problem through dissemination and interaction. The media role in setting the agenda is a by-product of our collective dependence on mass media for providing information on issues that we do not directly experience (Hackett and Carroll, 2006). This role refers to the need to become oriented in relation to an issue because of an individual’s lack of experience and a resultant high level of uncertainty. This need is most frequently fulfilled through the media (Dearing and Rogers, 1996; Weaver, 1984). This need for orientation will allow the media greater influence on public opinion formation with resulting greater agenda-setting effects and behavioural influence. The implication here for the promotion of responsible environmental behaviour is that citizens better engaged with environmental issues (with more direct experience with the issues) will be less likely to rely solely on the media for determining what is important. This highlights the importance of developing formal education curricula which foster the engagement of people with the fundamental relevance of environmental issues to the social development of communities, as well as encourage activities which deal with issues of public governance, above all, a democratic principle of citizenship. The role that education plays and can play in Brazil is the focus of the next chapter.
7. EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP

Introduction

The emergency of global environmental problems, though disseminated at world level, distinctively affect different nations and social groups. This is due to the different levels of wealth, political organization and education of those, who can develop a greater or smaller capacity of defence in response to the impacts of environmental problems (Lima, 2008).

The abstract level of global environmental problems lead common citizens to rely on mediated scientific knowledge and interpretations to orient their decisions and behaviour (Lima, 2008), becoming dependent on science as the source of information and solutions, and on the media as the disseminators of such knowledge. Beck (1992) discusses the ethical, ideological and political aspects of this concentration of power around science and the scientific community, defined as the representatives of specialized knowledge. For Beck, the contemporary debate about the production of environmental risks has acquired a technocratic character that is overwhelmingly filled with an empirical description of problems and their associated risks, neglecting the inherent cultural, social and political dimensions inherent. The critique extends to reductionism and the low social sensibility of certain environment-related scientific activity, which homogeneously presents victims of environmental impacts, independent of their lifestyle, income and education.

To think about the contemporary environmental crisis and how to remedy it demands the contextualization of environmental problems. We must admit that this crisis is a result of the capitalistic triumph, not of its failures (Lima, 2008). It is a social project which, as it advances, threatens its own sustaining basis. It is in the context of a complex, contradictory and unsustainable modernity that I suggest the understanding of environmental issues and their insertion into education. Throughout the history of the recent environmental crisis, education has been recognized as an instrument capable of
positively responding to this problematic, along with economic, scientific, legal, and other political means (Lima, 2008).

What is intended here is to explore ethical and political issues inherent in the relationship between education and the environment. Here I refer to issues related to the political and ideological orientation that we want to imprint on environmental education projects which, in turn, is associated to the kind of society we want to build. In this sense, how has the process of the institutionalization of environmental issues – which also resulted in the institutionalization of environmental education (EE) – represented a dilution of critical and emancipatory contents central to environmentalism? This loss of an emancipatory character of environmentalism can be observed in the depoliticization of environmental discourse and practices and in the rare recognition of conflicts inherent in environmental issues, with these being gradually substituted by conciliatory discourses based in ideas of cooperation and solidarity – such as sustainable development (Lima, 2008).

This is a side of the institutionalization of environmental issues which the dynamism of capitalism operated in its favour, converting the critique of the global industrial society into an instrument to serve its continuity. This is one of the most important underlying issues of the contemporary environmental debate which also orients environmental education (Lima, 2008). It is a tendency of the hegemonic social system to resist changing in light of increasing environmental problems by promoting an acceptance of a transformation discourse to guarantee that nothing changes. This configures a hypocritical endorsement of environmental standards which can be associated with Brunsson’s (2002) theory on how organizations make use of hypocrisy to appear to comply with macro standards and gain support.

When reflecting about environmental pedagogy, Carvalho (2006) talks about three different operational levels of environmental education: formal (or institutional); non-formal; and informal. All of these correspond to different levels where educational processes are effectuated. In this sense, formal environmental education is characterized
by institutional formalization which confers specific rules and particular intentions on the educational process. It mostly concerns education at schools. Non-formal environmental education is developed within the scope of communities in a less “regulated” form. It is usually developed by neighbourhood associations, social movements, non-government organizations, and sometimes assisted by government agencies. Informal environmental education is the form developed mostly by communications media (for example, newspapers, TV and radio shows) thus taking place anywhere. I have already dealt with issues related to the latter level of informal environmental education in the previous chapter, “Media and Environmental Issues”. In addition, I canvassed the dynamics of environmental education developed by an environmental youth movement which operates within a non-formal scope, in the chapter “The Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth”. Now, I will investigate how environmental education has been developed within a formal context in Brazil. For this purpose, I will analyse federal laws, policies, programs and projects in environmental education which orient practice throughout the country, and explore how it has been developed at a high school in the town of Pirenópolis, in the State of Goiás, as a case study to observe of how macro national standards in environmental education impact on local contexts.

For that analysis to reflect the intended ethical and political debate inherent in the relationship between education and the environment, we must first understand the historical political character underlying formal education and the school system in Brazil. In agreement with Franco (1993: 13), I argue that:

Environmental education is above all a matter of education, of the need to democratize culture, of access and permanence at schools and the elevation of the cultural level of the population to understand scientific advances and discourse and [to be critical about] the perspectives of solution opened up by this process.

The School System in Brazil

Education is a subsystem subordinated to the macro social system (Mann, 1970). In this light, educational concepts and practices do not possess an autonomous reality but
are subordinated to a broader historical context which conditions its development as well as its political and pedagogical character (Carvalho, 1998). This is a view of education as an ideological apparatus of the State (Mann, 1970).

Instead of correcting social injustice and promoting equal opportunities to citizens, the school system in Brazil reproduces social inequalities, maintains the established order, discriminates, alienates and reaffirms existing privileges. In Brazil, there is a great divide between private and public education. Middle- and upper-class students attend private schools. Lower-class students attend public ones. It is common sense that if you want to succeed in entering a good university (many of which are public federal universities with highly competitive entering exams, known in Brazil as Vestibular), you must go to private schools to get the “right” education. Public schools are seen as providing a lesser type of education (with few exceptions) and therefore are the recipients of those who cannot afford private schools, perceived as the providers of “good” education which leads students to success in the Vestibular. The implications of such a divide go beyond the high walls surrounding many schools in Brazil, perpetuating a segregated society well-known by its inequalities.

In her case study of citizenship education at schools in Rio de Janeiro, Veloso (2008) argues that “while poor children tend to come into contact with citizenship through rights-based assistance (by nongovernmental organizations or children’s rights councils, for example), for middle- and upper-class children schools are usually the only sites where citizenship is an issue”. She argues that in Rio de Janeiro, it is increasingly common for private schools to incorporate citizenship pedagogy into curricula following the national reform project fostered by the Ministry of Education in 1996, which included incorporating the notion of child citizenship. In her case study of a private school in an elite neighbourhood in Rio which marketed itself as “a radically democratic endeavour” (Veloso, 2008: 52), she expresses very well the hypocrisy present in the school system in Brazil:

Despite its emphasis on democratic citizenship, there were two important contradictions in this project: the fact that the school catered to middle-
and upper-class children whose families could afford the high tuition and the fact that this pedagogy was conducted in an extremely segregated space… the building was sheltered by high-security walls, bars on all the windows, and permanently closed gate… Therefore, and rather ironically, this school’s project of prototypical democracy for young children, based on notions of responsibility, participation, and social consciousness, took place in a private, segregated, expensive, and predominantly white space (2008: 54).

Furthermore, Caldeira (1996: 325) challenges the results of such a paradoxical environment:

> When some people are denied access to certain areas and when different groups are not supposed to interact in public spaces, references to a universal principle of equality and freedom for social life are no longer possible, even as fiction… [Such environments] foster inequality and the sense that different groups belong to separate universes and have irreconcilable claims.

Brazilians are faced with increasing urban violence, deep economic restructuring, and the limitations of an unfinished democratization process. This context has contributed to an erosion of the public sphere with the increasing privatization of urban space and in the limited venues for political association that this segregation allows. This creates a sociability that goes against democratic freedoms (Caldeira, 1996).

For the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, even though schools really function as a system which reproduces the dominant order, this process is not linear and free of contradictions. On the contrary, it presents ruptures through which it is possible to exercise critical practices and work that resist the reproduction of ideologies (Freire, 2005). Education and schools are a possible and important sphere of counter-hegemonic, though limited, struggle. To explore such potential, I will analyse the development of environmental education at a local high school in the town of Pirenópolis – initially through the development of projects correlated to disciplines traditionally offered by the school (such as Geography and Biology), following the federal government’s recommendation of developing environmental education across-disciplines and its later inclusion as an optional course within the school’s curricula. In addition, I will reflect on
the influence of the Environmental Collectives of Youth initiative in formal education, mainly through their participation in the COM-VIDAs projects at schools, which I argue constitutes a sphere of such counter-hegemonic educational struggle – with its advantages and limitations.

**The Reality: Depoliticized Education in Brazil**

It is worthwhile observing how the youth themselves perceive the current formal educational system – in this case as unattractive and disconnected from their everyday lives. Such perspective is evidenced in the answer of a member of the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth (CJMA-GO) movement when questioned about the role of youth in education and social change (Personal communication A, 2012):

> Education is still plastered and molded to perpetuate old standards of an unsustainable model. This, unfortunately, keeps youth away, as they are not able to see the importance of the educational process and do not see themselves writing and determining what the next generations should learn. It is easier to see youth movements adhering to practical causes which involve rallies and demonstrations, but rarely around discussions to reformulate education and its transforming role. Nevertheless, this has been changing and fortunately many young people, individually or in-group, have adhered to causes that involve education.

This indicates an educational process disconnected from emancipatory knowledge which enables young citizens to face contemporary challenges and to serve their aspirations, rather than serving others (Freire, 2005), as is the current situation. I believe it to be hard to be attracted by an educational system designed to serve an economy (not a society) which supports a social and political context that perpetuates segregation and inequality rather than emancipation through consciousness as proposed by Paulo Freire.

As argued by the coordinator of the Youth House Research Program – a civil organization connected to church in the city of Goiânia (Lourival Rodrigues in O Popular, 2010): “The formal high school education prepares young people to the
Vestibular. This is not to view the reality and needs of the great majority of Brazilian youth.” Further on this point, Carvalho (2006: 37) concludes:

… [the way] education was and continues to operate within municipal and state policies has hardly been able to prepare citizens to the full exercise of citizenship, even less allowing this exercise to be followed by an environmental consciousness.

In order to make education (here including environmental education) more meaningful for young citizens so that they can connect that knowledge to their practical lives, we must politicize education so it can deal with what really affects the well being and quality of life of individuals and communities. In agreement with Paulo Freire, Loureiro (2008: 95) states that “education is a political act” as it construes through pedagogical and social relations the basis of political awareness and critical capacity to intervene in history, in the dynamic and permanent search of the society we would like. To politicize environmental education and debate means to stimulate the understanding of environmental impacts, to identify and make responsible the real agents of degradation, to recognize the access to a clean environment as a citizenship achievement, and to promote the organized participation both in the resolution of community problems and in the defense of public wellbeing (Lima, 2008).

The Institutionalisation of Environmental Education in Brazil

My intention here is to briefly introduce some important points related to the institutionalization of environmental education in Brazil, as a detailed description of such development has already been presented by other authors (Carvalho, 2006; Sotero and Sorrentino, 2010; Lima, 2008). Although the process of institutionalization of environmental education by the federal government of Brazil can be traced back to 1973 with the creation of the Special Secretariat of the Environment (Secretaria Especial do Meio Ambiente – SEMA) (Brasil, 2005), it became a substantial State project only in the 1990s. During the 1980s, environmental education practice in Brazil followed the movement of expansion of the number of NGOs (Carvalho, 2006).
The year 1999 is considered a milestone in environmental education in Brazil when the law was approved that institute the National Policy for Environmental Education (Política Nacional de Educação Ambiental – PNEA). This is the most recent and relevant legal framework for environmental education in Brazil, as it defines national principles related to environmental education (Brasil, 1999). However, it failed to establish specific sources of funding to develop environmental education nationally (Sotero and Sorrentino, 2010). The national policy is a programmatic proposal for the promotion of environmental education in all sectors of society. It does not establish rules, but indicates responsibilities and lines of direction, contributing to its institutionalization (Carvalho, 2006). This suggests that the National Policy for Environmental Education will become effective in practice only through the conscious and critical participation of the population, which implies a greater dissemination and understanding of this law as an important tool for the consolidation of environmental education in Brazil. However, Carvalho (2006: 88) argues: “It is fundamental to understand that any education is not fulfilled in any level by force of law, but through actions and implementation of public policies which favour and contributes to increasing its effectiveness.”

In this regard, the hypocritical endorsement of environmental standards – here including the development of environmental education initiatives – on the part of the Brazilian federal government contributes to an unfinished project of environmental education for citizens. This hinders the development of consciousness and behaviour required to face the challenges posed by environmental problems at local, regional, national and global levels. The implications of such a tendency can be observed in the resulting low engagement by citizens in environmental behaviour and governance.

In 1994, IBAMA14 created the National Program of Environmental Education (Programa Nacional de Educação Ambiental - ProNEA), launching in 1995 the lines of direction for environmental education (Diretrizes de Educação Ambiental – DEA), which dealt with the creation of the Research Program in Environmental Education (Programa

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14 The Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources, Instituto Brasileiro de Meio Ambiente e Recursos Naturais Renováveis.
de Estudos e Pesquisas em Educação Ambiental – PEPEA) that has not yet been fulfilled. This is also the case for the ProNEA and the DEA, which still lack full implementation (Carvalho, 2006).

Such a lack of commitment as well as procrastination on the part of the Brazilian federal government in relation to environmental education can also be observed in the process of construction of the Brazilian Agenda 21, based on the agreement established during the elaboration of the Global Agenda 21 at the RIO92 United Nations conference. Under the agreement, countries assumed the commitment to elaborate and implement their own national Agenda 21. In Brazil, this process started right after that conference and was only concluded nearly ten years later.

In sum, in the case of environmental education in Brazil, at a federal level there is since 1999 a law which establishes the National Policy for Environmental Education: from 2002, a decree which regulates this law; from 2005, a National Program of Environmental Education in its third version; and a number of projects elaborated and implemented mainly by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Environment along with related agencies. Many states followed the same reality of the federal government, with their own legislation, programs and projects in environmental education. Some municipalities, especially the bigger ones, also have these instruments. However, one can observe an absence in the three government levels of instruments of macro-management of environmental education policies (Sotero and Sorrentino, 2010). This government failure negatively impacts on the national project of egalitarian education as it becomes impossible to achieve through a line of educational development that can influence social standards uniformly throughout the country.

Environmental Education at School

In 1997, the National Council for Education (Conselho Nacional de Educação) approved the National Curricular Parameters (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais – PCNs). The PCNs provide subsidies to support schools in the elaboration of their
educational projects. They recognize the need to treat some social themes urgent for the national development as cross-disciplinary themes “temas transversais” (Brasil, 2005d: 26). This allowed for environmental education to be inserted as a cross-disciplinary theme in the formal educational system in agreement with the National Policy for Environmental Education.

Slowly, environmental education became part of school curricula, most frequently within a preservationist framework. Issues dealt with by cross-disciplinary environmental education most frequently relate to the importance of preservation of natural resources. Both teachers I interviewed at the high school in the town of Pirenópolis (one in Geography and the other in Biology) told me environmental education has been worked within their disciplines through projects which highlight the importance of preservation of the local environment15. The initiatives developed include visits to local Private Reserves of Natural Resources (Reserva Particular do Patrimônio Natural – RPPN), planting of trees, recycling and cleaning up of the town’s river banks (specially after holidays, when a lot of rubbish is found around the river – a common leisure spot in town). One of the teachers comments on this process:

… Mainly for being a touristic town, there must be preservation, otherwise the tourist comes and that [their local environment] can be ruined. So, it must come from them [students] this learning about preservation. Many times they live right in the middle of the Cerrado [the vegetation typical of that region] and do not value it. But when we tell them, it seems to shake them up… (Interview 20, 2009).

The preservationist view of the environment is perceived in a response to the question of the importance of environmental education in that school for the local community. That teacher observed:

Here, we have a Cerrado region with a well-preserved area, the State Park, the areas of environmental protection (Área de Preservação Ambiental – APA), the RPPNs, and they [students] do not know these institutions which exist for protection. The intention is to show them that

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15 The economy of the town of Pirenópolis is based in mining, agriculture and tourism, the latter especially due to the beautiful environment of that region, which counts with a State Natural Park as well as Private Reserves of Natural Resources (Reserva Particular do Patrimônio Natural – RPPN).
our town has such reserves and that they must be preserved. Specially the State Park, which is a natural reserve but is not monitored [by the State]… so, the intention is to show the importance of Cerrado and to contribute to its preservation.

Currently there are no political themes or connections being made between politics, economics, society and the environment. The focus is on society and the environment, omitting the important influence of politics and economics in that relationship. This overshadows the real agents leading to the degradation of the environment to be preserved.

Though important, sensitization to environmental problems and the development of skills towards their resolution, on their own, do not necessarily lead to the exercise of environmental citizenship (Loureiro, 2008). It also depends on collective processes of conferring meaning on the environment and its related issues through the development of culturally and politically embedded process of education. One the greatest failures of “thematic” or cross-disciplinary educational processes, such as the way environmental education has been proposed by the national policy on environmental education and reproduced at schools, is the lack of clarity of the meaning of the political dimension in education (Loureiro, 2008). This fact can be verified by observing how educators’ interventions have limited environmental education initiatives to the mechanization of, and sensitisation towards, environmental issues, ignoring the economic limits and political paradoxes inherent in the achievement of sustainable societies (Loureiro, 2008).

Also, this cross-disciplinary approach does not allow for a clear insertion of environmental issues into the curricula. As one of the teachers argued (Interview 20, 2009): “environmental education is left as the last chapter of the semester, which means it will only be worked if there is enough time” which most frequently is not the case. As the teacher expressed later in the interview, one of the biggest challenges in developing further activities and environmental issues with greater depth is a lack of time.
Nevertheless, that particular teacher argued that things improved with the re-signification process within the high school system proposed by the government of that state. Through that process, schools can opt to offer elective courses. As this school opted to adopt this process, environmental education became an elective course of two sessions of 45 minutes every week. Both teachers who had already worked with environmental education projects within their disciplines perceived the re-signification process as positive. The Geography teacher, after undergoing a qualification course in environmental education at a nearby university (which she paid for by herself), became the convenor for the new course, which started to be taught one year before our interview, in the second semester of 2008. It was interesting to know that environmental education soon became the number one choice among the other electives (such as arts and music).

Nevertheless, the reach of that course is still limited to a few, as it is only one class of 25 students per semester. But the course convenor expressed her belief in the relevance of environmental education as a course, not just as a cross-disciplinary theme. She emphasized that the specific time allocated and the freedom of content possible in that course allowed her to develop activities with more impact in the school environment, including the creation and maintenance of a vegetable garden, planting of trees and care for the school surroundings in relation to rubbish. In this regard, the teacher argued: “In environmental education I can also work the school environment…” (Interview 20, 2009).

The teacher added that students are encouraged to “monitor” others around the school in relation to care for the school grounds. This highlights the relevance of such environmental education as a course for the purpose of forming environmental leaders in the community. These are young citizens who can become advocates of community socio-environmental issues. This is a model of an environmental education course to promote the formation of young environmental leaders, or “champions”, who can become role models for the community in the dissemination of responsible environmental behaviour. This is an example of the agency of social diffusion recognized by the idea of
the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1995). Such a potential role for students as disseminators of awareness and behaviour was noted in a MTV survey on the youth:

As general rule, learning about environmental issues comes from schools and less frequently from the family. Parents themselves recognize that much information and even change in family habits were stimulated by their children and ‘sowed’ by schools (MTV, 2008: 42).

We can highlight the relevance of that school’s environmental education initiatives oriented towards preservation of the local environment as an important means to raise awareness about local environmental issues (an alternative approach to the media, heavily influenced by national, and many times international, agendas, as we saw in the previous chapter), and to develop social governance over natural resources. Through the activities of the environmental education course, students start to engage in awareness about the importance of looking after their local environments and demanding such responsibility from others.

The potential of environmental education courses focused not only on teaching about preservation, but also on forming young environmental leaders, can greatly contribute to the governance culture in Brazil (currently weak, not only in relation to environmental issues) with the formation of local advocates whose influence can reach out of the school grounds. This is particularly relevant in case of a weak state presence in monitoring the implementation of policies, as frequently argued in relation to the Brazilian State. As Loureiro suggests (2008: 94-95), “…our environmental legislation is broad… it presents loop holes and can afford diverse interpretation... [and] considering the diffuse character of legal norms in relation to environmental issues”, it is imperative the participation of civil society in the elaboration and monitoring of environmental policies, in the implementation of new instruments of protection and environmental education. This requires continuous active social participation and awareness of the citizenship responsibility towards demanding that those laws are respected and enforced within a democratic sustainability frame.
Being a principle of citizenship, it makes sense to analyse how social participation takes place at school, as this seems to be relevant for the diffusion of such behaviour among young citizens. Both teachers interviewed expressed their discontent with the lack of participation of parents in the education system. As argued by one of the teachers (Interview 20, 2009): “Few parents come to the pedagogical meetings… it is not a custom for parents to be at school, unless we call them with a problem… unfortunately it is like that.” The other teacher further emphasized such lack of participation by saying (Interview 19, 2009): “We organize a meeting to discuss a certain project which the school intends to develop and few [parents] come.”

However, one of the teachers talked about a positive initiative regarding the participation of the community at school. Since the re-signification process which allowed the development of more creative learning opportunities at school, that school called upon parents to participate in education by proposing workshops for students, where information and skills could be developed under the guidance of parents. The workshops were mostly about music, arts and crafts and the re-utilization of waste items. Parents who expressed interest in participating were in charge of organizing the workshops. Parents were motivated to participate not just as the ones responsible for a child (as in the pedagogical meetings), but as “experts” in activities which involved the learning of skills. This is a more active participation in education than the passive attendance of meetings.

This indicates that low community participation is likely to result from the few opportunities for meaningful engagement that can build the motivation for parents and others to take part in activities developed at school. Although the potential for participation probably exists, practical opportunities for the engagement of community members in the educational effort are not so common. This example highlights the need to transform “school environments” in Brazil into “community environments”, transforming schools into community centres open to public participation. As long as schools are physically, socially and culturally limited by high walls and gates, efforts towards a project of full citizenship are utopian at best.
It is clear to me from the teachers’ accounts, backed by my own experience as a student of that educational system during the 1980s and 1990s, that there is a view in Brazil of “schools for students”, and not “schools for communities”. As there was a great focus on parents’ participation in answers to questions of who participates at school, I asked teachers about the participation of other institutions in school development. Both teachers emphasized that there was little participation by local government or the private sector. Most frequently, participation is in the form of funds, for example, by providing a bus to take students on a field trip or by sponsoring banners and sound equipment to be used at school events. As one of the teachers observed (Interview 19, 2009): “We go after them… we even have a person here at school which sort of fulfils that purpose… but for sponsorship, for paying for banners and hiring of sound system…” This calls our attention to the lack of participation by different institutions in school development as well as the lack of sufficient funds from the State for schools to develop their projects.

Nevertheless, one of the teachers argued that there has been the positive participation by a local NGO in the realization of environmental education workshops for students and in the qualification of educators, as that organization offers free capacity-building workshops to local teachers. This is something the government itself might be seen as responsible for providing them with but it has not been the case. This particular teacher paid for a qualification course in environmental education in a nearby university before becoming the convenor for the environmental education course. This is symptomatic of the lack of availability of specific sources of funds for environmental education and to support the qualification of educators by the federal government.

The educational system has been crucial in the process of socializing people into their roles as citizens (Mann, 1970). Therefore, participation by the broad community in educational projects and improvement of schools’ environments is pivotal for the consolidation of a democratic culture in society. In relation to social participation in education, Lima (2008: 136) suggests that “the absence of participation in education reinforces its authoritarian character, as well as hinders the possibilities of growth, autonomy and emancipation of the learner”. To politicize environmental issues and
education supposes the consideration of learners as carriers of rights and duties and the environment as a public good. This consciousness process would be incomplete if it did not incorporate and stimulate social participation as a practice that transforms citizenship consciousness into social action. The processes of citizenship and participation have between them an interdependent and complementary relationship fundamental to the affirmation and exercise of genuine democracy, as citizenship needs social participation to secure its dynamism, growth and maturation. Lima (2008: 137) concludes: “To politicise environmental education means to broaden and consolidate a democratic culture in society.” This must start at school, an important socializing agent in society (Mann, 1970).

It is valuable at this point to list the obstacles to the promotion of responsible environmental behaviour as recognised by the teachers interviewed for this study. They agreed that the media, families and the political system were the main obstacles. They blamed a lack of educational content in the media, a lack of family support through participation, and a lack of will from political actors in proposing initiatives, instead of just attending to demands.

To conclude, it is also valuable to approach the important component of evaluation in educational processes, in this case to assess the outcomes of the projects developed in environmental education. As stated by Fien et al. (2002:154), “evaluation can be a useful tool for identifying success … and for providing opportunities for progressive improvement of programs, organizational learning, and reporting to funders”. The school teachers mentioned that evaluation normally happens through a presentation to the school Principal and Coordinator of a “portfolio” of the project – a collection of material and descriptions of the activities developed, usually backed by pictures. One of the teachers commented “but I still have do that one” (Interview 19, 2009). This indicates an evaluation process which seems loose at best. The presence of weak processes of evaluation of environmental education activities, or even its absence in some cases, is also recognized by Carvalho (2006: 89), who observes:
The situation gets worse as almost always there is no evaluation after the work developed, being it relegated to a second position in favour of new projects and commitments… (Carvalho, 2006: 89).

I also observed this during my analysis of environmental communication programs focused at changing people’s behaviours through non-formal and informal processes of education (Rodrigues, 2007). In this light, I decided to delve further into the issue by asking one of the teachers: “So, how do you see the results of the environmental education developed at school?” It became clear from the teacher’s answer that she did not see changes in behaviour as a result of the activities developed at school. To support her argument, she based her analysis on the preservation/waste management dichotomy which underlines most activities in environmental education developed at school and concluded (Interview 19, 2009): “I still see rubbish all over the place, either near the river or at school” Overall, this teacher indicates her disbelief in behavioural changes brought about by the educational efforts at school.

Overall, environmental education at that school has been relevant in raising awareness about the importance of preserving the local natural environment; however, it has failed in identifying the drivers of degradation of that environment. This could be identified through a political approach to the social and economic dynamics leading to the mismanagement of natural resources. In this regard, the environmental education teacher admitted that sometimes, when she talks to students about the negative effects of mining in the local environment, they reply “So you want us to starve?”, as many of the students’ parents are involved in the mining industry and perceive no possible alternatives.

In accord with Loureiro (2008), I believe it is fundamental to associate formal educational processes to other social activities of struggle for a better quality of life and sustainability in order to engage people in environmental citizenship. Environmental education, with its principles of integration and promotion of quality of life, can construe understanding of the school environment as a totality that includes the community in which the school is located. This can take place by developing projects that associate
themes and initiatives developed at school with activities of relevance to the broad community, aiming for reflection and action in relation to the environment in which we live in. To illustrate this potential, I will now analyse the initiative of the COM-VIDAs – the Commissions of Environment and Quality of Life in Schools.

**Schools: a Sphere of Convergence**

In 2004, a set of actions called *Vamos Cuidar do Brasil* (Let us take care of Brazil) was implemented involving the mobilization of environmental educators in the constitution of two new spaces for youth action: the Commissions of Environment and Quality of Life in Schools, *Comissões de Meio Ambiente e Qualidade de Vida nas Escolas* (COM-VIDAs), and the Environmental Collectives of Youth, *Coletivos Jovens de Meio Ambiente* (CJMAs) (Brasil, 2006). While the CJMAs aggregate young people between 15 and 29 years of age who are not necessarily members of youth movements or organizations which incorporate the environment topic in their activities (as we saw in detail in a previous chapter dedicated to this initiative), the COM-VIDAs seek to involve and integrate students in their initial years of high school with their teachers and the local community in the construction of the Agenda 21 at school. The general objective is to act, intervene and construct socio environmental actions and projects from a youth perspective (Brasil, 2006).

The COM-VIDAs draw from the constitution of Agenda 21 in schools, ideally contributing to participation of youth in identifying the needs and demands for developing healthier socio-environments within schools and beyond (Brasil, 2004). It is an initiative based on the participation of students, teachers, directors, other school employees and members of the broader community – including the participation of young members of the CJMAs – to integrate environmental education to actions developed at school and beyond.

The CJMA of the State of Goiás (GJMA-GO) and another eighteen CJMAs around the country have participated in the COM-VIDAs project (Brasil, 2009). In 2008
alone, the CJMA-GO had the opportunity to develop a project entitled *Formando COM-VIDAs em Goiás* (Forming COM-VIDAs in Goiás), with the objective of implementing Agenda 21 in twenty-two high schools in Goiás (Brasil, 2009).

The intersection of CJMAs with school environments through the COM-VIDAs projects – aimed at improving schools’ and communities’ environments, thus complementing formal environmental education at schools – has proved valuable in contextualizing themes and practices in environmental education in terms of the social dynamics of local communities and showing students that these activities are more meaningful when they include other members of the community from outer school. However, one leader of the CJMA-GO observed that it is not an easy process to instigate change in the school community, but when that happens, results are more satisfactory. When asked about the difficulties in instigating change in the school community, this interviewee relates this difficulty to the internal organization of schools and their *Projeto Político Pedagógico* (Political Pedagogical Project). By law, educational institutions are responsible for elaborating and executing their own pedagogical proposals (Brasil, 1996). However, as this requires only the presentation of a formal document, not stating the due processes through which it must be constructed, many times it is done only to fulfil requirements under the law, thus becoming merely a bureaucratic instrument which lacks the participation of the broad school community.

… there is the school organizational factor, whether the school is already well organized, has a well elaborated PPP which allows for projects like this (the COM-VIDAs), whether the educators and directors provide openness to new experiences in the school… there are schools which do not have a clear organization, for example, they have not properly defined their mission in the PPP, they have not defined what the working philosophy of the school is, what educational line to follow and this hinders not only the formation of COM-VIDAs, but any other project to be created at the school (Interview B CJMA-GO, 2010).

Nevertheless, beyond these limitations, the initiative confirms the potential of schools as “community centres”, as a sphere of convergence for the community, where students, educators, parents, social movements, non-governmental and governmental
organizations can come together to develop educational processes. It is worthwhile highlighting that participation is something people learn and improve (through educational processes). It is primarily socially constructed (Carvalho, 2006). Through projects such as the one mentioned above, young citizens gradually are able to improve their level of local participation, opening the way and potentially leading them to a more mature participation within macro contexts, influencing the ideological and political orientations of society (Carvalho, 2006).

In addition, I can highlight another potential of such initiative to the engagement of young citizens in responsible environmental behaviour. As CJMAs contribute to environmental education at schools through the COM-VIDAs, schools, through environmental education courses, can form environmental leaders to engage with environmental advocacy, and they can have as initial experience of participation in the CJMAs, as these are by principle (“youth choose youth”) open to other young people. This is a dynamic cyclical development originally fostered by an inclusive initiative of the State.

**Conclusion**

What has taken place in formal education are environmental education activities based on a natural science model. They are most frequently directed towards conservation, preservation and recycling initiatives disarticulated from the economic, social, cultural and political context in which environmental degradation happens. Within this context, one can notice the difficulties for schools in incorporating the environmental dimension across disciplines in the curricula, as recommended by the national policy on environmental education. In addition, environmental education has not been present in key spaces of organization of educational work at school, for example, in the definition of the Political Pedagogical Project, in terms of the use of classroom time and in the remuneration and qualification of teachers.
Although progress has been made in the institutionalization of environmental education and the development of public policies in that regard, as well as in the attention given by schools and teachers to the development of environmental education initiatives, there is still the challenge of internalising in the institutional structuring spaces of education the development of a critical approach to environmental problems. If not for this purpose, the policies and practices in environmental education will serve only to feed the social imaginary with the false expectation that a new era of sustainability is been built. This misconception may continue to hinder the conscious participation of citizens in the resolution of socio environmental problems.

A reorientation of education in Brazil seems relevant as a strategy to meet the challenges posed by contemporary environmental problems. It also seems relevant in order to overcome, or at least decrease, the need for orientation we have in relation to issues with which we do not have close experience with – as described by the agenda-setting model of Dearing and Rogers (1996). This is in the face of an international discourse strongly oriented by global abstract environmental issues and of highly scientized environmental discourse presented by the broad media. In agreement with Reigota (1994), I believe that environmental education must be fundamentally understood as political education, as it prepares citizens to demand social justice, national and planetary citizenship, besides self governance and ethics.

Though the advances achieved through international conferences, the maturing of environmental legislation and the strengthening of different governmental as well as nongovernmental organizations operating in the environmental domain, there are still many difficulties for the environmental education proposal to be nationally resolved in Brazil (Carvalho, 2006). In this sense, environmental education seems to progress through a series of conceptual and strategical adaptations which contribute to a sense of confusion of what is intended with environmental education.

Overall, the greatest obstacles to developing and advancing environmental education in Brazil are related to problems faced by education as a whole and the value
conferred on it by governmental agencies and the population. Unprepared and unmotivated educators, bad working conditions, reduced investments, lack of appropriate material, and the devaluation of educational professionals are some of many problems which require urgent changes to improve the current state of education in Brazil (Carvalho, 2006). To achieve these changes means not only to improve environmental education, but also to recognize the fundamental role that education plays in society as an instrument to realize citizenship. The educational system has been crucial in the process of socializing people into their roles as citizens (Mann, 1970).

Although aware that education is not the only activity responsible for the social reconstruction towards a fairer society, I argue that a political project of environmental education, which involves and systematizes social relations and their dynamics, must be highlighted among other strategies as a means to achieve such an end. This involves going beyond the treatment of education as a means to succeeding in entering good federal universities (here, most importantly, primary and high school education) and of preparing young citizens to enter the job market (especially emphasized in education at universities) – by doing this seeing education as a strategy for economic development (which Brazil has already achieved). We need to start to approach education as an instrument to elevate environmental citizenship – something in which Brazil still has a long way to go.

Environmental education is not the solution for all environmental problems nor the solution for all problems related to social development. However, as a continuous learning process, it can contribute gradually to broadening the consciousness of community members about the potential as well as limitations involved, consciousness construed not by the mere transmission of information within a “banking” conception of education which operates as an instrument of oppression (Freire, 2005: 66), but rather by affording community members the opportunities to come together to evidence and reflect on what their reality is, why it is like that and how it can be improved.
8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This thesis takes as its underpinning assumptions that the idea of engaged environmental citizenship is a useful one, that it has increasingly important application in modern society, and that it has significant implications for human relations with the environment. I take the view that there are essential benefits to be achieved from increasing the numbers of engaged environmental citizens and that it is useful both from a theoretical and applied perspective to better understand the nature of engaged environmental citizenship and its implications.

This thesis has examined the communication mechanisms through which people with different interests and perceptions define and adopt responsible environmental behaviour (REB). From the communication point of view, the concept of REB passes mainly through communication channels before being implemented, being amenable to influence from specific interests. In addition, the fact that social dynamics and communication interactions have an important influence on the adoption of new ideas, or in this case, behaviour, makes it important to take them into consideration when developing initiatives aimed at promoting behaviour change in society.

Since the adoption of REB involves a complex social process, recognizing the role and nature of the interplays underpinning such a process becomes helpful so as to guide and improve environmental communication with similar goals. Viewed as a social process, promoting responsible environmental behaviour within the frame of environmental citizenship suggests that it is continuous (unfolds over time) and complex. It is influenced by past behaviour and relationships as well as the context of the interaction, affecting perceptions and subsequent interactions and behaviours. The analysis of those complex social dynamics indicates that citizens perceptions in relation to environmental problems are strongly influenced by how those issues are framed in the media. This can work towards or against translating intention into behaviour and when it does, the type of behavioural outcome. In this sense, political, social, economic and organizational factors shape or interfere with the intention-behaviour relation.
We cannot avoid the realization that environmental issues are about how people relate to their environments and how habits of resource use and lifestyles can be changed. More people are taking the sociological perspective that the root cause of environmental problems lies in social structures, which influence human relationships (including with the environment) and behaviour. We always see the environment through socio-cultural standpoints and communicate about it using embedded cultural and social systems of meaning. Furthermore, our behaviour in relation to the environment is essentially influenced by the nature of our governance systems, social institutions and organizations, as well as by our entitlements and responsibilities within these systems. This, in turn, influences our roles as citizens. However, greater involvement of citizens with government and institutional processes – an important part of citizens’ roles in the public sphere – is neither uniform nor universal. When citizens engage with organizations (including governments) they also have to deal with the nature of these institutions, their managerial strategies and political ideologies. A world where institutions and organizations have to act effectively while also reflecting conflict is more complicated than one where effective action is the single focus. Organizational management involves the internalization of conflicts, which influence organizations in different ways. Awareness of the possibility of hypocrisy in responding to conflicting demands is important for those wanting to have an impact on organizational affairs. In this sense, the theory of organizational hypocrisy helps us understand organizational behaviour impacts on society.

It is clear by now that the environment has become an established item in the international agenda. This involves a broad range of agents and forces encouraging the recognition of the need for societal intervention in environmental issues. However, how citizens are encouraged towards such intervention is susceptible to particular intentions that can have an impact on international agreements and on national policies and laws. These are increasingly coming to recognize environmental issues and related rights and duties. The set of responsibilities and entitlements for citizens throughout the world, as well as for specific societies and cultures, is subject to constant political and social
disputes, both regarding the recognition of the legitimacy of this category of claims and
in regards to its specific contents. The analysis of how environmental issues have been
institutionalised by the Brazilian State and the way they have been framed by media
reveal the importance of world-level factors. In this light, issues and organizations
frequently come to nation-states from world society, rather than being generated bottom-
up – the focus of much of the Brazilian literature on social movements, which portrays
local- or national-level activism. Relating environmental citizenship to world society
theories such as it has been done here is new, within the Brazilian context. This
contributes to an understanding of how the issue-framing process can influence the
policymaking process, opposing to a common focus on state capacity which highlights
implementation over agenda development.

The rationalism, scientism, globalism, and liberalism present in modern world
institutional settings have reconstituted nature and the world society. Environmentalism
is embedded in the rise of the modern world institutional setting which has recast nature
as the ecosystem and world society as the nation-state system. The sociological
conception of a world polity refers to the idea that much international behaviour is
structured by organized regimes and important components of these regimes are rooted in
discourse and rationalized knowledge within the frame of a world civil society. The
reconstitutions of nature as the global ecosystem and of world society as the system of
nation-states gave rise to the whole system of international treaties, and later, an increase
in governmental environmental agencies and public policies which address
environmental issues.

My analysis shows that the United Nations’ conferences on the environment have
served as important mechanisms to insert specific issues of international concern into the
Brazilian media agenda (sometimes overshadowing more important local environmental
concerns). This points to the influence an international organizational framework about
environmental issues has on domestic processes of meaning and motivation to act. This is
an agenda-setting process with a macro influence on national agendas with consequences
resonating in local debate, policy formulation and social action. In this sense, this
investigation indicates that the effect of spectacular events in triggering issues (in this case UN conferences) and boosting them to the top of the agenda stands – as formulated by the agenda-setting model.

Research on media coverage of environmental issues, such as the one conducted here, contribute to our understanding of why some environmental issues are successfully construed as issues for public concern, while others – seemingly equally serious or important – quickly disappear from the media agenda and public view. However, there is a need for media and communications research on environmental issues to reconnect with traditional sociological concerns about power and inequality in order to contribute to a democratic public sphere. My investigation reveals that international organizations and economic interests play a powerful role in shaping environmental issues in the public sphere in Brazil, with their frames being mediated through communications media’s preferred ideological standpoints, which is related to their pursuit of legitimacy and support. The result is a clear downgrading of the environment in relation to other more traditional economic and socio-political concerns.

No matter how dire or widespread, environmental problems do not automatically generate organized solutions, nationally or internationally. Problems become social problems as the result of a process of collective definition, not as the product of an objective malignancy affecting society. I observed that the communications media under analysis remained silent about the deeper social implications of environmental problems, not only leaving unquestioned the social practices that generate environmental problems but also omitting references to the role of political institutions in facing social problems which aggravate environmental ones. The absence of the correlation between the environment and daily problems faced by the population creates a false idea of dissociation between the environment and the public – the absence of a social correlation. The news articles seen in the communication media under analysis rarely explain the reasons for the problems and seldom indicate solution-oriented actions that common citizens can put into practice to avoid them. There is a narrow focus on these as individual issues, rather than a focus on the wider context and history that may be crucial
to understanding the interconnectedness of environmental issues and problems. A consequence of this pattern is the weak correlation of facts and decisions about environmental issues to the everyday lives of the population, leading to a lack of concrete alternatives within the reach of common citizens.

Mainstream media are failing to provide citizens with relevant civic information (which is crucial for the development of a just and equal governance model capable of engaging citizens in responsible environmental behaviour), as well as failing to contribute to a democratic public sphere. The media’s democratic deficit does matter for the promotion of engaged environmental citizenship because it profoundly influences political and social life, directly affecting our behaviours, and this must be addressed within the frame of environmental citizenship.

By influencing public perceptions of what is important and valuable (above all, what is connected to what), the media directly influence the societal definition of a given condition faced by members of a society, which determines whether the condition exists as a social problem – a precondition for social mobilization and action. The media are an important element in the public arena where definitions framed by different interested parties compete for prominence. The broad mainstream media provide an important cultural context from which citizens absorb frames of understanding for making sense of the environment and environmental problems, influencing attitudes and behaviour. As became clear from my analysis of news articles in the Folha de São Paulo, this influential Brazilian broadsheet newspaper produces and further emphasizes an approach to the environment and environmental issues based on capitalist economic terms – a discursive construction of environmental problems situating environmental issues within a neo-liberal economic program. By developing a global coherence analysis procedure of articles related to the occurrence of the COP 15, I detected a strong neo-liberal emphasis in defining mitigation actions in economic terms as well as a neo-liberal orientation towards responsibilities of the parties involved.
My analysis shows that the communication media under study build particular images of scientific knowledge on environmental issues in order to sustain their political preferences regarding the role of states (such as the responsibility of developed countries in technology transfer) and the general economic status (science providing the means for a green economic efficiency). It emphasizes the fundamental relevance of scientific knowledge to solve environmental problems on one hand, and on the other, a level of uncertainty assigned to scientific knowledge in relation to forecasts of impacts, especially of climate change.

Furthermore, the flow of environmental information should be permanent, as we are dealing with increasing environmental problems resulting from currently aspired lifestyles based in consumption values. This makes necessary the continuous provision of relevant information that addresses such problems. However, I observed that this flow in communications media is fragmented, discontinuous and non-linear. Different studies have noted this episodic rather than thematic framing of environmental issues.

To promote the emancipation of people to exercise citizenship, environmental communications need to propose alternative ways of facing problems. Information must go beyond denouncing problems to disseminating alternative long-term perspectives and communication needs that go beyond the common sense built around public opinion to promote transformations in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour.

The mainstream media’s role in setting the agenda is a by-product of our collective dependence on mass media for providing information on issues that we do not directly experience. This role refers to the need to become oriented in relation to an issue because of an individual’s lack of experience and a resultant high level of uncertainty. This need is most frequently fulfilled by the mainstream media. This need for orientation will allow the media greater influence on public opinion formation, with resulting greater agenda-setting effects and behavioural influence. The implication here for the promotion of responsible environmental behaviour is that citizens better engaged with environmental issues (with more direct experience with the issues) will be less likely to
rely solely on the mainstream media for determining what is important. This highlights the importance of developing formal education curricula which foster the engagement of people with the fundamental relevance of environmental issues to the social development of communities, as well as encourage activities that deal with issues of social participation and public governance, above all, a democratic principle of citizenship.

Discussions about processes and forms of public participation highlight the significance of a focus on methods and the extent to which these methods really contribute to democratic decision-making. In this sense, citizens need to be further educated in order to be effective environmental citizens. However, my analysis of the inclusion of environmental issues into the school curricula in Brazil showed that environmental education activities at school are frequently based on a natural science model. They are most frequently directed towards conservation, preservation and recycling initiatives disarticulated from the economic, social, cultural and political context in which environmental degradation happens.

Although progress has been made in the institutionalisation of environmental education and the development of public policies in that regard, as well as in the attention given by schools and educators to the development of environmental education initiatives, there is still the challenge of internalising in the institutional structuring spaces of education the development of a critical approach to environmental problems. This misconception may continue to hinder the conscious participation of citizens in the resolution of socio-environmental problems. In this light, a reorientation of education in Brazil seems relevant as a strategy to meet the challenges posed by contemporary environmental problems.

Though the advances achieved through international conferences, the maturing of environmental legislation and the strengthening of different governmental as well as nongovernmental organizations operating in the environmental domain, there are still many difficulties for the environmental education proposal to be nationally resolved in Brazil. The obstacles to developing and advancing environmental education in Brazil are
also related to problems faced by education as a whole and the value conferred on it by governmental agencies and the population. To achieve changes to this reality means not only to improve environmental education, but also to recognize the fundamental role that education plays in society as an instrument to realize citizenship.

As Brazil is presently implementing policies that are resulting in rapid socio-economic and ecological transformation of the country, it is certain that the decisions being made today are going to impact on the future of the current youth. This scenario identifies current youth as a strategic generation in facing the challenge posed by what some call the socio-environmental crisis. This panorama demands better conditions of development and social participation by young people and this can come from the state, responsible for developing long-term initiatives to prepare young citizens to face the inevitable socio-environmental challenges.

Under the banner of citizenship, youth mobilization towards social change has diversified in the last two decades in Brazil. In this context, it is necessary to highlight two principles that are constituting parts of the current youth movement: its intense fragmentation and strong heterogeneity. From my experience with the Environmental Collective of Goiás Youth (CJMA-GO) movement, they are young men and women who project within their groups their search for solutions to their personal dilemmas, trying to improve their surroundings according to their own beliefs. Although they still do not demonstrate intentions to generate a great mobilization, they have started to influence their families and associated groups. The results of the Environmental Collectives of Youth (CJMAs) initiative (originally a federal government initiative) suggests that engaging young citizens in participatory processes of environmental education contributes to the development of social responsibility as well as responsible environmental behaviour. This highlights the relevance of guaranteeing the continuity of this process of collective construction and of addressing its limitations. This is a valuable process which recognizes the important influence it has in the processes of civic engagement and the promotion of responsible environmental behaviour. The investigation of such an initiative and its underlying social and political dynamics is new
to policy studies in the Brazilian context, and indicates how the State can positively influence social movements. By doing so, this research attends to recommendations from previous Brazilian studies to consider the possibilities of the policy-making arena as a place where state agents and social movements can interact to their mutual benefit, opposed to the more commonly articulated focus on how social movements influence public policies.

Today there is a widely recognized need for stronger forms of citizenship in Brazil. Citizenship needs to be reconstructed, not only at the level of ideas, but also in practice, if Brazilian civil society is to be politically engaged in social and environmental problems and their solutions. A citizenship model is strongly rationalized, liberal and universalistic. The models that emerge and are institutionalised in world society are the ones that best articulate with the culture and organization of world society. However, as these models follow a top-down trajectory – originating from macro (international) processes of definition, then influencing micro (nation-state level) agendas – the resulting impact of such models in specific social contexts can vary. A citizenship model will be more likely to be assimilated in contexts where liberalization is more significant. That is probably why a citizenship model will be more significant to more liberal societies. Liberalization is becoming more influential in Brazilian culture and organization as citizens try to overcome an unfinished democratisation process inherited from decades of military dictatorship. World concerns (in the form of discourse and association) in relation to human rights have transcended the limited national interests of the Brazilian state in this area, leading to movements, informal associations and mobilizations which can make meaning out of a citizenship model of nature within that particular context. This cultural and organizational shift highlights the relevance of this model (environmental citizenship) for bringing about not only environmental awareness and behaviour, but also a recasting of the relations between citizens and the state, which could lead to improved public governance and greater levels of social change.

I draw on all of the theoretical debates outlined here to define environmental citizenship as a framework for the achievement of a more equitable and sustainable
society, and to express the relevance of a responsible environmental behaviour approach to achieve such an end. Central to this analysis is the notion that the consolidation of engaged environmental citizenship requires the reorientation of public policy actions, with the reformulation of media and educational environments.

**Future Research**

The dominant case-study tradition – though filled with advantages of its own – does not have the breadth to picture long-term transformations in discourse and activity in relation to nature. Therefore, the analyses presented here are by definition exploratory in character and cannot produce definitive confirmation of my hypotheses. More positively, they do help specify the terms of these hypotheses.

The oscillations in environmental issues coverage that discourse analyses of news media reveal seldom reflect just a single influential factor. This dynamic results from the complex interaction of multiple factors, as it was shown here. Nevertheless, this should not detract us from the potential of longitudinal studies in unveiling how media agendas are constructed and how they interact with other agendas – as demonstrated by agenda-setting research. This is a potentially valuable initiative to reconnect media studies with issues of how power influences the production and provision of information and its impact on public understanding and citizens’ engagement with political, economic, social and environmental issues. We need to strive for further progress in the study of framing of communications content and of how this process affects diverse social actors and institutional settings in the creation of meaning, with implications to mobilization towards social action. Recent and continuing work in the community and alternative media sector suggest some possible avenues for resolution of these concerns.

In addition, comparative research is needed which consider different nation-states’ commitments to rights and duties originating from world polity, indicating their effects on national polities. This should contribute to mapping macro international influence on micro national settings in the institutionalisation of citizens' entitlements.
and responsibilities and elucidating the extent to which they fulfil the development needs of local communities.
Appendix 1 – Methodology Summary

**METHODOLOGY SUMMARY**

What are the key concepts and processes I’m looking for in analysing the data?
- Self-conception of citizenship
- Self-conception of environment
- Conception of environment as social issue
- Conception of responsibility over the environment
- Connection between environmental communication and behaviour influence
- Agenda-setting connections

**Research Paradigm:** Interpretive (Constructivist)
**Research Approach:** Qualitative
**Research Method:** Ethnography (Case Study)
**Data Gathering Technique:**
- In-depth interview
- Participant Observation
- Discourse Analysis

**Data Processing Technique:**
- Open coding (classification and labelling of data having key concepts as guide)
- Memoing (as I code data, I also use the technique of memoing – writing notes that describe processes and relationships. These memos become part of the data for analysis, specially in the case of explaining agenda-setting processes)

**Data Analysis Technique:**
- Pattern Matching > variable oriented analysis > Explanatory Patterns
  [I search for explanatory patterns within a pattern matching technique]

The processed data is related to the theoretical propositions developed through the literature review. Evidence collected on the case study is also used to support, or not, hypotheses. The explanatory pattern matching strategy allows the study to draw conclusions about the relationship among the actors involved in the agenda-setting process and the dynamics and complexity of those relationships.

**Object of Study:**
- CJMA-GO (social movement) origin related to government initiative
- Environmental Education at School (government initiative)
- *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper (media)

**What was done:**
- 24 interviews
  - Government officials from the secretariat of Education - Pirenópolis
Government officials from the secretariat of Environment – Pirenópolis
School teachers – Pirenópolis
Students - Pirenópolis
Members of CJMA-GO
Members of the Educational Community of Pirenópolis

• 5 months of news data analysis – Folha de São Paulo (Nov/09>Mar/10)

• Participant observation
  2x classes of Environmental Education course at school – Pirenópolis
  Department of Environment annual meeting – Pirenópolis
  CJMA-GO meetings (x8)
  CJMA-GO facilitators workshop
  CJMA-GO/RECID sustainable consumption workshop at local university
  CJMA-GO – V EEJMAKO (The Fifth State Conference on Youth and the Environment, organized by the CJMA-GO)

> To understand the relationships underpinning the agenda-setting process is an objective of this investigation.
> The research will identify and examine the dynamics and complexity of the relationships.
> Focus on processes and relationships.
INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH AND YOUR PARTICIPATION

You have been asked to participate in a research study from the School of Humanities at Griffith University entitled ‘Environmental Citizenship: an inquiry into the engagement of citizens in responsible environmental behaviour’. The research is concerned with the social dynamics influencing community engagement in behaviour consistent with environmentally responsible practices. The results of this study are expected to assist the development of environmental education and communication initiatives, and will be included in Tiago Rodrigues PhD thesis. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand and would like further clarification, before deciding whether or not to participate. You should keep this information sheet for future reference.

• This interview is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time. I expect that the interview will take about one hour.

• I would like to record the audio of this interview so that I can use it for reference while proceeding with this study. I will not record this interview without your consent. If you do grant permission for the audio of this conversation to be recorded, you have the right to revoke recording permission and/or end interview at any time.

• You will be given a transcript of data concerning our interview for your approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

This project will be completed by December 2011. All the interview recordings will be stored until 1 year after that date in a secure workspace only accessible by the student researcher. The recordings will then be destroyed.

Please contact the chief investigators Dr Anthony van Fossen (via e-mail at a.vanfossen@griffith.edu.au or via telephone at +61 07 3735 7424) and Dr Michael Meadows (via e-mail at m.meadows@griffith.edu.au or via telephone at +61 07 3735 4055), or in Brazil the student researcher Tiago Rodrigues (via e-mail at t.rodrigues@griffith.edu.au or via telephone at +55 62 9658 3877), with any questions. If you have concerns or complaints about the ethics conduct of the research, contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Office for Research, Bray Centre, Nathan Campus, Griffith University, (via e-mail at research-ethics@griffith.edu.au or via telephone at +61 07 3735 5585), or in Brazil the student researcher Tiago Rodrigues (via e-mail at t.rodrigues@griffith.edu.au or via telephone at +55 62 9658 3877), who will promptly forward your concerns or complaints to the Manager of Research Ethics at Griffith University.

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and / or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University’s Privacy Plan at www.griffith.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp or telephone +61 (07) 3735 5585. Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.
Appendix 3 – Interview Consent Form

(This informed consent material was distributed on University letterhead)

**INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

This interview consent form is related to your participation in the research study from the School of Humanities at Griffith University entitled ‘Environmental Citizenship: an inquiry into the engagement of citizens in responsible environmental behaviour’, as detailed by the information sheet given to you which you should keep for future reference.

I understand the procedures described on the information sheet. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I give permission for this interview to be voice recorded.

Name of Participant: __________________________________________________________

Signature of Participant __________________________________      Date _______________

Signature of Investigator _________________________________      Date _______________

Please contact the chief investigators Dr Anthony van Fossen (via e-mail at a.vanfossen@griffith.edu.au or via telephone at +61 07 3735 7424) and Dr Michael Meadows (via e-mail at m.meadows@griffith.edu.au or via telephone at +61 07 3735 4055), or in Brazil the student researcher Tiago Rodrigues (via e-mail at t.rodrigues@griffith.edu.au or via telephone at +55 62 9658 3877), with any questions. If you have concerns or complaints about the ethics conduct of the research, contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Office for Research, Bray Centre, Nathan Campus, Griffith University, (via e-mail at research-ethics@griffith.edu.au or via telephone at +61 07 3735 5585), or in Brazil the student researcher Tiago Rodrigues (via e-mail at t.rodrigues@griffith.edu.au or via telephone at +55 62 9658 3877), who will promptly forward your concerns or complaints to the Manager of Research Ethics at Griffith University.

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and / or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University’s Privacy Plan at www.griffith.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp or telephone +61 (07) 3735 5585. Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.
Appendix 4 – Discourse Analysis Summary of Articles

Discourse Analysis Summary of Articles

November 8\textsuperscript{th}, 2009

[Article 1] Environment/Economy (Section: Editorial) – Headline: “Beyond Copenhagen”, Macro-propositions: COP 15 as an opportunity to internationally project Brazil as the world’s biggest natural based economy, Quotes: “\textit{There we have a unique chance for Brazil to show itself up to the prestige conferred by the good economic performance}”, “\textit{Brazil should arrive at Copenhagen with a target that goes beyond the obvious commitment to contain deforestation. A feasible program that engages all productive sectors in the national objective of redirecting the economy towards a new type of development, in which the effort to cut down carbon emissions is translated into increased efficiency and profitability}”, “\textit{Investing in energetic efficiency, alternative sources of generating electricity and biofuels is also an economically feasible initiative on its own. It does not depend on combating climate change to be justified}”, “\textit{Similar opportunity opens up to Brazil: by doing what is good for the planet, the world’s biggest natural based economy will continue in the avant-garde of the coveted clean development, guaranteeing better conditions of life and competitiveness for the future generations}”.

[Article 2] Environment/Amazon deforestation (Section: Science) – Headline: “Timber from Pará [a Brazilian Amazon state] has 89\% of its origin illegal”, Macro-propositions: Inefficient state control over exploration of natural resources, Quotes: “\textit{It is clear that the State government has not enough fiscal control over the extraction [of timber]... It cannot monitor and ends up working only with denunciation. There is also evidence of people registering data inappropriately, doing it with bad intentions}.”

[Article 3] Environment/COP 15 (Section: The week in 5 minutes) – Headline: “Uncertainty still dominates climate agreement”, Macro-propositions: Countries’ disagreement over global commitments, Quotes: “\textit{The difficulty in agreement is due to the perception that limitations [over carbon emission] are perceived as possible obstacles to economic growth}”.

[Article 4] Environment/Renewable Energy (Section: Money) – Headline: “China advances in renewable energy”, Macro-propositions: China’s ambition in becoming a leading player in renewable energy business, Quotes: “\textit{BYD Chinese car manufacturer releases electric car before its Japanese and American rivals, the country already leads in solar panels production}”, “\textit{The ascension of BYD demonstrates the current big ambition of the Chinese capitalism in leading the renewable energy business – part of the US$580 billion stimulus package released last year prioritises subsidies to such initiatives}”, “\textit{The environmental preoccupation has practical motives, as 16 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world are in that country, which still depends a lot on coal and petroleum importation}”. 
November 15th, 2009

[Article 5] Environment/Amazon (Section: Editorial – Emílio Odebrecht) – Headline: “Looking at the Amazon”, Macro-propositions: With the end of the financial crisis, the challenge of sustainable growth in Brazil depends primordially on environmental matters. A critical factor is the Legal Amazon, the part of the country covered by the world’s biggest tropical forest [stereotype of the concept of environmental sustainability directly linked to issues of development in the Amazon region], Quotes: “How to explore, without putting at risk a patrimony which is mostly Brazilian, but that impacts the whole of humanity?”, “Unoccupied as it is today, the region is under risk, risk potentialized by the absence of the State, in the case of Brazil, so quick in creating laws and regulations and so slow and absent in the enforcement and monitoring”.

November 22nd, 2009

[Article 6] COP15 (Section: Editorial - Emílio Odebrecht) – Headline: “The Climate Conference”, Macro-propositions: North American and Chinese indisposition to assume commitments towards climate change mitigation seen as arrogant attitude based on a short-term logic. People’s role in putting pressure on candidates through their voting power towards real commitments on the issue. The importance of adopting compensation mechanisms which stimulate measures necessary to the construction of a low carbon economy, in order to minimize economic and financial losses related to those measures. Quotes: “…The United States and China’s announcement of delaying any target commitment until 2010 caused perplexity… it is an arrogant attitude, based in a short-term logic… materializing an election vision, whereas the moment demands a generation vision”, “It is imperative that, in one hand, the voter exercise his/her pressure power demanding and confirming through the vote his/her choice for candidates really committed with the cause and, on the other hand, real forms of compensation are adopted, stimulating measures necessary to the construction of low carbon emission economy, so as to minimize the economic and financial losses related to these measures”.

[Article 7] Transition to low carbon economy (Section: Tendencies/Debates) – Headline: “The drivers of decarbonization”, Macro-propositions: Geopolitical processes go beyond global agreements. Decarbonization will continue besides the outcome of the climate summit in Copenhagen. The role of developing countries in the transition to low carbon development. Quotes: “If treaties among nearly 200 nations were really decisive, the world would be safer than at the end of the Cold War. However, there are 40 countries with nuclear potential, even though they were around half a dozen when the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was adopted”, “If the G20 was incapable of arriving at an agreement about the climate regime to be in place in 2012, little can be expected from what the 196 nation will promote in Copenhagen between the 7 and 18 of December”, “Pessimistic Prognostic? The contrary. It only reaffirms fact that the drivers of real geopolitical processes go beyond global agreements. The biosphere would not have
survived if it depended solely on respect to the old NPT”, “…on the contrary from what happens in the First World, the so called emerging cannot trust in their own generation of innovations necessary to the decarbonization. For this, there are still to come sacrifices to their own economic development instead of possible competitive advantages in new businesses and markets”, “…what will mostly influence the direction towards global decarbonization will be the possibilities opened up to these Second World countries so that they do not remain dependant on perverse technology transfers. That they can, on the contrary, benefit on cooperation schemes in the building of their own science systems, technology and innovation.” Written by José Eli da Veiga, Economic Professor at the University of São Paulo.

November 29th, 2009

[Article 8] COP15/Global Warming (Section: Editorial) – Headline: “Encouraging Climate”, Macro-propositions: The possibility of an agreement, though limited, stemming from the summit in Copenhagen. China and USA as major players in reaching an international agreement. Kyoto protocol recognized as failure. Quotes: “China and USA announce targets to combat global warming, reviving expectations over agreement in Copenhagen”, “We already know that there will be no strong treaty, with legal commitment from countries to reduce greenhouse effect emissions. This was the previous expectation: something more ambitious than the Kyoto Protocol (1997), a failure, which determined average cuts of 5.2% in emissions only from developed countries.”

December 6th, 2009

[Article 9] Climate change science/International agreement over targets (Section: Editorial) – Headline: “Not now, not never. But soon”, Macro-propositions: The uncertainty in relation to strong commitments about climate change leads to increase in deniers of the climate threat. Climate change science is highly uncertain, but must be considered seriously to avoid forecasted threats [the idea of better safe than sorry]. Environmental social movements portrayed as radicals. The time for effective action is ending. Quotes: “Copenhagen is not going to establish compulsory targets for all countries to hold back emissions that cause global warming, nor will it stop preparing the way towards arriving to a possible agreement. The risk with this ambiguity is to pave the way for soft action and the increase in climate threat deniers”, “Not Wolf [Martin Wolf, Financial Times] nor his newspaper are Greenpeace militants, hallucinated environmentalists or nothing that resembles radicalism of any sort…”, “the science that emphasizes climate change is highly uncertain”, “Given the risks, we must be very sure that science is wrong before following the sceptics…”

[Article 10] Environment/Socio-economic development (Section: More! Book Review) – Headline: “Green Equation”, Macro-propositions: The association between the social and the environmental. The kind of life style we want to have, maintain. Theoretical and methodological possibilities to interpret society from an environmental perspective. Quotes: “The association between the social and the environmental is the focus of diverse social scientists who converge in the necessary regulation of human actions in
the environment since the end of the 20th century. From this point, there is a series of theoretical and methodological possibilities to help interpret the current world from an environmental perspective”, “Information is fundamental to take a position about complex themes such the environmental ones. But, in the case of environmentalism, it is possible to go beyond and pursue different theoretical matrixes to interpret the contemporary world.”

[Article 11] Environmental impact/consumption patterns (Section: More! Book Review) – Headline: ‘Polluter dogs’, Macro-propositions: Pets’ potential source of environmental impact. Quotes: “For researchers, environmental impact of a domestic animal can be greater than that of a car”, “Forget about scratched furniture: your pet suddenly has to respond to more serious accusations, and involves nothing less than the planet’s environmental future”.

December 13th, 2009

[Article 12] Environment/State’s enforcement role (Section: Editorial) – Headline: “Moral Desert”, Macro-propositions: lack of social commitment from the Brazilian State to enforce the accomplishment of environmental obligations stipulated by the Forestry Code (contrarily influencing the dissemination of socially responsible behaviour), Quotes: “Not happy in favouring the majority which has resisted the norm, [the Federal Government] added to the generous package the suspension of all fines already inflicted to whom adhere...[to plans to recover areas illegally deforested]”, “The land owners [who followed the Forestry Code guidelines] are at risk of finding themselves as deceived as the tax payers who pay their taxes on time. The rational conclusion [of land owners] from this episode is that it is worth procrastinate and wait for the relaxation of the Forestry Code norms [currently under scrutiny at the Brazilian national congress]”.

[Article 13] Environment/COP15 (Section: Tendencies/Debates) – Headline: “Copenhagen is the turning point for the climate”, Macro-propositions: International Cooperation - the issue of whether there will be enough collective political will to overcome environmental challenges, Quotes: “We have the technology and, though the recession, the necessary transformation of our energy system is feasible. The question is if we will have enough collective political will”. Article written by Ed Miliband, UK Minister of Energy and Climate Change.

[Article 14] Environment/COP15 (Section: Science) – Headline: “Climate conference stops under protests”, Macro-propositions: popular discontent and protest over uncertainty about countries assuming responsibilities towards reductions in carbon emissions, Quotes: “…it was clear the indisposition of countries to assume their parcel of responsibility. In interviews during the week, the negotiators tried to push the fault to one another...”

[Article 15] Environment/Sustainable consumption (Section: Quotidian) – Headline: “Christmas inspires sustainable consumption”, Macro-propositions: negative environmental impact of Christmas consumption spree generating mindful simple actions
from consumers, Quotes: “The consumption spree of the Christmas period takes us to various questioning. However, from discourse to practice there is a long way”.

December 20th, 2009

[Article 16] Environment/COP15 (Section: Editorial) – Headline: “Indefinite Climate”, Macro-propositions: inefficiency of traditional institutions of international forum to institutionalise actions related to universal environmental rights, in face of failure in Copenhagen to reach an agreement on emissions reductions targets, Quotes: “In practice, Copenhagen escaped by little from a total collapse of the UN system to deal with climate change”.

[Article 17] Environment/Human Beings (Section: Editorial – Emílio Odebrecht) – Headline: “Human beings and nature”, Macro-propositions: social environmental approach to conceptualise preservation and the environment, Quotes: “environmentalism will be more consistent the more it focuses on human beings.” “We cannot allow environmentalism to petrify itself as a form of hostile discourse of modern society, serving as basis for political demagogy”.

[Article 18] Climate Change/Science (Section: Tendencies/Debates) – Headline: “Science and the dangers of global warming”, Macro-propositions: IPCC models do not enable predictions of precisely when the projected consequences will take place nor their intensity, also, scientific models do not tell us how to take measures to dramatically reduce the atmospheric concentration of green house gases. Quotes: “Scientific development will be necessary to inform all that... It is impossible to avoid political, economic and ethical matters”, “Some degree of uncertainty characterizes IPCC analyses, but this does not justify the postponing of decisive actions to reduce green house gases emissions”, “Nowadays, economic development is strictly connected to practices that involve large amounts of green house gas effect emissions. Many governments and companies have great interest in continuing with these practices, and this fact can lead them to delay action or develop insufficient ones”. Written by Hugh Lacey, professor at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania, USA.

[Article 19] COP15 (Section: Science) – Headline: “Climate conference ends divided, with a fragile agreement”, Macro-propositions: Final text of agreement is not considered legitimate by various countries, not being signed. Conference process perceived as having imploded. Quotes: “… a conference full of bilateral agreements or restricted to few participants, marked by divergences and domestic interests”.

December 27th, 2009

None

January 3rd, 2010
[Article 20] Environmental issues/legal system (Section: Tendencies/Debates) –
Headline: “Copenhagen, the deceptions and the law”, Macro-propositions: There are few economic incentives to correct environmental behaviour, as the environment is by nature the domain of social externalities. Two alternatives to the matter are presented: one is to wait for the occurrence of big scale natural disasters, forcing corporate structures to move and governments to free themselves [from corporate cooptation]; the other is less centralized and involves the adaptation of the law to guarantee the creation of an economic order more aligned to the transformations which may guarantee environmental survival. The latter is pointed as involving different strategies, but the article presents three most important: 1) discussion of the juridical aspects of property; 2) a legal strategy which allows for a second technological revolution, now turned to the green technologies; 3) the legal system must face with priority the combat to poverty. Quotes: “The environment is the kingdom of social externalities. This means that there are few economic incentives to correct environmental behaviour”, “It is necessary, among other things, a courageous approach to the existing economical structures which allow identifying not only, as the economists want, their productive efficiency, but also their social inefficiency”, “Time urges and does not admit a passive law system, merely reproducing decisions taken in other spheres. A set of norms, originating not necessarily from the State, but from the activism of organizations and aware citizens and the courage of judges and regulators, needs to take place”. Written by Calixto Salomão Filho, Law Professor at the University of São Paulo and at the Institut de Sciences Politiques de Paris.

January 10th, 2010
None

January 17th, 2010
None

January 24th, 2010

[Article 21] Urban Environmental Problems (Section: Editorial) – Headline: “Sufferable Anniversary”, Macro-propositions: Insufficient and inefficient government action to solve urban environmental problems (in this case related to flooding in São Paulo). Lack of responsibility on the part of citizens to prevent such environmental problems. Quotes: “Storm after storm, São Paulo is confronted with the deficiencies in the execution of projects planned to prevent flooding”, “In this and other cases, we ought to remember the contribution brought about by citizens’ indifference. The city’s rivers and streets are treated by many as open waste landfill, and the rainwater drainage pipe system as sewage”, “Nowadays there is more participation and understanding from society about public policies necessary to change São Paulo into a more efficient and liveable city. The next few years promise to bring economic and demographic favourable conditions. It is an opportunity that cannot be wasted”.

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January 31st, 2010

None

February 7th, 2010

[Article 22] Global warming/economy (Section: Science) – Headline: “Middle-west looses more with hot climate, says study”, Macro-propositions: Future economic loss forecast for different regions in Brazil due to global warming, mainly because of warmer drier climate and limited access to water, affecting agriculture and the generation of energy. Quotes: “The middle-west region of Brazil will suffer greater economic loss in the country, in proportional terms, with global warming”, “We will need very big investments to compensate for the negative effects of the hydrological resources reduction”.

February 14th, 2010

[Article 23] Federal Government initiatives to mitigate environmental problems (Section: Tendencies/Debates) – Headline: “Brazil entering the climate”, Macro-propositions: the Brazilian federal government is putting in place initiatives to adequate our production standards to meet environmental challenges, something perceived until recently as impossible, Quotes: “The real economy must enter the climate debate. If mechanisms such as interest rates, taxes and financial credit are divorced from climatic and environmental principles, those will only be unrealised utopias”, “State governments, entrepreneurs, scientists and citizens are starting to mobilize, positively responding to the necessary changes in our production and consumption standards. There is still a lot to do, but the paths are been defined. Brazil is entering the climate”, “What until recently seemed impossible happened. Brazil elaborated a climate change plan, established targets for carbon emissions reduction, approved a law defining instruments to accomplish the targets and another law to create the climate change fund…”

February 21st, 2010

None

February 28th, 2010

[Article 24] Green Economy (Section: Money) – Headline: “Brazil lags behind in green economy race”, Macro-propositions: In the global race for scientific development and broadening of investments connected to a low carbon economy, Brazil is starting to lad behind, Quotes: “Meanwhile the USA and China invest billions in technology, [Brazil] conforms itself with a clean matrix…”, “Meanwhile powerful countries such as the USA and China invest hundreds of billions in the field (low carbon economy), seen as the new frontier of world development, Brazil does not even have a national model, academics and environmentalists state”, “But the projects are much more directed towards exports. Around the world, the green appeal is bigger. In Brazil, there is a gap, for matters of
education, awareness, regulation and purchase power”. “In Europe, they are advancing in this sustainable and modern industry. This talk [of only preservation] is left for us. We are losing time”, “Another strategic sector which is still under explored are the forests. Seen as the government’s main strategy to promote a sustainable economy in the Amazon, the concession of public forests, approved in 2006 with an expectation of leasing 13 millions of hectares in ten years, has so far leased only 96 thousand hectares”, “Green development in the Amazon is crawling”.

March 7th, 2010

[Article 25] NGOs (Section: Brasil/Interview) – Headline: “Foreign and rich environmental NGOs run over local ones”, Macro-propositions: Big NGOs, rich in funds, impose what they believe to be the best to do, not considering the relevance of local NGOs. Big NGOs have an important role in raising funds and influencing policies internationally, while small NGOs are better structured locally being more effective in implementing actions. Quotes: “…international organizations want to tell countries what is the best to do”, “In the rush to obtain quick results to justify the funds raised, the big, rich and powerful foreign NGOs ‘run over’ the smaller ones when implementing environmental projects in Brazil”, “They come with a preconceived project, saying ‘I know what is the best for you’”, “We can act within our micro-scenarios, but we need somehow a voice which is more heard internationally. From bottom up, not from top to bottom, because what we feel is that there is a big tendency of things come preconceived and that the small must fulfil”, “Everything that comes from top to bottom rarely works well”, “Who is rich in money has to listen to whom is rich in biodiversity to get know the best way of doing”. Interview with founders of IPÊ (Ecological Research Institute), Brazilian NGO focused on skills building and first NGO in Brazil to create a higher education institution, the School of Environmental Conservation and Sustainability (ESCAS).

March 14th, 2010

[Article 26] Presidential Election (Section: Brasil) – Headline: “Marina [presidential candidate in 2010] builds ‘sustainable liberalism’”, Macro-propositions: Brazilian State is ‘heavy’ and inefficient. Decarbonization of economies is essential. Quotes: “From a leftist background, Marina builds an economic discourse close to a ‘sustainable liberalism’”, “The need for decarbonization of economies is cannot be postponed, e obviously Brazil has all the conditions to contribute to the reduction of emissions and to establish a new paradigm”, “We are not at the left or at the right of Lula, but ahead”, “Without carbon emission reduction, we cannot talk about development, because it would not be a sustainable one. This is the criterion which will define the success or failure of the whole national economy; therefore, every economic debate must be guided by it”.

[Article 27] Environment/Economy (Section: Brasil) – Headline: “Green Party project includes a lot of green investment and subsidies”, Macro-propositions: The need for
federal government greater fiscal discipline. The need to direct the Brazilian economy to a new model, more sustainable, and which also revises the country’s historical role of primary resources supplier. Quotes: “The idea is to make use of taxes to stimulate a change in carbon intensive activities or activities which degrade the environment”, “Every country must have a program to accelerate growth [in relation to the federal government’s program to accelerate growth, launched during Lula’s government]. It is like releasing the lions. What is necessary beyond that is to tame the lions. There should be another program to convert economic growth in human growth”, “The State’s investments, however, need to be revised in light of decarbonization, and not remain subordinated to political and electoral convenience”, “Do we want to be only a commodities exporter?”

[Article 28] Economic growth/Environment (Section: Science) – Headline: “Growth Acceleration Program runs over environmental counteractions”, Macro-propositions: Federal Government prioritises its infrastructure projects not fully considering the need for developing further environmental counteractions. Quotes: “The Ministry of Environment could not hold back the steamroller of the government’s projects, different from what was promised, it created new conservation areas in mismatch with environmental licenses given to the Growth Acceleration Program”, “The term of Carlos Minc [who assumed the Ministry of Environment after Marina Silva resigned, allegedly due to divergences over environmental licenses given to that program] is an example of this disproportion, which privileges infrastructure projects spotlight of Lula’s mandate in face of the so-called ‘green counteraction’”.

March 21\textsuperscript{st}, 2010

None

March 28\textsuperscript{th}, 2010

None
Appendix 5 – Discourse Analysis List of Articles

**List of articles, their core themes and macro-propositions**

Art. 1 (economy) – COP 15 as an opportunity to internationally project Brazil as the world’s biggest natural based economy

Art. 2 (state role) – Inefficient state control over exploration of natural resources

Art. 3 (inter agenda) – Countries’ disagreement over global commitments

Art. 4 (economy) – China’s ambition in becoming a leading player in renewable energy businesses

Art. 5 (economy) – With the end of the financial crisis, the challenge of sustainable growth in Brazil depends primordially on environmental matters. A critical factor is the legal Amazon, the part of the country covered by the world’s biggest tropical forest.

Art. 6 (inter agenda) – North American and Chinese indisposition to assume commitments towards climate change mitigation seen as arrogant attitude based on a short-term logic. People’s role in putting pressure on candidates through their voting power towards real commitments on the issue. The importance of adopting compensation mechanisms which stimulate measures necessary to the construction of a low carbon economy, in order to minimize economic and financial losses related to those measures.

Art. 7 (economy) – Geopolitical processes go beyond global agreements. Decarbonization will continue besides the outcome of the climate summit in Copenhagen. The role of developing countries in the transition to low carbon development.

Art. 8 (inter agenda) – The possibility of an agreement, though limited, stemming from the summit in Copenhagen. China and USA as major players in reaching an international agreement. Kyoto protocol recognized as failure.

Art. 9 (inter agenda) – The uncertainty in relation to strong commitments about climate change leads to increase in deniers of the climate threat. Climate change science is highly uncertain, but must be considered seriously to avoid forecasted threats [the idea of better safe than sorry]. Environmental social movements portrayed as radicals.

Art. 10 (social develop) - The association between the social and the environmental. The kind of life style we want to have, maintain. Theoretical and methodological possibilities to interpret society from an environmental perspective.

Art. 11 (consumption/economy)- Pets’ potential source of environmental impact

Art. 12 (state role) - lack of social commitment from the Brazilian State to enforce the accomplishment of environmental obligations stipulated by the Forestry Code (contrarily influencing the dissemination of socially responsible behaviour)

Art. 13 (inter agenda)- International Cooperation - the issue of whether there will be enough collective political will to overcome environmental challenges

Art. 14 (inter agenda) - popular discontent and protest over uncertainty about countries assuming responsibilities towards reductions in carbon emissions
Art. 15 (economy/consumption) - negative environmental impact of Christmas consumption spree generating mindful simple actions from consumers

Art. 16 (inter agenda) - inefficiency of traditional institutions of international forum to institutionalise actions related to universal environmental rights, in face of failure in Copenhagen to reach an agreement on emissions reductions targets

Art. 17 (social develop) - social environmental approach to conceptualise preservation and the environment

Art. 18 (science) - IPCC models do not enable predictions of precisely when the projected consequences will take place nor their intensity, also, scientific models do not tell us how to take measures to dramatically reduce the atmospheric concentration of green house gases.

Art. 19 (inter agenda) - Final text of agreement is not considered legitimate by various countries, not being signed. Conference process perceived as having imploded

Art. 20 (legal system) - There are few economic incentives to correct environmental behaviour, as the environment is by nature the domain of social externalities. Two alternatives to the matter are presented: one is to wait for the occurrence of big scale natural disasters, forcing corporate structures to move and governments to free themselves [from corporate cooptation]; the other is less centralized and involves the adaptation of the law to guarantee the creation of an economic order more aligned to the transformations which may guarantee environmental survival.

Art. 21 (responsibility) - Insufficient and inefficient government action to solve urban environmental problems (in this case related to flooding in São Paulo). Lack of responsibility on the part of citizens to prevent such environmental problems.

Art. 22 (economy) - Future economic loss forecast for different regions in Brazil due to global warming, mainly because of warmer drier climate and limited access to water, affecting agriculture and the generation of energy.

Art. 23 (economy) – the Brazilian federal government is putting in place initiatives to adequate our production standards to meet environmental challenges, something perceived until recently as impossible

Art. 24 (economy) - In the global race for scientific development and broadening of investments connected to a low carbon economy, Brazil is starting to lag behind

Art. 25 (inter agenda) - Big NGOs, rich in funds, impose what they believe to be the best to do, not considering the relevance of local NGOs. Big NGOs have an important role in raising funds and influencing policies internationally, while small NGOs are better structured locally being more effective in implementing actions

Art. 26 (economy) - Brazilian State is ‘heavy’ and inefficient. Decarbonization of economies is essential

Art. 27 (economy) - The need for federal government greater fiscal discipline. The need to direct the Brazilian economy to a new model, more sustainable, and which also revises the country’s historical role of primary resources supplier.

Art. 28 (economy) - Federal Government prioritises its infrastructure projects not fully considering the need for developing further environmental counteractions.
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