EDUCATION AND REPARATIVE JUSTICE: PUBLIC POLICIES FOR DISPLACED WOMEN AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OTHERNESS IN BRAZIL

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Abstract

This article analyzes the fundamental right to education as a tool of reparative justice and reconstruction of otherness within the scope of Brazilian public policies directed at women displaced by large-scale development projects. The theoretical object is the intersection of gender, forced displacement, and educational policies, investigating how the Brazilian state responds – or fails to respond – to the multiple forms of violence (material, symbolic, and territorial) affecting these women. The general objective is to demonstrate that the implementation of education as an intersectional public policy constitutes, beyond material reparation, a symbolic and political reconstruction capable of restoring broken bonds of belonging and dignity resulting from compulsory displacement. The article assumes that current normative and institutional structures still operate under developmentalist and patriarchal paradigms, which silence gender and territorial specificities and hinder the emergence of democratic arrangements for reparative governance. The methodology adopted is qualitative, with a theoretical and interdisciplinary approach, grounded in bibliographic review and critical-conceptual analysis of legal and doctrinal frameworks. The article argues that only through the articulation of redistributive justice, recognition of difference, and the institutionalization of public policies can the right to education be concretized as an emancipatory and reparative practice, reestablishing displaced women as full subjects of rights and producers of knowledge and territories.

***Keywords**: reparative justice; education; displaced women; public policies; otherness.*

1. Introduction

In Brazil and around the world, women subjected to involuntary displacement tend to face recurring violence, the loss of basic rights, and invisibility within decision-

making spheres. In addition to material losses, these women experience ruptures in symbolic and community bonds, witnessing their stories and identities threatened. In this context, the debate on reparative justice becomes increasingly relevant – namely, forms of redress and restoration of rights after violations, with a gender-sensitive perspective and an emphasis on the role of education in this process.

The implementation of large-scale development projects in Brazil, in particular, has produced forced displacements that go beyond the material sphere, affecting women in especially severe ways. In addition to losing physical and economic spaces, they experience the dismantling of family, community, and cultural networks, as well as the denial of fundamental rights such as access to land and education. This study proposes the right to education as a mechanism of reparation, recognizing it as indispensable for the reconstruction of dignity and autonomy, while also embedding otherness and social justice at the core of public policy agendas.

In this regard, the article draws on the contributions of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak[1], who denounces the discursive silencing of subaltern subjects, and Emmanuel Lévinas[2], whose ethics of alterity foregrounds responsibility toward the Other as a condition for justice. These perspectives illuminate how forced displacement, when viewed through a gendered lens, perpetuates cycles of invisibility and exclusion that undermine women's autonomy and dignity. Paulo Freire's[3] pedagogical philosophy, which conceives education as a process of humanization and emancipation, further supports the notion that reparative policies must transcend material compensation. In this framework, the right to education emerges not only as a constitutional guarantee but also as a central dimension of symbolic and political reparation. The general objective is to investigate education as a core axis of reparative public policies for displaced women. The specific objectives include identifying gaps in institutional responses, analyzing the dynamics of exclusion, and proposing guidelines for a reparative model capable of disrupting structural inequalities and reconstructing trajectories of citizenship.

The contemporary Brazilian context is marked by intense processes of economic development that, while aimed at progress, often result in the forced displacement of populations, with disproportionate impacts on women. Large-scale infrastructure projects – such as the construction of dams, the expansion of mining operations, and predatory urbanization – produce ruptures that are not merely physical but also social, cultural, and identitarian. Within this context, the discussion on citizenship expands to include internally displaced women, whose quest for redress and the reconstruction of their lives and communities poses both a legal and ethical imperative.

The 1988 Federal Constitution of Brazil enshrines education as a fundamental right, guaranteeing access and permanence, while the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education

[1] Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, WMF Martins Fontes, São Paulo, 2018.

[2] Lévinas, Emmanuel, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Edições 70, Lisbon, 2008.

[3] Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of Autonomy: Necessary Knowledge for Educational Practice*, Paz & Terra, Rio de Janeiro, 2021.

(Law No. 9,394/1996[4]) outlines its operationalization. However, for displaced women, access to this right is systematically violated, positioning education as a means of reparative justice and reconstruction of otherness and citizenship. This article seeks to critically analyze how Brazilian public policies – particularly those at the intersection of Law and Public Policy – have incorporated, or can incorporate, the fundamental right to education as a pillar of reparation and recognition, through the lens of feminist public policy theory and contemporary institutional analysis.

The relevance of this investigation lies in the need for a more attentive and sensitive perspective on the intersections of gender, race, class, and legal status in the treatment of displaced women. Simultaneously, the article interrogates how the Brazilian State, the 1988 Constitution, and public policies either facilitate or hinder these women's access to full citizenship. This research adopts a qualitative approach involving the analysis of national public policies and legal documents. It includes a bibliographic review of academic literature, NGO reports, and official data. While women's rights are frequently addressed within the broader architecture of human rights, they take on heightened significance when viewed through the lens of displacement – an experience that disproportionately affects some of the world's most vulnerable individuals. A gender-sensitive approach is indispensable in this analysis, given that women and children not only comprise the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons, but also endure disproportionately high levels of physical violence and gender-based exploitation.

This study seeks to demonstrate that the realization of reparative justice for displaced women requires a reinterpretation of citizenship – one that goes beyond legal formality to encompass the material and symbolic reconstruction of their lives. In this context, education emerges as a vector of empowerment, resilience, and agency, capable of reconstructing immaterial bonds (cultural, spiritual, and educational) and strengthening these women's participation in the public sphere. This article proposes a theoretical analysis integrating the themes of education and reparative justice within public policies targeting displaced women, examining how these instruments can contribute to the reconstruction of otherness, understood here as the re-signification of the place of the "Other" in society, free from stigma and exclusion. It is assumed that education – especially when framed through an emancipatory lens – and reparative measures guided by social justice, operate in a complementary manner to promote inclusion and the protagonism of these women.

This study employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary, and exploratory methodology, drawing upon bibliographic and documentary sources. A comprehensive literature review was conducted – covering academic articles, institutional reports, and legal frameworks –

[4] Brazil, Law No. 9.394 of December 20, 1996, establishing the National Education Guidelines and Framework (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional – LDBEN), which defines general principles, rights, and duties for primary, secondary, and higher education in Brazil. Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/Leis/L9394.htm. Accessed on: 19 July 2025.

focusing on the following thematic axes: human rights education, restorative/reparative justice, gender policies, and situations of forced displacement. The methodology privileges critical authors and intersectional perspectives, in order to capture the interactions among gender, race, class, and other social markers within the topic at hand.

2. Women in Situations of Forced Displacement and the Processes of Re-Signifying Otherness in the Brazilian Context

The forced displacement of women – through its multiple causes and trajectories – has become a complex and structuring phenomenon of contemporaneity, crossing geographical, normative, and symbolic borders. In the Brazilian context, these experiences challenge institutional mechanisms of protection and shelter, revealing the fragility of traditional legal and political categories when confronted with historically subalternized subjects. Women in situations of refuge, forced migration, or statelessness are embedded within global mobility flows and intense processes of re-signifying otherness, wherein markers such as gender, race, class, nationality, and religion are rearticulated into dynamics of exclusion, resistance, and (in)visibility. In this field of forces, otherness emerges both as a question of recognition and as a political device that produces classifications, hierarchies, and internal borders within the national space.

In scenarios of forced displacement and political-social vulnerability, Emmanuel Lévinas[5] offers a crucial theoretical inflection. By relocating the center of modern subjectivity to the face of the Other – a presence that interpellates, unsettles, and ethically commands the self – Lévinas subverts the presumed neutrality of juridical rationality and posits an ethics of responsibility anterior to any contractual or institutional mediation. Otherness, in his conception, is not reducible to a cultural fact or to an administrable difference; it is an ethical absolute that demands a response from the self. This demand reveals the ontological deficit of positive law when confronted with lives pushed to the margins of citizenship and legal recognition – lives that defy the boundaries of legal typification and migratory categorization.

In the context of displaced women, often treated as numbers, profiles, or objects of institutional guardianship, Levinasian otherness destabilizes bureaucratic matrices and demands a reorientation of the State's response: it is not a matter of recognizing the Other based on eligibility criteria, but rather of assuming unconditional responsibility for her existence. True legitimacy of any reparative policy thus lies in its capacity to recognize the Other as an end in herself, and never merely as a means – even when such recognition contradicts administrative convenience or market pressures.

The presence of women in situations of forced displacement places the right to education before an urgent ethical requirement: to recognize the Other as a subject of rights prior to any attempt at cultural, linguistic, or institutional integration. Emmanuel

[5] Lévinas, Emmanuel, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Edições 70, Lisbon, 2008.

Lévinas[6], in asserting that otherness is irreducible and that the relationship with the Other precedes any normative mediation, sheds light on this tension. The face of the woman, in this context, cannot be interpreted as a mere datum to be integrated but as an appeal to responsibility. Educability thus becomes a space of listening, rupture, and institutional repositioning. This implies shifting the axis from an adaptive pedagogy to a pedagogy of response through public policies.

Paul Ricoeur's[7] theory of narrative identity helps deepen our legal and political understanding of the experiences of women internally displaced by development projects in Brazil – particularly when their stories are systematically erased from official documents and impact reports. By stating that the "self" is constituted through mediation with the other, Ricoeur reveals how identity is not an immutable substance, but rather the result of a continuous construction involving memory, time, and alterity. For women displaced from traditional territories – be they riverside, rural, or urban – the mediating link between place, identity, and community is violently severed by developmental narratives that negate their agency and erase their epistemologies. In place of listening, institutional invisibility takes hold. Ricoeur's reading compels law and public policy to view these women not as passive victims of economic forces but as subjects whose identities are in dispute, in motion, and demanding space for reinsertion within the juridical and symbolic domains of belonging and citizenship. Reconstructing these interrupted narratives, therefore, becomes a constitutional duty of reparation and justice.

Raquel Hogemann[8], in her analysis of Ubuntu philosophy, challenges the individualistic foundations of modern law and introduces a conception of justice that is not limited to the equitable distribution of goods but is realized in the reciprocal constitution of dignity. This perspective invites a rethinking of the field of public policy through an ethic of interdependence in which otherness is not an obstacle to autonomy, but rather its condition of possibility. However, when transposed to institutional structures inherited from colonial and exclusionary paradigms, this philosophy becomes strained by legal frameworks that, while proclaiming neutrality, operate selectively with respect to vulnerable subjects.

Spivak's[9] seminal question – "Can the subaltern speak?" – remains central to understanding the epistemic violence inflicted upon internally displaced women in Brazil, whose voices are systematically erased by dominant legal and political discourses. More than silencing them, these mechanisms speak for them – they name, categorize, diagnose – through epistemic structures that reinforce the asymmetry between those who suffer and those who articulate. In this context, otherness becomes even more elusive when recognition of difference is filtered through tutelage rather than listening.

[6] Lévinas, Emmanuel, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Edições 70, Lisbon, 2008.
[7] Ricoeur, Paul, *Oneself as Another*, Papirus, Campinas, 2014.
[8] Hogemann, Edna Raquel dos Santos, *Human Rights and Ubuntu Philosophy*, Lumen Juris, Rio de Janeiro, 2017.
[9] Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, WMF Martins Fontes, São Paulo, 2018.

When the Other is only received as a passive victim of predesigned public policies, her singularity is stripped in the name of an abstract ideal of protection. The challenge, then, is to re-signify the modes of listening that undergird the legal and educational systems. In this sense, otherness demands an ethical shift: it is not enough to include – the hegemonic forms of representation that perpetuate exclusion under the guise of inclusion must be dismantled.

In cases of removal due to major infrastructure projects, official narratives often portray displaced women as passive recipients of social assistance compensation, erasing their political agency. This erasure is intensified when public policies – especially those related to the right to education – are generically designed without intersectional listening that takes into account the knowledge and trajectories of women experiencing forced displacement.

Within this complex terrain, Toni Morrison[10] reveals how the construction of the Other is not a spontaneous experience but a deeply political and historical project embedded in the structures of power, language, and race. The Other is not inherently different; rather, she is discursively constructed as different – precisely to legitimize mechanisms of control, exclusion, and subordination. In the case of internally displaced women in Brazil – particularly those marked by racialization, poverty, and territorial dislocation induced by large-scale development projects – this production of the Other is crystallized in public policies that manage bodies without recognizing them as subjects of history, rights, and memory. Morrison[11] shows that otherness becomes unbearable when it threatens to destabilize the fictions of homogeneity that sustain privilege, and it is therefore neutralized through simplified representations, invisibility, or institutional precarization. The ethical challenge of sustaining otherness lies in the structural compulsion to render the Other intelligible, assimilable – even docile – in order for her presence to be tolerated within dominant frameworks. In this sense, the very legal and educational devices that should guarantee recognition often become part of the machinery that silences them – especially when they operate through abstract models that ignore the concrete forms of suffering, displacement, and resistance inscribed in their bodies and territories.

Moreover, one often neglected aspect of displacement debates is that place is not merely where one lives, but where one is recognized. Displacement from one's territory – even when justified by development discourse – entails displacement from networks of legitimacy, recognition, and political agency. Internal displacements caused by large-scale projects treat space as a resource and people as technical variables, erasing ways of life that do not fit into institutional calculations. For the affected women, this erasure is even more severe, as their voices are rarely heard in decision-making processes – and when they are, it is often too late.

[10] Morrison, Toni, *The Origin of Others: Essays on Literature and Racism*, Companhia das Letras, São Paulo, 2019.
[11] Morrison, Toni, *The Origin of Others: Essays on Literature and Racism*, Companhia das Letras, São Paulo, 2019.

3. Justice and Freedom: Normative Tensions and Institutional Challenges in Guaranteeing the Right to Education for Displaced Women

The formulation of public policies aimed at repairing structural inequalities requires more than abstract recognition of vulnerability; it demands the reconstruction of the criteria by which certain subjects become recognizable as legitimate rights holders. Judith Butler[12] contributes incisively to this debate by demonstrating that otherness results from normative frameworks that define – through operations of power – which lives matter and which may be disregarded by institutional grammar. In the legal field, the tension between individual freedom and social justice becomes a central issue: while the State seeks to ensure protection, it also risks capturing subjects within structures of tutelage that reduce their autonomy and render invisible their own narratives of loss, displacement, and belonging.

In *The Idea of Justice*, Amartya Sen[13] breaks with abstract models of justice by shifting the focus of analysis toward practical comparisons between unjust realities and by prioritizing the removal of concrete deprivations of freedom. This perspective is especially relevant to the field of Law and public policy when addressing the structural vulnerabilities of historically excluded groups. Justice, in this framework, is not defined by the design of ideal institutions, but by the capacity to expand people's real freedoms and capabilities – recognizing that the mere formal recognition of rights often fails to ensure their meaningful and dignified exercise.

This distinction between formal rights and substantive freedom requires the legal-institutional apparatus to do more than enact universalist norms; it must attend to the material, social, and symbolic conditions that render some individuals systematically less capable of exercising their freedoms. At this point, justice becomes inseparable from an intersectional diagnosis of the structures that limit the agency of disadvantaged individuals, as proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw[14] and Lélia Gonzalez[15]. Women internally displaced by state-led "development" actions, for example, face multiple deprivations that cannot be addressed simply through the extension of public programs. The absence of meaningful listening, the disregard for their territorial ties, the fragmentation of sectoral policies, and the technical-administrative language of decisions all work together to restrict their real possibilities for choice and participation. Even when the State possesses the resources and formal structures to ensure rights, the effectiveness of justice depends on its capacity to transform those mechanisms into tools that concretely expand the freedom field of each affected person.

This implies a rethinking of policy design itself: rather than imposing pre-established solutions, institutions must create the conditions for historically silenced subjects to

[12] Butler, Judith, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?*, Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, 2015.

[13] Amartya Sen, *A ideia de justiça* [*The Idea of Justice*], São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2011.

[14] Crenshaw, Kimberlé, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Anti-discrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Anti-racist Politics", *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989.

[15] Gonzales, Lélia, *For an Afro-Latin American Feminism*, Zahar, Rio de Janeiro, 2020.

deliberate, resist, and rebuild their trajectories with autonomy and recognition. Social justice, in this domain, enters into tension with individual freedom when the state apparatus assumes neutrality while crafting solutions that disregard the multiple layers of oppression – such as gender, class, ethnicity, and territory – that shape the concrete possibilities of citizenship. Even when the legal framework guarantees rights to housing, education, or social protection, the way such rights are operationalized often privileges individuals who fit a normative profile of active citizenship, thereby excluding those whose experiences do not conform to that mold.

By introducing the concept of "remaindered life", Neferti X. M. Tadiar[16] draws attention to a category of existence shaped not by full citizenship, but by its functional suspension. These are lives kept operational for the system – useful as labor, statistics, or justification for programs – but disposable in terms of political and normative recognition. In the field of Law and public policy, this category demands a revision of traditional distributive logic. Women displaced internally by development policies rarely appear as full subjects of rights. Even when programs are designed to "include" such women, what is often produced is merely the maintenance of a precarious form of life – with access that is limited, fragmented, and conditional.

In this context, the tension between individual freedom and social justice becomes a question of voice: who can claim, on their own terms, what it means to live with dignity? And who remains, even within the bounds of legality, as a tolerated but unheard figure? Tadiar[17] does not offer an institutional model, but rather a critical provocation: Law only promotes justice when it refuses to normalize the permanence of degraded life as an acceptable outcome. This requires not only the allocation of resources but also the transformation of the political conditions for listening and deliberation, restoring to these subjects the ability to define the value and horizon of their own lives. As Dantas and Lima Jr.[18] argue, a robust model of deliberative democracy must conceive deliberative spaces not merely as institutional venues, but as educational processes through which individuals develop political agency, articulate demands, and reshape their collective realities. From this perspective, the right to education – understood in its broad and transformative sense – must encompass not only access to schooling, but also the creation of collective spaces in which forcibly displaced women can exercise agency, reconstruct self-narratives, and effectively participate in shaping the policies that affect their lives. As demonstrated by the authors[19], when articulated through an intersectional logic, these spaces become essential to produce social justice and to the symbolic redistribution of power. However, this proposition is not

[16] Tadiar, Neferti X. M., *Remaindered Life*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2022.

[17] Tadiar, Neferti X. M., *Remaindered Life*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2022.

[18] Dantas, Luana Cristina da Silva; Lima Junior, Oswaldo Pereira de, "Deliberative and Participatory Democracy in the Protection of Gender Vulnerabilities: The Formulation of Public Policies for the Protection and Empowerment of Forcibly Displaced Women in Brazil", *Revista de Direito da Administração Pública*, Vol. 1, November 30, 2024.

[19] Dantas, Luana Cristina da Silva; Lima Junior, Oswaldo Pereira de, "Deliberative and Participatory Democracy in the Protection of Gender Vulnerabilities: The Formulation of Public Policies for the Protection and Empowerment of Forcibly Displaced Women in Brazil", Revista de Direito da Administração Pública, Vol. 1, November 30, 2024.

without its tensions. The main challenge lies in dismantling the historical devices that keep these women on the outside – that is, the gender, race, class, and territorial markers that operate as exclusionary filters. Although the normative framework promises equal voice, the materialization of that promise requires a political pedagogy of recognition and listening, capable of bridging the gap between democratic discourse and its exclusionary practices. To deliberate, in this expanded sense, is to participate in a process of collective political education – one that reshapes both individual subjectivities and institutional structures, affirming that democracy remains incomplete where the voices of the historically silenced are not heard, valued, and transformed into action.

Following the theoretical overview of democratic deliberation and political participation, we introduce the relevance of deliberative educational spaces as arenas for the full exercise of the right to education for displaced women. The implementation of participatory platforms – such as community councils, training workshops, and territorial forums – can materialize emancipatory education by integrating technical knowledge, local wisdom, and the lived experiences of displaced women, allowing them to act as agents of the very policies that concern them. These spaces, however, are strained between the inclusive rhetoric of public policy and practical reality: often, freedom of expression is guaranteed institutionally but is weakened by the gendered, racial, class-based, and displacement-related barriers that limit these women's presence and voice.

To address these obstacles, we propose an intersectional and processual approach: institutions must articulate deliberative procedures that take into account factors such as time availability, reproductive burdens, functional illiteracy, and minimum income, thereby creating both material and symbolic conditions for substantive participation. In this sense, education ceases to be a merely formal right and becomes a continuous practice of co-producing knowledge – where the school and the State share responsibility for ensuring that the protagonism of women is both visible and valued. This proposal aligns with the conception of educational democratization that transcends formal schooling and embraces its deliberative dimension, recognizing that social justice demands flexible, dialogical, and strategically emancipatory education for those who have historically been excluded from decision-making spaces.

4. Pedagogy of Otherness: Education as a Public Policy of Recognition for Displaced Women

In the Brazilian context, women have been affected by various processes of compulsory displacement – from environmental disasters (such as dam failures and floods) to resettlements caused by infrastructure projects. In such scenarios, education emerges not only as an instrument for the prevention of injustice but also for post-displacement reconstruction. From the perspective of Paulo Freire[20], education – as a

[20] Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of Autonomy: Necessary Knowledge for Educational Practice*, Paz & Terra, Rio de Janeiro, 2021.

constitutive dimension of the modern civilizational pact – assumes the status of a fundamental right and a strategic mechanism for social formation. Embedded within the sphere of State obligations linked to the public interest, its effectiveness does not rest solely on formal guarantees of access, but materializes through institutional arrangements, pedagogical devices, and social practices that mediate the recognition of the subject as a rights-bearing agent.

Education mobilizes processes of political subjectivation, producing individuals who not only access the State but also critically engage with it. The bond between education and citizenship lies in the fact that education enables individuals to understand their place in the world, to recognize rights, and to participate actively in social and political life. In Freire's[21] conception, human educability is grounded in the ontological condition of incompleteness. It is precisely by embracing this unfinished nature that individuals refuse mere adaptation and instead embark on a process of humanization – a lifelong ethical and political struggle for freedom, dignity, and social transformation. From this perspective, the right to education is not merely a formal entitlement, but a transformative praxis – one that fosters individual emancipation while advancing collective social change. Still within the Freirean framework, critical education becomes a "practice of freedom," capable of awakening oppressed groups to their condition and empowering them to fight for social transformation. In the case of displaced women, formal and informal educational programs may promote autonomy, professional empowerment, and psychological resilience, facilitating their social and economic reintegration. Equally important, the education of society at large – through a multicultural and human rights approach – can help dismantle stereotypes about who these women are, fostering a culture of otherness (respect for the Other).

The pedagogy of bell hooks[22], deeply influenced by Paulo Freire, shifts the focus of education from mere instruction to a profoundly political and affective act, wherein teaching becomes a form of insurgency against structures of domination. For hooks, to educate is to enact a radical gesture of welcoming the Other in her wholeness – body, memory, language, and experience – which requires recognizing that educational spaces are traversed by hierarchies of race, gender, class, and social location. In the context of displaced women, such pedagogy becomes even more urgent: it disrupts the paternalistic logic of "including" subjects previously defined as passive and seeks to build with them situated knowledge that legitimizes their agency and restores their belonging to the public sphere. However, such transformation demands that public institutions – including legal frameworks – treat emancipatory education not as an auxiliary policy, but as a foundational pillar of democratic governance and social justice.

In this regard, we invoke the necessity of a pedagogy of otherness. In this work, the expression refers to the process of re-signifying the relationships between center and

[21] Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of Autonomy: Necessary Knowledge for Educational Practice*, Paz & Terra, Rio de Janeiro, 2021.

[22] Hooks, bell, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Perspectiva, São Paulo, 2019.

margins, especially after traumatic displacement events. It involves rescuing the self-narratives and voices of displaced women. This reconstruction demands recognition in the sense proposed by Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth[23], that is, public acknowledgment of these women's identities, cultures, and hardships, alongside the just redistribution of resources and opportunities. Only by combining symbolic recognition and material reparation is it possible to confront historical exclusion. Reconstructed otherness implies that difference – of origin, culture, or trajectory – is a legitimate part of a plural national identity. In Brazil, this means valuing the experiences of Indigenous, rural, quilombola, riverside, international migrant, and other women who have been displaced – by incorporating their traditional knowledge, their demands, and their perspectives into public policy formulation.

Achieving truly inclusive justice requires more than the formal recognition of rights or the allocation of material resources: it requires an institutional redesign that is sensitive to the historicity of exclusions and the specific ways in which they are reproduced. When the State formulates public policies targeting displaced women, it cannot do so based on homogeneous categories that ignore the complexity of their experiences. The intersection of class, gender, ethnicity, territory, and displacement experience imposes the need for actions that integrate the recognition of diverse identities with the effective redistribution of dignified means of living. However, any redistributive effort that disregards the symbolic value of these women's narratives risks reiterating subalternity in new forms. Likewise, policies focused solely on symbolic recognition – without structural reparative measures – tend to produce superficial inclusion and frustrate expectations.

In this regard, the fundamental right to education, enshrined in Article 6 of the 1988 Federal Constitution of Brazil, must be understood as a structuring condition of democratic citizenship. Education, as a social, human, and political practice, constitutes a symbolic and material space of historical reparation for collective subjects who have experienced the denial of their most elementary rights. Among these subjects, women displaced by large-scale development projects, socio-environmental disasters, or exclusionary urban dynamics occupy a central position – not only due to their numbers, but especially due to the intersectional complexity of the violence they face. As Paulo Freire[24] has warned, emancipatory education requires a dialogical and critical horizon – one that can break the culture of silence and create the conditions for oppressed subjects to recognize themselves as producers of knowledge and of the world. By envisioning education also as a practice of freedom, Freire[25] places the educational act at the core of the political struggle for recognition, personhood, affirmation, and

[23] Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, London, Verso, 2004.

[24] Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of Autonomy: Necessary Knowledge for Educational Practice*, Paz & Terra, Rio de Janeiro, 2021.

[25] Freire, Paulo, *Education as the Practice of Freedom*, Paz & Terra, Rio de Janeiro, 2003.

the reconstruction of public space. The denial of the right to education in contexts of forced displacement can be understood as a refusal of the Other's presence in the shared space of politics and communal life. Reparative education requires the institutional reconstruction of public space as a territory of otherness, attentive listening, and shared meaning.

The concept of public space, as employed here, goes beyond the idea of a neutral and abstract arena of deliberation. Rather, it refers to the concrete configuration of relationships between subjects and institutions, within which it is decided who is heard, who is visible, and who is recognized as a rights-bearing subject. The silencing of displaced women reveals the precarization of their presence in public space – understood as the *locus* in which free subjects can gather, deliberate, and participate in shaping the shared meaning of social life.

According to Jürgen Habermas[26], the public sphere is constituted by an intersubjective space in which opinion is formed through rational argument and free debate, ensuring the democratic circulation of demands and enabling social control over political power. When this sphere becomes inaccessible to certain groups – such as poor, racialized women affected by large-scale development projects – the very promise of democracy is hollowed out. In the absence of institutional mediation that guarantees the right to appear and to participate, territorial displacement turns into political displacement. In this context, education assumes a fundamental role: it becomes the path through which the possibility of public reappearance is reopened, the critical elaboration of experience is made possible, and bonds with the common world are reconstituted. The right to education, as a form of reparation, thus emerges as a demand for democratic reintegration.

5. Public Policies as Institutional Mediation: Displaced Women and the Crisis of the Democratic Project

The theory of public policy, when approached in its critical dimension rather than as a merely instrumental field, reveals that the design and execution of State programs involve normative and symbolic disputes over which lives matter, and which trajectories are legitimized as part of the societal project. In this context, educational policies aimed at displaced women cannot be analyzed solely through the lens of coverage rates or administrative efficiency, but rather as a field of struggle for redistribution and recognition[27]. This proposition invites the application of the meso-institutional framework developed by Maria Paula Dallari Bucci[28], which conceives public policy as a juridical-institutional phenomenon. In her view, State action becomes effective through institutional

[26] Habermas, Jürgen, *A New Structural Change of the Public Sphere and Deliberative Politics*, Editora Unesp, São Paulo, 2023.

[27] Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, London, Verso, 2004.

[28] Bucci, Maria Paula Dallari, *Foundations for a Legal Theory of Public Policies*, Saraiva Educação, São Paulo, 2021.

arrangements and normative flows that mediate and structure the relationship between State and society. It is precisely these meso-institutions – such as councils, public universities, public defenders' offices, and human rights commissions – that have the capacity to confer normative and political density to educational reparation strategies. However, in the Brazilian context, what is often observed is the fragmentation and weak intersectoral articulation of institutional arrangements targeting women in situations of forced displacement – arrangements that rarely integrate educational dimensions into their reparation agendas.

Modernity projected itself as the era of emancipatory reason, of technical mastery over nature, and of the unwavering belief in progress. Yet, embedded within this civilizational ideal is a logic of erasure, in which the imperative of the "new" legitimizes the displacement, degradation, or destruction of existing forms of life and knowledge. However, this civilizational promise is embedded with a logic of substitution and obsolescence, wherein the "new" is invoked to justify the destruction of what already exists. Under this rationale, large-scale development projects have transformed lived territories into functional spaces for capital, systematically erasing ways of life that deviate from the developmentalist norm. The forced displacement of populations, in this context, is not an accident but rather an expression of the modern rationality that transforms subjects into operational externalities and turns dissent into silence.

The woman displaced by development projects embodies a structural fissure within the modern promise of progress: her existence destabilizes the narrative that development is a neutral, linear, and inclusive process. The displacement imposed on this woman is not merely physical; it constitutes the forced revocation of her condition of belonging to the common world – understood as the shared space of recognition, memory, and action. Her experience exposes the authoritarian core of certain governance models, in which specialized knowledge operates as a deliberate tool of exclusion against human plurality. The absence of public deliberation regarding the impacts of these projects, the erasure of collective identities, and the normalization of loss as an inevitable cost of progress all express a shift from the rule of law to the rule of numbers.

Understanding public policies as institutional mediations between the State and fundamental rights – as proposed by Bucci[29] – allows the analysis to move beyond their merely instrumental dimension. Instead of treating policies as mere technical instruments of administrative management, they are recognized as arenas of contestation over the meaning and scope of citizenship. From this conceptual perspective, the forced displacement of women by development projects reveals a structure that reproduces inequality and hierarchizes subjects. When women are dispossessed of their territories without meaningful participation in decision-making processes, they are also removed from the public sphere of recognition. And when no institutional framework exists to convert the experience of loss into symbolic and material reparation, politics abdicates its democratic and constitutional vocation.

[29] Bucci, Maria Paula Dallari, *Foundations for a Legal Theory of Public Policies*, Saraiva Educação, São Paulo, 2021.

The absence of educational policy aimed at the reconstruction of these women's citizenship represents, in this regard, a deficit of public-social justice. The right to education – understood not as a service but as an institutional practice of restitution of the common world – thus becomes the reparative axis capable of reconstituting otherness and re-inscribing these subjects within the democratic pact.

Reading Mary Wollstonecraft[30] proves essential to understanding the historical tensions between reason and gender inequality, and the instrumental and dignifying power of education. As Dantas and Lima Jr.[31] note, the British author challenges the foundations of modern rationality by demanding that the human rights proclaimed as universal be truly extended to women – primarily through access to education as the basis of freedom and moral autonomy. In her critical engagement with Rousseau's model of citizenship, Wollstonecraft denounces how the exclusion of women from public and educational spheres compromises the very ideals of freedom and equality upheld by the modern project. The gap between proclaimed rights and structurally excluded subjects is a defining contradiction of Western modernity – one that continues in the institutional disregard for women displaced by developmentalist logics, whose bodies, territories, and memories are persistently marginalized within the State's horizon of reparative justice.

In Brazil, the voice of Nísia Floresta[32] – a 19th-century educator from the state of Rio Grande do Norte and a protofeminist thinker – had already denounced the injustice of a legal and moral system that relegated women to silence and guardianship. In *Direitos das Mulheres e Injustiça dos Homens* (1832)[33], Nísia[34] proposes education as a condition for freedom and citizenship, envisioning it as a public space for critical formation and emancipation. Her writing, though framed by the limits of her time, already anticipated the urgency of ethical and political reparation for women subalternized by patriarchal, colonial, and elitist power structures. Integrating her voice into the present debate is to acknowledge that Southern epistemologies have a long memory, and that reparation also requires excavating the silenced archives of history.

Gloria Anzaldúa[35], in turn, by proposing the notion of "mestiza consciousness" as a way of existing within identity borderlands, denounces the epistemic violence of a

[30] Wollstonecraft, Mary, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Edipro/Boitempo, São Paulo, 2016.

[31] Dantas, Luana Cristina da Silva; Lima Junior, Oswaldo Pereira de, "Female Emancipation in the Enlightenment: A Critical Dialogue between Wollstonecraft and Rousseau", *Juris Poiesis*, Vol. 23, No. 33, pp. 164-188, April 30, 2020.

[32] Floresta, Nísia, *Humanitarian Treatise: Advice to My Daughter*, Via Leitura, São Paulo, 2024.

[33] The book *Direitos das Mulheres e Injustiça dos Homens* (1832), by Nísia Floresta, was inspired by the feminist classic *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), by Mary Wollstonecraft. Although Floresta drew on Wollstonecraft to construct her project of female emancipation, she carried out a culturally and contextually situated translation – integrating critiques of patriarchy, the limited education afforded to women, and the institutional inequality that marked nineteenth-century Brazil.

[34] Nísia Floresta, *Direitos das mulheres e injustiça dos homens* [*Women's Rights and Men's Injustice*], São Paulo, Editora Lebooks, 2024.

[35] Anzaldúa, Gloria Evangelina, "The Consciousness of the Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness", *Revista Estudos Feministas*, 2005.

world that demands coherence, purity, and centrality. The displaced woman, in this context, is also the one who lives the constant tension between multiple belongings and systematic exclusions – migrant, Black, poor, Indigenous, mother, dispossessed. Otherness, in her case, is both ontological exteriority and political rupture from hegemonic modes of world-making.

To envision public educational policies as devices of reparation requires an epistemological shift: it is a matter of recognizing the centrality of listening, the reconstruction of community bonds, and the collective production of knowledge as integral parts of the reparative process. For displaced women, education cannot be conceived as an end in itself, but as the means through which fragmented identities, silenced self-narratives, and interdicted presences in the public sphere are reconstituted. Within this horizon, it becomes urgent to construct institutional arrangements that are democratic, intersectional, and territorially grounded – arrangements that articulate the right to education with the imperative of justice.

The conception of education as a process of historical reparation finds resonance in the philosophical reflections of Virginia Woolf[36]. In analyzing the structural exclusion of women from the domain of knowledge production, Woolf identifies the lack of material and symbolic conditions as a foundational pillar of women's epistemic marginalization. She denounces the social structure that denied women access to the public space of reason, writing, and creation. The juridical and institutional vindication of women's dignified existence aligns directly with the contemporary conception of the right to education as a constitutive dimension of citizenship. When considering the woman displaced by predatory development projects, it becomes clear that her deprivation is not only territorial but also epistemic and civilizational: the spaces of self-construction, of community-based knowledge, and of discursive belonging are violated. Reparative education, in this sense, must go beyond the formal provision of seats or statistical inclusion: it must be conceived as an instrument of reconstructing otherness – that is, of the capacity to be recognized and recognizable within a shared world.

6. Legal Frameworks and Collective Mobilization: The Role of Institutions and Movements in Educational Reparation

In the historical absence of a comprehensive framework for internally displaced persons, responses have been predominantly palliative, fragmented, and insufficient – failing to address the structural nature of displacement. A notable advancement was the recent enactment of the National Policy on the Rights of Populations Affected by Dams (Law No. 14,755/2023)[37], which formally recognizes affected communities and

[36] Woolf, Virginia, *Women Must Cry or Unite Against War: Patriarchy and Militarism*, Autêntica, Belo Horizonte, 2019.

[37] *Brazil, Law No. 14.755 of 15 December 2023, establishing the National Policy on the Rights of Populations Affected by Dams (PNAB), defining the rights of affected populations (PAB), creating the Program of Rights for*

establishes guidelines for public policy on the subject. Nonetheless, the challenge remains of moving beyond legislation and effectively implementing actions capable of transforming the lives of displaced women. Experience shows that legal frameworks only materialize through social pressure and proper resource allocation.

In this respect, the role of women's movements has been fundamental. These movements have acted as agents of popular education and as catalysts for public accountability. The Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB)[38], for example, has for years promoted workshops, assemblies, and projects specifically aimed at strengthening the agency and leadership of women in displaced communities.

However, the lack of integrated public policies becomes evident when one examines the matter across different sectors. Often, it falls to non-governmental organizations and international agencies to fill this institutional void. This reality reveals that an intersectoral and intersectional perspective has yet to fully permeate the design of government policies. The demands of displaced women must be heard and translated into concrete actions by the State. UN Women[39] and other entities have strongly recommended the inclusion of women in decision-making spaces related to reparation and post-displacement reconstruction, emphasizing that their voices and lived experiences should be at the center of public policy formulation. Without such participation, policies are likely to fail in addressing real needs and in achieving justice in a substantive manner.

The guiding thread of these discussions is the recognition of the dignity of these women and their communities – not only through the restoration of material goods, but through their reinstatement as full subjects of rights in society. Education, in turn, intersects with all these axes: it is an instrument for raising awareness among authorities and the public about the rights of these populations; it is a path to empowerment for the women themselves, offering training, self-esteem, and capacity-building; and it is a preventive element, ensuring that future policies are designed based on principles of equality and respect for difference.

In summary, the critical analysis reveals a challenging scenario, yet one with signs of transformation in progress. The notion of educability in its broadest sense transcends the limited view of formal learning and is rooted in the ethical and political

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Populations Affected by Dams (PDPAB), and establishing rules on the social responsibility of developers. Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/lei/l14755.htm. Accessed on: 19 July 2025.

[38] Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB), founded in 1980, is a Brazilian nationwide grassroots social movement that organizes individuals affected by dam construction to defend their rights, demand just compensation, and promote an alternative, people-centered energy project. Available at: https://mab.org.br/. Accessed on: 19 July 2025.

[39] UN Women Brazil (UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment), operating in Brazil since 2011, works with the federal and sub-national governments, Congress, and the Judiciary to promote women's rights through initiatives in gender-responsive governance, economic empowerment, and the elimination of violence against women and girls. Available at: https://www.onumulheres.org.br/. Accessed on: 19 July 2025.

recognition that all individuals are capable of learning, teaching, and transforming their realities through their experiences, knowledge, and contexts.

In the field of public policy aimed at vulnerable populations – such as women displaced by socio-environmental disasters – this concept operates as a structuring principle of emancipatory interventions: it is grounded in the assumption that these women are not mere recipients of policies, but epistemic and political agents entitled to full recognition of their formative capacities. Understood this way, educability fosters processes of reconstruction of social bonds, reinvention of dignity, and citizen participation. By affirming the educability of these women, a conception of social justice is projected – one that does not dissociate material rights from cultural and political recognition.

Lastly, attention must be drawn to the social mobilization of displaced women themselves, who have produced knowledge and exerted pressure for change. Their protagonism in the struggle – sewing rights together, building networks of solidarity and advocacy – is, in and of itself, an educational and reparative process. The reconstruction of otherness thus requires a convergence of efforts: integrated public policies, grounded in reparative justice and fueled by transformative education – capable not only of redressing past harm, but of repositioning these women at the center of constructing a shared future.

7. Conclusions

Based on the theoretical investigation conducted throughout this article, it can be concluded that emancipatory education and reparative justice are complementary pillars in the promotion of effective public policies for displaced women in Brazil. Education, understood in its broad sense (formal, non-formal, and popular), is essential for empowering these women, raising their awareness of rights, and sensitizing society to the need to include them without prejudice.

It was observed that the situation of displaced women is marked by the intersectionality of oppressions: gender, race, class, and territoriality combine to intensify vulnerability. For this very reason, responses must be intersectional. Reconstructed otherness implies that the "Other" – be she a displaced woman, a refugee, or a removed quilombola – is recognized in her full dignity. Such symbolic reconstruction depends on concrete actions: the inclusion of human rights and diversity content in school curricula; respect for these women's cultural traditions in resettlement programs; the creation of dialogical spaces where they can tell their stories; and the implementation of formal mechanisms for consultation and participation in the development of post-displacement policies.

The analysis developed throughout this article demonstrated that the right to education, when understood in its symbolic, political, and emancipatory depth,

constitutes a structural axis of reparative justice for women displaced by large-scale development projects in Brazil. More than a governmental service or a formally enshrined social right, education is revealed here as an intersubjective practice of reconstructing otherness, restoring citizenship, and repairing the communal, territorial, and epistemic bonds fractured by processes of compulsory displacement.

Legal and institutional structures continue, to a large extent, to treat displaced women as passive recipients of public policies. This scenario signals a structural justice deficit: the absence of a deliberative, democratic, and intersectional model capable of ensuring active listening, belonging, and knowledge production by these women as preconditions for any public policy responsive to their reality.

In this sense, the right to education functions as an instrumental mechanism of substantive citizenship. Drawing from authors such as Paulo Freire, bell hooks, Virginia Woolf, Emmanuel Lévinas, Paul Ricoeur, Gloria Anzaldúa, Neferti Tadiar, and Judith Butler, this study understands education as a language through which the displaced subject reinscribes her existence into the common world, reclaims denied dignity, and transforms pain into political narrative. Emancipatory education is not limited to formal schooling – it encompasses cultural practices, listening processes, the construction of collective spaces, and the formulation of co-managed policies with the women affected. The pedagogy of otherness advocated here, far from being a rhetorical category, presents itself as an operative ethical-political principle, capable of reorganizing the meanings of reparation in terms of cognitive justice, recognition, and redistribution.

The research further revealed that the existing legal instrumentssuch as – the 1988 Federal Constitution, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education[40], and the recent Law No. 14,755/2023 (which institutes the National Policy on the Rights of Populations Affected by Dams) – while representing significant normative advancements, have not, by themselves, succeeded in producing effective responses to the realities of displaced women. The efficacy of such norms depends on the construction of institutional arrangements that ensure material conditions for participation, respect for territorial diversity and popular knowledge, and the ability to articulate education, housing, income, health, and memory in integrated strategies.

The centrality of institutions is particularly decisive in this context, as they constitute listening and mediation spaces with political and epistemic density. The inclusion of intersectionality as both a methodological and normative principle proved essential for shaping appropriate reparative policies. Displaced women are not a homogeneous group: their experiences are traversed by markers of race, class, age, ethnicity, disability, motherhood, and diverse territorial attachments. At the close of this reflection, it becomes evident that education, understood as an intersectional

[40] Brazil, Law No. 9.394 of December 20, 1996, establishing the National Education Guidelines and Framework (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional – LDBEN), which defines general principles, rights, and duties for primary, secondary, and higher education in Brazil. Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/Leis/L9394.htm. Accessed on: 19 July 2025.

public policy and a reparative justice device, holds the potential to convert compulsory displacement into democratic reintegration, provided it is tied to an institutional project committed to listening, equity, and historical reparation. For this to be realized, it is necessary to challenge the developmentalist rationality that underpins large-scale ventures and to question the model of progress that subordinates territories and bodies to market logic. Only through the reconstruction of listening mechanisms, the redistribution of deliberative power, and the recognition of displaced women as world-making and knowledge-producing agents will it be possible to rebuild otherness as a founding principle of a substantive democratic State.

In conclusion, it is worth emphasizing that the struggle for reparative justice and liberating education for displaced women does not benefit only this specific group – it strengthens democracy itself and enhances social cohesion. By repairing and including those who have been historically excluded, we build a more just society – one that learns from the mistakes of the past and values human plurality. Otherness, far from being a barrier, becomes a foundation for collective construction in which every individual has a voice, a right, and a rightful place.