



The role of the new institutional sociology in implementing the environmental agenda

El papel de la nueva sociología institucional en la aplicación de la agenda medio ambiental

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Abstract: The new institutional Sociology declares that organizations, whether public or private, are influenced by norms, customs and beliefs institutionalized in their structure. Therefore, it is possible to infer that these factors can also influence organizations' actions regarding the environment and sustainability. Based on this understanding, we sought to investigate the role of the new institutional Sociology in the implementation of the environmental agenda. Given the purpose of this work, it is possible to classify it as bibliographic and exploratory in nature. Scientific articles, books, reports and other secondary data of national and international origin were used as theoretical support for the research. In the context of the environmental agenda, institutions can materialize in the form of laws, regulations, public policies, positioning of the professional class, behavior of successful organizations, consumer preferences and many other factors. It was noticed that institutions pressure organizations to develop sustainable practices and these, in turn, enable environmental conservation without necessarily impeding economic development. It was also possible to identify that the pressures felt by organizations to adopt similar environmental practices are explained through the phenomenon understood as institutional isomorphism. This occurs in three ways: coercive; mimetic and normative. Furthermore, this study allowed us to understand the levels of implementation of an environmental agenda. However, it was observed that agendas can be implemented at global, national and local levels. And, the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices in organizations is motivated, above all, by the need to legitimize organizations.

Keywords: *New Institutional Sociology; Environmental Agenda; Sustainability.*

Resumen: La nueva Sociología institucional afirma que las organizaciones, ya sean públicas o privadas, están influidas por normas, costumbres y creencias institucionalizadas en su estructura. Por lo tanto, es posible inferir que estos factores también pueden influir en las acciones de las organizaciones en relación con el medio ambiente y la sostenibilidad. A partir de este entendimiento, buscamos investigar el papel de la nueva Sociología institucional en la implementación de la agenda ambiental. Dado el propósito de este trabajo, es posible clasificarlo como bibliográfico y de carácter exploratorio. Se utilizaron artículos científicos, libros, informes y otros datos secundarios de origen nacional e internacional como soporte teórico de la investigación. En el contexto de la agenda ambiental, las instituciones pueden materializarse en forma de leyes, reglamentos, políticas públicas, posicionamiento de la clase profesional, comportamiento de las organizaciones exitosas, preferencias de los consumidores y muchos otros factores. Se observó que las instituciones presionan a las organizaciones para que desarrollen prácticas sostenibles y éstas, a su vez, permiten la conservación del medio ambiente sin impedir necesariamente el desarrollo económico. También fue posible identificar que las presiones que sienten las organizaciones para adoptar prácticas ambientales similares se explican a través del fenómeno entendido como isomorfismo institucional. Esto ocurre de tres formas: coercitiva, mimética y normativa. Además, este estudio nos permitió comprender los niveles de implementación de una agenda medioambiental. Sin

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embargo, se observó que las agendas pueden implementarse a nivel global, nacional y local. Y, la adopción de prácticas ambientalmente sostenibles en las organizaciones está motivada, sobre todo, por la necesidad de legitimación de las organizaciones.

Palabras clave: *Nueva Sociología Institucional; Agenda Ambiental; Sostenibilidad.*

INTRODUCTION

The intense international debates aimed at solving environmental and economic problems involve both government entities, the civil population and NGOs, as well as private sector institutions.

The pressures exerted by environmental laws and regulations have the power to force organizations to implement environmentally sustainable management practices, such as reducing the emission of polluting gases, recycling materials and optimizing natural resources. This type of incentive occurs through regulatory agencies.

The management, organization, decision-making process and social control of regulatory agencies were established in Brazil through Law No. 13,848 of June 25, 2019. In addition to offering guidance and support to organizations, regulatory agencies also have regulatory, supervisory and normative powers (Brasil, 2019).

In parallel with international and regulatory pressures, there is an influence exerted by the civilian population. In their role as consumers, they are increasingly looking at environmental issues. According to Silva and Batista (2019, p.2) "environmentally correct management will be one of the sectors most focused on by consumers when purchasing any object".

Another way of putting pressure on organizations, more specifically in the private sector, to adopt certain practices would be through the behaviour of their competitors. When other organizations adopt environmentally sustainable management practices, this can lead organizations to do the same in order to avoid losing competitiveness. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), the larger the number of staff employed or the number of clients in its portfolio, the greater the pressure exerted on the organization to offer the products and services already provided by other organizations.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983), referring to the work of Hall (1968), state that professions are subject to the same pressures as organizations. In this sense, professionals and environmental specialists can influence organizations through their recommendations and guidance. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) explain that the power attributed to professionals comes either from the state or from their professional activities. However, universities and professional training institutions play an important role in defining organizational norms between managers and their staff.

There are many ways of exerting influence on organizations, but this paper will look at the practices inherent in the three isomorphic processes - coercive, normative and mimetic - that drive the

way an organization acts. Isomorphism is understood by the New Institutional Sociology approach as a phenomenon that occurs in organizations, whether public or private, and causes them to adopt similar practices to the extent that they suffer certain incentives.

Given that the new institutional sociology argues that organizations, whether public or private, are influenced by factors such as norms, customs, rules and beliefs that are institutionalized in their structure, it is possible to infer that these factors can also influence the actions of these organizations with regard to the environment and the problems they face.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were created on the basis of the legacy left by the Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2015). The SDGs are targets for overcoming environmental problems. Developed countries have committed to mobilizing resources through international support and promoting improvements in the tax collection system in developing countries to make the sustainability mechanisms proposed by the SDGs viable. In addition, actions such as transfer agreements, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies, technological training and innovation are also adopted for the sustainable development of these emerging economies.

It can be seen that the various types of pressures exerted on organizations and explained in the light of the new institutional sociology play a significant role in the treatment and implementation of environmental agendas.

Based on this understanding, the aim of this research was to answer the following question: What is the role of the new institutional sociology in implementing the environmental agenda?

Based on this context, the general aim of this research is to verify the role of the New Institutional Sociology in the implementation of Environmental Agendas, specifically in: identifying the forces that pressure organizations to adopt similar environmental practices; understanding the levels of implementation of an environmental agenda and describing the motivating aspects of the search for sustainability in organizations.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

New institutional sociology theory

According to Araújo et al. (2019), institutional theory offers important contributions to the development of organizational management. The authors understand that an enterprise is the result of the association between a designed and planned human action and the interactions in its cultural and political context.

Several studies have approached institutional theory from a sociological perspective. According to Fachin and Mendonça (2003), this bias has made it possible to introduce variables such as shared values,

the search for legitimacy and isomorphism into studies on organizations and their interrelationships, as well as these and the environment in which they operate.

Shil and Chowdhury (2018) suggest the studies by Hussain and Hoque (2002) and Scapens (2006) to classify the different versions of institutional theory. The authors use the following nomenclatures: old institutional economics (OIE); new institutional economics (NIE) and new institutional sociology (NIS). The studies by Araújo et al. (2019) revealed that in Brazil there is still a predominance of the old institutionalist theory in scientific production.

To this end, it is also possible to identify in the studies by Hall and Taylor (2003), three schools of thought in institutional theory that adopt the title of Neo-Institutionalist for themselves: Historical institutionalism; rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. According to the authors, they all seek to "elucidate the role played by institutions in determining social and political outcomes" (HALL; TAYLOR, 2003, p. 194). Although there is no consensus in academia about the number of existing approaches to this theory, Miranda (2017) states that the most accepted classification is that of Hall and Taylor (2003).

Peres (2008) cites various studies that point to the origin of neo-institutionalism in the 1970s. According to the same author, neo-institutionalists focus on institutions and argue that they play an important role in structuring human behavior.

Therefore, this work will adopt Neo-institutionalism from a sociological perspective. For Shil and Chowdhury (2018), sociological Neo-institutionalism (NIS) understands the behavior of organizations as being motivated by forces coming from society as a whole. The authors also argue that the search for legitimacy leads organizations to adhere to the rules and norms valued by society. When this type of action occurs together, there is a certain similarity in the procedures adopted by the organizations. This is called institutional isomorphism. This idea arose from the search to explain how different organizations behaved in similar ways. The studies by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) classify institutional isomorphism into three types: Coercive; Mimetic and Normative. The characteristics of each type of isomorphism will be detailed below.

The first, coercive isomorphism, occurs due to political influence and the problem of legitimacy. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983):

"Coercive isomorphism results from formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations on which they depend and by cultural expectations in the society in which the organizations function. These pressures can be felt as force, as persuasion or as invitations to collude" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p.147).

An important example of formal pressure exerted on any company or private sector organization is proper registration with public government institutions. In Brazil, law 6.839, of October 30, 1980, already provided for this obligation in its first article:

"Art. 1 The registration of companies and the annotation of the legally qualified professionals in charge of them will be obligatory in the competent entities for the supervision of the exercise of the various professions, due to the basic activity or in relation to that for which they provide services to third parties" (Brazil, 1980).

This factor puts pressure on companies to adopt an organizational standard and even a system for recording their actions in order to avoid negative legal implications. The second, mimetic isomorphism, results from standardized responses to uncertainty. DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 140) explain that "uncertainty is also a powerful force that encourages imitation". It is indeed a tendency for organizations to imitate others that are considered successful or even more legitimized by society, but imitation does not always happen intentionally. According to the authors, the turnover of professionals between companies in the same sector can explain certain structural similarities. Furthermore, companies that achieve government recognition or even subsidies tend to be imitated. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) explain that the reason why this phenomenon occurs is linked to the hope nurtured by imitating companies of attracting the same advantages acquired by the imitated company. Finally, the third, normative isomorphism, is associated with professionalization. The aforementioned authors believe that universities and professional training institutions are very important in building organizational norms. In addition to these, there are class representative institutions.

By understanding the factors that induce the behavior of organizations, we can see that the neo-institutionalist theory, from a sociological perspective, can collaborate with the implementation of the environmental agenda. Institutions can serve as a means of promoting environmental sustainability, whether through public policies or environmental programs, neo-institutionalist theory can offer important contributions to the development of good environmental practices.

Environmental agendas

The global environmental agenda

The most up-to-date reference for the global environmental agenda is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Drawn up in 2015 and ratified by the 193 member states, the agenda comes as a response to the problems faced by various countries. According to the UN (2015), problems such as: the depletion of natural resources and the negative impacts of environmental degradation; desertification;

droughts; soil degradation; the scarcity of fresh water and the loss of biodiversity are part of the challenges facing humanity.

In order to overcome these problems, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were drawn up. These were drawn up based on the legacy left by the Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2015).

From a financial point of view, developed countries can mobilize resources through international support and promote improvements in the tax collection system, as well as other initiatives. This support can help developing or highly indebted countries deal with their external debt. From a technological point of view, actions such as transfer agreements, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies, technological training and innovation become necessary factors for the sustainable development of these emerging economies.

More specifically, SDG 17 - Partnerships and means of implementation - proposes strengthening partnerships at a global level to achieve sustainable development. To this end, SDG 17 emphasizes the need for collaboration and cooperation between governments, companies and civil society. Its targets cover a range of issues involving finance, technology, training, trade, politics and systemic issues. These aspects involve developed countries helping those that are still developing (UN, 2015).

There are many possible partnerships within the SDG 17 proposal. Public and private institutions and civil society play an important role in the implementation of each SDG and, above all, in its main objective of "ending poverty, protecting the environment and climate and ensuring that people everywhere can enjoy peace and prosperity" (UN, 2015).

The 2030 Agenda is also committed to reaffirming the results of all the major UN conferences - COPs - and summits - UNCSDs. These conferences, according to the UN, established a "solid foundation for sustainable development and helped shape the new Agenda" (UN, 2015). The main conferences and summits include: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992; The World Summit on Sustainable Development; The World Summit for Social Development; The Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20 and many others.

It is worth highlighting the 21st Conference of the Parties in Paris. According to the Ministry of the Environment, the developed countries pledged to invest 100 billion dollars a year in measures to combat climate change. Each country drew up its own commitments through what are known as Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (iNDCs). Among the main commitments made by Brazil are: Increasing the share of sustainable bioenergy in its energy matrix and reforesting 12 million hectares of forest.

Brazil's environmental agenda

The environmental agenda at national level is a set of government goals aimed at protecting the environment, promoting sustainability and dealing with environmental problems specific to each country. These agendas are drawn up by the government in partnership with non-governmental and/or academic institutions.

In Brazil, Law No. 6.938 of August 1981 established the National Environmental System (SISNAMA). Article 6 defined the bodies and entities responsible for protecting and improving environmental quality at all levels of government. The main government institutions responsible for drawing up, promoting and implementing the environmental agenda at national level in Brazil are: The Council of Government, a higher body that is part of the Presidency of the Republic and whose objective is to advise the presidency on the creation of public policies aimed at preserving the environment; the National Environmental Council (CONAMA), a normative, consultative and deliberative body; the Ministry of the Environment (MMA), a central body that interferes in all levels of government and whose mission is to promote the adoption of policies and principles for the knowledge, preservation and recovery of the environment, (Tera ambiental, 2019). There are also executive bodies such as IBAMA and ICMBIO.

An important example of a national environmental agenda is the Environmental Agenda in Public Administration (A3P). This is implemented in Brazil through a government program run by the Ministry of the Environment (MMA) and its aim is to encourage the country's public entities to adopt sustainability practices (Brasil, 2023). Despite being a ministerial initiative, the program is implemented in all spheres of government (federal, state and municipal) and in the three branches of government (executive, legislative and judiciary). According to the federal government's official website, the A3P's lines of action are divided into six axes: Rational use of natural resources and public goods; Waste management; Quality of life in the workplace; Raising awareness and training civil servants; Sustainable public procurement and Sustainable buildings.

Unlike the predominantly imposing legal mechanism, which acts on institutions in the private sector and promotes the phenomenon previously described as normative isomorphism, A3P actions are voluntary. In this way, the preservation of the environment and the optimization of public resources, previously assumed as an international commitment, are subject to the political will of the rulers in office.

The national environmental agenda also has a strong influence on the private sector. According to Maurício Voivodic (2017), director of WWF-Brazil, "the best way to overcome the global crisis is to put the environmental agenda at the center of development strategies" (WWF, 2017). In addition, he believes

that the low-carbon economy and green jobs are capable of accelerating economic growth in Brazil and raising it to the level of global leadership.

However, the national environmental agenda also brings with it consequences that are, at first glance, negative, such as: Increased costs due to investment in new technologies; Reduced productivity due to the scarcity of renewable raw materials; Costs of adapting to environmental standards, laws and regulations.

On the other hand, despite the challenges, the national environmental agenda is becoming an access route to new markets. According to Silva and Batista (2019), environmental protection is increasingly valued by the community and customers. In addition, companies that adapt to environmental standards will become more competitive over time.

Banks and insurance companies, industries, the service sector and many other industries are being forced to reduce pollution and use natural resources more efficiently. To this end, the Brazilian government has made efforts to support private institutions in the transition to an environmentally sustainable economy. An example of government action is the Investment Partnership Program (PPI).

Created by Law No. 13.334 of 2016, the PPI's objectives include some directly aimed at the private sector: To expand investment and employment opportunities and stimulate technological and industrial development, in harmony with the country's social and economic development goals; to promote broad and fair competition in the signing of partnerships and in the provision of services; to ensure stability and legal certainty, with the guarantee of minimal intervention in business and investments and to expand and strengthen interaction between the state and the private sector through the signing of partnership contracts and other privatization measures.

In addition to the PPI, Law 13.334 established the PPI Council, a collegiate body that evaluates and recommends to the President of the Republic the projects that will be part of the PPI, also deciding on issues related to the execution of partnership and privatization contracts, and the PPI Secretariat, which acts in support of the Ministries and Regulatory Agencies for the execution of the Program's activities.

The challenges faced by both public and private institutions are seen as a big step towards an environmentally sustainable future.

The local environmental agenda

For Parizzoto (2003, p. 102), a local environmental agenda based on Agenda 21 should be understood as a "participatory process of sustainable development in which the community is involved in the construction of actions that determine local development". According to the author, in the process of building a sustainable society, citizens are called upon to play a participatory role in the community.

From this perspective, it is argued that environmental education is directly associated with the population's level of participation.

It is important to note that Law No. 9.795, of April 27, 1999, which provides for environmental education in Brazil, defines the concept of environmental education as:

"Art. 1 Environmental education is understood to be the processes through which individuals and the community build social values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies aimed at conserving the environment, which is a good for the common use of the people, essential to a healthy quality of life and its sustainability" (BRASIL, 1999).

In Brazil, several local environmental agenda initiatives can be identified. A significant example of these agendas is identified in ports such as: Itaqui in São Luis do Maranhão; Imbituba in Santa Catarina; Santos in São Paulo and the port of Suape in Pernambuco. According to the National Waterway Transportation Agency (ANTAQ), the agenda aims to meet environmental compliance requirements.

The initiative for the local environmental agenda, according to ANTAQ, lies with the port authority and must be drawn up by local port operators, regulators and other parties involved in the activity in some way.

Related studies

A bibliometric study by Araújo et al. (2019) sought to identify the state of the art of Brazilian scientific production through the main journals registered in the Scientific Periodicals Electronic Library (SPELL®). In the areas of administration, accounting and tourism, in a time frame from 2005 to 2015, it was observed which productions had an institutionalist approach in their scope.

With regard to the sub-themes, the aforementioned study concluded that social responsibility was the most frequently addressed. According to the authors, this point has been widely discussed in organizations due to the growing pressure exerted by society on institutions in terms of caring for the environment and the people involved, internally or externally, with the organizations.

According to Aligleri and Souza (2010, p.8), "social responsibility is seen as a pertinent, irrevocable and active fact in current organizational contexts". According to the same authors, the implementation of management based on socially responsible values can occur both at the company's inception and throughout its existence due to an awakening of interest in this type of policy. Mechanisms such as isomorphism and legitimacy are cited as interesting in the development of socially responsible management.

In an international study carried out by Prado et al. (2019) and dedicated to investigating the relationship between institutional characteristics and the accounting disclosure of environmental provisions and contingent liabilities, it was found that despite the existence of normative pressures exerted by an international regulatory body, there were other institutional pressures of a regulatory and cultural-cognitive nature related to the characteristics of the companies and their countries of origin. The latter factors mean that companies seeking legitimacy adopt practices that are strategically aimed at serving other interests that are not related to the international regulatory body.

Within the public sphere, it is possible to identify the occurrence of both mimetic and coercive isomorphism. In a study carried out by Silva and Brunozi Jr (2021), these mechanisms were found to exist in most states in relation to the federal government. According to the authors, 77.8% of Brazilian states, approximately seven years after the publication of Law No. 12.846 of August 1, 2013, showed the occurrence of isomorphism in relation to the central government and between them. While some states have made progress, others already have regulations in place so that the three perspectives investigated have materialized in the form of similar bills.

Given the importance of the public budget as a tool that seeks to satisfy collective needs, Zambenedetti and Angonese's (2020) study carried out at a federal public higher education institution revealed that the budget process in question is explained by the three types of isomorphism proposed by the new institutional sociology.

METHODOLOGY

Given the purpose of this research, which is to clarify the role of neo-institutionalist theory in the adoption and implementation of the Environmental Agenda, it can be classified as exploratory. According to Gil (2002), this type of research aims to provide an overview of a particular fact.

To this end, a bibliographic survey of scientific production on the subject was carried out. Scientific articles, books, reports and other secondary data of national and international origin were used to provide theoretical support for this research. According to Gil (2002), an exploratory bibliographic study allows the researcher to cover a wide range of phenomena, providing an overview of the subject.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

New Institutional Sociology

Over the years, institutional theory has branched out, evolving in different directions. According to Freire and Lucena (2021), all the strands seek, in essence, to answer what an institution is, but they are

based on the needs and specificities inherent to each era. This allows us to understand that both theoretical lines will not necessarily be invalidated in their contributions.

Freire and Lucena (2021) also show that some currents of institutional theory are given different names by different authors, even though they are the same strand. It was found that Neo-institutionalism, Contemporary Institutionalism and New Institutional Sociology are some of the names given to the same dimension of institutional theory. This reveals that in addition to the various aspects addressed by the theory in its respective eras and branches, there is also no consensus as to how the authors treat them. Therefore, among the branches of institutional theory, this research sought to work with the concept of new institutional sociology (NSI).

Important authors have used NSI to explain organizational phenomena. However, the theory has been approached in various studies from the perspective of both its potential and its limitations. In this sense, some authors and their treatment of this theory will be presented below.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that organizations seek legitimacy by adhering to norms and rules that are well regarded and/or accepted by society. In this way, it is understood that not only economic and political factors determine the behaviour of an organization, but social and cultural factors are also capable of influencing the dynamics of organizations.

From the perspective of Meyer and Rowan (1977), NSI proposes that organizations adapt to environmental requirements. These, in turn, are responsible for ensuring social recognition, in other words, they give organizations legitimacy. The authors also state that "institutional rules function as myths that organizations incorporate", (MEYER; ROWAN, 1977, p.340), in order to gain legitimacy, resources and even stability in the market.

That said, it is possible to understand the importance and role of the NSI in implementing the environmental agenda. Factors addressed by the theory, such as: Legislation; Standardization; Social Acceptance; Professionalization, among others, are capable of influencing an organization and making it adopt an environmentally correct and socially accepted position. In this sense, the types of isomorphism are important for understanding organizational dynamics. They help to explain how organizations become similar to each other, even if there is no rational or economic need for this. Isomorphism can have a significant impact on organizational structure, culture and strategies, so the similarity between the environmentally friendly policies adopted by certain organizations can be explained through this theoretical proposal.

It should also be noted that NSI can be applied to a variety of organizations and fields. The works presented in the theoretical framework of this study show that the theory applies to both public and

private sector organizations, regardless of the size or branch of activity in which the organization operates.

Implementing the environmental agenda

In view of the socio-political-economic scenario in which organizations find themselves, the implementation of an environmental agenda can become essential for their survival. According to the UN:

"The depletion of natural resources and the negative impacts of environmental degradation, including desertification, droughts, soil degradation, freshwater scarcity and biodiversity loss add to and exacerbate the list of challenges facing humanity. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and its negative effects undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development. Increases in global temperature, rising sea levels, ocean acidification and other impacts of climate change are seriously affecting coastal zones and low-lying coastal countries, including many least developed countries and small island developing states. The survival of many societies, as well as the planet's biological systems, is at risk." (UN, 2015).

Therefore, in both the public and private sectors, it is possible to observe the existence of factors that exert pressure in favor of the inclusion of environmental criteria in the dynamics of the organizations' operations.

In the public sector, there is a global movement of commitment between developed and developing countries. The commitments made by the member countries of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the main international and intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change, through the SDGs have led to the creation of public policies, laws and norms that coercively or otherwise influence organizational dynamics.

Table 01 below shows a series of legal provisions, instituted in various areas of the public sector, which contribute to the implementation of an environmental agenda.

TABLE 01: Legal provisions related to environmentally sound practices in Brazil.

Instrument	Sphere of Government	Document number	Object
Decree	Federal	2.783/98 e 3.330/00	a ban on the purchase by governments of products containing Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (SDO's) and on energy consumption and the purchase of more energy-efficient products
Decree	State - SP	45.765/01	establishes the State Program for the Reduction and Rationalization of Energy Use, applying the 20% reduction in government facilities, referring to the acquisition of products and services with the best

			possible energy performance
Complementary Law	State - MG	27/1999	provides for the installation of hydraulic devices to control and reduce consumption in public and commercial buildings
Law	State - PR	12.204/98	provides for the preferential purchase of the fleet official alcohol-powered vehicles
Law	State - DF	2.616/00	provides for the use of water-saving equipment in the hydraulic and sanitary installations of public and private buildings intended for non-residential use in the Federal District
Resolution	Federal	45/93	provides for the use of recycled paper

SOURCE: Adapted from Pegorin *et al.* (2014).

In addition to the legal provisions imposed by public bodies, organizations are also obliged to meet the demands of society. Sustainable practices have become strategies used by organizations to deal with institutional pressures related to the environment. In this sense, the impact of implementing an environmental agenda represents not only compliance with legal obligations towards the state, but also an opportunity to generate value for companies.

It was found that the organizational benefits for those who make a commitment to align their practices with the SDGs are diverse, both in the public and private sectors. Improving brand image, competitive advantage, serving new market niches, increasing the possibility of staying in business and keeping up with market dynamics are all examples of benefits. However, there are some challenges to be faced.

The availability of resources is a challenge in both the public and private sectors. Government programs and environmental public policies need financial resources to be implemented. In addition, adopting sustainable practices for companies can mean the need to change or exchange old equipment for more advanced and less polluting technology. These factors can make organizations resistant to change.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to verify the role of the New Institutional Sociology in the implementation of Environmental Agendas. It also sought to identify the forces that push organizations to adopt similar environmental practices, to understand the levels of implementation of an environmental agenda and to describe the motivating aspects of the search for sustainability in organizations.

It was found that institutional theory is capable of elucidating the process of building and implementing the environmental agenda. The theory understands that organizational practices are shaped by institutions. Therefore, in the context of the environmental agenda, institutions can materialize in the form of laws, regulations, public policies, professional class positioning, the behaviour of successful

organizations, consumer preference and many other factors. Applying this understanding to the implementation of the environmental agenda, it can be seen that institutions put pressure on organizations to develop sustainable practices and these, in turn, enable environmental conservation without necessarily hindering economic development.

It was also possible to identify that the pressures suffered by organizations to adopt similar environmental practices are explained by the phenomenon known as institutional isomorphism. This manifests itself, in the light of the theory of the new institutional sociology, in three ways: Coercive; Mimetic and Normative. Each type of institutional isomorphism explains, under different scenarios, the pressures that encourage organizations to adopt certain practices.

In addition, this study made it possible to understand the levels of implementation of an environmental agenda. It was observed that agendas can be implemented at: Global level, such as the 2030 Agenda; National level, such as the Environmental Agenda in Public Administration (A3P) in Brazil and; Local level, such as the various port agendas mentioned in the theoretical framework.

It was also possible to verify that the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices in organizations is motivated above all by the need to legitimize them. The legitimacy factor is a valuable aspect for the implementation of the environmental agenda, as it is essential that organizational practices, public environmental policies and even the habits of civil society are perceived as legitimate and necessary by social actors. It can be seen that legitimacy can be achieved through public participation, as well as transparency and accountability mechanisms made available by organizations.

Finally, this research will contribute to a better understanding of the interaction between the theory of New Institutional Sociology and processes involving the creation and implementation of an Environmental Agenda. This understanding is crucial in a context of growing concern for the environment. The phenomena presented can influence public policies, management practices and organizational strategies related to environmental sustainability and the economic development of the different actors involved in this context.

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