

**FRAGMENTS OF REALITY: CLIMATE JUSTICE AND ENVIRONMENTAL
RACISM IN THE NARRATIVES OF BRAZIL'S FAR RIGHT**

***FRAGMENTOS DE REALIDADE: JUSTIÇA CLIMÁTICA E RACISMO AMBIENTAL
NAS NARRATIVAS DA EXTREMA DIREITA BRASILEIRA***

***FRAGMENTOS DE REALIDAD: JUSTICIA CLIMÁTICA Y RACISMO AMBIENTAL
EN LAS NARRATIVAS DE LA EXTREMA DERECHA BRASILEÑA***



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How to reference this paper:

BARROS, Trissia Maria Fortunato Paes de. Fragments of reality: climate justice and environmental racism in the narratives of Brazil's far right. **Rev. Cadernos de Campo**, Araraquara, v. 25, n. esp. 2, e025021, 2025. e-ISSN: 2359-2419. DOI: 10.47284/cdc.v25iesp2.20062



| **Submitted:** 27/02/2025
| **Revisions required:** 01/10/2025
| **Approved:** 13/10/2025
| **Approved:** 28/12/2025

Editors: Prof. Dr. Maria Teresa Miceli Kerbauy
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ABSTRACT: In Brazil, the rise of the far right accelerated the dismantling of environmental policies, justified, among other factors, by discourses that deny the climate crisis and its unequal impacts. Based on the work of Alfred Schutz, this article analyzes how such narratives configure a finite province of meaning sustained by intersubjective networks of validation. The articulation between neoliberalism and neo-extractivism shows that the denial of climate change goes beyond the discursive realm and consolidates itself as a political and economic strategy that perpetuates social inequalities and environmental racism. By examining these intersections, the study demonstrates how systematic disinformation and the invisibilization of vulnerable populations hinder the implementation of fair climate policies. As a conceptual contribution, the notion of shock of realities is used to explain resistance to such evidence. Thus, the article argues that understanding and confronting these discourses is key to advancing climate justice and overcoming historical inequalities.

KEYWORDS: Climate Justice. Far-Right. Alfred Schutz.

RESUMO: No Brasil, a ascensão da extrema direita acelerou o desmonte das políticas ambientais, justificado, entre outros, por discursos que negam a crise climática e seus impactos desiguais. Com base na obra de Alfred Schutz, este artigo analisa como tais narrativas configuram uma província finita de significado, sustentada por redes intersubjetivas de validação. A articulação entre neoliberalismo e neoextrativismo revela que a negação das mudanças climáticas transcende o campo discursivo, consolidando-se como estratégia política e econômica que perpetua desigualdades sociais e o racismo ambiental. Ao discutir essas interseções, o estudo evidencia como a desinformação sistemática e a invisibilização das populações vulneráveis dificultam a implementação de políticas climáticas justas e equitativas. Como aporte conceitual, emprega-se também o conceito de choque de realidades do autor para explicar a resistência a tais evidências. Assim, defende-se que a compreensão e o enfrentamento desses discursos são fundamentais para o avanço da justiça climática e a superação das desigualdades históricas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Justiça Climática. Extrema Direita. Alfred Schutz.

RESUMEN: En Brasil, el ascenso de la extrema derecha aceleró el desmantelamiento de las políticas ambientales, justificado, entre otros factores, por discursos que niegan la crisis climática y sus impactos desiguales. Con base en la obra de Alfred Schutz, este artículo analiza cómo tales narrativas configuran una provincia finita de significado sostenida por redes intersubjetivas de validación. La articulación entre neoliberalismo y neoextractivismo muestra que la negación del cambio climático trasciende el plano discursivo y se consolida como estrategia política y económica que perpetúa desigualdades sociales y racismo ambiental. Al examinar estas intersecciones, el estudio evidencia cómo la desinformación sistemática y la invisibilización de poblaciones vulnerables dificultan la implementación de políticas climáticas justas. Como aporte conceptual, se emplea el concepto de choque de realidades para explicar la resistencia a tales evidencias. Así, se sostiene que comprender y enfrentar estos discursos resulta clave para avanzar en la justicia climática y superar desigualdades históricas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Justicia Climática. Extrema Derecha. Alfred Schutz.

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges of our time is climate change, which lays bare the impacts of an extractivist economic development model that has disrupted ecological processes and deepened historical inequalities. Although global in scope, its effects disproportionately affect social groups such as Black, Indigenous, and peripheral communities. These populations face the most severe consequences of the climate crisis—floods, prolonged droughts, wildfires, landslides, contamination, forced displacement, and food insecurity—and bear the highest costs of environmental degradation. For them, climate change is not merely an environmental issue but a matter of survival, aggravated by the absence of effective public policies capable of mitigating its impacts and improving living conditions. Compounding this scenario, efforts to confront the environmental emergency encounter strong resistance from political narratives that deny the ecological crisis and its asymmetric impacts. Climate justice thus emerges as a crucial analytical lens for understanding socio-environmental inequalities and vulnerabilities rooted in economic, social, political, and racial structures that hinder fair, inclusive, and sustainable solutions (Bullard, 1990, 2004).

In Brazil, debates on climate justice have gained further relevance amid the rise of the far right to central positions of power since 2016. This political shift has been marked by a systematic transformation of environmental and Indigenous rights policies, a process defined in the academic literature as policy dismantling. This phenomenon is characterized by the revocation of laws and regulations, the weakening of administrative capacities, reductions in budgetary resources, and the suppression of policy goals and protective instruments in order to realign previous public policies with new political and ideological priorities (Gomide; Silva; Leopoldi, 2023; Menezes; Barbosa Júnior, 2021).

In the recent Brazilian context, political dismantling has represented a reversal of environmental and Indigenous rights that had been progressively strengthened since the country's re-democratization in the 1980s. This regression subverted decades of progress in environmental governance and human rights. The consolidation of this right-wing political project therefore tends to compromise climate mitigation and resilience strategies. Moreover, the rhetoric of the Brazilian far right, extending beyond the institutional sphere, operates as a structural mechanism for reproducing socio-environmental inequalities. Within this dynamic, populations vulnerable to environmental risks are marginalized, while predatory and exclusionary practices are normalized and legitimized under the logic of economic imperatives. Consequently, these developments have attracted growing scholarly attention aimed at

understanding the new right and the configuration of its activism, marked by intense polarization amid environmental and democratic crises (Gomide; Silva; Leopoldi, 2023; Menezes; Barbosa; Barbosa Júnior, 2022; Brown, 2020; Cêpeda, 2018).

This article advances the hypothesis that the narratives of the Brazilian far right regarding the climate crisis function as interpretive frameworks that construct their own finite province of meaning (Schutz, 2018, 2019), sustained by intersubjective networks and consolidated as a political strategy that obstructs critical engagement with social inequalities and environmental racism. This discursive construction shapes the perception of reality among significant sectors of Brazilian society, including agribusiness actors, voters and activists aligned with the far right, religious segments, sectors of the conservative middle class, media networks, and digital influencers. In this regard, Zhouri (2022, p. 107, our translation) observes that “anti-environmental and anti-Indigenous positions are constitutive of the country’s history, although their presence within governmental spaces is now programmatically explicit.” Against this backdrop, the central question guiding this article is: how do the narratives of the contemporary Brazilian far right structure shared meanings that deny the climate crisis, delegitimize the environmental and Indigenous rights agenda, and simultaneously reinforce social inequalities, foster environmental racism, and obstruct the implementation of climate justice?

To address this question, the analysis draws on the theoretical contributions of Alfred Schutz, particularly his concepts of multiple realities and reality shock (Schutz, 2019). Situated at the intersection of Max Weber’s interpretive sociology and Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology, Schutz’s sociological approach seeks to elucidate how specific universes of meaning are constructed, legitimized, and socially reproduced, thereby guiding social action. His framework, grounded in the intersubjective processes that structure shared meanings, highlights how everyday experiences are interpreted and transformed into collectively recognized and accepted patterns of behavior. Schutz argues that “there are as many innumerable types of shock experiences as there are finite provinces of meaning upon which I may place the accent of reality” (Schutz, 2019, p. 29, our translation). These provinces structure alternative interpretations of reality, determining what is considered true or relevant within a given context, operating according to specific systems of relevance, such as ideological, political, and religious discourses.

At the national level, the contemporary far right constructs and consolidates its own finite province of meaning concerning the climate emergency, the environment, and Indigenous

rights, generally portraying them as obstacles to progress, economic development, and national sovereignty. This horizon of meaning distances itself from the material reality of environmental degradation and its impacts, while simultaneously underpinning public policies of dismantling that intensify social and territorial conflicts, favor sectors of the carbon-based economy, and relax environmental regulations in the interest of specific financial elites.

Within this framework, Schutz's approach enables a deeper understanding of how such narratives are constructed, thereby facilitating their contestation. When confronted with concrete events that challenge their premises—so-called reality shocks—their internal contradictions become evident, opening space for disputes over meaning and questioning the validity of these discourses. In this way, the Schutzian theoretical framework offers a distinctive phenomenological basis for understanding how the political narratives and discourses of the Brazilian far right shape common sense and public perception regarding climate justice, social inequalities, and environmental racism within the vivid present—that is, the moment of immediate and qualitatively charged experience that grounds the constitution of the lifeworld and allows intersubjectivity and shared meanings to emerge within relational dynamics (Schutz, 2018).

Multiple Realities and Political Narratives: The Construction of Climate Denial by the Brazilian Far Right

“If I am elected, there will not be one centimeter demarcated for Indigenous or quilombola reserves” (Bolsonaro, April 3, 2017).

“I was wrong—there won't be even one more millimeter” (Bolsonaro, August 3, 2018).

“I gave him a mission (to Salles): go after everyone (at IBAMA). I don't want extremists occupying these positions. We will put an end to this fine industry” (Bolsonaro, June 11, 2019).

“The Amazon is not being devastated nor consumed by fire, as the media falsely claims” (Bolsonaro, September 24, 2019).

“The fires occur practically in the same places, on the eastern edge of the forest, where rural settlers and Indigenous people burn their fields to survive” (Bolsonaro, September 22, 2020).

“I do not believe in global warming. I went to Rome in May and there was a massive cold wave. The media does not report that” (Former Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo, August 2, 2019).

“If it were toilet paper, it would only serve to wipe one's backside” (Nabhan Garcia, Secretary of Land Affairs at the Ministry of Agriculture, referring to the Paris Agreement, October 2018) (Brasil [...], 2021, [n. p.], our translation).

On November 2, 2021, the Climate Observatory released the report entitled *Brazil: 1,000 Days of Destruction*, presenting a detailed—though not exhaustive—chronology of the Bolsonaro administration's (2019–2022) denial of the climate crisis, the effects of which impacted both Brazilians and the global community. The study compiles public statements, interviews, and official measures demonstrating the political and ideological alignment of a government characterized by socio-environmental regression. Its significance lies in the meticulous compilation of discursive data and in exposing the conflictual relationship between far-right governmental policies, environmental preservation, and fundamental human rights.

As a consequence, during this period, the international perception consolidated that the then Brazilian president, Jair Bolsonaro, had emerged as one of the most prominent climate change deniers worldwide. This rhetoric was grounded in processes that delegitimized environmental protection mechanisms, devalued scientific knowledge, and systematically dismantled environmental oversight institutions, thereby shaping a grave scenario in Brazilian politics. Despite successive warnings issued by researchers and specialized organizations, his stance remained anchored in premises that minimized or denied the environmental crisis, creating favorable conditions for the advancement of deforestation, forest fires, land grabbing, and illegal mining, and consequently for increased greenhouse gas emissions and the intensification of social and territorial conflicts. These immediate repercussions resonated internationally, undermining Brazil's image in climate negotiations and posing a serious threat to the historically achieved rights of Indigenous peoples—whose role is essential to the protection and sustainable management of ecosystems.

In this context, the 2021 report by *Observatório do Clima*, by systematizing governmental statements, normative acts, and omissions, reveals how the discourse of the Brazilian far right and its translation into public policy intensified socio-environmental setbacks, deepened regional inequalities, and fostered environmental racism. *Brazil: 1,000 Days of Destruction* exposes the concrete and pernicious effects of a political project strongly oriented by climate denialism, underscoring the need for critical reflection on the legacy of this period and on the future implications of a political agenda that has grown stronger while opposing scientific consensus, disregarding the climate emergency and the importance of energy transition. This narrative, sustained by arguments that deny or downplay the climate emergency, disqualify environmental protection norms, and undermine the rights of Indigenous communities as guardians of their territories, operates as a mechanism legitimizing the

dismantling of environmental policies, perpetuating hierarchies, historical inequalities, and environmental racism.

From this perspective, the aim is to demonstrate how such discourses constitute a finite province of meaning that operates concretely in the formulation of public policies, the mobilization of supporters, and the consolidation of a socio-environmental regression scenario in the country. By incorporating the phenomenological approach of Alfred Schutz, the objective is to understand how intersubjective processes and the construction of shared meanings validate and disseminate these narratives of reality. Symbolic mechanisms play a crucial role in maintaining power structures that favor environmental dismantling and deepen socio-environmental inequalities. This conjuncture articulates the exhaustion of natural resources—serving the interests of specific political and economic groups—with the annihilation of Indigenous peoples, who are portrayed as obstacles to a neoliberal economic development project centered on large-scale logging, forest fires, and deforestation associated with extractive industries such as mining, agribusiness, and oil exploitation. In this sense, it is argued that the Brazilian far right constitutes the antithesis of the meanings attributed to Indigenous peoples and environmental activism. In the realm of climate justice, the Brazilian far right alters the stock of knowledge by introducing interpretations that alternately minimize or deny climate change, its risks, and its unequal impacts.

In other words, within the context of the ecological crisis, the Brazilian far right constructs and consolidates a finite province of meaning in which the climate emergency and its disproportionate effects are minimized, while environmental agendas and Indigenous rights are devalued. The absence of legitimacy undermines the sustenance of rights, as these are constituted as reflections of a social pact that justifies specific claims and structures. Rather than recognizing climate change as a global and urgent problem, the far right organizes everyday reality in such a way that extreme events are interpreted as inevitable natural phenomena. Indigenous peoples and environmentalists, traditionally recognized as agents of conservation, come to be portrayed as obstacles to progress and threats to national sovereignty. Consequently, environmental degradation is normalized and reinterpreted as a necessary cost of development. Thus, the everyday reality of these social groups is not directly grounded in the materiality of climate impacts, but rather in a set of meanings socially accepted and reinforced by institutions, political leaders, and communication networks.

Conversely, climate science operates within a finite province of meaning grounded in empirical evidence, mathematical models, and long-term analyses. This interpretation conflicts

with the political and ideological narrative of the far right, which reinterprets the climate emergency through a specific economic and geopolitical logic. For the purposes of this analysis, the denialist province of meaning can be understood as structured around three elements. First, the reconfiguration of facts—climate change is not perceived as a human-induced problem but as a natural process of the Earth or as ideological political manipulation by adversaries. Second, the redefinition of enemies—non-governmental organizations, environmentalists, and Indigenous peoples are portrayed as threats to economic progress and as adversaries of the nation. Third, the creation of a new internal logic—environmental degradation is legitimized as a necessary collateral effect of national growth and wealth redistribution.

In this manner, this finite province of meaning functions autonomously in relation to climate science, operating within its own discursive structure while disregarding the empirical reality of the crisis. For those who adhere to this interpretation, scientific data on climate change are not necessarily contested; rather, they become irrelevant insofar as they do not align with the internal logic guiding their perceptions. In accordance with Schutz's conception of the "shock of realities" (Schutz, 2019), this dissonance produces moments in which individuals become aware of the incompatibility between prevailing discourses and the materiality of the climate crisis as experienced in the vivid present that shapes everyday life, thereby highlighting the urgency of rearticulating the relationship between humanity and the planet. In the face of climate challenges, such a shock manifests when extreme events—such as prolonged droughts, climatic shifts, floods, landslides, and forest fires—contradict the far-right narrative that global warming is irrelevant or even nonexistent.

In light of this confrontation of realities, two scenarios emerge. In the first, narrative adaptation occurs, whereby the denialist province of meaning reinterprets climatic events in order to prevent the collapse of its internal logic. Such reinterpretation may involve generating new justifications that attribute environmental disasters to natural cycles or to the failures of progressive governments. In the second scenario, the possibility arises of abandoning the denialist province. Individuals who directly experience the impacts of the climate crisis begin to question and reject the dominant narrative, gravitating toward a different province of meaning, such as the scientific understanding of climate change. To prevent such displacement, the far right strives to preserve the internal coherence of its province by reinterpreting facts and evidence that might contradict its narrative, ensuring that these remain aligned with its logic and collectively sustained. Ultimately, only through adherence to and shared endorsement of

these discourses—even in the face of contrary empirical evidence—can the necessary internal cohesion be maintained.

Thus, the Brazilian far right strategically mobilizes a discursive structure that forges a connection between national identity, economic development, and resistance to alleged external interference. Environmentalism—particularly when associated with Indigenous and climate-related agendas—is frequently framed as a globalist project promoted either by foreign actors or by an intellectual elite detached from the real needs of the “true people,” the so-called upstanding citizen. This framing strengthens the denialist province of meaning by transforming any attempt at environmental regulation into a symbolic conflict between the authentic people and environmental elites, thereby hindering the construction of political and institutional consensus around climate justice.

In this manner, the maintenance of such a discursive structure serves an economic and political logic that relegates the climate crisis to the status of a false problem, allegedly fabricated to constrain economic growth and undermine national sovereignty. Under the aegis of neoliberalism, the emphasis on state deregulation and market primacy provides the ideological foundation for discrediting both environmental policies and Indigenous rights. Concurrently, neo-extractivism, while acknowledging the need to integrate the country into the global economy, is grounded in the intensive exploitation of natural resources and the appropriation of Indigenous territories and protected areas. To enable this expansion, the denialist province of meaning reframes the exploitation of nature as an economic imperative, while demonizing territorial rights, environmental regulations, and oversight mechanisms, thereby reinforcing a predatory logic at the expense of socio-environmental justice.

Accordingly, the province of meaning advanced by the far right does not emerge randomly; rather, it aligns directly with an economic and political framework that requires the climate crisis to be maintained as a non-reality. Within this logic, neoliberalism and neo-extractivism depend on such denial to justify ecological deregulation and the appropriation of vulnerable territories in the name of economic growth. Climate denialism, therefore, cannot be reduced to a mere rhetorical device or an episodic political and social phenomenon. Instead, it constitutes an essential strategic instrument for the reproduction of social inequalities and environmental racism, while simultaneously neutralizing forms of resistance and obstructing policies committed to climate justice.

Moreover, the dissemination of these narratives does not occur in isolation. There is a discernible alignment among political elites, business sectors, and alternative media outlets that

reinforce and legitimize climate denialism, conferring upon it the status of common sense within certain social groups. Through intersubjective networks of validation, this province of meaning prevents the climate crisis from being recognized as an objective reality, thereby obstructing debate and the formulation of effective public policies for energy transition, while deepening social inequalities and environmental racism.

In light of this, understanding the interrelations among denialism, neoliberalism, and neo-extractivism is equally essential for analyzing the obstacles to the implementation of climate justice in Brazil. The so-called finite province of meaning of the far right is not merely a discursive or cultural phenomenon, but rather a political-economic instrument that sustains the maintenance of historical hierarchies and fosters predatory practices. Consequently, the dispute over narratives becomes central, insofar as breaking with this sphere of signification—or “informational bubble”²—requires not only contesting denialism, but also questioning the foundational meanings that perpetuate exploitation, environmental degradation, violence, and social exclusion in the country. At the same time, it is crucial to observe and acknowledge that Indigenous, quilombola, and peripheral communities have developed repertoires of resistance—such as community-based territorial monitoring, strategic litigation, grassroots environmental education, and alliances with organizations such as the Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil (APIB) and the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), as well as local networks—thereby constituting counterpublics that challenge the denialist province and affirm climate justice as a collective project.

Climate Justice and Environmental Racism: Socio-Environmental Inequalities and the Discursive Confrontation

Why are some communities turned into dumping grounds while others escape? Why are environmental regulations vigorously enforced in some communities but not in others? Why are some workers protected from environmental and health hazards while others (such as migrant farmworkers) are allowed to be poisoned? (Bullard, 2004, p. 42, our translation).

In an increasingly interconnected world that is ever more aware of socio-environmental complexities, debates on climate justice and environmental racism have emerged with unprecedented urgency. These concepts broaden the understanding of the climate crisis by

² The information bubble is referred to here as a phenomenon in which digital platform algorithms personalize the content displayed to each user, restricting exposure to information that reinforces their pre-existing beliefs. This results in an environment where there is little diversity of perspectives, limiting access to divergent opinions and data and, consequently, shaping the individual's worldview in a restricted way.

illuminating how structural inequalities determine which population groups are most vulnerable to its impacts. Far from being a strictly environmental issue, climate justice assumes a multidimensional character, encompassing economic, cultural, social, political, ethical, and racial dimensions, while highlighting the asymmetrical distribution of environmental risks and the historical responsibility of the most polluting countries and sectors within a global context.

As observed by Schlosberg (2007), climate justice can be analyzed through three fundamental dimensions, each highlighting interrelated aspects of inequality. The first, distributive justice, refers to the unequal distribution of environmental and climate impacts among different social groups. In Brazil, for example, contamination, floods, droughts, and landslides disproportionately affect Black, Indigenous, and peripheral populations—communities that frequently inhabit highly vulnerable areas as a result of historical processes of social exclusion. This asymmetry in exposure to environmental risks underscores the relationship between environmental degradation and structural inequalities. The second dimension, procedural justice, concerns the degree of participation of different social groups in decision-making processes regarding environmental and climate policies. In the Brazilian context, Indigenous peoples, quilombola communities, and other traditional groups face political and institutional barriers that restrict their access to decision-making arenas, resulting in public policies that often disregard their demands and knowledge systems. The third dimension, recognitional justice, emphasizes the importance of acknowledging cultural, social, and political identities for the realization of a truly just and plural society. In this regard, the dismantling of environmental and Indigenous policies in Brazil's recent context, coupled with the denial of territorial and cultural rights, intensifies socio-environmental inequalities and reinforces processes of historical invisibilization. Together, these three dimensions demonstrate that the environmental crisis cannot be dissociated from power dynamics.

The concept of environmental racism—originally coined to describe the unequal distribution of environmental risks and liabilities among racial groups in the United States (Bullard, 1990)—has been revisited in contemporary debates to highlight the responsibility of governments and corporations that, driven by economic and political interests, neglect the demands of vulnerable populations. In the case of far-right populism, strategies that legitimize environmental racism include anti-immigration and nationalist rhetoric, which marginalizes immigrant and racialized groups relegated to environmentally degraded areas (O'Connell, 2020). Moreover, cultural conservatism and economic protectionism reinforce the notion that

national sovereignty must prevail over any environmental or social agenda, portraying environmental regulations as obstacles to economic growth.

Environmental racism thus constitutes a key concept for understanding how racial, social, and territorial factors shape climate vulnerability. The intersection of racial discrimination and environmental inequality results in Black, Indigenous, and peripheral communities being asymmetrically exposed to precarious housing conditions, deficient infrastructure, and heightened risk in the face of environmental disasters and extreme climate events. Populations concentrated near polluting industrial facilities, landfills, riverbanks, or unstable hillsides are among those most affected by negligent policies and the absence of effective climate mitigation and adaptation measures. In Brazil, environmental racism manifests in multiple ways, including illegal land grabbing and the invasion of Indigenous and quilombola territories for agribusiness expansion, exposure to urban pollution, and recurrent landslides and floods in Black and peripheral communities. Climate change thereby exacerbates existing inequalities, perpetuating historical forms of racial and territorial domination. In response, multiple forms of resistance—such as community consultation protocols, autonomous territorial monitoring systems, grassroots communication strategies, and strategic litigation—have been mobilized by local collectives, strengthening their adaptive capacities and public advocacy.

Climate change, therefore, cannot be understood solely as an ecological problem, but as a matter of social and racial justice, insofar as its consequences amplify preexisting inequalities and reproduce mechanisms of domination. Within the framework of environmental racism, disproportionate impacts are often perceived as isolated events rather than as components of a system of structural inequality. The degradation of Indigenous and quilombola territories is normalized and even justified as economic progress. Racialized populations are portrayed as passive agents or blamed for their own vulnerability. From this perspective, the climate crisis ceases to be recognized as a political and racialized issue and is instead interpreted merely as a natural or technical phenomenon. This mechanism of invisibilization ensures that the most affected populations have limited voice and political representation, thereby reinforcing climate injustice.

Schutz (2019) also enables us to understand how far-right political narratives shape the shared stock of knowledge in ways that justify climatic and racial inequality. The far right constructs its own finite province of meaning in which the climate crisis is denied or minimized, thereby obstructing policies that would benefit vulnerable populations. Deforestation and the

exploitation of Indigenous lands, for example, are presented as necessary for economic growth, while environmental policies are framed as foreign ideologies that threaten national sovereignty. This process legitimizes environmental racism by shifting the focus of responsibility toward the imperative of economic growth, disregarding the groups most affected and preventing the effective implementation of structural change.

The rejection of climate science and the delegitimization of environmental policies reinforce a logic of denial that impedes the development of legal and institutional instruments capable of protecting populations most affected by the climate crisis. In this context, political leaders aligned with the far right promote discourses that portray issues such as global warming and deforestation as exaggerations or conspiracies designed to restrict national sovereignty, thereby sustaining a finite province of meaning that reinterprets environmental threats according to its own interests. This practice legitimizes the appropriation of vulnerable territories, the dismantling of environmental regulations, and the criminalization of environmental leaders and movements seeking to defend their territories (Santos, 2010).

The spread of environmental racism thus becomes intrinsically linked to the maintenance of the political and economic power of sectors that benefit from exploitative practices. This process is enabled by intersubjective networks of validation (Schutz, 2018), in which denialist discourses are amplified through alternative media and social networks, creating informational bubbles and undermining scientific consensus regarding the climate crisis. As a result, ideas opposed to environmental protection and territorial rights consolidate as common sense within certain social groups, hindering recognition of the climate crisis as an objective reality and, consequently, obstructing effective mitigation and adaptation measures. At the same time, practices of resistance—such as citizen science data production, grassroots climate education, and traditional territorial management—operate as shocks of reality that reorient relevances and open spaces for the reconstruction of meaning (Schutz, 2019).

When situating this debate within the Brazilian context, it is essential to engage with the tradition of environmental justice developed by local scholars. In particular, Henri Acselrad has demonstrated how environmental conflicts express mechanisms of unequal distribution of risks and harms associated with social and racial hierarchies, offering an analytical key to understanding the institutional production of territorial vulnerability (Acselrad, 2010). Similarly, Selene Herculano argues that environmental racism in Brazil emerges when racialized and impoverished groups disproportionately bear the burdens of polluting activities, large-scale infrastructure projects, and the absence of public services, thereby reinforcing the

need for policies centered on recognition and participation (Herculano, 2004). This dialogue with Acsehrad (2010) and Herculano (2004) strengthens the central argument of this article: climate denial does not operate merely as rhetoric, but as a device that normalizes environmental inequality and obstructs climate justice.

Final Considerations

This article has demonstrated that the narratives articulated by the Brazilian far right, grounded in a finite province of meaning, play a significant role in delegitimizing the reality of climate change while intensifying the inequality of its effects. By drawing on the theoretical framework of Alfred Schutz to analyze this social reality, it has been possible to understand how such discourses are constructed, shared, and validated through intersubjective processes that ultimately reinforce the reproduction of power structures and the expansion of social inequalities, including environmental racism.

The interconnection between neoliberal and neo-extractivist logics and climate denialist rhetoric extends beyond a merely conceptual or discursive debate, manifesting in concrete political practices that ratify and amplify specific economic interests. The deregulation of environmental policies, the weakening of ecosystem protection mechanisms, and the devaluation of the most vulnerable populations create a scenario of regression and deepen the social disparities that have historically characterized the country.

Accordingly, the proposed analysis underscores the need for a multidimensional approach that transcends the limits of technical-scientific debate by integrating ethical, political, economic, and racial dimensions into the understanding of the ecological crisis. This broader perspective is essential for identifying the mechanisms that legitimize both disinformation and the invisibilization of marginalized communities—factors that undermine the construction of truly effective and equitable climate governance.

At the core of this analysis lies the reconfiguration of denialist discourses, combined with the strengthening of participation by social and community actors, as a fundamental step toward building a form of climate justice that moves beyond merely identifying inequalities and instead commits to overcoming the structural roots of disparity. In line with the diagnosis presented, the following concrete and articulated recommendations are proposed: (i) strengthening public deliberative arenas with qualified participation of Indigenous, quilombola, and peripheral communities (procedural justice); (ii) institutionalizing mechanisms of free,

prior, and informed consultation and consent in climate and infrastructure policies; (iii) expanding transparency, open data, and community-based monitoring of emissions, deforestation, and environmental liabilities; (iv) restoring state capacities for environmental oversight and licensing through multilevel governance; (v) valuing traditional knowledge systems and grassroots climate education as antidotes to disinformation; and (vi) ensuring protection for environmental defenders and support for strategic litigation.

Such measures materialize what Schutz (2019) terms “shocks of reality” into processes of political rearticulation capable of contesting the prevailing stock of knowledge and establishing an alternative province of meaning oriented toward climate justice, the centrality of territorial rights, and the protection of the commons. This transformation is essential for the robust implementation of public policies that prioritize sustainability, equity, and environmental protection, encompassing the defense of Indigenous rights and knowledge systems, and thereby charting a solid path for effectively confronting the challenges imposed by a scenario marked by unprecedented and significant setbacks.

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CRediT Author Statement

- Acknowledgements:** To the Graduate Program in Sociology at the Universidade Federal de São Carlos (UFSCar) and to the journal Revista Cadernos de Campo da UNESP.
 - Funding:** This study was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) – Finance Code 001. The authors also acknowledge the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) within the scope of the research project “Climate Shelters on the Coast of São Paulo.” This study was also supported in part by the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP), Brazil. Grant number: 2023/09825-4.
 - Conflicts of interest:** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.
 - Ethical approval:** Not applicable.
 - Data and material availability:** The data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors upon reasonable request.
 - Authors' contributions:** All authors contributed to the conceptualization of the study. Marcos Tavares de Arruda Filho conducted the database searches and literature review. All authors drafted and approved the final manuscript.
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Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação
Proofreading, formatting, standardization and translation

