

**BEYOND THE PURELY ENVIRONMENTAL AND PHYSICAL NATURE: IS IT
POSSIBLE TO THINK ABOUT CLIMATE JUSTICE WITHOUT RACIAL
JUSTICE?**

**PARA ALÉM DA NATUREZA PURAMENTE AMBIENTAL E FÍSICA: É
POSSÍVEL PENSAR EM JUSTIÇA CLIMÁTICA SEM JUSTIÇA RACIAL?**

**MÁS ALLÁ DE LA NATURALEZA PURAMENTAL Y FÍSICA: ¿ES POSIBLE
PENSAR EN LA JUSTICIA CLIMÁTICA SIN JUSTICIA RACIAL?**

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to develop a discussion on climate justice, taking into account the racial and geopolitical issues in Brazil. During the discussion, developed countries are identified as the main culprits of global warming and vulnerable groups, such as the black population in Brazil, are identified as the main victims of the consequences of climate change. By analyzing the literature that addresses the topic, the article discusses topics such as environmental racism, necropolitics, climate and racial justice. To develop this discussion, the importance of demarcating quilombola lands as a way of combating the impacts of global warming is highlighted. In addition, it emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing traditional knowledge in this struggle, and ensuring that the black population has an active voice in environmental discussions and in the creation of public policies related to climate issues in Brazil.

Keywords: Climate Justice. Environmental Racism.

RESUMO

Esse trabalho busca desenvolver uma discussão sobre justiça climática levando em consideração a questão racial e geopolítica do Brasil. No decorrer da discussão é identificado os países desenvolvidos como os principais responsáveis pelo aquecimento global e os grupos vulneráveis, como a população negra no Brasil, como os principais atingidos com as consequências das mudanças climáticas. Ao realizar uma análise da literatura que aborda o tema, o artigo discute temas como racismo ambiental, necropolítica, justiça climática e racial. Para desenvolver essa discussão, é destacado a importância da demarcação das terras quilombolas como uma forma de combater os impactos do aquecimento global. Além disso, ressalta a importância de reconhecer e valorizar os conhecimentos tradicionais nessa luta, e garantir que a população negra tenha voz ativa em discussões ambientais e na criação de políticas públicas relacionadas com as questões climáticas no Brasil.

Palavras-chave: Justiça Climática. Racismo Ambiental.

RESUMEN

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Este artículo busca desarrollar un debate sobre la justicia climática, considerando las problemáticas raciales y geopolíticas en Brasil. Durante el debate, se identifica a los países desarrollados como los principales responsables del calentamiento global y a los grupos vulnerables, como la población negra en Brasil, como las principales víctimas de las consecuencias del cambio climático. Mediante el análisis de la literatura que aborda el tema, el artículo aborda temas como el racismo ambiental, la necropolítica, el clima y la justicia racial. Para desarrollar este debate, se destaca la importancia de demarcar las tierras quilombolas como forma de combatir los impactos del calentamiento global. Además, se enfatiza la importancia de reconocer y valorar los conocimientos tradicionales en esta lucha, y de garantizar que la población negra tenga una voz activa en las discusiones ambientales y en la creación de políticas públicas relacionadas con los problemas climáticos en Brasil.

Palabras clave: Justicia climática. Racismo ambiental.

1 INTRODUCTION

This work is the result of discussions held in the Discipline: Climate Change offered by the PhD in Agroecology and Territorial Development (PPGADT/UFRPE), on the theme of Climate Justice from the framing of global warming as an ethical and geopolitical issue, which goes beyond the purely environmental or physical nature of the problem.

From this perspective, the understanding is that the countries and regions with the greatest "development" cause the greatest impact on greenhouse gas emissions, while it is the richest countries that have the populations least vulnerable to the damage of global warming. Estimates show that – in the last 25 years – the richest 1% of the global population causes twice as many carbon emissions as the poorest 50%.

Otherwise, we can say that those who are paying for the high costs of global warming are not those who have contributed and are contributing to the devastation of the environment. The most affected groups are social groups with ethnic-racial peculiarities present in urban centers (peripheries and favelas), in the countryside and in the forest, in conditions of vulnerability, especially when it comes to the impacts of climate change.

Here we enter the problem that guides the discussion we want to develop in this text, since we pose the following question: is it possible to think about climate and environmental justice without racial justice?

In this way, we intend to deal with this issue, based on the experience of the black Brazilian population in the city, in the countryside and in the forest. To do so, it is necessary to analyze some analytical categories that enable us to understand the framing of global warming as an ethical and political issue.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Costa (2011), the world's resources are divided between those who have access to global natural resources and those constantly threatened by environmental disasters, whose survival depends on the natural environment in which they are inserted. Parajuli (2006) classifies these two groups as 'biospheric', which use the natural resources of the globe, and 'ecological ethnicities', which depend on the natural environment for their subsistence.

Matheus (2021) highlights that both concepts highlight the ethical and political character of environmental transformations, contributing to an analysis of the role of environmental racism within the context of climate change. Silvia (2012) complements by stating that environmental racism is related to historical social and environmental violence linked to the racial theme, seeking to understand the situations of environmental degradation

faced by ethnic groups and racial groups. Matheus (2021) reinforces that environmental racism manifests itself in actions related to the environment that affect a large contingent of people globally, including Brazil and other colonized countries.

Fuentes (2021) points out that environmental racism is a form of environmental inequality and injustice that affects certain ethnicities, social groups, and traditional populations, perpetuating power relations that inferiorize those most vulnerable to climate change. Ernane (2023) highlights the occurrence of environmental racism in Brazil through the observation of garbage disposal, access to water, and food security, especially in peripheral regions inhabited predominantly by black people.

Mbembe (2018) argues that by not confronting and combating environmental racism, we are contributing to necropolitics and the unequal distribution of opportunities to live and die in contemporary Western society. Silva and Gomes (2021) emphasize that environmental injustices should be considered as one of the technologies that promote death and physical and symbolic extermination of "undesirable communities".

Santos (2023) observes that there is persistent "environmental insecurity" in urban, rural, and forest territories where the majority of the black population resides, which is affected by expropriation, water and air pollution, extreme weather events, structural precariousness in housing in risk areas, inadequate waste dumping, in addition to the extraction of minerals and other non-renewable natural goods.

In this way, from the discussion presented in the theoretical framework, it is apparent how the theme of climate justice needs to be addressed taking into account the ethical and geopolitical issue that permeate this discussion, which goes beyond the purely environmental or physical nature of the problem, so that it can reach, meet and provide protagonism in the debate for the groups that are most affected by climate change in Brazil and in the world.

3 METHODOLOGY

The text was built based on the survey and initial bibliographic analysis of a total of six books, four dissertations, two theses, twelve articles and twenty articles from websites and newspapers found from the Google search platform. This platform made it possible to have access to material that directly and indirectly deals with the topic addressed in this text, enabling the construction of an interdisciplinary panorama of the discussion of climate justice, through the legal, social and human sciences.

To this end, criteria such as the thematic relevance and timeliness of the publications were established, in order to search for relevant materials, using specific keywords such as "climate justice", "racial justice", "climate crisis", "environmental disasters", "decarbonization

of the planet", "environmental racism", "ethnic territories", "traditional communities", "forest peoples", "land demarcation".

This bibliographic *corpus* was organized based on the chronological time for the years 2005 to 2023, as it represents the period with the largest number of articles, scientific publications, and articles related to the topic addressed, indicated by the platform during the course of the research. From this path, the issue of climate justice was addressed through themes such as environmental racism, necropolitics, global warming, ecological ethnicities, black territorialities, quilombola communities, among others.

To this end, the starting point of the research is the discussions around the climate crisis, of the following premises: there is no climate justice without racial justice and the demarcation of quilombola lands represents, above all, the drastic reduction of environmental impacts, in addition to the fact that it reaffirms that there are black forest peoples.

The bibliographic survey of the selected material was organized and analyzed based on two bibliographic sets: urban black population and black population of the countryside and the forest (quilombola populations), with the objective of presenting the consequences of climate change for the black population in the city, in the countryside and in the forest, in the light of the reference mentioned here.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Franzoni et al (2020), environmental impacts in cities are socially produced and are not only the result of climatic events. The distribution of these impacts is uneven, with emphasis on the restriction of the use of areas of high environmental vulnerability, which mainly affects favelas. Sato (2019) and Lima (2021) point out that this inequality mainly affects the black population, with low income and living in peripheral regions, especially single mothers, who are heads of household. These groups are forced to occupy more vulnerable territories, exposed to environmental disasters, and to live close to polluting industries and hazardous waste dumps.

Leite (2023) highlights that the location of dumps and large discards in territories of black occupation results in damage that mainly affects this population. Fuentes (2021) highlights the unequal access to basic sanitation and infrastructure services by the black population, demonstrating the inequality in access to natural goods. Wegner et al (2020) point out that eugenics and social hygiene perpetuate harmful effects on black populations, leading to their exclusion from essential territories and services. Júnior and Ramos (2008) point out that this exclusion occurs in the name of supposed urban development.

According to Serra (2023), the black population living in the fields and in the forest carries out economic activities such as family farming, handicrafts, fishing, and extractivism. However, these populations face difficulties due to climate change, due to the lack of financial and technological resources, access to land and territories in the countryside and forest, as highlighted by Silva and Gomes (2021).

Belchior et al (2021) draw attention to the existence of the black population in the Amazon, emphasizing the need to make it visible. The Black Coalition for Rights (2023) highlights that black communities in the countryside and forest face environmental degradation due to a predatory development model adopted by the State. Vasconcelos (2020) observes the decrease in natural assets that have historically kept quilombola communities in the fields and in the forest. Serra (2023) highlights that the increase in temperature interferes with agricultural activities and water availability, causing damage to the main agricultural crops in quilombola territories (corn, beans, cassava, among others), affecting the source of income and daily food.

Matos (2021) highlights the impacts of deforestation, mining, and wind energy on quilombola communities. Aguiar (2022) highlights the fires that have affected ethnic territories for a long time. Herculano and Pacheco (2018) mention the migration of quilombola people to large urban centers in search of better living conditions due to environmental problems. Balieiro et al (2023) point out the importance of quilombola communities in the debate on the "decarbonization of the planet". They emphasize that the regularization of ethnic territories, especially quilombola communities, is essential for reducing deforestation.

According to the Quilombola Census (2022), developed by the IBGE, only 12.4% of quilombola communities in Brazil have their territories delimited. This means that 87.6% of quilombola communities still do not have their territories officially regularized. According to the Black Coalition for Rights (2023), it is extremely important to regularize ethnic territories, such as those of quilombola communities, since the reduction of global warming depends on the elimination of deforestation. However, according to Terra de Direitos (2023), if the current pace of land regularization of quilombola territories continues, it will take at least 2188 years to fully title the 1802 regularization processes initiated by INCRA.

To illustrate the importance of regularizing quilombola territories, within the process of combating global warming, the experience of the quilombola communities of the Ribeira Valley can be taken as a reference. These communities develop important relationships with nature, providing what they need to survive and in return collaborate for preservation. Over the course of 300 years, these communities have practiced what Santos (2015) called territorial involvement with the environment, which according to Pasinato (2018), has helped

to preserve the largest continuous stretch of Atlantic Forest in the country, of the remaining 7%, 21% are preserved in the Ribeira Valley.

This territorial involvement made it possible to emerge what IPHAN (2020) called the traditional quilombola agricultural system, characterized by its diversity of crops, which includes both temporary and permanent crops, and by the maintenance of ancestral practices of land and biodiversity management. This system formed by a set of knowledge and techniques applied in the cultivation of plants used for food, medicine and material culture.

The traditional agricultural system of the communities of the Ribeira Valley was recognized as Brazilian Cultural Heritage in 2018 by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN). According to Munari (2009), the quilombola communities of the Ribeira Valley develop a traditional system that uses the swidden, which consists of felling and burning the vegetation of demarcated areas of forests for planting.

In this way, according to Ribeiro Filho (2015), these communities inhabit and manage the Atlantic Forest in a way that contributes to the maintenance and conservation of the environment in the region. It has become the most preserved and conserved sector in the state, standing out from other regions of São Paulo, which do not have quilombola communities and have a high level of deforestation.

According to Ribeiro Filho (2015) and Munari (2009), communities develop an agriculture integrated with the forest, balancing the need for production and the conservation of biodiversity, seeking to ensure better living conditions, through the production of their food, reducing the need for the market outside the communities.

For these and other factors, it is important to highlight how the black population has suffered from the consequences of climate change in the city, in the countryside and in the forest, defending black land, territories and territorialities as spaces of environmental and human life and, at the same time, fighting against environmental racism, drawing attention to the ethical and political issue that involves the discussions of climate change.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The black population has contributed to the debate on global warming, highlighting the ethical and political issues related to climate change in Brazil. Black-majority territories face environmental insecurity due to expropriation, pollution, extreme weather events, and lack of access to basic sanitation services. The lack of specific public policies aggravates these problems, resulting in an endless cycle of tragedies.

Black populations in the countryside and forests seek better living conditions in urban centers, as a consequence of climate change and social inequality, most of the time



contributing to slums and start living in risk areas. However, the black population also has the ability to help mitigate the consequences of climate change, especially through traditional quilombola knowledge and land demarcation. It is essential that the ethical and political issue involving climate change becomes an agenda of environmental movements, ensuring the participation of the black population in decisions on climate and environmental issues and promoting climate justice in Brazil.

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