PUBLIC POLICIES AND SOCIAL COOPERATION IN JOHN RAWLS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper it is discussed the need for local public policies to minimize the socio-environmental problems caused by the disposal of goods and products in environment and, at the same time, it aims to verify how this practice influences on socio-environmental vulnerability; as the second goal it is intended to seek the best public policies for the reduction of socio-environmental problems and see how it would be possible to reduce the vulnerability that exists in local areas through social cooperation proposed by John Rawls. The method used to make the analysis will be the analytical, aiming to know how it is possible to reach a solution to the problems highlighted.

Keywords: local public policy; social cooperation; John Rawls; Environment; socio-environmental vulnerability.

POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS E COOPERAÇÃO
SOCIAL EM JOHN RAWLS

RESUMO

O presente trabalho discute a necessidade de políticas públicas locais para minimizar os problemas socioambientais causados pelo descarte impróprio de bens e produtos e, ao mesmo tempo, pretende verificar como essa inadequação fragiliza o contexto socioambiental; como segunda meta, pretende-se, após o estudo das necessidades, buscar as melhores políticas públicas para a diminuição dos problemas socioambientais e como seria possível reduzir a vulnerabilidade existente nos espaços locais por intermédio da cooperação social, ideia proposta por John Rawls. O método utilizado para fazer a análise deste estudo será o analítico, tendo como objetivo averiguar como se pode chegar a uma solução para a problemática salientada.

Palavras-chave: *política pública local; cooperação social; John Rawls; meio ambiente; vulnerabilidade socioambiental;*

INTRODUCTION

This study intends to analyze the environmental issue and the socioenvironmental vulnerability of the modern societies. Based on this observation, it is considered whether it is possible local public policies, based on the principle of subsidiarity, a cooperation form brought by the author John Rawls. In its Theory of Justice as Equity/*Teoria da Justiça como Equidade*, the author states that people, by means of an overlapping consensus, can achieve the idea of cooperation in a democratic society.

With this purpose, first we analyze the environmental and the socioenvironmental vulnerability issues and, then, the John Rawls' Theory of the Justice, regarding the social cooperation among free and equal people and how to apply it to resolve the proposed issue.

At a later stage, it is investigated the application of the subsidiarity in the local space and, finally, how to apply these local public policies to achieve a social cooperation, proposed by Rawls, to minimize the problems from the environmental impacts that generate the socioenvironmental vulnerability. As fundamental element, we will study the socioenvironmental vulnerability and the public policies to resolve the problematic in the local sphere. It is intended to carry out the analysis about the social cooperation seen in the John Rawls´ Theory of the Justice, the pertinent legislation and the local public policies, implemented and/or necessary for the problems solution and to achieve the outlined goals. To this purpose the used method is the analytical.

1 ENVIRONMENT, RISK AND SOCIOENVIRONMENTAL VULNERABILITY

Nowadays, the socioenvironmental risks are a source of strong debates, given the increase in the number of occurrences and the intensity of the extreme events, whether environmental, or even social, causing diverse discussions on how to minimize them and even resolve them in the current social context. The environment protection does not refer only to the preservation, but also the coordination and rationalization of the resources use, in order to preserve the man and the planet future, not only for the future generations, but also to the current generation. In the vision of Nalini, the citizen can do by himself, denouncing the existing problems, manifesting through the media, the social networks and other means. To this author:

> **The citizen can act by himself, denouncing to the authorities, requiring providences from the government, triggering the state organs or, simply, manifesting the non-conformism** before the media. Tem citizen does not evaluate the weight of a "letter to the reader", of an e-mail addressed to the ruler, of a petition against an environmental breach. (NALINI, 2001, p. 303).

However, it is noticed that the human being is complex, as it has been well aware -for a long time of the environmental issues and risks and, even so keeps on persisting in the wrong doings that will degrade the environment and generate social vulnerability and others. From Giddens (2004, p. 666) perspective: "the human behavior is complicated and multifaceted and it is very unlikely that a theoretical perspective can cover all the characteristics". It is this diversity that stimulates the society progress and its future. Giddens (1995, p. 42) states:

> A person who risks something wards the danger [...] anyone who assumes a 'calculated risk' is aware of the threat or threats that a specific line of action can play. Risks are those dangers that arise from our actions. Every action involves decision, choice and betting. In every bet, there are risks and uncertainties. As soon as we act, our actions begin to escape their intentions; They enter into a universe of interactions and the medium takes hold of them, often counteracting the initial intention.

At the turn of the century XXI, Habermas foresaw that the future seemed to be negative for the social actors, as in his view:

> Draws the terrifying picture of the global threat to the interests of life in general: the armies race, the uncontrolled spread of nuclear weapons, the structural impoverishment of developing countries, unemployment and growing social imbalances in developed countries, problems with the overburdened environment, High technologies operated to the catastrophe, give the keywords that have invaded public awareness through the mass media. The answers from the intellectuals reflect a perplexity no less than that of politicians. It is by no means only realism if a perplexity accepted recklessly places itself more and more in the place of orienting searches that point to the future. The situation may be objectively unintelligible. Yet this impersonality is also a function of the readiness of action that a society deemed capable. It is the confidence of the Western culture in itself (1987, p.104).

According to this Idea, it is noted several problems arising from the environmental impact in the planet such as floods, earthquakes, destruction that generate not only damages to the nature, but also to the social context itself, as the affected populations undergo misery situations and hunger, social, environmental and economic degradation. This way, the countries develop a culture of domination and political, economic, social and even cultural alienation, by means of any relationships that involve the human beings, whether family, professionals, educational, religious, cultural, political and even juridical ties, some molded as a form of frequently non correct paths. Modernity, capitalism and globalization come as justification for the Power concentration, thus, bringing a lack of moral values among the human beings, mainly in issues referring to equality, freedom, consumerism and the environment. For Giddens,

> modernity, as anyone living in the late XXth century can see, is a two-edged phenomenon. The development of the modern social institutions and their diffusion on a world scale have created far greater opportunities for the human beings to enjoy a safe and rewarding existence than any premodern system. But modernity also has a shadowy side, which has become very apparent in the current century. (1991, p. 12-13).

This way, the globalization is an open and intrinsically contradictory process, which real implications are incommensurable and imprevisible, no one knows the society, the planet, the human beings' future. The globalization contradictory logic brings the benefit for one possibly to consume a very large diversity of products and services, of having access to the technologies, to the wonders of modernity; however, on the other hand, generates the uncertainty of the disposal of these products and of how to preserve the planet. At the same time, it generates for some people the impossibility of acquisition and of owning the minimum for its human dignity, thus bringing the social and even the environmental vulnerability for a part of the population.

Another way of thinking this dynamic is in terms of risk, as many are the changes carried out by the globalization, resulting in new forms of risk, quite diverse from those previously seen**.** To the contrary of the problems occurred in the preterit, which had established causes, and even well known effects, the current risks are incalculable and with

undetermined implications (GIDDENS, 2004, p. 65).

In the so said globalized and modern world, there are risks from every species, such as ecological, consumerists, social, etc., which threaten the human beings in different ways, leading to the need for this society, so said globalized, to think on how to minimize them, as resolving them is far from happen. The risk society is something inherent to the modernity and globalization, and the human being must co-exist with these transformations, which become the new stage in what the progress can transform in self-destruction machines or salvation for the humanity.

It can be affirmed that, therefore, there is the triumph of the neoliberal capitalism that end by assuming a new face by means of the globalization and modernity, where there is a planification and massification of the current culture in the countries, or that is, a local acculturation starts to appear substituted by a global and planned culture, where human beings end by losing their identity and being submitted to the cultural, social, environmental, economic training and, this way, leading to some who cannot have access to this, thus generating the socioenvironmental vulnerability.

Vulnerability can be treated in varied scales, whether individual or collective; therefore, the studies about the vulnerabilities involve the environment and the society, which analysis passes by the understanding of the two mentioned dimensions, in different moments. Hence, vulnerability is the basis for a series of public policies turned to the sectors which are deemed the most problematic in the society, that is, in case of citizens in situation of a social shortage, characterizing as social vulnerability. In the geography field, vulnerability is associated to environmental factors and the risk evaluation, and this is the face of the environmental vulnerability. Thus, integrating the two dimensions – social and environmental –, there is the socioenvironmental vulnerability that is justified by the fact that the vulnerability to the environmental risks depend on the economic, social, technological and cultural factors and their relationship with the environment, developing a social and environmental dynamics. In this sense, Giddens (2004) affirms that these changes in course involve practically all the aspects of the social and natural world; however, due to the fact that it is an open and paradoxical process, the true implications are difficult to be previewed and controlled.

Thus, the social vulnerability is present in several local spheres due to the intense segregation that lead the low income communities to live

in the periphery of the cities, with no adequate substructure, leading to the increase of the environmental damage risks due to external events, such as the lack of resources, that is, the lack of the minimum existential and even the lack of dignity as human beings. With this outline, it is possible to create a public policy turned to the local space in order to minimize the problems brought by the environmental and social issues that cause the economically and socially disadvantaged populations vulnerability. The modern society is based on the social inequality and on many environmental issues originated by the exacerbated consumerism that led to a vulnerability of populations

In this way, social vulnerability can be understood as the capacity to feel some risk situations located between extreme situations of exclusion and inclusion, making possible to study the inequality from the identification of these zones, confronting them with the current social structure in the country. In this study, therefore, vulnerability is understood as a risk condition in which people are going to be, in addition to the set of situations that lead to events such as exclusion, poverty, inequality and environmental crisis.

According to the RDH2014, "the vulnerability threatens human development – and, unless it is systematically approached by means of changing the social policies and norms, the progress will be neither equitable nor sustainable". (RDH2014, 2014, p.10). However, there is the need to fight the vulnerability, especially among the most marginalized and disadvantaged social groups, reducing inequality in every dimensions of human development, allowing that these human beings can have their dignity and respect guaranteed before a globalized and modern society. In order to reduce the social inequalities and the vulnerability, one alternative would be social public policies at local level, in addition to the social cooperation of populations, of governments, that is, of everyone who composes the society. The structural vulnerability and personal insecurity are sources "determinant of persistent deprivation – and must be considered in order to ensure the human development and the progress sustainability". (RDH2014, 2014, p.11). Therefore, the vulnerable are the people in need of everything, who have nothing for a minimum existential and live in total poverty facing high risks. According to the RDH2014:

> Anyone lacking the essentials to live a minimally acceptable life is truly vulnerable. Nearly 2.2 billion people are vulnerable to multidimensional poverty, including 1.5 billion that are multidimensionally poor. Three quarters of the world's poor live

in rural areas, where agricultural workers suffer the highest incidence of poverty trapped by poor productivity, seasonal unemployment and low wages. Globally, 1.2 billion people (22 percent) live on less than $ 1.25 a day. If we raise the poverty line to $ 2.50 a day, the world's poverty rate increases to about 50 percent, or 2.7 billion people. By moving the poverty line in this way, a large number of people potentially vulnerable to poverty and hardship are included. (RDH2014, 2014, p.19-20)

The RDH2014 shows that the vulnerability is going to affect not only the individuals in need, but also the communities and countries, being necessary that the governments are aware of this issue and take the attitude to regulate, control and resolve the problem which exist in the society. According to data from the RDH2014:

> Some countries suffer much more, with more significant chocks (economical, environmental and political) than others; Some are more resilient than the others – presenting more capacity to maintain their level of human development in face of these chocks. Similarly, to what happens to the individuals, the poor countries are in general more vulnerable than the rich, undergo greater chocks and are less resilient. Comparing with the rich countries population, the poor countries populations tend to be more vulnerable, to have less social competences and to have governments with more limited resources to protect them from the adversities. The governments may be aware of these issues, but not the market, these are blind. It is true that the functioning markets can reduce the vulnerability – increasing the production, the economic growth and the income – but it can also exacerbate the vulnerabilities, neglecting the public assets and therefore, it is necessary that the market are regulated, and their action complemented, to reduce the vulnerability. Public goods can lead to a better marketing functioning and to more sustainable results, at national and global level. Therefore, the government and the social institutions need to regulate, control and complement the market action. (RDH2014, 2014, p.26)

Thus, it is important that the modern and globalized society, which generates a series of environmental and social risks, find a solution or a way to minimize the problems arising from poverty in the modern society of capitalism consumption. This solution will allow people to have a minimum of dignity and of rights within a society based on the Idea of freedom and equality, where the human being must be respected together with the nature. Another care is not to turn this issues, whether environmental preservation or local social public policies as a form of

promotion or commerce in the capitalist world. Because it is known that the idea of consumption is rooted in the modern capitalist globalized society and, in order to reduce environmental impacts, attitudes are needed, not only proposals in the view of Lipovestsky, The consumption world ends by entering in the people´s life and in their relationship. So:

> Every day it seems that the consumption world enters our lives and changes our relationships with the object and with the others, without, despite of it, and the criticism formulated about it, we are able to propose a critical counter model. And, beyond the criticism posture, rare would be those who would desire to abolish it definitely. (LIPOVESTSKY, 2004, p.33).

Note that human development cannot happen in detriment of the future generations, the mission of the current society is to leave a healthy environment to these generations and not a legacy of destruction generated by the exaggerated consumerism and the futility imposed by a capitalist modernity which trains the human being on this way.

At the present time, the training by the capitalism, by the modernity and by the globalization, makes the society turn in a cycle of production and reproduction of social and environmental inequalities and vulnerabilities and, instead of eliminating them, try to minimize them by means of social public policies. It is important to highlight that these public policies should be the means and not the end, as the inequalities must be eliminated and not only minimized in the social context. Because it is inconceivable that in a modern globalized world there are people who have not a minimum to survive and live in situation of extreme poverty.

It is important to affirm that, for Rawls, the idea of justice is based on a contract and there is an impartiality, which is supposed to come from the original position guided by the veil of ignorance and mutual consensus, when the people free and equal, reasonable and rational, are going to choose the principles of justice and agree to become part of the social cooperation. These basic elements shall ordinate a society defined as Just and cooperative which can re-dimension the socioenvironmental vulnerability. It is understood that, behind the veil of ignorance, people do not know their role in the society nor the differences of sex, talent, race and even generations, thus giving rise to a society based on an equitable and non-meritocratic social aspect, where environmental preservation can be a present issue and possible to be resolved by means of the citizens'

participation in the local space, from the public policies.

The future generation has the right to the natural goods and to a preserved nature. The zeal for the socioenvironmental context can be recognized and accepted by all the human beings as a common interest, which will be respected equally by all, thus inducing an original position and the search for the principles of justice which lead to the social cooperation and the minimization of the environmental impacts and risks, allowing a right to the environment available to the other human beings.

Maybe the greatest difficulty in accepting Rawls´ principles is in the choice of the principle of equality between reasonable and rational subjects in the original position, under the veil, of the ignorance, as the will to preserve the own interests turns the subject transgressor of the rule established by Rawls. But, or the subjects become egotists and interested in their own good, being slaves of the consumerism and natural destructors, or reasonable and rational people, which leads to an instrumental rationality, as it is not enough a moral rationality

Next, the study on John Rawls's Theory of Justice as Equity, and the idea of social cooperation.

2 THE SOCIAL COOPERATION IN JOHN RAWLS THEORY OF JUSTICE

The issue starting point is to understand that one of Rawls' objectives, in his Theory of the Justice as Equity, from 1971, would be to provide an acceptable moral and philosophical foundation for the democratic institutions and which allowed to understand the equity and freedom within this society. With this purpose, Rawls turns to a public policy culture so that a society can be well ordinate based on ideas of justice, which is its main virtue. In this way, Rawls´ idea is that the society must be an equitative system of social cooperation that includes the Idea of reasonable and rational advantages for each participant.

Therefore, a well ordinate society follows the principles of the justice (freedom and equality) and is based on the conception of social cooperation between the entities, that is, the well ordinate society is an equitative system of social cooperation based on an overlapping consensus. It is important that this well ordinate society would be Rawls' idealization, which presupposes that all its participants are aware and accept that the others are going to accept a political conception of justice, based on the

principles of equal freedom and on the equity, and these citizens will have a sense of justice.

This way, the society basic structure must integrate a cooperation system, with defined rights and obligations which must be guaranteed and that regulate the division of goods and the distribution of charges, that is, this structure would be the primary object of the justice which principles will regulate the basic structure; however, it important to emphasize that the equitative terms should be determined by the parties through the initial position based on the ignorance veil brought by Rawls. The lack of knowledge allows the citizens, who are free and equal, not to be aware of their talents and position in the society, which would allow them to choose the principles of justice and act in the way of social cooperation. This original position would be an original contract with the purposes of justice as equity, supported on the association of free and rational people who accept the principles of justice, in an initial situation of equity, and which determine what the fundamental terms for this association would be. Thus, these two principles, chosen by free and equal rational people, should regulate the posterior agreements specifying the social cooperation.

Therefore, this agreement that is celebrated by citizens who are committed with the social cooperation is done in an impartial way under the veil of the ignorance, being a hypothetic situation (that is, a hypothetic social contract) and a-historical as affirms Rawls (2002). Thus, the original position "is the initial *status quo* appropriate to ensure that the basic consensus there established are equitative" (RAWLS, 2002, p. 19). Rawls states that this idea is obtained

> in the justice as equity the original position of equity that is corresponding to the
> state of nature in the traditional theory of the social contract. This original position,
> obviously, is not conceived as a real historical situation, much less as primitive
> cultural condition. It is understood as a purely hypothetic situation characterized so
> as to lead a given conception of justice. (RAWLS, 2002, p. 12).

Similarly, the original position is the adequate interpretation in order to achieve the purposes of justice as equity. Therefore, the parts in the original position are protected by the veil of the ignorance, that prevent them from being aware of their state of nature and of their social position, as states Rawls: "among the essential characteristics of this situation is the fact that no one is aware of its place in the society, the position of its class

of social *status,* and no one knows its luck in the distribution of the natural dowries and abilities, its intelligence, strength, and the like" (RAWLS, 2002, p.13).

The veil of ignorance will guarantee that nobody will be disadvantaged or even favored when choosing the principles that will order the basic structure of the society. Rawls (2002), therefore, understands that the original position based on the veil of ignorance would be a resource procedure, of which the contingences of the social world and the natural chance could be abstracted, that is, it is a political conception which understands that the social institutions must have a regulation by means of the two principles of justice, chosen from an original position by rational and equal people under the veil of ignorance.

Thus, the institutions would be organized and would seek the best ways of freedom and equity, becoming an equitative system structured on an original position by free people and for people equally free and equal, that would decide under the veil of the ignorance, being different of the Idea of the good and seeking, yes, the idea of the just. When speaking of the principles of justice, Rawls states that the they would have to observe the conceptions as follows:

> a.   All people have equal right to a fully satisfactory project of equal basic rights and freedom for all, a project compatible like all others; and, in this project, political freedom, and only this, should have their fair value guaranteed.
>
> b.   .Social and economical inequalities must meet two requirements: first, they should be linked to positions and posts open to all, on a level of equal conditions of opportunities; and secondly, they should represent the greatest possible benefit to the less privileged members of the society. (RAWLS, 2000, p. 47-48).

In the first case (a), it is the principle of equal freedom, by means of which people must have the right to a full project of basic rights and freedom equal for all. In the second principle, there is a division in two categories, the first one would be "the principle of equitative opportunities" referring to the linking of positions and posts open to all people in the society equally. And, in the second case, there the "principle of the difference", based on the conception of the possibility of existing social inequalities provided that the "less favored" can, due to these inequalities, benefit in the society. It is important to highlight that Rawls states that there is a lexographic order of these principles; the equal freedom comes first before

the equality and the equitative opportunities comes before the difference. According to Rawls:

> these principles should comply with a serial order, the first preceding the second. This order means that the violations of the basic liberties protected by the first principle cannot be justified nor compensated by greater economic and social advantages. These liberties have a central area of application within which they can only be limited or compromised when in conflict with other basic liberties (RAWLS, 2002, p. 65)

Therefore, the principles end by complementing each other allowing the achievement of a social cooperation leading to a well ordered society. Thus, the citizens inserted in the Idea of social cooperation must be considered free and equal, that is, free to the extent that they can exercise their moral and equal faculties insofar as they possess the essential degree to understand the faculties necessary to get involved in the idea of social cooperation.

The idea of person for Rawls is like a normative and political conception, and not like a metaphysical conception, prepared from the idea of how the citizens are seen in the public policy culture of a democratic society. It is noted that these citizens are autonomous, that is, rational and reasonable, allowing their participation in a cooperation system, pondering about the most suitable means to achieve the principles based on the justice as equity. According to Rawls, it also appears the idea of the public reason, as, when there is a society that starts from a reciprocity model, there is an overlapping consensus that allows for the principles of justice to be achieved, for Gondim, the reasonable differs from the rational, as "the reasonable has a form of public an d the rational does not. Through the reasonable the individuals are equal in the others´ public world and can propose, accept and dispose of equitative terms of cooperation among them" (GONDIM. 2011. p.50).

Rawls (2000, p.93) understands that people are reasonable when they are willing to propose principles and even criteria as equitative terms of cooperation and voluntarily to submit to these criteria, given as a guarantee that others will act in the same way. Thus, the norms would be reasonable to all, and, therefore, consider them justifiable to all. Therefore, "the reasonable is an element of the idea of society as a system of equitative cooperation, and, that its equitative terms are reasonable for the acceptance

by all, is a part of the idea of reciprocity". (RAWLS, 2000, p. 93).

For Rawls, the idea of reciprocity would be a quality that people possess, that is, free and equal people cooperate jointly in terms that everyone can come to accept. This idea is between "the idea of impartiality, which is altruist (the general good is the motivation), and the idea of mutual benefit, understood as general benefit regarding to the current and future situation, being the things as they are" (RAWLS, 2000, p. 93).

Similarly, the overlapping consensus appears with the political conception of justice between two comprehensive and reasonable doctrines; thus, the society is regulated by them and, also, independently of them. According to Rawls (2000, p. 07), the overlapping consensus will guarantee that it will be possible to coexist with the religious differences, in addition to a mutual acceptance due to the establishment of a given overlapping consensus around common values. Thus, the overlapping consensus, on the public sphere, will depend on the reduction of the conflicts between the values, being necessary that the justice requirements are not in conflict with the interests of the main social groups.

Tem Idea of the public reason would be realized by the political conception that it would be supported by an overlapping consensus of reasonable and comprehensive doctrines; he citizens will defend an ideal of public reason due to its reasonable doctrines, that is, the public reason content is going to specify the rights, the liberties and the opportunities, bringing a reflexive balance, which is the basis for a equitative system of social cooperation between free and equal people. For Rawls (200, p. 263), "in a democratic society, the public reason is the equal citizens reason that, as a collective body, exercise a final and coercive political power one over the others enacting laws and amending their constitution".

It is important to analyze Rawls' theory idea in the local space starting from the principle of subsidiarity.

3 PUBLIC POLICIES IN THE LOCAL SPACE

The public policies in the local space are important so as the society can solve its issues in more harmonic and consensual form, as the individuals know their problems well. Thus, when analyzing the local space, it is noted that it is going to provide autonomy to the population, allowing the citizens to participate in their Municipality decision-making. Canotilho and Moreira understand that "the local autonomy is, jointly with

the regional autonomy, one of the fundamental constitutional principles in the matter of State decentralized organization" (2010, p. 714).

For Hermany, the "fundamental element of the social State revitalization comes to be the appeal to the participative democracy, turning the interested people themselves, individually or in group, into agents of their condition change" (HERMANY, 2007, p. 10). The participative democracy, therefore, starts in the local sphere, where the problems are more visible and touchable for the population. According to Santos:

> The location of men, activities and goods on the space explain themselves both by the external needs, those of the pure production mode, and by the internal needs, these represented essentially by the structure of all the search and the structure of the classes, that is, the social formation itself. (SANTOS, 2008, p.28)

Thus, in the space there is a strengthening both of the local society and the citizenship, and of the institutions, consubstantiating the norms of social protection and the human dignity contained in the parameters of the 1988 Federal Constitution. For Baracho (1996, p. 20): "the public policies, through the structure and operations of the local government, take a new awareness, concerning the political concept of federalism". Thus, the local government action allows the federalism and the democracy to consolidate more broadly and with the popular participation. According to Baracho (1996, p.40): "the State cannot be considered an odd body, in which the citizens are seen bureaucratically. Its activities need to be understood, in relation to the smaller and private communities".

This way, the rulers' actions in the local space guarantee a change of the political and social paradigm in the society, allowing the concretization of the principle of the subsidiarity, which is fundamental so that the Municipality and their citizens participate actively in the decision-making. Martins understands that "if there is no subsidiarity but in a table where there are entities autonomous from each other or in face of the State, it is only applicable within the autonomous administration sphere" (MARTINS, 2003, p. 457). In the view of Krell (2008, p. 43): "the principle of the subsidiarity is its 'relational function', that obligates the state power to make feasible, potentialize and promote the smaller entities actions to the benefit of the common good".

Therefore, the principle of the subsidiarity "must be interpreted as being inherent to the preservation of the individualities, within the varied

social groups" (BARACHO, 1996, p.46), which governmental structure reflects the subsidiarity elements and establishing the self-administration of the local units. Martins understands that the principle of the subsidiarity "serves to the reorganization in this competences division, giving the general commandment, which can only be accomplished in each concrete case, as only there is possible to know who is clearest and solve it more effectively" (MARTINS, 2003, p. 458). Baracho complements adding that the subsidiarity function guarantees the necessary condition for freedom, as it reads:

> The idea of subsidiarity claims relative partition of goods, not for absolute leveling, but to guarantee to each one the necessary conditions for the exercise of its own freedom. The principle, [...], does not implicate only the distribution of goods, so that these resources provided by the civil society, as broad as possible, not depending only on the public instances. The citizens groups are able to exercise and answer the needs arising from the general interest, being through this, with no interference of the national instances, that the local collectivities can finance the social redistribution. To the individual groups is allowed a maximum of autonomy, they can exercise effective ways of action (1996, p. 66).

Therefore, the principle of subsidiarity must be interpreted as a form of local governmental structure, that allows the local units' self-administration, admitting that they can manage their public policies and embody the citizenship and the democracy by means of the feeling of individual/citizen belonging in this local space. For Hermany, the principle of subsidiarity is based on the human being dignity and other constitutional guarantees essential to live the full citizenship. Therefore,

> [...] the principle of the subsidiarity intends to restore to the citizens their concrete s attributes based on the human person dignity and on other fundamental constitutional guarantees. It is noted that the subsidiarity confers elements for the citizens' sovereignty, as it allows its participation in the directions of its municipality and of its country. (2012, p.21).

The subsidiarity confers fundamental elements for the "individuals' sovereignty, as it puts closer the citizens dialogue, stimulates the political participation, and opens the pluralist dialogue with the minorities" (2012, p.21). Thus it is noted that the principle of subsidiarity

stimulates the public interest, enabling the people and the public entities to participate in the development of the political decisions in the country, allowing that the decisions leave from the local scope, where the true issue can be solved, guaranteeing that freedom, the sovereignty and the dialogue guarantee the democracy. Hermany keeps on affirming that the principle of the subsidiarity "stimulates the pursuit of the public interest to be engaged by the individual or by intermediary social bodies between the citizen and the Sate" (2012, p. 26).

The subsidiarity guarantees that the public policies in the local space can make effective and possible the social cooperation as there will be greater facility for the overlapping consensus and that the citizens can be more reasonable and rational at the decision-making. The issue, however, is how to apply the subsidiarity from local public policies to achieve the social cooperation proposed by Rawls and minimize the socioenvironmental vulnerability in the modern society.

4 THE LOCAL PUBLIC POLICIES AND THE SOCIAL COOPERATION FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THE SOCIOENVIRONMENTAL VULNERABILITY

When analyzing the idea of social cooperation by means of the local public policies to resolve or minimize the socioenvironmental vulnerability, it is noted that the world society must be based on this idea from an overlapping consensus. The cooperation allows the implementation of public policies and the local space makes these public policies allow for the community to participate, exercising the full social citizenship. From there on, the issues whether environmental or even social, are easier to view and even to resolve. Thus, the idea of a society as an equitative system of cooperation is going to happen over time, as the people/the citizens need to act in a consensual way and give up their talents and positions, that is, there is a need for a public culture of cooperation within a said democratic society.

The citizens must seek this consensus in order to the cooperation to exist, not because there is economic profit, but because it turns people free and equal and allow a series of local issues, either environmental or social, to be resolved, as it is by means of the local space that one achieves the global space and achieves a result.

Rawls understands that there is the need to specify the idea of

social cooperation and highlights three relevant elements as follows: in the first moment, it is understood that cooperation "is distinct from the mere activity socially coordinated, such as for instance, the activity organized by the orders decreed by a central authority. The cooperation is guided by rules and procedures publicly recognized, accepted by the individuals that cooperate and considered by them adequate regulators of their behavior.". (Rawls, 2000, p.58). So in order there is cooperation, it must be publicly recognized and accepted by all.

Subsequently, it is understood that the cooperation must presuppose equitative terms. Thus, according to Rawls (2000, p. 58-59):

> These are the terms that each participant can reasonably accept, as long as everyone else accepts them. Equitable terms of cooperation imply an idea of reciprocity: all those involved in cooperation and doing their part as required by the rules and procedures, should benefit in the appropriate way, estimating this by an appropriate standard of comparison. A conception of political justice characterizes the equitable terms of cooperation. As the primary object of justice is the basic structure of society, such equitable terms are expressed by the principles which specify the fundamental rights and duties within the main institutions of society and regulate the arrangements of fundamental justice over time, so that the benefits produced by the efforts of all are equitably distributed and shared from one generation to the next.

Thus, it is noted that with the cooperation all win, as all accept the established terms without taking advantage of the others, that is, the rules and procedures are accepted by all, being equitable terms of cooperation. In a third moment, Rawls understands that the idea of cooperation requires an idea based on rational advantage or in the good of each one who participates in this cooperation. So, the "idea of good specifies what those involved in the cooperation, either individuals, families, associations or even governments of different countries are trying to achieve, when the project is considered from their points of view (RAWLS, 2000, p.59); thus, cooperation is going to generate a mutual benefit for all.

But one may question how people can fully participate in an equitative system of social cooperation? Rawls (2000, p.62) answers the question affirming that people can participate fully of an equitative system of social cooperation, if it is attributed to them the capacities to have a sense of justice and to have a conception based on the good. So,

> A sense of justice is the ability to understand the public conception of justice that characterizes the equitable terms of social cooperation, to apply it, and to act accordingly. Given the nature of the political conception of specifying a public basis of justification, the sense of justice also expresses willingness, if not the desire, to act towards others in terms that they can also endorse publicly. The ability to have a conception of good is the ability to form, revise, and seek to rationally realize a conception of personal or good rational advantage. (RAWLS, 2000, p.62).

Thus, there is the need to suppose that the idea of the society as an equitative cooperation system makes the individuals, "in the condition of citizens, to have every capacity to enable them to be cooperative members of the society" (RAWLS, 2000, p. 63). So, every capacity is understood as the minimum of rights so as to be free and equal and to participate in the cooperation. It is necessary to understand that to cooperate is acting together, seeking a common end, but, in order everyone can participate it is necessary that people, which live in situation of vulnerability, can have a way to get out of this frame. Public policy in the local sphere can be the solution for those whom have the opportunity within a social context marked by the globalization and the modernity.

Thus, so as the cooperation is successful it is necessary that there are common objectives which depend of some established conditions all known about, and this must be done according to a consensus, so that everyone can understand the goals to achieve. The mutual trust between people, common interests, preparation in common of rules and of the set of norms that lead to an agreement where there is the coordination of actions and the active participation of all those who compose the society. To this purpose, however, there is the need to start in the local area, and so later on to spread around the regional and the global spheres, as currently it is not possible a consensus in the global or even in the regional sphere, where the interests are not interconnected.

Thus, the development of the local space idea can be presented as a solution for the failure of the traditional models which are idealized under the model where the national State is the main promoter agent of the development. It is noted that this model prevents environmental and social issues to be solved, so the public policies turned to the local space enable the development and the solution of the issues. By articulating these public policies in the local space, and together with the other instances, allow the human capital to be used in the society, enabling these citizens to

participate actively in decision-making

It is known that people poverty generates, besides the social problems, a series of environmental problems; however, if this population were able to participate in their own space in the decision-making, as reasonable and rational people, free and equal, by means of the overlapping consensus, based on the idea on the social cooperation, both poverty and environmental impacts arising from that one, could be minimized. A public policy within this space, that would enable people to have an effective action, would be a way of solution, in addition to the environmental public policies and the reduction of poverty. It is clear, however, that public policies should not be an end for the problems solution, but a means to that end.

Usually, the poorest people in the society are the most vulnerable, as they lack rights, economic and social defense, support, which leads to the weakening of the capacity to respond to the social and environmental issues, so the State action is fundamental, especially in the local sphere, as each Municipality knows its actual needs to face the issue. Thus, the vulnerability that involves the society and the nature must be object of analysis and to be seen fully in order to understand that these two dimensions of the social reality need to be solved, in different or simultaneous moments.

It is important to understand that the local space can act as reproducer of the socioenviromental inequalities when not providing the adequate living conditions, but it can also act as a differentiator element to solve these issues. Thus, local public policies aiming at social cooperation allow that there is the implementation of rights that minimize or even eliminate the socioenvironmental vulnerability.

CONCLUSION

At present the risks of environmental damage reach new formats with the implementation of the modern society leading to the environmental vulnerability. However, it is noted that in the *local space* occurs a series of environmental issues that must be discussed, as, despite the wide globalizing universe, the effects are incident on specific locals, on a population with vulnerability that bears these effects. Therefore, it can be proposed a public policy on behalf of the environment and of poverty, to avoid the environmental vulnerability in the local space and, then, finally to reach the regional and global space.

It becomes important to understand the action in the local space so as to detect a specific problem, in populations in situation of vulnerability, social or environmental. These socioenvironmental issues may have one of its faces originated from the rampant consumerism faced by the modern society. Thus, the socioenvironmental vulnerability must be solved so as the most vulnerable social classes do not create environmental problems arisen from the consumerism and their condition. Therefore, a proposal of a local public policy, based on the law, which enable social conditions of the less well-off may be the solution for the proposed problem.

The new technologies, in a paradox, have favored the humanity technical development; on the contrary, they have been accused of damages to the environment – air and water pollution, destruction of the ozone layer, global warming. Thus, in countries like Brazil, characterized by social inequalities and poverty, it is pertinent a study turned to the conceptualization of the environmental vulnerability in the approach of the environmental risk situations. From the above, it is noted that there is the need to create local public policies which minimize the environmental risks and the socioenvironmental vulnerability and based on the idea of social cooperation social, so as everyone can participate effectively. This public policy would be divided into two parts: initially, social public policy so that the poor people could get out of the line of poverty and have the autonomy to decide and participate in the local space (it is emphasized that in Brazil there is the Plan Brazil Without Misery/*Plano Brasil sem Miséria* which one of the axis is the program *Bolsa Família*). In addition, a public policy for education which allow people to accept to participate in a social cooperation from an overlapping consensus in order to change the directions of their local space

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