



Sustainable Development in a Quilombola Community: analysis of the Restinga Community, Lapa, Paraná, Brazil

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SUMMARY

The present study aims to analyze the global socio-ecological crisis, highlighting the complexity of interconnected challenges, such as energy scarcity, climate change, economic inequalities and environmental degradation. In addition, it explores the emergence of the Theory of Good Living as an alternative to harmonize humans, nature and community. The objective is to analyze the quilombola communities of Paraná (Brazil) and their relationship with the Theory of Good Living for sustainable development. The research follows a qualitative and exploratory approach, with a hypothetical-deductive design. Data collection involved interviews and questionnaires, and the analysis was based on the principles of the Theory of Good Living. The results highlight that quilombola communities value a holistic perspective, recognizing the interdependence between geography, culture, economic activities, and history. Collaboration with associations and cooperatives emerges as crucial for economic sustainability and well-being. The Theory of Good Living offers an alternative centered on culture, quality of life and harmony with nature. The study contributes by questioning the traditional approach to sustainable development and by exploring the application of the Theory of Good Living as an alternative perspective. In addition, the methodology adopted, combining interviews, questionnaires and analysis based on the principles of the theory, presents an innovative approach to examine the relationship between sustainable development and traditional cultures. The conclusions underscore the importance of sustainable practices, collective collaboration, and cultural appreciation in addressing current challenges. Quilombola communities are recognized as essential for the preservation of biodiversity and culture in Brazil. The study also emphasizes the need for a transformation in environmental management, promoting balanced coexistence between natural resources and cultural traditions.

KEYWORDS: Quilombola Community. Sustainable development. Well-being.

1 INTRODUCTION

The global socio-ecological crisis, which has been notorious since the Stockholm Conference almost fifty years ago, occupies a prominent place in discussions on development. Problems such as energy and water scarcity, degradation of ecosystems and landscapes, climate change, rising economic inequalities, and food insecurity, among other challenges, are increasingly being understood in their interconnected complexity, going beyond an isolated approach (ALTIERI; NICHOLLS, 2021). The concept of sustainable development, as expressed in the 1991 document "Our Common Future", seeks to balance the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations, encompassing five fundamental dimensions: social, environmental, spatial, economic and political. (GUILLEN; NASCIMENTO, 2010; LEFF, 2001)

The traditional approach to sustainable development needs to be broadened to encompass not only environmental issues, but also cultural and social aspects, generating an interconnected syndrome, where the aggravation of a sectoral problem can affect the entire system (ALTIERI; NICHOLLS, 2021; EIDT, 2019). This understanding is based on the idea that biodiversity is a result of natural, cultural, and social factors, often reflecting human intervention in ecosystems and the intrinsic relationship with the environment. (EIDT, 2019)

The relationship between humans and nature forms a fundamental foundation for understanding the complexities of sustainable development and safeguarding the environment. The lack of a deep connection and understanding of the harmful effects of irresponsible exploitation has manifested itself concretely in several regions, demonstrating the unsustainability of society's modern way of life (AUGUSTO; ARRIECHE, 2020). In this context, new approaches and methods of conservation and promotion of sustainable development have

emerged, often anchored in holistic thinking models that emphasize ethical principles, social and collective responsibility towards all forms of life. (AUGUSTO; ARRIECHE, 2020; EIDT, 2019)

Among the emerging currents of approach to sustainable development, the Theory of Good Living stands out, an economic model that prioritizes harmony between human beings, nature and community. This theory has been especially applied in contexts involving traditional peoples, who often have forms of daily organization and economic practices that diverge from the prevailing approaches of recent decades. The Theory of Good Living offers an alternative and sustainable perspective, based on valuing quality of life, respecting human rights, preserving the environment and promoting social equity. (ACOSTA, 2016; ALCANTARA; SAMPAIO, 2017; AUGUSTO; ARRIECHE, 2020; PEIXOTO, 2022)

The practical application of this theory and the integration of knowledge aimed at the conservation of agrobiodiversity are intrinsically linked to the recognition and strengthening of the practices of traditional peoples and communities (EIDT, 2019). In Brazil, despite the legal recognition by the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 and international institutions of their importance for food security, environmental sustainability and biodiversity management, many traditional communities remain invisible and face challenges in ensuring the respect, preservation and promotion of their ancestral knowledge (CIDON et al., 2021; EIDT, 2019). These communities often deal with economic pressures, land conflicts, discrimination, social and political exclusion, as well as environmental conflicts resulting from territorial invasions, which directly impact their ways of life. (EIDT, 2019)

Among the various groups of traditional peoples in Brazil, the quilombolas, descendants of enslaved people who form rural communities known as “quilombos”. The term “remnant quilombola community” not only refers to what is left, but highlights what has been preserved, allowing these groups to live relatively autonomously while maintaining their cultures and ways of life. Remnant Quilombola Communities (CRQ) often face segregation, lack of public assistance, and difficulties in accessing legally guaranteed rights. In search of social inclusion and improvement in the quality of life, the quilombola population seeks mechanisms that enable economic development without compromising their social and ecological survival. (FIDELIS, 2011) (CIDON et al., 2021; EIDT, 2019) (FIDELIS, 2011)

(CIDON et al., 2021) Sustainable development, as a set of practices that seeks to harmonize economic development, social well-being and preservation of natural resources, finds crucial relevance in the context of traditional peoples. Thus, quilombola communities become objects of study not only to evaluate sustainable development, but also to face challenges and propose solutions aimed at this population. The Theory of Well-Living is an approach that allows integrating the particularities and roots of communities, preserving their cultural identity and sustainability. In addition to their social relevance, the integration of scientific and traditional knowledge can drive advances in environmental management, particularly in planning, conservation, and sustainable development. (EIDT, 2019)

In this context, the present study proposes to carry out a comparative analysis between quilombola communities in the state of Paraná, using the Theory of Good Living as a lens of analysis. The research is inspired by the observation of the Remaining Quilombola Community of Restinga, located in the city of Lapa, Paraná. This community makes up one of the three Remnant Quilombola Communities in the region, originated from stopping points for

muleteers in the eighteenth century, two of which are dedicated to the production of certified organic products, as is the case of the Restinga Remnant Quilombola Community.

The herein study is based on the following central question: "What are the challenges for sustainable development faced by the Restinga Remnant Quilombola Community compared to other quilombola communities, and how can collective organization and production systems, such as agroecology and handicrafts, contribute to their economic sustainability and well-being, strengthening them towards development with cultural preservation?"

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1. Methodological Design

The Methodology, according to Minayo, describes in detail the procedure used to explain, in a precise and rigorous way, all the stages of a research. Scientific methods are tools that guide the researcher in conducting investigations aimed at achieving the proposed objectives. In line with Lakatos and Marconi (2017), the methodology is the line of thought adopted in the research, and can be of types such as phenomenological, hypothetical-deductive, dialectical, inductive and deductive. (MINAYO, 2012) (LAKATOS; MARCONI, 2017)

This study is characterized as hypothetical-deductive, with a qualitative and exploratory approach. The central hypothesis is that an approach centered on cultural appreciation, strengthening of identity and empowerment of quilombola communities can result in effective strategies for their sustainable development, reconciling their contemporary aspirations with their historical and cultural roots. Qualitative research seeks to understand the complex knowledge generated and is based on scientific investigations that cover multiple fields of knowledge, practices and knowledge of the participants. This approach emphasizes the interpretation of the situation studied by the participants themselves, considers the subjectivity of the subjects' knowledge, adapts to uncertain situations and focuses on the research process itself.

Data collection was carried out through indirect documentary research, using secondary data, and direct documentary research, involving field research (. Indirect documentary research employed secondary sources as a complement to the information collected by other approaches. The direct documentary research involved open interviews with the representative of the Remaining Quilombola Community of Restinga, followed by online questionnaires applied to members of other Remaining Quilombola Communities in Paraná and São Paulo. This research aims to carry out an integrative analysis of practical knowledge aimed at solving specific problems, seeking to democratize access to the knowledge produced. LAKATOS; MARCONI, 2017)

2.2. Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The characterization of the communities was carried out through an open interview with the representative responsible for organic production in the Remaining Quilombola Community of Restinga. The interview was conducted following the guidelines of Lakatos and

Marconi (2017), using a script of open questions to understand the activities developed, organic production, cooperatives and incentives in the Remaining Quilombola Community of Restinga. Data collection took place between October and November 2022.

In addition, online questionnaires were applied to members of other Remnant Quilombola Communities in the states of Paraná and São Paulo, between November 2022 and April 2023. Participants were introduced to the nature of the research and provided informed consent before answering the questionnaires. The data analysis included a qualitative approach, involving the interpretation of the collected data and the documentary analysis of regulations, documents and records.

The analysis of the collected data will be carried out based on the Theory of Good Living, which emphasizes an integral view of the world, dynamic balance, diversity and reconnection with cultural roots. Analysis categories such as Holistic Vision, Multipolarity, Sustainable Balance, Complementarity of Diversity and Decolonization will be used, following the fundamental elements presented by Solon (2019) and Acosta (2019). The aim is to understand the challenges and opportunities of Remnant Quilombola Communities in light of this approach, and to explore how collective collaboration and traditional production systems can contribute to their sustainability and well-being. (ACOSTA, 2019; SOLON, 2019)

3 RESULTS

Partial data from the IBGE 2022 demographic census shows that Paraná has more than 7 thousand quilombola people in the state, with approximately 10% in officially delimited quilombola territories, of which none is officially titled. The Remaining Quilombola Community (CRQ) of Restinga is inserted in these territories, located in the municipality of Lapa together with the CRQ of Feixo and Vila Esperança (IBGE, 2023). The CRQ of Restinga is certified by the Palmares Cultural Foundation and has approximately 200 residents. Despite maintaining cultural and religious traditions and daily activities, it faces deficiencies in education, leisure and health.

The interview with C.F.S., a representative of the community, revealed crucial aspects of sustainable development in this context. She pointed out that economic activities, such as organic production and handicrafts, are mainly conducted by women, following family and ancestral traditions. *"With handicrafts I believe that about 6 make handicrafts, and with agriculture there are 4 rural producers"*, emphasizing the central role of women in the economy of CRQ. He highlighted the use of natural materials such as banana's fiber, bamboo and cattail to produce durable and sustainable handicrafts. She mentions collaboration with cooperatives as a strategy to diversify income and sell production. *"We have associates there and they are the ones who come in with a project, who do all the participation in the public notices of government programs."*

Lack of experience in seeking incentives and the bureaucracy involved are mentioned as significant obstacles. *"It's hard for you to access. [...] It's kind of like for the small producer, it's difficult for you to access."* This points to the need for support in administrative management and access to development programs. In addition, the lack of resources for agricultural inputs, such as fertilizer and seeds, and the absence of adequate infrastructure to optimize sustainable

practices are highlighted. Just as the absence of educational and leisure infrastructure is a barrier to retaining young people in the community. *"There are no public policies, I don't have that, a place where they can practice leisure, do a sport, is to take a course within the community."*

In the analysis of the questionnaires of the participants from other quilombola communities, we observed that in the Community of Manoel Ciriaco dos Santos in Guaíra there is a smaller population than the CRQ of Restinga. J.S., a representative of the community, reported that there are approximately 50 members. Its economic activities include the sale of *"vegetables, agriculture, fish farming, poultry and eggs"*, seeking an all-encompassing livelihood. The representative highlights the relevance of *the "association of our community"* and the participation in *"cooperatives that is also very important to not let food spoil"*. The lack of *"income generation"* is a challenge. To overcome this, the community aims to *"carry out projects"* and resources such as *"tractor, equipment, seeds, support from the municipality"*.

At CRQ, Varzeão, located in Doutor Ulysses, they face similar economic and cultural obstacles. The community is located 70 km from the city and faces infrastructure problems, extending the travel time to 50 minutes on a 22 km journey. *"Poor infrastructure"* is a notable challenge. Participants "L.R.L" and "F.C" point out that the community, with about 45 families, depends on agriculture and agroforestry for subsistence. "L.R.L" emphasizes *"agriculture"*, while "F.C" highlights *"pine resin extraction"* as the main economic sources. Participation in associations is vital. "L.R.L" highlights the importance of the collective struggle for the protection of the territory. "F.C." mentions the newly created cooperative to improve sales and access to government resources. The community adopts direct selling strategies in neighboring towns, although it faces internal challenges. Limited access to the internet restricts technology.

The largest CRQ analyzed was Tobias Ferreira, located in Palmas. The participant "J.A.A.F" points out that the community is made up of 300 to 500 members, including children and adults, and the economic viability occurs mainly through *"Some handicrafts, others work outside the community in companies in Palmas-PR"*. Declares that they receive government support through the PAA and non-governmental. Among the projects in which they are inserted, he says, *"We have food distribution programs from SESC Paraná and PAA from the federal government."* He reports that they do not participate in a cooperative or association, informing that *"the only association is that of the Tobias Ferreira community itself"*. On economic activities developed in the community: *"Some are retired, some make handicrafts to increase the family's income."* The absence of participation in cooperatives or associations is mentioned, highlighting the uniqueness of the local association of the Tobias Ferreira community.

In the comparative analysis between the communities in relation to good living, Table 1 shows the similarities and differences.

Table 1: Comparative analysis of the remaining quilombola communities of Paraná

Quilombola Remnant Community	Holistic View	Multipolarity	Sustainable Balance	Complementarity of Diversity	Decolonization
Sandbank	The description of sustainable practices, such as organic production and handicrafts, demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between human activities and the natural environment. Additionally, the emphasis on cultural and religious traditions passed down from generation to generation underscores the importance of preserving cultural identity and the relationship with the community.	Diversity is addressed by mentioning the variety of economic activities carried out by the community, such as agriculture and handicrafts. Collaboration with cooperatives and associations also illustrates the coexistence of different perspectives to achieve common goals, highlighting the richness of the diversity of approaches.	The search for balance is evident in the community's sustainable practices, such as organic production and the use of natural materials for handicrafts. The description of difficulties in accessing resources, such as agricultural inputs and infrastructure, highlights the need to strike a dynamic balance between human activities and available resources.	It is addressed by describing the economic activities mostly developed by women in the community, breaking with patterns imposed by colonization and recognizing the essential role of all parts of the community for development.	The focus on sustainable activities and the search for projects that value and preserve local culture reflect decolonization, prioritizing autonomous practices that are aligned with the values and cultural roots of the community. The lack of resources and access to government incentives also points to the fight against imposed standards.
Manoel Ciriaco dos Santos	It presents elements of a holistic view by highlighting the interconnectedness between community, local geography, and economic activities. The reference to the location near the Barigui River and the use of horses and carts as a means of transportation highlight the dependence and harmony with the natural environment.	The diversity of the community is highlighted by mentioning the variety of economic activities carried out by men and women, as well as the coexistence of different religious practices. In addition, the marketing of products to various recipients, such as the Food Acquisition Program, indigenous communities, fishermen and churches, reflects a diversified approach to economic sustenance.	The search for balance is evident in the subsistence agricultural activities carried out by the community, such as the cultivation of cassava, pumpkin, corn and animal husbandry. The diversification of economic activities and sales to different recipients also demonstrate the search for a dynamic balance to ensure economic viability.	The participation of both men and women in agricultural activities, as well as cooperation in an association, reflects the complementarity of diversity and the appreciation of the different roles played in the community to achieve common goals.	The reference to the community as a tribute to the patriarch who led the members after fleeing slavery-like situations underscores decolonization, highlighting the quest for autonomy and independence. The search for government projects and external partnerships also illustrates the struggle against the barriers imposed by the lack of resources.
Varzeão	It reflects a holistic view by highlighting the interconnectedness between local geography, poor infrastructure, and economic activities. The emphasis on transportation difficulties due to lack of infrastructure and geographic location highlights the influence of these factors on community life.	The diversity of the community is evident in the changing cultural practices over time, including the transition from celebrating traditional festivals to majority adherence to evangelicalism. In addition, the variety of economic activities, such as agriculture and agroforestry, as well as membership in cooperatives and associations, reflect the	The search for balance is evident in the description of traditional agricultural practices, cultivation for personal consumption, and the variety of economic activities in response to the different needs of the community. Membership in cooperatives and associations also suggests a search for balance in obtaining	The complementarity of diversity is highlighted by the different activities carried out by members of the community, such as children focused on studies, retired seniors, adults involved in temporary work and agriculture. The importance of the associations also shows unity in the struggle for rights and	The quest for territorial autonomy is evident in the description of the judicial process to obtain a larger area and in the struggle for legal documentation. In addition, the emphasis on participation in associations and cooperatives reveals the search for collective power and resistance to external threats.

		multipolarity of livelihood strategies.	resources and rights.	territorial security.	
Tobias Ferreira	The description of the Tobias Ferreira Community highlights the historical importance of the patriarch, Tobias Ferreira, and the changes over time, from post-"liberation" violence to the formation of the current community. The geographical location and the relationship with other black communities in Palmas are also addressed, evidencing a holistic view of the history and context of the community.	The multiplicity of cultural expressions and religious practices is explored, from the embodied practices of Umbanda, Candomblé and Catholicism to the reverence for various saints. The diversity of economic activities, such as handicrafts and business work, also reflects the multiplicity of approaches to economic viability.	The community's historical resilience and pride in its history highlight the search for sustainable balance in the midst of past challenges. The diversification of economic activities and the search for handicraft courses aim to improve the financial sustainability of the community.	The complementarity is evident in the different activities carried out by different members of the community, such as retirees who engage in handicrafts to supplement family income. The presence of the Quilombola Municipal School also highlights the complementarity between the preservation of culture and formal education.	The history of resistance after "liberation" reveals the ongoing decolonization of the community, resisting historical violence and persecution. The search for government incentives and handicraft courses reflects the search for economic and cultural autonomy.

Source: Author, 2023.

In this analysis, it is evident how the four communities, including the Restinga Quilombola Community (CRQ da Restinga), adopt a holistic view, valuing the interconnection between the community, local geography, economic activities, culture and history. In all of them, the emphasis on the preservation of cultural and religious traditions, as well as the balance between human activities and natural resources, stands out.

The three quilombola communities share a diversity in economic activities, such as agriculture, handicrafts and agroforestry, and see collaboration with associations and cooperatives as a means of strengthening both economic and cultural sustainability. Common challenges include the quest for autonomy due to a lack of access to government resources and incentives. The history of post-"liberation" struggles reflects the quest for autonomy and cultural identity, as well as decolonization.

The CRQ of Restinga stands out for its remarkable economic diversity, rooted in traditional practices that value the connection between community, local geography, economic activities, culture, and history. Its varied activities, such as agriculture and handicrafts, exemplify a local adaptation that promotes sustainable practices and maintains balance with natural resources.

Collaboration with associations reinforces the commitment to collective goals, economic and cultural sustainability. Faced with similar challenges to other quilombola communities, the CRQ of Restinga seeks autonomy and resistance, its shared post-"liberation" history reflecting the search for identity and decolonization. The assessment of specific challenges underscores the need for strategies for sustainability and cultural preservation, strengthening them as agents of sustainable development while preserving their identity.

Compared to other quilombola communities, it is possible to identify patterns and particularities of these challenges. Collective organization and production systems stand out as

crucial pillars for the economic sustainability and well-being of these communities. The analysis reinforces that collaborative practices and the diversification of economic activities play a central role in promoting the resilience of these communities. Associations and cooperatives play a key role in disseminating knowledge, promoting sustainable practices, and generating viable economic opportunities.

The comparison with other quilombola communities identifies patterns and particularities, highlighting the importance of strengthening the CRQs and recognizing their contribution to sustainable and cultural development. The assessment of the specific challenges of the Restinga CRQ highlights the need for strategies focused on its sustainability and cultural preservation. The strengthening and empowerment of quilombola communities, through valorization measures, emerge as ways for these communities to act as agents of sustainable development, while preserving and promoting their quilombola identity and culture.

4 DISCUSSION

In the context of the protection of biological diversity and the promotion of the agroecological use of the environment, there is a clear increase in consideration not only for the preservation of natural resources, but also for traditional communities impacted by excessive environmental exploitation. This awareness has its roots in the development of new approaches to environmental management. Traditional peoples have a unique approach to the organization and management of natural resources, based on their holistic view of the interconnectedness between living beings and surrounding plants. Its practices have an intrinsic focus on conservation and environmental awareness, member education, and the preservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage (Bruno and Matos, 2021; Gonçalves et al., 2018).

These perspectives lead to an understanding that nature should not be subjugated to sustainable development strategies or the prevailing economic logic. Environmental rationality emerges as a counterpoint to economic rationality, introducing a paradigm of eco-technological-cultural production centered on negentropic productivity. Cultural traditions and innovations find expression in the imaginaries and practices of populations, being revitalized through processes of reinterpretation and reaffirmation of cultural identity while reterritorializing their spaces. (LEFF, 2021)

This deeply interconnected form of harmonious coexistence with natural resources is especially evident in traditional communities, where integration with nature is vital for both survival and cultural expression. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the valuation of traditional production methods adopted by these communities, as it is recognized that environmental impacts extend to the social, economic, cultural, and health spheres of society. (GONÇALVES et al., 2018) (ARRUDA, 1999; SANCHEZ, 2020)

To counterbalance the dominance of the market over communities and address social challenges, strategies for food production and consumption based on territoriality have emerged, seeking food sovereignty and the restructuring of agricultural and agro-industrial systems. Agroecology, as a comprehensive response, integrates multiple aspects of sustainability. (ALTIERI; NICHOLLS, 2021) (AUGUSTO; ARRIECHE, 2020)

In this scenario, quilombola communities stand out as outstanding examples of sustainable practices, not only conserving natural resources, but also imparting valuable

knowledge for more balanced approaches between humans and the environment. The interplay between cultural traditions, livelihood practices, and environmental conservation creates an interconnected mosaic that challenges the prevailing development paradigm, offering crucial lessons for a more sustainable and harmonious future. (ALTIERI; NICHOLLS, 2021; ARRUDA, 1999; AUGUSTO; ARRIECHE, 2020; BRUNO; MATOS, 2021; GONÇALVES et al., 2018; LEFF, 2021; SÁNCHEZ, 2020)

The results of this analysis highlight the importance of sustainable practices, collective cooperation, and the strengthening of cultural identity as key factors in addressing the challenges faced by traditional communities. The four communities examined reveal a holistic perspective, recognizing the interconnectedness between community, local geography, economic activities, culture, and history. This underscores the need to preserve cultural and religious traditions, while seeking a harmonious balance between human activities and natural resources. This focus is especially evident in quilombola communities, where the search for sustainability is evidenced through diversified agricultural practices, handicrafts, and agroforestry. (ALCÂNTARA, 2017; ALCANTARA; SAMPAIO, 2017; CAETANO; CABRAL; BRITO, 2020)

Collaboration with associations emerges as a reinforcement of the commitment to economic and cultural sustainability. When facing specific challenges, the need to implement strategies that promote both sustainability and cultural preservation is highlighted. In this sense, collaboration with associations plays a key role, strengthening these communities as effective agents of sustainable development. (GONÇALVES et al., 2018)

These communities highlight the intrinsic importance of the relationship between humans and the environment, casting criticism on degrading practices. The search for sustainable and integrated solutions underscores the need to consider various dimensions, ranging from science and culture to ecology. Indeed, the gaps in current models of environmental management are evident, reflecting a disconnect between science, technology, and the human collectivity. (ALMEIDA, 2019; SANCHEZ, 2020)

The discussion also encompasses the tension between the epistemology of modernity and the politics of difference. In this context, traditional populations serve as a concrete example of an intrinsic and harmonious relationship with nature, reinforcing their relevance in the face of contemporary environmental and social impacts. The insufficiency of export monocultures is highlighted when contrasted with the need to ensure livelihood and well-being for rural communities, highlighting the relevance of alternative approaches such as agroecology and organic agriculture (ARRUDA, 1999; GONÇALVES et al., 2018) (ALTIERI; NICHOLLS, 2020; AUGUSTO; ARRIECHE, 2020)

These discussions are echoed in the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize the link between environmental care and sustainable agricultural practices. Despite challenges, such as lack of access to government resources and incentives, these communities persist in their quest for autonomy and resistance. Collaboration with associations and cooperatives is a means of achieving this goal, while the history of post-liberation struggles and overcoming reveals itself as a shared element, emphasizing the ongoing search for autonomy and cultural identity. (BRÁZ, 2020; UNGARETTI et al., 2018)

Collective organizing is critical to the economic sustainability and well-being of these communities. Cooperatives and associations play a crucial role in promoting sustainable practices, sharing knowledge, and stimulating diversified economic activities. Agroforestry practices are an example of how collective action drives the recovery of natural resources and the preservation of biodiversity. (ALTIERI; NICHOLLS, 2021; SILVA, 2021)

The Theory of Well-Being emerges as an alternative to conventional development focused on economic growth. This approach values sustainable lifestyles, harmony with nature, and quality of life. The concept transcends cultural boundaries, finding expression in solidarity practices, indigenous traditions, and cultural manifestations. In the context of traditional communities, the Theory of Well-Living emerges as a concrete alternative, promoting environmental sustainability, strengthening community ties, preserving culture and traditions, seeking local autonomy and considering integral well-being. Tailored to the needs and values of these communities, this theory offers an approach that aligns with their realities and aspirations (CAETANO; CABRAL; BRITO, 2020; GILONNA JÚNIOR, 2019).

In summary, traditional communities, especially quilombolas, play a key role in preserving biodiversity and culture in Brazil. Legal recognition and institutional support are vital to overcome historical and contemporary challenges, promoting sustainable development and cultural strengthening, as seen in the "aquilombamento" approach. Valuing these communities is crucial for building a more just and equitable society, prioritizing harmonious coexistence with nature (SANTOS, 2022) (ALTIERI; NICHOLLS, 2021; LEFF, 2021).

5 CONCLUSION

In summary, the interconnection between the protection of biodiversity, the agroecological use of the environment and the sustainable practices of traditional communities highlights a complex and interdependent panorama. The growing recognition of the importance not only of natural resources, but also of traditional cultures impacted by overexploitation, reflects a paradigmatic shift in environmental management. Traditional peoples, with their holistic and conservationist approach, offer valuable insights on how to harmoniously integrate humans and nature.

By challenging the supremacy of conventional development strategies and the dominant economic logic, alternatives such as environmental rationality and agroecology emerge, which embrace an eco-technological-cultural approach. In this context, quilombola communities stand out as examples of sustainable practices, transmitting ancestral knowledge that is vital to promote a more sustainable balance between society and the environment.

The need to preserve cultural traditions and values, while seeking harmonious coexistence between human activities and ecosystems, is a challenge that these communities face with determination. Collaboration with associations and cooperatives, as well as the adoption of strategies based on territoriality, strengthen these communities as agents of sustainable development.

The discussions around the intrinsic relationship between humans and the environment, combined with the search for integrated solutions and the consideration of various dimensions, reflect the need to overcome the gaps in current environmental management models. The tension between the epistemology of modernity and the valorization

of traditions is also evident, with traditional populations demonstrating an alternative path of harmonious relationship with nature.

The Theory of Well-Living emerges as a powerful alternative to conventional development, valuing quality of life, harmony with nature and culture. This approach is echoed in the practices of traditional communities, reinforcing the importance of equitable and sustainable coexistence.

In conclusion, the lessons drawn from these reflections on traditional communities and their sustainable practices are invaluable in shaping a more balanced and harmonious future. The preservation of biodiversity and culture, the promotion of collective collaboration, and the appreciation of traditions are essential components to face current challenges and build a fairer, more inclusive society in harmony with the environment. Respect for ancestral wisdom and the adoption of more sustainable approaches are crucial to achieving these goals, benefiting not only traditional communities but all of humanity and the planet as a whole.

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