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Environmental Psychology and Climate Action: theory and practice aligned with the 2030 Agenda

Psicologia Ambiental e Ação Climática: teoria e prática alinhadas à Agenda 2030

Psicología ambiental y acción climática: teoría y práctica alineadas con la Agenda 2030

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate how Environmental Psychology is articulated with climate action, considering its contributions to academic production, professional practice, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Brazil. The methodology adopted a qualitative, theoretical-analytical approach, based on a literature review on Environmental Psychology and climate action, as well as documentary research on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a focus on SDG 13, related to climate action, from 2015 to 2025. The selected material was interpreted through Content Analysis. The results indicate four recurring axes at the interface between Environmental Psychology and climate action: mental health and well-being; public communication and behavior change; community engagement and climate justice; and education and professional training. The documentary analysis of SDG 13 in Brazil highlights persistent challenges in its implementation over the last decade, associated with the predatory exploitation of biomes, investment in fossil fuels, urban vulnerability, and weaknesses in public policies, although a recent reorientation of the national climate agenda can be observed. It is concluded that Environmental Psychology can contribute to climate action through the promotion of pro-environmental behaviors, the strengthening of resilience and adaptation strategies, the qualification of public communication, and the inclusion of climate education in training processes, in line with target 13.3 of the 2030 Agenda, indicating pathways to accelerate the implementation of SDG 13 in Brazil.

Keywords: Environmental Psychology; climate action; 2030 Agenda; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); SDG 13; climate education.

Resumo:

Este trabalho tem como objetivo investigar como a Psicologia Ambiental se articula à ação climática, considerando suas contribuições para a produção acadêmica, a prática profissional e a implementação da Agenda 2030 no Brasil. A metodologia adotada envolveu abordagem qualitativa, de caráter teórico-analítico, baseada em revisão de literatura sobre Psicologia Ambiental e ação climática, além de pesquisa documental sobre os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS), com foco no ODS 13, relativo à ação contra a mudança global do clima, no período de 2015 a 2025. O material selecionado foi interpretado por meio da Análise de Conteúdo. Os resultados indicam quatro eixos recorrentes na interface entre

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Psicologia Ambiental e ação climática: saúde mental e bem-estar; comunicação pública e mudança de comportamento; engajamento comunitário e justiça climática; educação e formação profissional. A análise documental sobre o ODS 13 no Brasil evidencia desafios persistentes em sua implementação na última década, associados à exploração predatória de biomas, ao investimento em combustíveis fósseis, à vulnerabilidade urbana e às fragilidades das políticas públicas, ainda que se observe uma reorientação recente da agenda climática nacional. Conclui-se que a Psicologia Ambiental pode contribuir para a ação climática por meio da promoção de comportamentos pró-ambientais, do fortalecimento de estratégias de resiliência e adaptação, da qualificação da comunicação pública e da inserção da educação climática em processos formativos, em consonância com a meta 13.3 da Agenda 2030, indicando caminhos para acelerar a implementação do ODS 13 no país.

Palavras-chave: Psicologia Ambiental; ação climática; Agenda 2030; Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS); ODS 13; educação climática.

Resumén:

Este trabajo tiene como objetivo investigar cómo la Psicología Ambiental se articula con la acción climática, considerando sus contribuciones a la producción académica, la práctica profesional y la implementación de la Agenda 2030 en Brasil. La metodología adoptada incluyó un enfoque cualitativo, de carácter teórico-analítico, basado en una revisión de literatura sobre Psicología Ambiental y acción climática, además de una investigación documental sobre los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), con énfasis en el ODS 13, relativo a la acción contra el cambio climático global, en el período de 2015 a 2025. El material seleccionado fue interpretado mediante Análisis de Contenido. Los resultados indican cuatro ejes recurrentes en la interfaz entre Psicología Ambiental y acción climática: salud mental y bienestar; comunicación pública y cambio de comportamiento; compromiso comunitario y justicia climática; educación y formación profesional. El análisis documental sobre el ODS 13 en Brasil evidencia desafíos persistentes en su implementación durante la última década, asociados a la explotación predatoria de los biomas, la inversión en combustibles fósiles, la vulnerabilidad urbana y las fragilidades de las políticas públicas, aunque se observe una reorientación reciente de la agenda climática nacional. Se concluye que la Psicología Ambiental puede contribuir a la acción climática mediante la promoción de comportamientos proambientales, el fortalecimiento de estrategias de resiliencia y adaptación, la cualificación de la comunicación pública y la inclusión de la educación climática en procesos formativos, en consonancia con la meta 13.3 de la Agenda 2030, indicando caminos para acelerar la implementación del ODS 13 en Brasil.

Palabras clave: Psicología Ambiental; acción climática; Agenda 2030; Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS); ODS 13; educación climática.

1. Introduction

Environmental Psychology developed around a question that remains relevant today: how do places participate in people's psychological and social lives? This question shifts the understanding of subjectivity beyond the isolated individual, considering the places where everyday life is organized. Natural and built environments influence the ways individuals



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perceive and assign meaning to their experiences. Since the first half of the twentieth century, this field has brought together studies on urban transformations, population displacements, and relationships between people and spaces of coexistence, particularly in the context of post-war reconstruction and new forms of urban organization.

In Latin America, the field gradually became associated with issues specific to local territories. Research on person–environment relationships began to engage with socio-environmental conflicts, ways of life, social vulnerabilities, territorial disputes, and public policies. The Environmental Psychology Practices Catalogue, published by the Brazilian Federal Council of Psychology, presents the field as one that is still being consolidated in Brazil, characterized by transdisciplinary practices focused on communities and public policies (CFP, 2022).

Viewing reality through the lens of Environmental Psychology helps move beyond an individual-centered perspective, broadening the analysis to encompass socio-environmental crises marked by social inequalities, violence against Indigenous peoples and peripheral communities, as well as threats to traditional territories. These problems generate suffering, but they may also foster knowledge through forms of organization and resistance. Thinking about this field from the perspective of the Global South requires theoretical and methodological plurality that acknowledges community experiences and territorial knowledge, which do not always occupy a central place in classical psychological formulations (CFP, 2022).

The climate crisis intensifies this debate because global warming causes not only material damage but also psychosocial consequences. When a family loses its home or a community loses its territorial reference, climate issues become part of psychological and social life. This is precisely where Environmental Psychology can offer pathways to promote action against climate change (CFP, 2022).

The climate emergency, biodiversity loss, human rights violations, political instability, and the deepening of social inequalities constitute a global scenario of interdependent crises. This context motivated the United Nations (UN) to establish the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 (UN, 2015). Given the insufficient progress in achieving the SDGs, the UN Sustainable Development Summit held in 2019 identified climate change as one of the greatest challenges to accomplishing this agenda and launched the Decade of Action to accelerate its implementation worldwide (Brazil, 2024; GTSC A2030, 2025; UN, 2020).

The seriousness of this scenario has been highlighted by the UN itself. In 2023, UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated that the planet had entered an era of “global boiling,” drawing attention to the intensification of extreme heat, climate inaction, and the continued investment in fossil fuels (UN Brazil, 2023). This statement reinforces the urgency of actions aimed both at mitigation, through emissions reductions and energy transition, and adaptation, through the protection of populations from storms, droughts, wildfires, and heatwaves.

In Brazil, extreme climate events have become increasingly frequent and intense. The floods that affected Rio Grande do Sul in 2024 impacted more than 90% of the municipalities in the state, highlighting the vulnerability of populations, territories, and infrastructures in the face of the climate crisis. In the same year, Brazil also experienced severe droughts, historically low river levels, and wildfires whose smoke spread across much of the national territory. This context underscores the country's central role in climate discussions, both because of the severity of the socio-environmental impacts it faces and its diplomatic relevance, reflected in its presidency of the G20 in 2024 and the hosting of the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém, Pará.

Given this global and national context, this article is based on the assumption that Environmental Psychology can contribute to the territorialization of SDG 13, dedicated to climate action, in Brazil. This contribution is related to the field's ability to generate knowledge about behavior, emotions, risk perception, community bonds, social engagement, and person-environment relationships, all of which are fundamental dimensions for building psychosocial responses to the climate crisis.

The present study aims to investigate how Environmental Psychology is connected to climate action by articulating academic production and professional practice in alignment with SDG 13. Specifically, it seeks to map key references in Environmental Psychology related to climate action; analyze Brazil's commitments and outcomes regarding SDG 13; and identify approaches and practices in Environmental Psychology aimed at climate action.

The choice of this topic emerged from concerns developed throughout Psychology training. Although the climate crisis already affects the lives of Brazilian populations, this debate still appears only marginally in academic and professional productions within the field. This perception was confirmed through the literature review conducted for this study, which identified relevant international publications on Psychology and climate, as well as recent Brazilian contributions, such as the dossier published by Psicologia USP. Nevertheless, the



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articulation between Environmental Psychology, climate action, and SDG 13 remains fragmented. Organizing this interface contributes to expanding the debate on a problem that is already manifested in the consequences of global warming, psychosocial suffering, and the challenges posed to public policies and professional practices.

2. Methodological Path

The methodology adopted in this study involved a qualitative approach, combining literature review and documentary research. The selected material was interpreted through Content Analysis (Bardin, 2016), aiming to identify thematic recurrences and possibilities for articulating Environmental Psychology, climate action, and the 2030 Agenda, with a particular focus on SDG 13 – Climate Action.

Multidisciplinary academic databases and institutional repositories of national and international organizations were consulted using descriptors in Portuguese, English, and Spanish. The search terms included “Environmental Psychology”, “Psicologia Ambiental”, “Psicología Ambiental”, “climate action”, “ação climática”, “acción climática”, “2030 Agenda”, “Sustainable Development Goals”, “Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável”, “Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible”, and “SDG 13/ODS 13”. The searches included scientific articles, book chapters, technical reports, institutional documents, and public policy publications produced between 2015 and 2025. This time frame was selected because it corresponds to the establishment of the 2030 Agenda and allows for the analysis of the first decade of SDG 13 implementation in Brazil.

The inclusion criteria comprised materials that directly addressed the interface between Environmental Psychology and climate action, as well as documents related to the monitoring and outcomes of SDG 13 in Brazil. Materials unrelated to the research object, duplicate publications, and documents whose content did not allow the identification of theoretical or practical contributions to the investigated topic were excluded.

The analysis was organized into four stages. The first consisted of surveying publications and conducting an exploratory reading of the selected material to identify connections between Environmental Psychology and climate action. Subsequently, documents related to the 2030 Agenda and SDG 13 in Brazil were analyzed, with particular attention to available indicators and challenges highlighted in national and civil society reports.



Next, a triangulation was conducted between scientific literature, public policy documents, and official reports, allowing the articulation of Environmental Psychology academic production with the concrete challenges of implementing climate action in the Brazilian context. Finally, a thematic categorization of the information obtained was developed and organized into four analytical axes: (i) mental health and well-being; (ii) public communication and behavior change; (iii) community engagement and climate justice; and (iv) education and professional training. These axes, generated through Content Analysis according to Bardin (2016), guided the organization of meaning units and the interpretation of data for the construction of the theoretical discussion.

The review sought to establish a reading pathway that placed academic references, institutional documents, and reports on SDG 13 in Brazil into dialogue, without claiming to encompass the entirety of the existing literature on Environmental Psychology and climate action. Although this choice limits the scope of the review, it favors an integrated analysis of the investigated problem.

As a complementary documentary update beyond the 2015–2025 time frame, the recent publication by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) on the nationalization of the Brazilian targets of the 2030 Agenda (Ipea, 2026) was included due to its relevance for analyzing the implementation and territorialization of the SDGs in Brazil.

3. Results and Discussion: Connections between Environmental Psychology and Climate Action

The analysis of the selected material showed that the relationship between Environmental Psychology and climate action is structured through interdisciplinary and territorialized perspectives that articulate scientific production, public policies, professional practices, and community knowledge.

In the texts and documents analyzed, climate action is associated not only with environmental goals and technical responses but also with subjective, community, and institutional processes. It is at this point that Environmental Psychology offers a distinctive contribution, as its focus on person–environment relationships makes it possible to understand how climate change reaches everyday life, affecting place attachment and creating opportunities for collective responses in contexts marked by inequality.



The special issue “Psychology and Climate Change,” published by the journal *Psicologia USP*, constitutes a strategic reference for this study because it brings together recent contributions that connect Environmental Psychology and the climate emergency within the Latin American context. In the introduction to the special issue, Martins and Massola (2025) situate the collection of articles within the context of the 30th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP30), held in Belém, Pará, Brazil. The authors highlight the affective, cognitive, cultural, and community dimensions of person–environment relationships discussed in the publications, confirming the need to incorporate Environmental Psychology themes into responses to the climate crisis.

Based on the exploratory reading and thematic categorization of the selected material through Content Analysis (Bardin, 2016), four recurring axes were identified: mental health, well-being, and territorial bonds; public communication, risk perception, and behavior change; climate justice, community participation, and territorialization; and climate education and professional training in Psychology.

Some studies emphasize the impacts of the climate crisis on mental health and on people's bonds with the places where they live. Others focus on public communication, risk perception, and the factors that facilitate or hinder engagement in climate action. Contributions were also identified regarding climate justice, community participation, the strengthening of collective ties, and the need to incorporate discussions of the climate crisis into Psychology education and training.

Table 1 presents a synthesis of the main dimensions identified through the bibliographic and documentary review, relating the axes identified, the predominant themes, the types of sources consulted, and their contributions to the analysis proposed in this study.

Table 1. Summary Matrix of the Bibliographic and Documentary Review on Environmental Psychology and Climate Action

Identified Axis	Recurring Themes in the Review	Main Types of Sources Consulted	Contribution to the Study
Mental health, well-being, and territorial bonds	Psychological distress, eco-anxiety, trauma, ecological grief, place identity, territorial loss, and insecurity in the face of extreme climate events	Scientific articles, Psychology technical reports, national and international institutional documents	Demonstrates that the climate crisis produces subjective, community, and territorial effects, expanding the possibilities for Environmental Psychology intervention
Public communication, risk perception, and behavior change	Climate communication, misinformation, risk perception, perceived efficacy, pro-environmental behavior, values, and institutional trust	Environmental Psychology articles, international reviews, professional association documents, and technical reports	Indicates that climate action depends on qualified information, context-sensitive



Identified Axis	Recurring Themes in the Review	Main Types of Sources Consulted	Contribution to the Study
			communication, and understanding the factors that facilitate or hinder engagement
Climate justice, community participation, and territorialization	Socio-environmental inequalities, urban vulnerability, environmental racism, social participation, territorial knowledge, and public policies	Official reports, civil society documents, studies on climate justice and SDG 13 in Brazil	Demonstrates that climate action must consider historical inequalities, territorial conditions, and community participation
Climate education and professional training in Psychology	SDG 13.3, climate education, professional training, competencies for mitigation and adaptation, advocacy, and psychological practice	UN/Ipea documents, APA/GPA reports, institutional and academic publications	Supports the need to integrate the climate crisis into Psychology education and professional practice

Source: own elaboration based on verified sources (2026).

The matrix makes it possible to visualize that the interface between Environmental Psychology and climate action goes beyond the study of individual behaviors. The review indicates an expansion of the debate toward psychosocial, territorial, communicational, community-based, and educational dimensions. The organization into four axes does not intend to exhaust the topic.

This matrix provides an analytical framework for understanding how Environmental Psychology can contribute to SDG 13 in Brazil, particularly in light of historical inequalities that increase the exposure of certain groups to climate risks and reduce their adaptive capacity. The axes presented guide the analysis developed in the following sections.

3.1 Mental Health, Well-Being, and the Psychosocial Impacts of the Climate Crisis

The first axis identified in the review concerns the impacts of the climate crisis on mental health, well-being, and people's bonds with their territories. This dimension appears consistently in the international literature, which increasingly treats climate change not only as a socio-environmental and public health issue, but also as a phenomenon with psychological and psychosocial consequences. The report *Mental Health and Our Changing Climate*, developed by the American Psychological Association (APA) and EcoAmerica (Clayton et al., 2021), indicates that climate impacts may occur both acutely, following extreme events, and gradually, as processes such as rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, territorial loss, water insecurity, and environmental degradation intensify. The 2021 update of the report highlights that evidence regarding climate-related effects on mental health has expanded considerably in



recent years and that concern about this issue has grown among health professionals, policymakers, and the general population (Clayton et al., 2017; Clayton et al., 2021).

Within the literature on climate and mental health, the psychological effects of the climate crisis are frequently associated with anxiety, depression, stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, insecurity, ecological grief, and loss of belonging. In the report by Clayton et al. (2021), climate anxiety is presented as one of the expressions of distress associated with the climate crisis, allowing recognition of suffering without reducing it to an individual pathology and avoiding the displacement of attention away from the political, economic, and institutional responsibilities involved in producing vulnerability.

In disaster contexts, official records usually prioritize deaths, displaced populations, material damage, and infrastructure losses. While these data are indispensable, they are insufficient to encompass the full experience of affected populations. The loss of a home, the destruction of a familiar landscape, or the disruption of a community routine also alter references of safety and belonging. These effects, which often remain outside calculations of material damage, help explain why suffering persists even after the most visible phase of the emergency has ended.

Studies on place identity and resilience contribute to this discussion by demonstrating that bonds with the environment are part of both subjective and community organization. When a territory is degraded or affected by extreme events, some of these physical and symbolic references are also weakened. In Brazil, the special issue *Psychology and Climate Change*, published by *Psicologia USP*, contributes to incorporating this debate into a recent agenda within Psychology, bringing together articles that support the present study and address affective, cognitive, cultural, and community dimensions of the climate crisis (Martins & Massola, 2025).

Costa, Roldão, and Verrangia (2025) discuss eco-anxiety from a critical and political-environmental perspective, associating climate-related distress with the social, economic, and cultural conditions that sustain environmental degradation. This interpretation distances eco-anxiety from the notion of an isolated individual reaction and connects it to ways of life, inequalities, and possibilities for collective action.

Psychological interventions in the face of the climate crisis encompass a wide range of approaches, including individual care, psychosocial support in disaster situations, preventive actions, the reconstruction of territorial bonds, and participation in public policies aimed at



developing adaptation strategies. The APA Climate Change Action Plan recognizes this breadth of action by identifying roles for psychologists in research, professional practice, communication, and education (American Psychological Association, APA Task Force on Climate Change, 2022).

In Brazil, the psychosocial effects of a changing climate are intensified in territories marked by inequality, as socially vulnerable populations face greater exposure to extreme climate events while simultaneously having fewer resources for recovery. In such contexts, psychological care also depends on public policies and involves work within community networks, the promotion of territorial protection, and engagement in collective adaptation strategies.

3.2 Public Communication, Risk Perception, and Behavior Change

The material gathered under this axis brings together public communication, risk perception, and behavior change. Climate communication faces a recurring challenge. Data on temperature, emissions, and extreme events are increasingly available, but this does not necessarily mean that they are understood or translated into action. Climate denialism, low risk perception, feelings of powerlessness, and institutional distrust directly interfere with this process. Cruz and Modesto (2022) help contextualize this debate in Brazil by identifying three key tasks for Psychology: improving the quality of communication, combating misinformation, and producing psychological knowledge that is attentive to local realities, emphasizing the importance of connecting climate discussions to people's everyday experiences.

Bradley et al. (2020), in a study involving participants from Australia and France, analyzed the role of risk perception, response efficacy, and psychological adaptation in pro-environmental behaviors. The authors proposed a model in which psychological and sociodemographic variables influence risk perception, which in turn is associated with perceptions of efficacy and psychological adaptation, ultimately leading to environmentally relevant behaviors. This finding helps explain why access to information alone does not guarantee behavioral change. For information to be translated into action, individuals must perceive the risk, recognize possible responses, and find meaning in their participation.

Pinheiro et al. (2025) discuss the methodological challenges involved in investigating perceptions of climate change, given that this complex phenomenon combines uncertainty, long



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temporal scales, and effects distributed across different territories. To address this complexity, the authors adopted four dimensions to guide their analysis: perception and appropriation, spatial scale, temporal scale, and communication for engagement. This framework is particularly relevant to the present study because it demonstrates that climate communication requires the public translation of scientific knowledge through accessible language without sacrificing complexity.

However, climate communication may also generate distortions. Messages focused exclusively on catastrophes can produce fear, paralysis, or denial. Likewise, discourses centered solely on individual choices tend to shift responsibility toward personal consumption habits. As a result, economic structures, energy policies, dependence on fossil fuels, and unequal patterns of production and consumption are often relegated to the background. Addressing this challenge, Steg (2023) argues for the integration of individual behavior, collective action, public policies, and systemic change.

Risk perception becomes more concrete when climate-related problems affect lived territories through floods, wildfires, water shortages, loss of green areas, or disruptions in public services. As the climate crisis becomes embedded in everyday life, risk ceases to circulate as an abstract piece of information and becomes part of daily reality. This territorial dimension helps explain why some groups become mobilized, while others respond with denial or feelings of helplessness.

In Steg's (2023) review, human behavior appears both as a contributor to climate change and as a key element in addressing it. Factors related to individual and collective willingness to change are considered essential for grounding discussions on climate action. This perspective moves beyond interpretations centered exclusively on personal choices and incorporates broader social and political dimensions.

Behavioral change also depends on material living conditions. Saving water, recycling, or reducing motorized travel requires adequate income, infrastructure, and public transportation systems, among other conditions. When these factors are overlooked, sustainable practices risk being framed merely as matters of individual choice.

Considering the social inequalities that characterize the Global South, Weydmann et al. (2025) advocate for expanding research on Psychology and climate action in Brazil, noting that emerging countries still have relatively few studies examining psychological variables associated with climate change and behavior. The proposed research agenda seeks to identify



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groups most exposed to the impacts of extreme events and to develop interventions adapted to Brazilian social and territorial conditions.

Attention should also be given to how responsibilities are framed in public communication. Global warming is associated with historical models of development, economic inequalities, and dependence on fossil fuels. Presenting the crisis as the undifferentiated result of “human activity” may reinforce misinformation by obscuring these differences. In this regard, this axis is closely linked to Target 13.3 of the 2030 Agenda, which emphasizes education, awareness-raising, and the strengthening of human and institutional capacities to address the consequences of a changing climate (Ferreira, 2026), a topic revisited in Section 3.4 of this article.

3.3 Community Engagement, Territorialization, and Climate Justice

The third axis articulates community engagement with climate justice and represents the outcome of the triangulation between Environmental Psychology literature and reports monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Brazil, particularly SDG 13, dedicated to Climate Action. The analysis of these materials demonstrated that climate action cannot be examined solely at global or national scales, since its concrete effects are manifested within territories and affect populations unevenly.

Approaching climate action requires an analysis that takes territorial inequalities into account, as socio-environmental disasters do not affect all people in the same way. In Brazil, housing location, urban infrastructure, sanitation, transportation, income, access to healthcare, and support networks all influence the capacity for prevention, protection, and recovery in the face of the climate crisis. For this reason, the territorialization of SDG 13 demands attention to the places where climate change materializes according to the living conditions of different populations.

Brazil’s Voluntary National Review (VNR), published in 2024 by the National Commission for the Sustainable Development Goals (CNODS), constitutes the principal official document for monitoring and communicating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the country in recent years. In addition to highlighting the institutional reactivation of the Agenda, through the reestablishment of the CNODS in 2023 and the reintegration of social



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participation into governmental processes, the report presents policies aimed at addressing climate emergencies as one of the country's national priorities (Brazil, 2024; UNDP, 2024).

The VNR associates the unequal effects of extreme climate events and predatory economic exploitation of biomes more intensely with socioeconomically vulnerable populations. This perspective connects the climate agenda with the principle of "leaving no one behind" (Brazil, 2024), as it incorporates social vulnerability and territorial bonds into analyses of community response capacity and social participation. The challenge lies in transforming general guidelines into territorialized policies capable of reaching the most exposed groups and strengthening local processes of care, adaptation, and social protection (Brazil, 2024).

The Ninth Civil Society Spotlight Report on the 2030 Agenda, published in 2025, contributes to a deeper understanding of climate justice in Brazil by offering a critical assessment of SDG 13 implementation. The report acknowledges advances within the National Climate Plan, including the incorporation of inequality reduction and just transition principles into adaptation strategies, as well as the inclusion of civil society proposals aimed at addressing inequalities in vulnerability. However, the report also highlights tensions related to social participation in the development of the Climate Plan and points out that the guidelines for state, municipal, and district adaptation plans established in 2024 referred to vulnerability reduction but did not explicitly incorporate climate justice or gender and racial perspectives (GTSC A2030, 2025).

This interpretation is particularly relevant to Environmental Psychology because it demonstrates that the territorialization of SDG 13 requires meaningful listening to affected populations and consideration of social inequalities in the formulation of policies, plans, and regulatory instruments. It also highlights the need to strengthen participatory processes capable of recognizing how different communities perceive, experience, and respond to climate risks. Thus, the analysis of the Spotlight Report indicates that climate justice depends on the effective incorporation of participatory mechanisms, racial and gender perspectives, territorial strategies, and monitoring instruments capable of reducing vulnerabilities (GTSC A2030, 2025).

Climate justice also requires recognition that the impacts of global warming fall disproportionately on populations and countries that have historically contributed the least to its causes and often possess fewer resources to confront its consequences. This inequality affects peripheral urban territories, traditional communities, Indigenous peoples, Black



populations, people living in poverty, children, older adults, and persons with disabilities, among other socially vulnerable groups.

By considering the relationships between individuals, communities, and territories, Environmental Psychology can make important contributions to the territorialization of SDG 13. These contributions include understanding how communities perceive environmental changes, identifying existing local coping strategies, examining how solidarity networks are organized, and exploring how public policies can engage with territorial knowledge.

Within this context, the contribution of Environmental Psychology can be understood through its tradition of analyzing person–environment relationships, a field concerned with ways of inhabiting, belonging, resisting, and producing meaning within territories. The *Catalogue of Practices in Environmental Psychology* situates the field as an area of intervention focused on contemporary socio-environmental issues that generate inequalities, suffering, and illness, while simultaneously requiring a critical and transdisciplinary professional perspective (CFP, 2022).

Based on these references, Environmental Psychology’s contribution to climate justice can be understood as a situated practice of interpreting territories, conflicts, and collective forms of resistance. In the *Psicologia USP* special issue, Martins and Massola (2025), Varela and Ramos (2025) analyze extreme climate events through the lenses of environmental racism and gender relations, highlighting that women and Black and mixed-race populations are disproportionately affected and that climate responses must incorporate inclusive public policies and collective action.

This perspective also allows climate agendas to incorporate approaches that emphasize territorial bonds, social participation, and collective care. In their discussion of traditional communities in the Pantanal region, Luiz and Spink (2025) demonstrate that climate adaptation is also built through local knowledge, productive diversification, and solidarity networks. Farias (2025), in turn, analyzes conflicts related to wind energy production in the state of Rio Grande do Norte and calls attention to the need for an Environmental Psychology committed to popular struggles, capable of exposing the contradictions of “green capitalism” and forms of energy transition that may reproduce territorial inequalities. Together, these studies suggest that participatory methodologies, territorial psychosocial assessments, conflict mediation, and the strengthening of community networks constitute important pathways toward climate action that



is sensitive to socio-environmental inequalities, place attachment, and the concrete forms of resistance developed by affected populations.

3.4 Climate Education and Professional Training in Psychology

Within the fourth axis identified, concerning climate education and professional training, the special issue *Psychology and Climate Change* (Martins & Massola, 2025) also provides important references. Costa, Roldão, and Verrangia (2025) discuss eco-anxiety as a psychosocial issue shaped by the climate crisis and connect this debate to a political-environmental education inspired by authors such as Paulo Freire, Ailton Krenak, Martín-Baró, Mark Fisher, and Achille Mbembe. The article concludes by emphasizing the need to articulate critical awareness of reality, concrete action, and hope, contributing to the development of Psychology training capable of addressing climate-related distress without reducing it to the individual sphere.

Pinheiro, Farias, Barros, and Cavalcanti (2025), in turn, analyze methodological strategies for studying perceptions of climate change and highlight the importance of translating scientific language into forms accessible to decision-makers and the general public. They advocate for a perspective grounded in hope, capable of fostering engagement in socio-environmental care and action. Although current scenarios and projections often tend toward pessimism, meaningful engagement requires what the authors describe as an optimism of the will, focused on identifying solutions and pathways for action in the face of contemporary challenges. Similarly, Weydmann, Campos, Presa, and Bizarro (2025) propose a psychological research agenda on climate action in Brazil aimed at identifying relevant variables in the relationship between climate change and behavior. Together, these studies demonstrate the need to integrate the climate crisis into Psychology education by connecting mental health, communication, risk perception, environmental education, and social commitment, while incorporating research and intervention competencies related to climate change.

At the level of professional training, the connection between Psychology and debates on sustainable development and climate action is evident in the declaration *Humanity Needs Psychology and Psychologists Now More Than Ever*, published by the Global Psychology Alliance (GPA) and endorsed by professional associations worldwide, including the Brazilian Psychological Society (SBP). This document signals the participation of Brazilian Psychology in an international mobilization aligned with the 2030 Agenda (SBP, 2020). Through this

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initiative, the GPA has contributed to positioning Psychology as a relevant field for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing the climate crisis through responses grounded in science, cooperation, and social commitment.

Nevertheless, the presence of climate-related themes in Psychology education and practice remains limited. Integrating this topic into curricula, research, university extension activities, professional practice, and continuing education can enhance Psychology's capacity to respond to contemporary climate challenges. This includes preparing professionals to work in disaster situations, public policies, environmental education, communication, community mobilization, conflict management, and the promotion of pro-environmental behaviors.

The recommendations of the APA Task Force on Climate Change reinforce that the climate crisis should be understood as a cross-cutting theme within psychological science and practice. The action plan proposes expanding climate-related research across different areas of Psychology, developing professional competencies to support mitigation and adaptation processes, incorporating climate issues into educational curricula, strengthening advocacy efforts, and improving climate communication in ways that avoid alarmism and paralysis while encouraging constructive and solution-oriented messages (APA Task Force on Climate Change, 2022). These recommendations provide international support for integrating climate action into the education and professional practice of psychologists in Brazil.

The discussion on climate education and professional training is directly related to Target 13.3 of the 2030 Agenda and offers a strategic entry point for Psychology. As a complementary documentary update beyond the study's original time frame, this research also considers the publication by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) on the nationalization of the 2030 Agenda targets in Brazil, released in 2026. Its inclusion is justified because monitoring of Target 13.3 in Brazil still faces measurement limitations, as identified in the 2024 Voluntary National Review, particularly due to difficulties in operationalizing the global indicator and the absence of consolidated time series capable of continuously assessing education and institutional capacity for climate action (Ipea, 2026).

The Ipea publication seeks to address this gap by adapting the global target to the Brazilian context, incorporating environmental education, the valorization of traditional knowledge, and the strengthening of female and youth community leadership. In addition, it proposes guidelines for national indicators, expanding the possibilities for monitoring Target 13.3 and strengthening its relationship with the development of human and institutional



capacities. Table 2 presents a synthesis of Target 13.3 in its global and Brazilian formulations, highlighting its conceptual elements, indicators, and connections with Environmental Psychology and professional training.

Table 2. Elements of Target 13.3 in the Brazilian Nationalization of the 2030 Agenda and Their Relevance to Environmental Psychology

Element	Summary of Target 13.3
Global target	Improve education, increase awareness, and strengthen human and institutional capacity regarding climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning systems.
Brazilian target	Promote environmental education in accordance with the principles, objectives, guidelines, and instruments of the National Environmental Education Policy; increase human and institutional capacity to address climate change; value traditional knowledge of Afro-descendant, Indigenous, and Quilombola peoples and communities; and strengthen female and youth community leadership.
Justification for the Brazilian adaptation	The Brazilian formulation incorporates environmental education as an essential and permanent component of national education, present in both formal and non-formal processes. It also seeks to make the target more measurable through existing official indicators and to include traditional knowledge and community leadership as dimensions of climate action.
Central concepts	Environmental education; institutional capacity; traditional knowledge; risks and vulnerabilities; mitigation; adaptation; climate justice.
Global indicator	13.3.1: Degree to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development are integrated into national education policies, school curricula, teacher training, and student assessment.
Proposed national indicators	Percentage of schools implementing environmental education activities; percentage of municipalities with environmental departments, councils, and funds; existence of local legislation on adaptation and mitigation; implementation of Green Rooms; continuing education opportunities in environmental education; number of socio-environmental education centers; and number of community agents trained to respond to climate emergencies.
Suggested data sources	School Census/INEP; Municipal Information Survey (Munic/IBGE); Federal Budget Information System (SIOP); Multi-Year Plan (PPA) 2024–2027.
Connection with Environmental Psychology	The target aligns with Environmental Psychology by treating climate education and response capacity as processes linked to risk perception, territorial belonging, social trust, and community participation. It allows for the analysis of how individuals and groups understand climate threats, process losses, mobilize local knowledge, and develop collective adaptation strategies.
Connection with Psychology training	The target reinforces the need to integrate the climate crisis into Psychology education, preparing professionals to address psychosocial suffering associated with extreme events, risk communication, environmental education, community network strengthening, socio-environmental conflict mediation, and territorial adaptation, thereby connecting climate crisis, mental health, public policies, and climate justice within professional training.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Ferreira (2026) and Ipea (2026).

The synthesis of Target 13.3 demonstrates that climate education can be understood as a strategic dimension of climate action in Brazil. By transforming a global target that is difficult to measure into a national formulation linked to environmental education, traditional knowledge, and the training of community agents, the Ipea proposal offers pathways to overcome weaknesses previously identified in the monitoring of SDG 13. For Environmental



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Psychology, this update is relevant because it brings together climate education, risk perception, territorial bonds, community participation, and climate justice. For Psychology education and professional training, it reinforces the need to address the climate crisis as a cross-cutting dimension of psychological practice in mental health, public policy, education, communication, and community care.

4 Final Considerations: Pathways for an Environmental Psychology of Climate Action

This article investigated how Environmental Psychology connects with climate action by articulating academic production, professional practice, and the 2030 Agenda, with a particular focus on SDG 13. The analysis indicates that this connection becomes more robust when the climate crisis is understood through the relationships between people, environments, and territories.

The systematization carried out identified four analytical entry points for this interface: mental health and well-being; public communication, risk perception, and behavior change; community engagement, territorialization, and climate justice; and climate education and professional training. These axes broaden the scope of Environmental Psychology in addressing the climate crisis by providing tools to understand psychosocial suffering, improve communication processes, strengthen community networks, and support adaptation processes that are sensitive to local realities.

The documentary analysis of SDG 13 in Brazil revealed an important tension. On the one hand, there are signs of the institutional reactivation of the 2030 Agenda, including the reestablishment of the National Commission for the Sustainable Development Goals (CNODS), the presentation of the 2024 Voluntary National Review, and the nationalization of the Brazilian SDG targets by Ipea. On the other hand, the analyzed reports point to persistent weaknesses in addressing inequalities and in developing indicators capable of monitoring the educational, awareness-raising, and human and institutional capacity-building dimensions established under Target 13.3.

Environmental Psychology can contribute precisely within this gap between institutional guidelines and lived experiences in territories. Its field of analysis enables an understanding of how individuals and communities perceive risks, process losses, build trust, activate support networks, and develop responses to extreme events. This contribution depends

on participatory methodologies, listening to affected populations, territorial psychosocial assessments, the appreciation of community knowledge, and dialogue with public policies.

As a limitation, this study was not intended to be exhaustive or systematic. Its objective was to construct a theoretical and analytical interpretation of the interface between Environmental Psychology, climate action, and the 2030 Agenda, based on scientific literature, institutional documents, official reports, and recent contributions from Brazilian Psychology. Future studies may deepen empirical investigations of community experiences, academic curricula, public policies, and adaptation practices related to climate change.

Integrating the climate crisis into Psychology education, research, and professional practice has become an ethical, scientific, and professional imperative, particularly in a country marked by extreme climate events and socio-environmental inequalities. Preparing Psychology to respond to a changing climate means recognizing that suffering, belonging, care, and future prospects are deeply connected to territories.

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