

3. Género e condições de vida

OC - (22710) - DECOLONIZING ENVIRONMENTAL CASTEISM, RESISTING AUTHORITARIANISM IN INDIA'S URBAN PERIPHERIES: CRITICAL DALIT PEDAGOGIES AND EVERYDAY ACTIVISM

Devrim Eren (Germany)¹

1 - Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

While sanitation workers became utterly indispensable for megapolises like Delhi and Mumbai with the onset of Covid-19, little has changed in their quotidian lives since business has returned to usual. Despite the fact being frontline workers against climate change and pollution, waste pickers continue to remain highly vulnerable in urban India. This field of labor is characterized by a disproportionately high level of precarious feminization (approx. 90% are women), health inequalities and Dalitness, formerly known as 'outcastes' and thus literally at the bottom of Indian society. However, there is a myriad of tactics of subaltern everyday resistance by Dalit women who reject racial capitalism, state-organized abandonment and rising authoritarianism that is characterized by unutterable bigotry and gendered violence. This counterposes hegemonic narratives of poverty and neoliberal developmentalism which are diligently supported by the state and capitalists to justify e.g. forced eviction and labor exploitation. Drawing on 50+ qualitative interviews with female waste pickers, their children, Dalit NGOs and activists in informal settlements and landfills, it will first highlight forms of environmental violence which includes waste colonialism and environmental degradation, that ultimately lead to 'slow violence' of fence-line communities and concomitantly reinforce their on-going systematic illegalization and stigmatization. On the other hand, this paper will examine examples of decolonial praxis and resistance, spurred by the critical pedagogical work of Dalit intellectual activists, community workers and NGOs in quotidian encounters with these communities. Summarized in this paper as 'decolonial resilience', it works with concepts such as 'pedagogy of the oppressed', 'cuerpo territorio' and 'border thinking' and aims to deconstruct dominant political imaginaries of 'environmentalism', endorsing articulations of ecologies stemming from oppressed Dalit communities.

Palavras-chave : Gender, Caste, India, decoloniality, resilience, environmental justice