

Recognition and Redistribution in the Digital Media of the Común Tierra Project

Reconhecimento e Redistribuição nas Mídias Digitais do Projeto Común Tierra

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses issues of recognition, sustainability, and redistribution by monitoring and analyzing the digital media of the Común Tierra project, an itinerant undertaking that originated from a six-year journey through Latin America with the aim of documenting sustainable communities and ecological projects in different countries. We take as a starting point the analytical category of participatory parity. We also start from the hypothesis that we could understand the media produced at the project as community communication processes responsible for pedagogically disseminating ecological practices and promoting sustainable ways of life as an alternative to the capitalist system.

Keywords: Sustainability, community communication, digital media, recognition, redistribution

RESUMO

O artigo discute questões de reconhecimento, sustentabilidade e redistribuição a partir do monitoramento e análise das mídias digitais do projeto Común Tierra, empreitada itinerante originada a partir de uma viagem de seis anos pela América Latina com o objetivo de documentar comunidades sustentáveis e projetos ecológicos em diferentes países. Tomamos como base analítica a categoria de *paridade participativa*, partindo da hipótese de que as mídias do projeto podem ser consideradas processos comunicacionais comunitários responsáveis por divulgar pedagogicamente práticas ecológicas e promoverem um modo de vida sustentável como alternativa no sistema capitalista.

Palavras-chave: Sustentabilidade, comunicação comunitária, mídias digitais, reconhecimento, redistribuição

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¹This is the way in which the document "Our Common Future" is known. Coordinated by the then Prime Minister of Norway Gro Harlem Brundtland, the World Commission on Environment and Development sought to propagate the idea of sustainable development.

AT THE BEGINNING of the new millennium, as Henry Acelard (2009) reminds us, different types of discursive matrices have been associated with the notion of sustainability since 1987, when the "Brundtland Report"¹ (Brundtland, 1987) placed it in the global debate. Among these discursive matrices, Acelard (2009) highlights: efficiency, which would aim to combat the material waste of development, also covering economic rationality to the planetary mercantile space; scale, which advocates a quantitative limit to economic growth and the pressure it exerts on the environment; equality, which seeks to relate and articulate principles of justice and ecology; self-sufficiency, which propagates the decoupling of national economies and traditional societies from financial transactions in the global market – a strategy aimed at ensuring the community's capacity for self-regulation of the conditions for reproducing the material basis of development; and ethics, which is part of the social appropriation of the material world in constant dialogue with moral values and "the interactions of the material basis of development with the conditions of continuity of life on the planet" (Acelard, 2009, p. 43).

In fact, the different notions of sustainability and discursive matrices are related to the desired social results and the functions and articulations that certain discourses intend to turn into reality. In other words, "that set of practices that carry sustainability in the future is sustainable today" (Acelard, 2009, p. 46). And there are struggles in the field – symbolic, discursive, and communicational ones – of groups and organizations for the recognition of being sustainable and for the right to be sustainable in a world where the hegemonic logic of consumption prevails.

This article proposes to present the case of sustainable communities located in rural areas in Brazil and in Latin American countries which have, in common with other types of intentional communities around the world, the defense of a self-sufficient way of life based on permaculture (Arruda, 2018; Capello, 2013; Nery, 2017). In practical terms, this model is characterized by the adoption of a vegan or vegetarian diet; subsistence agricultural production; rejection of the consumer society and the use of fossil fuels; inspiration by the way of life of native peoples or traditional communities; and constant economic interaction with local and regional partners.

As a result of a post-doctoral research funded by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), this study has, as its main objective, the investigation of the Común Tierra project, responsible for mapping sustainable communities and ecovillages in Latin America. Therefore, in 2020, we monitored and analyzed the project's digital platforms, responsible

for disseminating sustainable practices on the internet, with special attention to the project's presence on YouTube and Facebook, networks in which it has a significant number of followers and views. In other words, types of media that have more popularity and ability to disseminate project ideals and, consequently, sustainable practices.

The *participatory parity* category, which we take as a basis, is related to notions of sustainability and is part of Nancy Fraser's theoretical discussions on *recognition and distribution*. In addition to the analysis of the digital media of the Común Tierra project and its relations with the issues of recognition and distributive justice, as a specific objective, we question whether these digital media can be conceived as community media in the light of the discussion by Muniz Sodré, Raquel Paiva, and Cíclia Peruzzo.

As an introduction to the proposed theme, Capello (2013) points out that the concept of *ecovillage*, one of the main focuses of this study, should not be limited to the establishment of a list of "green solutions" or equipment and forms of socio-environmental interactions that collaborate to gradually increase residents' ecological practices. However, such practices are not restricted to the internal benefits to ecovillages and their surroundings, as they are part of actions linked to global organizations that promote the values of different aspects of environmentalism (Castells, 2000; Leis, 1999) due to the serious environmental crisis that threatens the planet nowadays.

The contradictions that involve the concept of *sustainable development* (Leis, 1999) – in a continuum that extends from a business management modality to the convergence between environmentalism and spirituality – seem to be reproduced in sustainable communities, pressured by the need to economically survive with the provision of collective and individual services and to maintain the utopian ideals of a life that prioritizes the collective well-being of its members and of all living beings.

One of the criticisms to these communities concerns their relative social isolation and class elitism (Nery, 2017). However, it seems difficult to blame them for not including low-income people or people from ethnic minorities when public policies to finance their sustainability projects are scarce. Therefore, sustainable communities today represent an alternative way of life to current consumption parameters in a world in which the accumulation of wealth without the equal distribution of social benefits has exacerbated contradictions and conflicts in rural areas and in large and medium Latin American urban centers.

According to the research released in January 2020 by the non-governmental organization (NGO) Oxfam, between June 2018 and June 2019, global wealth



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remained densely concentrated “at the top of the distribution pyramid: the richest 1%, in terms of equity profile, in mid-2019, held more than twice the net wealth owned by 6.9 billion people” (“Desigualdades...”, 2020). This inequality became even more evident with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has spread across the planet and has already victimized more than 6.32 million people, in addition to leaving more than 115 million people living in misery worldwide, while the fortunes of billionaires grew by 27% in 2020 (“Os cálculos...”, 2020).

Given this picture, the main key to interpreting sustainable communities would be to observe them as “an attempt to find a system of values that defines the right human measure” (Silva, 2013, p. 19). In a similar sense, for Capello (2013), it is necessary to realize that sustainable communities would be examples of possibilities for new human settlements and community life, but that they do not constitute “a universal solution” to the world’s problems. According to the author, it is an enterprise of “the result of a group and community option or a philosophy of life, one of many that mark modern and pluralist western society . . . an ideology and a pedagogy” (p. 14).

In other words, sustainable communities present themselves as forms of community and of social and ecological action focused on a pedagogy of change that encompasses human beings’ relationships with nature, in terms of the preservation and regeneration of the environment, in which the logic of redistribution, as we shall see, is embedded.

Based on these first reflections, we present three hypotheses, one of them theoretical: (1) ideas about harmony between humans and nature, contrary to the capitalist logic of profit maximization, can be adopted beyond the spatial limits of sustainable communities; (2) digital media prove to be adequate to disseminate ecological ideals and sustainable practices, that is, they are responsible for the expansion and propagation of these ideas; and (3) we can consider the digital media of the Común Tierra project as community media responsible for sharing sustainable practices.

From these hypotheses, we formulate the following questions: can this way of life, common to a small number of communities, through community media, face environmental devastation and social inequality in capitalist society? How can the idea of harmony between humans and non-humans come to fruition via digital media, that is, beyond the spatial limits of sustainable communities? To what extent are the digital media of the project community media, as they are planned and produced by people outside the communities?

We argue here that the sustainable communities visited by the Común Tierra project represent community actions that involve the possibility of a cultural, economic, and social exchange in which the common does not mean the reduction

of differences to the same denominator (García Canclini, 2004). When reflecting on the meaning of apprehending the *common* in Latin American culture, along with all the differences and inequalities between groups and ethnicities, García Canclini (2004) argues that political and cultural integration remains as necessary as the autonomy of groups for the construction of a sociopolitical project to overcome inequalities.

Similar to Garcia Canclini, for Sodr  (2014), communication is revealed as the main organizational and political form in contemporary society. In other words, it is, in its radicality, “the organizational work of the essential mediations to the human common, the approximate resolution of pertinent differences in symbolic forms” (p. 15).

As a proposed discussion and analysis, we divided the article into three main topics, in addition to this introduction and our final remarks. The first topic describes the Com n Tierra project as an object of study and the methodology applied in the investigation; the second topic presents theoretical discussions and the applied categories of analysis. In a third moment, the analysis of the object of study is described, with the specific objective of answering whether we are truly facing a form of community media.

OBJECT OF STUDY AND APPLIED METHODOLOGY

Com n Tierra is a nomadic, itinerant enterprise, which has existed since 2010 with the aim of documenting sustainable communities and the ecological projects of intentional communities. The project was created by a young middle-class couple, Let cia Riggati, a Brazilian citizen graduated in Social Communication, and Ryan Luckey, a North American citizen. They traveled for six years through Latin America. Up until 2016, they visited 150 villages of Indigenous peoples and different sustainable communities. Among the countries visited are Mexico, Nicaragua, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, in which they traveled during the last six months of their trip.

They started in the south of the continent, on the border between Brazil and Uruguay, in the city of Chu . Therefore, the communities of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina States were the first to be visited and documented. Among them are the agroecological communities settled by the Landless Workers Movement (MST) in Nova Santa Rita, Rio Grande do Sul, and the S o Jos  Ecovillage, in Santa Catarina.

After a few months in these places, the couple headed to the community of Serra Grande, in the south of Bahia. There, they settled with their children and, in mid-2017, they built a new house. In this place, they began the process of settling with other families in the region, where they are still leaving.

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The entire experience was documented with the use of technological devices, cameras, computers, cell phones, and traveling media and shared on social networks with multimedia guides, photos, and videos. The couple says, in an interview available on the project's digital media, that this record was made through what they call *barefoot journalism*, with “one hand in the garden and the other filming and documenting.”

We started by defining the places visited by the Común Tierra project as communities that live locally and internally and connect globally and externally through personal and digital networks. Next, we discuss the importance of online communication in the economic and symbolic constitution and maintenance itself, that is, as forms of social recognition of these communities. As digital media, we consider all content produced and made available in a virtual environment in a multimedia form through the communication channels of the project in 2020. That is, the content available on social networks on the internet and online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, blog, and website (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Común Tierra project website



Note. Reproduction of the home screen of the Común Tierra project website.

The methodology applied was the observation, monitoring, and qualitative analysis of digital media from the categories of analysis described in the next item. According to Depexe (2015), the monitoring methodology presupposes keeping track and observing content flows in networks and activities, demarcated temporally. Thus, the observed and monitored period extended from March to December 2020 when information was collected. That provided insights into

the uses and appropriations of the internet as a platform for the interaction and dissemination of certain content and individual and collective participation.

Additionally, it is important to emphasize that the study was, in part, guided by network analysis, a method proposed by Malini (2017) in which it seeks to identify, process, and interpret the points of view expressed in interactions in virtual spaces and online social networks, produced or moderated by the organizers of the project. From an empirical point of view, the method presents concepts from a topological and temporal perspective in the analysis of social networks and digital media, based on the production of written messages and images produced by the profiles.

CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTIONS ON RECOGNITION AND REDISTRIBUTION

Axel Honneth (2003), a philosopher and sociologist who developed the theory of recognition, states that “the distinctively human dependence on intersubjective recognition is always shaped by the particular way in which the mutual granting of recognition is institutionalized in a society” (p. 138). Thus, this institutionalization of the mutual granting of social recognition takes place in different instances, including media. In this sense, Común Tierra’s digital platforms are part of the network society (Castells, 2000) which faces the disheartening prospect of an incessant crisis of catastrophic proportions for life on the planet, privileging digital networks as a way of structuring the system of economic greed while it promises connections to increase consumption and citizen participation through a set of narratives produced in the media, the State, and institutions.

Here, recognition ends up occupying a key place in the theoretical debate for those who propose to discuss new sociocultural perspectives for the organization of sustainable communities within these networks. For Nancy Fraser (2006), who expands on Honneth’s discussions, cultural recognition has replaced economic redistribution as a remedy and solution to social injustice and occupied a prominent place in political struggle at local and global levels.

According to the author, it is necessary to develop a critical theory of recognition that identifies and takes up the defense of versions of the cultural politics of difference, which can be coherently combined with the social politics of equality. Fraser demonstrates her aim to connect two problems which were previously dissociated, recognition and redistribution. According to her, we achieve a conceptual framework adequate to contemporary demands only by integrating both concepts.



Capello (2013), in turn, points out that sustainable and intentional communities have the particularity of combining concern for environmental problems with increased awareness of the need to experience new ways of life, based on the fair distribution of material goods and cultural services. Therefore, we can interpret that sustainable communities would be concerned with associating issues of recognition with redistribution.

In this sense, Fraser (2006) points out that it is necessary to pay attention to two forms of injustice: the economic one, which increasingly deepens itself in the economic-political structure of current societies; and the cultural or symbolic one, which delves into “social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication” (p. 231). That is to say, Fraser’s political philosophy captures the synergy between economic inequalities, culture, and discourse (Dahl et al., 2004), emphasizing the danger of analyses that simply ignore the politics of redistribution in exchange for the salience of identity politics.

Unlike Honneth, according to Fraser, recognition must be conceived as a matter of justice. For her, it is unfair that some groups and individuals are denied the *status of full partners in social interaction* merely because of institutionalized patterns of cultural valuation – in whose constructions they did not participate in equal conditions – which depreciates the distinctive characteristics they possess or are assigned to them. It must be said, then, “that non-recognition is wrong because it constitutes a form of institutionalized subordination – and therefore a serious violation of justice” (Fraser, 2007, p. 112).

Therefore, to study recognition as a matter of justice, according to Fraser, we should perceive non-recognition as subordination of status², that is, to find the mistake in social relations and not in social or interindividual psychology.

According to the author’s conception, the normative focus should be the notion of *parity of participation*. According to this parameter, justice requires social arrangements that allow members of society to interact as partners. First, the distribution of material resources must take place in a way that ensures the independence and voice of the participants, called the *objective condition* of participatory parity. Yet, the second condition, for Fraser, requires that institutionalized patterns of cultural valuation express equal respect for participants and ensure equal opportunity to the achievement of social esteem. Fraser calls it the *intersubjective condition* of participatory parity. Such conditions serve as a theoretical parameter for the analyses.

Here, it is necessary to emphasize that the objective condition and the intersubjective condition are necessary for parity of participation and cannot be treated as isolated facts. The objective condition focuses on concerns traditionally associated with the theory of distributive justice and related to the economic

² We do not agree with Fraser that it is necessary to disregard the validations of identities in exchange for validations for equality of status. We believe that the affirmation of identity differences does not prevent this equality. Not all identity struggles fit into what she calls repressive communitarianism.

structure of society and social class differentiations, such as the demarcation of Indigenous lands. The intersubjective condition, on the other hand, is related to the status order of society (which is different from identities) and to culturally defined status hierarchies. Thus, a broad conception of justice, guided by the norm of participatory parity, considers redistribution and recognition mutually.

How, then, can claims for recognition be analyzed in the digital media of the Común Tierra project and in other actions that seek to make the population aware of the different notions of sustainability? The approach proposed here, as already explained, considers participatory parity as an evaluative standard, the main category of analysis in this investigation.

According to Fraser (2007), those who claim redistribution must show that the current economic scenario denies them the objective conditions for participatory parity. Recognition claimants, on the other hand, must show that institutionalized patterns of cultural valuation deny them the necessary intersubjective conditions. Therefore, in both cases, the norm of participatory parity is the model for justifying the claim, and participatory parity serves to assess proposed solutions against injustice. This means that “regardless of whether claimants are demanding redistribution or recognition, claimants must show that the social changes they pursue will, in fact, promote parity of participation” (p. 125).

Thus, we also hypothesize that the digital media of the Común Tierra project can be considered as community communication processes responsible for claiming both redistribution and recognition issues.

Paiva (2007) highlights two attributes which apply to qualifying a communicative process as community communication. The first one is related to the communicated contents. According to the author, this type of communication arises from the perception of the biased and displaced character of the contents broadcast by conventional mass channels and from the desire to produce information which deals with local and regional problems in a more reliable way. Another outstanding attribute would be the community’s participation in the elaboration of the programming to be broadcast. As much as the vehicle is privately owned, it can only be characterized as community if the people of the locality have an active participation in defining the contents and approaches to be adopted. Therefore, a community vehicle would be one that deals with topics relevant to the community in a formative (and not merely informative) way, and that depends on the participation of the community itself in its daily working.

Hence, Peruzzo (2007) highlights the pedagogical character of community communication processes, which have the responsibility of disseminating content



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with the aim of developing education and culture and expanding citizenship. These characteristics, as well as the objective and subjective conditions of participatory parity, will be observed below.

DIGITAL MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE COMÚN TIERRA PROJECT

Based on the theoretical concepts of recognition, redistribution, and community communication worked so far, we will analyze the media content produced by the Común Tierra project.

Among more than 70 videos and documents available on the project's digital platforms, there are interviews and works developed in sustainable communities, ecovillages, and permaculture centers. On the project's website – which is available in Portuguese, Spanish, and English –, in addition to various materials, links, and documents, the main attraction is a map of Latin America with all the sustainable communities visited by the couple and a description of each one. In addition, within the website, there is a blog, updated up until 2018, with project activities after the trip.

The last blog post addresses a round of debates that took place in Ilhéus, Bahia, Brazil, on the “Rights of Mother Nature,” with researcher Vanessa Hasson, an expert on the subject, who works in the management and development of socio-environmental projects together with public authorities and the third sector. It is, in fact, a movement that works on the implementation of legislation that grants legal rights to the environment in Brazil and other countries around the world. On the occasion, were present residents of sustainable communities in the region, representatives of the legislature and the executive power of Bahia, and researchers from the State University of Bahia (Uneb), which demonstrates the political and representative character of the movement related to issues of recognition and redistribution and to the objective and intersubjective conditions of participatory parity (Fraser, 2006, 2007). In other words, when entering the project in discussions with the public power, participants start to demand changes of an economic and social order, as well as cultural and representative ones.

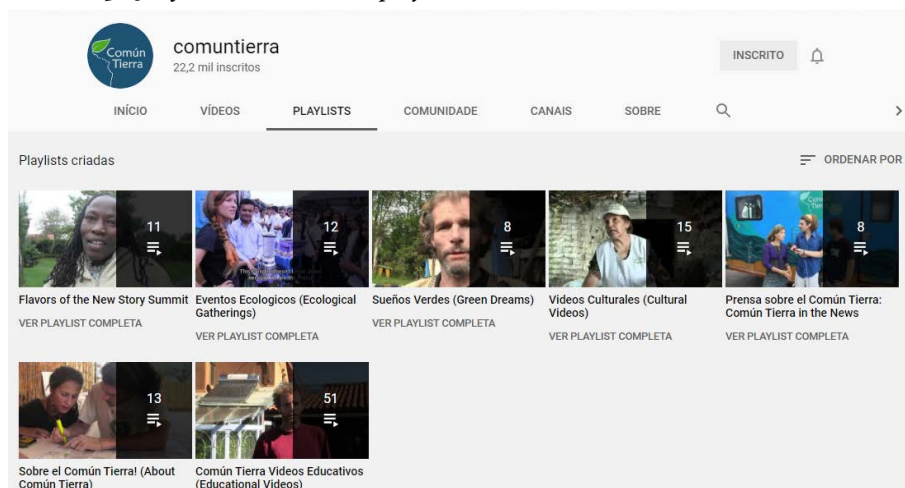
Also, the description on the website states that the main objective of the project is to disseminate educational information for the improvement of techniques and tools with a sustainable approach through visits in different locations. This point allows us to argue that we are facing a community communication process. According to Paiva (2007), the communication produced by these new media generates, at all times, new forms of language, producing effective interference

in the change of social postures. That is, its main characteristic is to act with the primary purpose of education. For the researcher, “the educational perspective is a primary prerogative of a community vehicle, and, for this very reason, its activity is not limited to the mere production of news messages” (p. 144).

In the same way, on their YouTube page (<https://bit.ly/3adwNQd>), which, in 2022, has 25.6 thousand subscribers (at the beginning of our analysis, in March 2020, there were 20.9 thousand subscribers), there is a vast amount of material produced by the project. This media space is the most important platform of Común Tierra, in which all the audiovisual materials produced by the couple are linked. For these reasons, greater attention was given to the analysis of this platform (Figure 2).

Figure 2

YouTube page of the Común Tierra project



Note. Reproduction of the Común Tierra project channel on YouTube.

Therefore, in order to carry out the analyses, we chose to divide the sections of the project videos available on YouTube into five subgroups:

(1) Educational videos: Here we find audiovisual recordings with an educational approach. That is, community, technical or demonstrative content addressing sustainability issues found in the different settlements and communities that the project has documented in Latin America and around the world. The videos in this section use background music, with colloquial language, mixing the couple's speeches with the testimonies of people who work and live in the Latin American visited ecovillages. These videos have an average length of five to six minutes.



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The webpage hosts 51 educational videos which deal with practices aimed at sustainability, such as: construction of houses with mud and straw (adobe technique); production of toothpastes with natural ingredients; assembly of a solar-powered oven and an ecological motorhome; preparation of medicinal tinctures; family-scale permaculture tips; and construction of a low-cost biodigester. Almost all videos feature the participation of members of the communities visited who share different types of teachings on sustainable practices. Here we see one more characteristic of community communication present, which would be the participation of the community itself in the elaboration of the contents.

Another important issue to be highlighted are the videos which deal with the promotion of dialogue networks between communities and how to organize them internally. Altogether, there are 10 videos in this section, conceived as educational videos. Here we perceive the intersubjective condition of participatory parity related to the status order of society in a pedagogical conception of shared and collectively organized environmental social justice in the Latin American communities visited by the project. It is perceived that there is an intention to give voice to the leaders of each community and, thus, through social networks, seek a possible interaction between them.

(2) Videos dedicated to ecological events: the second section documents international meetings focused on sustainability and ecovillages that the Común Tierra project participated in or held during and after the roadtrip. In this part are available 12 videos produced between 2010 and 2014, such as the “Pepena Fest: Festival of Recycling in the Capital of Mexico,” in 2010, about a meeting whose main theme was recycling, practices and solutions for waste, and disposable waste. This section also has videos about the Third Argentine Permaculture Encounter, held in Junin, Mendoza, Argentina, October 2013 and the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) conferences in 2013 and 2014, held in Switzerland and Germany, respectively. These meetings bring together around 300 activists from 51 countries and leaders of different movements from faith-based communities and ecovillages around the world. In this section, as highlighted in the educational videos, the notion of recognition and redistribution within the participatory parity category defended by Fraser is also evident, in which the discourse of equality and environmental justice is present since communities present themselves as organizational forms to combat ecological disparities at a global level, forming mutual support networks, albeit at different hierarchical and Eurocentric scales.

GEN, for instance, is coordinated by Europeans. Therefore, its organizational logics – even in an attempt to oppose the capitalist system through the

promotion of ecological and sustainable practices – also contain marketing characteristics of modern western rationalism, which highlights the structural limits of some of the changes which are proposed.

(3) Cultural videos: In this third section analyzed, we found videos which deal with the artistic expressions of popular, native, and traditional cultures of peoples of Latin America visited by the couple Leticia and Ryan. Here, we find video clips produced during the roadtrip with local artists. There are 15 videos available in total, some of them with musical performances by artists from the villages visited, such as *Kichwa* songs, Indigenous music from Rio Blanco and Ecuador, and an audiovisual record on the process of making handicrafts in *Cabuya*, the cultivation of weaving, with a member of the Asociación Mujer y Medio Ambiente of Plaza Gutierrez, Ecuador.

(4) Press: this section contains a collection of news about the project, broadcast on different television stations. Here, eight videos are available about the project broadcast by traditional TV stations, university media, and corporate hegemonic media in Brazil and other countries in Latin America. Here, we find reports from TVE Brasil; CNN in Spanish, shown in Mexico; *Tierra Viva* program, Canal 7, in Argentina; and TV Universitaria, from Bolivia. The issue of cultural or symbolic recognition becomes more latent, as it appears that the members of Común Tierra are concerned with the representation of the project in different channels, regardless of their profile, as a form of media and cultural legitimization of the ecological causes defended by them.

(5) “Sueños Verdes:” this section features eight videos filmed at the Encuentro Llamado de la Montaña with testimonies from activists and leaders of sustainable Latin American communities. Each member talks about the different perspectives of a sustainable future, a “green dream” for the world based on practices applied in their territories. Here, what Acselard (2009) suggests is confirmed, that is, sustainable would today be the combination of practices that carry sustainability in the future, a dream, an almost-utopia in a world full of social and ecological disparities and injustices.

Finally, the third platform monitored by the project was their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ComunTierra>), which, at the time of our last mapping, had 8,633 followers (Figure 3). During this last mapping of the project’s social networks, we analyzed one of the few posts made during the pandemic, on September 5, 2020: the video of an interview, which lasted about 1h30min, given by the couple Riggati and Luckey to the Una Nueva Eco project coordinator, Carlos Rojas, responsible for an information center which promotes encounters for the creation of ecological villages in Latin America.

Figure 3
Facebook page of the Común Tierra project



Note. Reproduction of the Común Tierra project page on Facebook.

The video had 2,100 views and 70 comments so far, most with questions about permaculture and the road trip experience, in addition to greetings. No offensive comments were found.

The conversation took place entirely in Spanish. What stood out the most was the attention given to the forms of social relations within the ecovillages, that is, the community and communicational aspect of the project. As we can see in the following Rigatti speech:

The work of communities breaks many paradigms. In some of the villages it became clear the part of social relations: of building trust among their members. The limiting factor of an ecovillage is the limit of the strength of personal bonds, which enables a greater energy or not. The community is a growing being, it is something into a lot of attention and care must be put. . . . The appreciation of placing relationships between people at the center of functions, vital for all processes, unlike what happens in the individualized world (verbal information). (Común Tierra, 2020)

In addition to community communication factors, another key issue in the interview was the importance of self-sufficiency in sustainable communities, something that is also very present in the testimonies recorded on YouTube from the different leaders of the settlements visited by the project. The couple also highlighted the need to develop economic interdependence and understand the

relationships of sustainable communities as support networks. Social and cultural chains that need to dialogue with each other, which can also be interpreted as a legitimate demand for redistribution, challenge the economic conditions denying them the objective conditions for participatory parity, and recognition, by emphasizing the necessary cultural valuation. Therefore, the norm of participatory parity is justified from this claim.

Finally, also from the Facebook monitoring of the project, even if outside our temporal scope, we found two posts supporting and disseminating the cause of demarcation of Indigenous lands in Brazil. One of the posts, from February 4th, 2019, is a video at their YouTube channel called *Vozes Tupinambá* (Tupinambá Voices - 2019), by chief Ramon Tupinambá, which brings the word of the Tupinambá people about the national campaign “Indigenous Blood: Not a Single Drop More!” during mobilizations in Olivença, Bahia, with the hashtag *demarcaçãojá*. Here, the project once again demonstrates an action that inhabits the fields of recognition and redistribution, in dialogue with the demands of struggle and environmental justice of the original Brazilian peoples, beyond the internal and practical issues of the settlements visited.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a starting point for our final considerations, we emphasize that the very name of the project refers to the common, a prefix of communication and community. As Paiva (2007) reminds us, community would be, then, “what allows individuals and groups to glimpse and perceive the opening to creatively extend new bridges over human dissociation” (p. 10). Therefore, sustainable communities, also called intentional communities, are motivated by the eagerness to overcome barriers beyond the settlements themselves in the act of prioritizing education and sharing in a pedagogical way through digital media, different paths of sustainability within the possible limits, even if in a restricted way and, at times, contradictory practices. Or, as the interlocutors themselves propose, “a barefoot journalism,” in order to disseminate such actions, which are urgent in a hegemonically capitalist world.

During our analyses, the three hypotheses were confirmed, two of them partially. The first one, about the harmony between humans and nature, sometimes antagonistic to the capitalist logic of profit maximization and able to be adopted beyond the spatial limits of sustainable communities, was partially confirmed. As we found, from theoretical analyses and readings, these changes will only be generalized if we have the transformation of the capitalist mode of production or a radical change in terms of distributive justice. In short, we could claim



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that only in eco-socialism would this be possible (Camargo, 2020; Löwy, 2005) and that this transformation seems very distant to us since, as these authors argue, it cannot exist without intersectional change. Political action enters the ecological relation, which produces collective transformations that contain an environmental class consciousness, a topic that we intend to address in future analyses. Due to our methodological choices (and for length reasons) this issue was not discussed in this article.

Regarding the second hypothesis, linked to the previous argument, we identified, in the digital media of Común Tierra, what Fraser (2006, 2007) points out as cultural recognition. That is, the attempt to fill gaps in place of socioeconomic redistribution is perceived as a search for a solution to social injustices and an objective of political struggle for a paradigm shift. In this case, ecological and consumer ones, based on the proposed actions. Therefore, the hypothesis is also partially confirmed. What we now have within our reach is the possibility of changing the patterns of work and consumption of human groups gathered in sustainable communities, assuming that the mediation of digital communication is a condition for the existence and maintenance of them. In other words, of a real participatory parity.

Finally, the hypothesis that we are facing a community communication process was confirmed. Even if it is an itinerant project, the observation is justified based on the assumptions of Peruzzo (2009), who draws attention to the fact that there are substantial changes in the conceptions of community while some of its principles are still being verified. According to the author, the feeling of belonging, participation, and the union of interests and interaction are characteristics which persist throughout history, while the notion of a “specific territorial locus as a structuring element of community is overcome by the changes caused by the incorporation of new information and communication technologies” (p. 57). According to the researcher, in line with what we have argued so far, we cannot underestimate the issue of geographic space as an important factor of social aggregation in certain contexts and circumstances. However, we find that there is a constant search to find connections and similarities between the different locations registered by the project members and the respective claims for environmental justice. We also found that community media play a fundamental role in contemporary times for participatory parity and for the material and intersubjective conditions of its application.

It should also be noted that face-to-face interviews with project members and field research in sustainable communities in southern Brazil were also planned. This was impossible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Another limitation of this research was also due to the fact that communication with the project organizers happened in a very restricted way, as we planned to carry out a semi-structured interview, albeit online, with them, something that did not happen, even after

a few attempts. However, sanitary limitations and restrictions allowed greater concentration on digital media and the communication practices analyzed here, which proved to be a rich field for communication sciences which can contribute to humanitarian and ecological developments. **M**

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