

Integrating the personal, relational, and political: empowering climate action through decolonial feminist action research

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Abstract: This article centres decolonial feminist contributions to action research, which orient us to see how the oppressive conceptual frameworks that enable sexism, gender violence, and gender inequality are fundamentally intertwined with those that enable racism, (neo)colonialism, and the pillaging and destruction of nature and planetary systems: all of which come together in the climate emergency. Given that climate change is unarguably a “threat multiplier”, if action research is to help combat the climate crisis, it must mobilise intersectional feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial frameworks. Integrating decolonial feminism with action research offers long-overdue theoretical, methodological, and practical insights. I use the acronym DF-AR to refer to existing and emerging forms of action research underpinned by decolonial feminist principles, as well as aspirational imaginaries gesturing towards decolonial feminist futures. Drawing on empirical insights from DF-AR processes embedded within an undergraduate final-year course in the UK, I consider how the experimental and micropolitical practices associated with these imaginaries can strengthen our response to the climate emergency: that is, the strategies and qualitative differences they afford.

Key words: Climate change, climate justice, decolonial feminism, intersectionality, gender equality, Global South, patriarchy, racial capitalism.

Integrando lo personal, relacional y político: empoderando la acción climática a través de la investigación-acción decolonial feminista

Resumen: Este artículo centra las contribuciones feministas decoloniales a la investigación-acción, que nos orientan a ver cómo los marcos conceptuales opresivos que permiten el sexismo, la violencia de género y la desigualdad de género están fundamentalmente entrelazados con aquellos que permiten el racismo, el (neo)colonialismo y el saqueo y la destrucción de la naturaleza y los sistemas planetarios: todos los cuales se unen en la emergencia climática. Dado que el cambio climático es indiscutiblemente un “multiplicador de amenazas”, si la investigación-acción quiere ayudar a combatir la crisis climática, debe movilizar marcos interseccionales feministas, antirracistas y decoloniales. La integración del feminismo decolonial con la investigación-acción ofrece conocimientos teóricos, metodológicos y prácticos largamente esperados. Utilizo el acrónimo DF-AR para referirme a formas existentes y emergentes de investigación-acción sustentadas en principios feministas decoloniales, así como a imaginarios aspiracionales que apuntan hacia futuros feministas decoloniales. Basándome en datos empíricos que surgen de los procesos DF-AR integrados en un curso de último año de pregrado en el Reino Unido, considero cómo las prácticas experimentales y micropolíticas asociadas con estos imaginarios pueden fortalecer nuestra respuesta a la emergencia climática: es decir, las estrategias y las cualitativas diferencias que permiten.

Palabras clave: Cambio climático, capitalismo racial, feminismo decolonial, justicia climática, interseccionalidad, igualdad de género, patriarcado, Sur Global.

1. Introduction: Framing a decolonial feminist orientation to climate action

This article centres decolonial feminist contributions to action research, specifically in the context of the climate emergency. Decolonial feminism fortifies action research through its systematic critique of the heteropatriarchal, racialised, and colonial structures of power implicated in the climate crisis. Action research allied with decolonial feminism helps us exceed the limitations of climate action within the confines of modern/colonial systems. It works to challenge and revise forms of research, development, and even activism that reproduce, or are constrained by, heteropatriarchal, racial, and neo-colonial capitalism. In its most audacious modalities, it is a force of fierce resistance, resolute in its problematisation of the enduring binaries, inequalities, violences, and oppressions that are the foundations of modern globalised capitalism and runaway carbon economies. Simultaneously, it manifests itself in subtly strategic modalities: for example, working alongside current power structures, from the inside out. In such contexts, its task is to make visible, and thus to encourage (i. e., hearten) us to confront the reality of globalised capitalism as the foundation of a normalised contempt for life that too often destroys both people and the planet.

As intellectual and sociopolitical movements, feminism and decoloniality respectively resist and deconstruct patriarchy and coloniality. Patriarchal and colonial hegemonic power are profoundly interwoven: both are sustained by dualistic thinking, powerful vested interests, and technologies of *anti-relationality* (Wilson Gilmore, 2002) which “[reduce] collective life to the relations that sustain neoliberal democratic capitalism” (Melamed, 2015, p.78). The oppressive dualisms and technologies of anti-relationality associated with heteropatriarchy and modernity/coloniality have been largely internalised, and unsurprisingly, are at the heart of the climate crisis. It is therefore imperative that the purposes they serve are named and critiqued.

Dualisms work to legitimise and perpetuate frameworks of oppression. In their analysis of the psychology of oppression, David and Derthick (2018) explain how binary oppositions produce meaning in oppressive conceptual frameworks: by assigning value, power, and privilege to one category over another. Binary oppositions, as employed in the modern/colonial paradigm, are not counterparts conceived as otherwise equal. It is the hierarchical ordering of contrasting pairs into dichotomies which justifies the subjugation of the category that is conceived of as “inferior”. The dominant group claims “superior” attributes, such as reason or mind, which it categorises as the norm or ideal. Non-conformance or non-belonging equates to being “less than”. For example, in the human/nature dichotomy that is a defining feature of modernity and coloniality, nature is established as having less intrinsic worth, permitting its exploitation for narrow anthropocentric purposes.

Likewise, patriarchy enshrines the ontology of gender oppression, namely, the supposed superiority of that which is male/masculine over that which is female/feminine, and consequent forms of subordination, particularly of women and non-binary or non-conforming

people or lifeworlds (Beechey, 1979). As a concept, patriarchy explains the essentialised dualist binaries underpinning gender hierarchies, and moreover, identifies how idealised, heteronormative forms of masculinity (and related gender norms) are maintained. And yet, as Anne Stephens (2013), writing on ecofeminism, explains, “At issue is not pure and simple masculine identity, nor is this about individual men, but a multiple, complex cultural identity which Plumwood (1993, p.6) famously framed as the ‘master’ discourse in the context of class, race, species, nature, and gender domination” (p. 18).

Decolonial perspectives challenge the “master” discourse, particularly in Global North and Global South relations, and in the many ways in which the privileges and dominance of the former are built on its historic and ongoing colonisation and oppression of the latter. The term Global South is used here in a geographically fluid way to refer to those “spaces and peoples negatively impacted by contemporary capitalist globalization” (Mahler, 2018, p.32). Coloniality refers to “the structural and embedded global power relations that remained after the elimination of many (not all) forms of direct colonization, [which] remains the condition of the possibility of capitalism’s continuity” (Bohrer, 2021, p.xii). Both the economic and the cultural/psychic elements of racism and coloniality must be fought in tandem: that is, “both on an objective and subjective level” (Fanon 2008, p.xii). This is because extractive capitalism, and the climate crises and injustices it fuels, are fundamentally based on the denial and dignity of the “Other”. Capitalism depends on inequality and hierarchy: white supremacy and epistemicide; conquest and oppression; the exploitation and expropriation of nature, labour, land, and resources; and the acceptance of all these as natural, value-neutral aspects of so-called free trade, globalisation, and economic activity.

Following Melamed (2015), decolonial feminism helps us “to name and analyze the production of social separateness—the disjoining or deactivating of relations between human beings (and humans and nature)—needed for capitalist expropriation to work” (p.78). This is also the promise of contemporary intersectional ecofeminism (WECF, 2023), which unites intersectional feminism with ecological activism to fight the intertwined oppressions and structural barriers that prevent flourishing across human and more-than-human systems. My use of the term decolonial feminism incorporates these critical and intersectional versions of ecofeminism. As Puleo (2017, p.32) states:

We must be clear that if feminism wants to maintain its internationalist vocation, it must also think in environmentalist terms, because poor women of the so-called “South” are the first victims of the destruction of the environment aimed at producing sumptuary objects sold in the developed world. The standard of living in rich countries is not exportable to the whole planet. Natural resources are consumed without taking into account the possibility or impossibility of their renewal. Pillaging is limitless in those countries where the population lacks the political and economic power to face the destruction of their environment.

A decolonial feminist perspective on the climate emergency is particularly helpful in highlighting what Stein, Andreotti, Ahenakew, et al (2020) refer to as the four denials of globalised capitalism and hegemonic modern/colonial systems. These are:

- i) the denial of the systemic colonial violence, expropriation, and exploitation, both historical and contemporary, on which the advantages, privileges, comforts, and securities of hegemonic systems and powerful interests are built;
- ii) the denial of the earth’s limited carrying capacity: the fact that our planetary systems cannot sustain exponential consumption and resource-intensive growth;

- iii) the denial of entanglement and relationality: the fact that we are always necessarily and inextricably in relationship with others; and finally,
- iv) the denial of the complexity and magnitude of the crises we face: the comforting fallacy of technocratic fixes denies the profound paradigm shifts, structural change, and hard work required.

Building on the above critique, decolonial feminism asserts that the climate emergency is not an external threat, and neither is it primarily an unprecedented crisis or the factual outcome of burning fossil fuels (although it is also those things). As a vital addition to action research and to territorial responses to the climate crisis, decolonial feminism orients us to see to how the oppressive conceptual frameworks that enable sexism, gender violence, and gender inequality are fundamentally intertwined with those that enable racism, (neo)colonialism, and the pillaging and destruction of nature and planetary systems: all of which come together in the climate emergency. Integrating decolonial feminism with action research offers us long-overdue theoretical, methodological, and practical insights, increasingly embraced within participatory responses to the climate crisis. This is the focus of the remainder of this article.

2. Refining action research in the context of intersectional climate justice

Action research, like feminism and decoloniality, advocates for worlds/futures that are more equitable and just, and that value the embodied knowledges of diverse peoples and beings, including those historically and currently marginalised, silenced, and excluded from knowledge-production processes. However, this is not to say that all participatory/action research (P/AR) is and has always been feminist or decolonial (Guy and Arthur, 2021; Houh and Kalsem, 2015).

Patricia Maguire (1987) first called out the androcentric nature of P/AR, arguing that it “mirrors [the] male bias” of the male-dominated movements which influenced its emergence: “Participatory research may challenge the class biases of dominant social science research, but to date, much participatory research leaves its patriarchal filter in place” (p. 76). P/AR can fail to consider how heteropatriarchal structures shape webs of power and relations, including the diverse struggles, privileges, and possibilities for agency of the women, men, and/or gender nonconforming folk involved in their projects (Reid and Frisby, 2008). Maguire’s challenge, accepted by a growing number of feminist participatory researchers, paved the way for a more purposeful, if still patchy, integration of feminist principles into action research.

Similarly, critical race scholars have criticised P/AR for too often excluding considerations of racial issues (Bell, 2001, 2006; Houh and Kalsem, 2013, 2015). Bell (2001) problematised the “eerie silence [that] lurks when it comes to discussing action research techniques to dismantle racial oppression” (p. 49), arguing that, as action researchers, we must find new ways to “dismantle both systemic and social dimensions of racial oppression, while at the same time addressing the interlocking forces of class, gender and sexual preference” (p. 56). Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), and others who followed her, engendered an intersectional lens within feminist action research, deepening our attention to how multiple forms of inequality exacerbate one another. Even so, as Houh and Kelsam (2015) reflect, it can be

difficult to “[figure] out how to bring race and gender to the center of our collective thinking... [with] our local communities”. These questions remain “strangely submerged” (p. 272), even where the data demonstrates racialised and gendered dynamics exist.

Such is the situation in the climate emergency. Alarming, the impacts of climate change are reversing advances in gender equality (Economist Impact, 2023), amplifying inequalities and reinforcing gendered societal expectations. Globally, women and girls face economic repercussions, increased unpaid care and domestic work, higher risks of violence due to the compounding impacts of climate change (e. g., poverty; militarism; migration; displacement), and bigger barriers to effective climate adaptation (Gloor, Bajet Mestre, Post & Ruigrok, 2022).

Though women and girls generally experience greater loss and suffering, the effects are not evenly distributed. Climate change is widely acknowledged as a “threat multiplier”, escalating tensions and vulnerabilities in volatile settings (UN Women, 2022). Particularly in the Global South—though not exclusively there, since “there are Souths in the geographic North and Norths in the geographic South” (Mahler, 2018, p.32)—women and girls bear the greatest burden of climate breakdown through food and water insecurity, environmental degradation, and loss of livestock and crops. Women and girls are less likely to survive seasonal and episodic weather and natural disasters “due to long-standing gender inequalities that have created disparities in information, mobility, decision-making, access to resources and training [and relief and assistance]” (UN Women, 2022, n.p.). A recent UN report finds that in a worst-case climate scenario, “food insecurity is projected to affect as many as 236 million more women and girls, compared to 131 million more men and boys, due to climate change” (UN Women, 2023, n.p.).

Health and security are also disproportionately affected. The climate-exacerbated spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue and Zika virus are linked to worse maternal and neonatal outcomes (UN Women, 2022). In Europe and the United States (as in the Global South), in addition to poorer reproductive, maternal, and neonatal health, women are more likely to die or suffer injuries, displacement, sexual violence, and illness after extreme weather events, such as floods or forest fires (Dunne, 2020). The threat multiplier effect is especially marked for people with multiple marginalised identities: “the risks of climate change are particularly serious for indigenous and Afro-descendant women and girls, older women, LGBTIQ+ people, women and girls with disabilities, migrant women and those living in rural, remote, disaster- and conflict-prone areas” (UN Women, 2022, n.p.).

These sobering facts confirm that, while action research is well-placed to help combat the climate crisis, to do so it must mobilise intersectional feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial frameworks (Guy and Arthur, 2021). Hereafter, I consider what decolonial feminist action research offers to the climate emergency. For brevity, I use the acronym DF-AR to refer to existing and emerging forms of action research underpinned by decolonial feminist principles, as well as aspirational imaginaries gesturing towards decolonial feminist futures.

3. From principles to micropolitical practices: the qualitative politics of possibility offered by DF-AR

This section explores how DF-AR can strengthen climate action. First, I name three manifestations of a “politics of possibility” activated by DF-AR, each roughly corresponding with first-, second-, and third-person action research. I draw on Sarah Amsler’s definition of “politics of possibility” as emergent political imaginaries which “[...cultivate] conceptions of the political that privilege not only institutional structures and forces of power, but equally practices of cultural representation and radical imagination, and the micropolitics of space, time, language, the body and the emotions (Gibson-Graham 2006, xxvii)” (Amsler, 2011, p.94).

I refer to the emergent political imaginaries that help us:

- i) ***Remember and reclaim the personal and embodied*** (aligning with first-person action research),
- ii) ***Repair and revitalise the relational*** (aligning with second-person action research), and
- iii) ***Reconnect and reactivate the political*** (aligning with third-person action research).

I consider how the experimental and micropolitical practices associated with these imaginaries can strengthen our response to the climate emergency: that is, the strategies and qualitative differences they afford. As an empirical example of a project that mobilises these politics of possibility, I share insights from a final-year undergraduate course that, with colleagues, I have taught for over a decade at the University of Bristol Business School. This course deepens students’ understanding of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability through a critical exploration of heteropatriarchal and racial capitalism, consumerism, and neoliberal globalisation: their ideological foundations and practical, political, and ethical implications.

The course requires a great deal of reflexivity, which we support students in developing through a scaffolded process based on DF-AR practices, in which they inquire into their own (and others’) positionalities, assumptions, and lived experiences of privilege and/or marginality (see also Larrea, 2020), and how these shape how they perceive and/or relate to the multiple systems, dynamics, places, and beings (human and more-than-human) we encounter through the course material. Weekly spark tasks, accompanied by detailed reflective prompts, invite course participants to reflect on their experiences of and beliefs about contemporary challenges, as well as the legacies of Western/European colonialism in existing social systems, values, and practices, and in what we understand as progress, growth, justice, and truth. This involves an honest assessment of whose agendas and interests are privileged and given voice or, conversely, silenced and marginalised. Students are encouraged to keep learning logs, as means for engaging actively with their journeys through the course, and as records to draw upon as they prepare their personal reflective summaries, which they submit as appendices to their assessed coursework. (Extracts from the reflective summaries of past students are included here, with their permission. Where appropriate, details have been changed to further protect their anonymity.)

Our pedagogical decision to help students grow their capacities for reflexivity is based on the conviction that ***remembering and reclaiming the personal and embodied is itself a political act***: a way of redressing power imbalances. DF-AR helps us resist the denial of

pluriversality (the legitimacy of multiple forms of knowledge; see also Gayá, 2021), reclaim situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988), and participate in processes of remembering, repair, and “conscientisation” (Freire, 1970). It requires us to examine our embodied positionalities, as management and organisational scholars, citizens (or otherwise), and as current/future consumers, organisational practitioners, and leaders—especially in relation to others who do not share similar positions and privileges. As this student, whose parents emigrated from Bangladesh, reflected in her reflective journal:

This course has allowed me to interact and position myself within my culture of origin, to which I have turned a blind eye living in a first world country safeguarded from harsh realities... The workers of the Global South whose stories we learned, those who bear the brunt of global supply chains and catastrophic climate change, they could easily have been me or any of my family members if my parents had not emigrated to the UK.

Adopting a DF-AR lens as we study CSR and sustainability means, among other things: interrogating power relations and hierarchies; seeking out perspectives from the Global South; reflecting on our own experiences of privilege, power, and marginalisation; and examining the legacies of empire and current patterns of heteropatriarchy, colonialism, racism, and oppression manifested through hegemonic forms of capitalism and globalisation. This led another student to reflect:

I have had to face the uncomfortable truth that my privileged position as a white, middle-class consumer means that I rarely connect my personal consumer behavior to the harmful social/environmental impacts felt by humans/more-than-humans elsewhere in the world and even in other parts of the United Kingdom. This is because I am not required to do so, as I do not necessarily feel the first-hand repercussions of unsustainable practices. This led me to explore the idea of anti-relationality and where my detachment from ‘Others’ is present in my thinking. My unconscious otherness is now something I am sensitive to and, in the future, I wish to bridge this by adopting a feminist perspective on the ethics of care.

Freeing ourselves from oppressive conceptual frameworks is a gruelling task: one in which we are supported by the practices of reflexivity and mutuality inherent in first- and second-person action research. As tutors, we clarify that we understand decolonial feminisms as unfinished processes, meaning that we all have countless opportunities to challenge existing patterns of oppression, and to create more just, equitable, and diverse alternatives. Our main objective is to help students develop reflexivity, their critical-experimental capacities, and their connection to networks of solidarity that support them in recognising and resisting patterns that reinforce oppression: whether these patterns are our own, or those of the organisations, territories, or movements of which we are part or which we support (for example, through our labour or consumption). As the following student reflects:

I am aware of my position in society, which has allowed me to access opportunities [...] not accessible to everyone. Consequently, when I write about [climate injustice], it is important for me to respect and listen to the perspectives of those who have been directly and disproportionately affected by it. I have realised that while technological and scientific change can help combat this crisis, systemic social change is also essential. In this sense, I want to continue educating myself about ecofeminism and spread its message in my future life, as it is a worldview that I have strongly resonated with [...] To understand the ecofeminist worldview is to reconcile with the history of patriarchal, racial, and carbon capitalism and with the hegemonic domination of nature, the planet, and human “others.” My growing interest in countering structures of domination has led me to the work of people like Satish Kumar. I found his book ‘Radical Love’ to be truly inspirational and meaningful on a personal level.

As this student’s final words suggest, in addition to self-reflective practices, we rely on the micropolitical practices of second-person inquiry, mutuality, and solidarity at the heart of DF-

AR, built on the conviction of the vital, life-giving necessity of *repairing and revitalising the relational*. As Vergès (2021, p.20) suggests, a decolonial feminist:

...asks herself what she does not see, she seeks to deconstruct the malignance of school education that has taught her not to see, feel, or know how to read, but to suffocate her senses, be divided within herself and be separated from her world. She must relearn to hear, see and feel in order to be able to think. She knows that the struggle is collective... [and that it] brings difficulties, tensions, and frustrations, but also joy and gaiety, discovery and expansion of the world.

DF-AR activates a politics of possibility in which we compassionately challenge ourselves, and support one another, in coming to see, feel, know, act, and *relate* in more critical-experimental, non-oppressive ways in the organisations, territories, and movements of which we are part: as thinking-feeling, embodied, situated, relational beings. Perhaps this is where DF-AR excels: in the promulgation of an ethics of care that centralises relationship, interdependence, and solidarity; that respects and accommodates difference without erasing or assimilating it; that does not reduce webs of human and more-than-human life to the narrow demands of instrumentality or corporate capitalist imperatives. This orientation helps us create bridges where we might previously have seen polarities, as this student explains:

My preconceived ideas about feminism were wrong. This is not about prioritising women over men, or women's rights over men's rights. It's about fighting oppression and advocating for equality. Even as a man, I saw a lot of myself in the challenges highlighted in ecofeminist visions [...] arriving in the UK as a Chinese immigrant at the age of 11, not knowing a single word of English, I really struggled to integrate socially and into the education system. I feel like the feminist/ecofeminist fight against oppression and dualisms is very much the same thing I have fought against most of my life. Therefore, I empathise with the feminist/ecofeminist cause, and while I previously saw distance between feminists and me, I now see connections and affinity between my experience of marginalisation and that of others, and I feel more open to understanding how my privileges are also part of these equations.

Repairing and revitalising the relational enables us to connect with collective, situated, and radical imaginaries, and with forms of “definitional power” (Melamed, 2015, p.79) that make life meaningful: for example, in the context of Black Marxism and civil rights movements, “making legible the past, present, and future existence of the Black radical tradition” (ibid). In the climate crisis, DF-AR values not just the grand stands, the public battles, but the material creation of “place-times in which we can unlearn, through projects of undoing great and small, the commonsense of patriarchal capitalist modernity – its parameters of possibility for loving, caring, imagining, organising everyday life, knowing one another, being in the world, and co-creating common new realities” (Amsler, 2018, n.p.). In our course, many students are struck by a sense of radical possibility when, within a spark task, they encounter the story of a man who leaves a successful career for a simpler life more aligned with his emerging ecological consciousness. As a student reflects in his learning log:

I feel inspired and a little envious. Seeing a man who was financially successful, leave that environment to dedicate himself to producing his own food and contradict the ideals of what many assume to be happiness, is refreshing. Leaving a life of materialism and mass consumerism for one that fosters a deep connection with nature and community is a life I would love to live.

This leads to the final manifestation of a politics of possibility enacted by DF-AR I consider here: *reconnecting with and reactivating the political*. This is made possible from a situated, embodied ethics: i. e., from a recognition that the flourishing of the personal and the political, the particular and the general, are connected. This is about reactivating the link between an embodied *ethics* of care and a *politics* of care, a realisation that care and justice are inter-

twined. The ability to feel and to care is essential because it provides the motivation to act (Warren, 2000).

Through *integrating the personal, the relational, and the political*, DF-AR supports those at the margins of modern/colonial power (including those able to recognise their own complicity and privilege within), to develop new forms of climate action, and conjoin with climate justice efforts that already exist, and which already offer models for transformative change. This empowering integration of the personal, relational, and political is well-represented in the following student's reflections:

I put myself in the position of my great-grandmother, who escaped the Tibetan borders in the 1920s and emigrated to Mongolia. Owing to her braveness, I have been blessed with considerable privileges... but at the same time I have felt deep sadness for millions of people who do not have the same privileges and opportunities as me [...] A key learning moment for me was at the seminar where we discussed the UK Supreme Court's recent ruling that more than 13,000 Nigerian villagers can bring legal claims against Shell for decades of environmental destruction and public health damage in the Niger Delta. I found it inspiring that the collective effort of low- and medium-power stakeholders could win against such a powerful corporation... These structural oppressions have been reproduced over many years, and I think it's important that we realise that and that none of these injustices are accidental or different from each other. With this, I want to emphasise that neither the forced labor currently happening in Xinjiang, nor the Shell case, nor my great-grandmother's story are isolated incidents. Therefore, challenging these interconnected systems of oppression is crucial to their destruction and transformation.

In our course, we do not just critique oppressive structures: we also pay attention to concrete possibilities or initiatives for climate justice that already exist, or are emerging, around the world. One source of exemplars is the annual archives of the Gender and Climate Solutions Awards organised by the Women and Gender Constituency Group (WGC), one of the nine stakeholder groups of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Awards recognise initiatives actively pursuing climate action which is simultaneously gender just. Such projects are supported by decolonial, feminist, and participatory ethics, politics, and methods. For example, one recipient of the coveted transformative solution award is the community of Sierra de las Minas in Guatemala, which confronts extractive mining to defend its territory. The territory counts on a "Centro de Reflexiones" (Centre for Reflections), which works to strengthen the capacities of women and men from communities in resistance—for example, offering political training workshops on indigenous rights, human rights, gender justice, community organising, and communication—with the aim of "helping communities build their own path towards alternative development models, based on the rights of people to autonomy and self-determination as political citizens, recognizing their Mayan Q'eqchi' and Poqomchi' identity" (WECF, 2022, p.37).

Learning about existing initiatives is inspiring, as one student reflects:

Focusing on these resources and individuals championing such caring ethics gives me hope. It validates some of my more 'dreamer' views about the world, how it could be and how we could all show up differently [...] after closing my laptop after the ecofeminist seminar, I was brought to tears thinking about those that are fighting for and believing in alternative, loving ways about and towards the world. It gives me hope.

The hope that surges when connecting with existing practices and initiatives is not ingenious. Critically, it demands that we better understand how each person's and community's lived experiences of the climate crisis are gendered, racialised, and more broadly shaped in intersectional ways, creating different modes and webs of privilege and discrimination, and thus different possibilities for resistance and action. For a constructive analysis of these complex

intersections, we ask students to read Godden et al's (2022) reflections on a climate justice project involving nine Bangladeshi women's rights organisations in Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. This project serves as yet another example of how decolonial feminist orientations can support those who have been marginalised or silenced by the combined forces of colonialism, hetero-patriarchy, and racial capitalism (and those who are working as reflexive allies alongside such peoples/communities) to gain confidence and mutual support in authoring, articulating, utilising, and building on their own knowledges and collective strategies. The project also demonstrates that developing capacities for collective action does not come without risks, vulnerabilities, and dangers, which requires great sensitivity on the part of allies, partners, researchers, and organisations involved: "Evaluations and continued risk strategies are necessary to promote women's safety in climate justice activism" (Godden et al, 2022, p.612).

Those of us who work alongside or within existing power structures (including in universities) must remain alert to opportunities to employ, boldly, subtly, and/or strategically, the tools and insights of decolonial feminisms—"their library of knowledge, their experience of practices and their anti-racist and anti-sexist theories [...] linked to anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggles" (Vergès, 2021, p.19). Doing so would help us to generate processes and "time-places" through which diverse actors and communities can be supported in decolonising and opening spaces for pluriversality within their own bodies, communities, identities, relationships, practices, and territories (Hall and Tandon, 2007).

4. Conclusion: foregrounding the explicit commitments of DF-AR in the climate crisis

In summary, integrating decolonial feminism with action research in the context of climate breakdown helps us to centre our attention on:

- Explicit commitments to grow our critical and reflexive capacities, dismantle dualisms and resulting oppressions, and foreground and grapple with intersectionality, positionality, vulnerabilities, and inequalities (whether implicit or starkly evident) in the climate crisis.
- Explicit commitments to reverse colonisation and the destruction of human and more-than-human knowledges, or "epistemicide" (de Sousa Santos, 2014), linked to patterns of colonialist, heteropatriarchal and capitalist violence, which are complicit in the climate emergency: commitments to recognise, value and give space to diverse voices and diverse knowledges, especially those that have been largely marginalised to date in modern/colonial climate responses. Politically, this aligns with feminist, decolonial, and participatory commitments to creating greater space and respect for an "ecology of knowledge" (de Souza Santos, 2007), including corporeal, relational, spiritual, ancestral, scientific, and rational knowledge, with greater capacity to respond to the climate emergency (Gayá, 2021).
- Explicit commitments to practising embodied ethics and politics of care, entanglement, and relationality; creating and experimenting with "place-times" that work to undo and counteract the harm of modern/colonial systems; the collective work of imagining, pre-figuring, and birthing territorial responses to the climate crisis that work against/beyond

hegemonic modern/colonial systems; all the while prioritising the safety, protection, and care of those who are vulnerable, or become more vulnerable, by joining collective action for climate justice.

Foregrounding these commitments, even with the support of DF-AR, is tough. It demands considerable time, energy, and resources, and even more, continual leaps of faith. The risks are great, and the efforts required may appear unacceptable luxuries or insurmountable obstacles in times of climate emergency. And yet, this work is essential, because by remembering and reclaiming the personal, and by committing to care for, repair, and revitalise the relational, we also engage in learning hope (Amsler, 2018).

From this place, we are better able to intentionally reconnect with other existing and historical struggles against hegemonic forces, other emergent and experimental knowledges, lenses, and ways of “refiguring reality” (Amsler, 2018) that support, challenge, and expand our own. This work—demanding, slow, and affectively charged—is fundamental to a politics of possibility, i.e., to “the collective production of a critical-experimental attitude towards being, which seeks to expand and re-signify space and time while inhabiting them with others” (Amsler, 2011, p.94). It is literally the learning of hope, intertwined with a collective critical-experimental attitude, that makes other worlds and other futures possible, beyond fear and resignation, and beyond the narrow confines of modern/colonial systems.

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