



# Emancipatory Urban Greening in the Global South: Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Dialogues and the Role of Traditional and Peasant Peoples and Communities in Brazil

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This article discusses theoretical, methodological and political issues related to urban greening in the Global South, as well as emancipatory alternatives to envisioning more inclusive, democratic, sustainable and healthy cities. We sustain that the role of traditional and peasant peoples and communities – including indigenous, quilombolas and others - is strategic for thinking about alternatives and actions aimed at the paradigmatic transition that surpasses the vision of Eurocentric modernity. It generates artificial barriers that divide countryside and cities, society and nature, life and economy, as well as subjects and objects in producing and sharing knowledge. These peoples and communities designates a diversity of social situations that have as a common denominator conditions of existence considered to contrast with “modernity,” situated on the margins of the representations of “development” and “progress” of the hegemonic economic and political powers. Our arguments are empirically based on experiences developed in Brazil with interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogues carried out in recent years. The events called “Meetings of Knowledges” brought together academic groups and different social movements and community organizations involving social struggles and topics such as health, environmental conflicts and justice, food security and sovereignty, agroecology, among others. These meetings intend to enhance intercultural and interdisciplinary interactions between agents working together in different territories with concrete knowledges and experiences. The contents generated by the debates held at these events and their developments depict social experiences that reinforce the underlying hypothesis behind this article: the social struggles involving the interaction between traditional and agricultural populations with urban spaces in the Global South provide important evidence for research agendas about emerging emancipatory processes related to urban greening. In the first part of the text, we analyze the historical, social and epistemological meaning of indigenous, *quilombola* and peasant peoples in the Brazilian context, analyzing both recent contradictions and threats, as well as their role in the emergence of ongoing emancipatory agendas, including interaction with cities. Finally,

we show examples related to social struggles, first of an indigenous ethnic group in the Amazon region, and then in two big Brazilian cities, involving social movements and community organizations that integrate actions for decent housing, sanitation, health care, and food along with the rescue of ancestral knowledge.

**Keywords:** emancipatory urban greening, Brazil, intercultural dialogue, Global South, traditional and peasant peoples

## INTRODUCTION: RETHINKING URBAN GREENING IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

This article aims to contribute to the theoretical, methodological and political issues related to urban greening in the Global South, as well as emancipatory alternatives to envisioning more inclusive, democratic, sustainable and healthy cities. The research is based on interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogues carried out in Brazil in recent years between academic groups and different social movements and community organizations involving social struggles and topics such as health, environmental conflicts and justice, food security and sovereignty, agroecology, among others. This involves both populations that live and politically act in typically urban spaces, as well as in the territories where the countryside, forest and the waters' populations live, which include the so-called traditional peoples and communities such as indigenous and *quilombolas* populations, and family and peasant agriculture. This terminology has been used in Brazil since 2008, when the National Policy for Comprehensive Health of Countryside, Forests and Waters Populations was created by the Ministry of Health (Souto et al., 2016), and subsequently also incorporated into documents from the environmental area that address Biodiversity protection. From the viewpoint of sustainability, these populations are related to different groups that have, due to their specific knowledges and ways of life, a strategic role throughout history in biodiversity conservation and the promotion of sovereignty and food security through the sustainable use and management of natural resources.

We consider it interesting using Brazil as example to discuss urban greening, as it is a country in Latin America with continental dimensions and where characteristics of the Global South and Global North coexist and collide in extreme ways. Brazil, as well as in other Latin American countries, has typical metropolitan regions of the Global North, guided by the modern State-Law-Science regulatory tripod, and whose populations are, in part, relatively more protected by the institutions and included in the formal market, either as elites and privileged classes, or as workers and citizens who fight for their rights, although the current context of deregulation and precariousness of labor laws are unfavorable to them. However, the persistence of the strong social inequalities in Brazil, which leaves unprotected a significant part of the population, cannot be exclusively justified by the capital-labor conflict in times of neoliberalism, or theories such as that of the dependence developed by Latin American intellectuals (Sunkel, 1969; Dos Santos, 1970). These perspectives

place inequalities as the result of exclusions caused by the incomplete development of productive forces, from the market operations and from more sovereign social and development policies to the country's possible rise to the group of so-called developed countries. However, racism and other forms of violence express a particular form of exclusion, the so-called radical exclusions, which ignore or despise other forms of being, living and knowing that are typical of peoples who lived in the former European colonies, established and later self-declared independent between the 16th and the 20th centuries (Santos and Meneses, 2014).

One important way to explain the existence and continuity of radical exclusions is reflected in the idea of a Global South that remains mainly in regions such as Latin America, Africa and Asia as an active construction of social and political non-existence. More than a geopolitical definition, it is a metaphor for the human suffering caused by radical exclusions resulting from colonial inheritances that affect not only the exploited workers, but all groups who are ontologically disqualified by the Eurocentric and capitalist modernity (Santos and Martins, 2021). The radically excluded groups encompass indigenous populations, Afro-descendants, agricultural workers, and even entire fractions of the racially and socially dominant groups, such as women and the LGBTQI+ community, although these latter two groups also suffer intersectional violence and discrimination in the context of the Global North, which are confronted through social struggles and agendas that are sometimes quite different in relation to the Global South. The Eurocentric modernity associated to the concept of the Global North imposes a radical exclusion, of an ontological and epistemological nature, which is related to cognitive injustice (Visvanathan, 2009), being simultaneously radical, invisible and ostracizing. This dimension of injustice is subtly combined with others and is behind phenomena such as racism, xenophobia and other types of violence against peoples and social groups considered ontologically inferior by Eurocentric modernity.

Therefore, the concept of the Global South is a complex one and corresponds to geographical, political and symbolic spaces, both in the countryside and cities, in which institutions that correspond to modernity are replaced by acts of plunder, violence and racism without the effective protection of laws and the State, even if these exist and are depicted as democratic. As Santos (2018) proposes, there is an abyssal thinking that separates the protection zones of the Global North from those that operate out of the violence and plunder that affect the populations and territories of the Global South. This idea is not exactly the result of irrationalities to be overcome by economic development,

social inclusion and education. The abyssal thinking result from conceptions of the world, values and rationalities that are considered superior in their ontological and epistemological dimensions; for this reason, other ways of being, knowing, living and connecting to nature are denied, despised, and made invisible by modernity.

Paradoxically, despite the historical violence that includes genocides and epistemicides, innumerable groups that have other forms of being, knowing and living still resist – such as indigenous, *quilombolas* populations, and agricultural workers – and are organized in social movements and community organizations. They currently preserve and reproduce values and conceptions of life, work, nature, sense of community, and spirituality that are typical of the Global South. Their social struggles and emancipatory processes cannot be delimited or understood only through social and health justices, or even by the defense of the environment, which constitute the idea of well-being of modernity aimed at a longer and more pleasurable life. To advance the dialogue with emancipatory resistances from the Global South, we believe it is necessary to incorporate other conceptions of justice to understand the current crisis as a broader civilizational crisis and to articulate agendas and processes. And that includes a greater dialogue with traditional and peasant peoples and communities who continue to be active in numerous social struggles, including in the urban context, beyond the critical agendas of urban greening typical of the Global North (Opitz et al., 2015).

The conceptual and methodological bases adopted by the authors and which support the article come mainly from the articulation of three interdisciplinary fields of knowledges: collective health developed in Latin America in the last 40 years to confront social and health inequalities in the region (Paim and de Almeida Filho, 1998); the political ecology that supports movements for environmental justice (or against environmental racism) through the understanding of social metabolism and environmental conflicts associated with the model of productivist and neo-extractive development (De Molina and Toledo, 2014); and finally, the post-colonial studies, especially the epistemologies of the South (Santos and Meneses, 2014), which expand the critique of capitalism by incorporating ontological and epistemological dimensions to the analysis of the continuity of colonialism (or coloniality) and patriarchy as axes of oppression and radical exclusion that affect mainly the populations of the so-called Global South.

These three fields provide the theoretical basis for proposing the four concepts of Justice (social, for health or sanitary, environmental, and cognitive) that we seek to promote aiming to confront social and ecological problems and propose actions together with social movements and community organizations, mainly in the Brazilian context (Porto, 2019a). The articulation of these four justices, as well as policies and actions that have social movements and community organizations as protagonists, provide the theoretical and empirical bases to envision utopian perspectives emerging from concrete social struggles, as well as the different knowledges that arise in the context of these struggles. The idea of emancipatory health promotion that has been developed is based on the reinvention of the very concept of

social emancipation underway in many of these struggles (Porto, 2019b).

Therefore, modernity, seen as permanently incomplete in the so-called developing countries such as Brazil, paradoxically brings with it potentials and social experiments of reinvention that can support the civilizational and paradigmatic transition toward new socioeconomic, political and cultural arrangements that can overcome the injustices created by the current hegemonic capitalist system. Even with recent setbacks in public policies and the resurgence in practices of social fascism, innumerable emancipatory processes continue to emerge, which point to the rescue and updating of knowledges and practices of traditional peoples and communities with ontologies and values that are counter-hegemonic to the Eurocentric and capitalist modernity. This provides a fertile ground to envision other economies that are more solidary and sustainable, community relations that are more convivial and harmonious forms of connecting with nature. Many of them exist and flourish like seeds, in present situations that point to other post-capitalist and post-colonial futures. For this reason, we believe that an important clue to rethink urban greening from the perspective of the Global South is to strengthen ongoing experiences in cities regarding their interactions with traditional and peasant peoples and communities.

However, the perception and expansion of emerging alternatives require not only intellectual and analytical tools developed by science and its methods. They demand new forms of co-labor-action, of sensitive methodologies (Fasanello et al., 2018) that blur the boundaries between science, art and politics. In other words, a “corazonar” (Guerrero Arias, 2010) of science that transcends the barriers of its supposed epistemic superiority. We believe that the interactions and re-existences of various movements and experiences of intercultural dialogues can reorient the ongoing emancipatory processes and Academy itself.

From a critical perspective, certain authors may consider that the Global South only updates previously used concepts, such as the Third World, of which use has fallen into disuse with the collapse of the Socialist Bloc and the end of the Soviet Union, being equivalent (or even analytically inferior) to that of peripheral or semi-peripheral countries within the scope of the capitalist world-system theory as opposed to the central countries that would correspond to the Global North (Wallerstein, 1979). However, although of great relevance, we consider this analysis to be limited for several reasons. For instance, this perspective has difficulties in incorporating social struggles that involve ethnic-racial, gender, cultural, ecological, spiritual or ontological dimensions, which intersect issues mainly from the Global South related to traditions despised by the Global North. These issues include the role of nature, community and spirituality that bring with them quite different perspectives, eventually opposed to the conceptions of development, economy, work, and well-being built by the Eurocentric modernity.

The context considered to be the most complex and relevant for thinking about the Global South comes from a wide range of works by politically engaged intellectuals that flourished after the Second World War. They encompass and can articulate different

contributions from the anti-colonial movement in Africa and Asia, from the World System theory (Wallerstein, 1979), the Subaltern Studies (Spivak, 1988); from the Dependency Theory and intellectual movements in Latin America, including the modernity/coloniality program (Quijano, 2000; Escobar, 2007); and the Epistemologies of the South, a synthesis work by Boaventura de Sousa Santos that aggregates and dialogues with the different aforementioned schools (Santos and Meneses, 2014; Santos, 2018). These references allow the articulation of different social struggles and knowledges arising from them, reinventing possibilities of social emancipation in the presence of the several ongoing crises, which disclose the limits of the utopias that guided and continue to guide the Eurocentric modernity.

The idea of an abyssal thinking proposed by Santos (2007) allows us to understand how different forms of oppression can exist in the same region, a country, a city or even in the same place of work due to two realities that coexist, the Global North and the Global South. The modern and Eurocentric Global North is currently represented by the spaces in which globalized capitalism expresses both its benefits and its most visible contradictions, but which can dialectically institutionalize the accomplishments of workers and citizens resulting from their social struggles. These are the spaces on “this side of things” of the abyssal line guided by knowledge-regulation based on the tripod of Science, Law and the modern State along with its institutions.

The Global South, more than a geographical space, represents the metaphor of human suffering that results from radical exclusions and, one should add, based on the contempt for other ways of being, living and knowing that diverge from the Eurocentric world. It is in this sense, that the Global South refers not only to the complaints, but to the announcements that bring hope and alternatives for the paradigmatic and civilizing transition rooted in the recognition and dialogue with other possible worlds, not just one universe, but a pluriverse (De La Cadena and Blaser, 2018) of relationships between humans and non-humans, including those who are seen as coming from other planes of existence (Santos and Martins, 2021). In these spaces the institutions that correspond to modernity (State-Law-Science) predominantly give way to forms of plunder and violence without the protection of Laws and the State, even if they exist and are said to be democratic. Thus, for the epistemologies of the South, the social struggles of the Global South must necessarily be anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-colonial and anti-patriarchal, based on the resistance and alternatives that will confront all these types of oppression, being by definition struggles that point to post-colonial and post-abyssal societies. The importance of the class struggle and other emancipatory struggles of the Global North is recognized, mainly focused on democracy, sustainability, inclusion and social protection. However, the denial of the social struggles of the radically excluded peoples characterizes a Eurocentric structuralism, albeit critical, which delegitimizes and secedes several struggles of the oppressed populations of the Global South. This is one of the problems of the critical academy in countries such as Brazil, strongly influenced by Eurocentric academic schools. To “decolonize” it means connecting ontological and epistemological issues to social struggles, which also implies appreciating theoretical and

empirical productions by intellectuals and social struggles from these regions, especially the historically most marginalized social groups and whose thinking's are daily delegitimized and ignored.

Therefore, the relations between the Global North and the Global South are complex and cannot be defined by geopolitical characteristics only. There are countries that represent stronger characteristics of the Global North by taking on a relevant role in defending the values of the Eurocentric Western modernity, as well as in the conduct and hegemony in the current globalized capitalism. However, at the same time, either because they were former colonies (such as the United States) or because they have undergone important migratory processes of populations coming from former colonies, they also have marked cultural and political characteristics of the Global South, with processes of radical exclusion that disregard and make invisible the ontological and epistemological dimensions of these subalternized social groups.

In recent years, the authors of this article organized two events entitled “Meetings of Knowledges,” to enhance intercultural and interdisciplinary interactions between agents working in Academia, in social movements and in different territories with concrete knowledges and experiences. The contents generated by the debates held at this event and its developments depict social experiences that reinforce the underlying hypothesis behind this article: the social struggles involving the interaction between traditional and agricultural populations with urban spaces in the Global South provide important evidence for research agendas around emerging emancipatory processes related to urban greening. We highlight some experiences involving intercultural and interdisciplinary dimensions that were discussed at the abovementioned meeting. They express countryside-city interactions of particular interest for research agendas connected to emancipatory processes: territory, food and care. More than strategic research topics, they all imply numerous social struggles in progress at different levels and regions of the planet that can help to articulate emancipatory agendas of the Global South and the Global North.

## EMANCIPATORY STRUGGLES IN CITIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH CONTEXT

### Paradoxes of Exclusionary Modernity in the Global South: Environmental Conflicts and Transformations of Urban and Rural Spaces in the Brazilian Context

In the colonial and capitalist context, the cities are guided by political and economic elites with their ideals of progress. Very often, the uncritical importation of urbanization perspectives ended up favoring the construction of artificial environments inappropriate for local climates, less resilient to the rain and insolation pattern that disregard “native” solutions. In general, they are built based on centuries of adaptations that generate better sanitation conditions and environmental sustainability. Therefore, it is to be expected that the construction processes of urban environments in these contexts are influenced by social agendas and struggles typical of the Global South, which

often present complex challenges not easily captured by critical theoretical approaches that are based on a modernization concept which excludes a significant part of sociodiversity.

Taking Brazil as an example, it underwent an intense expansion of urban areas, mainly throughout the 20th century. Much of this growth was due to the rural exodus to the cities, associated with a land concentration process, especially of public lands, by a small political elite, which was intensified with the Land Law of 1850 (Moreira, 2002). The latifundium remained the basis of the Brazilian agrarian structure ever since the first years of European colonization to the current days without the effective planning of social, economic, and infrastructure policies that would provide dignified and healthy circumstances for most Brazilian families.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, with the “March to the West” (and also to the North, toward the Amazon region), historically excluded groups, such as indigenous people, people of African descent, and peasants were recurrently expelled from their traditional territories, sometimes remaining “islanded” in the midst of the growing urbanization. That is why from 1,900 to 2,000 the urban population became 4.3-fold larger and nowadays ~85% live in urban areas (IBGE, 2017), mostly in the urban outskirts and slums with housing and sanitation deficits (Fernandes and Costa, 2012; IBGE, 2017).

This pattern continues up to the present day and is expressed in the presence of many social, environmental, and territorial conflicts in rural and urban spaces, with the latter increasingly expanding and influencing the first. In the countryside, the socio-environmental conflicts in recent decades are characterized by the export neo-extractivism of agribusiness, mining, and infrastructure projects, which face resistance from social and community movements linked to the agrarian reform and the demarcation of indigenous and *quilombola* lands. In the cities, real-estate speculation and gentrification driven by the finance, tourist, medical, and hospital capital or by major events (Olympics and World Cup) have intensified the socio-spatial processes of exclusion, with resistance organized by movements such as the Homeless Workers’ Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem-Teto*, MTST) (Rocha et al., 2017). Their fight is not just for housing, transportation and sanitation, but also for more democratic and inclusive cities.

The subtle complexity that characterizes these conflicts is highlighted when one thinks of the differences in emancipatory projects in the Global South, which are not limited to social inclusion, production and distribution of wealth proposed by the utopias of modernity that characterize the Global North. Here, the relevance of environmental and cognitive justice increases, as important dimensions for understanding the differences and possibilities of ongoing emancipatory agendas.

## People of the Fields, Forests, and Waters in the Countryside-City Interaction

Currently, many traditional, indigenous and *quilombola* populations coexist in the urban or peri-urban spaces of Brazil, in addition to those who insist on practicing family and peasant agriculture in areas increasingly threatened by

a disorderly urbanization. Generally, they are families that in the past were expelled from their original territories, migrated and are currently once again being threatened by urban policies that disregard and submit them to dynamics involving what Brazilian political geography scholars call the deterritorialization and reterritorialization (Haesbaert, 2004, 2009). These families are considered non-citizens by the Brazilian society, in addition to being landless. That is why, although many regions show economic development based on extractive economies such as the production of rubber, gold mining, large-scale mining of iron and bauxite, the exploration of timber, cattle raising, the construction of hydroelectric power plants, highways and waterways, and more recently, the production of grains (mainly soy), these people remain subject to a situation of poverty and oppression. They have been banished to the most degraded areas of large and medium-sized cities, even in Amazonian metropolises, such as the cities of Belém and Manaus.

As for other Brazilian regions, such as the Southeast, the South and the Northeast, their intense urbanization process started after the end of slavery (which occurred only in 1888, when black people went from “slaves” to “landless”) and mainly with industrialization process after World War II. However, even these regions also have traditional populations remaining in cities that, until a few decades ago, lived on family and subsistence farming, traditional fishing, seafood gathering and even hunting. Similarly to the whole of Latin America with its colonial heritage, the creation of cities in the region involves complex processes of a historical, political, economic, cultural, and environmental nature that are behind the violence, racism, and deep socio-spatial inequalities in the metropolises, including the creation of slums and the historical deficits of democracy and access to housing, sanitation, and health services.

At the same time that discriminated and marginalized populations in the Brazilian society were driven out of the countryside, in the last decades, entrepreneurial agriculture and, more broadly, the agroindustrial sector have become a strategic component of the Brazilian macroeconomic policy, becoming fundamental for the equilibrium of the trade balance and the stabilization of the economy, a position reinforced by the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso in the 1990s (Delgado, 2012). Agribusiness, favored by an international cycle of high commodity prices, has assumed a central role in the Brazilian society and economy, and has currently become the main obstacle to the agrarian reform, the recognition of traditional territories and the greening of cities, as well as the dissemination of an agroecological approach in the country (Caporal and Petersen, 2012). The maintenance of this configuration throughout the 2000s helps to understand how the country has become the largest international consumer of pesticides and the second in areas with transgenics crops, whereas, paradoxically, it has consolidated itself as an international reference in the construction of public policies in favor of agroecology (Schmitt et al., 2017). In this context, the country also ended up endorsing the maintenance of more than 4 million small and medium family production units, with a significant concentration of land, in which 0.91% of rural

establishments concentrate 45% of the entire agricultural area (Oxfam - Brasil, 2016).

Despite land possession restrictions and its historical marginalization in the scenario of Brazilian public policies, family, and peasant agriculture farming in the country has characteristics that comprise a wide mosaic of possibilities in different agroecosystems, with different degrees between subsistence farming and integration into the food market, as well as different levels of environmental degradation and preservation. This broad scenario includes agroecosystems in the northeastern semiarid region, in the *Pantanal* and in the *Cerrado* in the Midwest region, in the Amazon Forest in the North region, up to the remnants of the Atlantic Forest and *Pampas* in the Southeast and South regions, in the areas that comprise the bases of the Brazilian coast occupation between the 16th and 20th centuries.

Although surviving at increasingly adverse conditions, even with the growth of cities throughout the 20th century, green belts remained in their peripheries and surroundings, which were responsible for the supply of fresh food, since the focus of family farming beyond subsistence is, by definition, the internal market through the so-called “local and short food circuits,” while agribusiness is mainly focused on the international commodity market. Several indicators point out that family and peasant agriculture is responsible for a large part of the foods that comprise the Brazilian diet, such as fruits, vegetables, beans, cassava, coffee, and milk, among others. More than 80% of the rural establishments is family-owned and about 70% declare that they do not use pesticides, although a much lower number, about 2%, is recognized as organic agriculture (Niederle et al., 2013, Lima et al., 2020; Porto et al., 2020). Although counter-hegemonic, these data show the potential of family and peasant agriculture as the basis for the agroecological transition in Brazil.

Moreover, a striking characteristic of the Global South and Brazil is associated with the influence of traditional practices related to different cosmologies that are found in the Brazilian rural world, which involve, with different nuances and syncretisms, indigenous traditions, those of African origin and those related to peasants of Indo-European origin. This characteristic may contribute, according to our evaluation, to the construction of important emancipatory agendas and processes for the paradigmatic transition, including the context of urban greening.

## Recent Advances and Contradictions Related to Traditional Peoples and Communities and Peasants in Brazil

A relatively recent milestone of great importance for the traditional peoples and communities and peasants in Brazil was the constitutional reform carried out after the end of the military dictatorship. It officially ended in Brazil in 1985, although it was only in 1989 that Fernando Collor de Mello was elected president, the first president elected by popular vote since 1964, the year of the military coup that lasted more than 20 years. Indigenous peoples and *quilombola* communities had their rights guaranteed with the promulgation of the 1988 Federal

Constitution, also called the “Citizen Constitution.” It recognized indigenous peoples as full citizens for the first time in our history and put an end to the State tutelage that prevailed until then, simultaneously assuring them the right to exist, to subsist, to organize and to be represented autonomously and according to the traditions and social organization of each people. In the wake of the indigenous peoples’ successes, *quilombola* communities were also included in the Constituent Assembly, which defined that the State would have to demarcate all traditional territories in up to 5 years. The traditional peoples’ right to the land was considered an original right, that is, independent from the ratification by the State, which would only be responsible for the delimitation of indigenous lands and registering them as the collective heritage. It means that each people would have the right of usufruct, a timid component of the historical justice performed in Brazil considering its violent colonial past. After years of great effort by the black and peasant movements, *quilombola* communities were also included in the Constituent Assembly, but with a lower degree of legal security, as their land rights, unlike those of indigenous peoples, were subject to state recognition.

Unlike the advances for indigenous and *quilombola* communities, the results of the Citizen Constitution of 1988 were much less favorable regarding the possibilities of a broader and redistributive agrarian reform, which reflected the historical, economic and political power of the large landowners since the formation of the colonial Brazil and, later, in modern capitalist agriculture. This power remains to the present date, despite the several economic, political and technological cycles that were part of the Green Revolution and culminated in the power of modern agribusiness, which has established deep connections between agriculture and global industrial and financial capital in recent decades.

These factors are strategic to understand the weight of political conservatism and the bases of neoextractivism in the country’s development model remains hegemonic, with the increasing weakening of the developmental and industrial model forged after World War II. For authors such as Maia and Oliveira (2017), there was even a setback in the agrarian reform compared to the existing Constitution during the military dictatorship period. The result practically made agrarian reform unfeasible in the country due to bureaucratic requirements that favored only the large landowners, such as the payment required for the indemnity due to expropriations for social interest, as well as other gaps in the infraconstitutional legal provisions that hindered its implementation. Since then, the main pressures and advances in agrarian reform in Brazil have been generated by the organization of social movements such as the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (Landless Rural Workers Movement - MST) and its strategy of occupying unproductive land. Their actions have always involved many conflicts and violence on the part of the police forces and the judiciary, as well as armed actions by large rural landowners. Therefore, despite the advances and the relative elation with the promulgation of the Citizen Constitution of 1988, the Brazilian society has remained profoundly unequal and violent, with the maintenance of privileges and the perpetuation of an exclusion system that

reinforces the presence of an “abyssal line,” as proposed by Santos (2007).

The decades that followed the end of the military dictatorship in 1985 and the new 1988 Constitution brought about important changes, with the presence of some governments that implemented redistributive and inclusive policies in areas such as health, education, government programs to fight hunger and poverty, support for family farming, regularization of indigenous peoples and *quilombola* lands. At the same time, the cities started to develop housing and urbanization programs in slums and the outskirts, in addition to educational policies such as quotas for the poor and those of African or native indigenous descent. However, these were isolated accomplishments, although accelerated in the 21st century, during the years of *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers’ Party -PT) government.

Regrettably, there have been important setbacks in recent years after the political-institutional- media coup that removed President Dilma Rousseff from power in 2016, led to ex-president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva’s imprisonment in 2018 and then reached its peak with the election of a far-right government at the end of the same year. Although important, the social inclusion measures developed between the end of the military regime and the fall of President Dilma Rousseff were insufficient to reverse structural social inequalities and different forms of racism, with countless social achievements in recent decades being quickly reversed in a few years of retrograde neoliberal and conservative governments.

To understand this process, it is important to indicate that the more conservative sectors of society, although without a clear political expression after the end of the dictatorship, had been growing during the years of PT’s center-left coalition government. They were mainly driven by agendas such as the fight against crime, violence, and corruption, the defense of the traditional family values and religious intolerance and against the few advances related to the recognition of political minorities’ rights. The symbolic and political void left by the Catholic Church regarding its impasses in the presence of internal disputes that clashed conservative groups linked to the so-called Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement, with sectors whose pastoral action was based on the so-called Liberation theology, of a more progressive nature, came to be increasingly occupied by neo- Pentecostal evangelical churches. Herein, we highlight the prosperity theology that unites the Christian tradition, in a particular way, with capitalist modernity by associating, in a more explicit way, the spiritual and material success. This association is in the genesis of the analysis made by Max Weber in his famous book “The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism.” Although he focuses on the work ethics and wealth as a symbol of those who were blessed by God, the underlying idea is similar to that of neo-Pentecostal churches. However, in the latter, the constructed narrative has a more popular appeal and includes symbols of opulence, whereas before it was associated with a certain asceticism.

These churches, together with agribusiness, mining, the military sector and the financial market, are at the basis of the current far-right government elected in late 2018 agglutinates a

group of forces that, until recently, were part of the fragile center-left alliance and include sectors of great economic, political, and symbolic power, such as the hegemonic media. This strengthened a moral agenda of great appeal to the middle and popular classes, such as the selective fight against corruption by a conservative judiciary power influenced by the US geopolitical strategies that disseminated lawfare in the Brazilian judiciary (Santana, 2018).

In this complex context, some research groups have been working on the theoretical and methodological renewal to think about the construction of alternatives that articulate different fields of knowledge, social struggles, and movements. The present article is an expression of the search for this renewal.

## The Meetings of Knowledge and the Development of Sensitive and Collaborative Methodologies in Intercultural Dialogues in the Global South

The systematization of social struggles and emancipatory processes expressed in the context of the Global South can offer interesting signs related to urban greening. To illustrate this idea, we used as reference two events organized by the authors of this article in 2018 and 2019, entitled the “Meeting of Knowledges of Neepes” (Neepes, 2020). The objective was to enhance intercultural and interdisciplinary interactions between subjects working in Academia, in social movements and in different territories with concrete knowledges and experiences, be they leaders, activists, researchers, technical advisors, among others. It was a strategy aiming at the shared construction of research agendas and topics, exchange of experiences and conceptual frameworks that can support social struggles and the emancipatory processes for health, dignity and territorial rights.

The Meetings are also thought of as spaces for the experimentation of dimensions that are simultaneously epistemological and communicational, involving the articulation between scientific, artistic and popular languages in the interaction and dialogue processes, in addition to strengthening the work in cooperation networks.

A central aspect of this proposal for the carrying out of intercultural dialogues is the dilution of boundaries between the theoretical-conceptual and methodological dimensions, aiming at producing knowledge, not *about*, but *with* the social subjects who are present in the social struggles. Contrary to what the dominant scientific canon of Northern epistemologies defends, based on the ideas of objectivity, neutrality and reproducibility that stringently separate subject and object, producing knowledge *with* is usually much more complex and challenging. This collaborative theoretical-methodological attitude implies processes of inter-knowledge and self-knowledge, fundamental to the ethical and political dimension of knowledge aimed at social and community transformation.

Therefore, we have relied on the concept of non-extractive collaborative research (Santos, 2018), which has been resignified as sensitive co-labor-active methodologies (Fasanello et al., 2018, Porto et al., 2021). Different languages, such as academic-writing, graphic-imagery, poetic-musical and audiovisual, have been used as strategies to create the conditions for an

intercultural dialogue that overcomes the limits of the scientific language logocentrism and facilitates communication with social movements and community organizations (Fasanello et al., 2018). It is a matter of connecting them to the spheres of feeling and thinking, reason and affection, also called by Guerrero Arias (2010) as “corazonar.” By prioritizing the making of audiovisual documentaries together with articles, books and reports, we also rely on the theoretical-methodological proposal of the sociology of images by Cusicanqui (2015), in which the audiovisual emerges as a possibility for sensitive elaborations in the territories that simultaneously integrate the political, aesthetic and epistemological dimensions that make the alternative narratives visible. For the production of the Meetings, militant artists were invited to work with the discussion groups in the production of poetic-musical and graphic-imagery reports, including languages such as rap, *repente* and *cordel* (cultural expressions from northeastern Brazil that use rhyming verses), poetry slam, indigenous visual and graffiti artists, among others.

The last event in 2019 was focused on a key topic for the article and was called “The Countryside in the City: resistances, (re)existences, and interculturalities in care and food” (Neepe, 2020). Its objective was to develop the countryside-city relationship based on the interactions of knowledges, experiences, resistances, and transformations involving traditional peoples and communities, whether indigenous, *quilombolas* or others of African origin, but also the populations of peasants and traditional fishermen. As previously discussed, the set of this vast pluriverse of social groups has been referred to in Brazil as populations of the countryside, forests and waters. Despite the intense rural exodus and the rapid industrialization and urbanization processes throughout the 20th century that characterize the socio-spatial inequalities in Brazil, these populations remain alive and participate in countless social struggles and political agendas in the country, which are often simultaneously anti-capitalist and anti-colonial, including inside or near growing urban spaces (Porto, 2019b; Neepe, 2020).

The choice of participants involved at least two of the following criteria: (i) being part of a social movement, community organization or academic group working on the central topic of the Meeting; (ii) being involved in one or more environmental conflicts involving traditional populations in urban contexts, having the “Map of Conflicts Involving Environmental Injustice and Health in Brazil” as reference, a project coordinated by Neepe (Fasanello et al., 2018); (iii) have partnerships with researchers from Neepe, based on research projects. The Meeting was attended by 67 people from several Brazilian regions, 23 of whom linked to academic groups and, of the remainder, 16 linked to community organizations and urban social movements, 11 from indigenous organizations, 9 from rural organizations, and 8 linked to the black and *quilombola* movements.

In this event, we sought to advance the debates on how to strengthen the co-presence of social subjects from social struggles that are often made invisible, with their knowledges, practices and languages, aiming at more effective dialogical

processes. How can one build an ecology of knowledges with such different populations living in these territories of intercession (and exception) on the increasingly blurred borders between cities, fields, forests and populations living from their relations with the sea, rivers, and waters? Therefore, the conceptual and methodological consolidation of the emancipatory processes was sought, with the effective participation of subjects who bring their lives, values, knowledges and struggles and, respectfully, dialogue with other struggles and knowledges in the construction of this process of sharing their dilemmas, conflicts and the solutions developed by them, according to Freire (1998).

On the 1st day of the event, two tables were set up with speakers talking about territorial experiences, social and academic movements, aiming to present and discuss references that would inspire the collective debate on the day after the meeting. Under the title “The countryside in the city: contributions and resistances of traditional and peasant peoples and communities,” the speakers at the first table presented their experiences, highlighting how urbanization affects the territories and how traditional peoples and communities have organized themselves to resist deleterious pressures as much as to establish interfaces with urban movements that fight for housing, the right to the city and more inclusive, healthy and democratic spaces. The second table, entitled “Care and food: challenges in the encounter between the countryside and the city,” the speakers presented their experiences of care rooted in the knowledges found in the territories of traditional and peasant peoples and communities.

On the 2nd day of the Meeting, three Working Groups (WGs) aimed to share experiences and promote a debate around three axes: territory, care, and food. Aiming to promote an ecology of knowledges, there was a diversified distribution in all groups from the different social movements, community groups and academics present at the meeting. Each group received a set of questions that stimulated debate and sharing. In addition to the specific questions of each axis, the groups received four questions that were created based on conceptual, methodological, and political challenges considered to be strategic in the countryside-city relationship: (1) about the ecology of knowledges and interculturality in the relationship between academia and social movements, and between the countryside and the city; (2) about the enchantment, the spirituality, and relationship with nature found in the cities; (3) on the democratic challenge, coexistence, and tolerance involving sociodiversity in the interaction of populations such as indigenous peoples, *quilombolas* and peasants in urban spaces; (4) the identity challenge in the countryside-city interaction.

Based on these questions, debates emerged from the experiences related to the specific axis of each group (territory, care, and food) and the transversal topic of the Meeting (countryside-city relationship based on the interaction of traditional peoples and communities), which were partially recorded on video, with reports also being produced using three types of languages: poetic-musical, graphic-imagery, and written language, the latter made by people linked to academic groups. These recorded materials were used as the basis for the syntheses and analyses presented below.



## Synthesis of the Debates in the Working Groups: Territory, Care, and Food

The Territory WG focused on the guiding question: how are the struggles for territorial rights carried out by peoples, communities and movements that are traditionally linked to the countryside, forests and waters in their relationship with the cities? Through the idea of territorial rights, the aim was to encompass multiple aspects regarding the concept of territory, from land demarcation, seen beyond its legal dimensions, to the right to share common goods and public spaces related to the production and access to healthy foods, housing, mobility, sacred spaces, and the performance of important rites for traditional groups. The importance of territories in recovering and valuing ancestral traditions and knowledges, crucial as reference action points in the presence of contemporaneity crises, was emphasized. Processes of deterritorialization that bring stress, in different ways, to these populations and their ways of life, which make the successful synergies in the construction of other possibilities in the countryside-city relationship unfeasible, were also denounced.

An important example are the struggles for the demarcation of indigenous lands as a strategy to rescue and value their tradition and ancestry, in a dynamic of resistance and counter opposition to the processes of accumulation through the spoliation of processes linked to agribusiness, agro-extractivism, and urbanization. These processes even threaten society as a whole, considering that the guarantee of indigenous territories allows the conservation of several common goods and the recovery and appreciation of an important framework of knowledges about how we can preserve them.

The main question for the Care WG was: What experiences of care do traditional peoples and communities bring, resist and reinvent in the proximity to cities? The aim was to promote a debate related to the knowledges and practices of health protection, attention and promotion, including care for specific and vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant women, the elderly, people with mental suffering, victims of violence and racism. A set of successful care experiences promoted in different territorial contexts by traditional peoples and communities was shared. Different concepts of care were shared, which reinforce its multidimensionality, extrapolating the hegemonic idea of treating diseases, disabilities or mental suffering, as seen in the following statements. To care is "...not letting anyone go hungry, it's putting yourself in someone else's shoes." "...have feelings together means strengthening relationships, each warrior who falls, all relatives cry." "...sharing, welcoming and building a world of respect, as opposed to the prevailing climate of competition."

In the different speeches, the idea of care was related to ancestry and spirituality, with intergenerational affective, gender, community, and intercommunity relationships (transscale, because they join the local and the global), involving resistance and struggles for land and housing rights. The affective and collective dimensions of care were also highlighted, in contrast to the individualistic and utilitarian logic that prevails in the Western and capitalist scientific medicine. The inseparability of

care, territory, nature and food was highlighted. Additionally, tensions and conflicts that make traditional peoples and communities vulnerable in the face of the prevailing logic in biomedicine, which distance them from their autonomy, were denounced.

Finally, the following question guided the Food WG: how do the production, circulation and distribution of food, its quality and/or lack, contribute (positively or negatively) to the sovereignty and food security of traditional peoples and communities and the city populations? The aim was to reflect on food based on the experiences of traditional peoples and communities' movements, peasant family agriculture and agroecology, observing how they resist and create alternatives in their relations with cities. Moreover, we sought to discuss food from an intercultural perspective, related to the exchanges of knowledge and tastes, care, and spirituality.

The potential of territorialized experiences that seek food and nutrition sovereignty and security with ecologically sustainable and socially fair foods was emphasized. The need to guarantee that healthy foods are accessible to the most socioeconomically vulnerable people in cities and the countryside was highlighted, and not just another "market niche." In this sense, the experiences of the Movement of the Homeless Individuals of Bahia (MSTB, *Movimento dos Sem-Teto da Bahia*) in two occupations in the city of Salvador, state of Bahia, were highlighted; as well as the Serra da Misericórdia Integration Center (CEM, *Centro de Integração da Serra da Misericórdia*). These experiences unfolded into one of the research projects that are currently being developed by the authors of this article, which will be discussed later.

Also highlighted was the potential of interchanging and exchanging experiences between production and supply initiatives: "exchange is power!" was the motto of this discussion. At the same time, several concepts of food emerged, explaining its multidimensionality. Finally, threats to the experiences of food security and sovereignty were denounced, with the debate of urgent issues, such as the growing use of pesticides in agriculture, which directly impacts the health of those who work with agriculture and the production of organic foods; the threats to common goods and their importance to guarantee food security and sovereignty, especially access to land and water, and the issue of preserving and recovering traditional knowledges related to food.

On the 3rd day of the meeting, the three WGs shared the results of the debates. The presentations explained the potential of sensitive collaborative methodologies (Fasanello, 2018) in promoting intercultural dialogues between subjects from the territories and academic researchers through the use of other languages. In addition to written reports, graphic-imagery (drawing and painting) and poetic-musical (rap, *cordel*, and slam poetry) reports were made by artists with experiences with social movements. In this sense, the presentations showed that the current moment demands resistance and articulations between movements, organizations, academic and public institutions, at local, national and international levels. In a context of social, ecological, democratic, and institutional crisis, the participants showed that territory, care and food intersect at the material,

political, and spiritual levels. These synergies point to the strategic importance of continuing the successful experiences that celebrate and nourish with hope the democratic coexistence and the construction of utopias.

Below, a painting made at the Meeting by indigenous artist Denilson Baniwa is presented as an example, as well as an excerpt of the poem written by a rural and agro-ecological movement activist, Maicon Vieira, characterized by the cultural tradition of Northeastern Brazil. In the case of the poem, *cordel* is a folk-popular poetry often written in rhyme form, which originates from oral reports and is usually printed in pamphlets, although it can also be sung.

Graphic-imagery report by Denilson Baniwa



Excerpt from the poetic-musical report by Maicon Miguel Vieira da Silva

(Translated to English by Sonia Strong)

Brazil,  
 your time has come.  
 To listen to Marias, Mahins, Marielles, Malês \*,  
 To look for a place to talk about interculturality.  
 In care, food and the countryside in the city,  
 The resistances, the existences and their diversity.  
 An open-sky place, with an indigo background,  
 Where we can look at ourselves, reporting what we felt.  
 We found this place at the Roots of Brazil (...)  
 So large are these reports, which make us reflect.  
 In each gesture, an action, making us feel,  
 reinforcing the need for us to (re)exist.  
 (Re)existing in art, (re)existing in culture, (re)existing in the  
 food that comes from agriculture, (re)existing through the herbs  
 that bring us so much cure.  
 What is science? What is revolution? Do we have the answers  
 for this consideration?  
 For the answers teach us to walk with our feet on the ground.

*On the ground of knowledges, on the ground of diversity, on the ground of resistance, on the ground of equality, on the ground of territories that guarantee liberty.*

*A point of balance,*

*we must find,*

*between academic knowledges and popular ones, too.*

*Because the inexistence of this meeting is a challenge I point out,  
 Which prevent us from advancing (...)*

*We must come together, walking side by side, academy and territory are allies in this fight, defending the right to life and food, which is sanctified.*

*Our writings and knowledges must talk to each other.*

\*Mahin was a tribe of the African nation Nagô; Malês was the term used in Brazil in the 19th century to designate African people of Islamic origin brought as slaves to Brazil who organized an uprising in 1835 in the State of Bahia; and Marielle Franco was a Brazilian politician, feminist, socialist, and human rights activist who was brutally murdered in 2018. In 2019 two former police officers were arrested and charged with the murder of Marielle Franco.

Aspects that permeate the disputes in various territories, affected by transformations in the neoliberal and neextractivist capitalism, were evident in the final evaluations of the Meeting by the participants. Conflicts over land are worsening, in a process of resistance against agribusiness, mining and energy production, as well as housing spaces and spiritual practices, injured by real estate speculation and intolerant and violent religious fundamentalism, with increasingly more fragile democratic institutions and policies. In this sense, the presentations showed that the current moment demands resistance and articulations between movements, organizations, academic, and public institutions, at local, national, and international levels. In a context of social, ecological, democratic and institutional crisis, the participants showed that territory, care, and food intersect at the material, political, and spiritual levels. These synergies indicate the strategic importance of continuing the successful experiences that celebrate and nourish with hope the democratic coexistence and the construction of utopias.

The Meetings of Knowledges have shown the importance of the territories where the rural and the urban interlace, resulting in fertile spaces for establishing dialogues around social and environmental conflicts, as well as ongoing experiences that indicate possibilities of knowledges and practices to be better investigated, and which have been changing into agendas and research projects that bring new perspectives to discuss urban greening. Below are some examples toward this direction.

## The Case of Urban Expansion and the Challenges for the Munduruku People in the Middle Tapajós River in the Amazon Region

Regarding the *Munduruku* people of the Middle Tapajós River, whose representatives were present at the 2018 Meeting,

the cooperation was initially developed from the demand for institutional support to assess the impacts of mercury contamination associated with mining, as well as alternatives aimed at socio-environmental and cultural sustainability in order to promote health in the presence of the threats faced by them. In the project that was initially developed (Rocha and Porto, 2020), the interconnections between the processes that take place in the countryside and in the urban areas of the Amazon region became evident. They highlight how the economic dynamics based on the extraction of gold and forest products shape the economy of a city and put pressure on the villages closer to that people, limiting their social reproduction, territoriality, access to land, fishing and agricultural production activities. Based on the intercultural dialogue and interdisciplinary perspectives with this ethnic group, with the support of the reflections generated during the Meetings, new research questions were asked.

For instance, to understand the territorial and environmental conflicts surrounding gold mining and others existing in the Middle Tapajós river region, the question of the meaning of the value of gold for the *Munduruku* and non-indigenous people (called *pariwat* in their native language) is raised. Additionally, whereas the main problem in the villages farthest from Itaituba lies in the contamination of fish by mercury, in villages undergoing the process of urbanization they also face issues associated with real estate speculation, the disordered expansion of the urban area driven by the mining economy the appropriation of river banks for the installation of logistical terminals for the transportation of mineral, timber and grain farm (soy) production or the construction of roads and railroads that cut through the territory, preventing the continuity of traditional indigenous agriculture and fishing activities, submitting them to the same dilemmas of the peripheral populations of large metropolises.

Other important issues emerge to consider socioenvironmental topics influenced by the urban expansion. For instance, the meanings of food and fish in the *Munduruku* cosmology in comparison with the recommendations of the WHO and health research institutions about findings on mercury contamination, whose medical and toxicological recommendations impose rules that restrict the consumption of several important fish in different dimensions of that people's life. Because in the *Munduruku* cosmogony, fish have symbolic and spiritual meanings that cannot be disregarded based only on so-called technical-scientific recommendations.

The indigenous concept is not limited to a matter of access or exchange of animal protein sources. Just as it is not any piece of land that can be used by the *Munduruku* people to exercise their territoriality, and not all fish can be eaten, not by anyone, at any given time. The choice of what to eat, who eats it and when one does it, does not obey a utilitarian logic based only on the availability of animals in the river at certain times of the year, but also on a ritual logic that creates taboos about the consumption of certain fish species and encourages the consumption of others, including as part of self-care strategies.

The broth made of certain species is seen as imbued with curative powers, even for those situations during the life cycle in which people are subject to what they would call “diseases of the

spirit.” The care of parturients is also mediated by the choices of fish consumption, with some types of fish being considered as not recommended in this situation, while others help in the postpartum recovery period. In summary, the choice of whether or not to consume these animals cannot be mediated just by estimating how many milligrams of mercury are found in each kilogram of each species.

The relationship of the *Munduruku* people with rivers goes beyond mediating the health- disease-care process. The safety of the world itself would be associated with the relationships established with the beings that protect the river, as exemplified by the excerpt of a letter sent by them to the Brazilian government during the debates on the construction of a hydroelectric power plant in the municipality of São Luis do Tapajós:

*“São Luiz do Tapajós (Joropari kôbie) [is] an ancient place of the Munduruku existence, who lived there at that waterfall. The white people know nothing about that place. There is a hole in the middle of the waterfall that some ancient residents, who are not Munduruku, say there is a huge hole there, called the “devil’s throat”; anyone who is pulled down there, in that current, and is swallowed, will never appear and nobody will ever see them again. You can’t touch the waterfall and disasters can happen. The mother of the fish lives there, in the shape of a river dolphin, and some people who live there have seen this animal. So, the fish are happy to see her and the tapirs usually fall into the water in that place, where the mother is. According to the spiritual leader, the shaman warned that there should be absolutely no changes in that place, and if someone changes anything or destroy that sacred place, which belongs to the mother of the fish, misfortunes can happen in people’s lives, it is a risk for all societies. These things, the non-Indian will never understand.”*

That is why, for the *Munduruku* people, it is so important to establish coexistence relations with the rivers, fish and animals. According to their cosmogony, the *Munduruku* world was created by the deity *Karosakayban*, as their people’s inheritance. It is in this socio-environmental and cosmological context that food security and sovereignty alternatives have started to be thought of through an intercultural dialogue. This involves both fish farming activities, raising fish that are irreplaceable for them, under conditions that can protect them from mercury contamination, and the dynamization of traditional agricultural systems based on the promotion of indigenous agroecology in the region, which is seen by the main leaders as a desirable alternative to mining. For this purpose, a support network started to be built, involving agroecological and indigenous organizations, which have been working toward this direction at the regional and national levels. In addition to guaranteeing adequate food that respects the agroecosystems and indigenous culture, the idea is to create alternatives that generate income, considering the seductive idea of gold mining as a quick way to create wealth in villages that are increasingly impoverished and excluded from public policies; unable to maintain their traditional economic and subsistence activities. The economy of gold, soy and timber production, not only make the *Munduruku* way of life unfeasible in the end but is also paradoxically presented to them as an alternative to hunger and poverty.

This subordination is systematically stimulated by the government through educational, health or social security policies, which aim to integrate the villages into the non-indigenous way of life, especially through the concentration of the main public services in nearby municipalities. This encourages the migration of young people, both to study, to work or to have access to more complex health treatments. Thus, interethnic relationships are established, in which the traditional *Munduruku* knowledge is systematically despised, delegitimized and disregarded, starting with the loss of fluency in the language and signs learned in the forest, increasingly replaced by the predominant Portuguese language and by an urbanized way of life. Hence the importance that has been given to the indigenous school where the *Munduruku* language is spoken and taught, alongside Portuguese.

## Two Experiences of Articulation Between Social Struggles for Housing, Sanitation, Health, and Urban Agroecology in Brazil

Another important initiative furthered by the Meetings was the construction of a research agenda, aiming to systematize the knowledges and practices led by the Homeless People Movement of Bahia (*Movimento dos Sem-Teto da Bahia*, MSTB), in two occupations in the city of Salvador, state of Bahia; and the Serra da Misericórdia Integration Center (*Centro de Integração da Serra da Misericórdia*, CEM), in a slum complex in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Both organizations have actions that articulate topics such as the right to housing, sanitation and health in conditions of high socio-environmental vulnerability.

Even in the context of the expansion of the Covid-19 pandemic over these territories, several actions are underway to investigate how these collectives' initiatives can have a protective effect in times of severe crises, such as the current sanitary one. These two territorial experiences connect innovative actions in agroecology, food sovereignty and food and nutritional security, popular housing, ecological sanitation, self-care and environmental preservation, seeking to increase community resilience and promote equity and sustainability.

In the context of the sanitary crisis caused by the pandemic, these actions, which have been ongoing for several years, have gained greater dynamism and public expression, indicating an important inflection in the debates related to health and food, by seeking to guarantee good-quality and enough amounts of food for the populations in peripheral contexts of further social, environmental and nutritional vulnerability. Moreover, these initiatives increase an intercultural and intergenerational view of health through alternative care practices that value indigenous, agriculturalist and African ancestral knowledges, including those preserved by *quilombola* communities, with the participation of women and young people.

The CEM experience involves food production in urban agroecological yards, the sale of healthy foods, donations and exchanges aimed at vulnerable individuals in the *Complexo da Penha* and *Serra da Misericórdia*, in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The organization has also supported a set of actions with the objective

of promoting income generation, especially among women, and communication to disseminate its actions.

In the two popular occupations in the city of Salvador, in the state of Bahia, the MSTB has sought to articulate their efforts aiming at housing and health promotion with the production of healthy foods and medicinal plants. The community vegetable garden structured around the *Quilombo Paraíso and Quilombo Manoel Faustino* occupations encourages the production of herbal medicines and the rescue of their ancestral knowledges, giving rise to what they call the "Living Pharmacy," which has been an important alternative for the prevention and treatment of diseases. Currently, the movement has sought to promote the implementation of Agroforestry Systems in these occupations and in the surrounding *Bacia do Cobre*, an official environmental protection within the city. The actions seek to influence state housing policies that have historically been based on Cartesian urban planning, where popular housing projects are seen only as places to live, without spaces for leisure, commerce, production and other important situations for coexistence and the establishment of community bonds.

For MTSB and CEM, it is important that popular communities in cities or urban outskirts be seen as more than just apartment blocks or clusters of houses that reproduce a highly segregated city model that characterize the Global South. On the contrary, the popular territories are seen by these movements as spaces to rescue a certain rurality that was lost with the exodus, where families produced their own food or did it collectively, and their ancestral knowledges was valued. For this reason, the two organizations have promoted workshops with leaders who present their ancestral knowledges and offer the communities their indigenous values and practices, of African and agriculturalist origin, focused on health care and food.

## Final Considerations

The article sought to support the idea that the concept of urban greening has its own specificity in the context of the Global South. In the Brazilian context, this necessarily involves the understanding of the complex relationship between traditional peoples and communities and family and peasant agriculture, and that their existence and forms of mobilization through current social struggles express a vast pluriverse of different hues and hybridizations. In general, we highlight three population groups that work through social movements and community organizations: the indigenous people, *quilombolas* and those who work in family and peasant agriculture.

Even though they are characterized as countryside, forest and water populations, the enormous expansion of urban spaces in the country has been promoting a growing countryside-city interaction. At the same time that it degrades ecosystems and traditional ways of life of these populations, this interaction provides countless experiences of resistances and re-existences that indicate new conceptions of nature, care and common goods inside the cities and in the surrounding ecosystems. In this sense, the intercultural dialogue can strengthen the inter-knowledge between the cosmological meaning of sacred spaces and the scientific recognition based on ecology of the vital importance of

certain landscapes or rivers. This makes it possible to strengthen conceptions and public policies that, in the field of Law, have come to recognize rivers as rights holders.

In this context, the Meetings of Knowledges work as strategic spaces that improve the action of academic groups engaged in the production of knowledge in the presence of multiple action fronts of community movements and organizations that are mobilized in social struggles. Ultimately, they aim to strengthen the acknowledgment of the countless possibilities of being, knowing and expressing themselves in the world, present in the cultures, worldviews and practices of indigenous people, peasants, *quilombolas*, workers and residents of slums, occupations and urban outskirts that characterize the emancipatory processes of the Global South.

It is from this perspective that we consider that the reduction of social, environmental, spatial, cognitive and health inequalities and vulnerabilities in populations living in peripheral spaces represents an extremely complex challenge for the thinking of urban emancipatory and greening processes. These are social contexts and struggles that are inherent to the Global South, characterized by models of housing, sanitation, education, health and environmental preservation that disregard the way of life of these populations and impose an exclusionary, territorial organization logic, oriented almost exclusively toward the reproduction of international Capital and the expansion of the economic and political power of local elites. There is important evidence that, moreover, these contexts intensify ethnic-racial and gender inequalities, which make black and indigenous women and young people in these communities the main targets of violence, exclusion, poverty and even cooptation mechanisms, which disrupt the traditional social relations, with profound physical and psychological effects on families, which become fragmented and even involved in internal disputes.

In this sense, anti-hegemonic initiatives such as those carried out by CEM and MSTB, or under discussion by the *Munduruku* people, indicate instigating strategies for emancipatory health promotion together with urban greening. In common, regarding territorial experiences as ecologically and socially unique, as those in the basins of the Amazon river, in the northeastern coast and in the slums of Rio, they show the importance of agroecological approaches, popular strategies of health care, dignified housing and sanitation, while articulating knowledges and practices promoting sustainable and healthy urban, peri-urban or rural territories. Therefore, these are privileged cases of emancipatory health promotion as they integrate the reduction of vulnerabilities with four dimensions of justice: social, sanitary, environmental, and cognitive, the latter associated with radical exclusions involving anti-racist, feminist struggles for cultural-epistemic diversity and community autonomy. An additional important aspect, on which the authors have been working in different ongoing research projects is the support aimed at the strengthening

and creation of Agroecology Networks, whether indigenous or urban ones.

We understand, therefore, that all the aforementioned experiences, more than strategic research topics, are the emblematic expressions of innumerable ongoing social struggles at different levels, scales and regions of the planet that can contribute to articulate the emancipatory agendas of the Global South and the Global North.

Finally, we also consider noteworthy the proposals that the Meetings of Knowledges end up generating for the social struggles that are expressed in the Global South, in addition to the debates around more concrete research actions. In this sense, we highlight the production of audiovisual records, with documentaries that can be used in different spaces and as a support element for collective debates; as well as in the production of research and academic works, which can provide greater visibility to territorial struggles and indicate research topics and methodological postures that are relevant to the individuals from the territories and the researchers. These documentaries, with subtitles in many languages, can contribute to the intercultural processes of inter-knowledge and the construction of counterhegemonic narratives through the sharing of values, knowledges, and experiences, thus helping the dialogue between emancipatory processes in the Global South and the Global North. This includes bringing the meaning of urban greening created in the contexts of the Global North closer to the complex processes that involve populations and communities of the countryside, forests, and waters in the interaction with urban spaces in countries such as Brazil.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions generated for the study are included in the article/supplementary materials, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MP initially conceived the proposal, the structure, and the main contents of the article. MF on sensitive collaborative methodologies. DdR in the field of political ecology and traditional peoples and communities, especially indigenous peoples. JP on the agrarian and peasant question, and on agroecology. All authors participated in the general review of the article.

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