

## REVISITING TO UNDERSTAND: EMOTIONS AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION PROCESSES OF YOUNG QUILOMBOLA PEOPLE 16 YEARS LATER

## REVISITAR PARA COMPREENDER: EMOÇÕES E PROCESSOS DE CONSTRUÇÃO IDENTITÁRIA DE JOVENS QUILOMBOLAS 16 ANOS DEPOIS

## REVISITANDO PARA COMPRENDER: EMOCIONES Y PROCESOS DE CONSTRUCCIÓN DE LA IDENTIDAD DE JÓVENES QUILOMBOLAS 16 AÑOS DESPUÉS



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### ABSTRACT

This article revisits a master's thesis defended 16 years ago, aiming to analyze, from the perspective of the sociology of emotions, the affective dimension present in the narratives of subjects from a quilombola community in the southern region of Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil. The original research, qualitative in nature, was based on interviews with young people and local leaders, addressing themes such as family, territory, culture, and community participation. In this study, a reinterpretation of these interviews is proposed, seeking to identify emotions that permeate the narratives, such as shame, pride, belonging, and fear, especially regarding cultural practices such as jongo and the construction of quilombola identity. Methodologically, an interpretative analysis inspired by content analysis (Bardin, 1979) is carried out, articulated with a reflexive perspective on the researcher's position in the knowledge production process. The results show that emotions play a central role in the constitution of social experiences and in the re-signification of cultural practices, being fundamental to understanding identity affirmation processes. The temporal distance allowed for an expansion of the analytical perspective, revealing dimensions that were not addressed in the original research.

**Keywords:** Emotions. Quilombola Identity. Jongo. Territory. Reinterpretation of Research.

### RESUMO

Este artigo revisita uma dissertação de mestrado defendida há 16 anos, com o objetivo de analisar, à luz da sociologia das emoções, a dimensão afetiva presente nas narrativas de

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sujeitos de uma comunidade quilombola no sul do estado do Rio de Janeiro. A pesquisa original, de caráter qualitativo, foi desenvolvida a partir de entrevistas com jovens e lideranças locais, abordando temas como família, território, cultura e participação comunitária. Neste trabalho, propõe-se uma releitura dessas entrevistas, buscando identificar emoções que atravessam os discursos, tais como vergonha, orgulho, pertencimento e medo, especialmente no que se refere às práticas culturais como o jongo e à construção da identidade quilombola. Metodologicamente, realiza-se uma análise interpretativa inspirada na análise de conteúdo (BARDIN, 1979), articulada a uma perspectiva reflexiva sobre o lugar da pesquisadora no processo de produção de conhecimento. Os resultados evidenciam que as emoções desempenham papel central na constituição das experiências sociais e na ressignificação de práticas culturais, sendo fundamentais para compreender os processos de afirmação identitária. A distância temporal possibilitou uma ampliação do olhar analítico, evidenciando dimensões não tematizadas na pesquisa original.

**Palavras-chave:** Emoções. Identidade Quilombola. Jongo. Território. Releitura de Pesquisa.

## RESUMEN

Este artículo revisita una tesis de maestría defendida hace 16 años, con el objetivo de analizar, desde la perspectiva de la sociología de las emociones, la dimensión afectiva presente en las narrativas de sujetos de una comunidad quilombola en el sur del estado de Río de Janeiro, Brasil. La investigación original, de carácter cualitativo, se basó en entrevistas con jóvenes y líderes locales, abordando temas como familia, territorio, cultura y participación comunitaria. En este trabajo, se propone una reinterpretación de estas entrevistas, buscando identificar las emociones que atraviesan los discursos, tales como vergüenza, orgullo, pertenencia y miedo, especialmente en lo que respecta a prácticas culturales como el jongo y la construcción de la identidad quilombola. Metodológicamente, se realiza un análisis interpretativo inspirado en el análisis de contenido (Bardin, 1979), articulado con una perspectiva reflexiva sobre el lugar de la investigadora en el proceso de producción de conocimiento. Los resultados evidencian que las emociones desempeñan un papel central en la constitución de las experiencias sociales y en la resignificación de las prácticas culturales, siendo fundamentales para comprender los procesos de afirmación identitaria. La distancia temporal permitió una ampliación de la mirada analítica, evidenciando dimensiones que no fueron problematizadas en la investigación original.

**Palabras clave:** Emociones. Identidad Quilombola. Jongo. Territorio. Reinterpretación de la Investigación.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The production of knowledge in qualitative research does not end with its writing: the data remain open to new interpretations, especially when revisited under different theoretical references and altered historical contexts.

This article proposes a rereading of a master's dissertation defended 16 years ago, focused on cultural practices – such as jongo –, family relationships and identity construction in a quilombola community in the south of Rio de Janeiro. At the time, the analysis prioritized sociocultural and educational dimensions, without systematically exploring the affective dimensions in the narratives of young people.

When revisiting the interviews, emotions such as pride, shame, belonging and fear are evidenced, which cross the discourses and structure social experiences. Inserted in the sociology of emotions – which understands them as social constructions that organize practices and relationships (AGUILAR; VILLAGRÁN, 2013) – this study answers: how do these emotions cross the identity of young quilombolas and how are they resignified after 16 years?

The time interval problematizes the role of time in the analytical view, unveiling new readings of social experiences and reinforcing the affective relevance for quilombola education and identity politics.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The sociology of emotions understands that emotions are not only individual experiences, but socially produced and shared phenomena (AGUILAR; VILLAGRÁN, 2013).

By articulating emotions, body and space, Aguilar and Villagrán (2013) highlight that territories are lived in an affective way, being crossed by memories, bonds and sensitive experiences. This perspective is fundamental to understanding the relationship of young people with the quilombola territory.

In the field of aesthetic and sensitive experience, Didi-Huberman (2016) argues that emotions produce displacements and transformations in the ways of seeing and feeling, allowing new interpretations of reality.

Kaplan (2013), when dealing with youth, shows that emotions such as fear, insecurity and belonging are directly related to forms of social insertion. Certeau (1994) contributes by highlighting everyday practices as spaces for the production of meaning, in which subjects reinvent their experiences.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as a qualitative research of an interpretative nature, based on the rereading of interviews conducted in the context of a master's dissertation developed 16 years ago. The corpus is composed of semi-structured interviews with young people and leaders of a quilombola community, addressing topics such as family, territory, culture and social participation.

The analysis was guided by the assumptions of content analysis (BARDIN, 1979), focusing on the identification of emotional categories emerging in the narratives, such as shame, pride, belonging and fear. However, more than a thematic reclassification of the data, it is proposed here a displacement of the analytical gaze, by taking emotions as the central axis of interpretation.

In this sense, the research also assumes a reflective character, by recognizing that the data are not neutral, nor are they exhausted in a single reading. The rereading of the interviews, after an interval of 16 years, shows that certain dimensions — especially the affective ones — were already present in the discourses, but were not thematized in the original analysis.

This movement implies recognizing the place of the researcher as a constitutive part of the process of knowledge production. At the time of the initial research, the gaze was guided by other theoretical and analytical concerns, which directed attention to certain aspects to the detriment of others. In the present work, by adopting the perspective of the sociology of emotions, it becomes possible to identify and problematize elements that previously remained implicit.

Such repositioning dialogues with the understanding that knowledge is situated and historically constructed, being crossed by the experiences, formations and displacements of the researcher herself. In this sense, temporal distance is not understood as an obstacle, but as a condition of possibility for the expansion of the analytical view, allowing new interpretations of the data.

In addition, when revisiting the interviews, the researcher also revisits herself, her methodological choices and her ways of listening. This process shows that analysis is not only a technical exercise, but also a movement of implication, in which memory, experience and sensibility are intertwined.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 SHAME AND PRIDE: EMOTIONS IN THE RESIGNIFICATION OF JONGO

The narratives show a movement of emotional transformation in relation to jongo, which goes from an experience marked by shame to an experience crossed by pride and belonging.

One of the young women interviewed explains this process when she states: "before I was ashamed to dance jongo [...] Now I'm more proud to talk about jongo, to dance jongo." This displacement reveals the socially constructed character of emotions, which are transformed as the subjects resignify their cultural practices (AGUILAR; VILLAGRÁN, 2013). The jongo, in this context, ceases to be just a cultural manifestation to constitute a space for identity affirmation.

Similarly, the report of another interviewee highlights the weight of stigma: "they said that jongo was macumba [...] I didn't question it myself, I thought it wasn't from my stronghold." The negative association reveals how certain emotions — such as fear and rejection — are socially produced, especially in contexts marked by historical prejudices. The subsequent approximation with jongo transforms this perception, evidencing the role of experiences in the reconstruction of the senses (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2016).

### 4.2 BELONGING AND AFFECTIONS: THE EMOTIONAL DIMENSION OF THE COMMUNITY

The interviews also highlight the centrality of emotions in the construction of community bonds, in which the notion of family goes beyond blood ties and expands to the collective.

One of the participants describes the community as a space of strong affective connection: "even those who are not related know each other [...] many care about one another". This excerpt shows that belonging is not only a social condition, but also an emotional one, being sustained by relationships of care, recognition and daily coexistence. In this sense, the community is experienced as a space of affection, in which emotions structure social relations (KAPLAN, 2013).

In addition, the way in which young people refer to families reinforces the symbolic and affective dimension of the territory, which is constituted not only as a physical space, but as a lived space (AGUILAR; VILLAGRÁN, 2013).

### 4.3 EMOTIONS AND ENGAGEMENT: THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

Another relevant aspect refers to the articulation between emotions and processes of political engagement. The construction of a critical consciousness appears, in the narratives, deeply crossed by emotional experiences.

One of the interviewees says: "I'm not going to keep doing certain things because there are a lot of people who need me out there." The speech evidences a feeling of social responsibility that guides their choices and trajectories. This type of emotion — which articulates belonging, commitment, and identification — contributes to the formation of politically engaged subjects.

At another point, the same interviewee associates his participation with the recognition of his voice: "I had a space to show what I thought [...] People gave me importance." This recognition produces emotional effects that strengthen identity and encourage participation, evidencing that emotions are central elements in the constitution of social practices (CERTEAU, 1994).

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The rereading of the interviews, carried out in the light of the sociology of emotions, made it possible to show that the affective dimensions are not peripheral aspects of social experiences, but central elements in the construction of the quilombola identity. Emotions such as shame, pride, belonging and fear cross the narratives of the subjects, organizing their relationships with the territory, with cultural practices and with the collectivity.

By analyzing these narratives, it becomes possible to understand that processes such as the resignification of jongo, the construction of community bonds and social engagement do not occur only in the realm of practices or discourses, but also in the field of emotions, which guide perceptions, choices and positions. In this sense, emotions emerge as constitutive dimensions of social life, contributing to the affirmation of identity and to the production of meanings about belonging.

The temporal distance of 16 years between the production of the data and its reinterpretation proved to be fundamental for the broadening of the analytical view. This interval made it possible not only to identify aspects that were not previously thematized, but also to problematize the very limits of the analysis carried out in the past. When revisiting the interviews, it is evident that emotions were already present in the discourses, although in an unnamed or secondary way, revealing that the data are not exhausted in a single reading.

This movement of return to data necessarily implies a repositioning of the researcher, who begins to recognize her own intellectual trajectory as part of the process of knowledge production. Revisiting the research is also revisiting the theoretical choices, the ways of listening and the forms of interpretation that guided the original work. Thus, this article not only analyzes

the emotions of the subjects researched, but also explains the shift of the researcher's own gaze, evidencing the situated, processual and unfinished character of scientific knowledge.

Finally, the study reinforces the importance of revisiting previous research as a strategy for theoretical and methodological deepening, especially when articulated with new analytical frameworks. By highlighting the centrality of emotions in the construction of quilombola identity, the article contributes to the field of sociology of emotions and to studies on education and territory, indicating that understanding the affective dimensions of social experiences is fundamental for the analysis of educational, cultural and political processes in contexts marked by memory, resistance and belonging.

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