QUILOMBOLA IDENTITY AND MOBILIZATION ON THE AMAZONIAN MARAJÓ ISLAND

IDENTIDADE E MOBILIZAÇÃO QUILOMBOLA NA AMAZÔNIA MARAJOARA

IDENTIDAD Y MOVILIZACIÓN QUILOMBOLA EN
LA ISLA DE MARAJÓ EN LA AMAZONÍA

Dérick Lima Gomes - Federal University of Pará – Pará – Belém – Brazil
dericklima16@hotmail.com

Heribert Schmitz - Federal University of Pará - Pará - Belém – Brazil
heri@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Fabiano de Oliveira Bringel - Federal University of Pará - Pará - Belém - Brazil
fabianobringel@gmail.com

Abstract

This article aims to analyze *Quilombola* collective identity in light of social movement theory, more specifically through the contributions of Political Process Theory and New Social Movements -Theory. The debate elucidates our understandings of the practices that maintain and strengthen the social identity of the group. Research was carried out in Salvaterra (Brazilian state of Pará) and consisted of interviews, direct observations, in-field annotations and collection of bibliographic references and documents. Residents' processes of identifying as *Quilombola* in the municipality began with their assertion of a legal claim to territory, but was not limited to this, as the *Quilombola* community also created practices and events that valorize the Quilombo image. The (re)construction of symbols seeks to strengthen group identity, which has a strategic, cognitive and mobilizing character. The combination of the cited theories allowed us to understand that, even though the structures of political opportunities influence the origins of social movements, their durability, consolidation, and achievements do not depend on fundamentally political actions alone, but also on building a sense of belonging to collective, made possible through identity processes.
Keywords: Identity, mobilization, Quilombolas, Marajó island.

Resumo

Este artigo tem por objetivo analisar a identidade coletiva quilombola à luz das teorias dos movimentos sociais, mais especificamente por meio de contribuições da Teoria do Processo Político e da Teoria dos Novos Movimentos Sociais. O debate conecta-se ao entendimento das práticas que permitem a manutenção e o fortalecimento da identificação do grupo social. A pesquisa foi realizada em Salvaterra (PA), por meio de entrevistas, observações diretas, anotações e levantamento bibliográfico-documental. A identificação quilombola no município iniciou-se com a reivindicação dos títulos definitivos dos territórios, mas não se limitou a isso, pois se criaram práticas e eventos que valorizam a imagem dos quilombos. A (re)construção de símbolos procura fortalecer a identidade do grupo, que tem caráter estratégico, cognitivo e mobilizador. A combinação teórica utilizada permitiu compreender que, embora as Estruturas de Oportunidades Políticas influenciem a origem dos movimentos, a sua durabilidade, o seu fortalecimento e as suas conquistas não dependem apenas de ações essencialmente políticas, mas da formação de sentimentos de pertencimento a uma unidade comum, possível com o processo de identificação.
Palavras-chave: Identidade, mobilização, quilombolas, Marajó.

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la identidad colectiva *quilombola* a la luz de las Teorías de los Movimientos Sociales*,* más específicamente por medio de contribuciones de la Teoría del Proceso Político y de la Teoría de los Nuevos Movimientos Sociales. El debate se conecta a la comprensión de las prácticas que permiten el mantenimiento y fortalecimiento de la identidad del grupo social. La investigación fue conducida en Salvaterra (estado de Pará, Brasil) a partir de entrevistas, observaciones directas, notas y levantamiento de bibliografía documental. La identificación *quilombola* en el dicho municipio comenzó a partir de la demanda por los títulos definitivos de los territorios, no obstante no se resumió a esto, visto que se crearon las prácticas y eventos que valoran la imagen de los *quilombos*. La (re)construcción de símbolos busca fortalecer la identidad del grupo, que tiene un carácter estratégico, cognitivo y movilizador. La combinación teórica utilizada permitió comprender que, a pesar de que las Estructuras de Oportunidades Políticas influencien el origen de los movimientos, la durabilidad, el fortalecimiento y las conquistas de los mismos no dependen apenas de acciones esencialmente políticas, sino de la formación de sentimientos de pertenencia a una unidad común, posible con el proceso de identificación.

Palabras clave: Identidad, movilización, quilombolas, Isla de Marajó.

Introduction

In recent decades, identity studies have become more common in the Humanities, influenced by the strengthening of theories that question the explicative power of social class as a concept. Identification processes, aimed at obtaining respect for differences, have further allowed numerous groups to assert their political demands (Hall, 2014).

In Brazil, the struggles of diverse traditional populations for land redistribution and recognition of their specific ways of appropriating nature stand out—all being claims backed by the Federal Constitution of 1988 (Brasil, 2016). This is true for Quilombo communities who have long been victims of discrimination and today demand rights to definitive titles of their territories through collective self-identification (O'Dwyer, 2007).

In the past, individuals belonging to this social group were strictly seen as "residues" or "survivors" of slavery. Almeida (2002) and Leite (2000) argued for the need to provide new theoretical and legal meanings of the term, and not devise Quilombo residents (*Quilombolas*) as subjects of the past, but as actors who fight against inequalities today. Other studies associate the Quilombo identity with political mobilization that configures as a *re-existence* (Porto-Gonçalves, 2012).

Different authors contend that identities are socially constructed and subjected to modifications in the face of desires, needs, and possibilities (Bauman, 2005; Castells, 2001). The very return to a one's origins is not limited to remembering the past but helps future projects by turning them political. For this reason, recognizing oneself as Quilombola is a complex

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task that, like all identity processes, involves contradictions, which act "[...] both 'outside' of society, crossing over established political groups, and 'inside' the mind of each individual" (Hall, 2014, p. 15).

According to Alonso (2009), who reviewed principal social movement theories, the first studies on collective action conceived emotions as obstacles to mobilization.[1] This changed with the emergence of two specific lines of thought, originating with the exhaustion of Marxist debates on the possibilities of revolution called, Political Process Theory (*Teoria do Processo Político* - TPP) and New Social Movement Theory (*Teoria dos Novos Movimentos Sociais* - TNMS). Studies in these areas opposed economic analyses of collection action, along with the deterministic conception of the proletariat as the only universal historical subject; they elaborated macro-historical arguments that mixed cultural and political aspects into their understandings of social movements.

In our analysis, we contend that a combination of the two allow us to analyze the collective Quilombola identity in a strategic, symbolic and mobilizing way. The approximation of the two has already occurred, as has the reciprocal incorporation of some of their concepts. Thus, in addition to the cited reflections (Melucci, 1988; 1995; 1996; Tarrow, 2009; Tilly, 1993), in this work, we will also use the contributions of Blumer (1995), Benford and Snow (2000) who are also considered, to a greater or lesser degree, by the former authors.

The objective of this article is to analyze the collective Quilombo identity in light of social movement theories, specifically via the contributions of Political Process Theory (Tarrow; 2009; Tilly, 1993) and New Social Movement Theory (Melucci, 1988; 1995; 1996). Our study area is the municipality (county) of Salvaterra located on the Marajó archipelago, where 15 rural communities requested definitive land titles for their territories. Our discussion seeks to contribute to understandings actors' strategies through studying their specific practices and approaches through the lens of the previously cited theories. In this way, we consider Nicholls's (2007) critique of the need for geography not only to conceive of social movements as by-products of structural contradictions between antagonistic classes, but to understand how actors engage in collective mobilizations.

Quilombola self-identification processes in Salvaterra mainly began with attempts to acquire specific rights, such as land titles for collective

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territories. While motivated by structural issues, these processes were not, however, limited to possibilities arising from the 1988 Constitution—as they have also sought for the maintenance, redefinition and strengthening of the group to enhance future mobilizations. In this way, "non-territorial" actions that support the control and conquest of territories (Sack, 2011) use collective identification as a structural instrument in Quilombola demands in the municipality.

To conduct this study, we used qualitative research tools such as: bibliographic and documental research, cartography and open interviews with community leaders and residents during fieldwork. Following the suggestions of Beaud and Weber (2007), we "vertically" analyzed the accounts of each interviewee and examined the "horizontal" relationships between them, situating each within the plane of the defined objective. We opted to use codenames to preserve the identity of our interlocutors, which also allowed for more freedom in the use and exposition of narratives. Direct observations and fieldwork notes also aided the present analysis (Brandão, 2007).

This article is organized in the following way: the first part, contextualizes the Quilombo question in Brazil, showing how other social segments directly associate demands for land tenure; we also demonstrate the structural possibilities stemming from the 1988 Constitution that fed intuitional claims; following this, we describe the characteristics of the Salvaterra Quilombo Territory—how it was formed and its current situation, and finally, we analyze the relationship between collective identity and the mobilization practices of black communities in the study area.

Quilombola mobilization in Brazil

Quilombos were one of the first forms of resistance against colonial slavery, re-emerging in Brazil as the Black Front in the 1930s and returning to the political scene at the end of the 20th century. In recent decades, diverse groups, organizing themselves into Quilombola associations, have requested rights to their lands and the full exercise of their practices, beliefs, and values (Leite, 2000), as guaranteed by article 68 [2]of the Federal Constitution of 1988 (Brasil, 2016).

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Black people in Brazil historically suffered many hardships and disqualifications regarding the legitimacy of their claims to the lands needed to develop their activities. With the 1850 Land Law (*Lei de Terras de 1850*) and later, the abolishment of slavery, freedom did not emancipate them from their past. In fact, turning land into goods (merchandise) to be bought and sold, made it more difficult for these groups to access them; substituting the enslaved with migrant workers in this context stemmed from the belief that "[in] these relations there was no place for the worker who considered freedom as a negation of work, but only for the worker who considered work as a virtue of freedom" (Martins, 2013, p. 35).

Because of various types of racism and violence, these individuals were systematically expelled and removed from the spaces they decided to inhabit, even when the lands were purchased or inherited from old landowners with testimonies (wills) issued by notaries. For this reason, conquering a space to engage in one's practices came to represent an act of courage, struggle, and survival (Leite, 2000).

Today, Quilombola land struggles are based in claims for land regularization and are simultaneously attempts to partially repair the historic social exclusion of Afro-Brazilians (Carril, 2006). Old and contemporary Quilombos, thereby, have an intrinsic relationship with respect to current land claims, which make the national agrarian question even more complex.

Past exclusion of these populations also occurs as a symbol; for instance, for groups who suffer from stigmatization today, such as urban Quilombo groups living in the peripheries (Carril, 2006), "Quilombo" signifies the right to be recognized, not just remembered (Leite, 2000). Thus, as Almeida (2002, p. 67) argues, we need to shift our thinking when it comes to past conceptions of the "Quilombo", as such: "[…] the starting point for a critical analysis is questioning how social agents define themselves and represent their relationships and practices vis-à-vis the other social groups and agencies with which they interact".

If during slavery Africans and Amerindians were racially identified by colonizers as "black" and "Indian", as a domination method (Quijano, 2005), today the same categories have been given new meanings and are used to obtain rights that were historically negated. This process thus transforms terms of stigma and prejudice into instruments of mobilization (Cunha; Almeida, 2000).

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The category "traditional peoples" is similar in that it carries both empirical and political dimensions (Little, 2002). The term "traditional" does not refer to some sort of "archaic" or "irrational" practices of these peoples whose knowledge and of nature are notably efficient. Yet, rather from their putting into action a public identity though which they seek gains that extend to the institutional realm (Cunha; Almeida, 2000). These identities are reconstructed and negotiated in accordance with specific historical contexts. The concept of the Structures of Political Opportunities (*Estrutura de Oportunidades Políticas* - EOP) suggests that mobilization processes emerge when changes cause opportunities in the formal or informal dimensions of the political environment. When this occurs, new channels through which they group can express their demands emerge, where they find "[...] opportunities to present their demands when institutional access opens, or when differences among elites arise, when allies become available or when State's repressive power diminishes" (Tarrow, 2009, p. 99).

The 1988 Constitution, and in general, the re-democratization of the country operated like an EOP, mobilizing Quilombo and other traditional peoples. With favorable Structures of Political Opportunities (Tarrow, 2009; Tilly, 1993), the organization of subaltern groups or those unsatisfied materialized as demands were made in the public arena, and collective identities were used an important.

In addition to the possibilities stemming from the Constitution, which resulted from social movements' struggles for the inclusion of emancipatory proposals for black and rural populations, the environmental cause can be cited as a propellant of potential allies. In the face of the global climate change and environmental degradation, the constitution not only provided legal possibilities to social groups, but also motivated many of these groups to make their struggles "environmental" (Lopes, 2006).

In Amazonia, many actors took advantage of this opportunity. According to Porto-Gonçalves:

> What is new regarding the construction of the image of Amazonia today, is that it is not restricted to diplomatic offices or those of large companies wanting to explore the region's resources. Today, in addition to the same old protagonists are other participants, such as indigenous and rubber tapper leaders, leaders of family farmers, leaders of the rural workers union, in addition to other segments of First World societies, beforehand unconnected; among

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the latter, ecologists and union leaders from Germany, Italy, Spain and Denmark, as well as other countries that helped support the haltering struggles of these Amazonian populations. New agents participated in this new debate concerning the region's destiny (Porto-Gonçalves, 2012, p. 14).

Hence, traditional populations, whose forms of association go beyond the narrow scope of a trade union entity, now base their claims on ethnic, ecological, gender and collective self-definition (Almeida, 2004). Cruz (2013) points out the importance of this context in rural struggles, not only as a land redistribution policy, but as recognizing the differences of groups who claim their rights. These are "territorial rights" in the sense that territory operates as a capacitor through activating collective identities.

External political opportunities do not *a priori* sustain social groups. For this to occur, mechanisms that take advantage of structural possibilities must be employed (Tarrow, 2009). In this context, the Quilombo identity is strategic because it helps different groups demand rights guaranteed by law (such as definitive land titles or access to specialized education); it also has a symbolic-cognitive character, which potentializes the group's feelings of belonging and strengthens their participation in political mobilization. These commonly associated aspects permeate through the demands made by Quilombolas of Salvaterra.

The Salvaterra Quilombo Territory

In Amazonia, slavery of both indigenous and Africans peoples occurred simultaneously. While the first were exploited to collect forest products called *drogas do sertão*, the later were used to develop agricultural activities, including animal husbandry (Bezerra Neto, 2012). This occurred in eastern Marajó, which mainly consists of natural savannas (*campos naturais*), where raising cattle was the Portuguese Crown´s most desired economic activity during colonization. As Pacheco (2010, p. 41) states "[it] is possible that the first Africans were introduced to the region beginning in 1644, together with the first herd of cattle transported from the Cape Verde Islands".

According to Marin (2009), cattle raising on large estates was economically unstable during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries—periods

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in which ranches reduced their productive capacities or were abandoned when their owners moved to Belém, the capital of Pará state. In this context, "Quilombolas, indigenous and mixed-race peasants came to occupy 'leftover lands', ranches and other abandoned landholdings. Others received lands through donations or purchased them (Marin, 2009, p. 214).
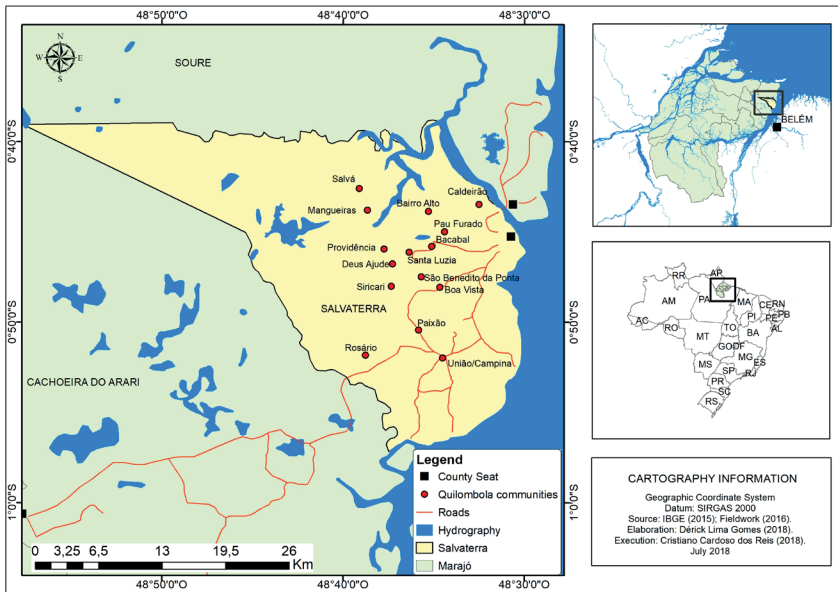
MAP 1 - Location of Quilombos in the municipality of Salvaterra (PA)

Source: IBGE (2015); Fieldwork (2016).

As a result of these historic processes, today 15 rural communities in Salvaterra identify as Quilombolas and have requested definitive recognition of their territories, representing the greatest density of Quilombos per square kilometer in Brazil. Among them are: Campina, Salvá, Bacabal, Santa Luzia, Deus Ajude, Rosário, Boa Vista, São Benedito, Pau Furado, Caldeirão, Paixão, Mangueiras, Bairro Alto, Siricari and Providência.

The request for land titles stems from advances in land speculation, the tourist industry, and the expansion of large properties with electric fences, all threatening Quilombolas' access to natural resources and beginning in the middle of the 20th century (Marin, 2009). Quilombola

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livelihoods are based on agriculture, fishing, hunting and the collection of forest products—precisely why residents need access to the territories historically appropriated by their ancestors, which provide them with income and food resources.

Because these groups obtained their lands through different mechanisms, which range from donations, purchases, inheritance, and registered occupations, they are subject to different land regularization processes—not withstanding their proximity. This does not impede, however, unity in their land claims since communities, in alliance with the Coordination of the Quilombo Communities of Pará State (*Coordenação Estadual das Associações de Comunidades Remanescentes de Quilombos do Estado do Pará* - Malungu), denounce the fences that impede their ability access lakes, savannas and forests; fencing of land has historically caused territorial tensions between ranchers and traditional people of the archipelago (Marin, 2009).

In a broader sense, the Quilombo struggle fight for land titles is an attempt to reconcile centuries-old land concentration patterns in Salvatera. To illustrate this point, we provide some data: in Salvaterra a total of 373 landholdings belong to small family farmers[3], representing 91% of all properties, however, this is equal to just 3.045 hectares or 34% of the total area. On the other hand, 38 landholdings belong to large property owners (9%), but concentrate 5,790 hectares, equivalent to 66% of the area (IBGE, 2006).

More recently, the Pará state government with support from the city governments of Salvaterra and Cachoeira do Arari expressed the desire to implement rice plantations in the savannas of the archipelago. Since 2010, this process has also come to the attention of the Quilombolas who denounce new territorial conflicts, environmental impacts and land speculation patterns resulting from agri-business expansion in the region (Gomes; Bringel, 2016; Gomes et al., 2018).

Even though the majority of Quilombos requested land recognition and regulation more than ten years ago, not a single title has been granted (Table 1). Due to this impasse, the social group has developed forms of mobilization that together can be defined as "[...] the process by which a collective entity gathers and organizes its resources for the pursuit of a shared objective against the resistance of groups opposing that objective" (Melucci, 1996, p. 289).

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Community	Start of process	Current status
Bacabal	2005	Expropriation decree published in the DOU*
Bairro Alto	2010	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation
Boa Vista	2007	RTID in elaboration
Caldeirão	2007	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation
Campina	2004	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation
Deus Ajude	2005	RTID in elaboration
Mangueiras	2010	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation
Paixão	2008	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation
Pau Furado	2007	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation
Providência	2013	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation
Salvá	2005	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation
Santa Luzia	2005	RTID published in DOU
São João	2007	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation
Rosário	2008	RTID published in DOU
São Benedito	2008	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation
Siricari	2013	Certificate issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation

Table 1 - Land titling processes of the Quilombo territories in Salvaterra, Pará

Source: Comissão Pró-Índio de São Paulo, 2018. Note: * DOU – Official Journal of the Union (*Diário Oficial da União*).

In May of 2017, for example, Quilombolas from Salvaterra and other sub-regions of Pará occupied the superintendency of the Agrarian Land Reform Offices (*Instituto de Colonização e Reforma Agrária* - Incra) of Belém. They requested speeding up titling processes in the state. After this and other complaints, the Federal Prosecutor's Office (*Ministério Público Federal* - MPF) determined in April of 2018 that the State and Incra must regularize Quilombola lands in Salvaterra, such that communities that already had Technical Identification and Delimitation Reports (*Relatório Técnico de Identificação e Delimitação* - RTID) published the must have their processes concluded within "….24 (twenty-four) months; processes in more initial phases, without RTID publication, should be concluded within 48 (forty-eight) months".

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As Tilly points out (1993, p. 264), actors opt for specific means to obtain results when faced with difficulties, something the author refers to as a repertoire, or "[...] a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice". In this case, occupying Incra, was inspired by a repertoire initially developed by the Landless Rural Workers Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* - MST), which has proved efficient, persisting over time and being used by other social groups. We can attest that it is through their collective identity that the Quilombolas of Salvaterra were stimulated to carry out this and other actions.

Identification processes in the municipality initially resulted from an important project realized in 2000—the mapping of rural black communities in Pará state executed by the Center for the Defense of Black Peoples of Pará (*Centro de Defesa do Negro no Pará* - Cedenpa) in collaboration with UFPA and the Roots Program (*Programa Raízes*). Before these actions, the Marajó population was not aware of its rights to Quilombo recognition and land regularization, even though they fought for decades against ranchers for these spaces (Lima Filho; Silveira; Cardoso, 2016).

> We went to a Quilombo meeting, we went all the way to Siricari, we liked it a lot. From there we began to understand from where we descend, based on the information from the other study. We did not invent that. Because sometimes you are born, but do not know where you come from. But we went after this information (Mr. Cravo, 2015).

> To be Quilombola is to rescue the culture of our ancestors, our grandparents' past, which is often forgotten. And the community association is very important. Through this organization we can demand many things (Ms. Jasmim, 2015).

These first meetings served as a foundation from which Quilombo groups could together reconstruct their ancestors' memories. Since experiences were shared through oral histories, not written, the mediation of researchers, Malungu and other institutions was fundamental for the collective reconstruction of a territorial history; beforehand, the origin of the families was not known in a systematic fashion despite the close degree of kinship between Quilombolas in the municipality. Today, as

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Ms. Jasmin relates, self-recognition does not relegate communities to the past, but allows residents go after their rights via community associations.

While the collective Quilombo identity was supported by the above-mentioned allies, some from the opposition questioned this legitimacy. In an interview with the journal *Valor Econômico*, a rice farmer who established himself in Marajó after being expropriated from the Raposa Serra do Sol Indigenous Land in Roraima state, displayed his indignation with Quilombola opposition to his business dealings saying, "a group of people are now claiming to Quilombola" (Barros, 2014, p. 1). As Bruno (2017) demonstrates this farmer's statement is not an exception, large landowners in Brazil use this type of disqualification as a principal means of impeding traditional communities' efforts to mobilize for rights recognition.

As discussed in the previous topic, the 1988 Constitution offered Quilombola communities opportunities to obtain diverse rights (Brasil, 2016), such as the definitive recognition of their territories, operating as a Structures of Political Opportunity (Tarrow, 2009). In this way, while titling processes are frequently slow, by using a collective identity Quilombola groups revive their collective memories and can resist the actions of external agents, such as ranchers.

Identification strategies in Salvaterra are related to obtaining land rights and, as previously mentioned, the Quilombo territory acts as a condenser of political rights (Cruz, 2013), as well as a controlled and appropriated space with a specific territoriality (Sack, 2011). This is evident in Luzia Betânia Alcântara´s statement cited in Booklet Seven of the New Social Cartography Project (*Projeto Nova Cartografia Social*) produced in collaboration with Salvaterra Quilombo communities:

> We began our struggle, struggle for which we need to unite, come together and fight for our territory. Territory of the Quilombo communities of Salvaterra. We can not ask for land, for example, just for Bacabal community. We must request land for everybody, we must speak the same language. We must meet frequently to obtain our goals; it is not each one for himself or herself, but everyone for all, and all for a Quilombo territory of Salvaterra (Projeto Nova Cartografia Social da Amazônia, 2006, p. 3).

In the past, demands in the municipality occurred through local organizations, such as fisher, farmer or resident associations, which

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worked in an isolated fashion, responding to the individual demands of each community or social group. These organization concern themselves with practical questions, such as how to access agricultural credits, improve production, restructure schools and health posts etc. In the process of constructing Quilombola identities, actors recognized that problems common to all communities, as well as possible solutions.

Hilário Moraes, the regional coordinator of Malungu and resident of the Caldeirão Quilombo points out the economic, political and social improvement that a definitive land title could bring to Quilombolas, such as more lands for agriculture and greater legitimacy in the eyes of the federal, state and municipal governments:

> Look. The first benefit we would have concerns family agriculture. Because without territory how can one farm? If I can not enter here or there because there is a fence, how is it that I am going to sustain my family if my livelihood is farming, hunting, fishing, forest collecting, do you understand? So, one of the benefits we see is the economy of these families. [...] So, there are things like this that we see would be strengthened with the title, and if you have something in your hand to show the federal government..., we need an entity, right? That is specifically Quilombola, an identity card... To be titled, it's our right tied to the PBQ [Brasil Quilombola Program, *Programa Brasil Quilombola]* (Moraes, 2015).

Quilombo accounts confirm that land struggles are based on the desire to regain control over areas originally appropriated by residents' ancestors through legal legitimacy via definitive land titling (Cardoso; Schmitz; Mota, 2010). For Cruz (2013, p. 163), claims such as this one further involves the recognition of cultural differences and "[...] it is here that we observe a semantic dislocation (from land to territory), in addition to epistemological, political and juridical shifts.

The process of self-identification to acquire rights to one's territory constitutes a contingent instrument of struggle. We stress, however, that collective identity is not a mobilization method restricted to Quilombolas. As Cruz (2013) and Almeida (2004) highlight other traditional populations use similar criteria to guarantee the conquest of their territories and exercise their specific territorialities. This demonstrates that this type of mobilization is not exclusive to one group, but rather emerges from the conflict structure influenced by the Structure of Political Opportunities (Tarrow, 2009; Tilly, 1993).

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Within this context, these actors reinvented themselves and are constructed from their needs and possibilities. The 1988 Constitution allowed for various identities, based on memory and the reinvention of tradition, to be put into action as political instruments. Since their rights were historically denied to them, the use of a Quilombo identity allowed them to act according to institutional frameworks, seeking greater legitimacy within a system, where their position was always marginal. These strategies emerged out of necessity, put into action after recognizing the reduction of natural resources and territories they once controlled, but also materialized due to the possibility of using the legal means guaranteed by the Federal Constitution to obtain their rights.

Hilário Moraes further relates "trickery" (*malandragem*) used in the past as resistance to external agents with the current need to appropriate instruments that are accessible to Quilombolas today, especially legal ones:

> You must use this trickery, man, you must use these guys' language because if you…Weren´t our ancestors tricksters? They were tricksters, man! While they beat us blacks e "threw the bellies, the jelly of calf hooves over there", which was rotten, they planted beans, took a little hidden and thinking it was going to stink, it turned into "feijoada". Feijoada [black bean dish] is our dish, man. When they killed cows, they threw the brains over there…the idea was to survive, clear the belly, real clean, make feijoada. Today, feijoada is the societies' favorite dish, you understand? And other things like. "Why are all these blacks playing the drums and not letting us sleep?", "ah, they are worshipping their Gods", said the Portuguese, the Spanish; Catholicism is very strong over here, so they brought saints' images and gave them names like Conceição, Iemanjá and went putting names all to circumvent, so they were tricksters too, you understand? Ah you are playing capoeira, "What is that you´re doing?", "Oh, this is just a dance!" They had no idea they were practicing self-defense (Moraes, 2015).

Mobilization by these actors seeks alternative futures through a collective identity supported by a return to the groups' roots (Hall, 2004); in this case, the group seeks to guarantee their own territory stemming from the notion of re-existing as black and Quilombola peoples (Porto-Gonçalves, 2012). "Malandragem" or the "use of these guys' language" as Hilário Moraes states is a way to gain legitimacy by way of institutional

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legality, and consequently, to be heard and have their claims attended to. For these reasons, identity and more precisely identification, constitutes a necessary instrument in their struggles. It is not limited, however, to political negotiation in the institutional plane, as it has been strengthened by the creation of new events and symbols.

Melucci (1998) highlights the importance of the construction of collective identity as a component of mobilizations, built through the construction and negotiation of a shared meaning for a set of individuals. From the author's perspective, macro-influences of opportunities and constraints are admitted, but collective action is also mediated by the perception and cognitive apprehension of the actors in the same structural conditions.[4]

Unlike other theories that conceived of the emotions as irrational acts and a cause for demobilization, Melucci (1988) considers psychological aspects as motivators of collective engagements that involve, simultaneously, reason and feeling. Collective identity constitutes itself as subject to change according to negotiations between individuals.

Thus, identification is a process that encompasses cognitive definitions about the means, ends, and field of social actors. It refers to a network of relations between individuals, who communicate, interact and negotiate their decisions. Thus, a certain degree of emotional involvement is required, which allows them to feel part of a collective unity (Melucci, 1995), a process called *esprit de corps*, in reference to Blumer (1995, p. 67) "[...] that people have a sense of belonging together and identify with one another in a common undertaking".

In the municipality of Salvaterra, one can see the importance local actors attribute to Quilombola education, which allows them to acquire infrastructures through educational policies and teach contents related their groups' social history. Painting the school was itself considered a victory. In the words of Ms. Margarida (2015), a resident of the Rosário Quilombo: "we already have our differentiated lunch menu, we have school uniforms, identified with Quilombola colors; we have the school flag, which was also an achievement".[5]

These elements are based on previously discussed victories, legal guidelines dedicated to the educational field can, such as Law 10.639 / 2003[6] (Brazil, 2003). One request refers to content delivered in classrooms to strengthen Quilombola identity which was historically associated

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with pejorative stereotypes, where black peoples were described as lazy, dangerous and unintelligent.

> And I always say to some people, what is this ... Identifying as a Quilombola is not an easy task, due to this range of prejudice, discrimination, racism, that is still very present in society, right? And for there to be transformation and awareness ... It must be very well worked out. I can give an example to you: it starts in the classroom, which the basis from which our teachers teach the History discipline; they only show the negative side of blacks, but do not show the contribution of blacks to the formation of Brazilian society. So that makes the person feel that, even if they have the desire, that desire to identify, but due to this, to that, it seems a pattern right, that the school informs people, like this: undecided. [...] The curriculum, the curriculum used in the classroom, here comes the teacher to discuss the issues of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, issues from out there that have nothing to do with our reality. And what should be explored, the realities of the Quilombos, the Quilombola families, this is not considered (Ms. Margarida, 2015).

> Here at home we never had this problem of this acceptance, but we know that within the community there are those who do not accept themselves. He wants what comes to the Quilombo, but he does not accept himself. Sometimes it is a lack of information, to say Quilombolas are not animals, that Quilombolas are people just like any other. I remember my grandfather saying: "black when it does not dirty the entrance, dirties at the exit". He said that because he did not understand. Me as a black woman, will never let anyone in say that today in front of me. But it has already changed a lot (Ms. Girassol, 2015).

The stigma directed towards Quilombolas makes identification processes complex and require a change in consciousness, of feelings and values regarding the groups' sense of self-importance. Therefore, we can understand the importance of demands to transform school curriculum, such that it does not perpetuate prejudiced views that deviate from Quilombolas' reality, as stated by the first interviewee. Also, for Ms. Girassol, a resident of the Mangueiras Quilombo, the valorization of the Quilombola identity begins with recognizing that many internalize a sense of inferiority that was historically imposed on the black population (Fanon, 2008), which in her opinion has occurred gradually.

In both statements, we notice the desire for a reconstruction of meanings, negotiated out of the existing political and cultural conditions (Melucci, 1988), which should guide and potentialize the process of identifying as Quilombola. At the same time, the fact that some acquire benefits geared toward Quilombos without recognizing themselves as such was also pointed out. For Schmidtke (1995), one of the main functions of collective identification lies precisely in creating sense of unity that mobilizes and encourages individuals to abandon their free-rider attitudes.

There is, however, another aspect that influences the internal negotiation of this collective identity: the expansion of evangelical churches which congregates faithful who refuse to recognize themselves as Quilombola; while some do not deny this identity, they oppose reemerging cultural aspects, mainly related to religious rituals of African origins. In general, however, Salvaterra's Quilombola territory is predominantly Catholic, and religious differences are not a decisive demobilization factor—in contrast to that observed by Boyer (2003) in a village in the Lower Amazon.

In any case, self-identification has become more frequent in Salvaterra. According to representatives of Quilombo groups this derives from: the possibility of access to specific rights; of grassroots work with local youth; the registration of schools as Quilombola; and recreational-political activities, such as the Quilombola Civic Parade and the Quilombola Games, both held in Salvaterra. The latter brings together all the local Quilombos, with music, sports tournaments and dances. Regional aspects are also valued, such as the Marajoara struggle, canoeing and carimbó.[7]

The Quilombola Civic Parade occurs in the urban center and counts on the participation of all the black communities in the municipality, constituting itself as a repertoire of the social group (Tilly, 1993). Permeated by symbolism, the very choice of the 6th of September as the parade day is political in nature. According to Hilario Moraes (2015): "We did not want the fifth, which is 'race' day, but what is this race that discriminates against us? We did not want the seventh, because this is the country´s birthday, what is with this country that has enslaved us for so many years? We chose sixth because that's the empty space between the two, so this is our day!"

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Capoeira, Afro-Brazilian religions and colors, as well as fishing, agriculture and other aspects of the countryside are promoted during this event. Also, noteworthy are the contrasts between this local parade and the conventional ones of September 7th. In Salvaterra, the exaltation of State force is replaced by celebrating the autonomy and diversity of the Quilombola communities. Unlike marching bands, hand drums and *batuques* are used, differing from percussion patterns of military marches (Lima Filho; Silveira; Cardoso, 2016), which demarcates the relational character of identification, made possible when actors recognize the distinction between themselves, the Other and the external environment (Melucci, 1995).

In addition, these events promote socialization between different communities and serve to increase the social group's visibility among the urban population of the municipality. They also demonstrate their culture, political organization and, mainly, give value to the Quilombola image, creating cognitive mechanisms providing the group with a *esprit de corps* (Blumer, 1995). In this quest to strengthen the collective identity, the reconstruction of meanings also seeks to strengthen social mobilizations (Melucci, 1988).

> Today, the movement is strengthened. But before it did not have that strength that it has today, the way people look at the communities. To this day, we are working hard on the issue of trying to take this information, so that our young people begin to take pride in being a Quilombola, and have no shame in saying who they are (Ms. Girassol, 2015).

> For me, being a Quilombola is a privilege, because we have had a lot of struggle, a lot of victories. To be a Quilombola is to be that person who fights, who at the same time suffers, but fights. Never give up or get discouraged. Despite the barriers, we are always together, always fighting (Ms. Rosa, 2015).

If the Quilombola mobilization in Salvaterra had the support of external allies for its creation, today one of the main objectives of the social group is to extend and strengthen its actions to youth, as reported by Ms. Girassol. In 2012, young people from the black communities of the municipality, with the support of Malungu, decided to create a group to stimulate a collective identification, to value Afro-Brazilian culture

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and to form new leaderships. The group was called Abayomi, "… an expression which in Yoruba means 'precious meeting' or 'the best I can give of myself'" (Cavalcante; Beltrão, 2016, p. 75).

Cavalcante and Beltrão (2016) cite some representations present in participants' reports of the collective, such as: the use of the "struggle" category, which associates the Quilombola identification directly with the contestation of historically imposed oppression; the reconstruction of the meaning of being black and Quilombola, now perceived as a source of pride; and gives mentions to older generations since one of the ways of recognizing oneself as a member of the social group is to understand the past based in resistance. Many of these aspects can also be seen in the narrative of Ms. Rosa, a resident of Rosário, who is 21 years old. Another factor that young people refers to is the possibility of having access to higher education through the Special Selective Process (PSE) of UFPA, also guaranteed to indigenous peoples.

As Melucci (1995) points out, the process of collective identification seeks not only to strengthen a sense of "we", but also, the durability of mobilizations, as evidenced by the effort to raise the awareness of Quilombola youth, to form new leaders and provide new meaning to content taught in schools, aiming for a new and most just interpretation of the historical and current importance of the Quilombos.

Thus, although collective identities are influenced by Structures of Political Opportunities, they are not limited to these, since they can be strengthened through the practices of social groups. In this context, the construction of frames,[8] such as the denomination of the youth group, the painting of the schools and the community flags in Quilombola colors, aim precisely to achieve this purpose. With them, movements seek to reduce social complexity to the perception of ordinary individuals, demonstrating the injustices present in the varied situations in which they live. Linking them to symbols, they expose problems that require collective reactions (Benford; Snow, 2000), such as the fight against prejudice and inferiority imposed on black and Quilombola populations.

Therefore, collective mobilizations do not arise only from the conscience of inequality, nor by simple calculations of interests or based on moral principles. In the light of the theoretical discussion and the empirical examples of Salvaterra's Quilombolas, we contend that "[…] mobilizations involve strategic action, crucial for control over assets and

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resources that sustain collective action, and the formation of solidarities and collective identities" (Alonso, 2009, p. 72).

The theoretical combination used here allows us to understand that although structural conditions influence the origin of movements, their durability, strength and achievements do not depend solely on essentially political actions, but also on the formation of a sense of group belonging, being part of a common unity, possible through the identification process (Melucci, 1995).

In short, the construction of the Quilombola identity in Salvaterra emerged from claims for definitive land titles for communities' territories, historically threatened by external agents. Although it is still their main demand, identification has not been limited to this aspect, since it has sought to strengthen practices that value the image of "being a Quilombola", returning to ones' origins to ponder new avenues in the pursuit of demands, including those for titling. The aim here was to demonstrate the complex nature of these processes, which involves structural, symbolic and strategic issues.

Final Considerations

Black history in Brazil is marked by profound economic, political and social inequalities. With the 1988 Constitution, mechanisms allowing Quilombo groups to request rights to their traditional territories were created at an institutional level. Our analysis focused on the post 1988 period to demonstrate how these new laws and judicial frameworks operated as a Structure of Political Opportunities for this social group.

To obtain historically negated rights, Quilombolas used a collective identity to mobilize, which allowed them to use institutional frameworks and fight for their demands within a bureaucratic realm. However, identity processes were not limited to this aspect since it needed to be further strengthened. We sought here to describe some practices working toward this objective, such as recovering local and African traditions, which are constructed as symbols or events aiming to give value to the Quilombola identity ("being Quilombola") and demonstrate injustices common to the social group.

The Quilombo identification process allows us to understand mechanisms through which collective actors engage in mobilizations.

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These, as opposed to being determined by structural conditions, are analytically restricted to conflicts between antagonistic classes (Nicholls, 2007); they are made possible through the creation, reinvention and re-valorization of cultural practices. In a broader sense, the efficiency of social movements is evident in that they result in objective actions and strengthen participants' subjective involvement.

In sum, Quilombola identification processes are at once strategic, symbolic and cognitive. Emotions are activated to optimize rational and deliberate actions used to strengthen demands. As a result, these processes attract a growing number of young people who take pride in their identity who work with older people in collective actions. In this way, cultural and political aspects are associated to one another; identity works as a rallying point for social actors who request, among other rights, the definitive titles of their territories—which as determined by the Federal Prosecutor's Office need to be turned in by April of 2020 and April 2022 for communities with and without Technical Identification and Delimitation Reports (RTIDs), respectively.

While territorial struggles began more than 10 years ago in the case of some communities, not a single land title has been granted. Just two RTIDs have been published and eleven communities received self-identification certifications from the Palmares Cultural Foundation, the document that allows the communities to initiate land titling processes. The most well-advanced process is that of Bacabal, for which a land expropriation decree was issued in 2015; however, residents are still awaiting their definitive land title. In general terms, the slowness of these processes is the main obstacle facing Quilombolas in Salvaterra, and simultaneously, one of the factors that motivates them to strengthen their identity and mature their mobilization mechanisms.

In conclusion, the theoretical combination used here may provide insights into the processes of many social movements in Brazil and Latin America, which are structurally organized around territorial struggles—where identification processes are one of the "non-territorial" actions with the potential to make them effective (Sack, 2011). In this sense, the relevance of the ways in which actors engage in collective mobilization and make this occur are worth pointing out: a) forming an *esprit de corps*, both among community residents and by strengthening representative supralocal organizations, such as Coordination of the Quilombo

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Communities of Pará State (Malungu); b) the building of frames, capable of directing social groups' attentions to the need to combat problems common to them, including demanding more appropriate educational services in line with their reality, and c) the creation of new repertoires, as well as giving new meanings to old ones, now with more emphasis on re-valuing local culture. The Quilombo experience is additionally capable of highlighting the influence of the Structure of Political Opportunities in the emergence of social movements and the need for them to reinvent themselves and stay constantly mobilized so that they can achieve their goals.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1 Political De-mobilization theory stands out in this regard, stating that "[...] collective mobilization would only breed irrationality or [...] the reactive explosion of frustrated individuals, which institutions would not be able to channel in the moment" (ALONSO, 2009, p. 50). Functional interpretations, in turn, conceived individual dissatisfaction as expressed in a chaotic fashion, without meaning or organization.

2 "Art. 68: Definitive properties will be recognized for remnant Quilombo communities who are occupying their lands, and the State must admit them their respective titles" (Brasil, 2016, p. 160).

3 In this article we use the normative term "Family Agriculture" simply as a land use category. According to Law nº. 11.326/2006, landholdings belonging to family farmers correspond to up to "four fiscal modules", equivalent to 304 hectares in the region; these groups primarily use family labor in their activities, which generate household income; activities are conducted on their properties (Brasil, 2006).

4 "Therefore, it cannot be considered either the simple effect of structural preconditions or an expression of values and beliefs. Individuals acting collectively 'construct' their actions by means of 'organized' investments: they define in cognitive terms the field of possibilities and limits they perceive, while at the same time activating their relationships to give sense to their 'being together' and to the goals they pursue." (Melucci, 1995, p. 43).

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5 The Quilombola colors are the red, black, green and yellow, making mention to "Mother Africa". They are present on community flags. Rosário's school, mentioned in the interview, was painted with green and yellow colors, for example.

6 "Amends Law No. 9,394, of December 20, 1996, which establishes the guidelines and bases of national education, making obligatory the Teaching Network 'Afro-Brazilian History and Culture' in the official curriculum, and gives other measures." (Brazil, 2003, p. 1).

7 Musical rhythm from the state of Pará.

8 The concept can be defined as a cognitive framing which "[...] help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action" (Benford; Snow, 2000, p. 614).

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Dérick Lima Gomes – Degree in Geography from the Universidade do Estado do Pará. Master of Family Agriculture and Sustainable Development through the Graduate Program in Amazonian Agricultures at the Universidade Federal do Pará/Embrapa. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1387-9718.

Heribert Schmitz – Master degree in Fundamentals of Mechanical Engineering from RWTH Aachen University. Doctor of Rural Sociology at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin and Post-Doctorate in Sociology (Theory of Social Movements) by the Freie Universität Berlin. He is currently Associate Professor III of Sociology at the Universidade Federal do Pará and recipient of productivity grant from the Centro Nacional de Pesquisa (CNPq).

Fabiano Bringel – Degree in Geography from the Universidade Federal do Pará. Master of Family Agriculture and Sustainable Development through the Graduate Program in Amazonian Agricultures at the UFPA/Embrapa. Doctor of Geography through the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco. He is currently professor of the Geography course at the Universidade do Estado do Pará. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8380-9096.

The Authors' contributions

All of the authors made substantial scientific and intellectual contributions to the article. The preparation, editing, and revision of the manuscript were done as a group. Authors Dérick Gomes and Heribert Schmitz were responsible in particular for the theoretical-conceptual development. Author Fabiano Bringel, in turn, contributed with the discussion of the results and methodological procedures, making substantial contributions to the interpretation of the data.