

# “Time is our worst enemy:” Lived experiences and intercultural relations in the making of green aluminum

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I would like to speak about the paradox of green colonialism. When colonialism has dressed up in nice, green refinery, and we are told that we have to give up our territories and our livelihoods to save the world, because of climate change (...) As an Indigenous people, we do not only carry the burden of climate change; we also carry the burden of mitigation.”

Aili Keskitalo, President of the Saami Parliament (the Arctic Circle, 2020)

## Abstract

Climate change’s burden is double for many Indigenous communities: while changing weather-patterns threaten their ways of life, greenlabeled extractive industries take hold in their territories. This article advances decolonial psychology’s engagement with climate change mitigation as a form of green colonization through a multi-site study of lived experiences among Indigenous and Tribal communities affected by the production of “green aluminum.” The study follows aluminum’s value and supply chains interconnecting the indigenous Southern Saami people’s struggle to defend their reindeer pasturing lands to the booming wind power industry in Norway and the Brazilian Amazon communities’ confrontations with bauxite-mining and alumina refineries. Data material consists of individual interviews ( $N = 25$ ), 13 group interviews and participatory observation. Despite sociocultural differences, participants narrated lived experiences of loss of lifeworlds and meaning-systems resulting from wind power and aluminum production, and harmful experiences with companies and bureaucracy thematized as forms of “bad faith.” They discussed different mechanisms of violence and dehumanization in hegemonic green agendas. By highlighting how Green New Deal (GND) proposals in Norway forward aluminum-smelting as exemplar of just transition and green inclusion,

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the study's findings suggest that for proliferating GND's to be inclusive and just, their scope must be international and decolonial.

## INTRODUCTION

Anthropogenic climate change is spreading numerous droughts, fires, and hurricanes, producing irreversible ecological losses and moving larger parts of our planet towards uninhabitability (Mbebe, 2019). Among the global hegemonic solutions to climate change are green economy frameworks premised on climate goals built on continued economic growth, paradoxically often contributing to more Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and socio-environmental damages (Cavanagh & Benjaminsen, 2017; Verweijen & Dunlap, 2021). In this context, climate justice developed as a concept, a research approach, and a framework of action that highlights and seeks to transform the uneven distribution of climate change and mitigation policies' burdens among groups and communities (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014). Climate justice frameworks prompted progressive parties and Workers' Unions in the Global North to embrace varied elements of the US Green New Deal (GND) (Zografos & Robbins, 2020). These emerging GND proposals are not uniform, but they share the aim of de-carbonizing the production and restructuring it around green technological innovation, redistribution of wealth, renewable energy, and green jobs (Eaton, 2021; Zografos & Robbins, 2020). Albeit the inclusive premises, scholars and grassroots communities highlight the risk that GND's may reproduce colonial legacies (Zografos & Robbins, 2020). The transitions to green jobs in the Global North depend on renewable energy, "smart" digitalization and other products associated with modernity that require the extraction of rare-earth minerals and metals, such as cobalt, lithium, and bauxite smelted to aluminum (Dunlap, 2021; Paul, 2020; Zografos & Robbins, 2020). The extraction of these minerals is often located in the Global South and associated with human rights violations and environmental damage (Taylor & Paul, 2019). If marginalizing these realities, even progressive GND proposals risk preserving or even boosting the "green extractive industries" of hegemonic green economy frameworks, dispossessing many rural communities and Indigenous peoples' territories (Eaton, 2021; Verweijen & Dunlap, 2021; Zografos & Robbins, 2020). Aili Keskitalo, current president of the Saami Parliament in Norway, conceptualizes this as "green colonialism" in this article's opening quote (the Arctic Circle, 2020).

From a decolonial psychological perspective, these impasses call for scrutiny of how even progressive models of green transition can reproduce coloniality in intercultural relations (Adams, Estrada-Villalta, et al., 2018; Bobowik et al., 2018). Decolonial scholars study how the colonial dynamics continue to influence and configure economies, politics, knowledge production, and lived experience (Adams, Estrada-Villalta, et al., 2018; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Quijano, 2007, see also Readsura Decolonial Issue Editorial Collective, In press). In this article, I hypothesize that if these colonial systems act upon GND promoters, for instance, through naturalizing their ways of life over those of Indigenous communities, they can contribute to set up an "abyssal line" (de Sousa Santos, 2014) between which ways of life become reflected in climate agendas and which ones remain invisibilized or sacrificed (Zografos & Robbins, 2020).

In the article, I hold GND as an "umbrella term" for the various proposals, discourses, and policies emerging to ensure inclusive and just green transitions (Zografos & Robbins, 2020). Hereafter, I study the production of "green aluminium" in Norway as one illustrative case of how the search for green inclusion may make Worker Unions and progressive political parties in the Global



North end up reproducing colonial intercultural relations with Indigenous or other populations in the Global South. Through boosting investments in renewable energy, Norway, whose economy depends on fossil-fuels, is currently attempting to reposition in front of energy transitions (Moe et al., 2021). Worker Unions and progressive political parties in Norway have, as part of their efforts to prevent the loss of workplaces from limiting the fossil industry, adopted aspects of the GND in their programs and aim for socially inclusive and green industrialization (Schnell et al., 2021). In this context, the aluminum industry portrays as an exemplar for generating green jobs and innovation (Moe, Hansen, & Kjær, 2021). The world-leading companies Norsk Hydro and Alcoa run the aluminum industry in Norway. Both companies extract the raw material bauxite in the Brazilian Amazon, where socio-environmental conflicts around mining proliferate. Furthermore, to satisfy global demands of “greening” aluminum, in Norway, both companies obtained energy contracts with the wind power industries Fosen Vind DA and Øyfjellet Windpark. These large-scale windpower projects also dispossess the country’s indigenous Southern Saami reindeer herders of their pasturelands (Normann, 2021). The present research presents a multisite study of the lived experiences of Indigenous and Tribal people and communities in Norway and Brazil, whose struggles have become interconnected by Alcoa and Norsk Hydro’s “green” value and supply chains. I present findings, first, from communities in the Brazilian Amazon affected by Alcoa and Norsk Hydro’s bauxite-mining sites and alumina industries. Second, I explore the lived experiences among indigenous Southern Saami reindeer herders in Norway, affected by the large-scale wind power industries that supply the aluminum plants in Norway with renewable energy.

To support the analysis, I draw from the conceptual framework of coloniality of being and knowing, and work specifically with these decolonial approaches to reflect on intercultural relations. Borrowing Fanon’s concept of “zones of non-being,” which described racialized inferiorization (Fanon, 2017; Gordon, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2019), I discuss the inclusion or exclusion of certain ways of life in climate agendas. The research presented here aimed to explore the participants’ lived experiences confronted with the green supply and value chains. Despite sociocultural differences across research sites, participants discussed experiences of loss, bad faith, dehumanization and violence, and constructed broader critiques of green agendas out of them. Whereas Norsk Hydro and Alcoa arguably epitomize green capitalist industries, the way Worker Unions’ and progressive political parties in Norway embrace the aluminum industry as an example of positive social inclusion in green industrialization suggests that coloniality might also influence current GND proposals. Therefore, the present study contributes to green economy research and GND promoters by identifying fundamental challenges that the pursuit of socially just green transitions must overcome.

## THE ALUMINUM–WIND POWER INTERCONNECTION

Within schemes of greening industries, aluminum has global strategic importance. As a light, flexible and recyclable metal, it is a component in energy and lower-carbon infrastructures (e.g., power lines, substations) and can substitute heavier metals, like steel, enabling lighter vehicles that need less energy input (Brough & Jouhara, 2020). However, aluminum smelting’s impacts on the environment are severe, increasing GHG emissions (Haraldsson & Johansson, 2019). Sheller (2014, p. 5) moreover writes that:

Tracing the silvery thread of aluminum across time and space draws together some of the remotest places on earth alongside some of the centers of global power, some of the richest people

in the world alongside some of the poorest, and some of the most pressing environmental and political concerns we face.

To ensure that aluminum's production, use, and recycling follow sustainability and human rights principles, The Aluminium Stewardship Initiative (ASI) developed a third-party certification program (ASI, n.d.). Certificates position final products in an international market where financial mechanisms make green options rentable. Alcoa and Norsk Hydro are currently certifying their production. Norsk Hydro's majority owner is the Norwegian state, whereas Alcoa is of North American origin and maintains two aluminum plants in Norway. Both companies ship raw material from the Brazilian Amazon to aluminum plants elsewhere, including Norway. In the Amazon, diverse cultural identities coexist (Indigenous, Quilombola, Ribeirinho, Peasants and others), and people have advocated for a common Amazon identity and territorial construction in opposition to extractive industries (Baletti, 2012). Socio-environmental conflicts involving violations of international legal frameworks, such as the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO), have proliferated around the extractive sites in Brazil (e.g., Arregui, 2015; Nascimento & Hazeu, 2015), calling into question the human rights principles in green certification schemes.

To achieve certification, the companies must guarantee long-term contracts with renewable energy producers. Norsk Hydro and Alcoa purchased energy contracts with Fosen Vind DA and Øyfjellet Wind Park for their Norwegian aluminum plants (Normann, 2021). These wind farms, of considerable size and finalizing constructions in 2021, sparked political and legal struggles between the Norwegian state and the Saami community because wind turbines occupy the ancestral pasturelands of Saami reindeer herders. The "greening" of aluminum thus exemplifies how communities' local struggles may be interconnected through complex, global supply and value chains, producing enclosures, not only in the geographical South, but also in the "hinterlands" in the North (Haller et al., 2019).

## **DECOLONIAL PSYCHOLOGY, INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

Contributions from critical psychology to climate justice research are increasing (Adams, 2021). Decolonial scholars additionally offer theoretical foundations for understanding climate change as a symptom of coloniality of power, knowing, and being (Adams, Estrada-Villalta, et al., 2018; Grosfoguel, 2016). Coloniality intertwines with extractivism, understood as the current hegemonic economic system that impulses limitless extraction of natural resources (Grosfoguel, 2019), leading to ecological destruction, a primary cause of the climate crisis. In this perspective, if GND proposals fail to question resource extractivism sufficiently, they may reproduce coloniality and climate injustice (Zografos & Robbins, 2020) because neither the burdens of climate change nor the burdens of extractive industries distribute evenly around the world (Sovacool, 2021). Postcolonial scholar de Sousa Santos (2016) suggests that divergent time frames between the senses of urgency that characterizes the climate agenda and the need for (decolonial) civilizational change can block a social transformation. Global warming demands urgent action, as we are far from achieving the minimum established goals of reducing global warming (Lynch & Veland, 2018). However, urgent actions might be unable to address the long-term civilizational issues linked to coloniality insofar as they act within the paradigm they seek to confront.

I use GNDs as an umbrella term of discourses, concrete actions and policies that shape intercultural relations (Adams, Estrada-Villalta, et al., 2018; Bobowik et al., 2018). I borrow Fanon's

concept of “zones of non-being”, further developed in postcolonial and decolonial theory (Fanon, 2017; Gordon, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2019). Fanon analyzed racialized dehumanization in a time when people fought formal colonies. Fanon stressed the continuing damaging effects of colonialism after formal independence, but he did not live to witness the current capitalist and neoliberal global expansion with profound consequences for future life possibilities on our planet. Current scholars apply his concept to analyze different forms of contemporary marginalizations, and in this article, I use it specifically to illuminate the intercultural relations intertwined in green agendas. A difference between the zones of non-being and being, or between those living above or below the abyssal line, as conceptualized by de Sousa Santos (2016), is theorized to be that although oppression exists within both zones, in the zones of being, it is mitigated by people not suffering dehumanization (Grosfoguel, 2019). Zones of non-being, on the other hand, are temporalities and spaces of negation and epistemicides, a term that refers to the destruction of knowledges, lifeworlds, and memories of groups of people (Burman, 2017; de Sousa Santos, 2016). Critical theory developed from within zones of being may lack conceptual criteria to comprehend the oppressions lived in zones of non-being (Burman, 2017; Grosfoguel, 2019), and reproduce epistemic violence if failing to admit knowledge produced in subaltern locations (Escobar, 2007). Exploring participants’ lived experiences guided by these concepts let us reflect on dehumanization mechanisms in two distant geographies, such as Brazil and Norway, while participants’ narratives may contribute to developing decolonial theory. Moreover, my argument is that although GND-inspired programs in Norway struggle for inclusive green transitions, they risk reproducing these colonial patterns when negligent of raw-material extraction’s socio-environmental impacts elsewhere.

Critical and decolonial psychologists engaging with environmental and climate justice have so far produced few empirical studies (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2020). Instead, postcolonial directions in political ecology and geography have advanced such studies (Álvarez & Coolsaet, 2020; Asiyani et al., 2019). Frosh (2013) notes that postcolonialism needs theories that attend to peoples’ complex affective lives to avoid essentializing the socio-historical. A growing interest in subjective experiences among people affected by extractive industries has developed in these interdisciplinary fields, frequently drawing on Foucauldian conceptions of governmentality or technologies of the self (e.g., Asiyani et al., 2019; Fletcher & Cortes-Vazquez, 2020; Nepomuceno et al., 2019). Thus, the present study contributes to emerging decolonial approaches in psychology and interdisciplinary fields by focusing on the intercultural relations that emerge through, materialize in, or sustain current environmental policies, and even GND proposals, that affect peoples’ lifeworlds and psychological possibilities (Adams, Estrada-Villalta, et al., 2018).

## METHOD

I organized the study through a partially collaborative methodology encouraged by activists in the international peasant movement Via Campesina and the Norwegian Committee of Solidarity with Latin America (LAG), seeking to build up an ecology of knowledges (de Sousa Santos, 2016) to demystify green aluminum. My connexion to this network of organizations is through work in Brazil in 2014/2015, coordinating an exchange program. In 2018, I researched wind energy development in reindeer herding pasturelands in Norway and its connection to the aluminum sector when Norsk Hydro’s alumina refinery in Brazil poured large quantities of red mud into the areas’ river network, causing an environmental disaster. Communities mobilized in Brazil and Norway to demand justice. Grassroots movements facilitated my research in Brazil, and upon writing this

article, there is a still-ongoing collaboration with them. To generate critical dialogues with Norwegian progressive parties on aluminum production's socio-environmental impacts has been a primary goal, but the 2020/21 pandemics initiated a pause. I call the methodology "partially collaborative" because while the research process in Brazil was co-constructed, I retained autonomy in the recruitment of participants in Norway and the data analysis and writing process. Below, I provide information about the research settings and procedures in each site.

## **The Brazilian Amazon and bauxite-mining**

In the Brazilian Amazon, communities have protested the impact of extractive industries for years. Under the military dictatorship (1964–1984), the Amazon became a clear economic expansion horizon. The Amazon state of Pará has large water basins supporting the mining sector, and development schemes hence destine Pará for expanded future exploitation (Iorio & Monni, 2020). Pará shows the highest rates of human rights violations and assassinations of environmental defenders in Brazil (Muggah & Franciotti, 2019). In Pará, the bauxite adventure began in 1979, with the installation of Mineração Rio do Norte (MRN). Today, the yearly extraction of 80 million tons of bauxite places MRN among the world's largest bauxite-mines (Arregui, 2015). Norsk Hydro and Alcoa were among the original investors in this joint venture project. Both companies moreover have independent bauxite-mines and alumina refineries elsewhere in Pará and the neighboring state Maranhão.

In February 2018, Alunorte occasioned an environmental disaster. Heavy rains brought large quantities of red mud, a waste product from alumina-refining, to pollute the Murucupi River and water sources in the region (Hoelscher & Rustad, 2019). This motivated popular protests and a federal decision to reduce Alunorte's production by 50%. Restoration depended on the company's commitments to secure its future production and improve community relations. These commitments materialized in a "deferred prosecution agreement" (Termo de Ajuste de Conduta, TAC), a conflict-mediating instrument used by prosecutors in Brazil to oblige companies to "un-do harm" against social groups. Despite the communities' continued criticism that several TAC-items remained unsolved, in 2019, ASI certified Alunorte, and a federal court removed the imposed production reduction. Alcoa's mining site in Jurutí Velho and refinery Alumar were also certified in 2019, indicating discord between community demands and certification standards.

## **Data construction in Brazil**

With the help of activists from the movements described above, I recruited participants in May/June and September/October 2019 from the following locations: (A) Quilombola and Ribeirinho communities near MRN. (B) Ribeirinho communities in Jurutí Velho, struggling for territorial rights and compensation after the establishment of Alcoa's bauxite-mine in 2009. (C) Communities in the agro-extractivist settlement (PAE) Lago Grande, resisting Alcoa's opening of an additional bauxite-mine. A federal decision from 2018 prohibited Alcoa's entrance, pending community consultation following ILO 169 standards. (D) Ribeirinho communities near Alcoa's alumina refinery, Alumar, in the city of São Luís in Pará's neighboring state, Maranhão. (E) Communities around the city of Barcarena in Pará, the site of Norsk Hydro's Alunorte alumina refinery.

The overall data material includes individual ( $n = 18$ ) and group interviews (10 groups, total  $n = 112$ ) with people from Quilombola, Ribeirinho, and Indigenous communities, missionaries,





alumina refinery workers, and NGO staff at different stages of confrontation with Norsk Hydro, Alcoa, or the joint venture MRN. Interviews were conducted in Portuguese, without translation. They followed a semi-structured open-ended guide with 11 items that explored how people described and gave meaning to their lifeworld (e.g., “how life is,” daily hassles, worries, positive feelings, desires); what the climate crisis and industries had changed for them individually and as communities (e.g., positive or negative changes, rituals, work, community belonging, emotions, economy, available life choices, gender relations, safety perception, spirituality, health, and well-being); and their individual and collective responses and thoughts about the future (including reflections about “what there is to learn” from their case relevant in other cases of green economy implementation).

During the first phase of data construction, activists joined the interviews, turning them into dialogues and often covering unexpected topics, related to concrete events occurring during the different stages of confrontations with the industries in each place. For instance, in Barcarena, the communities’ difficulties in achieving an independent health study (see below) was a repetitive, yet unexpected, theme during the interviews, and gave valuable insights to develop the analysis in the present article. In Lago Grande, how interviewees discussed the organization of a forthcoming youth procession to protest mining, provided insights into generational dynamics in the communities. This helped to study meaning-making in context (Jovchelovitch, 2019). This way, the interviews became a construction site of knowledge rather than a neutral instrument (Kvale, 1996). The activists’ presence generated an environment of trust in a context characterized by high levels of vulnerability. Participants agreed to have the interviews recorded. Participants invited me to public meetings, workshops, and seminars, allowing me to improvise participant observation. Such methods resemble ethnographic methods, increasingly applied by psychologists (Case et al., 2014). Fine-grained ethnographic analysis would require extended research periods, but the approach enhanced my understanding of participants’ lifeworlds.

## Wind energy development in Saepmie

The Southern Saami are among several indigenous Saami cultures whose territory, Saepmie, is under Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, and Russian sovereignty. For centuries, the Saami resisted colonial assimilation politics targeting their religion, language, political institutions, and land rights. Today, Norway commits to the Saami people’s cultural survival through international and national legal frameworks (Ravna, 2014). Reindeer herding is central to Southern Saami cultural survival and has special protection. Nonetheless, multiple infrastructural projects fragment the mountain areas where reindeers migrate. Variations in weather conditions in Arctic regions caused by climate change make winters unpredictable (Jaakkola et al., 2018). For instance, thinning ice-cover over lakes makes winter migration routes dangerous for animals and humans. Consistent with literature on climate justice (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014), green transition inflicts a “double burden” (the Arctic Circle, 2020). Copper mining and wind energy development on herding lands reduce the herd’s ability to adapt and threatens reindeer herding. This triggered political and legal struggles shedding critical light on the Nordic countries’ will to guarantee Saami cultural survival (du Plessis, 2020). Two wind power projects are relevant in this article. I focus on the Fosen Vind DA complex, which with over 1000 MW capacity, became Europe’s largest onshore wind power complex, selling one-third of the energy to Norsk Hydro. Second, I focus on Øyfjellet Wind Park, Norway’s largest independent wind farm when finished in 2021, owned by

green-profile investment fund Aquila Capital, selling the total produced energy to Alcoa's aluminum plant in a neighboring town (Normann, 2021).

## Data construction in Saepmie

Data construction took place between March 2018 and May 2020. In addition to seven individual interviews and three group interviews ( $n = 24$ ), I observed four lawsuits between Southern Saami reindeer-herding districts and wind power and energy infrastructure companies; meetings involving a broader Saami community; reindeer-herding activities, and protest actions. Whereas no organizational ties facilitated the research as in Brazil, my engagement in another action research project (Normann, 2019) allowed participants to identify the focus in earlier work before deciding on being interviewed. The Saami community has suffered epistemological violence (Teo, 2010) on many occasions (Fjellheim, 2020), making transparency about the focus of research a paramount concern. Participants were interviewed once, in Norwegian, without translation. I recorded the interviews with their agreement. These lasted from 60 to 90 min and were guided by a similar open-ended semi-structured guide as in Brazil. I conducted four interviews in collaboration with another researcher.

## Data analysis

I followed original thematic analysis (TA) procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2006), transcribing, anonymizing, and coding interviews before identifying patterns of meaning/themes across the data set. Braun and Clarke (2021) later emphasized that TA includes openness towards diverse epistemological approaches. Thus, my focus was on lived experience and framing in decoloniality theory, which inspired a critical-phenomenological (Guenther, 2020) orientation to the analytical strategy. This strategy encourages reflection on the material structures and politics embodied in people's subjective experiences. I sought to identify participants' lived experiences with green transitions, and I was particularly interested in how they constructed critiques out of their own lived experiences.

The entire data set consisted of 25 individual interviews and 13 group interviews, and extensive memos. Reading memos in parallel to the analysis of each transcript helped me reflect on each interview's possible meaning zone (Kvale, 1996). In each research-site, the interviews followed specific events that shaped participants' intentions and focus, and contextual information from memos reduced my distance from the original dialogue (Kvale, 1996). A risk in multisite research may involve reducing the variety of accounts to cover-all explanations of a phenomenon (Parker, 2004). In this perspective, the three themes presented below may stand as approximations of some central and shared experiences among participants from diverse sociocultural contexts.

## RESULTS

Through Thematic Analysis A, I generated three themes: (A) Narratives of loss, (B) Dealing with bad faith: and (C) Experiencing violence and dehumanization. In this section, I present and reflect on them.





## Narratives of loss: “Who are we then?”

Across research sites, lived experiences of loss related to the physical disruption of access to, dispossession of, or pollution of land and rivers. The participants narrated the losses as having occurred, as happening now, as predicted future losses or as a combinations of these. Saami participants noted how loss and fragmentation of pasturelands happen “piece by piece” and gradually (Normann, 2021), forcing a reduction of herds and hence the number of families that can live from herding. In Norwegian and international law, the latter constitutes a violation of their rights<sup>1</sup> and is thus a central question in ongoing lawsuits. Saami participants emphasized the unprecedented scale of losses following wind energy development. “I remember that the possible future wind park was mentioned when I was younger, but it was so big that I always thought that it just would not be possible. It’s not going to happen,” Sara, a young reindeer herder, recalled. Participants felt strong ties to the mountains and responsibility for protecting the knowledge defended by earlier generations. The thought of losing these ties produced “future anxiety” (Sara) (Normann, 2021) and a sense of losing the collective self (Hogg & Williams, 2000) and the meaning of life (see also Burrage et al., 2021). In explaining the meaning of loss, Sara allowed a glimpse into her lifeworld:

It is a scary profession. You expose yourself to many things; these are steep landscapes combined with ice. You need to know a lot about nature, how it acts, how the reindeer act, a lot about the weather, about winds... It was never an individual job. It’s all about family, about *sijte*: “community,” that we help each other. (...) The best part is when you follow the herd. You walk, keeping them together. You feel such serenity. Gathering the herd is the only thing in your mind. You are there, entirely present. There are no times to watch, no dates, no calendar. You are part of the environment. You are very clear-minded. You are not tired, you do not need food. You cannot sit down, you need to follow the herd, the animals decide. Evening arrives, and the herd starts pasturing. You sit down and just watch them. Maybe it’s incorrect to call it freedom, but it is another kind of life.

Kristine, a young herder, highlights the weight of the issue: “Without herding, ‘who are we then?’ We will disappear. And that is exactly what it is about, that thought of genocide.” (Normann, 2021). Her observation is akin to research on large-scale wind power industries’ gradual genocidal effects in other Indigenous contexts (e.g., Dunlap, 2018). Lars, another young herder, questioned whether these losses were justified:

Why must my future be ruined so that others can gain millions on our pasturing lands? I believe we should do to others what we want them to do to ourselves. And if I haven’t done anything wrong, why should I have to bear these constructions’ worst burden?

In Brazil, people from the communities close to the alumina refineries in São Luís and Barcarena narrated historical losses threatening their collective identities. Thomas, a Quilombola member, said, sadly: “We are no longer who we were.” The Quilombola and Ribeirinho communities are today surrounded by multiple industries and port-complexes (Júnior, Pereira, Alves, & Pereira, 2009; Nascimento & Hazeu, 2015), impeding the continuation of social practices associated with how former generations lived, remembered by the participants as a more peaceful life. Marcos, a Quilombola member in his forties, reflected on the psychosocial consequences from a historical perspective:

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<sup>1</sup> Research on how international law is implemented in cases of wind energy development in reindeer herding lands in Norway is still to be published. Olsen (2019) explores the issue in her Master thesis, written in Norwegian language. For an in-depth reading on the relevant legal frameworks, see Åhrén (2016).

People were dying, and we had no word for depression. We said that they died from passion. But he [the imagined, historical man] cried over losing his field, for losing the açai fruit, for not having more manioc (...). This development took the calmness and the peace away from people.

Participants negotiated self-blame or guilt for not feeling able to defend the social practices passed on through generations. The Saami participants projected this towards the future, while in Brazil, people looked to their past. Mary, a ribeirinho woman, reflected: "If we changed our habits, it was because there was no choice. They took over our home."

### **Dealing with bad faith: "If you let the dragon in, it eats you."**

A salient concern was participants' experiences of dealing with the companies and public institutions. This contact had its particular temporal-spatial look in the different research-sites. Participants reported "*faulty dialogues*"; "*structural ignorance*" (Normann, 2021), *little transparency, companies evading responsibility for pollution or accumulated burdens, manipulation, practices that split communities, and entering the territories illegally or illegitimately*. I call this theme "bad faith," drawing on Gordon's (2018) work on anti-black racism, but transferring his concept to the institutional practices that participants problematized. Gordon noted how subjects and institutions might lie to themselves to evade acknowledging certain truths, responsibilities, or ways of acting (Maldonado-Torres, 2008). Therefore, epistemologically, bad faith can manifest through only admitting perfect evidence to change one's opinion (Gordon, 2018). The presence of many extractive industries and infrastructures made it, according to Silvia—a health worker in Barcarena—challenging to prove the causation of people's health problems to the companies. "We have the right to distrust these companies," she insisted, advocating the legitimacy of community concerns. Saami participants mentioned pressure, short time, and significant knowledge gaps among Norwegian bureaucrats as structural barriers impeding a meaningful knowledge exchange during the consultation procedures carried out under wind power licencing processes (Normann, 2021).

Bad faith can appear in attitudes that lock people into asymmetrical relations of "lordship and bondage" (Maldonado-Torres, 2008, p. 120). In Norway, the conflict-mitigating dialogues set up between reindeer herding districts and companies can be analyzed as expressions of bad faith. Participants held them as frustrating experiences that gave people no real say. During lawsuits, the wind power companies' lawyers presented logs of every time they entered into dialogue with reindeer-herding districts to demonstrate a goodwill policy. On the other hand, if a reindeer-herding district hesitated to participate in the dialogues, it was claimed a sign of little collaboration. One herder responded in the courtroom:

I was taken hostage in a dialogue forum (..) The most stupid thing I ever did in my life was collaborating to create that dialogue. We were promised that the dialogue would be decent, collaborative, that reindeer herding would be taken seriously, and that the premises for reindeer herding would be decisive for licencing.

In PAE Lago Grande in Brazil, Kevin, a social leader, expressed that communities have much to lose in dialogues. "If you let the dragon in, it eats you," he remarked, referring to how mining companies' promises of work and dialogue techniques persuaded youth. For Lara, an NGO worker, dialogues represented sophistication compared to violent practices but added that mining activities had expanded in parallel. Companies would conduct dialogues separately with each



community, generating distrust among people. Betty described how Norsk Hydro staff approached her, and enacted covert resistance:

She [Alunorte employee] sent me Whatsapp messages every day, asking, “How are you my flower,” with lots of emojis (..) She thought I was coming to her office alone, and she wanted to buy me. Imagine, a woman against another woman! I did not tell her I’d be coming with my lawyer and companions. After that meeting, I never got another message from her.

A worker in the Alumar alumina plant questioned the value of certification processes in general:

Each time, there is first a study within Alumar’s installations. Whichever certification Alumar receives, there is preparatory work ... maybe at least for six months, where the workers are prepared with questions and answers.

He continued:

Alumar keeps producing conflicts or worse, making these environments dependent on Alumar. They call the community to give away a piece of cake, arrange a little party. That’s philanthropic stuff, not social responsibility. Alumar maintains the “shut up” [cala a boca] way, as we call it here. It needs to keep people controlled to stop them from speaking the truth.

These and similar bad faith experiences made participants question aluminum’s certification as “green and sustainable.” Paul, a missionary, said:

For us, when they talk about green aluminum, it seems like Pará is ignored. The companies’ entry was so traumatic that we no longer believe that anything like greening the aluminium can happen. Is it just another buzzword [mais uma conversa]?

## Experiencing violence and dehumanization

“Yes, visit us, so you learn that we are human too,” was the quick text-message reply from Joni, a Quilombola leader about to receive us in his home. The quick comment displayed his clarity of a colonial difference between us (e.g., Maldonado-Torres, 2007) but also his openness towards our potential for decolonial learning. This theme overlaps with previous themes, insofar as bad faith implies dehumanization, and losses through dispossession are forms of structural violence (Galtung, 1969). However, this theme organizes participants’ experiences with dehumanizing structures in the “long durée” and reflects how violence expresses in multiple ways.

Saami participants experienced *racism, invisibilisation, neglect and dispraise of their knowledge systems*. Per noted how young Saami herders had increased suicide risk (see also Stoor et al., 2015), relating it to how gradually disappearing pasturelands shake the foundations of herding, and hence the meaning of life. Among the psychosocial consequences of wind power, Saami participants noted *future anxiety, getting ulcers, suffering insomnia, and stress*. Per describes how people remain silent about such “individual problems”:

Talking about individual problems is seen as narrow; we are not “individuals” enough to do so. Not that we always *must* behave so individualised, but it has a relation to our psychological health. If we do not speak out about issues, how can things get better for us? We use our strength in solidarity struggles against forced slaughter, mining and windpower. Then, in our society, there’s no room for feeling tired or feeling anxiety.

Several Saami participants reflected on differences between their own and other Indigenous peoples’ experiences in places where direct violence occurs (Normann, 2021). This affected how “entitled” some seemed to feel to denounce their situation. Anders said, “it is better to be colonised

by a pen than by a gun,” but then added that silencing and invisibilization are indeed harmful (Normann, 2021). In the same vein, Per reflected:

We are less discriminated—or we’re not exposed to extreme racism or extreme hatred. In comparison to other Indigenous peoples, we are all right. But we are ignored and neglected. And that can be just as bad, even if right there and then something doesn’t feel like an assault. With the [windpower] areas, we see that the consequences of not being seen and heard can be just as harmful as direct forms of discrimination.

Participants in Brazil described denial or dispraise of knowledge systems and ways of life. Referring to the staff in the bauxite-mine affecting his community, Joni observed: “They say to us that we are not museums to keep history. People get carried away by that, so they change.” In Brazil, participants reported *violent persecution, severe pollution with damaging effects on ecosystems and bodies, ecocides, lack of respect, experiencing dispraise, high levels of insecurity, and depression*. Some received death threats through telephone calls, WhatsApp messages, or bullets fired at their homes. Perpetrators remained unknown, but participants saw the threats resulting from activism and claimed that the widespread violence against land defenders in Pará made people hesitant about openly criticizing the companies.

Discussing the violence’s psychological impact, participants had ambiguous points of view. Linda had received death threats and was living under protection measures. She held that talking about psychosocial health was not regarded as important: “..as if it was snobbish [frescura]. In the past, people saw talking about depression as irrelevant. We see that people try to hide their suffering. They suffer in silence.” Several participants expressed loneliness and personal vulnerability. While grassroots-organizations supported them in intense moments of struggle, they tackled the aftermath, which could mean increased threats or unemployment resulting from publicly confronting companies individually.

In Barcarena and São Luís, the precarious health situation was salient. Participants mentioned headaches, stomach pains, allergies, and dizziness and suspected that the toxic environment of many industries caused high incidences of stomach cancer and Alzheimer’s. They brought us to forests and gardens to observe white dust on leaves, dried-out fruit trees, and dirty streams. For Ribeirinho communities, rivers are the heart of their ways of life. We visited one such community by boat in which the river had a foul smell and was uninviting. People pulled up their sleeves, exposing multiple small scars caused, according to them, because the dirty water infects even trivial scratches, and they described losing their hair. “We can no longer touch the water,” explained Teresa.

After the February 2018 occurrence, the TAC-agreement involving Norsk Hydro granted hair and blood tests to some people to discover possible elevated metal concentrations in their bodies. One and a half years later, few people had received their results. According to participants, these few results indicated elevated concentrations of various metals. Each person received the frightening results on a “piece of paper,” no health assistance, and “returned home with feelings of anxiety” (Linda). In February 2020, a court fined the Pará state’s health laboratory for failing to distribute the remaining results (Carneiro, 2020). Participants demanded an independent study on the public health situation in Barcarena. Mina, a neighbourhood association leader, worried that people were getting used to living under toxic conditions and abandoning their claims for justice. In the interview, she repeatedly said, “The time is the worst enemy of all struggles,” mirroring research on how violence, like climate change, may unfold slowly and incrementally and “out of sight.” (Nixon, 2011, p. 2). Linda added that “aluminium should not hurt the lower classes. It brings progress to the city, but also diseases. Before becoming a piece of a cell phone, it has left many people sick along the way.”



## DISCUSSION

Despite sociocultural differences, the three themes suggest how the making of green aluminum in the context of this study reproduced colonial intercultural relations across research sites, pushing more people, and in particular their cultural ways of life, into zones of non-being. The theme “*dealing with bad faith*” suggests how participants experienced the contact with the companies as frustrating or directly harmful, pointing particularly to the dialogues as forms of bad faith. The findings thus indicate dissonances between certification standards and peoples’ lived experiences. In green-labeling extractive industries, certificates as the Aluminum Stewardship Initiative performance standard often contain items to endorse Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). While CSR literature puts forward that CSR may improve companies’ approaches to communities (Jamali & Karam, 2018), critical scholars highlight their limitations and evasion of structural change (Verweijen & Dunlap, 2021). In the “Norwegian corporate model,” CSR and dialogue-based conflict mitigation are particularly strong-rooted (Ihlen & von Weltzien Hoivik, 2015). However, violence can take subtle expressions (Bulhan, 1985) and be overt and covert (Auestad & Kabesh, 2017). This awareness is central to Kevin’s analysis that if the communities accepted dialogues with the corporations, “the dragon would eat them.” People balanced fine lines between confronting companies directly and claiming, for instance, monetary compensation with the risk of feeling absorbed into development schemes transforming their ways of life in undesirable ways.

Psychologists suggested that oppressed groups’ resistance is also covert and overt (Rosales & Langhout, 2020; Vollhardt et al., 2020). In this article, I focus on participants’ critiques of green transitions that emerged from their lived experiences rather than their general resistance strategies. Nevertheless, one point can be noted: Their avoidance of confrontation with the companies may indicate implicit critiques of “bystanderism” (Oliver, 2011) in intercultural relations. The failure of progressive political parties, solidarity organizations and critical researchers in supporting communities over time may make active resistance unaffordable (de Sousa Santos, 2016) or dangerous for them. “Slow” or covert dissent, as when Betty resisted the Norsk Hydro staff’s persuading intents, is best explored through “slow research” (Murrey, 2016), in resonance with decolonial psychological perspectives on accompaniment (Adams, Kurtiş, et al., 2018). An event during data construction was illustrative: four young men armed with sabres disrupted an interview organized by local activists, surrounding us quietly in the interviewee’s rustic courtyard. They split up when her husband suddenly returned. Husband and wife exposed extreme fear afterwards. I was unsure whether my likely unanticipated presence had attracted the men’s attention or caused them to hesitate. The experience illustrated the high vulnerability and insecurity that may unfold “out of sight” in industrial cities (Davies, 2019), an understated aspect in corporative discourses, doubtlessly affecting people’s safety perceptions when deciding whether to be outspoken with their critiques. But it also places fieldwork in a demanding light. The incident prompts reflections about caution in research in violent environments (Moss et al., 2019) and illustrates that each actor’s risk can be unequal even in collaborative methodologies.

The theme “*experiencing violence and dehumanization*” amplified the discussion on various forms of violence, exclusion, and dehumanization in socioculturally different contexts. Violence is studied and conceptualized in many ways, as structural (Galtung, 1969), slow (Davies, 2019; Nixon, 2011), or extractive (Verweijen & Dunlap, 2021). Dehumanization is also conceptualized variously (e.g., Kronfeldner, 2020), and for decolonial scholars, coloniality in itself represents dehumanization (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). For Indigenous communities, dehumanization materialises in epistemicides, and denial of their meaning-systems and self-determination. The destruc-



tion of Indigenous and Tribal peoples' territories is a form of violence with serious psychosocial impacts (Gonçalves, 2017), particularly traumatizing when indigenous cosmovisions conceive natural elements as humans' relatives (Porsanger, 2012; Ruiz-Serna, 2017). In this perspective, Saami participants' reflections on the difference between experiencing direct violence and their own lived experiences may contribute to the further conceptualization of zones of non-being. Some accounts forward direct violence as "always pending" in zones of non-being (Grosfoguel, 2019), whereas others indicate access to "realistically claim rights" or not as defining (de Sousa Santos, 2017). The Saami had better access to legal institutions than the Amazon communities but in seeking to evidence violations to Norwegian institutions, their knowledge systems received little value (Normann, 2021). They found their herding practices and ways of life, meaning-systems and knowledges excluded from green agendas. Rather than belonging to the "zone of salvation," in wind power licencing processes, their ways of life were "hindrances" or, in the words of Maldonado-Torres (2017, p. 123), "entities whose very existence is regarded as problematic."

In Brazil, people described anxiety and observed health problems imposed on them by toxic life conditions, consistent with research on slow violence "out of sight" in polluted cities (Davies, 2019; Nixon, 2011). People lacked the means to prove the causes of the precarious health-situation they witnessed, and Mina's reiteration that "time is our worst enemy" shows her worry that people would resign and adapt to living in toxic conditions as time passes. Her reflection likewise prompts reflection on this article's overall discussion: time frames, urgency, and acceleration single out as essential issues intertwined with climate change. Whereas senses of urgency in the Anthropocene crisis may hinder more substantial, decolonial transformations (de Sousa Santos, 2016; Lynch & Veland, 2018) and even incite GND promoters to accept green certificates uncritically, acceleration appears to correlate with existence below or above abyssal lines; between zones of being and non-being (Mbembe, 2019). Modernity's desire for speed, for Sheller (2014) characteristic of the kind of society that aluminum builds, impulses high-energy and unsustainable ways of life (Adams, Estrada-Villalta, et al., 2018) that Global North-societies seem unwilling to renounce on. On the abyssal line's opposite side, we often find slower ways of life with lower ecological impact and those slow increases of toxic violence that Mina denounced. The American Psychological Association's (APA) Task Force's Report on Climate Change suggested already in 2009 how Western culture treats time as a resource, maximized at the expense of natural resources, as energy is required to execute more tasks in less time (Swim et al., 2009). The APA report increased psychologists' research on climate change, but its suggestion of further research on the relationship between cultural time frames and sustainable behavior seems to go unaddressed. Time frames may be relevant to future decolonial approaches to climate change research as it opens for exploring the connection between coloniality and work conditions in accelerated Global-North societies.

Finally, the theme "*narratives of loss*" illustrates that the losses of many communities in the Anthropocene result not only from climate change but also its "remedies," exemplified in the present study by the interconnection of wind power and aluminum production. Climate change produces mourning over losses, grief and anxiety, including in Global North-settings (Adams, 2020). Mbembe (2020) writes that as mobility ascending tremble, the resulting anxieties might dispose people to cling to what seems to be left, even if it leads to the destruction of lifeworlds out of sight (Burman, 2017; Davies, 2019). If senses of urgency invade GND promoters in an era when, alongside the Anthropocene urgency, neoliberal reforms, and technological innovations cause precarization of work conditions and engender future anxieties, the outcome may be that the social inclusion they seek remains limited in scope. At worst, GND proposals reproduce the coloniality of hegemonic green economies. Scholars have suggested that reclaiming loss as our epoch's shared denominator for human and non-human experiences may open pathways





for identifying common tools to question colonial and corporate power (Adams, 2020). Losses resulting from imposed transformation, as in the present study, are likely experienced fundamentally differently from anxieties projected towards the future in Global North-settings (Adams, 2020; see also Burrage et al., 2021). Yet, despite differences, sharing the terrifying feeling of loss may be among what can guide people and movements, such as the network that facilitated the present research, to explore ways of remembering and coexistence in a breaking planet (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; Lynch & Veland, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

The present study provided insights into Amazon and Southern Saami communities' lived experiences along a "green aluminum" value and supply chain. Through the three themes loss, bad faith, and experiencing violence and dehumanization, this study may contribute to developing critical psychological research on climate change, primarily through forwarding that psychological research on climate change must include a focus on the economic and colonial structures that interact with climate change in producing people and communities' experiences and adaptive possibilities. Presenting diverse experiences within the frame of a paper is a compound exercise. How the gender system connected to coloniality (Lugones, 2009) interacts in this and similar cases can be developed in further research. The present study provides the policy field and climate justice frameworks with evidence about structural problems related to the greening of aluminum. While transnational capital drives aluminum production, the fact that Worker Unions and progressive parties in Norway present the aluminum industry as a positive example of inclusive green jobs makes this study relevant as a reminder of how GND proposals need to be both international and decolonial in their scope to achieve their inclusive and justice aims. Losses entangled with climate change will increase in the future. Technological escalation (Mbembe, 2019) and extractive industries' growing demands for natural resources move the abyssal line (de Sousa Santos, 2017) towards the inclusion of more people below it, making groups of people live through painful processes of loss. These losses of humans' diverse ways of life are followed by epistemicides with planetary consequences at a time when creative imagination is required to map out alternatives: However creative the human mind, our imagination is limited in the sense that it needs material to innovate (Bradbury, 2019), and therefore it needs cultural diversity. So, while calls are to rethink, reimagine, and remember the world, current versions of GNDs may limit our possibilities of doing so, as exemplified in the present study, where green jobs in the aluminum industry in Norway are linked to territorial loss and epistemicides among Southern Saami and Amazon communities.

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