

AN ECOFEMINIST RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Chelsea Quezada | POSC 401: Women in Political Theory

One of the causes of environmental degradation is globalization, and women in developing countries face a harsher reality when it comes to the opportunities that are available to them. When the environment around them is in chaos, they are the first to feel nature's effects.



Deforestation in Brazil. Source: The New York Times

WHAT IS ECOFEMINISM?

Ecofeminism argues that human suffering—along the lines of gender—is coextensive with nature's suffering. This is because nature is tied to femininity; we call it Mother Nature, and women create life. Ecofeminist theorist Val Plumwood, argues that humans have the innate desire to master nature.

WHY DOES ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION OCCUR?

In developing countries, increased globalization is a cause for the deterioration of natural resources. Participating in the global market is attractive to developing countries because they can open themselves up to economic growth and improve their quality of life. Globalization calls for a higher rate of consumption, however, in developing countries there has been more to lose than to gain. Women in these countries have to work harder to keep up with productivity, often impacting their health and general quality of life.

AN ECOFEMINIST REMEDY FOR PREVENTING DETERIORATION

Due to the human desire to control nature, ecofeminist theory states that our outlook must make a shift to an approach that is more compassionate to liberate the planet. These are a few things developing countries can do in order to prevent the degradation of nature:

- Have an emphasis on protecting living things
- Ensure that business change their practices to be regulated in favor of the environment
- Eliminate hierarchical thinking—nature should be seen as valuable, and unable to be manipulated by humans