



Anti-Racist Socioenvironmental Justice in Brazil: Environmental and Climate Change Policies and Civil Society Initiatives

Justiça socioambiental antirracista no Brasil: políticas ambientais e de mudanças climáticas e iniciativas da sociedade civil

Nanahira de Rabelo e Sant'Anna¹

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4072-7250>

Naira Santa Rita Wayand de Almeida²

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1177-4952>

Abstract: This paper aims to discuss perspectives for promoting anti-racist socio-environmental justice in Brazil. With this objective, the history of Brazilian environmental and climate change policies is analyzed, highlighting the content relating to vulnerable populations, especially the racialized ones – black and indigenous – and initiatives to combat environmental racism led by civil society are presented, in which the participation of communities impacted by environmental disasters is focused. In the theoretical section, the concepts of environmental racism and climate justice are addressed from their origins in the processes of colonization and enslavement of African and indigenous peoples. This research is expected to stimulate debates and inspire courses of action towards inclusive initiatives and equitable solutions in environmental and climate policy, with a view to contributing to a greater alignment between the country's commitment to environmental preservation and mitigating the effects of climate change, and to guaranteeing justice, equity and human rights.

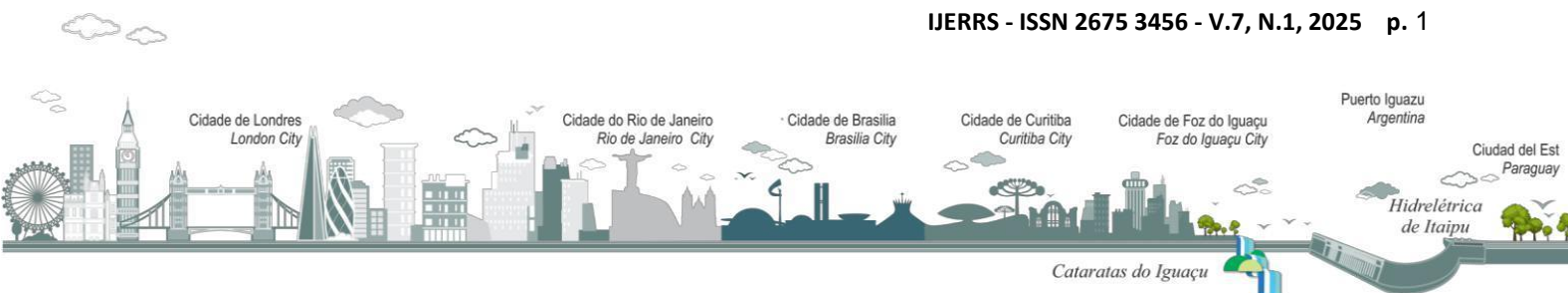
Keywords: Environmental racism; Climate justice; Environmental policy.

Resumo: O presente artigo tem o propósito de discutir sobre perspectivas para a promoção de justiça socioambiental antirracista no Brasil. Com esse objetivo, analisa-se o histórico de políticas brasileiras de meio ambiente e mudança do clima, destacando o conteúdo referente a populações vulneráveis, especialmente as racializadas – negra e indígena – e apresentam-se iniciativas de enfrentamento ao racismo ambiental protagonizadas pela sociedade civil, em que se ressalta a participação de comunidades impactadas por desastres ambientais. Na seção teórica, abordam-se os conceitos de racismo ambiental e justiça climática a partir de suas origens nos processos de colonização e escravização de povos africanos e originários. Com esta pesquisa, espera-se estimular debates e inspirar cursos de ação no sentido de iniciativas inclusivas e soluções equitativas em política ambiental e climática, com vistas a contribuir para um maior alinhamento entre o compromisso do país com a preservação ambiental e a mitigação dos efeitos das mudanças climáticas, e com a garantia de justiça, equidade e direitos humanos.

Palavras-chave: Racismo Ambiental; Justiça climática; Política ambiental.

¹ Doctor in Development, Society and International Cooperation at the University Brasília (UnB). Science and Technology Analyst of the Brazilian Ministry of Planning and Budget (MPO). Email: nanahira.rabelo@gmail.com.

² MBA in ESG and Corporate Sustainability at Faculdade Pitágoras. Founder and Executive Director of Instituto DuClima. Email: zarconaira@gmail.com.



While seeking to promote sustainable development, Global South nations face a complex web of intersecting challenges, including poverty, food insecurity, violation of human rights, and the pressing climate crisis. In this context, environmental racism and climate justice can be considered priorities for developing countries like Brazil, which is at the forefront of efforts to boost economic growth with social inclusion (Brasil, 2024a; G20 Brasil, 2024).

Environmental racism also affects indigenous and quilombola communities, residing in areas of great ecological value, such as forests and nature reserves. Despite their deep knowledge of these ecosystems, these communities have little influence over the decision-making processes that affect their territories, in addition to having their right to land restricted, suffering various violations in conflicts (Brasil, 2024b).

For this purpose, the priorities, objectives, goals and actions present in Brazilian environmental and climate change policies are analyzed, highlighting the content relating to vulnerable populations, and present actions to combat environmental racism led by civil society. The expectation is to illuminate actionable pathways that incorporate equity and inclusion, in which the perspectives of groups that bear the brunt of racial disparities are



effectively considered, to advocate for a better present for Brazil – one that promises a sustainable balance between human flourishing and the preservation of natural resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND CLIMATE JUSTICE IN A DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

One of the fundamental aspects of colonization was the establishment of a racial hierarchy that positioned Europeans as superior to black and indigenous populations. The deeply rooted belief in the racial superiority of Europeans revealed a moral justification for their actions, allowing them to perpetrate acts of violence, cultural exclusion, and economic exploitation on an unprecedented scale (Carneiro, 2005; Bento, 2022). According to Carneiro (2005, p. 29, own translation), the essence of racism³ “was to seek to legitimize, at the level of ideas, a practice, and a policy, regarding non-white people and the production of symbolic and/or material privileges for the white supremacy that engendered it”.

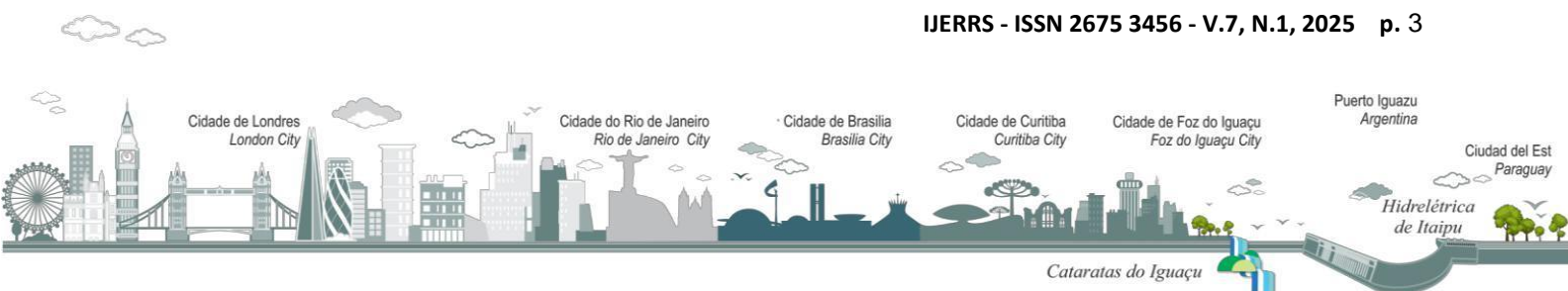
The scars of racial discrimination, evident even in a superficial examination of the social fabric of a nation (Nascimento, 1978), are further aggravated in the perpetuation of systems that unfairly afflict racial communities. This is particularly evident in the unequal distribution of the burden of environmental injustices and the impacts of climate change.

In the 1970s, Robert Bullard introduced the seminal concept of environmental justice⁴, encompassing the principle that “all people and communities are entitled to equal protection of environmental, health, employment, housing, transportation, and civil rights laws” (Bullard, 2014, p. 236).

By coining the term “environmental justice”, Bullard illuminated the interconnection of social and environmental struggles. The author recognized the terrible implications of allowing marginalized communities to bear the brunt of pollution, toxins, and ecological degradation – a cycle perpetuated by both systemic bias and government inaction. His assertion that access

³ It is important to highlight the notion that racism creates and sustains the concept of race, which does not represent a biological category, but a social construction reinforced through historical and contemporary racist practices. Despite the proof of the non-existence of human races, the term race continues to designate a political category used to justify inequalities (Kilomba, 2020).

⁴ Research on environmental justice began when Bullard was asked to collect and analyze data regarding a case in which the installation of a landfill near a black community had been authorized, which suggested environmental discrimination (Gardezi; Chenault; Dankbar, 2016).





to a clean and healthy environment is a fundamental human right reshaped the discourse around environmental issues, emphasizing the link between civil rights, social justice, and environmental preservation (Bullard, 1990; 1993).

Recent studies have built on this foundation, emphasizing that no segment of society, regardless of its ethnic, racial, or socioeconomic identity should disproportionately face environmental harms. Schlosberg (2007) and Pellow (2018) explore the evolving dimensions of environmental justice, highlighting the intersectionality of climate vulnerability and advocating for more inclusive policies that address the systemic inequalities still prevalent today. These works reinforce Bullard's original argument while bringing in current perspectives on global environmental justice movements and the need for deeper structural changes.

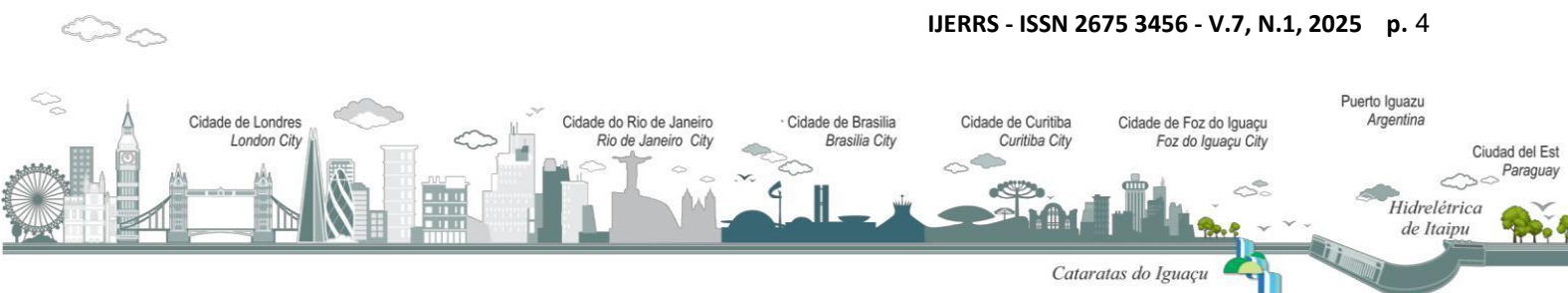
In the 1980s, Benjamin Franklin Chavis Jr (1993) presented the term “environmental racism” to refer to the reality of marginalized groups, especially black, indigenous, and ethnic peoples, who disproportionately bear the weight of adverse environmental impacts, and to the exclusion of these groups in the spaces for formulating social and environmental public policies⁵. In the author's words:

Environmental racism is racial discrimination in decision-making. It is racial discrimination in the enforcement of norms. It is racial discrimination in the deliberate allocation of toxic and industrial polluting waste in vulnerable communities. It is racial discrimination in public consent to risk factors for human health and life in communities of color. And it is racial discrimination in the historical exclusion of people of color from the main environmental groups, management of environmental agencies, commissions, and regulatory bodies (Chavis Jr., 1993, p. 3 *apud* Souza, 2015, p. 30-31).

In 2005, at the time of Hurricane Katrina, the idea of environmental racism was taken up again to show that the black people from the southeast coast of the United States was hardest hit by the climate catastrophe (Belmont, 2023).

The anthropogenic disaster in the municipality of Brumadinho, in the state of Minas

⁵ In the 1980s, the Racial Justice Commission of the United Church of Christ (UCC) prepared the study “Toxic wastes and race in the United States”, which identified the existence of a national standard for locating activities that were hazardous to health and their waste in non-white and/or poor communities (Souza, 2015).





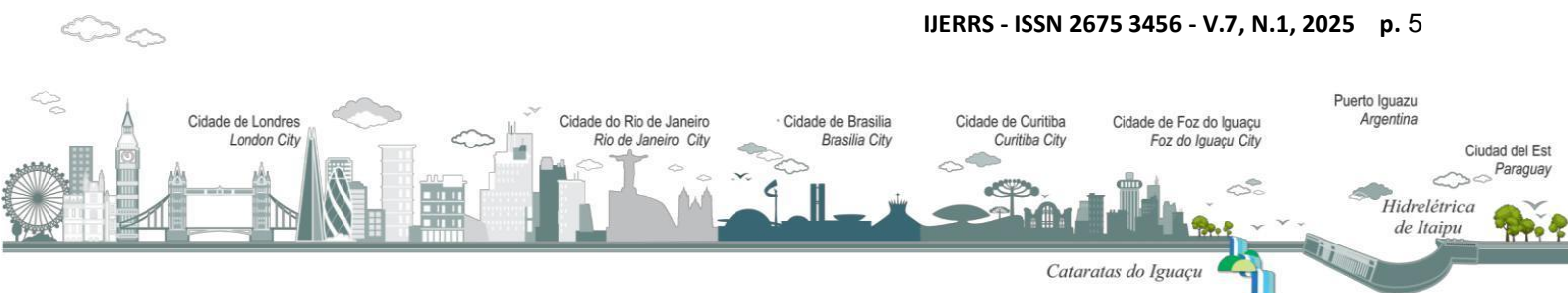
Gerais, Brazil, serves as a poignant example of environmental injustice exacerbated by vulnerabilities within affected populations. The black and low-income population was most affected by the tragedy; in the area reached by the first kilometers of the waste path, 63.8% of the population was non-white, a figure higher than the averages for the municipal (52.5%) and state (54.6%) populations. In the areas with the most affected populations and residences, Parque Cachoeira and Córrego do Feijão, the percentages of non-whites were even higher, reaching 70.5% and 58.8%, respectively. The tragedy involved significant social, economic, and environmental repercussions, leading to ongoing struggles for justice among the affected communities (Milanez *et al.*, 2019; Bacchi; Nunes; Tybusch, 2022).

Environmental racism is, therefore, an alarming and persistent form of discrimination that affects marginalized communities, subjecting them to disproportionate exposure to environmental risks and injustices, which has its origins in a complex web of historical injustices, dating back to the times of colonialism and industrialization.

In Brazil, after the so-called "Golden Law", the freed black people sought housing in precarious areas far from the central neighborhoods of the cities. Despite the abolitionist campaign having mobilized various strata of Brazilian society, black people were left to fend for themselves, without reforms that would integrate them into a society in transition to salaried employment (Fernandes, 2008). These narrative paints a picture of negligence, prejudice, injustice and suffering – a wound that continues to afflict Brazil. Understanding the lasting consequences of this violation of rights is essential in the context of precarious housing.

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2019), more than 13 million Brazilians lived in precarious housing conditions in 2019, contributing to insecurity and housing disparities. The lack of access to adequate housing disproportionately affects black Brazilians, who face higher levels of housing vulnerability in risky and overcrowded areas, perpetuating racial inequalities in living standards (CEERT, 2020).

As a result of a history of economic inequality, racial discrimination, and residential segregation, racial minorities are more susceptible to living in precarious and unhealthy housing conditions, often built on sloping and steep terrain, with the risk of slope instability, flooding, and other natural disasters. In Brazil, approximately four million people live in regions predisposed to socio-environmental disasters and intensifiers of extreme events, such as





landslides and floods (Souza, 2023)⁶.

The eminent contrasts present in events like this raise crucial questions about justice and equity in times of crisis. Are we all truly affected in the same way by environmental disasters and the broader challenges of climate change? The answer, it seems, is a resounding “no”. Disparities in access to resources, mobility, and security during these crises are a reminder of the deep inequalities that persist in our society. It is a call to action, reminding us of the urgent need to address these systemic inequalities and to work towards a fairer and more sustainable present for all, where the burdens and benefits of environmental resilience are shared more equitably.

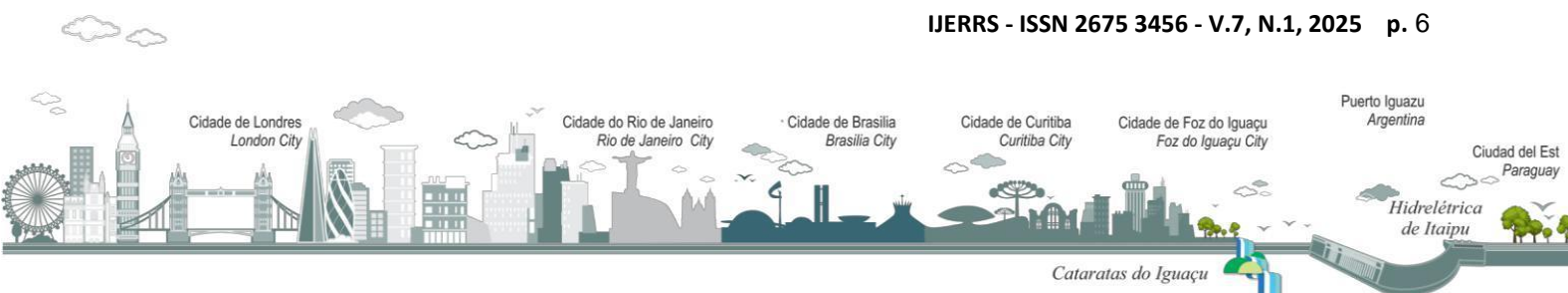
In view of the predictions of an increase in the frequency, intensity and devastation of extreme events, and the prevalence of other intersectionalities that affect vulnerable populations, such as lack of access to decent housing, health, education and food security, it is highlighted the importance of policies that pave a collective path towards a less unequal, more resilient and sustainable near future.

In this sense, there is an urgent need to establish and/or strengthen environmental and social policies that combine environmental justice and racial equity. With a view to effectively combating environmental injustices arising from a colonialist past-present, it is necessary to consider not only the facts and statistics relating to extreme events, but the perspectives of populations which are vulnerable to them in the construction of policies, in the establishment of goals and execution of actions.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN BRAZIL AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

This section is dedicated to the history of Brazilian environmental policies and the interconnections between these documents and the central concepts of this article, namely environmental racism and climate justice. The interface between environmental policies and

⁶ Disasters are understood as resulting from an interaction between potentially harmful physical events and the vulnerabilities of societies exposed to them (Licco, 2013). The intersection of environmental factors – floods, storms, earthquakes, droughts, etc. – and social factors – involving aspects such as economy, infrastructure, and education – worsen the impact on vulnerable populations in the country, such as those with lower incomes and those with racial markers.





the concepts is identified through analysis of the content referring to vulnerable populations.

For the purposes of this article, vulnerable populations refer to groups of people who are at increased risk of experiencing adverse outcomes, whether due to environmental, economic or social factors. These groups often face systemic disadvantages that make them more susceptible to various challenges, such as poverty, discrimination and reduced access to resources and opportunities. Special attention is given to low-income, racialized (black and indigenous), traditional populations and those residing in disadvantaged geographic areas.

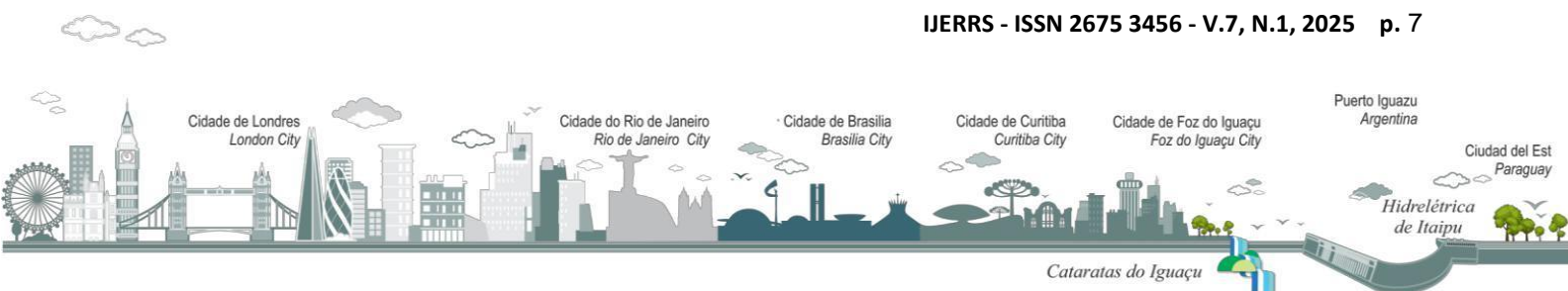
The first legal and institutional efforts (1930-1980)

Since the colonial period, there have been legal rules restricting the use of natural resources in Brazilian territory and providing for sanctions in case of non-compliance. Such norms, however, were not aimed at preserving native flora; their objective was to guarantee the monopoly of the kingdom of Portugal in the exploitation of extracted wood (Sparovek *et al.*, 2011).

The 1930s are considered to mark the beginning of the trajectory of Brazilian environmental policy, when it began to be outlined with the institution of the Water Code and the Forest Code, both in 1934. However, until the 1960s, there was no environmental policy in Brazil *per se*. There were “sectoral policies that tangentially considered the environmental issue”, focusing on the management of natural resources, aiming for their best economic use (Moura, 2016, p. 14, own translation).

In the Water Code, established by Decree No. 24,643/1934, rights of riverside populations are mentioned in provisions referring to common waters, riverbed and banks, hydraulic energy and concessions. For example, in article 143, a, the legislation determines that, in all uses of hydraulic energy, requirements to protect the general interests of “the food and needs of riverside populations” would be met (Brazil, 1934).

The Water Code was published six days before the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of 1934, in a context of nationalism, industrialization and the formation of a centralized structure in the Brazilian State (Rached, 2001). In the same year, the Forest Code was established by Decree No. 23,793/1934, focusing on the protection of soil for agricultural use, remaining in force until the establishment of a new Forest Code, by Law No. 4,771/1965.





The 1965 Forest Code included provisions relating to forestry, extractivist and traditional populations. According to its article 3, g, Permanent Preservation Areas (*Áreas de Preservação Permanente* – APPs) are considered, among others, forests and other forms of natural vegetation intended to maintain the environment necessary for the life of forestry populations. According to article 14, b, the Federal or State Public Power may prohibit or limit the cutting of species which are necessary for the subsistence of extractive populations. Article 37-A, § 1, states that traditional population areas are not understood as abandoned, underused or inappropriately used areas (Brasil, 1965). However, as Ahrens (2003, p. 10, own translation) considers, despite the advances achieved, “there was still a prevalence of a utilitarian perception of the so-called ‘forest resources’”.

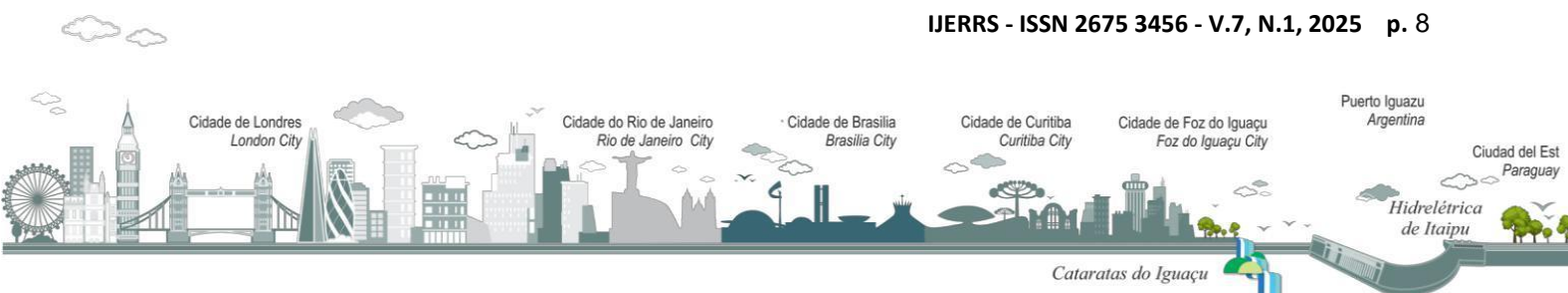
The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held, the so-called Stockholm Conference, held in 1972, contributed significantly to the increased attention of the environment in the international community (Lago, 2006; Moura, 2016). According to Principle 1 of the Stockholm Conference Declaration, policies that promote racial segregation, discrimination and colonial oppression are condemned. The Principle 15 of the Declaration, regarding urban planning, also addresses racism and colonialism:

Planning must be applied to human settlements and urbanization with a view to avoiding adverse effects on the environment and obtaining maximum social, economic and environmental benefits for all. In this respect, projects which are designed for colonialist and racist domination must be abandoned. (UN, 1972, p. 4).

Although disjointed and presenting more of an economic than environmental character, the legislation from the 1930s to the 1970s can be considered precursors of the environmental policies analyzed in the following sections. Vulnerable populations, when mentioned, concerned riverside and indigenous peoples.

Advances following the National Environmental Policy (1981-2008)

In the 1980s, the National Environmental Policy (Law No. 6,938/1981) was established,





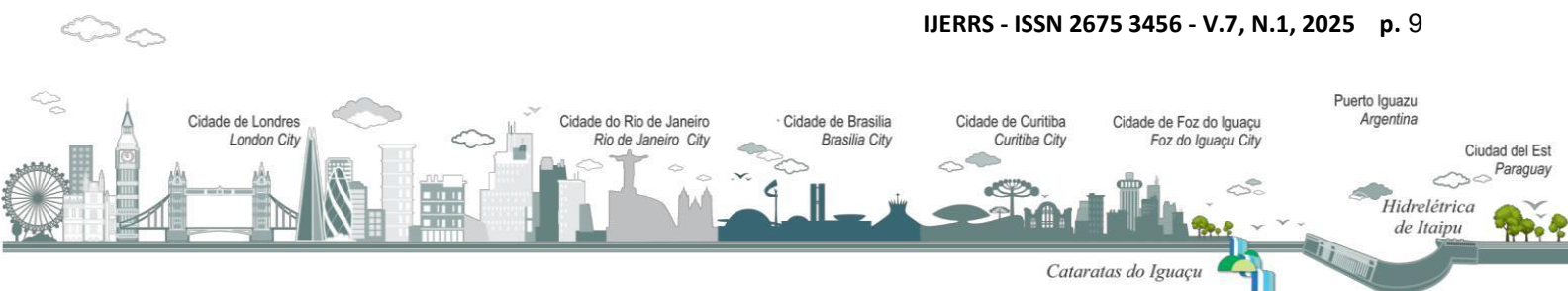
whose public policy instruments for the environment were regarded as innovative⁷. Regarding vulnerable populations, Law No. 6,938/1981 provides, in its article 17-F, that “those who practice subsistence agriculture and traditional populations” are exempt from paying the Environmental Control and Inspection Fee (*Taxa de Controle e Fiscalização Ambiental* – TCFA).

In the period between the creation of the Ministry of Urban Development and Environment, in 1985, and the Ministry of the Environment, in 1992, Law No. 7,797/1989 created the National Environment Fund (*Fundo Nacional de Meio Ambiente* – FNMA). Intended to support projects aiming at the rational and sustainable use of natural resources, FNMA provides for popular participation in decision-making on environmental public policies. According to article 5 of Decree No. 10,224/2020, the FNMA Deliberative Council is composed of representatives from government bodies, associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, indigenous peoples and traditional communities (Brasil, 1989; 2020).

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in 1992, in Rio de Janeiro – known as Rio 92. Important environmental agreements were signed at the Conference, such as the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In the Rio Declaration, it is recognized that environmental issues are best addressed with the participation of all interested citizens, who must have adequate access to information and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. Furthermore, the document highlights the role of young people in achieving sustainable development and of women and indigenous peoples in environmental management and development (UN, 1993).

The National System of Nature Conservation Units, established by Law No. 9,985/2000, includes several provisions relating to traditional populations, starting with one of the objectives of the System: “to protect the natural resources which are necessary for the subsistence of traditional populations, respecting and valuing their knowledge and culture and promoting them socially and economically”. According to article 5, X, the System is governed by guidelines that guarantee alternative means of subsistence or fair compensation for lost

⁷ The instruments of this policy include the establishment of environmental quality standards, the assessment of environmental impacts, the environmental licensing, the creation of specially protected territorial spaces and the Federal Technical Registration of Potentially Polluting Activities and Users of Environmental Resources (Brasil, 1981; Ganen; Araújo, 2015).





resources to “traditional populations whose subsistence depends on the use of natural resources existing within conservation units” (Brasil, 2000).

In turn, the National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Traditional Peoples and Communities, established by Decree No. 6,040/2007, includes among its objectives guaranteeing these populations access to natural resources used for their physical, cultural and economic reproduction; guaranteeing their access to public social policies and the participation of representatives in social control bodies; and recognizing, protecting and promoting the rights on their traditional knowledge, practices and uses (Brasil, 2007)⁸.

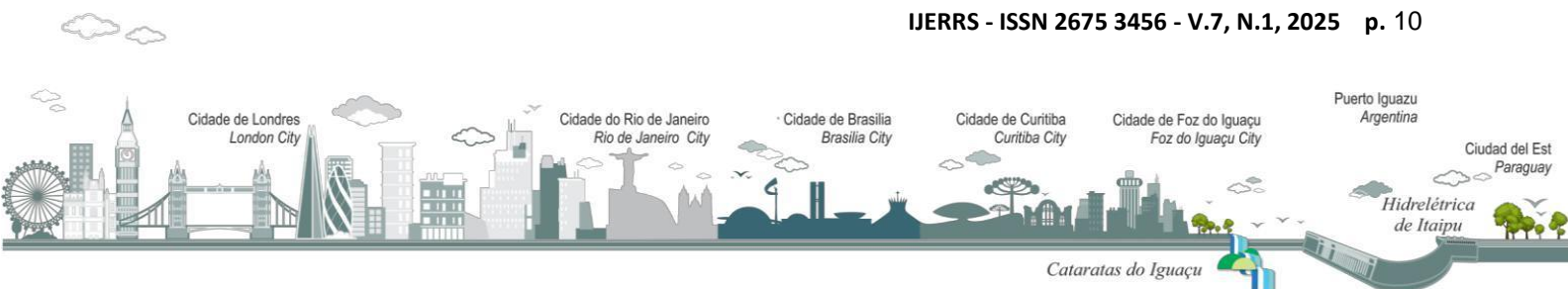
It is understood that the period between the National Environmental Policy and the National Policy on Climate Change, discussed in the following section, was characterized by the incorporation of general and comprehensive guidelines on the environment into the Brazilian legal system, highlighting the institution of public participation mechanisms in environmental policy, including traditional populations.

Recent actions since the National Policy on Climate Change (2009-2023)

The National Policy on Climate Change, established by Law No. 12,187/2009, presents among its guidelines the commitments assumed by Brazil in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Among its objectives, the Policy aims to implement measures to promote adaptation to climate change across the three spheres of the Federation, “with the participation and collaboration of economic and social agents, interested or beneficiaries, in particular those especially vulnerable to its adverse effects”.

The measures to be adopted for its execution must take into account the different socioeconomic contexts of its application, as well as distribute the resulting burdens between the economic sectors and the interested populations and communities in an equitable way and balance the individual responsibilities regarding the origin of the emission sources and the

⁸ It should be highlighted that the Policy extended the concept of traditional peoples and communities in Brazil to encompass diverse populations, such as indigenous people, quilombolas, riverside dwellers, extractivists, gypsies, *pantaneiros*, *caatingueiros*, *caíçaras*, pomeranians etc. The 1988 Federal Constitution recognized the right to land of indigenous people and quilombolas (Brasil, 2007; Geledés, 2022).





effects on the climate (Brasil, 2009).

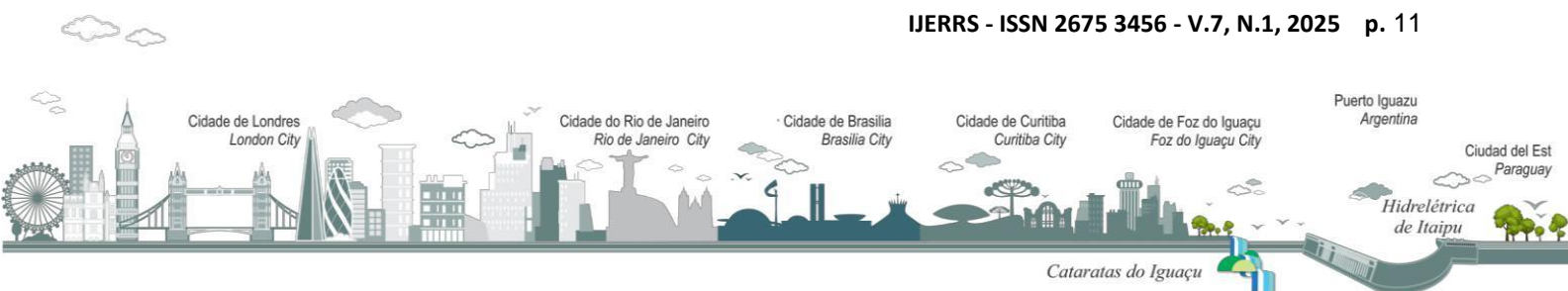
The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio+20, was held in 2012. Two themes were established for the Conference, one of which was green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. In parallel to the main negotiations, companies and governments signed more than 200 commitments to voluntary actions in different areas, such as energy, water and food (Moura, 2016). It is worth highlighting the list of demands from the Peoples' Summit, delivered to the United Nations, in whose final document racism is considered one of the structural causes of social and environmental injustice. The Summit's common agenda includes “expanding the fight for human rights, promoting a culture of peace, gender equality, valuing local and traditional knowledge and against racism” (Cúpula dos Povos, 2012, p. 11, own translation).

In that year, Law No. 12,651/2012 established the new Forest Code, which includes several provisions relating to traditional populations. According to its article 3, sustainable agroforestry practiced by traditional peoples and communities is of social interest. Low environmental impact activities include the construction of housing for family farmers, remnants of quilombola communities and other extractivist and traditional populations in rural areas (Brasil, 2012).

The National Climate Change Adaptation Plan was launched in 2016, as an instrument prepared by the Federal Government in collaboration with the civil society, the private sector and state governments, with the purpose of promoting the reduction of national vulnerability to climate change and carry out risk management associated with this phenomenon (BRASIL, 2016a). The principles to be observed by the Plan include the following:

Encompass social, cultural and economic dimensions for promoting adaptation, with particular attention to more vulnerable groups and populations, such as indigenous, quilombola and riparian populations, that require multi-sectoral, regionalised and priority approaches, including application of gender-sensitive and racial/ethnic criteria (Brasil, 2016a, p. 19, own translation).

In September 2016, Brazil ratified the country's adoption of the Paris Agreement, which was signed by the 195 countries of UNFCCC and sets targets to stop the global temperature rise. According to the country's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (iNDC), Brazil





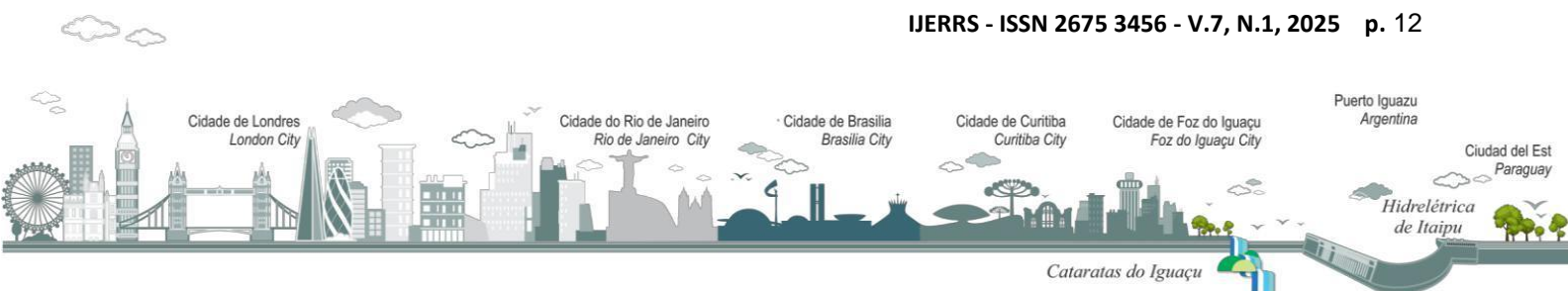
committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 37% below 2005 levels by 2025, with a subsequent indicative contribution to reduce them by 43% by 2030⁹. The country was committed to implementing its iNDC with full respect to “rights of vulnerable communities, indigenous populations, traditional communities and workers in sectors affected by relevant policies and plans, while promoting gender-responsive measures” (Brasil, 2016b).

At the end of the four years (2016-2020) of implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, a Final Monitoring and Evaluation Report was carried out presenting the main advances achieved in 11 strategic sectors, including “Vulnerable Peoples and Populations”. In this sector, actions were taken to raise awareness among its target audience and advances were observed in structuring the climate change adaptation agenda under the National Policy for Environmental and Territorial Management of Indigenous Lands, launched in 2012. Actions were also taken to identify vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change in Brazilian municipalities, providing support for the future planning of adaptation measures in areas at risk for disasters. Despite the guidelines to promote the participation of vulnerable groups in the preparation of studies and mappings, as well as in decision-making and discussion processes, no information is identified about the protagonism of these populations in the related activities (Brasil, 2020).

In 2023, there was a resumption of socio-environmental and climate policies, such as the Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon, created in 2004 and revoked in 2019, and the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation and Burning in the Cerrado Biome, created in 2010 and also revoked in 2019. According to Decree No. 11,367/2023, action plans for the prevention and control of deforestation in Brazilian biomes will be drawn up, monitored and evaluated with transparency and social participation, through consultation public and technical-scientific seminars (Brasil, 2023a; 2023b).

The program Coping with the Climate Emergency was the most voted among the 28 programs of the Multi-Year Plan (*Plano Plurianual – PPA*) 2024-2027 which were made available on the Participatory Brazil platform for prioritization by society. The program’s target audience include vulnerable populations and communities those located in the Coastal Zone,

⁹ In 2023, Brazil increased the targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 48% by 2025 and 53% by 2030 (Brasil, 2023b).





which suffer the effects of climate change, such as rising ocean levels, extreme events, erosion, flooding, landslides, and those located in regions at risk of natural disasters, especially populations that live on the outskirts of large urban centers and that are majority black (Brasil, 2023d; 2024a).

As presented, despite climate change is recognized as one of humanity's greatest challenges in recent decades, the topic was included in a national environmental policy only in 2009. The link between such policies and racism and justice environment is very recent and there is much to be done to increase the participation and protagonism of vulnerable populations in the country's environmental and climate agendas.

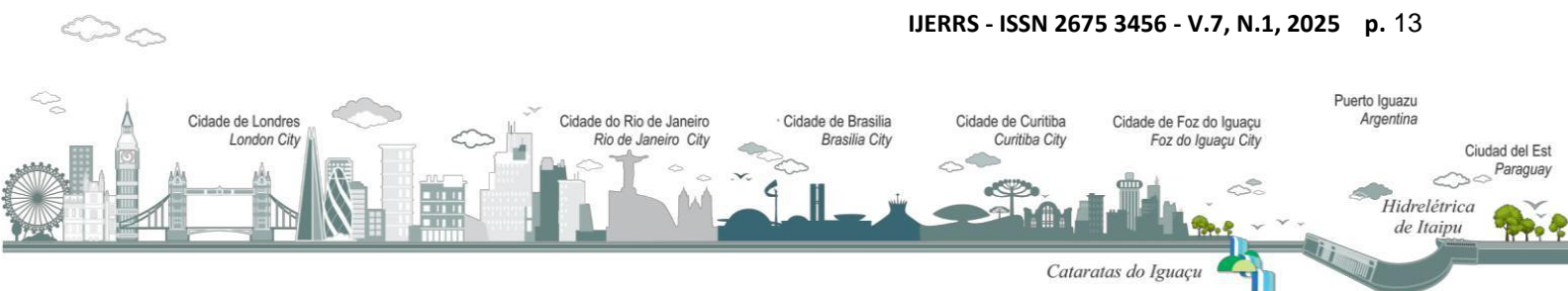
The urgency of mitigating the consequences of the climate crisis, considering its intersectionality with social inequalities and systemic racism, indicates the need to reevaluate public policy formulation processes, placing the perspectives of the most affected groups at the forefront. The next chapter presents examples of initiatives led by civil society organizations that have supported marginalized communities, disproportionately affected by socio-environmental impacts, to actively participate in these processes.

INITIATIVES IN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LEAD BY CIVIL SOCIETY

In line with the thinking of Bullard (1990), it is understood that a new political organization needs to be proposed to confront environmental racism and promote environmental justice, involving putting at the forefront the perspectives of the groups most affected by social inequalities and the advancement of climate crisis at public policy formulation and political advocacy spaces.

Recognizing that socio-environmental and climate impacts disproportionately weigh on marginalized communities, civil society organizations have supported and brought these groups together to actively participate in policy formulation. These groups have been gaining strength as a path to effective and significant institutional changes for people and territories, surpassing virtual activism.

In the following sections, examples of civil society initiatives for anti-racist environmental justice are presented. Their main lines of action and impacts are highlighted,





especially with regard to participation in the formulation of public policies.

DuClima Institute

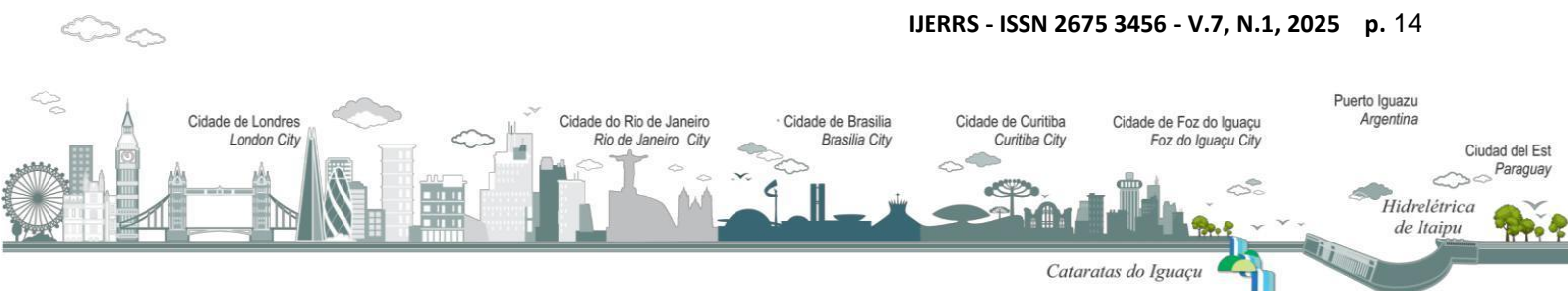
The DuClima Institute, founded by professionals who have personally experienced the effects of the climate crisis and environmental racism, is an organization dedicated to supporting all actors involved in the climate agenda in combating environmental racism and promoting anti-racist climate justice, focused in protecting the most affected groups (black, indigenous, quilombola, women, children), in promoting education, in the formulation of public policies and in the development of topics such as climate displacement and its impact on vulnerable groups.

A recent action consists of defending priority criteria in the Minha Casa, Minha Vida (MCMV) housing program for individuals affected by extreme events and socio-environmental disasters. An amendment covering this content, proposed together with the Marielle Franco Institute, was accepted and incorporated into the provisional measure sanctioned by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and transformed into Law No. 14,620/2023, which recreated the Program¹⁰ (Federal Senate, 2023).

According to article 8, IV, of the aforementioned legislation, priority will be given to, among others, families “who have lost a home due to natural disasters in a location where an emergency situation or state of public calamity has been declared”. Among the objectives of the new MCMV, according to article 2, VI, it is worth highlighting “strengthening urban planning and the implementation of actions and methods of prevention, mitigation, preparation and response against natural disasters” (Brasil, 2023c).

Additionally, the Institute led the drafting of three bills, whose mandate is from Congresswoman Erika Hilton, focusing on the rights of climate-displaced individuals, climate adaptation measures, and the fight against environmental racism. The first project is called the

¹⁰ Considered the largest public housing program ever implemented in Brazil, the MCMV Program was created in 2009 and extinguished in 2020, when it was replaced by “Casa Verde e Amarela”. With the approval of Provisional Measure No. 1,162/2023 and subsequent presidential sanction, the Program was recreated with the aim of offering housing to the less privileged classes, with sustainable constructions capable of generating jobs and reducing inequalities (Senado Federal, 2023).





National Climate and Environmental Displaced People Policy and aims to provide legal protection to individuals and communities who are displaced by extreme climate events, with a focus on addressing the disproportionate impact of these events on black, indigenous, quilombola and indigenous low-income communities. This bill, recorded in the Chamber of Deputies on May 7, 2024, aims to ensure that all individuals and communities receive the resources and support they need to recover from the impact of extreme weather events and mitigate the risks of future disasters (Câmara dos Deputados, 2024).

The second, called the Bill Focusing on Climate Displacement, Relocation and Decent Housing for the Climate Displaced People, aims to provide safe, adequate and affordable housing for individuals and families who have been displaced by the impacts of climate change. Finally, the Bill Focusing on Implementing Climate Adaptation Measures for Vulnerable Territories and Combating Environmental Racism has the purpose of requiring states to implement adaptation measures which are capable of building climate-resistant infrastructure, strengthening early warning systems and improve disaster preparedness to better address the effects of climate change and reduce the risk of displacement (verbal information¹¹).

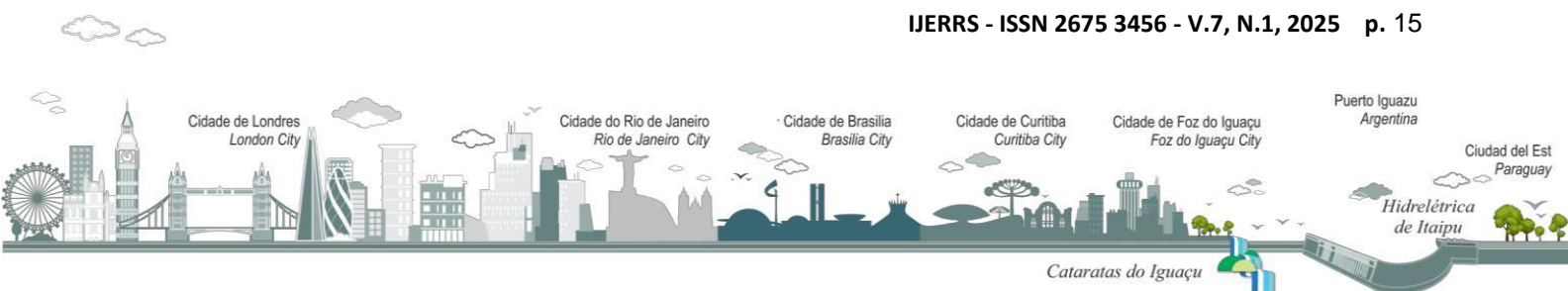
Anti-Racist Adaptation Network

The Anti-Racist Adaptation Network was created from the union of several third sector and civil society organizations to promote an anti-racist climate adaptation agenda in the national territory, dealing with agendas focused on the climate crisis, human rights, and climate justice in a coordinated manner, especially influencing legislative movements (Anti-Racist Adaptation Network, 2024).

The Network was responsible for preparing a public manifesto signed by more than 30 organizations across the country in 2022, called Climate Emergency in Brazil: The Need for an Anti-Racist Adaptation, a document aimed at the Brazilian government and civil society.

The document lists anti-racist climate and urban policies expected from public

¹¹ The two bills, whose mandate is also from Congresswoman Erika Hilton, are expected to be recorded in the Chamber of Deputies in the first quarter of 2024. The three bills presented in the section were written by the author Naira Santa Rita Wayand de Almeida.





authorities and the private sector. In the section on the policies, it is stated that:

It is not acceptable for mobilization to occur only in times of tragedy, leaving aside the legal obligation to guarantee a systemic approach to prevention, mitigation, preparation, repair, response and recovery actions in disasters, with the participation of the most affected populations, especially the peripheral black population. Climate adaptation policies need to prioritize areas that are at risk, consider knowledge and solutions generated from the territory and factors of loss and damage for affected groups, as well as promote anti-racist resilience and sustainability measures in cities, the countryside, and forests, interconnected with other human rights, such as the right to health, housing, and education (Rede por Adaptação Antirracista, 2022, p. 2-3, own translation).

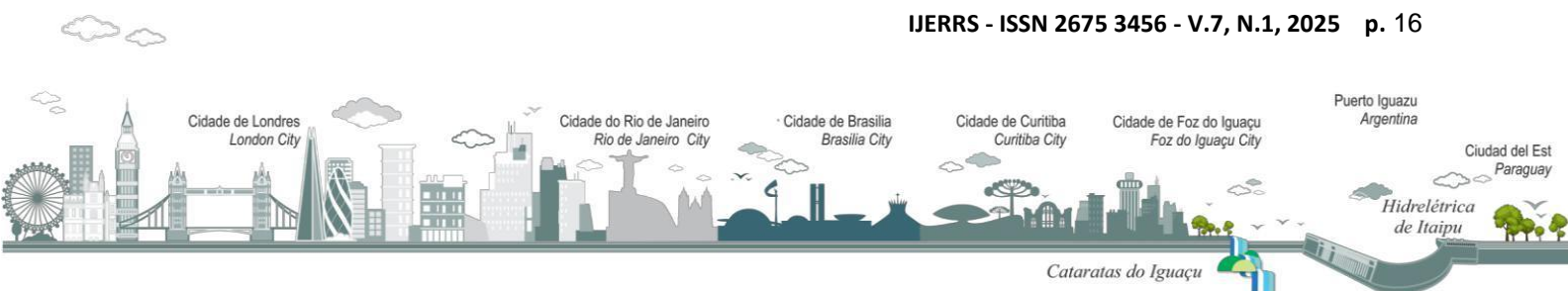
Although the Network recognizes the government's efforts in monitoring climate crises, the appeal presented in the document emphasizes the need for immediate and concrete actions, going beyond political promises. The requirement emphasizes that mobilization should not be limited to moments of tragedy, calling for systemic prevention, mitigation, and response measures, especially for marginalized communities (Rede por Adaptação Antirracista, 2022).

Peregum Black Reference Institute

The Peregum Black Reference Institute is a non-profit organization, with a private law nature, created in 2019, by popular education activists. Its mission is to strengthen the black and peripheral population, from and with black movements, bringing specific and urgent demands to the centrality of debates and social practices, in order to transform public policies and people towards an anti-racist society.

The Institute highlights four urgent and priority areas of action in society: Popular Education; Protection and Care; Political Incidence and Strategic Litigation; Climate and City. In the Climate and City axis, the Institute's actions include urban, environmental and climate planning projects, involving the creation of meteorological stations in peripheral areas to enable climate monitoring, as well as the organization of urban community gardens and training on food sovereignty, agroecology, and territorial mapping (Instituto de Referência Negra Peregum, 2024).

One of the Institute's publications mentions an excerpt from the letter from the Black





Coalition for Rights and Partners, which was delivered to the 26th United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP 26), in 2021. The document brings, in its centrality, “the permanent defense of quilombola territory, titling of territories of struggle and resistance” (Belmont, 2023, p. 20-21):

The fundamental debate on environmental racism still does not find wide support, or is denied, by environmental movements in Brazil, just as there is a lack of racialization of environmental public policies. As a result, we have a lack of environmental security in urban and rural territories with a majority black population, impacted by expropriation, water and air pollution, extreme weather events, living in risk areas, dumping of waste, lack of access to basic sanitation, impacted by floods, penetration, waterborne diseases, among others. (...)

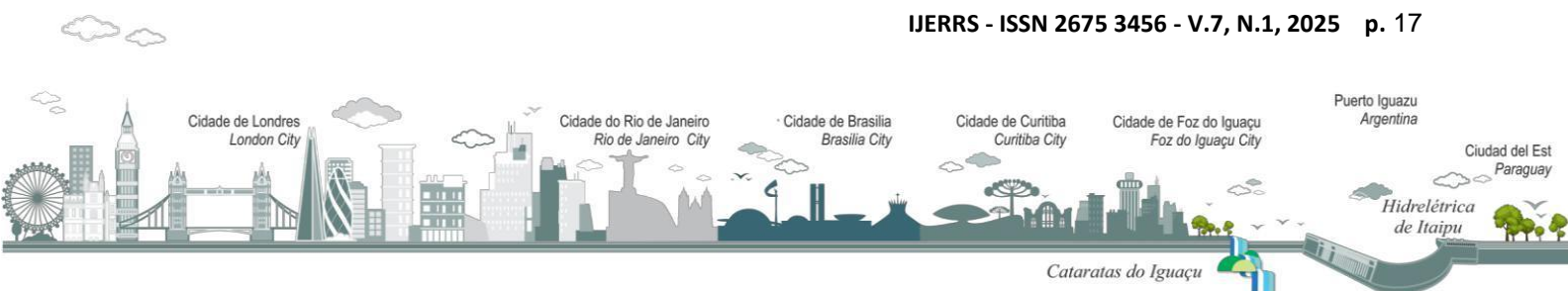
We make our own the words of Lélia González, in 1984: “From the big house and townhouse to the beautiful buildings and residences of today, the criteria have been the same: the racial division of space” (Belmont, 2023, p. 20-22, own translation).

In Brazil, anti-racist environmental justice initiatives represent a fundamental movement that aims to combat systemic disparities and injustices that have disproportionately affected marginalized communities. These initiatives recognize the interconnection of environmental and climate issues with social and racial inequalities, recognizing that vulnerable populations, especially black, indigenous and quilombola communities, bear the brunt of the damage. In the last analysis, the importance of these initiatives lies in their commitment to paving a path towards an environmentally just society, where all individuals, regardless of their racial or ethnic origin, can live in a dignified environment.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article seeks to contribute to literacy efforts on environmental racism, anti-racist climate justice and fundamental related intersectionalities, shedding light on issues which require greater attention and action. Greater awareness of these issues, especially in the context of Brazilian civil society, highlights the urgency of inclusive and equitable solutions.

Inclusive public policy formulation initiatives have endorsed the importance of breaking down barriers that have historically excluded and silenced these voices. Marginalized communities often face structural impediments such as language barriers, limited education





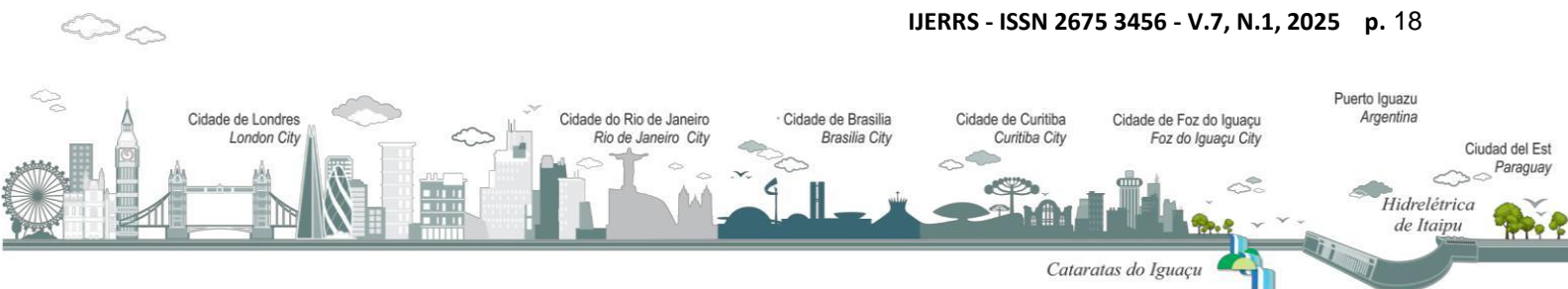
and lack of representation. To ensure equitable participation, political processes must create accessible platforms for engagement, offering resources and information in formats that resonate with and engage these communities.

One of the most compelling aspects of the involvement of the most affected groups is their intimate knowledge of the environment and challenges that surround them. Traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous wisdom, and community insights offer unique perspectives that are often ignored in conventional political discussions. By integrating these perspectives, policies can become more contextually relevant and effective in addressing specific climate-related concerns.

It is worth highlighting that the formulation of inclusive policies goes beyond mere consultation; it involves genuine participation and co-creation. Engaging marginalized communities as active partners in policy discussions ensures that their priorities, needs, and aspirations are not only considered, but are an integral part of the decision-making process. This approach not only improves the quality of policies, but also promotes a sense of ownership, empowerment, and advocacy within these groups.

The engagement of civil society demonstrates the power of collective action in resuming the impact on spaces of effective change. However, it is crucial to recognize the challenges and difficulties encountered during the research process. The notable disparity in available literature between colonialism and racism, as opposed to research which specifically addresses environmental racism and climate justice in Brazil, represents a significant obstacle. This imbalance points to a critical gap that requires greater exploration and commitment from the academic community to be addressed and corrected, especially including legitimacy of narratives from social researchers, peripheral, empirical experts, who are spread across all territories of Brazil.

Looking to the future, further studies may consider deepening the role of civil society and representatives of groups affected by climate and socio-environmental disasters. Case studies could offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of their actions, providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced and the successes achieved by them. Furthermore, exploring the concept of corporate responsibility in climate and socio-environmental disasters represents a crucial avenue for research. Analysis of companies' actions, policies and



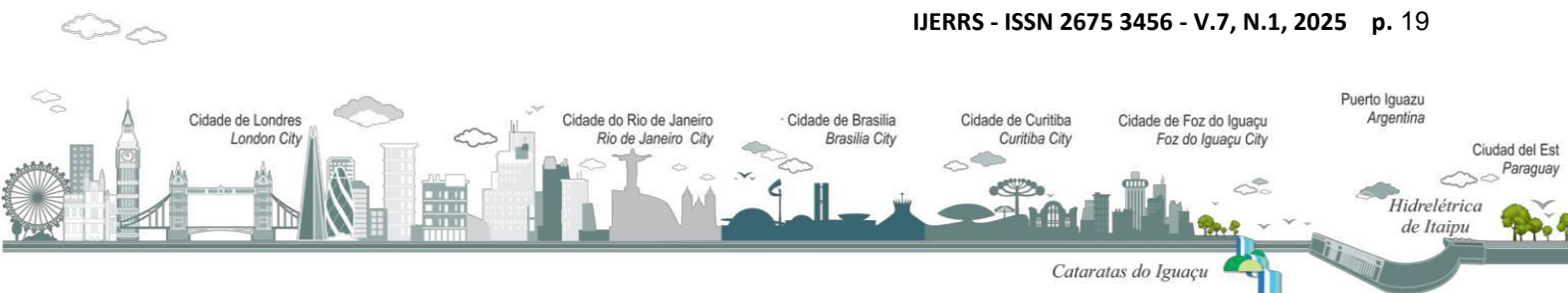


responsibilities in mitigating and preventing environmental damage can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play.

While this article highlights Brazilian civil society's efforts to combat climate change, it also emphasizes the need for a more balanced research landscape. By considering these gaps and promoting future studies on the role of civil society, the paper might contribute to a more informed and effective approach to combating environmental racism and advancing climate justice in Brazil and beyond.

REFERENCES

- AHRENS, S. O novo código florestal brasileiro: conceitos jurídicos fundamentais. CONGRESSO FLORESTAL BRASILEIRO, 2003, São Paulo. **Anais Eletrônicos**. São Paulo: Sociedade Brasileira de Silvicultura: Sociedade Brasileira de Engenheiros Florestais, 2003. Disponível em: <https://ainfo.cnptia.embrapa.br/digital/bitstream/item/60219/1/SP4708.pdf>. Acesso em: 28 out. 2024.
- BACCHI, K. S.; NUNES, O. A. M.; TYBUSCH, J. S. Desastre antropogênico de Brumadinho-MG: a injustiça ambiental sob o viés das vulnerabilidades. In: 6º CONGRESSO INTERNACIONAL DE DIREITO E CONTEMPORANEIDADE, 2022, Santa Maria. **Anais Eletrônicos**. Santa Maria: Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM), 2022. Disponível em: <https://www.ufsm.br/app/uploads/sites/563/2022/11/4.5.pdf>. Acesso em: 28 out. 2024.
- BELMONT, M. (Org.) **Racismo ambiental e emergências climáticas no Brasil**. São Paulo: Instituto de Referência Negra Peregum, 2023.
- BENTO, C. **O pacto da branquitude**. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2022.
- BRASIL. **Decreto nº 24.643, de 10 de julho de 1934**. Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 1934. Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/decreto/d24643.htm. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.
- _____. **Lei nº 4.771, de 15 de setembro de 1965**. Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 1965. Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l4771.htm. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.
- _____. **Lei nº 6.938, de 31 de agosto de 1981**. Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 1981. Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l6938.htm. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.
- _____. **Lei nº 7.797, de 10 de julho de 1989**. Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 1989. Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l7797.htm. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.
- _____. **Lei nº 9.985, de 18 de julho de 2000**. Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 2000. Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l9985.htm. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.
- _____. **Decreto nº 6.040, de 7 de fevereiro de 2007**. Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 2007. Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2007/decreto/d6040.htm. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.
- _____. **Lei nº 12.187, de 29 de dezembro de 2009**. Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 2009. Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2009/lei/l12187.htm. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.





_____. **Lei nº 12.651 de 25 de maio de 2012.** Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 2012.
Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2011-2014/2012/lei/l12651.htm. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.

_____. **Plano Nacional de Adaptação à Mudança do Clima.** Estratégia Geral. Brasília, DF: Ministério do Meio Ambiente, 2016a.

_____. **Intended Nationally Determined Contribution Towards Achieving the Objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.** República Federativa do Brasil, 2016b.

_____. **Decreto nº 10.224, de 5 de fevereiro de 2020.** Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 2020.
Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2019-2022/2020/Decreto/D10224.htm. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.

_____. **Decreto nº 11.367, de 1º de janeiro de 2023.** Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 2023a.
Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11367.htm. Acesso em: 28 out. 2024.

_____. **Governo retoma política socioambiental e climática em 2023.** Brasília, DF: Ministério do Meio Ambiente e Mudança do Clima, 2023b. Disponível em: <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/governo-federal-retoma-politica-ambiental-e-climatica-em-2023>. Acesso em: 28 out. 2024.

_____. **Lei nº 14.620, de 13 de julho de 2023.** Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 2023c.
Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2023-2026/2023/Lei/L14620.htm. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.

_____. **Programa 1158 - Enfrentamento da Emergência Climática.** Mapeamento de Programas Integrantes do Plano Plurianual 2024-2027. Brasília: Ministério do Planejamento e Orçamento, 2023d.

_____. **Agenda Transversal Ambiental PPA 2024-2027.** Série Planejamento Nacional. Brasília, DF: Ministério do Planejamento e Orçamento, 2024a.

_____. **O que é racismo ambiental e de que forma ele impacta populações mais vulneráveis.** Brasília, DF: Presidência da República, 2024b. Disponível em: <https://www.gov.br/secom/pt-br/fatos/brasil-contrafake/noticias/2023/3/o-que-e-racismo-ambiental-e-de-que-forma-impacta-populacoes-mais-vulneraveis>. Acesso em: 11 jul. 2024.

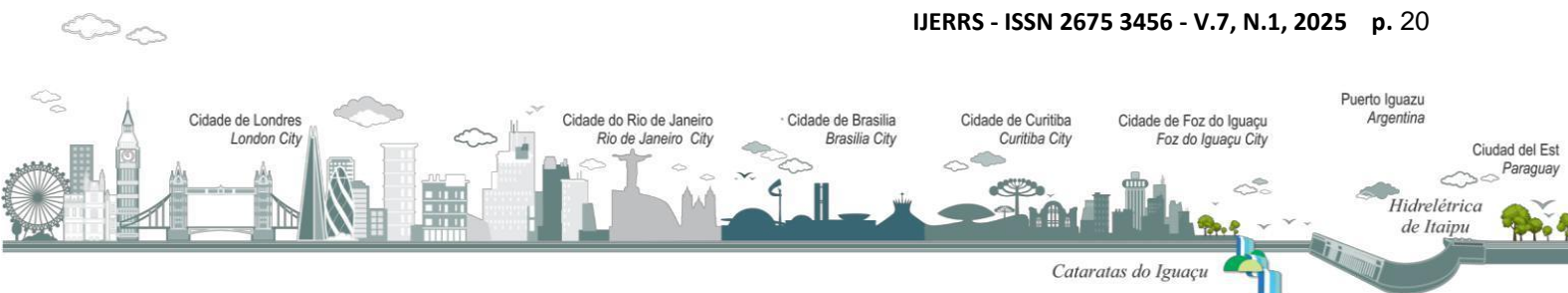
BULLARD, R. D. **Dumping in Dixie: race, class and environmental quality.** Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1990.

_____. **Confronting environmental racism: voices from the grassroots.** Boston, MA: South End Press, 1993.

_____. "People-of-Color Environmentalism" from *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* (1990). In: WHEELER, S. M.; BEATLEY, T. **The Sustainable Urban Development Reader.** 3. ed. London: Routledge, 2014. p. 235-241.

CÂMARA DOS DEPUTADOS. **Projeto de Lei nº 1594/2024.** Institui a Política Nacional dos Deslocados Ambientais e Climáticos – PNDAC, estabelecendo seus direitos e fornecendo diretrizes para que o Poder Público promova sua proteção. Disponível em: <https://www.camara.leg.br/proposicoesWeb/fichadetramitacao?idProposicao=2431186&fichaAmigavel=nao>. Acesso em: 11 jul. 2024.

CARNEIRO, A. S. **A construção do outro como não-ser como fundamento do ser.** Orientadora: Roseli Fischmann. 2005. 340 f. Tese (Doutorado) – Faculdade de Educação – Universidade de São





Paulo, São Paulo, 2005.

CEERT - Centro de Estudos das Relações de Trabalho e Desigualdades. **Black Lives Matter: Report on Racial Inequalities in Brazil**, 2020.

CHAVIS JR., B. F. Preface. *In*: BULLARD, R. D. (Ed.). **Confronting environmental racism: voices from the grassroots**. Boston, Mass.: South End Press, 1993.

CÚPULA DOS POVOS. **Documentos Finais da Cúpula dos Povos na Rio + 20 por Justiça Social e Ambiental**. Rio de Janeiro: Cúpula dos Povos, 2012.

FERNANDES, F. **A integração do negro na sociedade de classes**. São Paulo: Editora Globo, 2008. v. 1.

G20 BRASIL. **Quebrando paradigmas**: Sul Global lidera debates para desenvolvimento mais inclusivo. G20 Brasil, 5 de fevereiro de 2024. Disponível em: <https://www.g20.org/pt-br/noticias/quebrando-paradigmas-sul-global-lidera-debates-para-desenvolvimento-mais-inclusivo>. Acesso em 27 out. 2024.

GANEN, R. S. (Org.); ARAÚJO, S. M. V. G. (Textos). **Legislação brasileira sobre meio ambiente: fundamentos constitucionais e legais**. Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados, Edições Câmara, 2015.

GARDEZI, M.; CHENAULT, C.; DANKBAR, H. Climate Change and Environmental Justice: A Conversation with Dr. Robert Bullard. **Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis**, v. 5, n. 2, 2016. Disponível em: <https://www.iastatedigitalpress.com/jctp/article/566/galley/446/view/>. Acesso em: 28 out. 2024.

GELEDÉS - Instituto da Mulher Negra. **Gente do campo**: descubra quais são os 28 povos e comunidades tradicionais do Brasil. Portal Geledés, 31 de janeiro de 2022. Disponível em: <https://www.geledes.org.br/gente-do-campo-descubra-quais-sao-os-28-povos-e-comunidades-tradicionais-do-brasil/>. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.

IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. **Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Contínua**: Boletim Anual. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2019.

INSTITUTO DE REFERÊNCIA NEGRA PEREGUM. **O que fazemos**. Instituto de Referência Pregum. 2024. Disponível em: <https://peregum.org.br/>. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2024.

IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. **AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023**. IPCC, 2023. Disponível em: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>. Acesso em: 26 out. 2024.

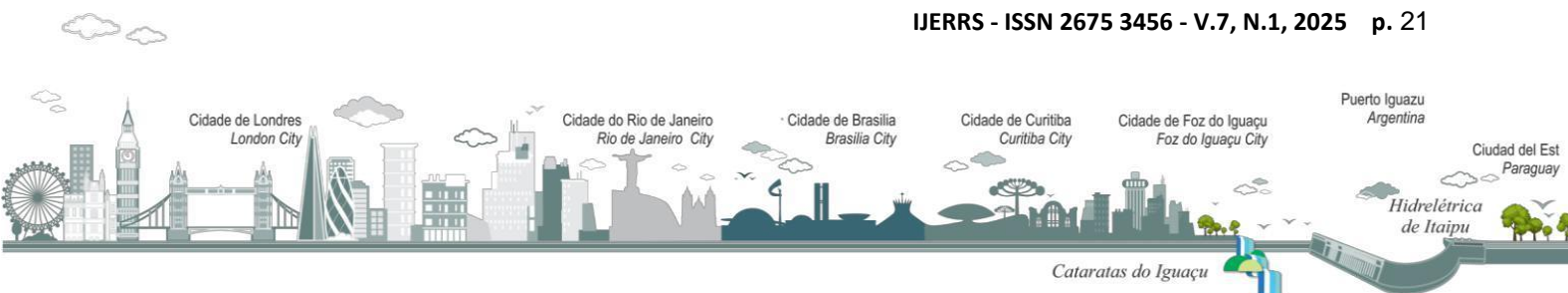
KILOMBA, G. **Memórias da plantação**: episódios de racismo cotidiano. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Cobogó, 2020.

LAGO, A. A. C. **Estocolmo, Rio, Joanesburgo**: o Brasil e as três conferências ambientais das Nações Unidas. Brasília: Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão (FUNAG), Ministério das Relações Exteriores (MRE), 2006.

LICCO, E. A. Vulnerabilidade social e desastres naturais: uma análise preliminar sobre Petrópolis. **Revista de Saúde, Meio Ambiente e Sustentabilidade**, Dossiê, v. 8, n. 1, p. 25-41, 2013.

MOURA, A. M. M. Trajetória da política ambiental federal no Brasil. *In*: MOURA, A. M. M. (org.). **Governança ambiental no Brasil**: instituições, atores e políticas públicas. Brasília: Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (Ipea), 2016. p. 13-43.

NASCIMENTO, A. **O genocídio do negro brasileiro**: processo de um racismo mascarado. Rio de





Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1978.

PACHECO, T. **Racismo ambiental**: expropriação do território e negação da cidadania. In: SRH - Superintendência de Recursos Hídricos (org.). Justiça pelas Águas: enfrentamento ao Racismo Ambiental. Salvador: SRH, 2008. p. 11-23.

PELLOW, D. N. **What Is Critical Environmental Justice?** Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018.

RACHED, G. Estado e nacionalismo no setor elétrico brasileiro: o Código de Águas de 1934. IV CONGRESSO BRASILEIRO DE HISTÓRIA ECONÔMICA, 2001, São Paulo, **Anais Eletrônicos**. São Paulo: Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores em História Econômica, 2001. Disponível em: <https://www.abphe.org.br/arquivos/gabriel-rached.pdf>. Acesso em 28 out. 2024.

REDE POR ADAPTAÇÃO ANTIRRACISTA. **Brasil em emergência climática**. Rede por Adaptação Antirracista. 2024. Disponível em: <https://adaptacaoantirracista.org.br/>. Acesso em: 11 jul. 2024.

_____. **Emergência climática no Brasil**: a necessidade de uma adaptação não-racista. Rede por Adaptação Antirracista. 2022. Disponível em: https://adaptacaoantirracista.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Posicionamento_Orgs_Chuvvas_19052022.pdf. Acesso em: 11 jul. 2024.

SENADO FEDERAL. **MP do Minha Casa, Minha Vida segue para sanção**. Agência Senado, Brasília, 13 de junho de 2023. Disponível em: <https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/materias/2023/06/13/mp-do-minha-casa-minha-vida-segue-para-sancao>. Acesso em: 11 jul. 2024.

SCHLOSBERG, D. **Defining Environmental Justice**: Theories, Movements, and Nature. Oxford, UK; New York, U.S.: Oxford University Press, 2007.

SOUZA, A. S. **Direito e racismo ambiental na diáspora africana**: promoção da justiça ambiental através do direito. Salvador: Editora da Universidade Federal da Bahia (Edufba), 2015.

SOUZA, L. **Quase 4 milhões de pessoas vivem em áreas de risco no Brasil**. Agência Brasil, São Paulo, 22 de janeiro de 2023. Disponível em: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2023-01/quase-4-milhoes-de-pessoas-vivem-em-areas-de-risco-no-brasil>. Acesso em: 11 jul 2024.

SPAROVEK, G.; BARRETTO, A.; KLUG, I.; PAPP, L.; LINO, J. A revisão do Código Florestal brasileiro. **Novos Estudos**, v. 89, n. 1, p. 111-135, 2011.

UN – United Nations. **Declaration on the Human Environment**. Adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 16 June 1972. New York: United Nations, 1972.

_____. **Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development**. Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992. New York: United Nations, 1993.

