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Challenging colonial narratives: the (de)(re)constructing of quilombola identities in two communities in Paraná through a post-colonial lens

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Dossier: Identities in the Global South

Challenging colonial narratives: the (de)(re)constructing of quilombola identities in two communities in Paraná through a post-colonial lens

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Abstract
This article examines how the identities of quilombolas from two communities located in Palmas, in the Brazilian state of Paraná, have been (de)(re)constructed. To this end, we developed a theoretical discussion from a post-colonial perspective on identity, questioning the essentialist constructions present in the literature. Methodologically, we adopted the oral history approach for data collection, conducting interviews with quilombolas from both communities. From a heretological perspective, the analysis showed how narratives have been deconstructed, contested, and (re)told from the quilombolas' own standpoint. In a context marked by territorial instability and structural racism, the findings indicate that the (de)(re)construction of identities is based on the recovery of their ancestry. Practices that are re-signified, reproduced, and (re)lived beyond the territorial limits of these communities reveal identity hybridity and a departure from the essentialist vision of identity, thereby challenging colonialist perspectives.
Keywords: colonialism, heterology, identities, quilombolas, post-colonial.

Desafiando narrativas coloniais: o processo de (des)(re)construção de identidades quilombolas em duas comunidades no Paraná, sob a lente pós-colonial

Resumo
Neste artigo buscamos compreender como as identidades de quilombolas de duas comunidades localizadas em Palmas – PR foram (des)(re)construídas. Para tanto, realizamos uma discussão teórica a partir da perspectiva pós-colonial sobre identidade, questionando construções essencialistas presentes na literatura. Como metodologia, adotamos o método de história oral para a coleta de dados e realizamos entrevistas com quilombolas das duas comunidades. De uma perspectiva heterológica, a análise permitiu evidenciar como histórias foram desconstruídas, contestadas e (re)contadas sob a visão dos próprios quilombolas. Em meio à instabilidade territorial e ao racismo estrutural, observamos que há uma (des)(re)construção de suas identidades, que tem como base o resgate da ancestralidade. As práticas ressiginificadas, reproduzidas e (re)vividas para além dos limites territoriais das comunidades evidenciam um hibridismo identitário e o rompimento com a visão essencialista de identidade, contestando, assim, a visão pregada pelo colonialismo.
Palavras-chave: colonialismo, heterologia, identidades, pós-colonial, quilombolas.

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Desafiando narrativas coloniales: el proceso de (des)(re)construcción de identidades "quilombolas" en dos comunidades de Paraná, desde una perspectiva poscolonial

Resumen

En este artículo buscamos comprender cómo se (des)(re)construyeron las identidades de los "quilombolas" (cimarrones) de dos comunidades ubicadas en Palmas-PR. Para ello, realizamos una discusión teórica desde la perspectiva poscolonial sobre la identidad, cuestionando construcciones esencialistas presentes en la literatura. Como metodología, adoptamos el método de historia oral para la recolección de datos y realizamos entrevistas con "quilombolas" de dos comunidades. Desde una perspectiva heterológica, el análisis permitió destacar cómo las historias fueron deconstruidas, contestadas y (re)contadas desde la visión de los propios "quilombolas". En medio de la inestabilidad territorial y el racismo estructural, observamos que hay una (de)(re)construcción de sus identidades, que se basa en el rescate de la ancestralidad. Las prácticas que se resignifican, reproducen y (re)viven más allá de los límites territoriales de las comunidades, demuestran un hibridismo identitario y una ruptura con la visión esencialista de la identidad, cuestionando así la visión predicada por el colonialismo.

Palabras clave: colonialismo, heterología, identidades, poscolonial, "quilombolas".

INTRODUCTION

Although colonialism was practiced in the past, it is still structurally present in Brazilian society. When it comes to minority groups, colonial narratives foster a limited and distorted understanding of their identities, primarily those linked to historically marginalized groups, such as the quilombolas.

This points to the need for research that considers the Latin American context, especially through a post-colonial lens, given its history marked by colonial processes and discourses. As stated by Muzanenhamo and Chowdhury (2023), it is necessary to create opportunities to deconstruct a hegemonic and "white supremacy" and contribute to the debate on counter-hegemonic theories and practices.

In this respect, post-colonial criticism may help deconstruct the ideological and totalitarian discourses of modernity, which attribute hegemonic normality to the uneven development and differing histories of nations, races, communities and peoples, demonstrating that there are unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation (Bhabha, 1998). Hence, the post-colonial lens provides new possibilities for seeing the other, who is sometimes constituted and interpreted from a totalitarian and essentialist point of view (Vilas Boas & Ichikawa, 2023).

According to Brown (2022), there is a vast and seemingly growing body of literature on identity inside and outside organizations, although not always with an eye to its (de)construction. Our focus with this text is to discuss the impacts of such identities constructed through a hegemonic gaze and to understand the dynamics behind a historically oppressive identity construct. Our aim is to deconstruct colonial ideologies associated with identities and (re)construct new ways of understanding, from the position of those who live and experience such identities in their daily lives, especially in the context of the Global South.

For this purpose, this article upholds the idea that thinking of identity homogeneously is a mistake. In Bauman (2005) view, identities are negotiable and their construction

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depends on the paths taken by a given subject, their decisions and ways of acting. In this sense, they are not fixed or immutable. Recent studies such as those by Côté and Evans (2023) and Christensen and Newman (2023) corroborate this notion, showing how identities can be fluid and (re)constructed according to each context, life stories and experience.

In that line of thought, this work questions the essentialist constructs present in the literature on quilombola identity, and emphasizes the importance of considering the experiences, stories and daily lives of the quilombolas themselves. As Murdoch (2023) suggests, there is a movement for a review of traditional systems of thought and understanding of the world, that is to say, those inherited by the hegemonic culture, which are set up as foundations of an absolute or fixed character, and our idea is to contribute to this debate.

In the management field, specifically in the subfield of organizational studies, authors such as Barbosa et al. (2025), Klozovski et al. (2024) and Silva (2021) have explored quilombos and aspects related to their identity, resistance, memory, and the ordinary management of quilombolas. Quilombos, in addition to being spaces of resistance, contain alternative modes of organization which permeate identities. Organizations, then, represent spaces where these identities are (re)produced and (re)constructed.

When it comes to Brazil, it is not uncommon to stumble upon narratives that either silence or offer a stereotypical view of the other. One example of this is the reinterpretation of the term *quilombo* that took place over time, as well as its representations, which are questionable. Gomes (2015) points out a romanticized view of quilombos under which their isolation supposedly is a form of reproducing Africa in Brazil, which should be contested. Furthermore, Nascimento (2016) criticizes a totalitarian view of the word, arguing that it has acquired several meanings over time, and thus, the views conveyed about the “quilombo” lack grounding in in-depth research, which may promote a stereotypical view of such communities.

In an examination of Brazil, specifically of Paraná state, a historical silencing can be found, especially regarding the quilombos and quilombolas who live in the state, as well as their ways of organization, their identities and the processes involved. Paraná has always been considered as a state colonized by Europeans (mainly Italians, Ukrainians, and Germans) or the Japanese, but not much is said about the contribution of black people to its formation. There are 40 quilombo remnant communities recognized by the Palmares Foundation in the state, 38 of which are certified, although it is informally believed that there are more than 80 such communities. Besides, much of the literature on quilombos in the state offers a homogeneous and stereotypical narrative about their identities and ways of being and living, which was shown by some contemporary research, such as that by Molina et al. (2022), to not quite reflect their realities.

It is, then, of vital importance that members of these communities may have the opportunity to speak for themselves without the homogenizing gaze of the colonizer. Palmas, a city located in the southwest of the state, can provide this perspective, as it was the municipality in Paraná with the highest number of self-declared quilombolas in the last Brazilian census, with a total of 1,652 individuals in the municipality (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2022). Based on the context provided, the aim of

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this work is to understand how the identities of quilombolas from two communities located in Palmas/PR were (de)(re)constructed from a post-colonial perspective.

This paper contributes meaningfully to the fields of management and organizational studies by broadening the debate on quilombola identities and the quilombo itself as an organization from a postcolonial perspective. In other words, based on an approach that values the experiences lived in the global South and rejects homogeneous discourses imposed by colonialism, experiences presented within such a context contribute to thinking about alternative organizations and forms of management. This perspective allows us to grasp to what extent colonial elements are still present in contemporary times and still impose, through their discourses, the construction of identities that do not necessarily correspond to lived realities. Furthermore, this paper leads us to reflect on organizations that, although not hegemonic, challenge dominant concepts and understandings and have important political and cultural dimensions. Lastly, it builds paths for epistemological debates focused on the Brazilian setting.

THE POST-COLONIAL PERSPECTIVE ON IDENTITY

The attempt to dominate the other is historical and manifests itself in the present, even long after colonization. The same holds true for the denunciation of domination, ever since the anti-colonial movement. Placed in a colonialist setting, the anti-colonial movement denounces the condition of the colonized and the colonial violence suffered, bringing to light the inequality present in the colonizer/colonized relationship. According to Brito (2021), this movement is interested in the analysis of the historical process of Eurocentric domination and in the racist nature of colonial policies, concerning itself mainly with the violence of the colonizer and the disfigurement of the colonized.

Edward Said (2007) was one of the first to theorize about post-colonialism in his work “Orientalism” (1987). Post-colonial thought followed in the light of cultural studies. Post-colonial thought marks the beginning of a process of deconstruction and has given rise to important debates in the field of anti-racism, and in general has currents of thought directly linked to resistance movements (Vilas Boas & Ichikawa, 2023). Thus, post-colonial criticism points to unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation (Bhabha, 1998).

Understanding the game played in the colonial system urges us to think about deconstructing what has hitherto been taken as the truth about the other, as well as the way in which meanings have been used and represented (Vilas Boas & Ichikawa, 2023). In Bhabha (1998) view, a critical post-colonial discourse is needed in order to establish other historical places and other forms of enunciation.

According to Hall (2003), this is one of the theoretical advances stemming from post-structuralism, such as the possibility of the practices of different social groups being brought together and transformed into a class capable of interfering as a historical force, a class that is “for itself”, capable of establishing new collective projects. There is a need for a decentered rewriting of the great imperial narratives of the past (Hall, 2003). Muzanenhamo and Chowdhury (2023) argue that there is an epistemic injustice, that is, an effect of racism itself, which trivializes the knowledge of black people, suppressing their ideas.

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Authors like Dussel (1993), Quijano (2005), Mignolo (2008, 2017), Maldonado-Torres (2007), Grosfoguel (2008), and Castro-Gómez (2005), all linked to decolonial lines of thought, propose an epistemological rupture. Maldonado-Torres (2007) uses the term "decolonial turn," which, in short, involves the end of colonization relations and seeks to oppose the legacy and continued production of colonialities. Coloniality is considered to act on several fronts, such as the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being (Quijano, 2005). In this sense, decolonial thinking is a way of breaking with a logic in a single possible world: that idealized by Eurocentrism, representing a strong critique of colonialism and an investigation into coloniality and its forms (Mignolo, 2008).

Although decolonial discussions in management represent important advances in overcoming colonial logic and share with the post-colonial approach a critique of Eurocentric domination, our study is not focused on working towards a radical epistemological break, but rather on conducting a critical analysis of cultural representations and the effects of colonialism on quilombola identities, thus justifying the choice of a post-colonial rather than a decolonial approach. The post-colonial approach revisits silenced regions and provides an alternative beyond official approaches to history, which we deem fundamental to the choice we made for this article, especially in light of what emerged from the data, namely, the issue of fragmented identities that are constantly being deconstructed and reconstructed.

When considering post-colonial criticism, questionings of the essentialist idea of identity, for instance, are found. As Bhabha (1998, p. 79) puts it, "the problem of identity returns as a persistent questioning of framing, of the space of representation, where the image – missing person, invisible eye, oriental stereotype – is confronted by its difference, its Other." In the meantime, what is being questioned is not only the image, but also the discursive place from which questions of identity are posed.

Increasingly, researchers have been concerned with broadening the scope of research into identities, investigating their significance for understanding and theorizing organizational processes (Brown, 2022). In the field of Organizational Studies, questions about identity and its construction process have come into focus (Alvesson et al., 2008; Brown, 2019). Identity construction is understood as the process by which people come to define who they are (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016).

In the Brazilian context, there have been recent discussions on topics like identity, self-identification, resistance, and the ordinary management of everyday practices (Barbosa et al., 2025; Klozovski et al., 2024; Silva, 2021). Barbosa et al. (2025), for instance, sought to understand the mechanisms of resistance adopted by the quilombolas of the "Curral Novo" community, located in Minas Gerais, in the midst of adverse situations and external pressures faced by the community. Klozovski et al. (2024) addressed their ordinary management of everyday practices based on the memories recounted and experienced by the leaders of the quilombola community "Invernada Paiol de Telha – Fundão," located in Paraná. Silva (2021) analyzed the construction of the history of self-identification of the "Luizes" community based on the memories of its members, allowing for a greater understanding of the organizational dynamics present in quilombola communities in an urban setting.

We know that practices such as the construction of history itself have led to identities being formed under a hegemonic gaze. Hence, the effects of this construction must be

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considered. To what extent can a hegemonic other theorize about identities that involve an inaccessible reality?

In line with this perspective, Silva (2012, p. 96) argues that "identity is not fixed, stable, coherent, unified, permanent. Nor is identity homogeneous, definitive, finished, identical, transcendental. On the other hand, we can say that identity is a construction, an effect, a production process, a relationship, a performative act". Ahokas (2023) claims that identities are always re-signified over time.

A recent empirical study by Côté and Evans (2023) conducted with indigenous entrepreneurs from Canada, the United States and Australia, corroborates the above statements by showing how fluid and mobile identities are. The authors analyze the social mobility of indigenous entrepreneurs and discuss how this can affect their identities. Although there is a colonial discourse that preaches an indigenous culture "at risk" due to social mobility, there is an adaptation to the social and economic environment where they are inserted, but this does not mean a "loss" of identity, but rather a resignification and adaptation, while they do not give up their cultural identities (Côté & Evans, 2023). Another study by Shekhar and Jha (2019) revealed that contact with other people from different groups, with different symbolic characteristics, may lead to the fragmentation of identities.

Along these lines, the idea of the unity and fixed nature of identities has been deconstructed by various studies. And considering the unstable nature of identities and the impossibility of finitude, it is worth reflecting on the tendency towards homogenization, that is, the tendency to name, classify, and define, standardizing places, groups and meanings. This homogenization is part of a process of naturalizing the other. Carneiro (2005) argues that racist ideologies depend on the naturalization of its conception of the Other, in the sense that it is essential for this dominated Other to express what has been attributed to them.

Such a movement may be understood by means of the idea of difference, as identity also stratifies, precisely because it divides, differentiates and classifies. Both identity and difference are present in a complex field of disputes. Silva (2012) states that in this field of disputes, there is the power to define identity which is associated with broader power relations, so that identity and difference are never innocent, but rather come up in the context of cultural and social relations, as a result of a process of symbolic and discursive production.

According to Kouhpaeenejad and Gholaminejad (2014), when we define a certain identity for ourselves, we are somehow assimilating ourselves to a particular group or class and, at the same time, differentiating ourselves from others who do not belong to that group or class. As such, we conclude that the acts of homogenizing and classifying are not in themselves neutral, but rather associated with forms of social hierarchization of people and groups in general. Candau (2016) characterizes the act of naming someone or a group as a form of control, since naming attributes a social place to the subject or group. These issues can also be linked to what Carneiro (2005, p. 324) referred to as "epistemicide":

> […] the dynamics and production that have been carried out by lowering self-esteem, which compromises cognitive ability and intellectual confidence; by denying black people the status of subjects of knowledge in pedagogical instruments or in social relations in everyday school life; by delegitimizing black people's knowledge about themselves and the world;

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> by devaluing, denying, or concealing the contributions of the African continent to the cultural heritage of humanity, by inducing or promoting cultural whitening etc.

Therefore the essentialization and homogenization of "communities" must be resisted, because as Hall (2003, p. 83) puts it, to adhere to the concept of a "closed" cultural identity is to believe in something immutable and timeless, a myth, considering that communities bear the marks of diaspora, of hybridization in their very making, that is, a hybridization that is linked to the process of cultural translation of each person, which, however, is never complete.

According to Murdoch (2023), hybridity subverts the imposing dominance of binaries and seeks alternative solutions to the historical and discursive linearities implicit in colonialism, interrupting and "disturbing" previously held notions. It also opposes cultural imperialism, highlighting the multivalence of a mixture that creatively transforms both culture and identity, as well as their forms of articulation (Murdoch, 2023). In Kouhpaeenejad and Gholaminejad (2014) view, it is in this context that identities are reclaimed. For these authors, identity claims are "acts" through which people construct new definitions of who they are.

In light of this, one can see how fragile and also provisional identity is, while at the same time acknowledging that a totalitarian understanding may contribute to different forms of oppression, especially that of minority groups. Multiplicities, fragmentations, mobility and inventions must be considered. As D'Cruz et al. (2022) point out, research authored by the Global South must be highlighted, based in their countries of origin, considering the cultural and geographical connection, with a view to the possibilities of understanding "realities as they exist".

Hence, it is essential for research to consider the modes of being found in the Global South and to acknowledge their narratives, histories, and ways of life, not from a hegemonic standpoint but from the perspective of those who have actually lived and continue to live these realities, so that these people may get to speak for themselves.

THE METHODOLOGICAL PATHS OF THIS RESEARCH

For this investigation, in emphasizing its historical nature and recognizing memory as an active element in the construction of experiences, we adopted oral history as its method and interviews as the main tool for data collection. In oral history, narrative is valued as one of its main foundations, which we see as compatible with our research aim precisely because it takes this careful view of the other, recognizing and respecting them as another. In this case, narrative and lived experience become the central point. It is this lived experience, even if inaccessible, that offers the possibility of restoring what has been forgotten and finding subjects through their traces, and from there, through a heterological stance, the lived experience allows the researcher to create their own reports or literary genres (Certeau, 1982) based on this altering otherness that heterology itself allows; in other words, it alters the researchers themselves and destabilizes the constructed knowledge (Certeau, 1986).

Oral history is always a history of the "present time" and is also recognized as "living history". It is not exhausted at the moment of its apprehension, analysis or text, but rather maintains a permanent commitment to recording, allowing others to apprehend it in different ways (Bom Meihy, 2005).

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In this process, it is also important to consider the role of the researcher in terms of how the method is used. Although this is qualitative research, which can be operationalized in different ways, we emphasize that working with oral history requires the researcher to have a high level of respect for others, for their opinions, positions, and worldviews (Alberti, 2018). Similarly, the heterological research (Certeau, 1986) that we embrace involves an effort not to try to represent others, but to let them speak, to make otherness the subject of the research, valuing the memories, words, and journeys that resist the homogenization of history and society. It is inside such a worldview that we guide each testimony collected.

The steps suggested by Bom Meihy (2005) were followed for conducting the research: project design; recording; preparation of written documents; the eventual analysis; and returning the product. The study was conducted with quilombolas from two communities from Palmas, Paraná: Quilombo Remnant Community (QRC) Castorina Maria da Conceição and QRC Tobias Ferreira. For the study to be carried out, and for ethical purposes, the people interviewed were informed on the nature of the research, and those who agreed to participate were given an *informed consent form* to read and sign, and only those who freely agreed to it were interviewed. Data collection began in August 2022, and the survey results were presented to the quilombolas in November 2024.

For the sake of confidentiality, their real names will not be disclosed. Ten people were interviewed, five of which are from the QRC Castorina Maria da Conceição and five are from the QRC Tobias Ferreira, identified henceforth by the following fictitious names: Marta, Lúcia, Marina, Pedro, Letícia, Rita, Carmem, Marcos, Zeca and Fernanda. During the interviews, the names of other people who did not participate in the survey occasionally came up, and they also had their names replaced.

Participants were selected at random and according to their availability and interest in being part of the research, given that many of them work, study, and have responsibilities outside the communities. So the interviews were conducted on sporadic days and times, usually during our visits to the QRCs. We visited the communities on three occasions, staying for the entire week on each trip, since Palmas is located about 310 miles away from our own city.

Interviews were conducted using a cellphone recorder. A field notebook was used, where we wrote down questions about certain aspects that caught our attention at specific moments for further examining. A field diary was also used in this process, mainly for taking notes, theorizing, registering uncertainties, feelings, and emotional outbursts that arose during the interactions in the field.

After recording the interviews, data was transcribed manually. At first, we typed all the interviews into *Microsoft Word*, followed by textualization and transcription. One should note here that the quilombolas' narratives have been preserved; however, as they were not presented in a linear fashion, they have been organized in the text according to the subject matter mentioned, so that the stories could be more neatly displayed, which is why transcreation was chosen over literal transcription.

Regarding the analysis of the narratives collected, some considerations are in order. Teixeira et al. (2021) state that the use of this method implies recognition by the

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researcher of the ownership of the narrated story, which always belongs to the social agent who gave it. Besides, the authors also emphasize the importance of careful transcription. To this end, we sought to present the interviewees' narratives alongside a "dialogue" in an attempt to construct a sequence with themes and situations that they brought up in the interviews, thus preserving their narratives. As Certeau (1982) puts it, oral language expects writing to run through it and to know what it says. Therefore, when valuing these narratives, words are not instituted as to "replace" the other or as a discourse about the other. On the contrary: this is an attempt to think alongside this other, in a heterological practice (Certeau, 1986) that seeks to find traces of this other, but from an anti-representational perspective.

Thus, considering the current stories experienced by the quilombolas of the Tobias and Castorina communities, their ancestors, and their daily lives, we sought to find similarities with their realities in the traces of their experiences. Lastly, through the narratives and connections made with the quilombolas, we held discussions about the process of (de)(re)construction of these identities from a post-colonial perspective.

THE HOMOGENIZATION OF QUILOMBOLA COMMUNITIES AND IDENTITIES: TOWARDS A DECONSTRUCTION OF OFFICIAL DISCOURSE

While there were theoretical movements based on racial differences that emerged in Europe with the belief in differences between human "types," segmenting people into hierarchies, as Santos (2005) points out, it was no different in Brazil. Brazil, the country with the largest black or African-descendant population in the world, was for almost 400 years the largest slave-owning territory in the Western Hemisphere, as well as the last country to officially abolish slavery (Gomes, 2019). The repercussions of this are immeasurable. Looking specifically at the state of Paraná, one can see how historical developments and colonialism had implications for black people, for example, with attempts to "whiten" the population.

Historians from Paraná, such as Wilson Martins, depict an idealized Paraná dominated by a hegemony, silencing the history and contributions of black people in the state, as well as reinforcing an ideal of whitening. His books "*A Different Brazil: Essays on the Phenomenon of Acculturation in Paraná*" (1989) and "*The Invention of Paraná: A Study of the Presidency of Zacarias de Góes e Vasconcelos*" (1999) portray an official history of Paraná that silences and excludes black people.

These writings reinforce the desire to create a singular identity for the state, solidified in the production of a "Paranist" historiography. Paranism, a movement that took place in the 20th century and continues to this day, aimed to construct the "image" of a state that would represent traits of development, progress, technology, and science, relying on various politicians, intellectuals, and artists to disseminate a history of Paraná's traditions and construct a cultural identity specific to the state (Takatuzi & Carneiro, 2013). This achievement points to the silencing and erasure of black people in the history of Paraná.

Even in research that discusses the black contribution to the development of Paraná and the quilombolas, it is possible to detect many generalist discourses still present about the quilombos, as seen, for example, in the following excerpt from a study by Priori (2012, p. 54), when referring to quilombola communities in Paraná: "In general, these communities maintain the production patterns used by their ancestors, based mainly on cooperativism and the practice of a subsistence economy."

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We do understand that although the practices mentioned may occur in some communities, considering that each community has its own dynamics, the pattern of practices mentioned may not be seen in all communities. It should be borne in mind that some quilombos have been urbanized, and many quilombolas may work in external activities or carry out other activities not linked to manual labour and subsistence, as noted previously (Priori, 2012).

Another example can be found in a text by Alves and Bernartt (2020), which links quilombos to precariousness and violence, as if this were a pattern in the communities. Furthermore, the authors discuss the preservation of quilombola culture as linked to working essentially with the land. In their view, the fact that quilombolas work outside the community could lead to its disappearance:

> In addition to on-site verification of [...] numerous reports of police, domestic and workplace violence, lack of access to health and public safety, among others (Alves & Bernartt, 2020, p. 283).

> The work done by many quilombolas in the community generally has two characteristics, namely: it allows their survival, but it has contributed greatly to the demise of the quilombola community of Palmas, Paraná, either because of the acculturation enabled by it, or because of the mobility of residence it requires, or because of the meager resources it brings on a monthly basis, requiring overtime as a rule to guarantee a slightly better existence, which distances the individual from community life (Alves & Bernartt, 2020, p. 307).

The second excerpt mentions the need for the quilombolas of Palmas to be forced to leave the community to work and earn their living, which would lead up to the end of quilombo culture. This calls for reflection: is the maintenance of cultural practices strictly linked to working in the fields or limited to the territory of the community? Does mobility of residence contribute to the demise of communities? Does quilombola "identity" depend on people from the community not having contact with outsiders? The authors seem to hold the view of a homogeneous, immutable and timeless identity, forgetting that hybridization is something that exists and will not necessarily lead to the "demise of the quilombola community".

One realizes, then, that there are still narratives that ultimately offer a generic view of the ways in which quilombola communities exist, contributing to the essentialization and homogenization of identities. We also believe that these narratives contribute to the reproduction of a hegemonic logic of assigning places, where black people are often associated with manual labor, and are thus assigned subordinate roles, linked to execution and operation, or even with limitations on their ways of life.

It is in this sense that we propose a study of such communities, with the aim of comprehending how quilombola identities have been (de)(re)constructed from a post-colonial perspective.

TWO COMMUNITIES: THE (DE)CONSTRUCTION AND (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITIES

The Castorina Maria da Conceição and Tobias Ferreira communities are located in Palmas, in southwestern Paraná. Before being mapped by the Clóvis Moura Working

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Group[2] and receiving a certification from the Palmares Foundation, along with the Adelaide Maria Trindade community (a neighboring community), they used to form just one community, until then known as Rocio (Silva, 2021). In his study, Silva (2021) notes that, based on the narratives of the community's own residents, the quilombo was established in mid-1836, with pioneer families settling in Rocio when Palmas was founded.

The communities were later divided up according to their family nucleus. The names of the communities are tributes to the families' matriarchs and patriarchs. The two communities, QRC Castorina and QRC Tobias, were recently recognized as quilombo remnant communities, so they are certified by the Palmares Foundation, having been published in the DOU on April 16th 2007 and September 9th 2013 respectively.

And yet, until recently, conflicts permeated the very recognition of quilombola identity, as evidenced by the accounts of quilombolas from the Castorina and Tobias communities, the result of stigmatization and distorted discourses about quilombola identities and their practices. In line with this, with the historical erasure and the whole process of devaluing and discriminating against black people in Paraná, when the community was recognized as a quilombo, many of the quilombolas didn't see themselves as such, as can be surmised from Lúcia and Pedro's accounts:

> **Lúcia (QRC Castorina):** We didn't know [that we were quilombolas]. And through studies. They did the genealogical tree, the cartography. It was discovered, right? Our ancestors, that we were quilombolas.
>
> **Pedro (QRC Castorina):** It was a dance group that brought African dances to [...] the people of Palmas. Yeah. Nobody wanted to participate. Because it was shameful, because it was Macumba. You see, nowadays, everyone is proud to be a quilombola.

The denial of historical recovery, the lack of self-recognition as a quilombola and the sense of shame that many felt strongly signals the structural racism that prevails in Brazil, which has consequences for the black people themselves in the quilombos that were surveyed. Almeida (2019) argues that structural racism is a system that permeates all spheres of society, ensuring the maintenance of white privilege and the marginalization of other racial groups. The author adds that "racism, as a historical and political process, creates the social conditions for racially identified groups to be systematically discriminated against, either directly or indirectly" (Almeida, 2019, p. 39). Case in point, over the centuries, black people saw themselves as being on the margins, and one of the ways of being "at the center" was to deny their own origins. According to Alvesson et al. (2008), collective perceptions are important resources in the formation of personal self-understanding. The reports show that these feelings have been deconstructed as a result of significant awareness-raising work, especially among the younger generations. As Fanon (2021) points out, those who were once made to feel inferior no longer run away from themselves, finding meaning in the past once again, in the cult of their ancestors.

Pedro speaks proudly of his ancestors and recognizes the damage and repercussions of the colonial period. He knows about the erasure of black people's contribution to local historiography. He reframes history, saying that many of his ancestors were "kings and

[2] The Clóvis Moura Working Group (GTCM) was a research initiative dedicated to understanding the socioeconomic, cultural, and political conditions of Remnant Quilombo Communities in the state of Paraná.

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queens" before they were brutally captured, showing the need for historical deconstruction.

> **Pedro (QRC Castorina):** Because, you know. It's always [...] based [history] on the explorers, the troops from Guarapuava, the muleteers... Yeah, but along with those travelers came my great-grandparents, my great-great-grandparents who were enslaved. I'm not going to say that [...] I'm not going to say that my great-grandparents came to colonize here. No. No. We know that those were harsh 388 years! Harsh! And at that time abolition hadn't come yet, it wasn't even talked about! There was the free womb law, the sexagenarian law, but even so, that wasn't explained. Dona Castorina, who came to Palmas, was an enslaved black woman. So, she came to Palmas as a slave [...] but we helped form the identity of these people [...], we helped form the identity of these people. [...] Now they've woken up. But they're still not remembered in the history books.

> **Pedro (QRC Castorina):** So that's it. To remember that these children and grandchildren of the kings and queens who were captured in Africa also have something to offer. [...] and that they have great potential. To show these people, these young people, that their hair […]. Not young people, but children, right? That their hair is beautiful, that their skin color is beautiful, that their features are beautiful, because black culture is amazing.

We recognize that historical knowledge and its (re)construction, as well as the deconstruction of official narratives, is linked to the reclaiming and valuing of quilombola identities today. History is therefore contested. As proposed by Woodward (2012), a contestation of history can be found in the political struggle for the recognition of identities in a post-colonial world, with the collapse of old certainties and the production of new forms of positioning and, with this, the affirmation of identities.

Woodward (2012) argues that this affirmation of identities is accompanied by some form of authentication, and this authentication often takes place by reclaiming the history of the group in question. Thus, by reclaiming history, identities are reconstructed.

In different ways, we conclude that the reclaiming of history has occurred and is occurring in both communities. Traditional colonial historical knowledge is discussed, deconstructed and expressed from an unofficial perspective. Pedro and Zeca's criticisms of official history, for instance, demonstrate this:

> **Pedro (QRC Castorina):** [I want to] Show civil society itself, which is the one that abandoned us, that regardless of anything, we are descendants of kings and queens. Oh, no, you're descendants of slaves. No, okay? They were enslaved, but only for a time. But really, they were kings and queens on their continent. [...] Oh, but you quote "won your freedom" unquote, right? Here's the thing, we gained the freedom to no longer work without pay. But we left all our history on the other continent.

> **Zeca (QRC Tobias):** [...] Our race today, like it or not, is called inferior to the other ones. It's always been like that. So much so that people came on ships, all our ancestors came on ships from Africa to be enslaved here. [...] But we can't allow our culture, especially black culture, our race, to be forgotten, right?

As argued by Nascimento (2022), more and more Brazilian descendants of Africans are acquiring a conception of what their history was and are keenly aware of the misunderstandings rooted in official history about their trajectory. This view is also evident in Pedro's statement when he acknowledges the contribution of black people to the constitution of Palmas, Paraná:

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> **Pedro (QRC Castorina):** We helped form the identity of these people [...] which is never mentioned.

Regarding this deconstruction, Zeca tells of a lecture he gave at an educational institution and made a point of telling the story of the community, thus deconstructing colonial narratives. He says:

> **Zeca (QRC Tobias):** [...] Because a lot of people today [say], "Oh, the quilombola community, oh, they're just some black people" [...] "The quilombola community exists just because they're black". No, they should know what used to happen in the quilombo community, what used to happen, what took place in the history of the community, in the quilombo community, in order for them to be in a quilombo.

Although there is the perception, as Rezende et al. (2024) argue, that the only human experiences and human stories worthy of being told are those produced by the West, Zeca's speech shows the importance of understanding that a quilombola community should not be built on stereotypes and that such narratives must be deconstructed. His account shows that colonialism still has an effect on how people perceive the quilombola community. Pedro holds that there are still challenges:

> **Pedro (QRC Castorina):** It's that utopia of equality, isn't it? We've been dealing with it, we're hoping that public policies will emerge so that we can achieve that longed-for equality. Gender equality, race equality, social class equality.

Our experience in the quilombos gave us the opportunity to meet people with a lot of knowledge, we would say above average. They were extremely politicized and equipped with deep historical and political understanding, which is a different picture from what official discourse and some research sometimes represent. Here, we wish to emphasize that the search for knowledge converges with the (de)construction of a history that essentializes identities, and it contributes to the process of affirming and valuing quilombola identities and serves as a form of resistance.

The stories told by the quilombolas in the two communities show, then, their daily challenges. At the same time, they deconstruct the stereotypes that official history has imposed on them, that is, of a people who contributed little to the development of Palmas and Paraná, which led them, for some time, to deny their quilombola roots. This is no longer the case today. In this sense, identities are systematically in a process of change and transformation because they are subject to the historical process.

THE RECOVERY OF ANCESTRY AND THE (RE)AFFIRMATION OF IDENTITIES

As we have seen, the two communities have a common past. They only recently became two (Palmas has three in total), when their histories shifted, each with its own trajectory. Today, each of them, in its own way and in different ways, tries to recover characteristics and practices through its ancestry. By seeking their historical antecedents, that is, their ancestry, they constantly deconstruct and reconstruct their identities, and this is also a form of identity reaffirmation.

According to Woodward (2012), when such people reaffirm their supposedly lost identities and search for them in the past, new identities are produced. Simultaneously, this also points to an attempt to defend and affirm one's sense of distinction of their

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identity in the present. It is worth noting that although the affirmation of identity is linked to the past, the practices are transfigured.
In this context, some ancestral practices are resumed or reproduced. First and foremost, religion, which runs through the communities and is based on the relationship between the residents and their ancestors, especially the matriarchs. Belief is shared for generations in both communities. Although there is a strong Catholic influence, the religious diversity serves as proof for the heterogeneity present in the communities, in the practice of other religions such as Candomblé and Evangelicalism:

> **Zeca (QRC Tobias):** Today there are some [religions] here, there's (...) Candomblé (...). There are evangelicals. At first there was hardly any evangelicals because it was all blessings, prayers and stuff. Not today. Today there are evangelicals who differ completely from Catholics. Catholics have one doctrine and they have another. But it's their religion and we can't intervene in it. Nor should we, right? Religious intolerance shouldn't even exist, right?

The recovery of religion plays an important role in the reconstruction of identities, since, mediated by a given ancestry, it serves as a major form of cultural reaffirmation. However, this practice has received new meanings over time and reveals a plurality of existing beliefs, which contributes to understanding the transfiguration of these practices, reaffirming the fluidity of these identities.

Religious practices, both Catholic and Protestant, reveal tensions between cultural erasure and reinvention, demonstrating the presence of colonial elements that have historically contributed to the oppression of African cultural expressions. These elements are part of everyday life and the reconstruction of identities. According to Hall (2003), it is a mistake to adhere to the concept of a "closed" cultural identity, given that cultural translation is never complete. Furthermore, Murdoch (2023) highlights what he refers to as the "multivalence of a mixture," which creatively transforms both culture and identity, as well as their forms of articulation.

At the same time, there is a revival of historically practiced religious traditions. Blessings, for example, with their roots in popular Catholicism and Brazilian religious syncretism, incorporating elements of Candomblé and Umbanda, which were performed in the past by matriarchs, are now being reproduced by younger people, as reported by Carmem and Marcos:

> **Carmem (QRC Tobias):** [Dona Mariana, matriarch of the community] She was the one who would bless people, some child could be sick. And suddenly the child was well again. She also taught people how to prepare homemade tea.

> **Marcos (QRC Tobias):** My grandmother was a healer, right? Then there's my cousin. He's a healer. But I don't know for sure [...] if he does it all the time.

In addition to syncretic religious practices, there are many stories told by the quilombolas, and many traditions that have been revived and are practiced today, even in the face of changes in customs and ways of life. There is an attempt to revive cultural practices, stories, and traditions, albeit in different ways in both communities. In line with Kouhpaeenejad and Gholaminejad (2014), we understand that the revival of ancestral cultural practices enables the construction of new identities.

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In the Tobias community, one example is the revival of capoeira dancing. As Zeca explains:

> **Zeca (QRC Tobias):** Capoeira, which is an African dance, a game in this case, but they practiced it to defend themselves. That's the only one that we're trying to bring back today. There are the "piás"[3] who are doing capoeira, who are taking the guys from here.

The capoeira dance has been taken up by the kids of the community, taught by a quilombola who is part of the younger generations. Even in the face of difficulties in terms of not having a suitable place for it in the community, or even people available and knowledgeable enough to teach it, the initiative to hold classes in the city came about through the encouragement of the elders.

One could also mention the use of herbs for medicinal purposes and culinary traditions, such as pork with quirera (corn flour), which Marcos mentions:

> **Marcos (QRC Tobias):** Pork and quirera[4], right? That's my grandmother's old tradition. She always used to make it. So we do it every now and then.

Through various dynamics, the revival of traditions also takes place in the Castorina community. We see cooking as one of the main ways of (re)living ancestry, as Lúcia points out in her account when talking about her grandmother, who was considered an excellent cook:

> **Lúcia (QRC Castorina):** My grandmother always made food like this for them [the farmers], back in the day. But grandma always made some great feijoada. I learned how the prepare the feijoada. Yeah, feijoada is a family tradition.

The feijoada, considered by Lúcia to be a "family tradition", is considered the "flagship dish" of Marina's restaurant. Located in the city center, the restaurant has a large clientele and is reminiscent of the family's recipes and spices, as Marina says:

> **Marina (QRC Castorina):** In times of need I also found that I like [cooking], I learned to like it, and that I have a gift for cooking as well. And this was passed down from generation to generation. Look, today our flagship dish [at the restaurant] is my great-grandmother's feijoada. (...) I never thought that I would have a restaurant or that it would be, like, well accepted. (...) And sometimes we receive older customers, and they say, "Oh, this seasoning (...)." "You're also grandchildren of hers? They are Jane's grandchildren."

It is noticeable how present cooking is in their way of life, especially that of the quilombola women in the community, and how it empowers them. As argued by Rezende and Pereira (2023, p. 5), despite this "historical fate" given to black women, there are spaces that differ from those based on exploitation, in which these same women, using their culture and ancestry, get to take center stage, as is the case with Marina.

[3] In the regional linguistic usage of southern Brazil, the word "piá" has the same meaning as "boy".
[4] Pork with quirera (corn flour) is a typical dish from the countryside of Paraná and Santa Catarina. It was part of the cuisine of the "tropeiros", or muleteers, who would journey from Rio Grande do Sul to Sorocaba, São Paulo, crossing the countryside of Paraná, including Palmas. As Palmas was founded by these travelers, one can deduce that this was one of the dishes that the ancestors of today's quilombolas used to cook, since many of them arrived in the region along with the tropeiros.

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Another form of reviving their traditions is dance. At QRC Castorina, the dances of São Gonçalo and Divino[5] are rehearsed and practiced in various situations, like commemorative dates like Black Awareness Day, or in church. In Rezende et al. (2024) view, festivities are one of the main instruments of resistance, a form of Afro-diasporic cultural manifestation. Letícia comments on them:

> **Leticia (QRC Castorina):** The mother came and told everybody, "let's dance", and then one pulled the other, one pulled the other and everybody went along. Then there was an interval, then we stopped. And just now, for the Black Awareness activities that the school held, we've tried to revive it[6].

From these testimonies, we see that both communities, mediated by their ancestry, are trying to rebuild their quilombola identity. The question that remains is: is this an example of the line of historical continuity between quilombos as forms of organized resistance in the centuries of slavery and subjugation and the quilombolas' current forms of resistance, as previously advocated (Nascimento, 2022)?

THE MYTH OF HOMOGENEOUS IDENTITY: "CROSSING BORDERS" AND HYBRIDIZATION

The struggle for land and rights is known to give meaning to social practices and relationships, which are necessary for the construction and maintenance of identities. Identity thus becomes an important factor in political mobilization (Woodward, 2012). In this sense, identities are systematically undergoing a process of change and transformation, since identities are subject to the historical process. As stated by Hall (2012), identities invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to maintain a certain correspondence. But in what way? In relation to the use of the resources of history, language, and culture for the production of what we have become and how we have been represented, and how this representation affects the way we can represent ourselves, therefore, tradition itself would be the same thing that transforms (Hall, 2012).

Conversely, this contributes to the understanding of why the identities of the quilombolas from both communities are not essentialist, since, throughout history, they have faced several instances of erasure, oppression, and modes of resistance, which has made their culture plural and syncretic. The two communities share a common past, having only recently become two separate entities (there are three in total in Palmas), with each following its own path, but sharing a common ancestry. Today, in its own way, each of the communities tries to rescue characteristics of this ancestry in different ways, according to the resources that each one has. Here we wish to highlight religion, which permeates these communities grounded on the relationship of the residents with their ancestors, especially the matriarchs.

Although Catholic influence is strong, religious diversity demonstrates the heterogeneity present in these communities, given the practice of other religions such as Candomblé and Evangelicalism. With traces of Afro-Brazilian ancestry, belief and religion are

[5] The dances of São Gonçalo and Divino, although Portuguese in origin, are widely practiced in black and quilombola communities in Brazil due to the religious syncretism that has reconfigured these colonial traditions.

[6] Due to the fact that in some quilombola communities in Paraná, the tradition of dancing São Gonçalo and Divino is no longer a customary practice, there is the need for it to be "recovered". The same applies to other communities in the state. For more details (Klozovski et al., 2024).

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present in the ways of life of the quilombolas, whether through blessings, collective manifestations, dances, festivals, collective prayers in the community church or in their homes. They participate in the construction and representation of identity while also serving to strengthen social relations. At the same time, the influence of evangelical and Catholic religious branches demonstrates that there is silencing and reinterpretation of cultural practices, while the restoration of Candomblé and *benzimento* (blessings) in the daily life of communities highlights their own ancestral recovery.
In this context, we understand that identities are constantly constructed and deconstructed, while at the same time identity is reaffirmed based on historical antecedents and ancestry. When one seeks an identity in the past, new identities are produced. According to Woodward (2012), by reaffirming their supposedly lost identities, seeking them in the past, such people produce new identities, while at the same time showing an attempt to defend and affirm the feeling of separation and distinction of their identity in the present.

Although the affirmation of identity is linked to the past, practices are transfigured. In Woodward (2012) view, this occurs because those who reclaim their identities are not limited to being positioned by them, but are rather capable of positioning themselves and reconstructing and transforming historical identities, which are inherited from a "supposed" common past. At the same time, by returning to the past, which is often organized by legends, stories, and traditions, communities are able to deal with the fragmentation of the present (Woodward, 2012).

As we have seen, there are many stories told by the quilombolas, and many traditions that have been revived and are practiced today, even in the face of changes in customs and ways of life. There is an attempt to revive cultural practices, stories, and traditions in different ways in both communities.

Such examples of cultural revival in the Tobias and Castorina communities hint at visits to the past and reproductions in the present. These practices, now undergoing new interpretations due to the experiences they had as a community, prove the impossibility of homogenizing quilombola communities, as each community carries its own history. Naturally, this is reflected both in the ways in which each community organizes itself and in its practices. It is possible to identify generations that intersect with ways of life specific to their time. Therefore, despite having struggles in common, when considering otherness, the other, it becomes impossible to admit any essentiality.

In this context, one finds a distinct collective organization in both communities, mediated by ancestry, which strengthens resistance. A collective that permeates the community and transforms itself into sharing networks. A collective that is strengthened and preserved by community association, religion, conversation circles, visits, coordination with social movements, knowledge exchanges between communities, and the appreciation of traditions. We also understand that historical knowledge and its (re)construction, along with the deconstruction of official narratives, are related to the vindication and appreciation of quilombola identities today.

In this manner, histories are contested. By reclaiming history, identities are reconstructed. In different ways, one finds that the reclaiming of history has occurred and continues to occur in both communities. Traditional colonial historical knowledge is discussed. This knowledge is deconstructed and recounted by the quilombolas themselves, from an

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unofficial perspective. As Nascimento (2022) points out, a growing number of descendants of Africans in Brazil are acquiring an understanding of their history and thinking clearly about the misunderstandings rooted in traditional literature about their own trajectory. This deconstruction fosters the process of affirming and valuing quilombola identities, and such an appreciation is encouraged and shared with younger people, who from an early age recognize the importance of knowledge and the struggle for freedom and respect for differences.

So far, all of the topics discussed have shown that identity is something that always eludes us. According to Ashforth and Schinoff (2016), identities are constructed in different ways according to individual and collective aspects that are inherent to each person.

As Silva (2012) argues, the process of identity production oscillates between two movements, where, on the one hand, there are processes which tend to fix and stabilize identity, and on the other, processes that tend to subvert and destabilize it. Subversion occurs on different fronts, destabilizing and deconstructing the "frameworks" that were assigned to them. Thus, the very claim to history is in itself an act of subversion.

According to Silva (2012), there are movements whose work aims towards subversion, such as hybridity, which alludes to some kind of mobility between the different nuances of identity and is part of the dynamics of the production of identity and difference. Hybridity, as Silva (2012) explains, is linked to demographic movements that allow contact between different identities, such as diasporas, journeys and border crossings.

The "crossing of borders" is linked to moving beyond signs that "artificially" demarcate the boundaries between territories of different identities and favor processes that transform, destabilize and displace "original" identities, both subordinate and hegemonic (Silva, 2012). This hybridity, which somehow also affects power by destabilizing identities, can be articulated with what Bhaba (1998) calls the "third space". The third space, as conceived by Bhaba (1998), constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation which ensure that the meaning and symbols of a given culture have no unity or a fixed nature, allowing for meanings to be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read in other ways.

Looking at the history of the Castorina and Tobias communities, one may argue that hybridity is present in both, whether due to forced slavery, territorial instability, the occupation of other spaces outside the community, or even the effects of structural racism, which has led many quilombolas to express feelings of denial. This is a movement which enables the destabilization of an identity that at first was considered "fixed" for the quilombolas, while also, due to the crossing of borders, affecting identities that were considered hegemonic. But in what way?

Initially, one must admit that the quilombo is a territory that moves in geographical spaces, as expressed by Nascimento (2021). There are no barriers. It is rooted in history, culture and ancestry. As Barros et al. (2023) mention, we are impelled to engage with multiple identities, which is an aspect of the modern human experience itself.

In this sense, contact with other identities, cultures, practices, and mobility constitute hybridity. Colonial elements are present in the daily lives of communities, as is the case with Catholicism and Protestantism, revealing cultural tensions and the dynamics of

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(de)(re)construction of identities. This validates, above all, the idea that identities are fluid. One sees, then, a subversion of the imposing dominance of binaries that had been constituted until a given point in time. As Murdoch (2023) argues, hybridity brings alternative solutions to the historical and discursive linearities implicit in colonialism, interrupting and "disturbing" what was previously known.

Marina's restaurant exemplifies this mobility. Her cooking and the typical dishes recovered from their memories revive and reproduce ancestral practices, ensuring the recovery of quilombola identity. Resistance is present there, at the very center of a municipality that does not recognize, in its official discourse, the participation of black people in its construction and development. A border town, historically formed mostly by white Europeans. We have no intention of romanticizing resistance, but of showing that it is present in the practices, in the quilombolas' ways of life, in the negotiation of social spaces, thus subverting not only fixed identities, but also the imposition of places. This shows that working in a space other than the community does not prevent some quilombolas from maintaining relations with the territory, nor does it keep them from reproducing cultural practices and reviving traditions. Borders are constantly crossed, and at the same time, identities are (re)constructed and (re)affirmed.

Therefore, by considering the entire historical process, social roles, social relations and interactions practiced by the quilombolas inside and outside their community, each in their own way, we perceive the process of hybridization that permeates their identities. As Silva (2012) emphasizes, the cultivation of other identities and the crossing of borders are powerful strategies for questioning the operations of identity fixation.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

In this article, the post-colonial perspective was faced with a (de)construction of hegemonic narratives. It denounced forms of domination which are linked to the very construction of identities and their forms of representation. When analyzing bibliographies that address the remaining quilombola communities in Paraná, we noticed that there are still discourses that constitute their identities in an essentialist manner. There is a great deal of silencing on the issue of black contributions to the development of the state of Paraná, as well as generalizations and associations of quilombolas with violence, precariousness, manual labour, subsistence farming, and even insinuations that the communities would come to an end because the quilombolas seek employment outside the community and carry out other activities.

This study leads us to reflect on the need to deconstruct these discourses that homogenize the other, as if all quilombos shared the same reality and their residents carried the same identity. From this perspective, the double erasure that quilombolas from QRC Castorina and Tobias suffered becomes most visible: because they are in the Global South, they have always been perceived as not producing "legitimate knowledge" – which comes mainly from the Global North – including the knowledge about who they are, how they should survive, what religions they should practice, ultimately, what their identity is. Structural racism manifested itself in various ways in the course of the research, including the act of naming what is "true" about them. Additionally, in having been conducted in a so-called "white" state like Paraná, which negates black contributions to the history of its development, the research showed how this same structural racism works by highlighting that the quilombolas did not see themselves as such, since they were made invisible by

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the dominant gaze, becoming subjects of ontological non-existence, as previously expressed (Fanon, 2008).

From the standpoint of this non-existence, there was a motion to exist. And to resist. It is at this point that the research highlights a break with identity essences, a stance of non-acceptance adopted by the quilombolas themselves against being who society wanted them to be. There is a hybridization that permeates quilombola identities, even with their movements, sometimes contradictory, in search of an ancestral past. It is the fragmentation of identity, the search to discover who they are, while at the same time their own context and history lead these individuals to a series of displacements and ruptures, in an eternal deconstruction and reconstruction of identity. The very mobility of the quilombolas is evidenced by the crossing of borders. Practices are reproduced and (re)lived beyond the territorial limits of the communities, while other practices are taken up once again in search of ancestry. This shows that there is no single quilombola identity, but that they are plural, as each community and its members have gone through experiences and histories that give them unique characteristics.

In methodological terms, the heterological perspective of this research posed considerable challenges since in this conception research should not “appropriate” the other, and in that light we deemed it as befitting the postcolonial perspective. The intention behind this choice was to recognize the otherness of the other as something that eludes and cannot be fully reduced by Western knowledge. Nonetheless, we do acknowledge its difficulties, as writing about the other is a task that requires extreme ethical caution so as not to erase the uniqueness of the other's experience.

In terms of its contributions to management and organizational studies, the results of this investigation can be summarized in the following fronts, with their findings and reflections: (1) The Global North has always had a need to homogenize the other, especially the Global South, its identities, and its cultures, in order to better control it. But if the subjects are not homogeneous, to what extent is this possible?; (2) The study showed that there is a need to emphasize the importance of analyzing organizations within their specific historical and cultural contexts, while also questioning “truths” produced by the Global North; (3) Instead of applying generic management models, which silence local and non-hegemonic knowledge from the Global South, research on the small and the subordinate is of great significance, as it brings to light the complexities of individuals and diverse realities, raising issues such as segregation for debate, even long after the end of colonialism.

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Elisa Yoshie Ichikawa: Conceptualization (Equal); Data curation (Equal); Formal analysis (Equal); Fundraising acquisition (Lead); Research (Equal); Methodology (Equal); Project management (Lead); Resources (Lead); Supervision (Lead); Writing - original draft (Supporting); Writing - revision and editing (Equal).

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