

## Contributions of the concept of body-territory and community feminisms to think about building Healthy and Sustainable Territories

*Contribuições do conceito de corpo-território e dos feminismos comunitários para pensarmos na construção de Territórios Saudáveis e Sustentáveis*

Cristiane Coradin<sup>1</sup>, Simone Santos Oliveira<sup>2</sup>

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**ABSTRACT** This text constitutes a literature review, which presents the path towards building the concept of body-territory, its connections with community feminism, ecofeminism and decolonial feminism, to discuss the construction of Healthy and Sustainable Territories (TSS). This concept originates from community mobilizations of women of Abya Yala peoples. It has been gradually incorporated by Brazilian Indigenous, Black and peasant women. The body-territory consists of biological, mental, social and cosmogonic dimensions. From their bodies and territories, they question the impacts of large undertakings; problematize violence against women and the Earth; problematize sex-gender, class and race inequalities; and denounce situations that constrain health and their bodies and territories. Through care practices, these women recover their own health and of their community groups and territories, expanding theirs and the collective health. This favors resilience and reparation of the web of life. This female protagonism has been invisible in studies on TSS. Therefore, it is considered essential that these feminist contributions are intersectional in actions to promote TSS.

**KEYWORDS** Community feminisms. Ecofeminism. Feminism. Collective health. Decoloniality.

**RESUMO** O presente texto constitui-se como uma revisão de literatura, na qual se apresenta o percurso de construção do conceito de corpo-território, suas conexões com o feminismo comunitário, o ecofeminismo e o feminismo decolonial, para discutir a construção de Territórios Saudáveis e Sustentáveis (TSS). Esse conceito proveio de mobilizações comunitárias de mulheres de povos originários de Abya Yala. Aos poucos, foi incorporado por mulheres indígenas, negras e camponesas brasileiras. O corpo-território consiste em dimensão biológica, mental, social e cosmogônica. A partir de seus corpos e territórios, elas questionam impactos de grandes empreendimentos, problematizam violências contra a mulheres e contra a Terra; problematizam desigualdades de sexo-gênero, classe e raça; e denunciam situações que constroem a saúde e seus corpos e territórios. Por meio de práticas de cuidado, essas mulheres recuperam a saúde de si mesmas, de seus coletivos comunitários e territórios, ampliam a sua saúde e a saúde coletiva. Isso favorece a resiliência e a reparação da teia da vida. Esse protagonismo feminino tem sido invisibilizado em estudos sobre TSS. Assim, considere-se fundamental que essas contribuições feministas sejam interseccionais nas ações de promoção de TSS.

<sup>1</sup>Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (Unesp) - São Paulo (SP), Brasil.  
cristianemottimcoradin@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Fiocruz), Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca (Ensp) - Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brasil.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** Feminismos comunitários. Ecofeminismo. Feminismo. Saúde coletiva. Descolonialidade.



## Introduction

We live in a context of global syndemic<sup>1</sup>. This process combines situations of hunger, undernutrition, and obesity with climate changes. Furthermore, it composes a setting of expanded civilization crises, which conjugates economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental dimensions. Aiming to find answers to the challenge posed by this context, we sought to recognize, analyze, and discuss emerging experiences having a potential to address in an integrated manner the health of human and non-human populations in different contexts. Drawing on feminist approaches, we sought to understand how multiple women construct and signify their bodies and territories, interlaced with community groups and natural goods.

We have identified in feminist community studies of Abya Yala how multiple women construct their bodies in a relationship of ecodependence with non-human natures of the Earth. With Nature, they constitute ways and means of life, which are related to the contextualized construction of social determination of health. These relations are permeated by the coloniality of gender and Nature, which colonizes their bodies and territories, such as being, knowing and being able. We observed how coloniality operates based on violence, expropriation, and exploitation, and how it affects the health of women and their territories of life. Moreover, we recognized how, in critical settings with many violations of rights, through their agency, women face the constitutive categories of this domination, increase their capacity for the manifestation of life, as well as how in their territories of life they reconstitute resilience for themselves, their community collectives and natural environments, thus expanding human and environmental health.

Lugones<sup>2</sup> understands agency as the capacity for action in the face of social representations and behaviors that constitute patriarchal, sex-gender, sexist relations that make women

be passive in situations of inequality and violence. Agency is the capacity to create and liberate active subjectivity, capable of creating social practices and representations that enable decolonization and social emancipation of women.

This female protagonism has been invisible in studies on Healthy and Sustainable Territories (TSS). Thus, the purpose of this article is to make visible and highlight female protagonism, providing contributions to think intersectionally about the contribution of the multiple women to the construction of TSS. This essay comprises a short introduction, followed by an item with a review on the theme and another one with propositional reflection, concluding with the final considerations.

## Material and methods

This paper is a theoretical essay, drawing on a literature review. With this purpose, we made a search on the theme on the portals of Capes and SciELO, using the keyword “*corpo-território*” (“body-territory”), to find texts that could contribute to this discussion. Only eight scholarly-scientific articles were found on this theme, which makes evident the relevance of delving into it, as well as the importance of conducting further studies. Moreover, we added other studies on the theme that we identified in books and book chapters, published in Portuguese and Spanish, with the purpose of qualifying the review and the reflection.

## Results and discussion

### Body-territories, community feminisms and ecofeminism

The notion of body-territory emerges from the social mobilization of indigenous and peasant women in Abya Yala. Lorena Cabnal<sup>3,4</sup> explains how the bodies of Guatemalan women are

deeply connected to the means and ways of life and to identities, as well as to the forests, fields, waters and community collectives existing in these territories. The territory constitutes the physical, psycho-emotional, mental and spiritual organism of women, as well the forests, fauna and flora, and waters are maintained by their bodies. Both, body and territory, live in a deep relationship of ecological codependence.

This intrinsic correlation between body and territory constitutes the key to understand colonial, capitalist, racist, and patriarchal exploitation and spoliation. Understanding this interrelation helps us to comprehend the motivations that women of the forests, fields and waters operate to build their health, as from their community collectives and territories of life.

This construction dialogues and, at the same time, constructs a popular and community ecofeminist perspective. Warren<sup>5</sup> argues that there are bonds between women's domination and nature's domination. It would be a set of values, beliefs and practices socially constructed, based on hierarchizing binaries that perform in superposition between them, composing a lens through which it is possible to see the world and legitimize relationships of domination over women and nature. This conceptual framework becomes oppressive when it "explains, justifies and maintains women's subordination to men"<sup>5(15)</sup>. Among these hierarchizing dichotomies, Warren stresses some frequently cited: reason / emotion, mind / body, culture / nature, human / animal, and man / woman. It is argued that what has been (historically) associated to emotion, body, nature, animal and woman is considered inferior to what has been (historically) associated to reason, mind, culture, human (in its male sense) and man<sup>5</sup>.

The ecofeminist thinking is grounded on the idea of sexual dimorphism, which justifies and naturalizes the existence of hierarchies of power, valuation and different social roles for men and women based on gender<sup>5-7</sup>. This 'biologization' of social roles based on gender

led to the naturalization of such social roles – of women and circumscribed to the domestic sphere, such as care with the family's food, organization and hygiene of the domestic space, education and care of children, elderly, sick, etc. As activities and roles placed inferiorly, these practices of care were relegated to women and circumscribed to the social reproduction of the family; whereas for men, was relegated the domain of reason, science, public sphere, roles considered as superior<sup>5-7</sup>. In both cases, nature is seen as female, whose representation is closely linked to the female representation of women.

Thus, the path for feminists, ecologists and ethic-environmentalists is to transgress the metaphors and models that feminize nature and naturalize women for mutual disadvantage<sup>5(17)</sup>.

Svampa<sup>8</sup>, from an ecofeminist approach, studies the formulation of Latin American experiences and stresses the relevance of intersectionality in the construction of popular ecofeminism. The author finds it essential to emphasize "[...] about lands, territories, bodies and representations"<sup>8(129)</sup>. She draws our attention to understand how women, by means of their agency, construct themselves as subjects, identities, territorialities, at the same time that they construct situated ethical ecofeminist notions of care for life. Agency, in the light of studies by Lugones<sup>8</sup>, is understood here as the capacity to liberate active subjectivity, as the capacity for female action in the face of colonialist sex-gender domination. In other words, it implies the liberation of the capacity for speaking, expressing, acting, positioning oneself, drawing limits, self-value, self-respect and self-loving, the capacity to transgress sex-gender inequalities and inequities, and to occupy spaces and behaviors denied to them by the colonialist domination.

In this perspective, Cabnal<sup>3,4</sup> and Cruz et al.<sup>9</sup>, together with other indigenous female authors, assume a Latin American popular ecofeminist reading and sustain the argument

that there exists a retroactive correlation between the domination of women's bodies and the Earth's body. Thus, they make explicit how community feminisms<sup>10</sup> formulate their own ecofeminist perspectives, which highlight how these women relate to the natures of their bodies and the non-human natures of the Earth, produce and reproduce their means and ways of life, as well as identities, hence conserving the biodiversity and socio-biodiversity that exists in the waters, fields and forests.

In order to understand this relationship, they develop the concept of body-territory of women and of the Earth. By means of this concept, they seek to explain how the processes of territorialization and de-territorialization of their habitats are related, in an articulated way, to the establishment of relations of domination, expropriation, and violence of their female bodies. The Earth's body-territory is understood as the diversity of biophysical elements that constitute local ecosystems, associated to the symbolic, cosmogonic, cultural, social, economic and political dimensions that are engendered in these spaces. Women's body-territories are understood as the biological, psychosocial, emotional and cosmogonic condition. Female subjectivity and materiality are produced with the Earth's body-territory. They are ecodependent on the natural goods, understood as soils, forests, waters, air, game animals, livestock animals, among other goods and services provided by nature.

We connect ourselves to the territories through the senses: we listen to what the river tells us, we talk with the farms, the corn fields, and laugh with the birds; in other words, the senses are what connects us to the territories<sup>9(7)</sup>.

Living in an ecodependent relationship with the Earth's body-territory, as these territories are impacted by the action of large modern-colonial capitalist undertakings, these women argue that it is on women's bodies that are somatized the sex-gender violence and

the violence against the Earth, throughout long-term ancestral generations. They understand that violence against the Earth's body-territory produces violence against women's body-territories. They also understand that violence against their body-territory reverberates through violence against the Earth's body-territory:

we think of the body as our first territory and recognize the territory in our bodies: when the places where we live are affected, our bodies are affected, when our bodies are affected, the places where we live are violated<sup>9(7)</sup>.

Therefore, the processes of territorialization and de-territorialization of their life environments are traversed and traverse sex-gender relations intersectionally, whose impacts are inscribed on women's body-territories and the Earth's body-territory.

In the intersectionality of gender, race, health and territory, through community feminism, Cabnal<sup>3,4</sup> denounces violence against the Earth and against women in Central America, from processes of territorialization and de-territorialization of indigenous peoples, through colonialist domination attacks on their territories of life. The author explains how Guatemalan indigenous peasant women construct social praxis of resistance against colonialist attacks, based on cosmogonic ecofeminist practices, which promote the healing of their body-territories and the Earth's body-territory. The concept of intersectionality used here regards the superposition of oppressions that conjugate sex-gender<sup>11</sup>, especially, racial oppression. Drawing on the perspective elaborated by Cabnal<sup>3,4</sup>, in this article we have adopted as concept of intersectionality the superposition of intersections of class, gender and race with the oppression of Nature.

The perspective of emergent health through these body-territorial experiences internalizes a perspective of self-care among women, care of their community and of the Earth, manifested in the forests, mountains, waters

and soils. By means of these practices, they strengthen personal and collective resilience, strengthen themselves as active subjectivities, and strengthen popular collective resistances in the face of the intersectional domination of gender, class, race and nature, expanding their capacity for social emancipation. Resilience is a term originating from ecology, widely used in studies in the field of agroecology. According to Holling<sup>12</sup>, resilience is the capacity of a system to absorb disturbances and reorganize itself while going through changes. We place this concept of ecology in dialogue with the perspective of Canguilhem<sup>13</sup> to think of health as a capacity to make life move on.

In a study on Latin American feminisms, Gago<sup>14</sup> analyses how women are affected by different colonialist undertakings, highlighting how they assume the protagonism of collective social struggles in the face of the impacts of those undertakings. Being close to the feminist decolonial perspectives, the author formulates the hypothesis that domestication and colonization are indissociable, because they establish a relationship of subordination, which has its own characteristics, in the exploitation of labor and subordination of territories. Gago also stresses the relevance of de-patriarchalization within the process of decolonization by means of the body-territory, because

[...] the image of the body-territory reveals battles that are happening here and now, in addition to marking a force field and making it sensible and legible as from confliction<sup>14(106-107)</sup>.

Similarly to Cabnal<sup>3,4</sup>, Gago also identifies women's bodies as this frontier that 'embodies', 'incarnates' the experience of life, its territories, its identities, community collectives, means and ways of life.

Body territory supposes the idea that dissident women and corporalities organized in the struggle understand the body as an extensive territory, i.e., it is not an exclusive stage of individuality, but rather an expanded matter<sup>14(109)</sup>.

The violence of the colonizing process takes place through the production of not being, not knowing and not being able to express the own body-territory. Hence, through violence, expropriation and exploitation that subordinate, dehumanize and, by dehumanizing, colonize. The feminist resistances occur, therefore, in the battlefield of this body-territory – which will trigger what it produces on them as being, knowing and social power in relation to the situated means and ways of life.

In Brazil, some recent studies have been seeking to analyze the notion of body-territory, women's organizations and community feminisms. In this article, we present some reflections of studies conducted especially on Brazilian Amazonian indigenous and Black *quilombola* women. These experiences may help us to reflect on how we can approach this notion of body-territory and, by dialoguing with constructions of women and other feminists, problematize the construction of TSS.

Santos and Ferreira<sup>15</sup>, in a study on body-territory, decolonial feminisms, health and strategies of the movements of indigenous women of the Amazon, describe a trajectory of social organization of Amazonian indigenous women. According to the authors, this construction creates challenges for the indigenous women to reflect on the conceptual terms and specificities of their agency. They describe the transformations that the political agendas of these women's social movement go through in this journey, from dietary restrictions specific to female confinement, reproductive rights, midwives' training, valorization of their knowledge in ancestral medicine, moving on to demanding greater political participation, indigenous land demarcation, expulsion of invaders from their land, combating racism and sexism, right to adequate and healthy food, right to differentiated education, combating violence against indigenous women, greater political empowerment of women, combating gender inequalities in the indigenous movement and gender equity. In this construction, they dialogue with the notion of body-territory,



originating from community feminisms and organizations of women of Abya Yala.

For the Brazilian Amazonian indigenous women, the body is a socioecological construction that is constituted in their relationship with the natural habitat and the community sociability.

The body-territory is not [...] only a conceptual marker, it is also a manifest of a deep relationship involving the woman's body and other ontological webs that permeate the Universe<sup>15(37)</sup>.

Speaking about the Amazonian indigenous women's body-territory is a demand of “[...] a specific place until then denied to the indigenous woman agent, in the political, epistemological ambits, and in the territorial ambit”<sup>15(37)</sup>. This concept is inserted in the struggle agendas of Amazonian indigenous women, drawing on the formulation it receives in the Manifesto of the Indigenous Women's March of 2019, “[...] as a non-negotiable and inalienable concept”<sup>15(39)</sup>.

In the book ‘Corpo-território mulher kalunga’ (‘Body-territory of Kalunga women’, in free translation), by Jaqueline Evangelista Dias, published in 2019 by Articulação Pacari, the author describes and makes visible through images of daily life, dwelling, nutrition, and planting, the existence of the Kalunga woman in her territory of life. “The Kalunga woman is a walker. [...]. The movement of the waters, the Earth and the skies is in her body”<sup>16(1)</sup>. Dias describes the habits, the different uses of natural goods and spaces of the territory in the socioecological metabolism of the social reproduction of life.

The wisdom and the strength of the Kalunga woman are fruits of the life commitment she makes to her territory. She feels what her territory provides to her life and how her body needs to act in order to collect this offering. She puts her body into question, in readiness, for her existence and that of her daughters and sons. The vitality of the Kalunga woman's body

is her expression of confidence in life, aware of living in a provider territory<sup>16(1)</sup>.

It is a body-territory made in cohabitation, in walking, and in benefiting from this rich socio-biodiversity that constitutes the body-territory. The author does not express social conflicts, struggles and collective mobilizations for recognition of a shared ethnic-racial identity, nor for political rights. In common with the other studies, it makes explicit the relation of co-dependence of the existence of these women with the natural goods that they enjoy due to living in these territories and as components of their identity.

The study by Alves<sup>17</sup> on the experience of the indigenous women Kaxarari and Rio Gaporé, in the Amazon, problematizes the geographic concept of territory in the light of decolonial studies, problematizes colonialist violence against indigenous women, and highlights the importance of the organization of the movement of Amazonian indigenous women. Among the main demands, they list the actions related to the combat against violence, prevention of and combat against the use of alcohol and drugs, and educational actions.

[...] For, in the presence of land invaders, women are usually the preferential victims and suffer all sorts of violence (sexual, physical, and moral), with reports of women trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation<sup>17(8)</sup>.

The study by Oliva<sup>18</sup>, with the title ‘Do corpo-espaço ao corpo-território: o que a geografia feminista tem a dizer?’ [‘From the body-space to the body-territory: what does feminist geography have to say?’], in free translation], problematizes the concept of territory construed by the field of critical geography, from a feminist perspective. It weaves dialogues with community feminisms to open possibilities of new understandings in the field of geography on how to comprehend the relationship between the body and the territory by means of the notion emerging from community

feminism and the organization of women of different indigenous peoples.

Haesbaert<sup>19</sup>, in an essay entitled ‘Do corpo-território ao território-corpo (da Terra): contribuições decoloniais’ [‘From the body-territory to the territory-body (of the Earth): decolonial contributions’, in free translation], presents a systematization of this thinking in dialogue with decolonial studies; and about body-territories, presents the trajectories of the construction of this notion, reflecting on the feminist decolonial construction of the notion of body-territory. The text seeks to situate the theme and reflect on it from a critical and decolonial perspective.

In the field of rural sociology, Coradin<sup>20</sup>, in a study on women and agroecology in agrarian reform territories, seeks relations between decolonial feminisms, ecofeminism and popular peasant feminism, to construct possibilities of relations between the concept of body-territory and the social reproduction of the life of agroecologist peasant women. In addition, analyses how peasant women strengthen, reweave, and construct their reconnection with their bodies, community collectives and the non-human natures of the Earth, by means of agroecology and the promotion of food and nutritional security.

The ensemble of these experiences engenders new possibilities to understand different potential expressions for the construction of body-territories, whether in the fields, forests, waters or cities – what characterizes them as similarity, close relation of reconnection with the non-human natures of the Earth and with community collectives, and what distances them, as heterogeneous sociocultural processes.

### **Body-territory, health and the construction of Healthy and Sustainable Territories**

Drawing on what we have been reflecting until this point, we will now advance to the possible relations between constructions of

body-territories and possible contributions to think about the construction of TSS. For this, we will reflect on how these experiences construct the relation between territory, body and health. For this purpose, we bring to the dialogue Haesbaert<sup>21</sup>, Cabnal<sup>13,4</sup>, Lugones<sup>22</sup>, Miñoso, Correal and Munhoz<sup>10</sup>, among other authors. In this section, we will weave connections between these authors and authors in the field of health<sup>13</sup> who can aid us in understanding how this notion of body-territory can help in the construction of TSS.

Haesbaert<sup>21</sup> understands that the territory has a sense that is material and functional, of domination and appropriation, as well as a symbolic, affective, cultural ontological sense:

[...] the territory, immerse in relations of domination and/or appropriation society-space, unfolds along a continuum that goes from the more ‘concrete’ and ‘functional’ political-economical domination, to the more subjective and/or ‘cultural-symbolic’ appropriation<sup>21(21)</sup>.

In the sphere of health, Machado, Martins, Souza and other authors<sup>23</sup> understand that the territory “[...] is the base upon which the social determinations of health produce transforming effects”<sup>23(244)</sup>:

Thus, we verify the existence of a process of social reproduction territorialized and conditioned by determinant factors or sustainability premises. These premises configure socio-technical spaces and determine characteristics of the territories’ social fabric that may or not promote health, according to their predominance, presence or absence<sup>23(245)</sup>.

It is in the territory that occurs the construction of social determinants of health<sup>24</sup>, as a dialogical and contextualized process, through the social agencies performed by the subjects who construct these spaces, articulating with processes of territorialization and de-territorialization lived in these territories.

Territories are made by means of the constitution of territorialities. Territoriality refers to a social praxis that individuals and collectives establish in a given territory. Drawing on their social, economic, political and cultural interaction, territoriality is “intimately connected to the way people use the land, organize themselves in the space and how they provide a meaning to the place”<sup>21(22)</sup>. Territoriality is constituted as an image or symbol concerning a territory, a strategy of power and a way of providing meaning to a social construction of a given territory:

It is also an immaterial dimension, in the ontological sense that, while ‘image’ or symbol of a territory, it exists and can be efficiently inserted as a cultural-political strategy, even if the territory to which it refers is not concretely manifested<sup>21(22)</sup>.

Drawing on Deleuze and Guatarri, Haesbaert<sup>21</sup> develops the concept of territorialization and de-territorialization in the flow of entries and exits from the territory. There is not only one vector of entry or exit. A process of de-territorialization keeps in itself a re-territorialization process. Territorialization implies a permanent process of becoming and a past entity, moved by constant transformation. The end of a form of territorialization inaugurates the construction of a new territorialization. In this process, it is possible to find, thus, continuities and discontinuities, superpositions, hybridizations, and material and symbolic ruptures. The speed and direction of this vector of territorial transformation will depend on power disputes and collective and individual agencies of the actors performing in these spaces.

All of these relations are intersectionalized by gender inequalities, as explained by Lugones<sup>22</sup>, Miñoso, Correal and Muñoz<sup>10</sup>, Cabnal<sup>3,4</sup>. The processes of territorialization and de-territorialization imply intersectional reproductions, gender inequalities and inequities. The intersectional feminist approach

leads us to the assumption of centrality, conflicts of sex-gender, class and race as centrality of the territorialization and de-territorialization processes.

In the intersectionality of gender, territory and health, Cabnal<sup>3,4</sup> develops the concept of women’s body-territory and the Earth’s body-territory to explain how occur the processes of territorialization and de-territorialization of their habitats and their connections with the health of women and the Earth. For them, violence is the category that operates the process of colonization of their body-territories and the Earth’s body-territory. It is in women’s bodies that are somatized the violence of sex-gender and against the Earth through long-term ancestral generations. Women understand that violence against the Earth’s body-territory produces violence against women’s body-territory; and that violence against their body-territories reverberate in violence against the Earth’s body-territory:

We think of the body as our first territory and 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<sup>9(7)</sup>.

Therefore, they understand that the processes of territorialization and de-territorialization, as understood by Haesbaert<sup>21</sup>, as well as the construction of the determination of health on the territory<sup>23</sup>, are traversed by sex-gender violence, inscribed on women’s body-territory and the Earth’s body-territory. Violence against women’s body-territory and the Earth’s body-territory is the key to understand processes of health from the perspective of the body-territory.

Through the connection between their bodies, violence and the Earth, the indigenous women manifest illnesses of themselves and of the Earth. According to them, when neo-extrativist colonialist undertakings are installed in their territories, they intensify violence, inequalities and inequities



of sex-gender associated to the intensification of expropriation and exploitation of the Earth. This has a violent impact on women's lives, as well as it affects their health condition and the health of those environments.

Looking into how these women understand the process of their own and their environment's health, we weaved some dialogues with Canguilhem<sup>13</sup> to analyze in which way occurs the process of social determination of health construction through the body-territories. From this, we can weave dialogues with the construction of the TSS and potential experiences of other Brazilian women, beyond the experiences of the indigenous women of Abya Yala.

Canguilhem<sup>13</sup> discusses the operability of concepts of given body and produced body, normalization and standardization, to think about collective health. In order to reflect on these constructions, we will use the author's study to understand the concepts of given and produced body, normalized and standardized body; in the sequence, we will reflect on the construction and reconstruction of these bodies, understood in an extensive way as body-territories.

In a critical-social perspective, health is thematized not as a state of absence of infirmities or absence of social vulnerability factors through the conditionings of social determination of health. As health, we consider the capacity to tolerate, recover, overcome infirmities, and transform the environment's adverse conditions<sup>13</sup>.

The healthy organism, previously to conservation, seeks to realize its nature in expansion, facing the risks that this entails. 'Health is, thus, having a capacity for tolerance or security that is more than adaptive'<sup>25(83)</sup>.

Further, Canguilhem<sup>13</sup> will refine this conception of health, distinguishing health as the state of the given body and health as the expression of the produced body. The given body is related to the genetic heritage,

the 'genotype'; whereas the produced body is related to the ways of life of each person, either by choice or imposition, or to the 'phenotype'<sup>25</sup>. As given body, the author refers to the capacity of the body to become ill and recover and, thus, become a more potent body. While the produced body's health

[...] is a guarantee lived doubly as a 'guarantee against the risk and the audacity to take the risk'. It is the feeling of being able, ever more, to surpass the initial capacities<sup>25(84)</sup>.

Therefore, the produced body is this capacity for action in the face of the situations of life. At this point, it is important to consider the relation with society and with the social determinants of health, i.e., the relation with the "[...] conditions of life (lack of sanitation, food etc.)", under which "[...] should be designed intervention strategies – transformation policies"<sup>25(85)</sup>.

The construction of health of this produced body dialogues with the female agency construction, i.e., the capacity for action of women in the face of the colonialist domination of gender and Nature. Thus, health refers to the capacity to evoke those social representations, spaces and practices that become more strengthened, self-assured and emancipated from the colonizing patriarchal domination, as being, knowing, and being able. The produced body-territory's health is associated to the capacity for resilience and resistance of women with the Earth, since both are co-dependent and interact with each other, through ways and means of life and subjectivities that compose these women's experiences – ways of being, knowing and living, which constitute and ensure a well living for them and their community collectives, and the conservation of natural goods.

Besides the given and the produced bodies, Canguilhem differentiates the normalization and the standardization of these bodies, regarding health.

Canguilhem takes the concept of norm as biological norm, understanding normalization as the possibility of creating norms that, more than adaptation, enables the expansion of life<sup>25(84)</sup>:

Normalization, as he defines, is the expression of a set of collective requirements, which in a given historical society defines the way of relating its structure, perhaps its structures, with what it considers as its particular good, even if there is no awareness on the part of individuals<sup>25(85)</sup>.

Therefore, normalizing the health of populations means to frame them, to fix them into a normal that is pre-fixated by a normalizing decision: what is normal and what is abnormal or pathological. When reflecting on decolonial studies, we can consider the hegemony of the colonizing process as a process of imposition of a Eurocentric, white and patriarchal normalization, imposed over the norms lived by the colonized peoples. The colonialist normalization determined to the colonized peoples its values and social practices, mischaracterizing the dominated social group as being, knowing and social power. Therefore, by normalizing, it colonizes, and by colonizing, it dehumanizes.

According to Ramminger<sup>25</sup>, Canguilhem questions the normalization process, because, for him,

[...] life is not indifferent to the conditions in which it is possible, that life is polarity and, therefore, a position unaware of value, in sum, that life is, in fact, a standardizing activity<sup>25(80)</sup>.

This standardizing activity is understood as the capacity of subjects to create norms:

As much as normalization refers to the rationality of the society's norms and the specific way of each society to position itself as subject of its norms, standardization is understood as the capacity, not only subjective, but also social, to incorporate new norms<sup>25(86)</sup>.

Standardization is, therefore, the capacity not to let oneself be conducted or fit into a given normalization that constrains the manifestation of life. It is the capacity to refute, adapt, incorporate and/or create other norms, more adapted and adjusted to the manifestation of life. Standardization allows for the incorporation, rejection and transformation of norms so that they become better adjusted and enable the manifestation of life. The produced body, thus, is understood as that which constructs itself as standardization that becomes decolonized, as being, knowing and being able. Health is related to this capacity to construct, adapt, as well as create and transform the norms, becoming more potent in the manifestation of life.

Regarding the theme under discussion in this article, we can consider standardization as the capacity for individual and collective agency of women in the face of the colonialist normalization. Female agency creates and recreates norms that refer to ways of life and individual and collective subjectivities that transgress and transform what colonizes them, as being, knowing and multiple female power, and enable greater expression of the manifestation of life. They evoke what characterizes them as a social group, distinct ethnic-racial group, based on certain social practices, means and ways of life, which cultivate a type of common well living, adjusted to the conservation of local ecosystems. With these social representations and practices, they question inequalities and iniquities of sex-gender, class and race, activate healing practices for their body-territories and the Earth's body-territory. Thus, they weave the collective organization of the web of life. This expands their capacity for the constitution of a new standardization, with more potent conditions to propel the construction of collective resistances in the face of the colonialist standardization of their body-territories and the Earth's body-territory.

The loss of health of their body-territories and the Earth's body-territory can, therefore, enable

[...] an experience of positive innovation of the living being, and not only a diminishing or multiplying fact, is not 'a variation of the health dimension', but a 'new dimension of live'<sup>25(82)</sup>.

The recovery of health, for Canguilhem, occurs when it is possible to re-establish a new standardization, capable of creating for themselves other norms, at times superior to the old norms, in the sense that they have greater plasticity in the face of the unpredictability of life. This restoration of standardization is not anachronistic, "[...] a return to what one was before: 'life does not know reversibility', but 'admits reparations that are physiological innovations'"<sup>25(82-83)</sup>. In addition to the physiological reparations of their body-territories, there are also cultural, political, legal, economic, social, and environmental reparations.

We reflect that this sense of 'capacity for manifestation and reparation of life', which is present in the feminist communities formulations, dialogues with the social determinants of health, as well as with the formulation of health elaborated by Canguilhem<sup>13</sup>, which must be taken into consideration in the formulation of contributions of the body-territory concept to think about the construction of TSS.

In a literature review on studies that address the TSS thematic, Machado, Martins, Souza and other authors<sup>23</sup>, in a study entitled 'Territórios saudáveis e sustentáveis: contribuição para saúde coletiva, desenvolvimento sustentável e governança territorial' ['Healthy and sustainable territories: contribution to collective health, sustainable development and territorial governance', in free translation], situate TSS as

[...] relational spaces and of belonging where healthy life is made possible by means of community actions and public policies, which interact and materialize, through time, in outcomes that aim to achieve global, regional, and local development in their environmental, cultural, economic, political and social dimensions<sup>23(246)</sup>.

For this purpose, the authors stress the importance of the construction of territorial governance networks,

[...] in a way to ensure changes in the mode of production and social reproduction, promoting sustainable and cooperative development on local, regional and global dimensions<sup>23(247)</sup>.

In this understanding, the TSS are, therefore, "[...] the outcome of a dialectics between changes in the relations of production and of life in their different scales"<sup>23(247)</sup>.

The study on the experience of the Observatory of Healthy and Sustainable Territories of Bocaina (OTSS)<sup>26</sup>, conducted in the South coast of the State of Rio de Janeiro and in the North coast of the State of São Paulo, a conservation territory of the Atlantic Forest, highlights the above mentioned propositions. The book resulting from this study reports on how the processes of social organization were articulated with public institutions, especially with Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, constituting a territorial governance in favor of sustainable development. This territorial governance defined in a participatory way the strategies and priorities for action in the perspective of the materialization of sustainable development in the territorial sphere.

It is the territory and territoriality that will enable, from the dialogue between knowledges and practices conducted in them, the reconstitution of the categories sustainable and healthy<sup>26(35)</sup>.

Among the priorities for action, the following were listed: the strengthening and qualification of the Forum of Traditional Communities; the defense of the territory through legal advice; mobilizations and strategic articulations; the production of a georeferenced database on the territory, including participatory methodologies and social cartography; ecological sanitation; differentiated

education; social technologies incubator; agroecology; community-based tourism; assessment and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the United Nations 2030 Agenda; and the articulation with international solidarity networks.

Common actions were constructed for each of the priorities listed in a participatory way, resulting in different experiences that potentiate the construction of the Bocaina TSS.

Construct sustainable and healthy territories requires a critical appropriation by the subjects, drawing on the ecology of knowledges and by means of a pedagogy of autonomy, resulting in local solidary governance, sustainable production and effective citizenship policies<sup>23(144)</sup>.

For Gallo<sup>27(38-39)</sup>

the concept of sustainable territories, more than pointing an object situation, needs to be guided by the empowerment and production of autonomy, equity and sustainability, seeking to construct counter-hegemonic epistemological cartographies deriving from the critically reinvented daily-life.

Healthy territories are conceived as

[...] 'ways of making life move on', which are constructed in relation to the other, promoting the capacity of individuals and collectives to make decisions about health, social relations and life in three dimensions: clinical, sanitary and ethical-moral<sup>27(40)</sup>.

According to Gallo, the answers to the challenges of the convergence between health, environment and development

[...] have been searched by experiences that seek to adopt approaches that promote social-environmental justice, equity, autonomy and sustainability, drawing on local communicative-strategic governance<sup>27(40)</sup>.

For this purpose, the agendas and territorial pacts need to act in three dimensions: insertion of the local economy in a mode of sustainable development; guarantee of citizenship rights that ensure a minimum standard of equity and quality of life; and institution of mechanisms of participatory and strategic governance and management of the territory.

In this study, issues of gender equity, sexual and ethnic-racial diversities were thematized in methodological proposals of assessment of health promotion and sustainable development<sup>28</sup>. Yet, when analyzing the set of implemented actions, we identified actions in the sphere of deconstructing a racist culture, by means of legal advice and strengthening of the Forum of Traditional Communities, as well as through indigenous and *quilombola* education. However, it was not possible to identify actions that have been able to express, debate, and analyze sex-gender inequalities and diversities and their intersections with race in the other implemented activities. This leads us to reflect about possible invisibilities and reproductions of sex-gender inequalities in these experiences.

In view of such data and analytical experience reports, considering what has been presented in this text, i.e., the importance and the protagonism of women in the construction of experiences that promote health in their body-territories and the Earth's body-territory, we stress the importance that strategies, actions, programs and governances aiming at the promotion of TSS, take sex-gender transversely as an intersectional, and not specific, category, in the set of strategies, actions, and territorial governance.

The experiences of community feminisms<sup>10</sup>, Latin American popular ecofeminisms<sup>8</sup>, organization of Amazonian indigenous women<sup>15</sup>, Brazilian agroecologist rural women<sup>20,30</sup>, women in situations of socio-environmental conflicts and injustices<sup>31</sup>, or women who face environmental disasters<sup>32</sup>, highlight how they assume a central role in the collective mobilization against socio-environmental impacts,

conflicts and injustices. In these processes, they face numerous sex-gender violence, are overloaded with productive, socio-political and domestic work, but even so they construct collective resistance, which strengthens the health of their body-territories, their community collectives, and the Earth's body-territory. Through these actions, they act directly in the production of daily and collective resilience on the territorial level. They maintain and expand capacities to make life move on, to manifest life, from their body-territories and the Earth's body-territory.

Therefore, we stress the importance of making visible the actions conducted by these women; strengthening their forms of social organization; educating for decoloniality, by means of intersectional deconstruction of sex-gender, class and race inequalities and iniquities; deconstruct violence against women's body-territory and the Earth's body-territory; promote greater equality in the sexual division of labor, problematizing women's double and triple journeys of labor, among other themes. This is crucial to advance with the SDG, 2023 Agenda, and the well living of these community collectives. When we look at these experiences in this way, we can think of actions that strengthen women's participation, capacity for agency and socio-political organization in the territorial governance, thus potentiating the construction of TSS.

## Final considerations

Community feminism experiences demonstrate how women construct actions that break with patriarchal colonialism and, at the same time, recover from violence against

their body-territories and the Earth's body-territory. Ecofeminist female thinkers argue that there is a common oppressive landmark, which dominates through violence, exploitation and expropriation the bodies of women and of the Earth. For them, violence against the Earth reverberates against women and vice versa.

Regarded this way, health is linked to the construction of social determinants and is understood as the capacity to make life move on; it is linked to the capacity to put limits to what constrains the manifestation of life; and implies the capacity to construct individual and collective resilience and resistance. When transversal with gender and race, it connects to women's capacity for decolonizing themselves as being, knowing and being able.

The experiences analyzed in this study highlight the relevance of female protagonism in the construction, maintenance and expansion of experiences and networks that restore, maintain and expand the individual and collective resilience and resistance, promote human and environmental health both of women's body-territory and the Earth's body-territory. Thus, we consider it important to make visible, valorize and analyze intersectionally the contributions that women's protagonism assume in the construction of TSS.

## Collaborators

Coradin C (0000-0001-5152-2966)\* contributed to bibliographical survey and discussion of the manuscript. Oliveira SS (0000-0002-1477-749X)\* contributed to the discussion of the manuscript. ■

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\*Orcid (Open Researcher and Contributor ID).



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