



PRACTICE INSIGHTS

Science Communication and Intersectionality: Quilombola Women and the Dialogue on Inequality and Resistance

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Abstract

This article adopts the perspective of inclusive science communication by approaching the interface between science, technology, intersectionality, and the experience of female Quilombola leaders in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Quilombolas are an ethnic-racial group of Black origins associated with oppression and resistance over the centuries, particularly against slavery during the colonial period. The primary strategy for engaging these women with science was the web series Meios de Prosa (Means of Prose), developed across three seasons. Twelve women, aged between 21 and 73, shared their experiences of early labor, racism, community leadership, and resistance in the context of their access, use, and appropriation of information and communication technologies (ICT).

Keywords

Social inclusion; Diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in science communication; Science communication and social justice

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1 - Introduction

Social transformations resulting from political struggles have impacted science, as society is the context in which scientific advancements take place [Kruschick & Schoch, 2023]. Issues related to gender, ethnic-racial belonging, territory, and other markers of difference have been mobilized under the umbrella of inclusion and diversity. In the field of science communication, for example, there was a 63% increase in the frequency of topics related to equity, diversity, and inclusion from 1980 to 2020 [Judd & McKinnon, 2021].

In this paper, we report on the experience of communicating science with 12 Quilombola women, aged between 21 and 73, living in the Minas Gerais state, Brazil, as the protagonists of the web series *Meios de Prosa* (Means of Prose). The perspective of intersectionality guided this audiovisual production, allowing us to address the specificities of these women's experiences in different contexts. We aimed not to perpetuate inequalities typically observed in research and practices within this field. Our central research question was: how do the life experiences and communicative practices of Quilombola women, as portrayed in the web series *Meios de Prosa*, contribute to expanding the understanding of science communication from an intersectional perspective?

The audiovisual production was guided by intersectionality, a concept rooted in Black feminism that highlights how overlapping systems of oppression — such as gender, race, class, and territory — shape the experiences of Black women [Crenshaw, 2002; Collins & Bilge, 2021]. Black Brazilian intellectuals such as Beatriz B. Nascimento [2021], Lélia Gonzalez [2020], and Luiza Barrios [1995] have further developed this framework to expose the structural inequalities faced by Black women in Brazil and to illuminate the social and political significance of their daily resistance.

Even though intersectionality has been used in some works on science communication [Canfield et al., 2020; Hotez et al., 2021; Valdez-Ward et al., 2023], the correlation between these two fields is still incipient. Searching on scientific platforms (Scopus, Scielo, and *Periódicos Capes*) using the keywords “science AND communication AND intersectionality” initially yielded 205 results, but this was narrowed down to eight articles of relevance. These articles indicate two axes of activity supporting diversity that need concurrent advancement to reduce inequalities. First, the scientific community still must fight against oppression within academia itself, as different social groups (women, Blacks, LGBTQ+, and others) are still marginalized and do not have the same prestige as the dominant groups. The scientific community must be a plural and inclusive space, as advocated by ReclaimingSTEM [Valdez-Ward et al., 2023]. It is also essential to advance this internal axis of diversity in science communication beyond White-centered perspectives, as Vyas et al. [2022] argues.

The literature search yielded a second axis in need of greater research, one THAT reflects external considerations of diversity. Science communication can reach diverse audiences; however, as Canfield et al. [2020] point out, this depends on eliminating the deficit mentality. It is also necessary to use the media resources available to engage in dialogue with the communities. In doing so, community members can become active participants in the decision-making processes, including the selection of formats and creation of content for podcasts, documentaries, films, and other media [Roberson & Orthia, 2021; Hotez et al., 2021].

Based on the literature, the internal axis proposes a transformation within the scientific community focused on combating oppression and respecting diversity, while the external

axis points to the need to understand audience diversity and establish better dialogue with communities. External diversity relates to the themes, formats, and practices of science communication. It involves rejecting deficit-based models [Canfield et al., 2020] and embracing participatory approaches that empower marginalized communities to shape the narrative. Authors such as Roberson and Orthia [2021] and Hotez et al. [2021] stress the importance of co-creating media formats (from podcasts to documentaries) in ways that democratize both content and authorship.

The work of Reznik and Massarani [2022] is particularly noteworthy within this critical debate. They advocate for putting science communication at the service of gender equality, arguing that a patriarchal and sexist scientific system alienates women and undermines their contributions. These authors emphasize the need for intersectional feminist approaches not only to analyze exclusion but also to enact concrete transformations in how science is communicated and by whom. They propose that science communication should function as a field for political engagement, aligning with broader struggles for social justice and knowledge equity.

Our project advances this agenda across both internal (diverse research team) and external (active community dialogue) diversity axes, as emphasized in the literature.

It is coordinated by a Black woman researcher and carried out by a predominantly female team, reflecting a deliberate commitment to challenging traditional power dynamics in knowledge production. By positioning Quilombola women as protagonists and knowledge-holders, the project affirms their voices, territories, and lived experiences as essential to building more inclusive and equitable models of science communication.

We followed the principles of the Inclusive Science Communication (ISC) framework, which emphasizes the integration of social differences and calls for diverse strategies to foster genuine sociocultural, ethical, and inclusive transformation [Rasekoala, 2019]. This is a complex endeavor, particularly in Latin America, a region often described as a “cultural melting pot” due to its diverse origins. ISC professionals must confront social inequalities, reach diverse audiences, and face institutional opposition to science and the spread of misinformation, as seen in Brazil [Aguirre-Rios & de Regules, 2022].

Developing science communication products with inclusivity as a core value is challenging. However, Sobane et al. [2023] argue that this approach fosters public engagement and encourages broader participation in science. Using multiple tools and communication channels can also facilitate reaching different audiences. In Sub-Saharan Africa, researchers have noticed that inclusive practices often face difficulties, such as language barriers, the absence of gender equity policies, and insufficient support for women in science.

Promoting inclusive science communication requires more than adopting new formats or language; it demands dismantling the power structures within the scientific community that perpetuate inequality and marginalize non-dominant identities [Valdez-Ward et al., 2023]. Peer dialogue and respect for difference can drive important editorial changes in academic journals, helping to challenge historic structures of exclusion, including White supremacy, racism, and gender discrimination [Vyas et al., 2022].

Our research followed the principles of inclusive science communication by developing an audiovisual product that featured the testimonies of 12 Quilombola women leaders from

Minas Gerais, Brazil. Their stories illustrate that intersecting social markers not only create obstacles but also shape unique forms of resistance. As Montes et al. [2025] point out, videos can enhance emotional engagement and create strong connections between science and the public. The women's narratives are presented across three seasons of the web series *Meios de Prosa*. The episodes focus on two main issues: (1) how social markers such as gender, territory, race, and class influence their daily lives and access to, as well as the appropriation of, information and communication technologies (ICTs); and (2) how they confront structural inequality and organize themselves to advocate for their communities. The episodes were published between March and July 2024 on the Instagram and YouTube accounts of the research group *Meios — Comunicação, Relações Raciais e Gênero* (Means — Communication, Racial Relationships, and Gender).

2 - Context

The term quilombo in Brazil refers to autonomous Black communities and groupings formed by fugitive enslaved people [Maria da Silva & Souza, 2022]. Across the Americas, various terms are used to describe similar rural black communities, such as *palenques* (Colombia, Cuba, and Ecuador), *cimarrones* (Uruguay, Cuba, and other parts of Hispanic America), *marrons* (Jamaica, Suriname), *Cumbes* (Venezuela), and *garífunas* (Honduras and Guatemala) [F. S. Gomes, 2015].

Black resistance was expressed through the formation of quilombos. According to Gomes [2005], quilombos were established by enslaved Black people either as a direct act of protest — through small groups of fugitives who carried out raids on farms or nearby villages — or as an effort to build autonomous communities. These communities often practiced subsistence agriculture and merged into the local economy, playing a crucial role in shaping the Black peasantry in Brazil.

Quilombos are complex social phenomena. However, their social perception is often biased, reducing their significance to historical acts of resistance while overlooking their existence as “alternative social systems organized by Black people” [B. Nascimento, 2021, p. 109]. The most prominent example in Brazil is the Quilombo of Palmares, located in Pernambuco (northeast region), which resisted the oppressive system for nearly a century. Palmares has become a symbol of Black resistance in the ongoing struggle for freedom and rights [A. Nascimento, 1980; Cristina & Santana, 2012; Gonzalez, 2020; B. Nascimento, 2021].

The Brazilian State recognizes Quilombolas as ethnic-racial groups with identities linked to Black heritage, known for their strong bond with their land and a history marked by the resistance and oppression faced during slavery [Brasil, Casa Civil, 2003]. Although the official term “reminiscent communities from quilombos” originates from Brazil's colonial era, quilombos extend beyond the past. They are living, dynamic processes that embody the collective effort to rescue dignity, freedom to express culture, religiosity, and appreciation for ancestry [B. Nascimento, 2021; Souza, 2016; Maria da Silva & Souza, 2022; Santos & Correa, 2013].

In 21st-century Brazil, Quilombola resistance addresses historical issues concerning land and life rights while embracing new vital agendas, such as the need for recognition in official data. This particular request was made by the National Coordination of Black Rural Quilombola Communities (*Coordenação Nacional de Articulação das Comunidades Negras*

Rurais Quilombolas, Conaq). In 2022, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*, IBGE) carried out a specific survey on Quilombola communities for the first time in 150 years [Crisóstomo et al., 2022]. The census revealed 1.3 million Quilombolas in Brazil, representing 0.65% of the national population. Most of these communities are located in rural regions and can be found in nearly one-third of Brazil's 5,565 municipalities [Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2023].

This practice insight focuses on Quilombola communities in Minas Gerais (MG), a state whose history is marked by the significant presence of enslaved Black people who served as labor force in gold mining, agriculture, tobacco cultivation, and other economic activities. At the time, Minas Gerais accounted for 15% of Brazil's enslaved population [Lamas, 2006]. According to the most recent demographic census [Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2023], the country's population is predominantly Black, representing 58% (12 million out of 20.5 million inhabitants). Quilombolas make up 0.66% of the population, or approximately 135,000 individuals, placing Minas Gerais as the state with the third-largest concentration of this social group, after Bahia and Maranhão — both in the Northeast region. Although Minas Gerais is home to 392 officially recognized Quilombola communities, only 3.38% of the Quilombola population in the state (approximately 4,576 people) live in demarcated territories [Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2023].

In Quilombola territories, inequality is manifested by the limited access to essential services, such as sanitation, paved roads, and electricity, as well as through digital exclusion [Dealdina, 2020; Ribeiro Caetano et al., 2022]. In this vulnerable context, women act as essential local leaders. They are vital in promoting health, offering social assistance, sparking political discussions, and suggesting solutions to the challenges faced by their community [Dealdina, 2020]. These female leaders advocate for Quilombola issues to public authorities and create networks of solidarity and support [Crisóstomo et al., 2022].

The web series analyzed in this article was part of a funded scholarship aimed explicitly at scientific dissemination support (SDS) for the research project “From quilombos to favelas: Black women, intersectionality, and access to information and communication technologies,” funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (*Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico*, CNPq) through the network modality (2022 pro-humanities call for proposals). The web series was called *Meios de Prosa* and was conceived in three seasons: 1) *Yalodè* — a Yoruba word meaning “She Who Leads.”; 2) *Íròkó* — ancestry and resistance; and 3) *Agbegbe* — community and territory. Each season includes four episodes, each featuring the testimony of a Quilombola woman leader. The research group *Meios* published the web series on its social media platforms between March and July 2024.

3 - Methods

The research adopted a qualitative approach involving 41 Quilombola women, who were leaders in 35 communities located in 28 municipalities within the regions of Zona da Mata Mineira, Central, Campos das Vertentes, Norte, Vale do Jequitinhonha e Mucuri.

The first stage of the research applied a snowball methodology [Vinuto, 2014; Goodman, 1961], which uses a network of references to identify the interlocutors. This non-probabilistic

sampling method relies on key informants to identify individuals who match the research profile.

We surveyed the sociodemographic profile (age, gender, marital status, schooling, income, etc.), data on ICT in the territories, and individual questions regarding access to and appropriation of these technologies. After collecting the responses of 41 women between April and October 2023, we moved on to the second stage of the research, which involved conducting in-depth interviews with 17 women. They were asked about their leadership roles, inequalities affecting Quilombola territories, gender racism, and access to and appropriation of information and communication technologies.

The interviews served two purposes: gathering research data and engaging others in science communication by featuring the interviewees in the web series. For this reason, the participants signed a form consenting to the filming.

This study complied with national ethical standards. It was registered on *Plataforma Brasil*, a national and unified database for human research under the Research Ethics Committee (*Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa*, CEP) system. The Certificate of Submission for Ethical Appraisal (*Certificado de Apresentação de Apreciação Ética*, CAAE) number 68785223.6.0000.5153 was assigned, and the favorable opinion number 6.054.960 was received to conduct the research.

The data was manually processed using thematic content analysis, following the stages proposed by Bardin [1977]: (1) pre-analysis and exploration — the in-depth interviews were transcribed to get a better understanding of their content; (2) thematic coding — the data were initially thematically classified based on readings, and key concepts were identified; and finally, (3) thematic category construction — broader thematic categories were then developed from the identified codes.

4 - Results

In 2023, when the interviews were conducted, the web series participants were aged between 21 and 73 (see Table 1). Three interviewees were categorized as young (ages 21–29), three fell into the elderly category (ages 63–73), and six were classified as adults (ages 33–49). Women often join the Quilombola movement early in life and remain active members until old age, sharing experiences and motivating younger women to participate. In the interviews, this relationship was evidenced by collective leadership, respect for the elders, and recognition of intergenerational knowledge.

Overall, the older women had fewer years of formal schooling. One adult and two elderly women did not finish elementary school, while two adults and one senior completed high school. Among the young and adult participants, only three held a higher education degree, while three others were enrolled in a course at a federal university at the time.

The leaders had occupations that include general and cleaning service provider (3), rural worker (1), community health agent (1), project coordinator (1), and teacher (1). Additionally, there were university students (3) and retirees (2). The majority (6) had a monthly income equivalent to one minimum salary.¹ Three interviewees said they benefited from the *Bolsa*

1. The minimum wage is the lowest legal monthly income that a formal worker in Brazil is entitled to receive. Its value is adjusted annually by the Federal Government and serves as a basic reference for wages and social benefits.

Table 1. Participant's profile. Caption: each color represents a web series' season. Source: research data.

Name	Age	Quilombola Community	City
Maria Luiza Marcelino	66	Namastê	Ubá
Efigênia de Castro da Gama Catarino	73	de Fatima	Ponte Nova
Carina Aparecida Veridiano	33	Buieie	Viçosa
Patrícia Diniz Moreira Alves	44	Nossa Senhora do Rosário de Justinópolis	Ribeirão das Neves
Liliane Laine dos Santos Silva	25	Córrego do Meio	Paula Cândido
Nivalda de Fátima Pereira	63	Colônia do Paiol	Bias Fortes
Daiane Cristina de Paula Estanislau	34	Vila Santa Efigênia and surroundings	Mariana
Fânia Izabel da Silva	37	São Pedro da Carapuça	São Tiago
Gracielly Naiara Silva Veloso	32	Arturos	Contagem
Dirciana Aparecida Teodoro Melo	29	Santo Antônio do Morro Grande	Ressaquinha
Aparecida Natalina Martins de Souza	49	Coelhas	Rio Pomba
Ana Caroline Daniela Dias	21	São Sebastião da Boa vista – Corujas	Santos Dummont

Família Program, a federal anti-poverty initiative designed to support families with a per capita monthly income below R\$218 (about \$43.60).

The income data reveal that having a higher education degree has not led to a better income. Two of the three participants in this situation earned up to two minimum salaries, while the third received between two and three. This is anchored in racism, as it “normalizes the overexploitation of labor, [...] which can be illustrated by the typical case of a worker who is unable to support their family on their salary or does so with great difficulty, regardless of the number of hours they work.” [Almeida, 2019, p. 172].

The web series was called *Meios de Prosa* in allusion to the name of the research group *Meios — Comunicação, Relações Raciais e Gênero*, and the word “*prosa*”, which is very common in the local vernacular to refer to a friendly, informal conversation or a person who likes to chat a lot (“*prosear*”). We chose Yoruba words for the season titles to reference the heritage that defines the Quilombola identity and highlight the importance of female leaders within these communities.

Meios de Prosa premiered in March 2024 with the season *Yalodè* or *Ìrókò*, meaning ancestry and resistance, was released in May, followed by *Agbegbe*, which translates to community bond, in July. A promotional piece was created for each season (see Figure 1), and the episodes were released weekly on Fridays, accompanied by a teaser video featuring the participants. At the start of the week, we ran another promotion to announce the episode.



Figure 1. Promo pieces for the three seasons of the web series *Meios de Prosa*. Source: archive group *Meios*.

Although the initial plan was to separate themes into different seasons, the narratives revealed overlapping experiences related to community, leadership, labor, inequality, racism, and resistance. Therefore, the analysis is presented in five thematic categories: education; work; ancestry and leadership; information and communication technologies (ICTs); and resistance, struggle, and dreams.

4.1 ■ Education

The social marker race strongly influenced the educational background of the participants. Nearly all of them state that they have experienced profound racism since early childhood, recalling times when they were labeled (and judged) as “Quilombolas” in primary schools outside their communities. Ana Carolina Dias (21) claims that she noticed her sixth-grade teacher treated her very differently, especially compared to her White classmates.

Besides overt discrimination, as Ana Carolina Dias noted, another striking element in these women’s education was the devaluation of Black history and culture. In this regard, Liliane Silva (25) emphasizes, “They never discussed this topic [the contributions of the Black community to the nation’s development], that we are Black and our history is beautiful. That education was not intended to support our growth. They did not encourage us to have dreams.” The social marker of race seems to be one of the primary constraints on the empowerment of these women. This issue is enhanced by ethnic bias, which varies further from imposed social standards due to cultural backgrounds.

Despite the often-unwelcoming school environment, the testimonies suggest that education can serve as a pathway for emancipation and enhance the appreciation of Black ancestry,

especially in institutions focused on rural communities. Four participants emphasized that education was crucial for them to assume community leadership roles. They highlighted the significance of the undergraduate course on Rural Education² and the Family Agricultural School Paulo Freire, which allowed them to engage with subjects that, in their words, “made us question and reflect on ourselves, deepen the understanding of our communities, our experiences, and our organizations, and encouraged us to explore our territory further” The six participants in the Rural Education course believe that their higher education journey was vital for enhancing their ethnic-racial awareness and appreciation. It is worth noting that this experience was primarily made possible due to the affirmative policies enacted by the federal government.

4.2 ■ Work

The women interviewed, particularly the adults and the elderly, recounted their experiences of working from a young age and the exploitation faced by other community members. They portrayed domestic work as exploitative and degrading, comparing the employer-employee dynamic to historical slavery. This relationship typically occurs in the private sphere, subjecting the subordinate class to reproductive work [Carvalho, 2023].

At 33, Carina Aparecida Veridiano has worked from a young age. Her diverse experience includes roles as a housekeeper, coffee planter and harvester, and street sweeper. She is a community leader and was studying to get a degree in Rural Education at the Federal University of Viçosa (*Universidade Federal de Viçosa, UFV*). She mentions that most local families source their income outside the community, and most women work as housekeepers. However, their resistance strategy for the future is to expand their activities to family farming: “We are working so that more women can produce food without poison, so they can get an income from their backyards and have time to look after their children, without wearing themselves out in another family’s home [domestic work], a service that only exploits them” (Carina Aparecida Veridiano).

The elderly Maria Luiza Marcelino has been working since childhood. At age 10, she was already helping her mother with laundry work. She mentioned her difficulty in working in a family home due to prejudice. As the daughter of a *mãe de santo* (a Candomblé spiritual leader) and a practitioner of African religion, she was labeled a *macumbeira* — a term that White families, out of ignorance, did not want to be associated with. Maria Luiza Marcelino says that her family’s financial difficulties forced her to stop studying at 10, while they decided to allow her brother to continue his education.

Aparecida Natalina de Souza (49) had to discontinue her education after the fourth grade because the school was too distant, and their family lacked the money for transportation. At 15, when her father died and her mother fell ill, she had to take on responsibility for the family: “When I was 15, I became a woman. I had to take care of my siblings, who were 4 and 6, and my sick mother” (Aparecida Natalina de Souza).

The cases of Maria Luiza Marcelino and Aparecida Natalina de Souza illustrate how class, race, gender, and poverty led their families to prioritize the education of only one child, specifically the son. This decision forced these women into the informal labor market at a

2. Federal University of Viçosa (UFV) offers a course on Rural Education aimed at forming teachers for multidisciplinary instruction in rural areas.

young age. Carina Aparecida Veridiano's experience of taking on family care responsibilities when she was still a teenager illustrates that, throughout history, women have taken on the primary responsibility for family care. However, assigning this role exclusively female perpetuates gender inequality. In 2022, Brazilian women devoted 9.6 hours per week more than men to household chores and caregiving. Among the women who self-identified as Black, the rate of those in charge of domestic work was higher compared to White women [Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2022].

4.3 ■ *Ancestry and leadership*

Leadership manifests across various dimensions, including politics, community, and family. Many women assume leadership roles in their families, often out of necessity, especially in situations of male abandonment. Participant Daiane Estanislau (34) points out that she is the daughter of a single mother, coming from a family of many Black women who shared a similar experience. Within this setting, she said, "The women looked after each other. While some worked in the fields or outside the community, others cared for the children."

It can be seen that gender strongly influences leadership practice across different dimensions, including the very aspects shaping it and the confrontation with machismo and patriarchy. Female figures, such as mothers, aunts, and grandmothers, inspired the participants to engage in their communities and take on leadership roles. Ana Carolina Dias attests, "My mother was the association's vice president. She was always after the rights of the community, our legal rights to access public policies aimed at us. Seeing her inspired me, and I try to do the same now. I try to help my community in some way."

Gender also emerges as a marker of inequality when negotiating with public authorities. Participant Patrícia Alves (44) stated, "We have many issues with them, mainly because we are women. Because I am a young woman, people treat me with distrust, even more so because I am Black. It is very challenging." Hostility from parts of the public authorities also becomes evident in the testimony of Daiane Estanislau, "The community urgently requires infrastructure. Some residents lack access to water, and all sewage is exposed, yet the municipality ignores us and fails to facilitate access to public policies."

The participants' relationship with the territory is deepened by the struggles for rights stemming from social and racial inequalities. However, immaterial aspects overlap, transforming the space into sacred ground. For Gracyelly Silva (32), "The territory is ancestral. Here, we produce our food and carry out our cultural and sacred practices. So, we must first reaffirm the importance of regularizing our territory. "Ancestry is reassured as a cultural foundation in these communities, where conversations with elders and storytelling are the "first form of education" (Carina Aparecida Veridiano). This participant stated, "Much of our knowledge comes from our ancestors. We understand the importance of taking ownership of the knowledge we have here."

4.4 ■ *Information and communication technologies (ICTs)*

Quilombola territories experience inequality in various forms, including the precariousness of essential services (such as sanitation) and the inefficiency of public authorities in providing quality internet access. The participants believe that the internet and ICTs can

potentially improve the quality of life for the Quilombolas. Gracielly Silva thinks ICTs can also unlock the potential of young Quilombola children.

Internet access is not fully available in the Quilombola communities. For example, there is no internet signal in the communities where Daiane Estanislau and Ana Caroline Dias live. Dirciana Melo (29) reports that only three or four families in her community have home internet. This is possible only because they have opted for a satellite service, which they rely on to support their younger members' school activities. Maria Luiza Marcelino explains that not everyone has internet access at home because few service providers operate in the communities and often charge high prices.

Despite the generally poor service, women can still utilize ICTs in locations where internet access is available, such as schools and workplaces. However, Gracielly Silva's testimony emphasizes the gender marker by showing that women face more significant challenges when engaging with ICTs. Their limited digital skills are intertwined with their educational background and minimal exposure to other technologies, as most of their activities are confined to the home environment.

Even with access challenges, these women are convinced that ICTs can benefit communities, assisting not only children and young people with their educational demands but also enhancing the entrepreneurial ventures of Black women. Furthermore, according to Maria Luiza Marcelino, the internet is vital for Quilombolas, as it enables them to access public policies and obtain the necessary documents for community certification.³ Daiane Estanislau reinforces that the community is interested in participating in various public calls. Nonetheless, they miss out on opportunities due to a lack of internet access, which prevents them from even reading informational documents. The women also believe that ICTs can enhance the visibility of the complaints voiced by the communities.

4.5 ■ *Resistance, fight, and dreams*

The speeches of these Quilombola leaders combine pain, determination, and hope. They present the challenges they face and the dreams that fuel the collective fight for dignity and justice in their communities. The two elderly women, Efigênia Catarino (73) and Maria Luiza Marcelino, reflect on the weight of leadership when living with the violence and inequality that affect the Quilombola youth.

Maria Luiza Marcelino says, "It makes me want to quit [the leadership work], but I see too much injustice. "There has been too much death in the quilombos. Then, I tell myself, 'I cannot stop.' If Zumbi [dos Palmares] and my great-great-grandmother fought so I could get as far as I have, it is not time for me to give up."

Efigênia Catarino mentions the imprisonment of Black youth as a reflection of racism and a lifetime of limited opportunities. "I am very sad because I am not strong enough to be part of the prison ministry. Because [in prisons] I will see young people from my community, people that I saw being born. I know they are there due to a life with no opportunities."

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3. The official certification of these communities — granted by the federal government — reinforces their identity and cultural preservation, as well as their right to territory, enabling access to public policies and incentives that promote visibility and recognition (Brazil, 2024).

The strategies of resistance and struggle include the sense of collectivity, support for women, and, most importantly, the acknowledgment of Quilombola's ethnic-racial identity through the appreciation of the culture and beauty of Black people. Patrícia Alves mentions the creation of the Afro-female choir *Vozes de Campanhã*⁴ as a means to connect the cultural practice with the valorization of the Quilombola body and aesthetic. According to her, thanks to the choir,

“We realized there was much prejudice because we were Black and Quilombolas. We used to wear our hair straightened. Now we wear our natural [afro] hair. We wear our clothes freely. We used to be ashamed of those things because we faced a lot of prejudice. We started to realize that it was all due to prejudice. We learned to reject it, stand up for ourselves, express our opinions, and refuse to be silenced.” (Patrícia Alves)

Efigênia Catarino also emphasizes the intrinsic relationship between aesthetics and resistance, which serves as an inspiration to the group *Gamga Zumba*. Wearing traditional clothes and hairstyles is a political statement that reaffirms pride in one's ancestry and challenges standards imposed by the dominant society. Education and knowledge are also recognized as strategies for resistance, encompassing both formal (higher education), as mentioned by Liliâne Silva, and informal methods, as pointed out by Efigênia Catarino. Both qualify their struggles from the perspective of strengthening arguments and rejecting injustices.

As for dreams, they cover a broad range of aspects of community life. Some desire an association headquarters to expand their activities and hold meetings, while others mention the need for land titling. For some, the dream is as basic as having food and decent housing. Children and youth rank high on the list of concerns for the majority. This means that the future of the Quilombola community relies on providing cultural and educational opportunities today, along with a decent income that families can benefit from, thus creating options for the younger generations.

5 - Discussion

The findings, when viewed through an intersectional lens, underscore the potential of science communication to amplify subaltern voices and challenge mainstream narratives that have historically erased them. In this study, the web series *Meios de Prosa* functioned simultaneously as a data collection tool and as a platform for producing and disseminating scientific knowledge grounded in the lived experiences of Black women leaders. This approach aligns with growing calls in the literature for forms of science communication that are inclusive, context-sensitive, and participatory — ones that recognize diverse epistemologies and the sociopolitical conditions in which knowledge is produced [Canfield et al., 2020; Roberson & Orthia, 2021].

Race, gender, class, age, and territory intersected in the participants' life stories, revealing the compounding effects of structural inequality. Even among those with access to higher

4. [@coralvozesdecampanha](#) on Instagram.

education, income levels were disproportionately low, reinforcing Kimberlé Crenshaw's (2002) argument that overlapping systems of oppression cannot be analyzed in isolation. Structural racism and patriarchy persist even where access to institutional services, such as education, has been formally granted. In the web series, intersectionality shaped both the content and its format.

Each season (*Yalodè*, *Ìròkò*, and *Agbegbe*) recognized the participants' narratives as legitimate forms of knowledge production. Through storytelling and audiovisual media, the project challenged the traditional, top-down models of science communication that often ignore or oversimplify the experiences of marginalized communities. Rather than transmitting knowledge unidirectionally, *Meios de Prosa* emphasized co-creation, cultural relevance, and local vernaculars, embodying what Valdez-Ward et al. (2023) described as a democratizing practice that reconfigures both content and authorship.

While video as a format has long been a staple in science communication, Montes et al. (2025) argue that its transformative potential lies in the combination of narrative depth, emotional resonance, accessible language, and high production value. *Meios de Prosa* meets these criteria by placing Black Quilombola women (not scientists) as protagonists and knowledge-holders. Their narratives confront dominant discourses on leadership, science, and citizenship by offering grounded perspectives shaped by struggle, culture, and everyday resistance.

In this context, science communication emerges as a tool of political affirmation and cultural resistance. Rather than merely diagnosing exclusion, *Meios de Prosa* enacts what Reznik & Massarani (2022) propose: a science communication practice oriented toward social transformation. By legitimizing ancestral knowledge and decentering Western epistemologies, the project challenges dominant hierarchies of knowledge production and redefines what is recognized as "science."

The opening statement of the web series — "I am Black. I am poor. I am fat. I am a *macumbeira*. Society does not accept that" (Maria Luiza Marcelino) — encapsulates the deep entanglement of race, class, gender, religion, and body politics in shaping both exclusion and resistance. Each marker the interviewee names carries symbolic violence and social stigma, which, in combination, intensify the barriers she and others navigate. Nevertheless, her voice is not one of victimhood, but of radical self-definition — a foundational tenet of Black feminist thought [Collins, 2002; Gonzalez, 1982].

6 - Final considerations

This article explores how an intersectional perspective can inform inclusive science communication, particularly through the experiences of Quilombola women in the web series *Meios de Prosa*. Based on the premise of not reproducing inequalities in research and scientific practices, the project positioned these women as protagonists, enabling them to voice their experiences with racism, inequality, leadership, and cultural resistance.

Aligned with the proposal of Reznik & Massarani (2022) for an intersectional feminist lens in science communication, this approach draws attention to narratives often excluded from conventional discourse. By fostering plurality — both in the diversity of researchers and in the participatory dynamics with the audience — *Meios de Prosa* challenges dominant models of

science dissemination. The Quilombola women's testimonies not only affirm their agency but also broaden the public conversation around structural oppression and collective dignity.

The web series offers critical insights for science communication by adopting an intersectional, community-based approach that centers the voices of Quilombola women. First, it challenges conventional notions of scientific authority by recognizing local knowledge and lived experiences as legitimate epistemologies. Second, its collaborative audiovisual format fosters emotional resonance and cultural relevance, expanding the reach and engagement of science communication efforts. This experience underscores the importance of participatory practices that embrace co-authorship, contextual sensitivity, and cognitive justice. Ultimately, the project demonstrates that science communication should not aim for neutrality but rather engage directly with structural inequalities (particularly those related to race, gender, social class, and territory), thus contributing to a broader agenda of social transformation through inclusive knowledge practices.

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