

SOCIETY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Animal rights in sustainability discourse

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to verify the approach to the issue of animals and their rights adopted in events on sustainable development with global repercussions promoted by the United Nations Organization, in order to characterize the perspective and comprehensiveness of animal rights awareness. It expounds on lines of philosophical thinking regarding animals and their rights and how they are inserted in the discussion of sustainable development and sustainability. It is a qualitative research of an exploratory nature and its development is defined by a survey of United Nations documents. The results show a chronological sequence of initial concern with animal habitat, subsequently increased by the concern with animals in extinction and, more recently, the broadening of the perspective towards animals in general and in different contexts, ergo a more conscious approach to animal rights.

Keywords: Animal rights; Sustainable development; Social and environmental plans and programs; Awareness of society.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is a globally diffused concept as it refers to a theme of universal interest: the health of the planet. The consequences of the capitalization and commercialization of Nature (including its animals) have led human beings to reflect on the future of the Earth and its inhabitants. In the 1980s the desire for a more ethical world led to the questioning of how to reconcile the economy with environmental conservation (ALMEIDA, 2002). The unsustainable nature of growth, that is the planet's intolerance of the way human beings conduct it, led to the emergence of the concept of sustainable development (DALY, 2004). It can be seen from the respective literature that sustainability and development are distinct concepts but complementary

In a strictly logical sense, sustainability is the capacity to be sustained, to be maintained. A sustainable activity is one that can be maintained for ever: in other words, if the exploitation of a natural resource is conducted in a sustainable manner, it will last indefinitely and never be exhausted. A sustainable society is one that does not put the elements of the environment at risk. Sustainable development is development that improves the quality of life of mankind on Earth while at the same time respecting the production capacity of the ecosystems we live in (MIKHAILOVA, 2004, p. 25).

In the course of their existence, human beings have been transforming natural ecosystems into urban ecosystems, generating innumerable changes in the process. One positive factor worth mentioning is that urbanization has given human beings access to health, housing infrastructure and education, among other benefits, and to the possibility of constructing a (collective and individual) social identity of rights and duties. There are, however, negative factors associated to it as well; while on the one hand urbanization has benefited human beings, on the other, it has led to their distancing themselves from Nature (BOFF, 2012).

When using the term 'nature', it is important to understand it in its broadest sense, that is, including all the flora and fauna, or in an even broader one, the whole of planet Earth itself. It is in that context that the idea of sustainability gains notoriety insofar as it brings with it concern to protect and guarantee the quality of life of all living beings, including the animals; they also have the right to life and liberty and to have access to the ecosystems (BOFF, 2012).

The exploitation of animals always marks a strong presence in any discourse addressing sustainability mainly because of notoriously abusive practices involving animals such as poaching and illegal fishing, using animals for entertainment, trafficking in wildlife species, using animals in industry and many others (CHUAHY, 2009).

In the sphere of such discussions it is possible to identify various lines of philosophical thought with contents that may be divergent or convergent. Irrespective of their trends, all of them have the relationship between human beings and animals and their rights as their central issue (LOURENÇO, 2008). There have been frequent debates on

the question of animal rights, involving a variety of different actors and it can readily be observed that various media organizations broadcast and diffuse questions that directly or indirectly touch on this theme. In Brazil, for example, there are media organizations such as the Animal Rights News Agency (Agência de Notícias de Direitos Animais - ANDA) specializing in publicizing information on the theme. Internationally, there is a growing animal rights movement and the issue is included on the agendas of international events to discuss sustainable development that the United Nations Organization promotes and whose deliberations have repercussions in many countries and guide the actions designed to foster such development.

The question being raised here, however, is; what is the approach to the question of animal rights being adopted by interventions with global repercussions promoted by institutions fostering sustainability or sustainable development? Based on that question this research proposes to verify the approach adopted to discuss the question of animals in such events in order to characterize the vision and the degree of awareness regarding animal rights.

The research is of an exploratory nature enabling it to obtain a diagnosis of what is being investigated (KERLINGER, 2003). It is developed by means of a qualitative review of United Nations Organization documents given that the organization has been responsible for conducting sustainable development initiatives that a series of countries have adhered to. The survey to construct the research results made use of the search words: fauna; animals; fish; biodiversity. Being widely considered appropriate for reading and analyzing research data, Content Analysis was used to interpret the data; it is a type of analysis that identifies meanings (thematic analysis) and signifiers (procedure analysis). It not only works with messages (communication) but also concerns itself with “the way information contained in the messages is manipulated” (BARDIN, 2016, p. 41).

2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN BEINGS AND ANIMALS

In the course of history, the relationship between human beings and animals has undergone many changes. One of the most important occurred in Switzerland in 1991 when the system of producing eggs with hens confined in cages was changed to a system that allowed hens to scratch freely on ground covered with organic material and to lay their eggs in comfortable sheltered nests. That step taken by the egg production industry inspired fifteen other European countries to follow its example (SINGER, 2010). The treatment meted out to animals reveals the respective feelings regarding them. Consequently, animal rights are expressed by means of two different lines of philosophical thought: the abolitionist line and the welfarist line.

The abolitionist line subscribes to the idea that animals are beings that feel both pain and pleasure and accordingly they have the right to not wish to suffer or to die. That approach endows animals with moral value which means they must be considered as beings with rights. It defends the idea of abolishing animal slavery of any kind, meaning

that under no circumstances can animals be utilized, not even in the ways humans most commonly use them, such as in the meat industry or in vivisection:

[...] a true abolitionist movement must never agree to any kind of violation of the animals' fundamental rights to life, bodily freedom, physical and psychic integrity, unless such things occur to the animal's benefit or in situations that would also be admissible for human beings (GORDILHO, 2008, p. 91)

In turn the welfarist line also subscribes to the idea that animals feel pain and pleasure and that they have moral value. However, in alignment with utilitarianist ideas welfarists believe that (cognitively and physically) the value of animals is inferior to that of a healthy human. They accept the use of animals in the service of humans when there is no other option but provided that the use is ethical and causes as little suffering as possible, setting priority on the animal's welfare being (FELIPE, 2007).

Those lines of philosophical thinking first emerged with the publication, in 1776, of the book 'A dissertation on the duty of mercy and the sin of cruelty to brute animals', by the theologian Humphry Primatt, in which the author presented arguments concerning animal rights. It is interesting to note that the year when the author wrote his treatise was the year the United States proclaimed its independence and formalized the idea that private interests should never be placed above the right of each individual to liberty and the pursuit of happiness (FELIPE, 2014).

In that context the Primatt's discourse is incisive in its insistence that human beings are prejudiced in regard to the other species as they limit the question of justice to themselves alone when they consider that, of all the animals, humans alone are deserving of mercy and compassion because they are different. That kind of thinking fosters neglect regarding the so-called brutes (animals inferior to men) as if they only existed for use and service of humans and could thus be treated with indifference (PRIMATT, 1776).

Primatt set himself against such prejudiced thinking and declared that the love and mercy of God are for all the beings he created and not just human beings with all their "[...] rank, shape and capacity" (PRIMATT, 1776, p. iii). From that point of view it must be considered that, just like human beings, all animals are susceptible and sensitive to pain – they express their feelings by means of cries and groans –, and all living beings have the same mechanism of self-preservation (PRIMATT, 1776). That line of thinking establishes the principles for the discussion on animal rights.

Again, in the 18th century, philosopher and jurist Jeremy Bentham contributed to the discussion on animal rights, albeit his philosophy was not associated to that theme. In his book 'An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation', he took up Primatt's ideas once more and made his own important contributions, stating that the animals are beings with feelings and have the right to benevolence and the right to not suffer from malevolence inflicted for pleasure. In other words, the moral issue is directly connected to the ability to experience pain (to be vulnerable to suffering) and pleasure and consequently animals must be morally included. He argued that, in a given situation, what is

morally correct is to take an attitude that results in the greatest possible pleasure for the greatest possible number of beings (LOURENÇO, 2008).

In the 20th century, 200 years after the ideas of Primatt and Bentham appeared, Henry Salt (1900), in a text entitled 'The Animal rights' defended the idea that it is scientifically incorrect to separate the animals from human beings and consider the latter as superior given that man, like the other living beings is also part of the Animal Kingdom, in other words, not separate from the animals. Each animal is unique and has its own specific needs. However cognitively or physically different a human being may be, he continues to be part of a greater whole of which the animals are also part (SALT, 1900).

At the end of the 20th century, psychologist Richard Ryder coined the terms speciesism and painism to develop arguments in favor of animal rights. In his work 'Speciesism, painism and happiness: a morality for the twenty-first century' he criticizes the way human beings treat animals and use them as objects to serve their own human ends. He calls that treatment 'speciesism'; it is the prejudice generated by the idea that because human beings have different (physical and cognitive) characteristics and show themselves to be superior to any other species, they have the right to use the other species to their own advantage. That is illogical and egotistic thinking and the author believes that just like racism (the idea of one race being subordinate to another), speciesism is a discriminatory prejudice as it qualifies another living being based on the appearance characteristics of each species (RYDER, 2017), (2017).

Ryder uses the term 'painism' in his discourse, as a counterpoint to the term 'utilitarianism' Jeremy Bentham coined in 1789, believing that Bentham's term merely served to justify abuses perpetrated in the name of happiness given that, according to it, if it were necessary to inflict pain on an animal for the greater happiness of another individual, that would be acceptable (RYDER, 2017). Thus, the term painism expresses the idea that animals are capable of feeling pain:

One of the important tenets of painism is that we should concentrate upon the individual because it is the individual - not the race, the nation nor the species - who does the actual suffering. For this reason, the pains and pleasures of several individuals cannot meaningfully be totaled, as occurs in Utilitarianism and some other moral theories (RYDER, 2017, p. 1254).

In the 1970s, Peter Singer lent more weight to animal rights with his presentation of the 'sentient' concept which was used to characterize animals as beings capable of consciously feeling sensations (pain, pleasure, etc.) and sentiments (sadness, healthiness, happiness, etc.) related to the experiences that are happening around them (SINGER, 2020). In that way, the principle of equality is introduced; it does not depend on intelligence, moral capacity, physical force, or any other such factor but, instead, on a moral ideal that involves all. The principle of equality should be "[...] extended to all beings, Negroes or whites, males or females, humans or non-humans" (SINGER, 2010, p. 10), irrespective of their differences.

Singer's statement shows that the principle of equality must include all, without distinction of gender, ethnic group or even species. One of the great problems here is that most human beings are speciesists and consider themselves far superior to the other animals and that creates difficulties for the principle of equality, both for humans and non-humans. Based on that understanding, Singer uses the sentience criterion to conduct advocacy in favor of the animals:

Animals are capable of feeling pain. As we have seen previously, there is no moral justification for considering the pain (or pleasure) that animals feel to be less important than the same level of pain (or pleasure) that human beings feel (SINGER, 2010, p. 24).

Animals' capacity to suffer, feel pain, feel pleasure and be aware of what is going on around them is quite enough to assure the existence of a minimal level of interest on their part in not suffering. For that reason, there is no moral justification for continuation of suffering irrespective of the species of living being concerned. All suffering has the same weight and must be addressed in the same way, minimized and avoided (SINGER, 2010).

Singer supported his ideas on the utilitarianist ideas of Jeremy Bentham which the latter presented in his work 'An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation' published in 1789. For Singer, however there was a need to include the sentient animals in the moral consideration, considering that the overall idea was to reduce the total amount of suffering and increase the general amount of welfare in the world (GORDILHO, 2008). On the other hand, however, Singer accepts the painless slaughter of animals provided they have a healthy existence free from suffering (LOURENÇO, 2008). He also believes that an action can only be considered just if it leads to a high level of social benefit even if the benefit in question represents a cost for the minority.

In parallel with Singer's neo-utilitarian ideas, bioethics philosopher Tom Regan proposes the complete abolition of using animals. In Regan's view, animals are 'subjects-of-a-life' because they have awareness of the world, awareness of what happens to them, as well as having desires, needs, memories and frustrations. That author ponders whether, apart from the mammals, other animals, like the birds, could be considered as being subjects-of-a-life (REGAN, 2006). Answering his own question, Regan declares that:

Behaviors that we have in common, just like the anatomical structures we have in common, support that answer. Furthermore, recent studies in all parts of the world have repeatedly demonstrated rich and diversified avian cognitive skills. Birds learn from experience, they can teach one another, they can think logically; they can even alter their behavior if they think that other birds are watching them (REGAN, 2006, p. 73) (Translated from the Portuguese language edition)

In that context, given that they are vertebrates, feel pain and pleasure, have a complex physiology, anatomy brain and spinal cord as well as highly developed nerve terminals, the fish must also be included (REGAN, 2006). That can also be understood

by observing their behavior: they live in stable groups, recognize one another, recognize their surroundings, all of which means they know where they are and where they are going (REGAN, 2006).

In that author's view, even though an animal may not know what its rights are, that does not mean it does not have them; a human baby is also not aware that it has rights. In both cases it is up to the human beings to defend those rights (REGAN, 2006).

[...] moral rights can never be denied, justifiably, for arbitrary, prejudiced or morally irrelevant reasons. Race is one such reason; sex is another. In short, biological differences are that kind of reason. How then can we believe that being a member of a species marks a defensible boundary between animals that have rights and those that do not have rights? Logically, it makes no sense. Morally, it indicates prejudice of the same kind as racism and sexism, the prejudice known as speciesism (REGAN, 2006, p. 78). (Translated from the Portuguese language edition)

Speciesism is a flawed argument when it endeavors to persuade us that the animals are not subjects-of-a-life (REGAN, 2006). Animals' interest in not suffering is so important that they should be protected, whatever the consequences:

There is, however, absolutely no doubt that the animals we routinely exploit-cows, pigs, sheep, goats, chickens, turkeys, fish, lobsters, etc.-are sentient. All sentient beings have at least two interests: the interest in not suffering and the interest in not dying. That is, although not all sentient beings may think about their lives in the same way, all of them desire or want to remain alive. And the use of animals as property for food, clothing, and other purposes implicates at least two related, but different, interests that animals have. That is, using animals in the ways that we use them involves doing things to animals that they want, desire, or prefer us not to do: we cause them suffering and we kill them (FRANCIONE, 2015, p. 17).

Given that they have interests, animals should have their basic right acknowledged as they are of moral importance. Once those have been recognized, then the animals can no longer be used as if they were property because being property means existing exclusively to serve as a resource for another. In other words, being classified in that way is the equivalent of having the status of a 'thing'. Human beings have a moral duty to stop treating animals as if they were goods and to acknowledge that all sentient beings are qualified as subjects with rights and are not mere resources (FRANCIONE, 2015).

Chart 1 enables a visualization of the ideas of some of the authors associated to the two theoretical lines, welfarists and abolitionists, who have defended and defend animal rights.

LINE	AUTHORS	WORKS	IDEAS
ABOLITIONIST	Humphry Primatt	A dissertation on the duty of mercy and the sin of cruelty to brute animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be merciful to animals; • Consider animals as having moral value; • Animals feel pain.
	Henry Salt	The animal rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the animals, the human being is part of the Animal Kingdom; • Consider the individuality of each species to generate pleasure; • Animals feel pain and happiness
	Richard Ryder	Speciesism, painism and happiness: a morality for the twenty-first century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Against speciesism; • Against utilitarianism; • Animals experience pain.
	Tom Regan	Empty Cages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Against speciesism; • Consider all living beings equal in regard to their capacity to feel pain and pleasure; • Animals are sentient; • Making use of animals should be abolished.
	Gary Francione	Animal rights: the abolitionist approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals have an interest in not dying and not suffering; • Against speciesism; • Animals should be morally recognized; • Against utilitarianism; • Animals are sentient; • Consider all living beings to be equal in regard to their capacity to feel pain and pleasure.
WELFARIST	Peter Singer	Animal Liberation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Against speciesism; • Consider all living beings to be equal in regard to their capacity to feel pain and pleasure; • Animals are sentient; • In in favor of utilitarianism.

Source: Elaborated based on from various authors.

Thus, Primatt, Bentham, Salt, Regan, Singer, Ryder and Francione all endorse the fact that animals feel pain and pleasure and for that reason they must be considered morally. Furthermore, they state that it is the responsibility of human beings to cherish those beings in order to avoid any kind of suffering given that the arguments about physical and cognitive differences are insufficient to justify their being used by human beings. Therefore, based on the arguments put forward by the above authors, it is possible to consider animals as subjects endowed with rights.

3 SUSTAINABILITY FOR HUMAN BEINGS AND ANIMALS

Given their view of the Earth as if it were a treasure chest of resources waiting to be exploited, human beings began to intervene in the planet to obtain benefits (BOFF, 2012). However, the process of capitalizing and commercializing Nature (including its animals) led their actions to have repercussions on the future of the Earth and its inhabitants. The quest for a more ethical planet gave rise to the question as to how economies could be reconciled with conservation of the environment (ALMEIDA, 2002).

Sustainability is a discourse that emerged in the light of the need to interfere in the relationship between human beings and nature because the way humanity was using and continues to use the ecosystems is manifestly unsustainable (BOFF, 2012). The complexity associated to formulating the meaning of sustainability is due to the broadness of the concept itself which is susceptible to variations based on a variety of different interests and stances.

There is, however, one thing that is invariable in all the equations regarding it: environmental sustainability and economic and social issues are inseparable (RUSCHEINSKY, 2004). Given that statement it can readily be understood that sustainable actions must also aim to maintain their capability to replenish the population of a given species whether it be an animal or a plant (RUSCHEINSKY, 2004).

From that point of view, the question of sustainability does not only exist for human beings but also for the other living beings that inhabit the planet Earth. Interests associated to environment protection must be directed at all living beings, including the non-human ones which have their own intrinsic moral value (LOURENÇO; OLIVEIRA, 2012).

It can be seen, in the sphere of this discussion, that the relationship of human beings with Nature is viewed in three main theoretical perspectives: anthropocentrism, ecocentrism and ecological personalism. In the attitude of Anthropocentrism, the human being interacts with the planet to serve his own interests and attributes mere instrumental value to Nature, especially now with the considerable technological and scientific progress that makes it possible to manipulate nature and that even includes actions to mitigate the consequences of human activities. Ecocentrism places nature at its very center. It cherishes the idea of an environment in equilibrium in which all the living beings that inhabit the planet have the same intrinsic value, which means nature is not centered exclusively on human desires (ROLLA, 2016).

The third theoretical perspective, known as ecological personalism, places human

beings above all others (given that the others are incapable of abstraction, of producing culture or of exercising liberty). However, unlike anthropocentrism, personalism declares that man must be the guardian of nature, albeit he is part of it himself. In other words the human being is different from nature but nevertheless, is responsible for it and should set priority on the common good. Based on those three views it can be deduced that the relationship human being- nature is seen in two ways; either believing that nature attributes value to itself or believing that it is man who attributes value to nature (ROLLA, 2016)

The most appropriate way to address the question of sustainability is to think about the question of development; it means expanding, fulfilling potential, gradually bringing about a state that is more complete, greater or better (DALY, 2004). Growth, means increasing in size, getting bigger, but development means becoming different (DALY, 2004). Sustainability takes on an aspect that is more complete than either growth or development when it includes the social aspect and the protagonist role of the human being as an interlocutor and social participant in its discourse:

[...] the idea of sustainability implies the prevalence of the premise that it is necessary to set a limit to growth possibilities and to delineate a set of initiatives that take into account the existence of important, active social interlocutors by means of educational practices and a process of informed dialogue that reinforces a sense of co-responsibility and the constitution of ethical values. It also means that a development policy for a sustainable society cannot ignore the existing cultural aspects or the power relations and even less, the ecological limitations, on pain of merely maintaining a predatory pattern of development (JACOBI, 1999, p. 179).

From that point of view the theme of animal rights must be present in sustainable development because sustainability should concern not just human beings interest in taking care of the planet for future generations but also respect for the lives of other living beings and of their rights to have an environment in ecological equilibrium (LOURENÇO; OLIVEIRA, 2012).

4 DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

The discussion on sustainability and/or sustainable development has led governments, academic specialist, ordinary citizens, in fact, society at large to create pro-sustainability movements. At first, they were associated to specific aspects but as time went by they expanded in their environmental, economic and social approaches to address issues of great concern in regard to the life of planet Earth.

The timeline of sustainable development is marked by various outstanding events. One of the earliest was the United Nations conference on the environment, held in Stockholm in 1972 which effectively inserted the environment on the international agenda (SACHS, 2000).

The question of the animals is important because, if we believe that nature should be understood in a holistic manner, then the concept should embrace all beings that inhabit the planet Earth (ALMEIDA, 2002). Animal rights are directly linked to development and to the ethical issue that presupposes extending those values to other living beings, apart from humans (LOURENÇO; OLIVEIRA, 2012). Based on that understanding it is worth pointing out that, ethically, the quest for sustainable development must include all living beings in its discourse.

There have been various events organized around the theme of sustainable development. The World Commission on Environment and Development, the Rio + 10 and the various COPs are some examples and they have generated documents such as Our Common Future, the Kyoto Protocol etc. A careful reading of such documents to examine the discussion on sustainable management in its environmental, social and economic dimensions revealed significant emphases at different moments in time. However, concerning animal issues, the same reading revealed that only a few of them effectively address the theme.

The research survey searched for initiatives with worldwide repercussions, specifically those promoted by the United Nations Organization on the theme of sustainability or sustainable development and its relations with the animals,

One important piece of information that stood out in the results of the survey was the absence of a document widely cited by various academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and academic articles: The Universal Declaration of Animal Rights. Although it is cited as having been declared and endorsed by UNESCO at a session in Brussels in 1978, the survey showed that such information is incorrect, and the document referred to does not exist in UNESCO's files and records

The Universal Declaration of the Rights of the Animals was in fact written by George Heuse and published in the English periodical 'The Spectator' on September 17, 1977 (MARTIN, 1977). In September of 1978 the declaration was adopted by the La Fondation Droit Animal, Éthique & Sciences (1977) and that same institution proclaimed it shortly after at a meeting in UNESCO building in Paris on October 15, 1978. Thus, despite its importance regarding animal rights, it is not included in the results of this study as it has never been officially proclaimed by UNESCO.

The research results only present those events and documents promoted by the United Nations Organization in which the rights of the animals were present on the agenda (vide Chart 2). Chart 2 displays a chronological systematization making it possible to visualize the frequency and the content of the debates on those rights.

Chart 2 - Events and Documents addressing the Theme of Animal Rights in Sustainable Development

Event/Date and Venue DOCUMENT	Themes addressed related to Animal Rights
The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm/Sweden, 1972) Document: Environmental Manifest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harm that human beings cause to other living beings; • Safeguarding wildlife for future generations; • Human beings' duty to preserve and administer the wildlife heritage and its habitats; • Inclusion of wildlife conservation in economic development plans.
The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development – Earth Summit - Rio 92 / ECO 92 (Rio de Janeiro/Brazil, 1992) Document: Agenda 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to look after the animals; • Research on the relationship of the fauna with environment to foster the preservation of both.
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro/Brazil, 1992) Document: -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals in extinction; • The way humans treat other species; • Caring for other living beings that inhabit the Earth; • Protection for the fauna.
Millennium Summit (New York/USA, 2000) Document: Millennium Development Goals (MDG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing marine and terrestrial biodiversity destruction.
Presentation - Earth to Paris (Paris/France, March 2000)/Official public launch at the Peace Palace (The Hague/Netherlands, June 2000) Document: Earth Charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treating all living beings with respect and consideration; • Protecting wildlife from poaching and trapping; • Impeding forms of fishing that cause extreme, prolonged or avoidable suffering; • Avoiding or eliminating the capture and destruction of species.
Mauritius Strategy (Mauritius, 2005) Document: Mauritius Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing a community capable of conserving the species and their habitats; • Illegal fishing and fisheries management; • Coastal and marine resources for the conservation of trans-seasonal and migratory fish species.
UN Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio+20 (Rio de Janeiro/Brazil, 2012) Document: The Future we Want	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of a convention on illegal international trading in wild fauna and flora species threatened with extinction.
United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (New York/USA, 2015) Document: Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving marine and terrestrial animals and promoting fauna protection; • Illegal fishing and the replenishment of fishery stocks; • Animals in extinction, urgent measures against illegal hunting, protected fauna trafficking and trading in illegal wildlife products; • Reducing natural habitat degradation to curb biodiversity loss; • Maintenance of genetic diversity in regard to farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species.

Source: Elaborates based on BRASIL, 2017; NAÇÕES UNIDAS, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d; UNITED NATIONS, 2017.

Chart 2 shows that during the 1972 UN Conference on the human environment and in the declaration it issued, the debate on animal rights emphasized the question of preserving the habitats and consequently the respective wildlife as one of the ways to preserve the human life in the future. However, although it does refer to the rights of the animals, the discourse adopts an anthropocentric stance in its approach to the question of wildlife, that is, it is aligned with a philosophy whereby the human being is considered to be at the center of everything and that nature only has any value if it is ordered by human beings (BOFF, 2012).

At the time of that conference, speciesism, which sets mankind above and apart from all the other species, was still commonly present in the discourse of the day. Two facts confirming that statement are: the question of fauna is initially linked to the question of habitat and furthermore, in 1983 the World Commission on Environment and Development was created later to become the Brundtland Commission which issued a document in 1987 with the title *Our Common Future*, also known as the Brundtland Report, but none of the respective documents made any mention of animal rights

That low degree of interest in the subject was also evident in later events that the UN promoted. Important events and documents like the Brundtland Report (Stockholm, 1987) failed to address any aspect of the animal rights issue. In the selection examined to characterize approaches to the question it could be seen that they only occurred in the light of some critical situation that could harm the human species: species threatened with extinction, loss of habitat, destruction of fauna and flora, illegal trading in wildlife products etc.

The Rio 92 conference and the document Agenda 21 did briefly address the question of the animals but the discourse is generic, merely referring to the need to preserve them and to stimulate scientific research on the relationship of the fauna with the environment and the preservation of both. Chart 2 confirms that, once again the approach to the issue was linked to the aspect of habitat. However, unlike the Stockholm Conference document which stated that the needs of human beings would be sufficient justification for them to make use of animals, the agenda 21 spoke of human beings' duty to look after the fauna and the environment.

Just like the Rio 92 document, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity which took place in the same year in Rio, addresses the question of human being's duty to take care of the fauna, to endeavor to curb species extinction, to adopt pro-conservation and preservation measures and to firmly place on the agenda, the need to consider and take care of the other living beings that also inhabit the planet Earth.

At the turn of the millennium two highly important events in the area of sustainability and sustainable development took place: the Millennium Summit that culminated with the elaboration of the MDGs, and the Earth Charter event. The first of those events and its document are very succinct in what they have to say regarding animals in the context of sustainable development. They directly address the question of protecting marine and terrestrial fauna and identify the need to curb the destruction of biodiversity, so, once again the animal issue is linked to the question of habitat. However, unlike the content

of earlier discourse, the MDGs emphasize the need to curb the imminent destruction stemming from human exploitation

In turn, the Earth Charter document directly addresses and values the animal theme. It addresses the question of treating all living beings with respect and that could be understood as referring to human beings, plants, trees, wildlife, marine and domestic animals etc. In the document there is a readily identifiable concern for the protection of living beings and putting an end to the poaching of animals and the destruction of species. Thus, the Earth Charter approach to animal rights is direct, without subordinating them to questions such as habitat, for example. In spite of that broader vision, in 2005, in the Mauritius Strategy event which was convened to conduct a 10-year review of the Barbados Program of Action for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States), once again the event and the document only make sporadic mention of animal issues, binding them once more to the question of habitat.

The Rio +20 event held in the city of Rio de Janeiro in 2012 elaborated the document *The Future we Want*. During the event itself, the subject was raised of the importance of developing a Convention regarding the international trade in wild fauna and flora species threatened with extinction. However, not one other point was made regarding animals or the need to mitigate the effects of human activities.

Lastly, in 2015, the Sustainable Development Summit took place and it elaborated a document describing the Sustainable Development Goals. Unlike the preceding events, the Summit event and its document addressed the question of the animals directly as a separate topic; the questions of animals and habitat were addressed separately. It is possible to observe, in both the event and the document, the expression of concern not only with the descriptive aspect of preventing and conserving, but also prescribing measures to be taken as fast as possible, attitudes to mitigate the consequences of human actions and a change of mentality in relation to the way the animals are treated. That approach could be considered as “developing a more profound vision” (LOURENÇO; OLIVEIRA, 2012) in regard to the value of the animals. In that year, for the first time, domestic animals were also mentioned as prior to that only marine and terrestrial wildlife had been considered.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In a historical perspective it is plain to see that animal rights first appear in an anthropocentric society and for anthropocentric reasons: preserve the fauna so that future generations can also make use of it. The analysis of the research results enables us to state that the same philosophy has been present in the agenda of the United Nations Organization ever since the first event in Stockholm in 1972 which treated the fauna and flora as if they were a heritage of human beings, albeit endowed with rights, and that humans had rights over them but at the same time duties towards them (duties that were to the benefit of the human beings themselves).

The low degree of interest in animal rights is visible in the subsequent events the UN promoted. Important events like those that engendered the Brundtland Report

(Stockholm, 1987) do not address any aspect of the question whatever. It can be seen, from the selection analyzed here that the subject is only addressed when some critical situation arises especially one that might cause harm to the human species, such as the threat of extinction of some species, loss of habitat, destruction of the flora and fauna or illegal actions such as the trading of wildlife products etc.

Another point to consider concerns the Universal Declaration of Animal Rights proclaimed by the Fondation Droit Animal, Éthique & Sciences. Even though UNESCO must have known about the document, because it had made its own building available for the event in 1978, it failed to show the slightest interest in the declaration. Twenty years later, animal rights appeared for the first time on the United Nations agenda but, even then, it was only addressed in a very superficial way.

It was at the turn of the millennium that a change in the way animals were viewed started to come about. Whereas formerly they had only been brought into the discussion in situations where it was strictly necessary and directly related to the future of human beings, with the change in position, a dialogue began on the need to treat animals with respect and consideration. From then on, the discourse regarding animal rights began to reveal an approach with an orientation closer to that of a welfare philosophy. Nevertheless, no expressive changes have taken place in the 46 years since the first United Nations event and document. One could go so far as to say that the initiatives to effectively include animal rights on the agenda of sustainable development discussions viewing them as sentient beings with the right to life and to not suffering are still very timid.

In spite of the existence of the abolitionist line of philosophy, it is clear in regard to the question of animal rights in the discourse on sustainability, that it is a line of philosophical thought that has not been present at all on the United Nations agenda. It is believed that the underlying reason for that is that the paradigm for representing man and nature is still structured around anthropocentrism. Thus in an anthropocentric context, animal abolitionism seems to be a utopia and welfarism, even though it sounds like a merely palliative option in regard to animal rights and even though it is still a long way off from achieving the ideal objectives, nevertheless, it seems to be a more promising step to take in regard to the relationship between human beings and the animals

There is an urgent need for academic institutions to include animal rights in their research to engender a greater change in the way we view the anthropocentric culture we are immersed in. To that end it is worth stressing that while nature can continue without human beings, human beings cannot live without Nature.

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SOCIEDADE E DESENVOLVIMENTO SUSTENTÁVEL: O DIREITO DOS ANIMAIS NO DISCURSO DA SUSTENTABILIDADE

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Artigo Original

Resumo: Esta pesquisa tem por objetivo verificar a abordagem dada aos animais nos eventos de repercussão mundial sobre o desenvolvimento sustentável promovidos pela Organização das Nações Unidas, a fim de caracterizar o olhar e a abrangência da conscientização sobre o direito dos animais. Em seu desenvolvimento, disserta-se sobre as linhas filosóficas relacionadas aos animais, seus direitos e sobre como eles se inserem na discussão do desenvolvimento sustentável e da sustentabilidade. Trata-se de uma pesquisa exploratória, de caráter qualitativo, cujo desenvolvimento é definido a partir de levantamento documental, que tem como fonte a Organização das Nações Unidas. Como resultado, é possível observar cronologicamente uma preocupação inicial com o habitat dos animais, acrescida em seguida da preocupação com aqueles em extinção e, mais recentemente, a ampliação do olhar sobre eles em geral e em diferentes contextos, abordando, assim, de forma mais consciente, o direito dos animais.

Palavras-chave: Direitos dos animais; Desenvolvimento sustentável; Planos e programas socioambientais; Conscientização da sociedade.

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SOCIEDAD Y DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE: EL DERECHO DE LOS ANIMALES EN EL DISCURSO DE LA SOSTENIBILIDAD

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São Paulo. Vol. 23, 2020

Artículo original

Resumen: Fruto del avance biotecnológico, la biología sintética se ha aplicado desde la mejora de los alimentos hasta la creación de nuevos organismos. Este artículo investiga, desde una perspectiva bioética, acerca de los beneficios, riesgos y amenazas a la vida, derivados de la producción, manipulación y, principalmente, de la creación de ADN sintetizados inexistentes en la naturaleza. Informes de bioética de la Casa Blanca y el Comité de Bioética de España y Portugal contribuyeron a la discusión. El progreso de la tecnociencia, sin la debida capacidad ética de evaluación, puede producir resultados que comprometen el desarrollo social, la dignidad humana y la vida de la biosfera en el futuro. En ese sentido, las conquistas de la biología sintética se han demostrado ambivalentes, porque las esperanzas se mezclan con las amenazas, con resultados imprevisibles a la diversidad de la vida de la biosfera, lo que hace la prudencia la virtud por excelencia.

Palabras-clave: Derechos de los animales; Desenvolvimiento sustentable; Planes y programas socioambientales; Concientización de la sociedad.

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