

CONSTRUCTING THE DIFFERENCE: QUILOMBOLA SCHOOL EDUCATION AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

 Antonio Jorge Gonçalves Soares^I

 Kalyla Maroun^{II}

 David Gonçalves Soares^{III}

 Translated by: Elisabeth Harris^{IV}

^I Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Natal (RN), Brazil; Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil; ajgsoares@gmail.com

^{II} Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil; kalyllamaroun@gmail.com

^{III} Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), Niterói (RJ), Brazil; davidsoares1234@gmail.com

^{IV} Freelancer, Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil; beth.edfisicaerj@gmail.com

Abstract

This article aims to reflect about the role played by anthropology in the political agenda that resulted in the institution of the subject of rights known as “Quilombola” in the Federal Constitution of 1988, as well as the predominance of anthropological grammar and its recontextualization in Quilombola School Education. Our sources include discussions about the interaction between the field of anthropology with government entities, social movements, the National Curricular Guidelines for Quilombola School Education and an ethnographic experience in a teacher training course. We concluded that public policies geared towards Quilombola communities stemmed from a discourse centered in ethnicity, based on the protagonism of anthropology’s participation in this public agenda.

QUILOMBOLA EDUCATION • PUBLIC POLICIES • CURRICULUM • IDENTITY

PRODUÇÃO DA DIFERENÇA: EDUCAÇÃO ESCOLAR QUILOMBOLA E AS CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS

Resumo

O objetivo do artigo é refletir sobre o papel exercido pela antropologia na agenda política que resultou na instituição do sujeito de direitos nomeado como quilombola na Constituição Federal de 1988, bem como a pregnância da gramática antropológica e sua recontextualização na educação escolar quilombola. Como fontes, utilizamos os debates sobre a interação entre o campo antropológico com as instâncias governamentais, os movimentos sociais, as Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação Escolar Quilombola e a experiência etnográfica em um curso de formação de professores. Concluímos que as políticas públicas voltadas às comunidades quilombolas foram tributárias de um discurso centrado na etnicidade, a partir do protagonismo da antropologia na participação dessa agenda pública.

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PRODUCCIÓN DE LA DIFERENCIA: EDUCACIÓN ESCOLAR EN LOS “QUILOMBOS” Y LAS CIENCIAS SOCIALES

Resumen

El objetivo del artículo es reflexionar sobre el papel desempeñado por la antropología en la agenda política que resultó en la institución del sujeto de derechos denominado “quilombola” en la Constitución Federal de 1988, así como la prevalencia de la gramática antropológica y su recontextualización en la educación escolar en los “quilombos”. Como fuentes utilizamos los debates sobre la interacción entre el campo antropológico con las instancias gubernamentales, los movimientos sociales, las Directrices Curriculares Nacionales para la Educación Escolar en los “Quilombos” y la experiencia etnográfica en un curso de formación de profesores. Concluimos que las políticas públicas dirigidas a las comunidades de los “quilombos” fueron el resultado de un discurso centrado en la etnicidad, a partir del protagonismo de la antropología en la participación de esta agenda pública.

EDUCACIÓN QUILOMBOLA • POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS • PLAN DE ESTUDIOS • IDENTIDAD

PRODUCTION DE LA DIFFÉRENCE: ÉDUCATION SCOLAIRE QUILOMBOLA ET SCIENCES SOCIALES

Résumé

L'objectif de cet article est de réfléchir au rôle joué par l'anthropologie dans l'agenda politique qui a abouti à la reconnaissance du sujet de droit appelé *quilombola* dans la Constitution fédérale de 1988. Il vise aussi à examiner la prégnance de la grammaire anthropologique et sa recontextualisation dans l'enseignement scolaire quilombola. Nos sources proviennent des débats sur l'interaction entre le champ anthropologique et les organismes gouvernementaux, les mouvements sociaux, les lignes directrices du programme national pour l'éducation scolaire *quilombola* et l'expérience ethnographique acquise au cours d'une formation d'enseignants. Nous concluons que les politiques publiques destinées aux communautés *quilombolas* ont été influencées par un discours centré sur l'ethnicité, à partir de la perspective anthropologique de l'agenda public.

ÉDUCATION QUILOMBOLA • POLITIQUES PUBLIQUES • CURRICULUM • IDENTITÉ

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THE PARTICIPATION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PUBLIC ISSUES IS A RECURRING THEME in the sociological discipline. This participation can occur in different manners, such as through the intentional and voluntary participation of researchers in public arenas, as well as through the effects, which are not always predicted, of their scientific production and the effects of the classifications and notions they develop regarding the social space. Giddens (1991) reminds us of the effects of constructing reality based on the notion of double hermeneutics, according to which the concepts of the social sciences and society “out there” are mutually intertwined. While the social sciences necessarily use practical categories from the social universe, they also remake them and, occasionally, make them more sophisticated, as well as creating new categories, which are resumed and reappropriated by the people. An example of this would be categories such as social class, cultural capital, ideology, and others, which became a part of the popular lexicon, public policies and the interpretative frameworks of social movements and were originally formulated in the field of the social sciences.

The aforementioned field frequently engages in and discusses concepts and categories of various public issues, also debating possible solutions for said matters through its interpretations. This is what Burawoy (2006) dubbed public sociology, which is understood as a “manner” of making sociology “engaged”, that does not confuse the indispensable search for scientific objectivity or successive approaches – observing the ethical requirements and commitments to value that are inherent to this search – with the ostensive adoption of moral or even political neutrality (Braga & Santana, 2009). Burawoy (2006), in the opening lecture of the 2004 American Sociology Association Conference, delineated the notion of public sociology, presented other forms of sociological labor division and examined the matrices of professional, political, critical and public sociology. His arguments were geared towards demonstrating the differences between these sociological practices but, above all, their interactions, superpositions and emphases which can demonstrate, for instance, the public dimension, even in multiple sociological productions, be they theoretical, critical, surveys or statistical analyses. At the end of the lecture, he argued that what makes sociology so special (which we can extend to the field of social sciences in general) is not only the fact that it is a science, but also that it contains, in its practice, “a moral and political strength” (Burawoy, 2006, p. 11).

The topic of Quilombola communities in Brazil represents one of these fields of dispute in which it is possible to visualize the public participation of social sciences, with significant effects on the production of laws and regulations about this topic, on state practices, and on the appropriation and circulation of images, arguments and litigation in various fields, such as politics, the media and the legal system. A tangible example of this participation can be observed in the inaugural administrative process for a group to be recognized as a Quilombola community (Chagas, 2001). The continuation of the process, which begins with the group’s self-denomination as such, initially depends on the preparation of a specialized anthropological report, which functions as a certification of the local ethnicity and its collective nature.

This role that is attributed to anthropological knowledge not only demonstrates a peaceful and consensual recognition of the subject’s technical specialization but is also a reflection of its participation in the symbolic struggles, occurring throughout the past few decades, for the implementation of an official definition of who the Quilombola communities are and how they should be treated (Jorge, 2016). According to this conceptual construction, the remains of quilombos would not be associated exclusively with the historical quilombos, the groups that fled

slavery, as common-sense interpretations induce one to believe, but also with groups in a process of ethnic construction, permanently constituted through the establishment of boundaries and the reaffirmation of differences. Such groups would have in common their fight for the rights to the land and the conservation of their territories. This interpretative shift, also known within the anthropological field as a process of resemantization, began with what we can call ethnogenesis (Arruti, 1997). This social process mobilized the participation of many social actors, institutions and fields of symbolic production since the enactment of the 1988 Federal Constitution. Among these participants, it is possible to mention the Federal Prosecutor's Office and the Federal Supreme Court, which discussed a Direct Action of Unconstitutionality¹ pertaining to the topic, as well as the institutional positions of the Fundação Cultural Palmares [Palmares Cultural Foundation], Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (INCRA) [National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform], the Black movement and multiple social movements associated with traditional populations, especially the Coordenação Nacional de Articulação de Quilombos (CONAQ) [National Coordination of Quilombo Articulation], among others (Jorge, 2016; Mota, 2014).

One interpretation that was officialized and based from the beginning on the public participation of the Brazilian Association of Anthropology (ABA), then went on to configure the aspects and structures of public policies associated with these groups. In the field of education, anthropological ideas helped legitimize Quilombola School Education as a modality of basic education. An example of the influence of anthropological grammar can be found in the Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação Escolar Quilombola [National Curricular Guidelines for Quilombola School Education] (DCNEEQ, 2012): these refer to theorizations about culture, ethnicity, identity, ethnogenesis and, as a background, to analyses regarding ethnic-racial, territorial and economic inequalities, developed in the field of social sciences. The notion of Quilombola School Education (QSE) as a distinctive education that is ethnically and territorially anchored can be directly tied to the concept of ethnogenesis and of other formulations that inspire both reaffirmation and the production of cultural differences and ethnic boundaries constructed through the educational practices. Thus, the treatment of the Quilombola issue, as well as all of its developments that directly affect school pedagogical practices, include, as a backdrop, processes for the recontextualization of anthropological grammar.

The present article aims to reflect about the public role played by the social sciences, especially anthropology, in the political agenda that constitutionally implemented the Quilombola communities, as well as the predominance of anthropological grammar in the DCNEEQ (2012) and in the local attempts to develop a differentiated education for Quilombola schools. In this sense, we see this text as a second ethnographical reflection stemming from a study initiated in 2017, which aimed to analyze the creation of a Quilombola school curriculum. From our first observations, we noticed a shallow discussion regarding the Quilombola issue in school curricula and also a relative insecurity regarding the definition of how a Quilombola school should function (Soares et al., 2022).² However, the community leadership and the municipal department of education were both dissatisfied with the active model of education at the time (Soares et al., 2022)

1 PFL (Liberal Front Party), currently known as the Democratas Party, filed an Ação Direta de Inconstitucionalidade (ADI) [Direct Action of Unconstitutionality], n. 3,239 (2003) to overturn presidential Decree 4,887 (2003), which regulates the processes of recognition and denomination of groups that self-identified as Quilombola communities.

2 Watch the *Rosa do Quilombo* (Maduro, 2022) documentary.

and shared the desire to organize a truly differentiated curriculum that could anchor and adjust the local school to the national curricular guidelines (DCNEEQ, 2012). Two years later, in 2019, we witnessed a synergistic development between community leaders and the department of education with the goal of rebuilding another curriculum that, in the words of local interlocutors, was to become “truly Quilombola” (Magalhães, 2019). This movement created a teacher training course that we were interested in following, since we were being faced with what appeared to be a change in local mobilization geared towards an educational project differentiated and appropriated by and for the community.

Said course occurred throughout four months, between August and November of 2019, and alternated between meetings with the entire municipal education network and meetings with the teachers from the Quilombola school. Three speakers held a place of privilege in these meetings: a representative of the Quilombola movement, the community leader of the Botafogo-Caveira quilombo and an anthropologist who was a professor and researcher at a federal university. Something that caught our attention from the beginning was the importance given to the last speaker in the definition of what the school should be, or which elements should guide the work of the local Quilombola community. It was through the perception of this prevalence that we formulated our first hypotheses about participation in the academic universe of social sciences, especially anthropology, in the structuring of that social universe and its effects on the definition of a project for Quilombola education. To us, it seemed productive to search in the more general anthropological discussion for some normative concepts that were presented to the education professionals on that occasion.

To demonstrate the connection between scientific production in the field of the social sciences and the development of a Quilombola curriculum, we perform the following actions: in the first section, we describe the academic field’s historical process of action, especially concerning anthropology, in the construction of a public agenda pertaining to the Quilombola agenda; the second section contains a description and an analysis of the teacher training course, understanding it as a process for “recontextualizing” the anthropological concepts, materializing as a pedagogical discourse (in the sense espoused by Bernstein [1996]), sensitizing and giving the teaching staff the tools to develop and formalize a Quilombola curriculum (Mainardes & Stremel, 2010). Finally, we present some considerations regarding the participation of social sciences in the public agenda.

The current concept of quilombo and the participation of anthropology in the public agenda

The current notion of quilombo must be observed from the perspective of the public discussions that resulted in the appearance of a resemantized definition for the ethnic groups in question, which became the official interpretation, stating who they are, their composition, and how they must be viewed by public policies. The first public interpretations of the legal category pertaining to the notion of quilombo were geared towards a restrictive vision of the term (Jorge, 2016). According to Matos and Eugênio (2019), two interpretative paths stood in opposition in the analysis of the constitutional mechanism. The first was linked to the dictionary’s definition of quilombo, which considered the historical notion of quilombo to identify and recognize Quilombolas, using the literal sense of the definition *the remaining members of quilombo communities*. This definition was not only associated with the more general representations of quilombos, but

it also viewed land rights as individual property rights. On the other end of the discussion, there was a movement that promoted a semantic shift, which was later baptized by the anthropological field as a process of “resemantization”, that advanced in the emphasis of the concepts of ethnicity and “common use lands”³ belonging to the quilombo remnants. This second interpretation broke free from “a necessary tie between the right to the land as a Quilombola and the need to prove a historical past” connected with slavery (Jorge, 2016, p. 5), increasing the insertion of people and communities in the legal category of Quilombola.

This resemantization movement was the result of discursive and conceptual constructions in the 1990s and the resulting recontextualizations conducted based on the actions of various significant actions performed by social movements, sectors linked to the State and agencies that were involved with the issue (Palmares Cultural Foundation, INCRA), the social sciences and law, especially anthropologists, mainly through the actions of the ABA (Jorge, 2016; Mota, 2014). It was this combination that led to the appearance of a hegemonic interpretation according to which the remnants of quilombo communities are seen as ethnic groups with self-declared identities and the collective right to land, as stated in the 1988 Federal Constitution in recognition of their own forms of territoriality and tradition (Schmitt et al., 2002).

As an inflection point in the construction of this semantic shift, Jorge (2016) identifies the Document from the ABA’s Working Group about Rural Black Communities, which was published in 1994,⁴ as the instrument that pioneered the new interpretation. Thus, quilombos would be ethnic groups in a process of permanent constitution, through the establishment of boundaries and the affirmation of differences; a process that was dubbed “ethnogenesis” (Jorge, 2016). The result of the resemantization process for the term “quilombo remnants” transformed it into a product that was less linked to a dated past and more associated with the results of ethnic and identitarian engagements of social groups that are, dynamically, still forming in the present time (Jorge, 2016; Mota, 2014).⁵

Other categories and concepts stemming from anthropological repertoire would be present in the production of this interpretative framework, such as collectivity, territoriality, collective memory, traditional populations, alterity, and others (Jorge, 2016). However, the main one, that which provided the central base for the term’s semantic shift, was the “ethnicity” category, and its derivations, such as “ethnic groups” and “ethnic boundaries”. To Barth (2000), the process of ethnic identification has, as its main characteristic, the desire to establish the limits between “them” and “us” to define and maintain a “boundary”. More precisely, the established boundary results from a commitment concerning that which the group intends to demarcate. It is a social boundary. Furthermore, ethnicity has more to do with organizational and interactional elements – the ties and manners of sociability among individuals from the same group – than with a mere cultural manifestation. Although at first glance we might classify the groups according to their similarities and differences, these would not suffice to lead to the formation or recognition of different ethnic groups. The sharing of a culture would be a consequence, and not the cause or condition, much less an explanation of ethnicity (Villar, 2004) since the differences between social groups should

3 “Common use lands” were directly related to rural Black communities even before Article 68 of the 1988 Federal Constitution ADCT (Act of Transitory Constitutional Dispositions).

4 See the document and discussion in ABA (1997).

5 Mota (2014) presents the case of the Sacopã Street quilombo, a recent quilombo in Rio de Janeiro’s south zone. The families of Black workers had occupied those lands since the 1930s. After going to court with a case of acquisitive prescription, which took decades, they claimed the Quilombola ethnicity.

not be sought in apparent external characteristics or in the search for an essentiality that claims the notion of a distinctive or “original culture” (Barth, 2000; Cucho, 2002).

Along with the idea of ethnicity, another theory related to the proposals for the resignification of the concept of quilombo was the distinction made by Max Weber regarding the difference between racial and ethnic groups (Jorge, 2016). To Weber (1982), racial belonging is based on a person’s community of origin, while ethnic belonging is established according to a “subjective belief” in one’s community of origin. Namely, classifications that are based exclusively on the social concept of race are one thing while self-classifications in a Weberian sense, which depend on a subjective belief of self-recognition of these individuals as carriers of a qualitative group difference based on their community of origin, would be another. This type of epistemic construction emphasizes the notion of ethnic self-declaration.

Thus, self-declaration became the main form of attributing rights to Quilombola communities. In this sense, Decreto 4.887 (2003),⁶ is fully aligned with the concept of resemantization when it states:

Art 2. For the purposes of this Decree, the remnants of quilombo communities are considered to be ethnic-racial groups in accordance with the criteria of self-declaration, possessing their own historical trajectory, specific territorial relations, with the presumption of Black ancestry related to the resistance against the historical oppression experienced by this group.

Indeed, the development of this interpretation was vital, among other political actions, for the dissemination of categories that are present in the anthropological repertoire. The concepts of ethnicity, ethnogenesis and self-declaration were appropriated, recontextualized and used in disputes and discussions in the main public arenas (legislature, public administration, current legal proceedings, etc.), in which more discussions were held regarding which communities can, or not, be considered Quilombola communities.

It is important to underscore the fact that, while ethnic self-declaration is a stable action, the concept of ethnicity is part of a *continuum*, in the sense that its original boundaries may be more or less delineated, strengthened or consolidated. It is no coincidence that intermediary elements of Quilombola identities comprise the practices for recognizing such groups in Brazil (Jorge, 2016). Part of the literature demonstrates how dances and parties, for instance, have served not as a manner of “rescuing” the past, but for recreating new cultural practices and traditions that legitimize the Quilombola condition and produce greater internal cohesion due to the shared social identity.

Lara et al. (2009) described the creation of a music and dance company called “Kundun Balê” at the Paiol de Telha Quilombola community (recognized as Quilombola since 1988), explaining that the company was created to fill a gap in the matter of the supposed “absence of Black culture” in the community. Similarly, Maroun (2016) demonstrated the role played by *jongo* as a restructuring element of the Quilombola collective memory and identity in Bracuí (Angra do Reis-RJ), contributing to the community’s permanence in the fight for its territory and for the public visibility of its demands. The *jongo* that is practiced today is a process of resignification since, in the past, it had a strong magical-religious appeal tied with religions of African origin

⁶ Regulates the process for the identification, recognition, delimitation, demarcation and registration of the lands occupied by the remnants of quilombo communities mentioned in article 68 of the 1988 Federal Constitution ADCT.

(Maroun, 2016). Finally, Mota (2014) describes how the urban quilombo on Sacopã Street in the south zone of Rio de Janeiro resulted from the group's mobilization, originating from a samba circle that served *feijoada* (typical dish) in the 1980s, better defining this group's Black culture and resistance in the elitist territory of Rio de Janeiro's south zone.

If we consider the fact that Quilombola communities, as subjects of rights, are still relatively recent realities in national republican history, since many of them are still undergoing the process of recognition or registration (Jorge, 2016), and if we add to this the fact that the guidelines for the model of Quilombola School Education (QSE) were only published in 2012, it is clear that we are faced with processes of construction and legitimization, both for differentiated education⁷ and for the reinforcement of said groups' ethnic identities (Barth, 2000). It is important to note that QSE is still under construction, subject to experimentations conducted by educational system administrators, school agents and the communities themselves. As stated by Arruti (2017, p. 109), "Quilombola school education is not a reality of which a precise portrait can be painted, nor is it a specific pedagogical proposal or a defined public policy". However, the indissociability of the trajectories of Quilombola schools and communities has already led to concrete experiences in the scenario of the public education system. Maroun and Carvalho (2017) indicate that two Quilombola schools inserted in different contexts and conducting QSE experiments can be as distinctive as the very process of their communities' processes of formation and self-declaration. However, it is possible to visualize tendencies of work conducted by the schools in this role of developing and strengthening ethnicity. Nevertheless, the following questions remain: How can this be constructed? What are the consequences? Which dilemmas and challenges are predicted?

The public policies geared towards Quilombola communities in Brazil have been characterized by a particular array of policies based on "recognition" and "distribution" (Honneth, 2009; Fraser, 2002; Arruti, 2009; Mota, 2014). The former see Quilombolas as minorities with a particular ethnic identity, which requires the recognition of its differences, while the latter view them as underdeveloped groups that lack the basic rights and protections of national citizenship, indicating a right to equality in material and symbolic opportunities.

Particularly regarding policies associated with the educational field, Arruti (2009) suggests that, initially, the different character of school education in Quilombola communities was dealt with, exclusively, through the lens of redistribution, valuing their inclusion in the access to universal educational resources. Thus, municipalities with a Quilombola presence, that is, those that contained recognized and certified Quilombola communities, were given greater access to funds for financing basic education,⁸ allowing an increase in the number of schools in their territories, small improvements to infrastructure and increased access to other resources such as school meals and transportation.

However, despite guaranteeing greater inclusion to Quilombola communities, these gains were marked by references to a universal, undifferentiated school. It was only in 2012, with the implementation of the DCNEEQ, that a new stage of this process began, broadening the recognition

7 The concept of differentiated education is directly tied to the learning processes, whether school-related or not, of traditional communities. In the school environment, differentiated education for such groups must go beyond universal curricula, incorporating traditional knowledge and its transmission practices.

8 Categorization as "Quilombola" (that is, "located in the space of a community derived from a quilombo", according to the criteria adopted in the School Census form) increases the funding owed by Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação (FUNDEB) to a significant portion from the total of schools (Arruti, 2009).

policies, that is, those that emphasize communities' ethnic and cultural differences through the development of a specific curricular project for education in each of these territories.

This direction taken by public policies, going from a distributive/universal character to the recognition of ethnic and cultural differences, is associated with the process of developing a public understanding of quilombos in Brazil. Thus, we emphasize the argument that the appearance of an official interpretation of quilombos resulted from the contribution of countless social movements and actors, institutions, and the public dimension of anthropology and the social sciences based on their symbolic productions. However, the academic field of Brazilian anthropology was the main formulator of the points that became the official interpretation of the concept of quilombo (Mota, 2014) and it is worth remembering that all of this anthropological grammar was also appropriated and resignified in the educational field and in social movements. Jorge (2016) indicates that the history of the current definition of quilombos can also be understood as the social history of anthropology's monopolistic production regarding this object.

The recontextualization and mediation of anthropological concepts in the pedagogical discourse regarding Quilombola education

As mentioned in the introduction, between 2017 and 2019, we were involved in field research, observing the attempts to implement QSE in the school located in the Caveira community, in São Pedro da Aldeia, Rio de Janeiro. In this period, we observed two different moments that deserve to be highlighted. In the first moment (2017-18), we witnessed the development of a curriculum geared towards symbols of what we can generically dub Africanities, as well as an anti-racist pedagogy that intended to value a Black identity among the Quilombola and non-Quilombola children in attendance. However, the emphasis on the valorization of Blackness and the supposed anti-racist pedagogy produced a sort of dislocation of the school in relation to the local history of resistance, causing discomfort to the political leadership, which began to consider that the Quilombola school functioned very similarly to other schools in the municipal education network.

In 2019, this criticism was recognized by the Municipal Department of Education, which developed a work agenda with the goal of creating a differentiated curriculum for the Quilombola school at Caveira, the only school for this educational modality within the municipality. This led to the offer of a continued education course for the teachers (which was also extended to other school staff members) to support the development of a differentiated curriculum associated with the Caveira quilombo. In September of 2019, the São Pedro da Aldeia municipal department of education created a technical commission to develop the Dona Rosa Geralda da Silveira Quilombola Curricular Proposal (Rodrigues, 2019). Aside from members of the department's pedagogical team, school administration and some of the teachers, the commission also included a representative from the CONAQ, an anthropologist with ties to a federal university, a political leader from the Quilombola community⁹ and our research team, which was invited to observe and help with the course development, if possible.

Throughout the course, we observed continued education actions for the teachers based on the very meaning of what Quilombola communities are and the role the school could play in the construction and consolidation of that particular community's ethnic identity. Our records,

9 Our research team was authorized to follow and participate in the commission's work, as well as the course.

in agreement with the literature on the topic, indicated that the course's experience, with all of its idiosyncratic characteristics, was a part of a broader and more cohesive legal framework that, in short, had to do with the need for engaging and strengthening that Quilombola community's identity. During the course, we observed a process of pedagogization, translation and recontextualization of anthropological concepts, as well as an emphasis on the history of political fights for land rights in Caveira and the social movements that are inherent to the Quilombola cause in Brazilian society. It is possible to say that the course's intent was to create a pedagogical discourse to support the process of curricular construction at the school based on the socialization of recontextualized anthropological ideas.

The anthropologist, who was the main guest lecturer, presented conceptual elements that would be covered in the course,¹⁰ with the target audience being almost entirely constituted of non-Quilombola teachers who were teaching at the school in question. The anthropologist discussed basic ideas about two elementary concepts of the social sciences: *culture* and *identity*. He warned against the naturalization of these terms, present in common sense. Regarding the concept of culture, he defined it based on the history of anthropological theory, bringing up three classical conceptions. The first one associates culture with the notion of a way of life, defending that this idea was based on comparative terms among people, to state that, on the evolutionary scale, some were civilized, and others were primitive or savage. He emphasized that, even today, this evolutionist idea that is somewhat reified in the social fabric is still used in arguments that associate culture with erudition – a pool of knowledge considered superior, that supports a hierarchical distinction between cultural practices, nations and people. The second highlighted concept associated culture with the idea of a people's spirit or soul, a shared mentality, ways of being, feeling and thinking, as indelible marks of a nation, as the “soul” of a group. The third concept, which is also the most recent one, is the one that, according to him, is vital for the school's teachers to incorporate. This concept holds culture as the values that its agents express and the discursive meanings they attribute to their own material and symbolic practices. He emphasized that, in the first two concepts, the interpretations occurred amid the colonial period, with relationships of power that were generally determined from the colonizer's perspective. The third concept represented an epistemological shift, in which the meaning of culture is inscribed in a vital dynamism which, aside from being mutable, disregards any fixed existential or historical condition. This concept, from the anthropologist's perspective, would be the most adequate to apply to the Quilombola communities, since an ethnic group's identity is not always determined by skin color or by cultural or artistic manifestations. Based on this viewpoint, his advice to the teachers was for them to listen and interact with the community, notice the traces of what it presents as local culture, local history and, basically what it values and practices in everyday life in the occupied territory.

From our perspective, the anthropologist encouraged the teachers to go beyond the walls of the school, adopting the persona of “lay-ethnographers” in the Caveira Quilombola community. Upon understanding the cultural logic of that location and the Caveira community, the teachers should select knowledge, history and content to be emphasized in the development of that school's curriculum. By highlighting the fact that the concept of culture shifted from an outside determination to an internal narrative stemming from the group, the anthropologist was describing, in other words, the process of ethnic self-declaration and mobilization.

10 Here, we bring a selection of the main elements covered in the teacher training course.

As for the concept of *identity*, he insisted on warning the participants that this concept is dominated by common sense, which normally considers it to be immanent, that is, solidly marked in the essences of individuals and groups, in their bodies and subjectivities. The anthropologist's statements frontally attacked the essentialist idea of identity (Cucho, 2002) – mainly through didactic examples and the pedagogical recontextualization of the discussion pertaining to this concept. Against the essentialist conception of identity, he stated that questions such as “Which characteristics *should* native Brazilians *have*?” or “Which characteristics should Quilombolas have?” define the identity of others through stereotypes produced by those who had the power to identify the “other” from an “outside perspective”, which established a relationship of power. However, the anthropologist argued that identities should not be assigned from the outside in, but instead based on what the group or individuals themselves must self-define. The manner in which the group defines itself has to do with the way in which their collective elements and historical processes are constructed, as well as what they themselves establish as their own marks and characteristics.

According to another conception, from Durkheimian sociological theory, identity can be understood as a social construction that is necessarily external to the individuals, who passively incorporate it. It is only through socializing action that the identities would be internalized in those who possessed them. Thus, we would “learn” to be Brazilian or Hindu, from certain regions, certain religions, fans of certain soccer teams, etc. and, once consolidated, such socialization processes function as an indelible mark of what we are, or better, what we imagine ourselves to be.

Clearly, we are faced with an explanation of the pedagogical recontextualization of the ethnicity category, as well as the concepts of self-declaration and ethnic identity, although these were never literally mentioned by the anthropologist, who was adjusting his speech according to the participants. He stated that being Quilombola in Caveira must be an active construction performed by a group that is organized around significant mobilizations of itself and its existential repertoire. He said that, despite this category being necessarily associated with the historical phenomena of slavery and colonization, as mentioned in the original definition of quilombo, Quilombola identity possesses, beyond historical ties, other markers created by the collective experiences and memories of the families in that community. Leaving behind the essentialisms of old identities, the anthropologist emphasized that “memory was and should be constantly updated by the communities”. Thus, he encouraged the teachers to open channels to the community to better listen to local memories. However, for this to occur, the teachers had to go out into the field and think of education as something larger than the school space and the standardized teaching routines developed for the profession during their college degrees.

Presenting knowledge of the region and the community itself, the anthropologist prescribed that the land conflict be treated as the core of the Caveira identity. After all, in his words, it was the fight for the occupied lands that produced a part of the collective identity of that social group, upon establishing an “ethnic boundary” in relation to society as a whole. Thus, a symbolic marker of the group and its ethnogenesis was recontextualized. It did not matter, according to the model for anthropological prescription, how each family got there; if each individual's phenotype showed elements associated with Blackness; if they possessed a distinctive cultural element. What was expected from a Quilombola community was a common history and memory of the community's formation, in this specific case, marked by the fights for the occupied lands against the supposed landowners who held the land titles thanks to violent processes legitimized by the State. The anthropologist insisted that the teachers should abandon the allegoric aspects of Black identity,

even their exotification, to seek elements and knowledge alongside the community, to reflect about the axes of that specific Quilombola curriculum.

In these terms, the school gained a new function. Not only was it to operate based on the classic pedagogical presumption of beginning with the local culture and reality to create the curriculum, but it was also to actively produce mobilizations and legitimizations of the Caveira community's specific struggles. To some extent, the school was not supposed to merely respect and reproduce the community's ethnic and cultural characteristics but, somehow, it was to develop, (re) elaborate and systematize the local ethnic identity and memory, with the last point focusing on the (historical) struggles of many families for the right to remain in their lands. The anthropologist encouraged the teachers to be active in this process and conduct, as previously mentioned, a sort of "lay ethnography" of the community to develop a differentiated curriculum and the Quilombola identity alongside the community leaders.

Other common cultural elements were listed and should be considered a consequence of the community's social interaction: the way they make flour, the practical mathematics used by community elders, the family trees of group members, etc. However, one point that was repeated many times was that the mobilization of "folkloric" cultural elements or those linked to "Africanities" – such as products and dances that are supposedly Quilombola or "exotic" – based on superficial associations between the community and the African continent should be avoided or always mediated in accordance with local reality. The Caveira school should be, according to what we understood from the anthropologist, an instance of ethnic mobilization in the construction of the local Quilombola identity which, in the absence of previously consolidated cultural elements, should underscore the networks of support and internal cohesion resulting from the threats of territorial loss undergone by the community during the 20th century. With this, using the terms espoused by Bernstein (1996), it would be possible to state that we were faced with a process of recontextualization of anthropological discourse according to pedagogical discourse.

The construction of singularity and difference in the heart of QSE would then become a part of the education of professionals engaged in both the mobilization and construction of this memory associated with the fight for land. As we speculated in our discussions during the field work, the course's normative tone attempted to induce and provide hints for the teachers to become "para-ethnographers" or "para-historians" for the community surrounding the school in the sense of developing a "text" or a "translation" that established that group's boundaries and idiosyncrasies. Here, the school should bring about the consolidation of Quilombola identity which, according to the community leaders, was not yet consolidated (Jesus Oliveira & Martin, 2014; Soares et al., 2022).

Strengthening the topic of boundary establishment, the CONAQ representative described how Quilombola communities in other cities and regions of the country were organized. She explained that the ways in which these communities dealt with the land were, generally speaking, different from the ways of white farmers, underscoring the difference pertaining to the ethnicity and territoriality that were common to these communities.¹¹ From her perspective, the category of Quilombola community remnants, without adequate educational handling, could lead to an existential unrest that would need to be considered during the implementation of QSE. Such

11 The particular forms of rural life and work that will comprise the arguments for the creation of rural school education and these same arguments will be used to demand Quilombola school education, while there are differences in relation to the differences recognized for rural groups (Arruti, 2009).

an idea, due to its association with slavery, could create a stigma that negatively affected the construction of subjectivity in the community's children. She also gave an example related to her personal trajectory, as she "discovered" herself to be Quilombola during her college degree in Education. She used the expression "Quilombola conversion", marking her conscious, voluntary and individual act in taking on this identity but she also highlighted the need to include ethnic mobilization in Caveira as a part of the school's social responsibilities. Thus, she expressed the recommendation to "teach [in this school] the children so that they do not learn about this only when they go to college".

Transforming the knowledge presented by the lecturers into pedagogical practices in the school curriculum was the main goal of the teacher training provided by the São Pedro da Aldeia Municipal Department of Education. The department's educational specialists reminded everyone of the need for teachers to consider three aspects: "How to (re)construct local knowledge?", "How to work on a curricular proposal for the school?" and "How to consider educational strategies?" Thus, the teachers were encouraged to reflect about the Quilombola school's curriculum (which local and differentiated knowledge should be a part of the universal curriculum?) as well as the forms of knowledge transmission (differentiated methods) to be employed in curricular practices.

In the anthropologist's vision, the curriculum presumed a pedagogical text supported on/by the local Quilombola community, with an appeal for the reconstruction of their collective memory and allusions to their ancestry. However, it could not be just any element of their memory (any cultural artifact), but instead the memory of their fights and struggles for the land. In the course we observed, we noted that the process of mediation and recontextualization sought to provide the teachers with concepts and ideas to understand and work with the DCNEEQ, bringing them closer to Barth's (2000) concept of ethnogenesis.

The anthropologist who was involved in the process, whether consciously or not, led through that course a process of recontextualizing and mediating the anthropological knowledge, the Quilombola struggles and the DCNEEQ in the production of pedagogical discourse. He emphasized that the subjects and contents should be connected "whenever possible" to local history or based on the "mediations" between "traditional knowledge" and "consolidated school subject knowledge". From a practical standpoint, he spoke about the convergence between school activities and the life story of individuals from the community, traditional knowledge and the elders' experiences as a manner of "traditionalizing" the universal content of subjects such as Science, Mathematics and Portuguese. At a certain moment, he said:

... Quilombola School Education may, for instance, bring in a member of the community, whether literate or not. Mr. Afonso has mathematical knowledge he uses in his life. This knowledge can be brought to school for the students to observe that there are other ways of counting and measuring beyond official mathematics. This knowledge stems from another cultural logic. (Field diary, Oct. 2019, own translation).

His idea was to stimulate the teachers to use anthropological lenses when constructing curricular mediation and translation processes, considering the need for the school to value local history and knowledge. From another angle, the example above served to relativize the Eurocentric logic that presents itself as universal while calling attention to the existence of other manners of thinking that exist in parallel to the knowledge legitimized by Western thinking; there is nothing more anthropological than using the socialization of a balanced relativism to contemplate the

“other”. From his perspective, the Quilombola school should have a deep knowledge of the history of its children and the families surrounding it, encouraging them to “get interested in the history of their family trunks” (family trees):

We, folks, are Quilombola education, talking about Quilombolas, about our history, you know these children’s stories, right. “Ah, but where do I get whatever?” From the children, right, from their trajectories. Teach them to ask at home: “Mommy, Grandma, why is it like this?”; “Who was Ms. Rosa?”. Based on Ms. Rosa, you can bring up the whole story, right. “Okay, but what about Mr. João?”; “Mommy, what about Mr. Silvio?”; “Mommy, Daddy, Grandma, Grandpa...”. And with this, you bring the families closer to the school. (Field diary, Oct. 2019, own translation).

Conversely, the anthropologist explained that there is no exact and ideal model of a Quilombola school to follow. “*There is legislation that presents principles*”, he stated, citing the DCNEEQ, “*but not models per se*” (Field diary, Oct. 2019, own translation). As such, he suggested observing other cases, such as that of Conceição das Crioulas, Pernambuco,¹² the educational model that inspired the DCNEEQ (Silva, 2012). However, he reminded us that no model can be mechanically transplanted, since the models are idiosyncratic and connected to each community (Field diary, Oct. 2019). Thus, each school should develop its own pedagogical project. Here, we observed that the anthropologist was reinforcing a scenario present in the field of Education, in which each school, as well as its context, is singular, requiring pedagogical choices and decisions that align with its specificities. However, as we know, there are school cultures and administration processes that, occasionally, make schools very similar to one another, despite the singularities imposed upon them by territorial and social relations (Julia, 2001).

The teacher training presented herein attempted, in a certain way, to reinforce a normative ideal that should guide curricular development in that Quilombola school, that is, it should produce a curriculum intended to act upon the students’ subjectivities regarding the construction of their ethnicity. These ethnic subjectivities should be based on the recognition, organization, access and valorization of the memories of the group that, in that space, with all the strengths and weaknesses of community ties, identifies as the Caveira Quilombola group due to the struggle to remain in its land. Thus, we observed that, in the time and space of that teacher training course, there was a pedagogical recontextualization of the discourse/text constructed throughout years of discussions and actions pertaining to the definition of the Quilombola community category,¹³ for which the mobilization of each group’s ethnic identity is a central element and based on which the school is expected to work on the development and intermediation of this identity in the heart of the community (Soares et al., 2022).

Although we have not included in this text any data collected regarding the pedagogical proposals put forth by the teachers, it was possible to visualize some indications of the dilemmas associated with the context of school practices. The teachers’ reception of the ideas presented in the course was symptomatic of the effects of the recontextualization of a discourse/text (Bernstein, 1996; Gallian, 2008; Mainardes & Stremel, 2010). They made a visible effort to understand the recontextualized meanings of ethnicity, ethnic mobilization, indissociability between school/

12 Conceição das Crioulas is located 550 kilometers from Recife and is one of the quilombos that was recognized by the Palmares Foundation in 1998 and received the deeds to its lands in 2000. It is a community with a strong identity and cultural projects geared towards Quilombola education.

13 Article 68 from the 1988 Federal Constitution ADCT; DCNEEQ.

community/territory etc., as well as to deconstruct their own ideas about culture, identity and quilombos. However, some of the questions they asked reflected some barriers present in the process of recontextualization and mediation developed in that context: *“Why was this culture lost? Because the children do not pass anything on to us?”*; *“How can we teach them something without a practical experience if they themselves lost their cultures and identities?”*; *“What defines a Quilombola?”*; *“How can we recover what is not present in the community?”*. One of the teachers complained that this process should be conducted from the community to the school, and not the opposite. In other words, her intervention, during the discussion that was held in the course, was to complain about the odd situation of the teachers at that school, who did not belong to the Caveira Quilombola community, being responsible for the reconstruction of local history and the mobilization of the Caveira Quilombola community’s identity. The strangeness felt by the teachers in the face of the demands presented by the development of a differentiated school education for the Caveira Quilombola community was not a surprise considering the challenges they already face with the basic universal curriculum that is established for these levels of education.

Final considerations

The appearance of public policies geared towards the country’s Quilombola communities, such as the land and educational policies, stemmed from a discourse centered in ethnicity and difference, with the establishment and reproduction of social boundaries and based on the strong role played by anthropology through its participation in this public agenda. As mentioned by Mota (2014), Brazilian legal and social sensitivities depend on manners of “constructing differences”, to make individuals “without rights have rights”, that is, to transform underprivileged individuals and/or groups into beings (re)cognized in the public space and by public policies. This operation of highlighting difference as a form of accessing basic public resources is strikingly described in Mota (2014, p. 171):

The mere occupancy of a social position, such as that of “favelado”, an inhabitant of an “irregular occupation”, has no pragmatic effects regarding the right to remain in one’s home in the community in case of eviction or a conflict with the state. In this case, there is only the “right to have no rights”. In contrast, in the case of a person whose social identity is associated, for example, with the “Quilombola” social category and is a member of the group of inhabitants descending from slaves, this individual can “at least” access basic resources to retain legitimacy and attempt to recognize their fundamental rights, possibly even stopping the demolition of their home in case of eviction, as the subject has acquired the right to have some rights.

The social movements, the legal field, and the discursive research and production, especially when associated with the Brazilian anthropological field, can be understood as the producers of this effect in public agendas that emphasize differences (Jorge, 2016). It is not only a case of social science participation in public issues, but also an example that demonstrates the interesting capacity for transforming social matters through the knowledge and theory we produce, a mechanism that Giddens (1991) termed double hermeneutics, as mentioned before.

The interpretations made by the academic field on its trajectory to the schools include, necessarily, the redevelopment of knowledge/texts/discourses, first in official agencies and, a

posteriori, from these to the schools (Bernstein, 1996). This whole process invites us to reflect within the educational field, as it requires new positions from schools, such as the odd situation of making schools responsible for mobilizing their surrounding communities, in the somewhat complicated role of local ethnic reconstruction.

The explanation of the operating principles in the development of QSE texts can contribute to a sociological analysis of real possibilities for schools to fulfill yet another public requirement, among the many that are directed towards it. It is worth highlighting that practical manifestations of differentiated Quilombola school education can not only be varied, but even contradictory, with their only common factor being the fact that they result from a conflict of perspectives, projects and expectations. Thus, a necessary research agenda within this field is to understand how local cultures are treated in the Quilombola schools and their communities, how they are inserted and emerge from situations of conflict and struggle, often trapped between the collective desires for schooling and the universal curriculum, which is linked to documents such as the Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação Básica [National Curricular Guidelines] and the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) [National Common Curricular Base].

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Note on authorship

Antonio Jorge G. Soares – conceptualization; data collection, field work; discussion and analysis of the results; article’s planning and writing; revision and approval of the article’s final version; obtained the funding for the project.

Kalyla Maroun – data collection, field work; discussion and analysis of the results; article’s planning and writing; revision and approval of the article’s final version.

David G. Soares – conceptualization; data collection, field work; discussion and analysis of the results; article’s planning and writing; revision and approval of the article’s final version.

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After publication, the data will be available on demand to the authors.

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