


**MULTIPLE CHILDHOODS AND EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE AMAZON FLOOR**

**INFÂNCIAS MÚTIPLAS E DESAFIOS EDUCACIONAIS NO CHÃO AMAZÔNICO**

**MÚLTIPLES INFANCIAS Y RETOS EDUCATIVOS EN EL PISO DE AMAZON**

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigates Amazonian childhoods, emphasizing playfulness, family, and protection networks in the daily life of riverside communities, analyzing their implications for child care and development. This qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory research sought to understand how play, kinship ties, and godparenting structure both formal and informal educational practices, contributing to cultural preservation and community cohesion. The findings indicate that playfulness, beyond being a pedagogical resource, is a cultural expression and an instrument for strengthening identity, while the extended family acts as a core for protection and knowledge transmission. The study reinforces the importance of policies and practices that value cultural and territorial diversity, avoiding homogeneous models disconnected from the local reality.

**Keywords:** Amazonian Childhood. Playfulness. Extended Family. Protection Networks. Riverside Communities.

## RESUMO

O estudo investiga as infâncias amazônicas, enfatizando a ludicidade, a família e as redes de proteção no cotidiano ribeirinho, analisando suas implicações para o cuidado e o desenvolvimento infantil. A pesquisa, de natureza qualitativa, descritiva e exploratória, buscou compreender como o brincar, os vínculos de parentesco e o compadrio estruturam práticas educativas formais e não formais, contribuindo para a preservação cultural e para a coesão comunitária. Os resultados apontam que a ludicidade, além de recurso pedagógico, é expressão cultural e instrumento de fortalecimento identitário, enquanto a família ampliada atua como eixo de proteção e transmissão de saberes. A investigação reforça a importância de políticas e práticas que valorizem a diversidade cultural e territorial, evitando modelos homogêneos e desconectados da realidade local.

**Palavras-chave:** Infância Amazônica. Ludicidade. Família Ampliada Redes de Proteção. Comunidades Ribeirinhas.

## RESUMEN

El estudio investiga la infancia amazónica, con énfasis en el juego, la familia y las redes de protección en la vida cotidiana ribereña, analizando sus implicaciones para el cuidado y el desarrollo infantil. La investigación, cualitativa, descriptiva y exploratoria, buscó comprender cómo el juego, los lazos de parentesco y el compadrio estructuran las prácticas educativas formales y no formales, contribuyendo a la preservación cultural y a la cohesión comunitaria. Los resultados muestran que el juego, además de ser un recurso pedagógico, es una expresión cultural y un instrumento de fortalecimiento de la identidad, mientras que la familia extensa actúa como eje de protección y transmisión de conocimientos. La investigación refuerza la importancia de políticas y prácticas que valoricen la diversidad cultural y territorial, evitando modelos homogéneos y desconectados de la realidad local.

**Palabras clave:** Infancia Amazónica. El Juego. Redes de Protección de la Familia Extensa. Comunidades Fluviales.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Childhood, in the riverside communities of the Amazon, carries historical, cultural and socioeconomic specificities that challenge traditional models of educational analysis and intervention. It is a geographical and symbolic space in which daily life is structured around expanded networks of kinship, cronyism and community practices that articulate work, care and transmission of knowledge. These childhoods are not limited to reproducing national patterns of child development; They reinterpret them based on experiences marked by direct interaction with the territory, by the appreciation of traditions and by the presence of multiple educational agents.

The relevance of studying Amazonian childhoods and their protection networks is justified by the need to understand how learning and care processes are structured in contexts of social vulnerability and geographic isolation. This analysis contributes to broadening the discussion on public policies and pedagogical practices, allowing cultural and territorial singularities to be considered as constitutive elements, and not as obstacles to the integral formation of children. In addition, the recognition of the importance of playfulness and the extended family as formative axes makes it possible to think of educational interventions that dialogue with the local reality and value their knowledge.

The problem that guides this investigation stems from the observation that educational and social policies, often conceived in urban contexts, have difficulty incorporating the specificities of riverside communities, resulting in disjointed or ineffective actions. Thus, the question is: how do playfulness, families and protection networks influence the education and care of riverside children, and how can these dimensions be incorporated into educational practices that are more appropriate to the Amazonian context?

The general objective is to analyze Amazonian childhoods, focusing on playfulness, family and protection networks in the daily life of the riverside, seeking to understand their contributions to the integral development of children. As specific objectives, it is proposed: to identify the cultural and pedagogical practices linked to play in the local context; describe the structure and functioning of kinship and crony networks; and to discuss the implications of these dynamics for formal and non-formal education.

The methodology adopted is qualitative, descriptive and exploratory, as it enables an in-depth understanding of social phenomena in their real context. Such an approach is justified by the need to capture nuances, meanings and interactions specific to the communities studied, something that could hardly be apprehended by purely quantitative

methods. As Lakatos and Marconi (2017) argue, qualitative research is appropriate when it seeks to understand relationships and processes from the perspective of the subjects themselves, allowing a more sensitive and situated look at the realities investigated.

## **2 AMAZONIAN CHILDHOODS AND THEIR CONTEXTS OF LEARNING AND CARE**

The childhoods lived on the Amazonian soil are shaped by a deep intertwining between territory, culture and social relations. Far from being just biological phases, they represent ways of being in the world that bear the mark of community practices, oral traditions, and daily interactions with nature. The banks of the rivers, the trails in the forest and the small communities form a scenario that not only shelters, but educates, and that, at the same time, challenges the hegemonic conceptions of childhood. In this environment, knowledge is built both in school and outside it, in the fields, in fishing, in community festivals, and in the kinship networks that structure social life (Andrade, 2019).

The family space, although central, is not limited to the restricted nucleus of father, mother and children. The relational configuration of the Amazon involves an extended family that incorporates uncles, grandparents, cousins, godchildren and neighbors as figures of care and reference. This complex web of bonds, sustained by relationships of cronyism and reciprocity, builds a model of social protection that is, at the same time, affective and functional. Although the function of cronyism is rooted in the choice of influential godparents as a strategy of security and prestige, it also remains a mechanism for welcoming and transmitting values, especially in communities where the state presence is rarefied (Vilar, 2021).

In everyday life, this care network does not operate in an abstract way. It materializes in the sharing of household chores, in accompanying children to community events, and in mutual protection in the face of crises or illnesses. This relational format also directly influences the learning processes, since the child interacts and learns with multiple adult figures, receiving guidance, stories and examples of conduct. In a territory where the school often faces difficulties in access and permanence, these expanded interactions play a central role in socialization and non-formal education (De Amorim Santos Andrade and Amorim dos Santos, 2024).

The playful dimension is equally structuring, functioning as a link between cultural tradition and the integral formation of the child. Studies carried out in Amazonian schools show that playfulness, when adapted to the local context, becomes a powerful pedagogical

strategy, capable of arousing interest and promoting meaningful learning. Traditional games, oral narratives and collective games are naturally integrated into school and community activities, resulting in experiences that stimulate creativity, criticality and the ability to cooperate (Beltrão et al., 2015).

Play, in these communities, is not restricted to a moment of rest or recreation. It is also a space for symbolic production, in which simple objects (such as pieces of wood, seeds and leaves) are transformed into toys that carry collective memories and meanings. This ability to resignify environmental resources into instruments of fun and learning evidences not only children's inventiveness, but also the deep relationship between children and territory (Mangieri and Rodrigues, 2024).

Alongside these powers, historical challenges persist that affect the right to full childhood. The overlapping of responsibilities, such as participation in productive activities from an early age, marks the lives of many Amazonian children. In communities where family work is essential for subsistence, schooling can be fragmented, alternating periods of study with fishing, gathering or farming tasks. This condition, far from being just a choice, is often the result of economic inequalities and the absence of effective social protection policies (Azevedo, 2017).

The overload of functions imposed on many children in the Amazon does not mean the absence of desire or appreciation of schooling. On the contrary, in several communities, access to school is seen as an instrument of transformation, even though reality imposes interruptions or difficulties in the continuity of studies. Reports from teachers in the region point out that, even in the face of adverse conditions, there is a collective effort to keep children enrolled, either by organizing community transport or by adjusting school schedules to the tides and family work cycles (UNICEF, 2018). This flexibility, however, is not always recognized by national educational policies, which are still based on urban models that are not very adaptable to riverside life.

This disconnect between official guidelines and local practices is also expressed in educational development indices. Surveys show that, in a large part of the Amazon, the results of the Basic Education Evaluation System (SAEB) reveal a performance below the national average, especially in isolated areas (Brasil, 2022). These numbers, although relevant, do not reflect the complexity of learning experienced outside school, which is often made invisible in official metrics. The challenge, therefore, is to recognize and value the

education that takes place in the multiple spaces of community interaction, without underestimating the need to ensure adequate infrastructure and teacher training.

The critical perspective on Amazonian childhoods requires understanding that the child's body bears marks of social and political reality. Arroyo (2012a) problematizes the concept of "precarious bodies" to refer to those exposed to structural neglect, symbolic violence, and systematic exclusion. In the Amazon, this manifests itself not only in the lack of basic services, but also in the invisibility that falls on these childhoods in the public debate and in investment priorities. Recognizing the child's body as a territory of rights implies questioning practices that naturalize inequality.

In the educational field, there are experiences that demonstrate the power of a culturally situated approach. Projects that incorporate traditional knowledge, oral histories, and environmental management practices into the school curriculum have shown significant results in student motivation and engagement (Andrade, 2019). Such initiatives break with the logic of content detached from reality and enable children to realize the practical relevance of what they learn, strengthening their identity and self-esteem.

By preserving ancestral games and adapting them to the current context, communities reaffirm their historical continuity, as research shows that, when playing is recognized as part of pedagogical planning, it enhances socio-emotional development and contributes to learning in an integrated way, instead of segmented by disciplines (Beltrão et al., 2015).

This integrated vision contrasts with school practices that still reproduce a rigid and centralized model, little open to adaptations. In urban schools in the Amazon, where the external influence is more intense, there is a risk of losing cultural elements that sustain community playfulness. Curricular homogenization, imposed by national standards, tends to reduce the diversity of experiences, distancing the school from the daily lives of children (Mangieri; Rodrigues, 2024).

On the other hand, the extended family maintains its relevance as a formative axis, even though it faces the impacts of migration, the advancement of technologies and economic precariousness. In many homes, the use of digital devices replaces part of traditional interactions, changing the way children build bonds and perceive the world. This phenomenon is not exclusive to the Amazon, but acquires specific nuances when considering the uneven speed of internet access and selective exposure to external cultural content (Vilar, 2021).

The bond between family and school, when strengthened, is capable of creating more stable conditions for learning. Experiences of articulation between teachers, community leaders and family members show that early childhood education becomes more effective when there is a continuous dialogue about the needs and potentialities of each child (UNICEF, 2018). This approach, however, requires time, trust, and respect for local rhythms, aspects that are often disregarded in standardized intervention programs.

At the same time, the need to include children with disabilities or neurodevelopmental disorders in educational processes further challenges the region's school systems. Studies on inclusive educational policy in Manaus reveal advances in the creation of multifunctional resource rooms, but also point to significant deficiencies in teacher training and infrastructure (Sadim, 2012). The absence of policies adapted to the Amazonian reality makes the challenge even greater, especially in remote areas.

The intersectoral approach is indispensable to address the multiple factors that affect Amazonian childhoods. The articulation between health, social assistance and education is essential to guarantee rights and prevent situations of extreme vulnerability (De Amorim Santos Andrade; Amorim dos Santos, 2024). Isolated programs, no matter how well-intentioned they may be, tend to lose effectiveness when they do not dialogue with other policies and territorial specificities.

Despite the challenges, there are successful experiences that indicate possible paths. Community environmental education initiatives, for example, not only transmit ecological knowledge, but also reinforce values of care and collective responsibility. By involving children in reforestation activities, cleaning streams or monitoring species, these actions promote meaningful learning that dialogues directly with daily life and the preservation of the territory (Andrade, 2019).

These community experiences demonstrate that education, when thought from the territory, can integrate school knowledge and local knowledge in an organic way. The presence of the child as a protagonist, and not only as a receiver of content, transforms the teaching process into an exercise of autonomy and co-responsibility. By taking care of the forest, rivers, or food production, children not only learn scientific concepts, but also internalize values of preservation and citizenship that would hardly be transmitted only through books or expository classes (Andrade, 2019).

In this context, playfulness is no longer understood as an accessory activity and starts to occupy a place of centrality in Amazonian pedagogy. The games, adapted to local

conditions, fulfill the function of socialization, conflict resolution and creative experimentation. Playing with net pulling, building small wooden canoes or organizing swimming competitions are activities that mobilize motor, cognitive and affective skills in an integrated way. The relationship with the environment, therefore, is also built through pleasure and curiosity, and not only through normative discourses (Beltrão et al., 2015).

Although these practices reveal power, they coexist with a reality of severe restrictions. The lack of materials, the absence of libraries and the lack of specific pedagogical resources compromise the continuity of initiatives that depend on institutional support. In some locations, teachers improvise with what they have, producing resources from elements found in the community itself. This creativity, although admirable, highlights the inequality of conditions in relation to other regions of the country (Brasil, 2022).

Child labour, although formally prohibited, persists in certain areas, often masquerading as family help. The need to ensure the survival of the house leads children to participate in heavy activities, such as carrying firewood, helping with night fishing or planting. These practices are not necessarily perceived as exploitation by the communities, but the physical overload and the reduction of time for study and leisure compromise integral development (Azevedo, 2017).

The statistical invisibility of these situations contributes to the maintenance of the problem. Official indicators rarely capture the complexity of children's journeys, which mix work, study and care for younger siblings. Public policies that do not consider these specificities run the risk of applying standardized solutions, incapable of dealing with the multifaceted reality of Amazonian childhood (De Amorim Santos Andrade; Amorim dos Santos, 2024).

Despite this scenario, there are local and regional movements that strive to create more effective protection networks. Community organizations and residents' associations have been active in promoting extracurricular activities, often focused on music, sports and handicrafts, as a way to keep children away from risk situations. These spaces also function as territories of intergenerational coexistence, where the elderly transmit stories, songs and traditional techniques to the new generations (Mangieri; Rodrigues, 2024).

The strengthening of the intergenerational bond is a key point for cultural preservation. On the banks of rivers, the child learns by observing and repeating gestures of fishing, cultivation or food preparation. This learning, although informal, creates a solid base of practical knowledge that dialogues with school life. The problem arises when the school



ignores or devalues this repertoire, treating it as irrelevant or backward, thus reinforcing an artificial dichotomy between popular knowledge and scientific knowledge (Arroyo, 2012a).

On the other hand, experiences that value this knowledge have the potential to transform the school environment. Pedagogical projects that include classes on the river, visits to cultivation areas and workshops on traditional knowledge strengthen children's self-esteem and a sense of belonging. When they realize that their culture has a place in school, they start to see learning as something useful and connected to real life (Andrade, 2019).

This approximation, however, depends on the willingness of educational policies to make curricula and evaluation practices more flexible. Normative centralization and the focus on standardized exams end up reducing the possibility of a more situated and participatory education. Children in the Amazon, therefore, are often measured by parameters that do not reflect their reality, generating indices that reinforce the image of deficit and inferiority (Brasil, 2022).

When dealing with the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Amazonian context, the difficulties multiply. The absence of adapted transportation, specific materials and trained professionals limits the effectiveness of inclusion policies. Cases of school dropout due to lack of adequate care are still reported, revealing that the universalization of access does not guarantee, by itself, quality and permanence (Sadim, 2012).

However, there are inspiring experiences in which inclusion goes beyond legal compliance and becomes everyday practice. Schools that reorganize pedagogical time, adapt activities and involve colleagues in supporting children with disabilities create a more welcoming and collaborative environment. In these situations, the school community learns to deal with diversity as a value and not as an obstacle, something that also reverberates outside the walls of the school (UNICEF, 2018).

The central challenge, therefore, is to build an educational policy that recognizes and values the uniqueness of Amazonian childhoods, guaranteeing them the right to learn without giving up their cultural identity. This requires breaking with the logic of homogenization and assuming complexity as a starting point, not as a problem to be corrected. It is in this encounter between culture, territory and rights that the possibility of a truly transformative education for the region lies.

## 2.1 PLAYFULNESS AS A CULTURAL AND PEDAGOGICAL EXPRESSION OF PLAYFULNESS

Playfulness, when situated in the Amazonian context, reveals itself as a phenomenon that transcends mere recreation to become a structuring element of the learning process and cultural preservation. In riverside and rural communities, playing is intertwined with traditional practices, economic activities and forms of sociability, configuring itself as a field of knowledge where popular knowledge and school knowledge meet. It is in this space that children learn to manage the environment, to cooperate with peers, to respect collective rhythms and to resignify elements of the territory as instruments of learning and fun.

The understanding of playfulness as a pedagogical resource cannot be limited to the notion of an auxiliary tool in formal education. The perspective defended by Beltrão et al. (2015) leads to a deeper understanding:

"[...] a methodological resource capable of providing spontaneous and natural learning. It stimulates criticism, creativity, socialization. It is, therefore, recognized as one of the most significant activities, if not the most significant, for its social pedagogical content" (Beltrão et al., p. 4, 2015 apud Oliveira, 1985, p. 74).

This definition places play at the center of the educational experience, not as a methodological adornment, but as a nucleus of integral development. The spontaneity mentioned here is not synonymous with improvisation, but the result of an environment in which creative freedom is guided by cultural values and formative goals.

The cultural value of playfulness in the Amazon is evident when observing the relationship between games and oral traditions. Many songs, games and narratives transmitted between generations carry collective memories, moral teachings and knowledge about the territory. Playing "canoe" with improvised trunks or participating in races on the creek are activities that, at the same time, strengthen motor skills and reaffirm community identity. These moments not only develop physical and cognitive skills, but also reinforce a sense of belonging that would be difficult to achieve by teaching methods detached from the local reality.

The school, when it is open to integrate these practices, is able to establish a dialogue between the official curriculum and community knowledge. The challenge is to break with the view that playing is "wasted time" or just compensation for intellectual effort. On the contrary, playfulness can serve as an articulating axis of the educational process, connecting

disciplines and contents to concrete experiences. This requires teachers to recognize and value the cultural repertoire of children, creating opportunities for games and playful activities to be incorporated in a planned way into the school routine.

This incorporation, however, should not mean domesticating playfulness so that it fits into the curricular requirements. The richness of play lies precisely in its flexibility and adaptability. In Amazonian areas, where material resources can be scarce, the creativity of children and the community makes up for the absence of industrialized toys. This not only stimulates the imagination, but also strengthens environmental awareness, since the reuse of natural or recycled materials is part of the act of play itself.

In addition to mediating intergenerational relationships, playing also fulfills the function of community integration. Collective games, popular festivals and sports activities organized on specific dates create moments of social cohesion, in which children, young people and adults share the same space and objective. In these events, play goes beyond the boundaries of childhood and becomes part of the social fabric, reinforcing bonds and strengthening solidarity networks that have a direct impact on the protection and care of children.

In the school environment, the incorporation of playfulness requires a pedagogical look attentive to the possibilities of transversality. Playful activities can be articulated with the teaching of mathematics, science, history and geography without losing their creative and pleasurable nature. Adapted board games, dramatizations, counting games with elements of nature and simple experiments carried out in groups are examples of how play can dialogue with curricular content. This planned use, far from stifling playfulness, enhances it as an instrument of learning and engagement.

Unlike overly standardized teaching methods, playful activities allow each participant to experiment, make mistakes, discover, and try again without the burden of immediate formal assessments. This is particularly important in the Amazon, where the heterogeneity of experiences and previous knowledge among students is quite accentuated due to differences in school access and family experiences.

The role of the teacher, in this context, is that of facilitator and articulator of experiences. More than "allowing" play, it needs to create conditions for playfulness to flourish as a legitimate pedagogical practice. This involves recognizing that games and games are not on the margins of knowledge, but constitute a privileged access route to complex knowledge. When well worked, playful activities develop critical thinking, problem-solving

skills, and socio-emotional skills that are difficult to consolidate through traditional exercises alone.

The statement that playfulness is "a methodological resource capable of providing spontaneous and natural learning" gains even more strength when we observe its application in the daily life of Amazonian schools. The natural environment favors the use of open spaces, interaction with elements of the ecosystem and the mobilization of local resources, creating learning situations that escape the rigid format of the classroom. Under these conditions, spontaneity is not synonymous with a lack of planning, but the result of a pedagogical intentionality that respects the way children relate to the world (Beltrão et al., 2015 apud Oliveira, 1985).

Therefore, thinking of playfulness as a cultural and pedagogical expression in the Amazon also means defending it as a right. It is about ensuring that each child has the opportunity to fully live their childhood, exploring, creating and learning through meaningful experiences. This defense requires public policies that recognize play as an integral part of the curriculum and that guarantee material and formative conditions for it to be effective in schools, valuing local cultural practices and strengthening the identity of new generations.

## 2.2 FAMILY AND PROTECTION NETWORKS IN THE DAILY LIFE OF THE RIVERSIDE

The family structure in the riverside communities of the Amazon differs widely from the urban models or traditional patriarchal arrangements observed in other historical contexts in Brazil. More than a restricted nuclear unit, the riverside family is an expanded network that includes multiple degrees of kinship and ties of patronage. This arrangement is not defined by constant cohabitation, but by the active maintenance of bonds of support and reciprocity. Thus, even when they do not live under the same roof, the members of this network recognize each other and mobilize to help each other, whether in everyday situations or in times of crisis.

This configuration has deep roots in the social and economic dynamics of the region, where the geographical dispersion of housing and the need for mobility due to productive activities (fishing, subsistence agriculture, extractivism) impose forms of organization that are different from families in urban centers. The description that

"the family, in the Amazon, constituted a vast group of kinship, but different from the patriarchal family of the sugar mills and coffee farms. In general, the relatives did not live together, nor did they work together. The houses were indeed small, but kinship

was always remembered and taken into account. It incorporated father, mother, brothers, uncles, grandparents, nephews, cousins, brothers-in-law and mother-in-law, as well as godchildren and children of the house. Cronyism was an important institution. Godfather and godmother had a protective function for the godson, in the absence of the parents. Preferably, important people were chosen as godparents: a political boss, a leader, an authority, the boss, etc" (Vilar, 2021, p. 60 apud Costa, 2000, p. 179)

It shows that this family network goes beyond the biological scope and is also based on strategic and symbolic choices.

Cronyism, in this context, assumes singular relevance. In addition to the religious rite, it is constituted as a social alliance that guarantees material and moral support, functioning as a protection mechanism for the child and his family. The choice of godparents, often associated with figures of prestige and influence, reveals not only the cultural importance of the bond, but also its role as a strategy for survival and social insertion. This political aspect of cronyism does not diminish its affective value, but inscribes it in a broader scenario of power relations and reciprocity.

The riverside family protection network operates in a decentralized and adaptive way. It is not a structure formalized by public policies, but a relational fabric sustained by trust and community commitment. The presence of godchildren and "children of the house" expands the circle of care, incorporating children who, for different reasons, have come to live or depend on the support of another family. This practice, far from being uncommon, responds to emerging needs, such as orphanhood, temporary migration or economic difficulties faced by a family nucleus.

Throughout life, belonging to an extended family and an interconnected community offers emotional and material support in situations such as illness, displacement, or financial difficulties. This characteristic is particularly relevant in regions where access to public health, education, and social assistance services is limited and irregular. In these circumstances, the family and the community not only complement but often replace the role of the state.

The strength of these networks of kinship and cronyism, however, can also reproduce inequalities. The choice of godparents based on criteria of political or economic power can reinforce local hierarchies and consolidate relations of dependence. At the same time, respect for the most influential figures in the network guarantees a certain balance in community relations, functioning as a mediator in conflicts and as a point of articulation in

collective decisions. This ambivalence between protection and reproduction of inequalities is an intrinsic part of the functioning of Amazonian family networks.

The riverside family network also presents itself as a privileged space for the transmission of knowledge and cultural practices. Children grow up observing and participating in everyday activities (from preparing food to making fishing instruments) learning by immersion in an environment where teaching and learning blend into the natural flow of life. This learning is not formalized, but structured by its own logic, in which knowledge is incorporated by repetition, example, and active participation. In this sense, the family not only protects, but forms, ensuring that traditions and techniques remain alive throughout the generations.

The influence of this network on formal education is equally significant. In communities where school may be hours away, it is common for family members to organize themselves to accompany children on the way, often using shared boats. In addition, the very decision to keep the child attending school often depends on the consensus and support of the extended network, which takes responsibility when parents need to be absent or dedicate themselves to work. This cooperation between relatives and neighbors shows that, in addition to the affective function, the riverside family acts as an active agent in guaranteeing the right to education.

Grandmothers, aunts and godmothers assume central roles in the upbringing and care of children, especially in cases of paternal absence or division of labor that requires men to leave for seasonal activities. This female presence, combining affection and discipline, constitutes a fundamental pillar for the maintenance of community life, articulating material, emotional and educational dimensions of care.

The relationship between family and community is reinforced by rituals and celebrations, which function as milestones for the reaffirmation of bonds. Religious festivals, joint efforts and local celebrations strengthen the collective identity and reaffirm the importance of the alliances built over time. On these occasions, cronyism and kinship networks become visible in their function of integrating and mobilizing people around a common goal, be it festive, spiritual or of practical necessity.

Even with the arrival of new social and economic dynamics, such as access to the internet, the expansion of trade routes, and more frequent contact with urban centers, the structure of kinship and protection of riverside communities remains resilient. These changes

influence habits, values and modes of interaction, but the family network continues to be the axis that organizes social life, even if adapted to new demands.

However, it is important to recognize that these networks also face weaknesses. Labour-motivated migrations, economic pressures and generational fragmentation itself can weaken traditional ties. In some cases, geographic dispersion hinders daily reciprocity, creating gaps that, if not filled by public support policies, can compromise the full protection of children and adolescents.

Even so, the riverside family continues to be a reference of belonging and identity, ensuring not only physical survival, but the preservation of a specific way of living and learning. It is simultaneously a space of care and cultural transmission, a bridge between past and future, and a shield against the uncertainties of a context marked by distance from the State and proximity between people.

### **3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The family and the protection networks in the daily life of the riverside reveal a logic of social organization that goes far beyond immediate care. They constitute a true infrastructure of life, where affections, responsibilities and knowledge are intertwined to sustain the collective. In this arrangement, each bond, whether of blood or of cronyism, carries with it a social and symbolic function that ensures cultural continuity and community cohesion, even in the face of external pressures and changes imposed by time.

More than a kinship structure, these networks represent a form of resistance and adaptation. Its strength lies in its ability to transform everyday life into a space for learning and mutual support, preserving values and practices that keep the riverside identity alive. By recognizing and valuing this dynamic, space is opened to understand that the care and education of a child is not limited to the domestic sphere, but expands throughout the social fabric that surrounds him.

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