

Bodies-territories and intersectionalities: contributions to public health surveillance

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THEMATIC ARTICLE

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Abstract *Multiple bodies and territories experience impacts, conflicts, and socioenvironmental injustices in different ways. The consequences of the neoextractivist accumulation patterns weigh differently on women, especially non-white women. This text brings narratives of a wide range of women who live in different territories and experience different impacts from major undertakings. Through their narratives, we seek to understand how they constitute their territorial bodies; how they are impacted; and how they resist colonialist domination, defend life, and restore health. These impacts affect women's means and ways of life, and restrict their ways of being, power, and knowledge in these territories, rendering them vulnerable, subject to the precariousness of life, immersed in systemic intoxication, reaching situations classified as genocide. Faced with such threats, they manage collective resistance; trigger what makes them active subjectivity; and decolonize themselves as beings, knowledge, and power. In this way they defend life and restore their health and that of their environments. These experiences indicate ways to strengthen public health surveillance perspectives and networks.*

Key words *Body-territory, Socio-environmental conflicts, Feminism, Political ecology, Public Health Surveillance*

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Introduction

The expanded reproduction of capital on a global scale in the current context deepens the condition of Brazilian subaltern development as exporters of agricultural and mineral commodities. In a process of increasing commodification of nature and life, based on a model characterized by territorial dispossession, the deprivation of the ways of doing and being in the world of traditional peoples and communities constitutes an irreversible impact on biodiversity.

The socioenvironmental conflicts and injustices that permeate the processes of implementing and reproducing major undertakings impact multiple bodies and territories in different ways. In the modern-colonial and neoextractivist condition^{1,2}, major undertakings become territorialized and have profound consequences on the means and ways of life, especially on the health of those who inhabit these spaces. Recent studies on socio-environmental conflicts and injustices^{3,4} draw attention to how these impacts affect the most vulnerable populations, such as women, indigenous peoples, traditional communities, and peripheral populations, especially black people.

Such a complex theme requires an approach from a conceptual perspective of *Latin American Political Ecology*⁵, which makes it possible to understand socioenvironmental conflicts as disputes over territory and its assets crossed by power relations, as well as monitor overt resistance and struggles for environmental justice. This study favors the intersectional approach to analyzing these conflicts through contributions from ecofeminism, black feminism, decolonial feminism, and community feminism. When piecing together the genealogy of the concept of intersectionality, Vigoya⁶ showed the relevance of black feminism in criticizing white and universalist feminism. She emphasized the intersections between sex, race, and class as combined and inseparable inequalities and oppression that may occur in different ways, contexts, and cultures, and proposed the construction of a notion of cultural and historically placed intersectionality.

The present study contributes from an intersectional perspective that suggests the construction of a qualitative analysis of socioenvironmental conflicts and injustices, and their relationship with the construction of public health surveillance actions and networks. Adopting the perspective of decolonial feminism^{7,8}, this study strives to understand how bodies located in different conditions of class, race, gender, and

territories are affected and resist colonialist domination, as well as defend and recover health.

The narratives of a wide range of women were carefully selected in view of the richness of their individual journeys and life stories, in their roles as leaders of social struggles aimed at preserving the life and health in their bodies and territories when faced with the impacts of major undertakings. This is how the authors of the present article attempted to understand how these women constitute their bodies-territories; how they are impacted; and how they resist colonialist domination, defend life, and restore health, thus contributing to the development and betterment of public health surveillance actions.

Conflicts and socioenvironmental injustices through intersectional language in bodies-territories

Socioenvironmental conflicts involve disputes over material resources, geographic territory, and symbolic production, which are inherent to the logic of global neoextractivist accumulation⁹. Known as “accumulation through dispossession”, a new colonization is constituted based on the commodification of nature, which, as “development”, responds to the needs of agricultural products and minerals for transnational capital. According to Guevara and Moreira¹⁰, these impacts are significant in those areas rich in resources, with devastating consequences on biodiversity, traditional, and indigenous peoples, leading to forced relocation and destroying their ways of life, processes that, in a field of an unequal correlation of force, do not occur without resistance.

These conflicts occur in Brazil in urban centers, with an emphasis on issues related to social equity, and in rural areas, in general, due to the appropriation of natural assets or to the detriment of the cultural preservation of traditional peoples³. Socioenvironmental conflicts can be defined as “disputes between social groups arising from the different types of relationships they have with their natural environment”¹¹ (p.107). Resistance arises from this conflict, which goes beyond a clash against forms of capital accumulation and state action, as it also represents a field of symbolic and political dispute over the environment, where the affected groups aim to establish equality and justice in the defense of their social, territorial, and cultural rights in the use and appropriation of nature¹².

This reality is transversalized by the violence of global patriarchal power, generating specific

experiences of resistance that intersect class, gender, ethnicity, race, and age. Critical ecofeminism emphasizes that the marginalization of women and the destruction of biodiversity come from the patriarchal model:

*The main threat to nature and people comes from the centralization and monopolization of power and control, the impulse of which generates one-dimensional structures called 'monocultures of the mind'. Such cultures threaten biodiversity, like a disease, and create coercive structures that shape this diverse world of ours, biologically and culturally, on the privileged categories and concepts of class, race, and gender of a single species*¹³ (p.53).

Ecofemism focuses on environmental issues based on power relations transversalized by gender to address the plots of socioenvironmental conflicts and deconstruct the dualistic hierarchies that modernity has imposed on women and nature, which are regarded as being inferior, controllable, and commodifiable.

Maria Lugones^{7,8} introduced the category of gender and sexuality to the logic of racial and social classification of the coloniality of power "[...] I want to emphasize that the dichotomous and hierarchical categorical logic is central to modern capitalist and colonial thinking about race, gender, and sexuality"⁸ (p. 935). She states that it is "[...] only by perceiving gender and race as inextricably intertwined or fused that we truly see women of color"⁷ (p.82). In this context, resistance becomes the tension between subjectification (the formation/information of the subject) and active subjectivity, that minimal notion of agency, necessary for the relationship of resistance to be an active relationship, capable of questioning and deconstructing intersubjective and materially gender-based coloniality, affirming the construction of other possible intersubjectivities and materialities.

Cabnal^{14,15} and Cruz *et al.*¹⁶, together with other feminist authors of the indigenous community, have developed the concept of body-territory to explain how the processes of territorialization and deterritorialization affect their bodies and habitats in an intersectional way: "We think of the body as our first territory, and we recognize the territory in our bodies: When the places we inhabit are affected, our bodies are affected, when our bodies are affected, the places we inhabit are violated"¹⁶ (p.7). The body-territory is constituted by a human body that is produced in and with the physical territory: "We connect with the territories through the senses: we listen

to what the river tells us, we talk to the farms, the corn fields, and we laugh with the birds; that is, they are the senses that connect us to the territories"¹⁶ (p.7). Lorena Cabnal^{14,15} explains how indigenous women build collective resistance through socioenvironmental conflicts based on cosmogonic ecofeminist practices, which reconnect their bodies with the Earth and thus strengthen their ability to resist and recover their health and that of the Earth. The notion of health as expressed here is expanded, covering bodies, community ties, territories, as well as the Earth, and is based on self-care and care for the Earth.

The health perspective that emerges through collective resistance is expanded, as it is based on a biopsychosocial and cosmogonic relationship that is established between human bodies and the Earth. As they resist, they heal and restore their health. As they heal, they extend the health of the Earth. One cannot talk about health without referring to the contributions of Canguilhem¹⁷, in which health is considered to be the ability to produce variations in the environment with the production of new standards of life and the capacity for reinvention as a central aspect in the process of reconstructing the environment. In this sense, the ways of living are not dissociated from the cultural experiences of bodies and territories.

It is from this cosmogonic, biopsychosocial vision and intersectional perspective that a contribution is made toward expanding public health surveillance practices, toward living well, aimed at inserting public surveillance in dialogic health, structured in the daily praxis of territories, with work and the environment as driving forces for change, which are alive, in movement, emerging, and adaptive to the contexts of life and the populations that give life to the space and transform it into territories of life and the production of meaning. Thus, a commitment is made to public health surveillance based on the premise of valuing public and community participation, considering the different knowledge, values, and sociability that constitute cultural identities and territorialized affections as an instrument of struggle and social transformation¹⁸.

Path taken

As part of the "II International Seminar on the Denaturalization of Disasters and community mobilization: expanded crises, networks, and resistance", held in October 2021 and promoted by the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ)

as part of the general program, the authors of this study organized a workshop entitled “Intersectionality and major undertakings: collective forms of resistance”. This workshop enabled the participating public and researchers to listen to different voices, narratives of different experiences lived in different contexts in Brazil.

Considering that socioenvironmental disasters and intersectionalities are complex issues involving conflicts, rich experiences were selected that would contribute to the debate on collective health, specifically for public health surveillance. The authors of this study took advantage of their relationships and contact networks in the context of teaching, research, and extension to identify key speakers who, through their experiences, would enable them to analyze social processes that involve different territorial impacts, ethnic-racial identities, gender issues, and the construction of health and forms of resistance.

Thus, seven women were invited: Laura Ferreira, member of the National Coordination of Quilombos Movement (CONAQ); Maria Conceição de Sousa Pinto and Ana Félix, rural settlers of the Maceió Settlement, located in Itapipoca, Ceará; Cleomar Ribeiro da Rocha, member of the *Quilombola* Association of Cumbi, Aracati, Ceará; Ana Carla Cota, affected by the Doutor Minas Gerais dam; Juliana Kerexu, Chief of the Tekoa Takuaty, Cotinga Island, Paranaguá, Paraná; and Neltume Espinoza, Member of the Agroecology Seed Network (RESA). However, technical problems made it impossible for Juliana Kerexu, Ana Félix, and Maria Conceição de Sousa to participate.

The authors used the speakers’ narratives as a methodological tool to build knowledge that facilitated a better understanding of these territories and conflicts. Accordingly, it was possible to enter into these women’s lives and the complex social fabric of each space. Narrating the experience gives it new meaning, contributing to an emancipatory process as other voices are summoned to transform it into a collective story that comprises the experience embodied in women¹⁹. In this sense, they reposition themselves in relation to their own experience, producing localized knowledge, which, from a methodological and epistemological point of view, accounts for the decolonial feminist perspective and situated knowledge.

During the workshop, the women began their narratives by introducing the territory in which they live, explaining how they build and express their ways of life, identities, and cultures. Fur-

thermore, they identified which major undertakings generate conflict and impact their means and ways of life, identities, and illnesses in their bodies-territories. They reported the various forms of resistance that were built from their bodies. The narratives were divided into two items to better express their voices: bodies-territories that experience the impacts and bodies-territories that resist and defend life.

Bodies-territories that experience the impacts

The first speaker, Neltume Spinoza, introduced herself as an agroforestry farmer, the daughter of peasants with a deep tradition of working the land. She stated that she had worked with agroecology long before the term had been coined: “*Since agroecology... we work hard today, and we also worked in the past, but we didn’t call it agroecology*”. It is this expanded agroecological construction that establishes it as a body-territory and supplies its experience with meaning.

Agroecology seeks to restore the productive capacity of agroecosystems through ecological practices and produce healthier food for the population. As a part of agri-food systems and society, it intervenes in the deconstruction of social inequalities and oppression and is characterized by democratic, transformative, and emancipatory collective organization and mobilization.

Contrary to agroecology, Neltume emphasized that conventional agriculture, understood as that based on chemical and synthetic inputs, transgenic seeds, and intensive use of pesticides, is strongly supported by governments and obtains the strongest incentives to the detriment of those who grow agroecological food. She stated that one of the biggest challenges today is seed contamination. She argued that, since the 1990s, farmers have suffered contamination from transgenic seeds as there is no legislation that regulates and supports the conservation of native seeds, which are seeds that are culturally and traditionally cultivated and improved by women farmers, but which have not undergone industrial genetic improvement through hybridization or transgenic modification. This has a direct impact on the loss of creole varieties, which, in addition to being a heritage of humanity, are a heritage of life. “*We end up losing life, history, memory, a bunch of things that we end up not seeing anymore and that are being lost, we’re being left with less and less diversity, because it’s affecting our lives*”. Recent gender and agroecology studies²⁰ have clarified how

native seeds are symbols of the production and reproduction of life for agroecological women, and the depth of their connection with the seeds. Losing their seeds means losing autonomy over their ability to generate and reproduce life.

Continuing the dialogue, Cleomar, *quilombola*, fisherwoman, and resident of the Cumbe *quilombo* in Aracati in Ceará, representing the Cumbe *Quilombola* Association, described the community as a place rich in water, with dunes, a beach, mangroves, a river; altogether, an area from which they derive their livelihood. Talking about the territory means remembering her childhood, her memories, a healthy territory, and the search for a good life. It is this relationship with the territory that constitutes her social metabolism, her being, knowledge, and power as a body-territory. She explained that the search for living well has not been an easy one. The Cumbe *quilombola's* struggle has been going on for 25 years against an array of different threats:

In the 1990s, shrimp farming moved in with shrimp raised in captivity, in the mangrove areas. The areas where we had total freedom, areas that we took care of. We were the owners; we looked after them; we fed them. They were our source of leisure and when shrimp farming arrived, these areas with which we had such a strong relationship were taken away from us. We were prevented from accessing them (Cleomar).

She reported that it was part of the community's culture for the women to work with seafood while catching crab was done by the men. When shrimp farming was set up, many people from the community were employed by these companies and, in 2001, they experienced significant crab mortality for the first time. Families were desperate. The chemicals used in the large-scale production of shrimp for export ended up contaminating the mangroves, prompting a major environmental imbalance in the territory:

From then on, our waters were contaminated, our mangroves degraded, our access was taken away. Our species of fish and crustaceans began to decline. The water was very salty, including water in our wells. It was a loss and we didn't know where to turn for help (Cleomar).

Shrimp farming brought with it a myriad of conflicts, especially involving the big business owners, who began to persecute the *quilombola* communities. Colonialist violence was expressed through the curtailment of their livelihoods, the loss of water quality, and the loss of the mangroves' health, leaving the *quilombola* population vulnerable. Environmental racism was thus

reproduced, rendering women's bodies-territories vulnerable. Following the impact of shrimp farming, the Cumbe community received a wind farm in another nearby area in 2008:

As if this wasn't enough, we went through some really difficult times in 2008 with the wind farm that was set up on another side of the community, which was also a very important place for the quilombolas. [...] we made our living by fishing in the lakes and from small plantations in the low waters. We collected native fruits that only grew on the dunes, [...] on the hills, and that was a place that we took care of. It was our place, and it had no owner (Cleomar).

When the wind farms showed up, the use of these areas by the *quilombolas* was restricted. "We residents of the lagoon set up stalls, where we sold cakes and juice, and then we started to be pushed out" (Cleomar). The culture and way of doing things in this community were being prevented from existing because of these projects. What made them a healthy body-territory was being increasingly degraded. The territory meant life for this community. "The territory shows who we are, our history, our identity".

Following Cleomar's speech, Laura Ferreira da Silva, CONAQ, Quilombo Mutuca Mato Grosso, continued the narrative, underscoring her concern over a current context marked by a modern-colonial system that has had a detrimental impact on the lives of *quilombolas*, affecting what the territory symbolizes for its people, a sacred place of belonging, linked with their identity and ancestral knowledge

Today we don't even have the right to exist, the right to come and go, and, especially, freedom of expression. Because if we say something, we suffer strong reprisals from the local government, which is controlling, dominating, oppressive... which doesn't respect [...] quilombola causes (Laura).

Locally, she reported that conventional agri-food enterprises have had a negative impact on the cultivation of fruits that the *quilombola* population produced and were no longer able to produce due to the excessive pesticide spraying of soybean crops and the scarcity of water. Despite caring for their native seeds and their water sources with a view to the common good, analysis had shown that the bodies of water within the *quilombola* territories, including rainwater, contained pesticides that had been banned in other countries, but continued to be used in Brazil:

What we're going through today in the State of Mato Grosso is this problem of water scarcity, especially considering climate change. [...] We

can't harvest the crops we plant because of climate change, which is due to the greed of these projects (Laura).

Here the advancement of colonialist agri-food production, based on conventional grain cultivation for export, appears as an agent of socioenvironmental impact in a way analogous to the case reported by Neltume. This represents yet another example of harmful actions that took place in the Jejum community, as Laura described:

We had a big problem in the Jejum community back in March, where families suffered from exposure to toxic dust from the soybean harvest. There were newborn children involved who ended up being profoundly affected and little was done about it (Laura).

Laura explained that the abrupt arrival of these agri-food companies disrupted the families, impacting not only food production but also access to drinking water. She highlighted that terrestrial sources of water were scarcer and rainwater was contaminated with pesticides. By restricting the livelihoods of this population and contaminating their resources, the patriarchal colonialist system expressed in these agri-food enterprises led to the expulsion of *quilombolas* from their territories:

If we take our people out of our territory, where will they go? To the outskirts of a big city? Because they do not know how to live there... the knowledge given to us is located within our space, within our territory. Here is where we raise a family, where we create bonds with the earth, with mother nature. We are guardians of knowledge, holders of all knowledge, and that is being put into play from the moment they don't give us the right to exist (Laura).

Laura made it clear how these agri-food enterprises propagated structural racism, as they restrict and contaminate resources for the reproduction of life, which she classified as the genocide of the black *quilombola* populations that live in these territories. As a category of coloniality of power, structural racism nullifies the right to exist. It nullifies the being, knowledge, and power of the *quilombolas*, and in doing so, leads to genocide.

Following Laura's speech, Ana Carla Cota reported her experience. She told how she had been affected by the Doutor Dam collapse in Minas Gerais, living in the district of Antônio Pereira. From the outset, the residents had been suffering from the impact of mining for approximately 40 years and, since February 2020, after the "*Sea of mud never again*" legislation had gone into effect,

the Doutor Dam needed to be completely dismantled (it needed to cease to exist).

Ana Carla recounted that, since then, the territory had been the target of perverse, violent, and inhumane actions by the mining companies. It was a situation that produced bodies-territories afflicted by pain, suffering, and death. Iron ore mining was orchestrated by two influential mining companies, Vale and Samarco. The decommissioning process was done in an authoritarian manner and without transparency. "*The mining company imposed the process without discussing it with the community, everything was very dictatorial*".

Given that the region has been dominated by the mining industry, most of the men wound up working in this field. Out of a total of 5,000 inhabitants, an estimated 85% of them worked directly or indirectly for one of the mining companies. Most of these men were afraid to speak out for fear of reprisal, so the women ended up taking the lead in the resistance struggle. Being one of only three residents of the so-called Self Rescue Zones (ZAS), characterized as an area where rescue is not possible in case of dam collapse, thereby requiring relocation, she did not accept the mining company's pressure and her house was invaded five times, each time accompanied by a police report.

They were always like that whenever I took a firm stance during meetings, so the last time I felt it necessary to leave the area. Vale wanted to impose a committee elected by it on the community, [...] with the leaders it wanted... [...] we women were prevented from accessing the meetings. We tried. We received links from other people to access these virtual events but Vale blocked us. [...] and we were in favor of independent technical advice, [...] we had been fighting for over a year and we managed to hold an election together with the District Attorney's Office. Today, we have a technical advisory body elected by the community and Vale does everything it can to obstruct the technical advisor, whom they didn't want in the first place (Ana Carla).

She highlighted that retaliation happened on an individual basis, affecting "*Ana Carla, Maria Helena, affecting community leaders, and they tried to silence us*". Here the company, in its patriarchal colonialist condition, used violence against women as a coercive strategy. The voices of the women who organized resistance are being silenced as a means of legitimizing their colonialist domination. Ana Carla emphasized how necessary it is to talk about how women have dealt

with machismo in the community because there is no unity within the community against the way Vale had approached the residents. The community is now divided between a political side, made up of people in governmental positions and in favor of Vale, and the side of the women warriors for human rights. She reported that because she is a geologist with technical skills and information about the community's rights, she ends up silencing the men, who have no arguments to oppose her and retaliate against her. Last time, she was urged to leave the territory by the human rights defenders' program in which she participates due to concerns for her safety.

Bodies-territories that resist and defend life

Through such socioenvironmental conflicts and injustices, seen from an intersectional perspective, the speakers have organized resistance aimed at defending the health of their bodies-territories. To this end, they look for support in community feminism, in social movement networks, in the sociopolitical representation of the State, and in their connection with the Earth.

Neltume's experience underscores the importance of agroecology in strengthening ecological agri-food systems. The Agroecology Seed Network was created in 2015. This network encouraged farmers to see themselves as seed guardians and they began to fortify the production and conservation of native seeds, which were the basis of their food and agroecology. Women were the protagonists of this work. It was through the defense of agrodiversity, as a defense of life, that they organized their collective resistance: "We found ourselves at the moment of recognizing ourselves as guardians of seeds, not just of rice, beans, and corn, but also guardians of seedlings, guardians of palm seeds on the coast, of peach palms..." (Neltume). Recent studies in gender and agroecology^{20,21} have emphasized the importance of women in conserving native seeds, which are understood as a basis for the reproduction and sustainability of agroecological experiences. Thus, the conservation of native seeds, along with other agroecological practices, has become a strategy of collective resistance and promotion of their health and that of their living environments.

Neltume stressed the importance of organizing and sociopolitical awareness of women's gender as a mechanism to curb gender-based violence and recognize the importance of women's work. She said it was important to work with the new generations and remain firm in what they

believed in. "We're fighting for a more just life". The sociopolitical gender organization of women within the struggle for agroecology is seen as a constitutive category of the process of gender decoloniality in the countryside, as recent studies on this topic have pointed out²².

Cleomar highlighted the resistance of black women in deconstructing structural racism in the Quilombo do Cumbe. She reported that the quilombo was certified in 2014 by the Zumbi dos Palmares Foundation. However, to this day, they struggle to raise awareness among the population and sensitize local authorities to understand, value, and respect the collective identity of the community. It is concerned with training the local population and public management to understand what it means to be a *quilombola* and about being careful when providing safe information to not give space to Fake News, which propagates racism and devalues the identity of *quilombolas*:

The management does not recognize us. Our school is not recognized as a quilombola school. Today we have 110 families registered with the association and the struggle to vaccinate ourselves, we know how difficult it was. We had to go to court [...] I believe it's a right for everyone to be recognized the way they want, but "don't take away my right to be" (Cleomar; emphasis added).

As they expanded their organization and sociopolitical awareness and activated customs, symbols, values, and practices that strengthen community ties and group identity, they felt more welcomed, valued, and respected as a right to be, know, and gain power, and they expanded their capacity to construct a decolonized black subjectivity, strengthening the construction of emancipated bodies-territories. Cleomar has reinforced the role of the community's women in all these activities. She believes social mobilization has increasingly developed the women's capabilities and their active voice. These actions are being reinforced by community tourism:

As an example, we have community tourism. This network has been growing a lot, getting stronger. The tourism pathways we take lead visitors to sacred places, productive backyards, and families [...] so today it's showing our history, our experience, how it strengthens our community, and how we want to live. This kind of tourism is based on who we are, what we do, how we want to do it, taking care of nature, the territory, and our history (Cleomar).

Following Cleomar's talk, Laura reported that the resistance experiences of *quilombola* communities in Mato Grosso activate, value, and seek

to cultivate the memory, ancestry, means, and ways of life of these groups associated with the sustainable use of their natural resources. Laura ended by saying the organizational processes took place based on the struggle to defend their rights within their territories. *“Being a woman is already difficult, imagine being a woman, black, and lesbian. It is even more difficult”* and *“they may even prevent us from being able to go to college, but with our knowledge, they’ll never stop us”*. By reinforcing the elements that constitute their *quilombola* identity and territoriality, these women defend their bodies-territories, their right to be, exist, and live well and healthily in their territories of life.

Finally, in the case of those affected by mining dams in Minas Gerais, particularly in Antonio Pereira, Ana Carla disclosed that a Committee for Those Affected by Mining had been created. Women are organizing themselves through the committee and raising awareness among local authorities. This way, they build an independent consultancy through mediation with the District Attorney’s Office, which has reduced violence and improved negotiation conditions with the mining company.

Given the overall process, they formed a group made up of women to strengthen themselves as the situation was making them ill, especially concerning mental health. *“These illnesses, both mental and physical, are real. It’s how our body reacts, and this is a way of silencing us”*. This experience reaffirmed the importance of women’s awareness and sociopolitical organization associated with healthcare practices, especially mental health, to expand women’s active subjectivity, agency, and resilience in conflict situations.

Ana Carla concluded by pointing out the importance of education because: *“the more knowledge, the more freedom... Resistance is the way. We need to educate our future generations”*. She further reaffirmed that attending events like the Seminar is essential for women to have a place to tell their stories, be welcomed, and be able to realize that even though they are strong, they are also vulnerable and need to be stronger in networks like this one: *“We’ll be able to change by resisting. Will it take time? Yes, but I still believe that we, as a community, will be able to change this predatory, inhumane system, where profit comes before lives... ‘Life comes first’ [...]”* (Ana Carla).

In summary, despite all the expropriation and violence suffered in their bodies-territories, these women are recreating ways of being, knowledge, and power from their bodies and in their territo-

ries, preserving and recreating ways and means of life and their identities. When threatened, they defend their lives and their living environments, confront patriarchal, racist, and colonialist violence, resist and decolonize themselves as being, knowledge, and power in an intersectional way. As such, they recreate their bodies-territories and ensure better health for themselves, their communities, and territories, thus contributing to the construction of actions and strengthening of the public health surveillance networks.

Conclusion

The women’s narratives serve to explain how different undertakings use class, gender, and racial oppression in a transversal way to impose and legitimize their colonialist and patriarchal extractive domination, resulting in illness. Faced with such contexts, women are resisting and re-inventing their ways of being and living in these territories. They activate their belonging to a common ancestry and their connection to the sacred; confront the patriarchal violence they experience; support each other through collective organization; reaffirm and defend their means and ways of life and social identities; and fight for the health of their bodies, communities, and territories. This form of resistance encompasses a relationship that goes beyond the biopsychosocial body and is linked to the decolonizing agency of territorial and community construction. In this relationship, they produce and reinvent themselves, restore health to themselves and their environment, create fractures in coloniality, and broaden their capacity to emancipate themselves.

The perspective of agency expressed in these women’s resistance contributes to the construction of a public health surveillance system that considers these intersectionalities. These issues can be problematized in a transversal sense through dialogic mediation, and help understand how different bodies-territories respond by resisting, restoring, defending, and preserving the life and health of their bodies and environment, thereby fortifying public health surveillance networks.

In terms of research gaps, the authors stressed the need for new, broader studies that include other narratives from other women present in other territories covering Brazil’s diverse biomes, as well as narratives from marginalized and vulnerable urban women. The questions emerging from this study point to the need for new studies

to gain a more in-depth and detailed understanding of these enterprises' impacts on the epidemiological processes that affect the lives of these women, to understand the solidarity networks they operate, as well as to analyze the character and quality of care they enjoy from the public health system in their life-promoting territories.

Collaborations

All authors contributed to this study's design, data interpretation, writing, and critical review and approved the final version of the article to be published.

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