



The insertion of social movements in the protection of the environment: bodies and learnings in the Recôncavo da Bahia

La inserción de los movimientos sociales en la protección del medio ambiente: cuerpos y aprendizajes en el Recôncavo da Bahia

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the possibilities and actions of social movements and traditional communities in protecting the environment in the Recôncavo da Bahia through interventions of the Federal University of the Recôncavo da Bahia, UFRB. As a territory of identity, the Recôncavo is home to niches for social movements and diverse communities. With their bodies, educational actions, and cultures, they develop actions ranging from the preservation of heritage to the struggle for natural spaces for cultural survival, acting together with the state apparatus to preserve and protect the environment. Methodologically, a bibliographic review was carried out with a study of education, environment, and physical education; as a result, new reflections that may help society preserve the environment with sustainability are proposed. The main results point to strengthening institutional and community configurations, the visualization of collectives and minority groups, and the generation of democratic platforms for change based on the dialogue between different knowledge and world visions. We conclude with the possibility of disciplinary integration and the need for further studies.

Keywords: community development, physical education, higher education, social need, community participation.

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INTRODUCTION

The Recôncavo da Bahia is a strip of land that can be defined as a part of communities bordering or surrounded by the Bay of Todos os Santos; it covers hundreds of municipalities, including those where the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia, UFRB, has its campuses or teaching centers. This university network is home to about 16,000 people in its



community of students, employees, and professors. As a territory of identity, Recôncavo integrates social movements and diverse communities, such as Afro-Brazilian religions, cultural groups, and gypsy camps, as well as homeless and landless movements. They bring together beliefs, resistances, knowledge, and practices, which gives them the status of social movements with their own identity and intercultural relations (Akbulut et al., 2019; Hawlina et al., 2020; Mackay et al., 2021; Scheidel et al., 2020).

The main notion sought to be explored is the possibility of structuring the agency of individuals and groups through the convergence of the bodily, the educational, and the cultural. From this convergence, initiatives aimed at environmental preservation, the struggle for identity survival, and integration into governmental and non-governmental systems that share the same objectives should be nurtured.

This study was based on the need to conceptualize social movements from an ideological and militant perspective, seeing social movements as those that graft counter-hegemonic thoughts and actions within formal and non-formal structures. In this sense, trainers and educators are those who accompany these social movements and act as forces that move less favored societies, offering their services and cultural and political visions for collective decision-making. This form of agency is conceived as a crucial way to generate new ways of living and creating.

There are multiple examples of social movements that require these mechanisms of participation and support, such as the landless, homeless, quilombolas and traditional African and indigenous territories, LGBTQIA+ movements and women, students or traditional communities. In common, these groups sustain collective struggles through non-governmental organizations, formats that distance them from institutional models and whose capacity to transform reality may be far from the ideal and their needs.

In the Recôncavo da Bahia there are camps of the Landless Rural Workers Movement, MST, quilombola territories and traditional mixed communities, fishermen, sambadeiras, as well as resistant religious organizations, such as Candomblé terreiros and confraternities, others of movements in transit, such as the gypsies. Actions range from the protection and defense of natural spaces, called ecosystems, to the use of bodies in cultural and religious manifestations that show the integration man/woman/nature that is educated to move life and preserve the environment.

United for the preservation of the environment, we seek to advocate from the field of Physical Education due to the importance of the body integrating with nature and playing a leading role in the protection and/or destruction of the environment in which it survives. How this body learns to deal with nature and to qualify its knowledge is what we are primarily interested in discussing in this text.

Now, the body-being is defined as the integration of the corporeal existence where consciousness, biology, and nature dialogue; all these elements that make up the human. This vision of a body-being integrated with the environment forms points intertwined with Agenda 30 of the United Nations (UN). Therefore, it aims at a world that is progressively more sustainable and capable of establishing dialogues between nations for the preservation of the environment and humanities, appealing to sustainability actions.

Brazil, as part of the organic potential of the Amazon, has made various efforts to prevent further destruction and raise awareness among the population through concrete actions by the communities with support and institutional-governmental apparatus. In this process, attending to the components of Educational Sciences through schools and universities is fundamental.

This article deals with the implication of education in the sustainability and preservation of the environment and explores the corporal dimension of the agency of men and women in the task of defending their own habitat as a vital issue. To this end, a bibliographic review was carried out, and several texts by authors addressing the categories of “university”, “education”, “environment”, “cultures”, “sustainability”, “learning” and “physical education” were analyzed. This experience is an attempt to unify proposals for decisions that converge in the protection and sustainability of the natural world, where cultural and territorial sustenance, belonging, identities, and life can be systematized.

METHODOLOGY

Epistemological and methodological approach

The epistemological approach adopted was qualitative, with a marked orientation towards critical theory and theoretical ideas associated with intersectionality. Therefore, the review carried out had a committed view of the

social, economic, group and community processes of minorities and emerging collectives in their counter-hegemonic struggle (Benkirane & Doucerain, 2022; Hill et al., 2021; Ruiz et al., 2021).

From this theoretical and cosmovisional platform, we sought to carry out a critical analysis of the postulates of the main authors identified a priori in the topics of interest. From the initial search of the key texts, a scoping review search was carried out to systematize the literature, while an initial evaluation of the main lines and available data was pursued (Bradbury et al., 2022; Ruiz & Petrova, 2019).

For this purpose, a first approach was made using keywords, an assessment of the research question-methodology relationship, a scoping review, and the authors' discussion on the correct adaptation of the components (search strategy, criteria, and data extraction) (Khalil & Tricco, 2022). The outcome of this initial phase was the determination that this would be the best methodology because of its exploratory nature, broad but deep scope, and best contribution to the foundations of future studies (Powell & Koelemay, 2022).

Research question, indicators and search strategy

How do social-identity movements and cultural and community education intersect with respect to initiatives that, from the corporal and the agency of minority and emerging collectives, seek to preserve the environment and promote sustainable development? Based on this question and the synthesis of the ideas proposed by the authors consulted, a proposal of thematic lines was elaborated to guide the search for sources through keywords (see Table 1). The Google Scholar search engine was used; the search was limited to sources indexed in Scopus, and priority was given to sources in English, a decision that reflects the availability of sources according to language.

Table 1.

Thematic lines and keywords

Thematic lines	Keywords
Legal apparatus and environmental education	Environmental policy + environmental education+ brazil
University, environment and sustainability: convergence in social movements.	University + environment and sustainability + social movement
Body dimension, health, wellness and environment: integration in education.	body image + social movement
Body, movement and environment	physical education + social movement and environmental education

Source: own elaboration.

Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Due to the exclusive selection of texts published by journals indexed in Scopus, it was decided not to carry out a direct evaluation of the quality of the sources, but to evaluate the exclusive review of scientific articles. This allowed us to discern between the typology of the sources and to exclude essays, commentaries, letters to the editor, or editorials; additionally, to concentrate our efforts on the analysis and understanding of the broad framework of the state of the art and the generation of guidelines for future studies (Heffernan et al., 2022).

Data extraction, analysis and synthesis

Data extraction was performed with the help of ATLAS.ti software for tagging, coding, and categorization. Each thematic line was structured as an independent database, and the sources were downloaded using the keywords organized within each hermeneutic unit for coding, segmentation, and introduction of comments. The analysis was run from each hermeneutic unit to reach internal saturation and close coding for each database. Overall saturation was assessed by triangulation of the analysis in each individual hermeneutic unit and achievement of the study objective (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Sebele, 2020).

Limitations of the study

The main limitation of the study was its exploratory scope since the intention was to achieve a comprehensive view of the network of categories of interest. This breadth of interests, expressed in the range of categories and disciplines addressed, made it difficult to follow a PRISMA-type protocol and to generate metadata in terms of

the necessary bibliometric indicators. In this sense, there is a need for new exploratory studies with a critical orientation, but also bibliometric studies that provide greater clarity as to the impact of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to achieve a deeper and more representative presentation of the main contrasting data, theoretical and explored lines, and main trends, the findings are discussed through the central themes. Finally, the possibilities of disciplinary integration are discussed, and some of the main sublines to be explored in the future are offered.

Legality, transformation and corporeality: social movements and spaces for social change

Article 225 of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 determines the relevance of laws to guide public policies for environmental protection. This legal apparatus constitutes one of the bases for combating environmental violations. Hence, it is an important instrument for ensuring compliance with the Environmental Crimes Law.

Due to the ecosystemic complexity of the country and its wealth of resources, the National System of Nature Conservation Units assumes objectives related to the preservation of the biological and genetic reservoir of species, the care and restoration of ecosystems, as well as participation in sustainable development programs. Recently, however, this basis has been compromised, resulting in fifty years of evolution of environmental laws and programs, as well as the generation of an increase in harmful human action on ecosystems or insufficient management to cope with the effects of climate change and natural disasters (Gomes et al., 2021; Pivello et al., 2021; Schmidt & Eloy, 2020).

Due to its present and future impact, one of the legal dimensions to be considered is that which sustains environmental education. In 1999, Law 9.795 was enacted, which provides for Environmental Education, establishing the National Environmental Education Policy, whose essential objectives have been to promote environmental awareness, participation in the care and preservation of the environment, as well as the construction of a society more oriented to balance with nature. The data studied reveal the importance of this awareness and its rise during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period during which the themes of social responsibility and citizen participation for sustainability gained relevance (Severo et al., 2021).

This regulation seeks to establish the basis for sustaining permanent political dialogues for constructing public policies that converge in practical actions for environmental protection. However, this legal basis requires effective concretization in programs that promote the aforementioned awareness, hence educating for environmental sustainability is more than a process of knowledge transfer and is one of building values and joint experiences, as evidence suggests that such sustainability has a direct impact on environmental benefits (Ardoin et al., 2020; Mehmood, 2021; Zafar et al., 2020).

Given that man is a cultural being, it is expected that this construction will be understood as a joint process that is the responsibility of all social agents. A university should provide, among other things, connection between the academic environment, communities, industry, and local-regional governments for direct attention to the economic, strategic, and socio-cultural issues of sustainable innovation (Durán et al., 2020; Lerman et al., 2021; Murillo & Hernández, 2023). Sources indicate that these alliances should aim to establish commitments in projects and interventions aimed at strengthening and creating public policies for sustainability and environmental care from the shared social responsibility and interest that transforms them into stakeholders (Kraus et al., 2020; Sánchez et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2020).

To this extent, “public policies” are understood as the set of popular positions and projects constituted through dialogues between powers. Education is an important factor in the efforts to integrate body-being and environment so that its actions are learned, taught, and developed on a permanent and daily basis. This line of research, although promising, is far from being an established field, and the studies analyzed suggest the need for further deepening of current trends associated with body image and its impact on social transformation processes (Ando et al., 2021; Rodgers & Rousseau, 2022; Vandenbosch et al., 2022).

In this scenario, education, as a social process and institution, acts as a mediating factor of relationships, interests, and projects (individual, community, and social). Environmental Education is one of the essential ways to promote public policies for the sector because, in its convergence with laws through schools, universities, social movements, and communities, it allows to unite experiences and actions in terms of dialogue of different visions so that negotiated proposals emerge.

This vision implies reconciling an integration of interests in light of the differences in worldviews and objectives in the agendas of different agents. According to the sources consulted, it is crucial that pedagogy, as the guiding discipline of training, must present theoretical and practical alternatives to support new ways of thinking, generating knowledge, and contributing to sustainable development. This also implies thinking about the trainers and their programs, their beliefs, and what they socially reproduce; hence, this is another transcendental issue, especially from an intergenerational perspective of common and divergent objectives (Günther et al., 2022; Nousheen et al., 2020).

A preceding study considered a priori, conducted by de Brito (2012), investigated the environment and education in the Bahian community of Diogo, on the northern coast of Bahia. His main interest was to investigate the relationship between Education and Environmental Education as instigators of change, which led him to appeal to a non-hierarchical relationship between the two fields and to value the contribution of both to holism and social movements that seek a humanity-nature balance.

In Brazil, there is a long tradition of social movements. Several studies point to land, food production, agroforestry, and water resources exploitation, as well as in the energy sector, as the most controversial and in need of attention (Brondizio et al., 2021; Niederle et al., 2020; Rivera et al., 2021; Van den Berg et al., 2022). Consequently, from the critical analysis, it was possible to define the need to transfer social struggles to new planes, so we define body-being and corporeality as common sociocultural spaces that are situated and converge on the cultural plane and its manifestations. Moreover, this notion could offer gnoseological alternatives to the virtual-presential dichotomy and facilitate multi-site articulation and intercultural dialogue of diverse social movements (Greijdanus et al., 2020; Leong et al., 2020; Mackay et al., 2021).

Examples of these spaces are the sambadeiras, the movements for the preservation of popular cultures of the Recôncavo and the traditional communities where a good part of the Candomblé terreiros are located; natural settings used for rituals of both festivals and religious cults. Therefore, the integration of these communities into productive and decision-making processes could facilitate the production of new cultures, practices, leaderships, and the transition to new models of sustainability, as well as smooth out resistance due to differences in values (Campos & Marín, 2020; Mackay et al., 2021; Martinez, 2021; Selvanathan & Jetten, 2020).

In the Recôncavo, spaces are mixed. There can be landless settlements in quilombola communities and, within these spaces, diverse cultural actions where bodies that dance and sing their roots, sow, harvest, fish, and care for natural species, whether animal or vegetable. In this way, the body exercises its biocultural-political function by integrating itself into the environment as a form of preservation, sustainability, and defense. Hence the need for the sociocultural processes associated with corporeality to be studied in depth from the social and political sciences, with the educational sciences as mediators.

The importance of propeller partnerships for environmental and sustainability research in Recôncavo da Bahia

The foundation of the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia 18 years ago promoted research, teaching, and extension projects in this territory of identity. In order to analyze the impact of the results, discuss them, and contrast them with those offered by the literature, it was necessary to make a more detailed reading of the current Institutional Development Plan.

In its basic purposes, a call was appreciated for the pedagogical foundations to be anchored in an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary vision of the curriculum, assessment of extension activities, and knowledge that would not be conceived as scientific in traditional academic logic. These guidelines were positively valued, as they advocate the pedagogical basis necessary to accompany local solutions, the forms of agency of different multi-agent initiatives. This fact was contrasted with the literature and the sources studied, where it is pointed out that the empowerment of local actors constitutes a key path to sustainable development (London et al., 2023; Norström et al., 2022).

This perspective can and should be translated into a proposal for the meeting of cultures, knowledge, and educational practices outlined in the subjects served and/or participants of the university projects designed from the UFRB. The PDI-2015/2019 incisively emphasizes the need to recognize the subjects excluded from higher education and who were considered in the university's creation project. International studies confirm that, especially for young people, it is essential to be critical in terms of their social identity, concern for environmental threats, and interest in common responsibility, within the framework of pro-environmentalist social movements (Haugestad et al., 2021; Jasny a& Fisher, 2023; Shen et al., 2020).

The above implies not only the recognition but also the integration of their ancestral knowledge and practices, which have been systematically excluded, but at the same time, tighten the bridge that links the university with the Recôncavo da Bahia through outreach and support for social and community participation and the strengthening of relations with governance institutions. This position is essential, as several studies highlight the importance of the integration of these indigenous systems (knowledge + practices), in that it positions them as stakeholders and empowers them by promoting their sovereignty and participation in decision-making (Ford et al., 2020; Latulippe & Klenk, 2020; Mach et al., 2020).

The analysis of the sources allows us to affirm that, in a historical context marked by complex confrontations, the university community must undertake the education of new collective consciences in defense not only of institutions but also of existence itself. This platform is ideal for promoting freedom of expression, autonomy, and political commitment to the environment and sustainability. Moreover, from it, it is possible to ensure that curricular and pedagogical actions and practices position UFRB as an inclusive, democratic and pluricultural university.

The proposal to debate and promote socio-environmental practices in the regions occupied by social movements in the Recôncavo da Bahia involves producing/creating reading material for UFRB interventions based on research and extension actions. Parallel to this, a documentary survey should be conducted on the history of interventions of social movements and traditional communities that can be inserted into university education and communities.

The background information consulted shows that data collection should take place in localities and at the university, as the essence of the democratic proposal with an inductive and conciliatory approach to the representations of various groups with different views (Dias & Cerqueira, 2021). Participatory field research should make visible social movements' and traditional communities' experiences and actions. Based on this proposal, a wide range of possible interventions of the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia in the environment, heritage preservation, and public policies in this area were identified. In this aspect, social movements should be called to the responsibility of action and proposal of policies for the insertion they have in the territory (Dubois, 2021).

Body dimension, health, wellness and environment: integration in education.

Body and movement are multidisciplinary fields of study at a time when the quality of life at work, its balance with everyday life, and the different spheres of human life are being discussed. When it comes to teaching in public higher education, the idea that learning takes place in silence to produce a high concentration of attention is striking. This dismisses the principle of mobility as fundamental for the workforce to adapt to high-stress loads and productivity. It also implies underestimating the pleasure components present in people's daily lives in any space.

In the proposal context, it is necessary to analyze categories such as body, movement, playful pedagogy, and stress reduction programs. These lines of research should be associated with bodily practices in the daily development of classes as factors that can identify bodies: teachers, dancers, sick, dignified. It is necessary to understand that these playful approaches should go beyond the child's age and contribute to generating transformative and inclusive spaces, which requires pedagogical and didactic support for the proper operationalization of the objectives without denaturalizing social processes (Boysen et al., 2022; Pyle et al., 2022).

When analyzing the concept of "quality of life", associated with the factors that determine the fall in the qualitative productivity of teachers, it was found that this phenomenon is associated with a loss of productivity. Consequently, this produces a drop in the quality of what is taught and learned. Therefore, it is necessary to model social and pedagogical processes that include the link between the concepts of "quality of life", "collective health" and "environmental preservation" in a context of sustainability. Teachers, even with the peculiar attributions of the function, are not out of the context of common people.

This view makes it possible to understand how teachers themselves can reduce the probability of illness and death based on new concepts of practice and pedagogy. The generation of these methodologies should observe the creation of educational environments for the reduction of stress and the achievement of learning with a tendency to inductive, to the construction of a new meaning of life with quality, and integrated to the environment. Therefore, it is perceived the need to address ways of knowing and doing behind the educational act that permeate mediation, simplicity, and the consideration of all educational agents as equals.

It is then up to the teacher in the classroom to propose, organize, and intervene in the dynamics to provide space for quality of life and preserve the bodies from stressors capable of reducing the pleasure of learning and its multiplication. In order to do so, the teacher must then provide a safe, democratic, and collaborative environment so that the educational process is the result of joint action.

This depends on cultural, emotional, environmental and political factors based on dialogical situations in democratic spaces. Therefore, the body, although objectified in research and analysis linked to productivity and mercantilism, should not be considered as detached from its cultures, singularities, pluralities, and political being.

Then, the feeling of collectivity is attributed to the action, which in practice can be differentiated according to its individuations and objectives, being able to interfere with the goals and objectives of a given educational organization. The idea of considering public spaces as constructions of respect for rights and democracy is taken up again, and leisure as a right and a vehicle for social transformation. This study-project made it possible to justify the need to understand these phenomena for the construction of new forms and pedagogies that discuss and defend the quality of life of the subjects in the graduate school from an integrated vision of the environment.

Final thoughts and input for future developments

This article aimed to encourage extension and research actions aimed at bringing the quality of life closer to pedagogical practices associated with the preservation of the environment to reduce stress factors in educational spaces. This allows us to affirm that it remains to reflect on methodologies involving democratic constructions and living moments of physical activity and leisure as members of a body that educates and is educated from the perspective of spatial and bodily sustainability. These premises translate into the need to create a conceptual apparatus and, in praxis, to promote education through joy and beauty, the defense of pleasure in the educational act, and the reconstruction of space as creation, value, and harmony.

The results suggest that part of the methodology should be directed to the use of data and discussions on the health of teachers and researchers in public graduate schools in Bahia, while another part should focus on the discussion of pedagogical practices and methodologies that favor the reduction of stress-related diseases. This implies the search for a quality of life practice associated with teaching activities, specifically in treating and caring for the classroom space and academic productions. Initially, an outline of the lines of research and extension for future developments is proposed:

1. To study the contributions of social movements and traditional communities for the preservation of the environment in the Recôncavo da Bahia.
2. To study patrimonial and environmental aspects in the Recôncavo da Bahia within the scope of social movements.
3. To propose socio-environmental programs for the traditional and combative communities of the Recôncavo da Bahia.
4. To experiment socio-environmental practices in regions occupied by social movements and traditional communities in the Recôncavo da Bahia.
5. To promote environmental public policies based on the contributions of social movements and traditional communities.
6. To propose new methodologies and didactic-methodological devices capable of favoring the quality of life with sustainability, considering the diverse human learning from the valorization of the environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of sustainability, the socio-environmental factors that influence it, and the educational needs associated with its teaching -both for new generations and for those who grew up without the awareness of its importance- demand new initiatives. These initiatives depend on a complex theoretical and methodological underpinning, as they are subject to unique configurations of agents, environmental conditions, local-global identities, formal and identity territories, and alternative knowledge systems, among others.

The study conducted led to the conclusion that the study of corporeality, as an expression of the present and of the cultural richness of individuals, groups, and communities, can contribute to sustainability through the construction of spaces of democracy, equality, inclusion, and quality of life. However, its didactic and methodological organization requires teaching and learning processes committed to the construction of common sociocultural spaces. In this undertaking, the data analyzed show that the helix models, the integration of indigenous knowledge systems, and the generation of local solutions are the main alternatives.

Finally, it is concluded that physical education could act as a dynamic discipline in the relations between social agents, government, industry, and university, based on the creation of the necessary programs based on the corporeality mentioned above. For this, future studies are required, both documentary and empirical, which, according to the sources consulted, should be of a mixed type.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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