Research Article

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS BASED ON BLACK BRAZILIAN WOMEN'S TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

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The global climate crisis and its causes are closely linked to the exploitation and oppression of Latin American women, predominantly Black, indigenous, rural, and quilombola. This article analyzes community solutions developed by Black Brazilian women from traditional communities for the patriarchal, colonialist and racist systems that contribute to this crisis, resulting in ecological and social inequalities. The traditional knowledge of these women is crucial for creating community-based solutions to the climate crisis. Decolonial and intersectional Community Psychology values the expertise and practices of these traditional communities, contributing to the construction of a more inclusive science committed to social and environmental justice. Intersectionality is an essential theoretical tool for understanding the multiple forms of oppression these women face and for developing strategies of resistance and care for the Earth. The agroecological practices and collective care of these women offer ways to mitigate the impacts of climate change, preserving biodiversity and promoting environmental justice.
Keywords: environmental justice, community psychology, climate change, traditional people

1. Introduction

What does the climate crisis have to do with the oppression experienced by Latin American women? The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change notes that women account for 72% of people living in extreme poverty and are more exposed to environmental disasters (Mendes, 2023). According to the report prepared by the Women in Finance Climate Action group, the climate crisis increases social and economic inequalities and, in turn, the vulnerability of women and children. Regarding the impact of climate change on women's lives: "when disasters such as droughts, floods, and hurricanes occur, women's responsibilities become even more arduous, increasing their level of vulnerability. Moreover, women constantly face additional obstacles in

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accessing resources" (Levasier, Barbosa, Alves, Quesada & Lopes, 2024). The Black Voices for Climate Network (2023, p. 4) has been denouncing the absence of policies focused on "(...) housing, sanitation, disaster prevention, civil defense, combating racism, gender equality, health, and productive inclusion (a longer list could fit here)", which has led to significant exposure of mainly Black women and their communities to the severe effects of climate change.

The intersections that affect bodies, the processes of subjectivation of women, the causes of the current climate crisis, and the marks produced by the Modern Colonial Gender System (Lugones, 2014) have the same logic: the objectification and exploitation of groups and forms of life considered subordinate (Spivak, 2010). Animals that are not human-being, plants, women and native people are life forms that the anthropocentric system and modernity/coloniality, in its patriarchal, sexist and racist rationale, objectify and render invisible. Thus, it is essential to discuss climate change mitigation actions that take into account local factors within communities and historical perpetrators of racism (Lykes & Van der Merwe, 2017). Therefore, this text aims to reflect on the knowledge and practices of Black, rural, and *quilombola*[2] Brazilian women in confronting the climate crisis, engaging in dialogue with decolonial and intersectional community psychology.

This article explores community-based responses to the climate crisis developed by Black, *quilombola,* and rural women in Brazil, whose traditional knowledge systems and daily practices offer concrete and transformative alternatives to environmental injustice. By engaging with narratives rooted in agroecology, ancestral healing and seed guardianship, we seek to analyze how these women's practices challenge the colonial, patriarchal and racist structures that have contributed to climate collapse. Grounded in the theoretical frameworks of decolonial and intersectional Community Psychology, the article positions these knowledge-practices not as marginal or residual, but as vital forms of resistance and re-existence that hold valuable insights for climate justice and community well-being. The paper unfolds through a literature review of the colonial roots of climate injustice, a discussion of decolonial contributions to Community Psychology, and a methodological reflection on case study and narrative interviews that illustrate community solutions to the crisis.

The authors of this article occupy both academic and community positions in the struggle for climate and epistemic justice. We write as psychologists, educators and activists who are situated within and alongside the communities whose stories and knowledge systems are highlighted here. Some of us are *quilombola* and rural women whose lives and territories have been directly impacted by environmental degradation and extractivist violence; others are researchers committed to collaborative and ethical knowledge production grounded in solidarity, affect and co-resistance. This shared commitment allows us to collectively weave a narrative that centers traditional practices as political, ecological and epistemological tools of transformation.

[2] The Brazilian state understands *quilombola* populations as ethnic-racial groups that identify themselves as *quilombolas*, with their own historical trajectory, endowed with specific territorial relations and with presumed black ancestry from people enslaved in the Brazilian colonial period (Ministerio da Saúde, 2025).

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Colonial Roots of Climate Injustice and Environmental Racism

To seek the roots of global problems as a field of analysis for understanding the current situation, it will be necessary to examine the processes that preceded the ecological, social, and political conditions of nowadays (Ferdinand, 2022). The paradigm of rationality, which underpins the intellectual, economic, and social construction of modern capitalist society, postulates a conception of human beings as the image and likeness of the European white man. As a result, everything outside this paradigm has been designated as savage (Fanon, 2008). This Eurocentric paradigm of rationality, a direct consequence of colonialism and patriarchy, has produced the subordination and control of those not included in this paradigm, such as women, Black and native people, natural resources, other animals, etc (Delanty, 2018).

Looking through this lens, we begin to understand that the convergence of patriarchal, colonialist, and racist domination systems underlies the construction of contemporary social reality, which establishes hierarchies among different life forms, groups, and activities, thereby producing inequalities (Barca, 2020) and ecological collapses. According to Martinican researcher Malcolm Ferdinand (2022), the environmental crisis of modernity originates from a totalizing way of being in the world, which he calls “colonial inhabiting”. This way of inhabiting articulates the exploitation, domination, and subordination of women’s bodies, racialized people, the Earth, and non-human beings, all reduced to their capacity to produce energy and value through work. Colonial inhabiting develops through acts of land appropriation (property), suppression of native life forms of non-human beings (deforestation), and other humans (ethnocide, femicide). The logic of intensive exploitation of colonial inhabitation not only benefits a single, specific mode of life – patriarchal, white, and urban – but also creates multiple ecological disruptions, transforming landscapes, disrupting biological balances, and breaking the metabolism of life (Ferdinand, 2022).

As a result, we are all living through a succession of environmental disasters and extreme climatic events, such as droughts and heatwaves, floods, and large fires. With Ferdinand (2022), we can understand the global climate crisis as a metabolic rupture, having its primordial core located in the modern/colonial conception in which the white European man is placed as the reference of humanity. Also, according to Brazilian Indigenous intellectual Ailton Krenak (2019), by detaching ourselves from the Earth through a civilizational abstraction, colonialism, currently in its neoliberal form, “(…) suppresses diversity, denies the plurality of life forms, of existence and habits. It offers everyone the same menu, attire, and, if possible, the same language" (Krenak, 2019, p. 12). This is our "humanity", which today lives the impacts of the exploitation and suppression of biodiversity.

Such exploitation and appropriation of nature results in what the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] report about climate change denounced. There is no longer any doubt about the human contribution to global warming (IPCC, 2023). For Ailton Krenak (2019), there is a logic of separation from the human connection with nature, leading to rampant consumption, exploitation, and climate change. Catastrophic scenarios significantly impact ecosystems, biodiversity, and human health (Scotti & Pereira, 2022). Despite

its global dimension, the ecological crisis is imbued with environmental racism, which causes some groups to be more affected than others.

In Brazilian territory, as in other realities of the Global South, social dynamics have been organized around racism, producing inequalities, violence, and attempts to silence traditional populations, such as rural, Black, *quilombola*s and indigenous communities. It is clear here that the structural impacts produce social inequalities, such as environmental racism. These populations are the most exposed to the effects of extreme climate change, such as heavy rains, landslides, prolonged droughts, etc (Cidade, Moura Jr. & Ximenes, 2020). This reality results from the violent marks of coloniality, which historically have produced inequalities, discrimination and limited access to policies aimed at mitigating the effects of extreme climate phenomena.

That is why environmental racism needs to be considered, considering the influence and impact of coloniality. For Dulce Pereira (2021), environmental racism must be understood as one of the coloniality's resources for materializing structural racism, a concept also defended by Ferdinand (2022). He emphasizes that analyses committed to a decolonial ecology must consider that racism not only produces greater vulnerability to socio-environmental conflicts but also legitimizes environmental destruction, especially in countries of the Global South (Ferdinand, 2022). Black people continue to predominantly live in the outskirts of large cities and areas more exposed to climate change effects, such as hills and slopes destroyed by severe storms, suffering neglect and discrimination, exacerbated by the intersection with other markers of difference (Akotirene, 2019; Grzanka, 2018).

That is why we argue here that another fundamental aspect of this debate is the urgency of thinking about the climate crisis and its effects from an intersectional perspective. As an interpretative key, intersectionality helps us to think about the relationships produced by structural violence and its impact on care forms and strategies (Crenshaw, 2002). According to Black feminist thinker Carla Akotirene (2020, p. 19), "intersectionality aims to provide theoretical-methodological tools for the structural inseparability of racism, capitalism, and cis heteropatriarchy – producers of identity avenues where Black women are repeatedly affected". Thus, the intersectional perspective we advocate in this text involves understanding contemporary social inequalities as concurrent rather than independent of various variables and intersections.

In this sense, by resorting to intersectionality, it is possible to (re)construct experiences, historical landmarks, and cultural perceptions, thereby investigating underexplored aspects of subordinated groups, highlighting potentialities and particularities while avoiding generalizations (Pellicer, Schmitz, Strapazzon & Zanella, 2022). Therefore, we also defend, in Community Psychology, the recognition of the importance of intersectionality and collectively constructed strategies to confront climate conditions as they are lived.

2.2. The Role of Community Psychology with Black, Quilombola, and Rural Women in the Fight for Community Care and the Assurance of Their Territories

In this section, we aim to briefly revisit some of the paths Community Psychology has taken in Brazil, as well as the interventions and contributions of Black feminism to this field of knowledge. We highlight that weaving this dialogue serves as a decolonial strategy to produce tensions and break with distorted, negative, and naturalized views of Black, rural, and *quilombola* women in

the Global South. At the same time, it reaffirms the decolonial contributions thought and made by these women from the Global South. Understanding the place of Psychology in Brazil is only possible through an analysis committed to the economic, political, and cultural aspects that daily mark the bodies of those who traditionally and predominantly occupy Brazilian territory and Latin America. According to Campos (1996) and Freitas (2005), extreme economic inequality and the military coups in Latin America during the 1960s were important milestones for the construction of the field of Community Psychology, as the tensions produced by this context mobilized psychologists to question the place of their interventions with most populations.

Then, the trajectory of Community Psychology in Brazil is marked by the need to build new sites of practice and to adopt other theoretical and methodological perspectives that oppose the white and colonial theories and processes that have marked the history of Psychology. At the same time, several interventions in Social Community Psychology start from methods and theoretical perspectives that prioritize the class category as a central marker for intervention processes. For Campos (1996), this produces a reading of communities as places of absence and needs. According to Black intellectuals Gonzaga, Carvalho and Souza (2023), understanding social inequalities only from class readings legitimizes the silencing and impact of racism on the modes of subjectivation and assurance of the rights of subordinated communities. The system of whiteness has produced numerous silences in the field of Psychology as epistemic racism only legitimizes the knowledge produced in the Global North. There is a real urgency to reflect on our work and scientific production, since the definition of scientific psychological knowledge, grounded in the hegemonic North, fails to account for the ontological and epistemological diversity of Latin America. In this sense, discussions and experiences at locals and community levels can contribute to this task of moving Community Psychology away from north-centered rationality and its colonialisms.

Living with climate crisis in Global South, where the bodies-territories of Black, *quilombola*, indigenous and rural women are strongly violated, we understand that to weave a new look at Community Psychology from emancipatory, anti-racist, intersectional, and decolonial bases, it is fundamental and urgent to listen to and recognize the knowledge and practices built by the experiences of these women in traditional contexts. They are the ones who occupy a central place in building solutions to the fight against the climate crisis since they have experience and knowledge of their territory and community that can help to develop actions to care for Mother Earth. Women have been developing environmental conservation initiatives, caring for and healing the Earth, and fighting to remain in their traditional territories, underscoring the urgency of their involvement in policies that construct an agenda committed to other ways of being/doing within the Earth.

In this sense, it's important to note that "traditional knowledge" is brought here not in the sense of an economic and cultural delay, as modernization theories defined them, predicting the inevitable (and desirable) overcoming of traditional societies (Sahlins, 1997). On the contrary, in this manuscript we are moving closer to transdisciplinary and critical studies that analyze cultures from the perspective of historicity, that is, as cultural traditions that are maintained and updated through constant dynamics of transformation (Little, 2018; Carneiro da Cunha, 2017). "Thus, the use of the term 'traditional' refers to profound knowledge and philosophies that do not remain intact but have been producing care and community healing in inhabited and claimed territories for generations" (Pellicer, 2025, p. 104).

So, recognizing and learning with the traditional knowledge of these subjects, as well as their agencies and insurgent movements, produces fractures in psychological theories that lead to "generalizations that allocate these subjects to crystallized positions of subalternity" (Gonzaga *et al.,* 2023, p. 5). By assuming intersectionality as a central lens to break with universalizing readings, we understand the numerous intersections between racism, sexism, and class inequality that traverse the experiences of Black, *quilombola*, indigenous and rural women in Latin America. At the same time, an intersectional, decolonial, and anti-racist approach in Community Psychology makes it possible to recognize and listen to the care and healing strategies of the Earth and the political, collective, and community resistance produced by these women.

Thus, by identifying community solutions to the climate crisis in the resistance of these women, Community Psychology can collaborate in the promotion of environmental justice, the principle that all individuals should have equal access to environmental benefits and risks. Also known as "ecojustice", this approach aims to achieve environmental equity. It proposes the fair and meaningful participation of these populations in decision-making, which is also the objective of Community Psychology (Fernandes-Jesus, Barnes & Diniz, 2020). The increasing scarcity of natural resources and the destabilization of ecosystems affect different social groups or geographic areas in an unequal and often unfair way, and therefore, the recognition of their knowledge and practices in caring for the environment is an urgent task.

Decolonial perspectives in Community Psychology argue for a radical rethinking of the field's role in relation to the climate crisis, emphasizing its responsibility not only to study but to act with communities that are most impacted by environmental degradation. This involves shifting from extractive research models to praxis-oriented, participatory, and relational methodologies that center community voices, traditional knowledge, and collective care practices. As Madyaningrum et al. (2024) highlight, decolonial Community Psychology must engage with the ontologies and cosmologies of communities in which it operates. In their analysis of community-based interventions in Indonesia, the authors propose that psychologists move beyond technical solutions and begin working relationally, by listening deeply, building long-term trust, and acting with communities in a horizontal way. These relationships are grounded in *gotong royong* (cooperation), a principle that illustrates how local values and cultural practices are foundational to community well-being and environmental stewardship.

In another contribution, Lugo-Hernández and Serrano-García (2024) demonstrate how climate resilience is strengthened through community-led education and ecological care. Their project, *Aula en la Montaña*, in Puerto Rico*,* was developed in response to climate disasters and sustained neglect from the state. Through pedagogies rooted in land-based learning, agroecology, and intergenerational dialogue, the project enabled children and families to imagine and build alternative futures collectively. Here, Community Psychology becomes a facilitator of transformation, supporting the regeneration of knowledge, ecosystems, and community bonds. Araya-Carvajal et al. (2024) also stress the need for Community Psychology to challenge the dominance of Eurocentric paradigms by recovering relational and situated knowledges. They propose that transformative community action must be grounded in what they term *comunalidad*, emphasizing collective responsibility, territorial belonging, and resistance to extractivism. Community psychologists, in this framework, are called to co-create with

communities practices that affirm autonomy, sovereignty, and life in the face of environmental violence.

The work of Moura Jr. et al. (2024) offers a foundational framework for how Indigenous epistemologies can reshape the goals and practices of Community Psychology. They emphasize that ancestral ways of being, centered on reciprocity with the land, cyclical time, and spiritual interconnection, are not only valid but necessary to transform psychological practice. This means Psychology must become accountable to land-based struggles and recognize territory as a living subject. From this perspective, community solutions to the climate crisis are inseparable from cultural identity, historical memory, and collective care.

Analyzing the implications of top-down social policy, Daher et al. (2024) call attention to the risks of what they term *praxical violence*, when interventions reproduce colonial hierarchies and disregard the lived knowledge of communities. To counter this, they argue for a decolonial praxis that is accountable, reflective and dialogical. This is particularly urgent in the climate context, where imposed solutions can exacerbate harm or erase local forms of adaptation already in place. Together, these perspectives position Community Psychology not only as a field of inquiry but as a partner in collective ecological healing, whose role is to accompany, amplify, and co-learn with communities in their struggles for climate justice.

We understand that decolonizing the knowledge and practices of Community Psychology means enhancing and expanding the perspective by locating in the community experiences of the Global South the protagonists of Black, *quilombola*, indigenous and rural women. The intense resistance of these women and their territories produces a reality where being in the community becomes essential for protection and defense against the systematic control of their bodies and territories. It also means keeping alive memories, bonds, and knowledge that would be erased hegemonically if it were not for the community dimension, which operates as a true bond of protection (Góis, 2008). In this sense, when Community Psychology seeks to cast its research and practice with the communities of the Global South, it is essential to reinterpret, translate and reconfigure some concepts, such as the very concept of community, considering at its base the knowledges/practices shared by Black, *quilombola*, indigenous and rural women and their territories in the construction of community processes.

As neo-extractivism has spread throughout Latin America in a predatory manner, various forms of resistance represented by these women have emerged in different territories. These are experiences in community, rural and popular contexts, where women traditionally mobilize against the advance of neoliberalism and build networks of solidarity and collective self-management (Svampa, 2019). One of these forms of resistance is the cultivation of ancestral practices of care, reception and health grounded in an extended kinship system (Manzi & Anjos, 2021). Alternative forms of caring have thus become a knowledge/practice developed by Black women, mothers and grandmothers, as well as by *quilombola*, indigenous and rural women. These knowledge systems have modes of reproduction and maintenance of life that, in a moment of climate crisis, need to be recognized and valued to be present in constructing another possible social system (Siliprandi, 2020; Fernandes-Jesus, Barnes & Diniz, 2020).

The word “care” can have many meanings, making it polysemic. Here, however, we highlight that the act and practice of care are not only defined from a biologizing or medical perspective but also encompass social practices in which collective care is the centre (Paiva, 2007). Collective practice as decolonial care, where the struggle against colonial oppression occurs not only for

one another but also with one another (Atallah, Bacigalupe & Repetto, 2021). Thus, care becomes an enabler of criticality, capable of transforming colonial wounds and traumas into possible paths of healing and resistance against historical violence and its consequences.

Considering subalternized realities such as those of traditional peoples, we highlight that their care strategies can be multiple as they are living cultural legacies across generations that persist in ancestral territories. In other words, traditional care practices persist and reinvent themselves over time, and although modern medicine has constructed another logic of conceiving care, both share principles, "such as empiricism; specific rituals; and the intermediation of forces and energies according to the type of practice and historical context" (Gewehr et al., 2017, p. 33). We also emphasize the possibility of strengthening these forms of resistance anchored in collective care, historically developed against oppressions, an intersecting class with race (Costa, 2015) and gender (Castro & Mayorga, 2019).

As these populations are the most affected by the consequences of climate change, as discussed above regarding environmental racism, through movements and organizations of Black women and *quilombolas*, for example, it is possible to emphasize community and social care practices based on culturally significant relational approaches (Atallah, Contreras, Albornoz, Salgado & Pilquil, 2018) in the mitigation and adaptation to increasing climate catastrophes.

3. Method

To highlight the richness and depth of the narratives presented here, we have developed a methodological approach that values the plural knowledge of Brazilian Black, rural, and *quilombola* women. To do this, we started from a counter-colonial, dialogical and confluence approach, as proposed by Antonio Bispo dos Santos (2023). This perspective recognizes that knowledge is not the property of a single group, but rather a mosaic of interconnected knowledge, built in dialogue with the Earth and ancestral experiences.

Therefore, our study adopted a qualitative methodological approach, grounded in a critical and collaborative case study design (Creswell, 2007), to explore community-based responses to the climate crisis from the perspectives of *quilombola* and Black Brazilian women. As a form of inquiry, the case study allows the authors to connect personal, political and cultural dimensions of lived experience to broader social phenomena (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011), producing knowledge that is situated, reflexive, and transformative.

Therefore, the narratives shared are not secondary data or merely illustrative examples; rather, they constitute the core of the epistemological and analytical process. We recognize them as both method and data, emphasizing voice, memory, place, and identity as sites of knowledge production (Boylorn & Orbe, 2021). This study is based on the narratives of Maria Silvanete Benedito de Sousa Lermen and Simone Maria. The conversations with both did not follow a rigid interview format. Still, they were guided by a dialogical, affective, and situated perspective, respecting the narrator's timing, pace, and conditions of speech. The narrative interview method is characterized as a flexible tool designed to achieve greater narrative depth and encourage participants to recount significant moments in their lives, histories, and contexts (Muylaert et al., 2014).

With Maria Silvanete, conversations and exchanges over several days gave way to a process of storytelling and narrative construction via audio recordings on WhatsApp. The number and duration of conversations varied and occurred throughout March 2024. In the case of Simone Maria's narratives, the construction process took place through in-person and virtual meetings held at various points during periods of shared living and collaborative work in the Gesteira quilombo territory. These meetings involved open conversations, sharing of experiences, audio recordings, and dialogues built into the daily routine of community actions and collaborative research (Miranda, 2025).

Both narratives were subsequently organized and systematized by the authors and submitted to a collaborative validation process, in which Maria Silvanete and Simone Maria were able to review, supplement, and validate the meanings produced, ensuring co-authorship and an ethical-political commitment to the shared production of knowledge. The narratives were analyzed using a thematic and interpretive approach (Braun & Clark, 2006), inspired by narrative and decolonial perspectives, which understand experience as historically situated, relational, and intersected by social markers of difference. The analytical process involved successive readings of the narratives, identification of nuclei of meaning, and construction of emerging thematic axes, without the imposition of pre-existing categories (Castro & Mayorga, 2019). In this way, the analysis was conducted reflectively and collaboratively, considering both the narrated content and the contexts of production, the silences, the memories, and the affective dimensions involved. Thus, the narratives were not treated as data to be coded, but as living productions of knowledge, articulating experience, territory, ancestry, and resistance, in line with approaches that recognize narrative as a method and as a field of epistemological production.

4. Results

We will now present two narratives from distinct places: some woven into social struggles, others into research and field experiences, and still others into affective and political networks, mediated by documentaries and social media, preserving the syntax and form of expression of each. Inspired by the work of Liliana Parra-Valencia *et al*. (2022, p. 166, our translation), "we will concern ourselves with the task of making difference noticeable". Given the diversity of narratives, different ways of sharing these crossings, and the polyphony in each experience and narrative, we highlight something all authors share: the urgency of listening to traditional knowledge forged in ancestry and committed to community experiences and ecological struggles.

Who can speak and write in the intellectual work we develop with communities? Who do we invite to dialogue? With these questions, we reaffirm the need for Community Psychology to challenge its theories and practices, occupying them with diverse languages, knowledge, and practices that express the communities and people who effectively build knowledge. Let's listen to Maria Silvanete and Simone Maria.

4.1. Silvanete: A Story of Confluences Between Care, Ancestrality, and Agroecology

Maria Silvanete Benedito de Sousa Lermen is a Black woman who wove her story of struggle by converging ancestral and agroecological knowledge into forms of community care. Born in a so-called traditional agricultural community in the municipality of Exu (Pernambuco, Brazil), located in the territory of Sertão do Araripe, Silvanete began her life journey by crossing two paths: political struggle and ancestral knowledges. The political struggle path was shaped by her belonging to the Batedor community. Her testimony demonstrates how local, place-based strategies of care and cultivation challenge extractivist models and propose sustainable and relational alternatives to climate collapse.

To understand Silvanete's narrative, we must define territory as a category constructed through a dialectic between the material and the symbolic (Haesbaert, 2010). The concept of territory is associated with both a concrete delimitation of space and a symbolic appropriation, charged by lived experiences. In this sense, territory is not only a physical space but also the result of symbolic appropriation. "It is essential to understand that space precedes territory. Territory is formed from space; it is the result of an action conducted by a syntagmatic actor (an actor who carries out a program) at any level" (Raffestin, 1993, p. 143).

The so-called syntagmatic actors here are the farmers who insert their political struggle into the territory, which also becomes an identity. It is in this community of struggle that Silvanete grows up. In her youth, she engages with the Rural Pastoral, a social movement through which she participates in important debates about the condition of female farmers, noting their absence from community decision-making and struggles due to dynamics of control and power wielded by their male partners. Parallel to this realization, Silvanete traces her path precisely with ancestral knowledge passed down by women. From the memories and knowledge of her grandmother about medicinal plants, teas, remedies, care techniques, prayers, and blessings, Silvanete expands her grandmother's steps and becomes a recognized figure in her community for acts of healing and care.

After years of political struggle, Silvanete and her family conquered a piece of land for cultivation and residence, where they have managed and cared for an agroforest for over 10 years. Agroecology, a cultivation system that includes agroforestry, is a way of practising agriculture that aims to maintain the natural environment, respect the processes of the Earth, plants, and animals, and cultivate and learn from their cycles (Neto, 2023). In the same place, beans, coffee, bees, medicinal plants, cassava, fish, chickens, among other life forms, exchange sustenance with families like Silvanete's. In this agroforestry space, she and her family establish an organic relationship with the other inhabitants of that place, respecting and interacting with the time of plants and animals, and merging biodiversity with ancestrality, managing nature through the traditional knowledge of that community. From this intimate relationship with the production of life through agroecology and the ancestral knowledge passed down by her grandmother, Silvanete creates what she calls a Living Pharmacy, that is, a place within her agroforestry area where, according to her, there are remedies that are alive, as they are plants: "We say it's alive because it needs to be alive alongside us." (Interview with Silvanete, March 15, 2024).

Silvanete's Living Pharmacy began to take shape when the AGRODÓIA association, founded in 2005, along with the Environmental Protection Area Chapada do Araripe Council, cataloged 173

plant species from the local flora. From this survey, 40 plants were identified in the Batedor community for various uses. Ancestral Medicine was one of the highlights. Additionally, in this identification process, she sought to recognize people in her community who held ancestral knowledge about the medicinal use of plants. The result of this process was formally shared with the Federal University of Pernambuco, which, together with the community, gave recognition to those old trunks, mothers, uncles, and grandparents for a previously invisible care knowledge/practice.

From this Living Pharmacy, a result of the confluence of ancestral and agroecological knowledge, Silvanete, along with her family, began producing natural remedies during the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen the community's health conditions, thereby preventing transmission by activating the immune system. Using a technique called the collective care protocol, knowledge born in cultural and community spaces, in kitchens, and in grandmothers' laps, socialized to the world, Silvanete provided the community with complementary treatment using natural remedies. She advised that those who were sick should take the provided medication three times a day, while those who were not sick should take it only once a day, with collective follow-up. In this context, when someone questioned Silvanete about the treatment's effectiveness, the response was that the person was strengthening their body and that, if infected, their body would be more resistant and better able to withstand the virus.

The results of the collective care protocol were very positive. During the first year of the pandemic, out of the 450 residents of the Batedor community, only three people who contracted the virus were hospitalized with severe symptoms. Despite the power of this practice, experiences of collective care through ancestral medicine have been threatened by land tenure issues in the region and by the loss of opportunities for collective sharing. The concentration of land in the hands of a few has driven young people out of the region in search of work, as it has become increasingly difficult to make a living from family farming. With the departure of these young people, the transmission of knowledge from elders to the younger generation is often interrupted. Thus, practices like the Farmácia Viva tend to disappear if these territories are not certified by the state and protected by the communities. All the elements—plants and roots—used to make the medicines of the so-called Living Pharmacy exist within the territory; they are cultivated and harvested in the fields, which is why a living, demarcated territory is so important. Without this, there is no Living Pharmacy in the territory.

Despite these challenges, with ancestral knowledge transmitted by her grandmother in health care, the management of her territory's biodiversity with agroecological techniques, and her paths of training in the struggle for land, Silvanete builds a trajectory in which care is her primary language. A care that inspires us to find more contextualized ways to care for the biodiversity of our territories and the knowledge of our communities, and, thus, paraphrasing Krenak, perhaps delay the end of the world a little.

4.2. The Guardians of Creole Seeds: The Knowledge/Practice of Women from the Quilombola Community of Gesteira Through the Narrative of Simone Maria

Simone Maria is a woman, mother, teacher, and *quilombola* leader of the Gesteira community (Minas Gerais, Brazil), which was affected in 2015 by the disaster caused by the collapse of Samarco's mining. The mud of toxic waste and the result of the crime-disaster of the Fundão dam

collapse were transported to the outlying neighbourhoods, where the Black population lives, and the Gesteira community is located. The mud has contaminated the soil, air, and water, contributing to the region's rising temperatures (Pereira, 2021). Thus, Simone Maria brings a self-narrative of resistance and reconstruction following the environmental and social disaster. Her story highlights the racialized impacts of environmental crimes and the epistemic strength of Black *quilombola* women who act as guardians of creole seeds and ancestral agricultural knowledge. Through her narrative, she reclaims community-based strategies of food sovereignty, care, and environmental resistance for our Black *quilombola* people.

A transatlantic and violent crossing brought our ancestors to *Abya Yala*[3]. Diasporic movements placed us in places of extreme subalternity and separated us from the courses of rivers, our families, and our sacred songs, experiences that our elders shared in their traditional territories in Africa. In this way, our meeting in the present is a resistance movement! We want to (re)encounter the memories and knowledge of our Black people, knowledge that has cared for the Earth and our communities.

Despite the coloniser's insistence on producing designations that sought/seeks to hierarchize our bodies and experiences, our affective and political networks insist on producing community and care encounters. Initially, in distinct places, we acted on school grounds to defend the body-territory of the affected Black population. On one side, a knowledge practice-oriented by a decolonial Community Psychology was woven, which made it possible to recognize that the dam rupture was a crime sustained by environmental racism and that the marks of toxic waste mud have produced and crystallized conditions of subalternity and inequalities for the affected Black women (Gonçalves, Giffoni & Wanderley, 2016). Meanwhile, in the classroom, a revolutionary movement was thought and proposed: (re)recognize the history of the centenary Quilombola Community of Gesteira, a territory located on the banks of the river Gualaxo do Norte in the city of Barra Longa (Minas Gerais-Brazil).

It is worth noting that in 1711, in the lands of Gesteira, the Portuguese colonizers, in search of gold, tried to exterminate the Botocudo and Acaiabas indigenous peoples and, for three centuries, enslaved the Black and indigenous population. Despite the supposed abolition and the resistance movements forged by the *quilombola* Community of Gesteira to guarantee their freedom and management of their territory, in 2015, the extractivist and Eurocentric model of relating to the Earth produced, through the mining company Samarco, controlled by Vale and the British company BHP Billiton, the destruction and alteration of ways of life, intimate relationships with the river, family and community ties and traditional practices and knowledge.

As we discussed before, environmental racism is a phenomenon that must be understood from a historical perspective (Pereira, 2021). Faced with the numerous masks of silencing imposed on us, Black women, here we choose to announce not only our scars and ways of survival in the face of a racist structure that legitimizes social inequalities and violence on our body territories. Thus, we will share the technologies and ideas woven by the *quilombola* women of Gesteira to delay the end of the world: the knowledge practice of the guardians of creole seeds.

[3] Abya Yala is a term that means “living land” or “land that flourishes” in the language of the Kuna people, native from Serra Nevada, Colombia. The term is currently used to refer to the American continent as a symbol of cultural identity and respect for the nature of the territory. It is part of the identity-political construction of indigenous movements and is part of initiatives to decolonize history and thought in America.

The guardians of the seeds assume great responsibility for the community. After the harvests, they separate, in the palms of their hands, the best seeds to be planted in the next season. A practice that sought to ensure the care and nourishment of their people, as well as the movement of replanting/preserving life, history, and the identity of their community. The practice of guardianship is a countercolonial knowledge/practice committed to Mother Earth. It opposes the "colonial matricide", a practice in which the colonized land is stripped of its place as Mother Earth, becoming a land without children, and the children continue without Mother Earth's care (Ferdinand, 2022). In guarding the creole seeds, there is an invitation to root the sacred, to reclaim the place of the child, and to share care and healing with the Earth. In the process of touching and feeling the Earth, we are called to share those seeds that can care for/heal the soil. These women pave the way to breaking free of colonial perspectives that view the land merely as a resource.

For the *quilombola* women of Gesteira, guarding the seeds is a community commitment, where, at the time of planting, the stored seeds are shared/exchanged within the community. A space of collective resistance woven by Black women that preserves the ancestral and community belongings that the modern colonial system sought to fragment and tear apart. Guarding the seeds is building a place of resistance, reclaiming the memories lived with the land, assuming the place of the child, and participating with Mother Earth in the political responsibility for the use of the lands we inhabit. Finally, it is worth noting that after the dam rupture, the *quilombola* women of Gesteira could no longer continue this traditional practice, as the toxic mud destroyed the territory, sickened the land, and led to the loss of many creole seeds. Over the past nine years, the community has been weaving strategies to resume their practices and knowledge and build new healing methods with the Earth.

5. Discussions: Community Solutions Based on the Traditional Knowledge and Its Relation to the Community Psychology

The cases of Maria Silvanete and Simone Maria illuminate how traditional knowledge and practices, deeply rooted in Black, *quilombola* and rural communities, generate community-based solutions that counter the impacts of the climate crisis. These practices are centered on agroecology, community healing, seed guardianship, and ancestral care and reclaim land, identity, and collective health. Such actions are not isolated cultural survivals but dynamic technologies of resistance and re-existence. In the Gesteira community, *quilombola* women's practices of guarding creole seeds are not just acts of food security but of epistemic and environmental justice. Similarly, Silvanete's creation of a Living Pharmacy in her agroforest testifies to an ecological cosmovision where healing is collective, political, and land-based. These community solutions contest extractivist paradigms and reassert life-centered alternatives grounded in ancestral wisdom.

This resonates deeply with what Ciofalo et al. (2024) define as *comunalidad*, a worldview that embraces interdependence, reciprocity and collective responsibility with the Earth, rejecting anthropocentric, individualist, and colonial logics. From this standpoint, agroecology becomes not only a farming method but a decolonial pedagogy, a way of healing the land and the community at once. Agroecology, in this sense, is a relational and political practice deeply embedded in the cosmopraxis of traditional peoples. As emphasized by Lugo-Hernández and

Serrano-García (2024), agroecological initiatives must be understood as acts of resistance that foster food sovereignty, cultural continuity, and environmental regeneration, especially in communities marked by historical and structural abandonment.

Within Community Psychology, the recognition of such practices demands a shift from understanding communities as mere recipients of interventions to co-creators of knowledge and transformation. As Moura Jr. et al. (2024) point out, a decolonial Community Psychology must dismantle epistemic hierarchies and work alongside communities to valorize their knowledge systems, situated histories, and struggles for autonomy. This praxis positions Community Psychology not just as an academic field but as a companion in the fight for *Buen Vivir* (Good Living), where ancestral wisdom, land, and care are central.

In the Latin American context, this means engaging with sentipensar (feeling-thinking), a practice that integrates affect, spirituality, and political consciousness. This approach is evident in the weaving practices of Indigenous and Black women, where storytelling, seed preservation, and herbal medicine are not only healing acts but also expressions of communal memory and resistance (Bautista Cruz et al., 2024). These practices challenge the binaries of mind/body, human/nature, and theory/practice often perpetuated by Eurocentric psychology.

Moreover, the ethical stance of working with communities, not on them, as emphasized by Madyaningrum et al. (2024), requires building long-term, affective relationships based on trust, reciprocity and shared purpose. In this sense, the work of these women aligns with the decolonial ethics of *Ubuntu*, *comunalidad* and solidarity, forging pathways of collective healing that Community Psychology must support and amplify. Thus, Community Psychology, when rooted in a decolonial perspective, is not just a discipline but a space of convergence for diverse knowledges and practices that sustain life. It must commit to deep listening, dialogical co-creation and the political task of amplifying the ancestral technologies of survival and flourishing crafted by Black, *quilombola*, and rural women in their territories. These are not alternative practices—they are necessary practices for building other possible futures.

6. Final Considerations

The opposition between nature and society has historically legitimized the exploitation of natural resources while producing individualized, isolated, and decontextualized subjectivities, resulting in increasingly fragile social ties. In this process, the community dimension deeply experienced by traditional peoples and communities has been progressively devalued. This article, however, argues that attention to community practices can restore and strengthen this dimension, reaffirming its relevance as a social and political force.

The practices and traditional knowledge of Black Brazilian women analyzed here resonate with other global experiences, highlighting that addressing the climate crisis requires responses that are simultaneously ecological, political, and rooted in territories. Across different regions of the world, responses to the climate crisis have emerged from territorially grounded community practices that articulate local knowledge, food sovereignty, and resistance to the dominant agro-industrial model. In Sub-Saharan Africa, agroecological movements have strengthened resilient food systems based on traditional knowledge (Altieri & Nicholls, 2017). In Southeast Asia, indigenous land management practices have been recognized for their sustainability while facing

territorial disputes with extractivist projects (de la Cadena, 2015). In Southern Europe, community seed networks operate as forms of resistance to agricultural homogenization and corporate control over biodiversity (Calvet-Mir et al., 2012).

Within this broader landscape, the multiple challenges faced by traditional communities amid heightened exposure to the climate crisis underscore the need for epistemic shifts. These shifts are fundamental to the construction of an intersectional and decolonial Community Psychology committed to environmental justice. That way, the voices presented in this study call for movements across epistemic boundaries, where these women are recognized not merely as research subjects but as producers of organic and emancipatory knowledge, as well as agents who demand and shape public policies aligned with their realities and practices. Amplifying these voices and integrating their contributions into broader policy frameworks and community practices is essential for building more just, sustainable, and plural futures.

For this, the climate crisis must be understood not only as an ecological phenomenon, but as an expression of historical and ongoing systems of colonial, racial, patriarchal, and capitalist domination. In this context, the knowledge, practices, and community technologies developed by Black, quilombola, and rural women in Brazil emerge as powerful responses that challenge extractivist paradigms and propose alternative ways of living and healing with the Earth. While these women are disproportionately affected by environmental injustices, they are also central protagonists in creating community-based solutions rooted in ancestral knowledge, agroecology, collective care, and resistance. So their knowledge and traditional practices should not be understood as mere cultural expressions, but as vital strategies for ecological and social resilience.

Building on these insights, it is necessary to move beyond purely normative recognition of traditional knowledge and outline concrete pathways for its integration into policy frameworks. In practice, this could involve the formal legal recognition of community-based initiatives, such as seed guardianship networks and living pharmacies, within national biodiversity and health systems, ensuring their protection against extractivist and corporate pressures. Similarly, traditional ecological knowledge held by quilombola and rural women should be incorporated into national and regional climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, not as supplementary inputs but as foundational epistemologies guiding territorial management and resilience planning. Another key avenue lies in public funding and institutional support for participatory community monitoring programmes, in which local communities actively produce data on environmental change, biodiversity, and health impacts, thereby challenging top-down models of knowledge production. Such measures would not only strengthen the evidence-policy interface but also contribute to dismantling epistemic hierarchies, fostering more democratic, context-sensitive, and justice-oriented climate governance aligned with the lived realities of traditional peoples.

From a decolonial and intersectional Community Psychology perspective, it becomes essential to recognize and co-produce knowledge with them. Practices such as cultivating creole seeds, healing with medicinal plants, organizing collective food production, and preserving memory are grounded in reciprocity, spiritual relationships with the land, and intergenerational solidarity. Far from being residual or folkloric, these practices constitute living epistemologies and political strategies that affirm the possibility of alternative futures. In this sense, the articulation between environmental justice, intersectional, and decolonial perspectives offers critical pathways for

Community Psychology to address the climate crisis. As we move forward, it is imperative to integrate these insights into broader policy frameworks and community practices to create a sustainable and equitable future for all.

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