**Quilombola Identities: rethinking hybridity beyond dichotomies**

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Submissão: 08/10/2024

Aceite: 05/11/2024

GIMOVSKI, Fabio; OLIVEIRA, Cintia Mara Ribas de. Identidades Quilombolas: Repensando a hibridização além das dicotomias. **Periódico Eletrônico Fórum Ambiental da Alta Paulista**, *[S. l.]*, v. 20, n. 5, 2024. DOI: [10.17271/1980082720520245262](https://doi.org/10.17271/1980082720520245262)

Disponível em: <https://publicacoes.amigosdanatureza.org.br/index.php/forum_ambiental/article/view/5262>

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**Identidades Quilombolas: repensando a hibridização além das dicotomias**

**Resumo**

Este ensaio analisa criticamente as identidades das comunidades quilombolas brasileiras como processos contínuos de hibridização cultural. Argumenta-se que perspectivas estáticas, essencialistas e dicotômicas como tradicional versus moderno e rural versus urbano são insuficientes para apreender a complexidade dessas experiências. Em contrapartida, propõe-se compreendê-las por meio de aportes teóricos pós-coloniais e decoloniais sobre hibridismo, tradução cultural e interseccionalidade. Demonstra-se como, desde sua gênese nos quilombos coloniais, esses grupos protagonizaram negociações criativas entre distintas matrizes africanas, indígenas e mais tarde urbanas em complexas estratégias de resistência. Explora-se a natureza intrinsecamente fluida, múltipla e transcultural das identidades quilombolas, permeadas por tensões e hibridismos internos de gênero, geração, classe e território. Por fim, apontam-se implicações para a formulação de políticas públicas interculturais e pesquisas participativas que valorizem os contínuos processos de reinvenção identitária protagonizados por essas comunidades.

**Palavras-chave:** Quilombos. Hibridismo Cultural. Identidades Negras. Interseccionalidade. Decolonialidade.

**Quilombola Identities: rethinking hybridity beyond dichotomies**

**Abstract**
This essay critically analyzes the identities of Brazilian quilombola communities as continuous processes of cultural hybridization. It argues that static, essentialist, and dichotomous perspectives, such as traditional versus modern and rural versus urban, are insufficient to grasp the complexity of these experiences. Instead, it proposes understanding them through postcolonial and decolonial theoretical approaches to hybridity, cultural translation, and intersectionality. The study demonstrates how, since their genesis in colonial quilombos, these groups have engaged in creative negotiations among diverse African, Indigenous, and later urban matrices in complex resistance strategies. It explores the inherently fluid, multiple, and transcultural nature of quilombola identities, shaped by internal tensions and hybridizations of gender, generation, class, and territory. Finally, it highlights implications for the formulation of intercultural public policies and participatory research that value the ongoing processes of identity reinvention led by these communities.

**Keywords:** Quilombos. Cultural Hybridity. Black Identities. Intersectionality. Decoloniality.

**Identidades Quilombolas: repensando la hibridación más allá de las dicotomías**

**Resumen**
Este ensayo analiza críticamente las identidades de las comunidades quilombolas brasileñas como procesos continuos de hibridación cultural. Se argumenta que perspectivas estáticas, esencialistas y dicotómicas, como tradicional versus moderno y rural versus urbano, son insuficientes para captar la complejidad de estas experiencias. Por el contrario, se propone comprenderlas a través de enfoques teóricos poscoloniales y decoloniales sobre hibridismo, traducción cultural e interseccionalidad. Se demuestra cómo, desde su génesis en los quilombos coloniales, estos grupos han protagonizado negociaciones creativas entre distintas matrices africanas, indígenas y más tarde urbanas, en complejas estrategias de resistencia. Se explora la naturaleza intrínsecamente fluida, múltiple y transcultural de las identidades quilombolas, permeadas por tensiones e hibridaciones internas de género, generación, clase y territorio. Finalmente, se señalan implicaciones para la formulación de políticas públicas interculturales e investigaciones participativas que valoren los continuos procesos de reinvención identitaria protagonizados por estas comunidades.

**Palabras clave:** Quilombos. Hibridación Cultural. Identidades Negras. Interseccionalidad. Decolonialidad.

**INTRODUCTION**

Quilombola communities represent a significant portion of the Afro-Brazilian population and stand as one of the principal symbols of Black resistance against the enduring oppression of the slave-based system. Emerging from enslaved African ancestors who dared to defy the established order and build autonomous settlements known as quilombos, these communities are recognized as centers of resistance and bear a heritage of struggle, resilience, and the preservation of traditions and ways of life deeply rooted in their Afro-diasporic worldviews (Carneiro, 1957; Nascimento, 1985; Silva & Souza, 2022). Clovis Moura, in his work on the Sociology of the Black Brazilian (1968), critiques the contentious understanding of Black people in Brazilian society, referencing the studies of Nina Rodrigues (1935), who viewed Black individuals as biologically inferior, Arthur Ramos (1953), who offered a culturalist interpretation of their historical-social condition, and Gilberto Freyre (1981), who espoused a view of harmony between oppressors and the oppressed. Moura (1968) notes that these scholars contributed to a framework of thought not devoid of prejudice.

In this regard, studies on ethnicity, emphasizing field observation over the production of data by deduction (Barth, 1967), highlight the continuous evolution of cultures. Consequently, contemporary quilombola identities transcend mere recollections of the past and instead represent an ongoing process of re-existence, cultural affirmation, and struggle for rights (Arruti, 2006). As aptly noted by Munanga and Gomes (2006), the process of resistance involved exposing socioeconomic exploitation and overcoming racial discrimination. More than mere refuges, quilombos emerged as spaces of resistance and have been configured as ethnic symbols in the fight against racism (Gomes, 2015). However, despite their undeniable historical and sociocultural relevance, quilombola communities still face significant challenges, including social invisibility, inadequate public policies, and threats to their traditional territories (Marinho, 2017). Part of these challenges stems from a limited and often stereotypical understanding of their identities by the State and broader society.

The challenges faced by quilombola communities are also linked to the analytical frameworks through which their identities have historically been interpreted. Much of the research and public policy continues to rely on binary and essentialist approaches, which tend to frame quilombos within simplistic dichotomies such as traditional versus modern, rural versus urban, and authentic versus acculturated (Arruti, 2006; Gusmão, 1997). This dichotomous perspective imposes a false notion of authenticity tied to cultural immutability, disregarding the continuous flows, exchanges, and reinterpretations that have shaped quilombola identities over time. As Bhabha (1998) argues, the representation of difference facilitates the imaginative identification with the "other," implying that the desire for recognition should not be read merely as a reflection of cultural traits. Identities are relational, fluid, and constantly evolving—a continuous process in which, as Barth (1967) asserts, not only the interaction with other groups but also the relationship with the environment plays a determining role.

Given this context, the central aim of this essay is to critically analyze the processes of identity hybridization experienced by Brazilian quilombola communities, including the individualization often neglected among popular classes. Instead of framing them within fixed paradigms of authenticity or acculturation, this study seeks to understand quilombola identities as hybrid, multifaceted constructions in constant flux, akin to the movement of hybridization analyzed by Canclini (2001), wherein all cultures are seen as border cultures—that is, they develop in relation to others, exchanging points of communication and knowledge.

The notion of cultural hybridity will be utilized not only to dismantle simplistic binary oppositions but also to reveal how quilombos historically constituted themselves through active processes of selective incorporation, reinterpretation, and reinvention of external elements intersecting with their African roots (Arruti, 2006). Accordingly, popular tradition is associated with a space for cultural preservation as it is directly linked to resistance. Far from being considered conservative, popular culture is transformative (Hall, 2003). This dynamic and processual nature of hybrid identities will be explored throughout the essay, alongside an essentialist perspective that tends to homogenize quilombola communities, ignoring the multiple intersections of race, gender, class, generation, and the internal diversities within each group (Ratts, 2006).

There is no loss of authenticity in hybridization; rather, it enables quilombola identities to continuously reinvent themselves as a strategy of resistance against the violence of slavery and structural racism (Eugenio & Lima, 2014).

At the same time, intersectionality is a concept that recognizes that each individual possesses overlapping identities such as gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, and disability, among others (Collins, 2015). These identities intersect and interact in complex ways, creating unique experiences of privilege or oppression. In other words, intersectionality entails understanding that a person is not merely a woman, or Black, or disabled, for example. They are a combination of these and other identities, and this unique combination shapes their experiences and challenges in ways distinct from those faced by someone with a different set of identities. For the concept of intersectionality, forms of discrimination and disadvantage do not exist in isolation; they overlap and reinforce one another. Crenshaw (1989) illustrates how a Black woman, for instance, may face discrimination not only for being a woman but also for being Black, with the intersection of these identities creating a distinct experience.

It is therefore imperative to transcend these simplistic dichotomies and recognize quilombola identities as dynamic, plural processes marked by constant negotiations, cultural exchanges, and creative reinterpretations in the face of historical adversities. In this way, the essay seeks to illuminate the complex negotiations and reinterpretations involved in shaping quilombola identities through an analytical lens capable of valuing the multiplicities and fluidity of contemporary quilombola experiences.

Only through such a critical perspective will it be possible to advance public policies and academic approaches that are more sensitive and appropriate to the realities of these communities. To this end, a bibliographic review was conducted, encompassing theoretical perspectives guided by the following keywords: cultural hybridization, identity, quilombolas, cultural diversity, intersectionality, and resistance against colonial practices. A total of 52 scientific articles and 20 books were analyzed to position this essay within the existing body of knowledge, engaging with key works in the fields of post-colonial and decolonial studies. Above all, the essay endeavors to undertake a critical-dialectical reading that emphasizes the multiplicity inherent in the theme of cultural hybridization.

**DECONSTRUCTING DICHOTOMIES**

The dichotomies of traditional versus modern and rural versus urban have been uncritically applied in studies of traditional communities and become even more pronounced in interactions between rural and urban populations (Ocampo, 2019). Regarding quilombola communities, the slow process of land titling in rural areas and the ethnically constructed spaces in urban zones further accentuate these dichotomies (Treccani, 2006; Silva and Tomazi, 2019; Pereira and Oliveira, 2019). Quilombos are complex structures that defy simplistic explanations, and the notion that their members are predominantly of African origin has been questioned (Reis and Gomes, 1996). The traditional work carried out in quilombola communities, as shown in a study conducted in Palmas, Paraná (Alves and Bernartt, 2021), serves as a means of cultural and identity preservation, given that these communities predate the municipality itself. Such studies highlight the need to challenge the uncritical application of these dichotomies in quilombola research.

These binary oppositions tend to portray quilombos as isolated entities, in opposition to the dynamics of modernity and urban spaces. However, this perspective proves simplistic and misleading in light of the complexities of quilombola experiences (da Silva, 2014). For example, the traditional knowledge of medicinal plants in a quilombola community in southern Bahia is vital for its sociocultural maintenance and sustainable development (Mota and Dias, 2012). This ethnoknowledge integrates with local biodiversity, reinforcing the community's cultural fabric. As Canclini (2001) argues, traditional cultures reveal their contemporary relevance when historical contexts are examined, and the market increasingly seeks to incorporate traditional cultures into mass communication to engage populations less integrated into modernity.

Thus, it is evident that cultural manifestations are never static, as rural and urban cultures continuously merge. Quilombos are not immune to external influences, fluxes, and transformations arising from their surroundings. The dynamic nature of traditional cultures, intertwined with rural and urban cultures, epitomizes hybridization. In the context of urbanization and modernization, the complexity of traditional communities often goes unrecognized. Bessa-Oliveira and Simão (2016), for instance, highlight this misunderstanding in their analysis of indigenous communities in Mato Grosso do Sul. When considering the role of collective memory, this complexity also manifests in the resistance of young people, particularly, to self-identify as quilombolas (Carvalho, 2019). The impact of modernization on rural culture underscores the interplay between individual and collective memory, evoking a world grounded in mutual commitment—a fluid nature characteristic of traditional rural cultures, distinct from urban relationships.

The very concept of “traditional” is a construction that fails to acknowledge the processes and choices made by Black and Indigenous people to exist as ethnic subjects in a racist country, evidenced by academia's slow acceptance of quilombos as a legitimate research topic—except for Palmares (Ratts, 2006). Quilombola cultural practices and expressions are inherently dynamic, reinterpreted according to each group's needs. Furthermore, the boundaries between rural and urban are increasingly fluid and challenged by migratory movements and exchange circuits between cities and traditional communities (Alves and Bernartt, 2021). Many quilombos navigate hybrid realities, incorporating urban elements while maintaining their territorial and identity connections. In this sense, ethnic identity can be understood as oriented toward the past—not as historical science, but as collective memory, where mythical stories also play a crucial role in defining these identities (O’Dwyer, 2002).

The supposed opposition between tradition and modernity is further complicated by the multiple temporalities present in traditional communities (Ocampo, 2019). The expectation of finding a tradition untouched by change does not align with reality. In other words, without variations across time and space, one risks defining an identity disconnected from the realities of quilombola individuals—a social universe far removed from their lived experiences (O’Dwyer, 2002). Thus, abandoning simplistic dichotomies and recognizing that quilombola identities are forged through hybridization processes—in which elements deemed modern are constantly reinterpreted and integrated with traditional worldviews and practices—is essential. The boundaries that supposedly separate quilombola communities from other sociocultural groups are far more fluid and porous than often assumed. Far from existing as isolated islands, immune to external influences, quilombos are immersed in continuous exchanges, consistent with the discussions of Eugenio and Lima (2014) regarding intercultural exchanges and reinterpretations.

Hall (2003) critiques the notion of pure or untouched cultures, arguing that cultural development results from hybridization processes. Cultural identities, therefore, are constantly shifting, migrating, and being transformed. In the quilombola context, these continual exchanges are evident in their historical dynamics of territorial formation and expansion. Quilombos emerged through ongoing movements of alliances and exchanges of territories, goods, and knowledge with other groups (Arruti, 2006; Eugenio and Lima, 2014). Through these interactions, the concept of race is reexamined—not through bloodlines or phenotypic traits but as a social unit that combines historically consolidated forms of resistance and enables collective coexistence (Almeida, 2002). The complexity of quilombola experiences is often lost amid stereotypes or idealizations, masking their real needs. As Audebert et al. (2022) note, while race has been scientifically redefined as a social construct, relations between distinct racial groups remain shaped by power dynamics.

Moreover, in the globalized world, exchanges are intensified through communication technologies, population mobility, and the networking of the quilombola movement. An example is the analysis of the Kalunga quilombola community in Goiás (Fernandes and Lopes, 2019), which demonstrates how these groups creatively manage rural and urban, traditional and modern elements in their daily lives to reinterpret their culture. Their unique traditional knowledge grants access to phytotherapeutic plants as well as food sources for humans and animals, as highlighted in a recent study conducted in the same community (Paim et al., 2023). The preservation of traditional knowledge is vital for these communities, as corroborated by studies emphasizing the role of oral traditions in transmitting knowledge across generations and connecting to the past. This allows ancestral and contemporary elements to coexist harmoniously, as seen in the study of the Mimoso quilombola community in Tocantins (Alves et al., 2020), which focused on the significance of oral narratives for establishing territorialities.

These examples illustrate that quilombola identities cannot be understood as sealed totalities; instead, they are in constant flux, traversed by multiple currents of intercultural exchanges that reconfigure their boundaries in creative and unpredictable ways. In a study conducted in the Tucum quilombo in Bahia (Eugenio and Lima, 2014), the complex processes of identity construction were observed, highlighting how identities are formed through connections to the land and local culture. According to the authors, about 300 quilombola families express the community’s collective memory through oral traditions. Beyond consanguinity, the search for memory of the past fosters a sense of belonging, with the active participation of individuals in traditional communities serving as a fundamental element of ethnic identity.

Thus, rigid categorizations cannot withstand the fluidity and hybridization inherent in quilombola identities, nor do the dichotomies of traditional/modern and rural/urban adequately capture the richness of their lived experiences. Instead, these processes reveal continuous hybridization, where seemingly antagonistic codes are redefined in inventive ways within the broader context of these communities’ struggles for dignified existence and recognition.

**HYBRIDIZATION AS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS**

The concept of cultural hybridity, as a form of constant negotiation and reconfiguration, has been explored across various contexts. For instance, it has been applied in agriculture to the development of hybrid bean varieties (Gonçalves-Vidigal et al., 2008), while Queiroz (2019) and Santos and Flores (2022) examine its influence on religious traditions. Queiroz (2019) focuses on the interplay between Catholic and Afro-Brazilian traditions and their impact on Kardecist doctrine, while Santos and Flores (2022) discuss the Barquinha religion in the Amazon, which blends African, Indigenous, and European religious elements. Mello and Froehlich (2021) extend this discussion to contemporary artisanal production, exploring how globalizing forces have hybridized traditional artisanal practices. Collectively, these studies emphasize the dynamic and transformative nature of cultural hybridity, challenging essentialist perspectives and highlighting the fluidity and adaptability of cultural identities.

The notion of cultural hybridization has been extensively developed by theorists as a means to deconstruct essentialist views and acknowledge the constant intertwining and negotiation among different cultural matrices. Bhabha (1998) conceptualizes hybridity as being produced over time, with its boundaries serving as active sites of intersection and overlap. In this framework, Bhabha rejects perspectives that view cultures as self-sufficient totalities, arguing instead that all cultures are relationally constituted through what he calls the “third space” or the interstitial space where supposedly antagonistic elements encounter and mutually translate one another. Hybridity, therefore, is not merely a mixture but a reinvention—a process of continual negotiation and reinterpretation.

This understanding resonates with Hall’s (2003) formulations, which assert that cultural identities are neither immutable essences nor closed, unitary, or homogeneous models. The transitory nature of hybridization enables the constant crossing and reconfiguration of cultural identities. In line with this perspective, differences are reorganized without being suppressed, as Canclini (2001) argues, defining hybrid cultures as processes of intersection, confrontation, and dialogue in which the separation of modernity from tradition becomes indistinct. Hybrid cultures emerge as creative strategies of negotiation and reinterpretation in response to the uncontrollable complexity of contemporary global exchanges.

Thus, hybridity is not a static condition or final state but an ongoing process of exchanges, translations, and reinscriptions of meaning. According to Hall (2003), this perspective allows for the understanding of cultural identities as dynamic and relational constructions, challenging essentialisms and acknowledging the continuous diasporic flows that characterize global cultural interactions.

Far from being isolated or hermetically sealed formations, quilombos have always engaged in constant dialogue and the creative incorporation of external influences through an ongoing process of hybridization. Their very genesis is intertwined with complex diasporic transits that amalgamated diverse practices, knowledge systems, and worldviews from different African ethnicities in intersection with Indigenous populations already present in Brazilian territory (Silva, 2014). This is not about reestablishing a modern concept of quilombo but rather listening to quilombola communities themselves regarding their identities and social representations, as exemplified in a study conducted with the Santa Ifigênia quilombola community in Minas Gerais (Carvalho, 2019). Quilombola culture, and more broadly Black culture, was born and developed in a context of cultural multiplicity, receiving and integrating diverse influences. Although predominantly composed of Black individuals, quilombos also included Indigenous people, mixed-race individuals, and whites (Treccani, 2006). For instance, African-based religious practices underwent inevitable reinterpretations when recreated in the New World, incorporating Indigenous and Christian elements (Arruda et al., 2019).

Quilombos, therefore, were plural entities, incorporating distinct aspects of the existing sociocultural universe. In this sense, Ratts (2006) emphasizes that quilombos were never entirely disconnected from colonial society, maintaining relationships involving the exchange of goods, knowledge, and people with other groups. Additionally, to ensure their material and cultural survival, quilombos needed to sustain constant ties with peasant communities and urban markets, circulating through these spaces and incorporating exogenous elements into their ways of life (Goulart & Tavares, 2021). Ethnographic examples demonstrate that even groups considered more isolated, such as the Kalunga in Goiás and Tocantins, experienced constitutive hybridisms in their material culture, godparent relationships, and Afro-Amerindian festivals and rituals (Marinho, 2017; Alves et al., 2020). As such, quilombola cultures have never been pure or immutable entities but have historically developed through the creative intersection of African and Amerindian matrices (Almeida, 2002; Cardoso, 2008). Quilombos symbolize this ongoing capacity to hybridize diverse material and immaterial heritages, reinterpreting them as strategies of resistance to colonial violence.

It is crucial to understand that hybridization does not represent a finalized state or static condition of cultural identities. Rather, it is a dynamic, continuous, and relentless process of exchanges, negotiations, and reinterpretations among different symbolic repertoires and matrices. As Canclini (2001) observes, hybridization is not a peaceful coexistence of heterogeneous elements but a restructuring through which heterogeneity persists. Furthermore, cultural expressions often strengthen when in contact with others. In this context, hybridization does not lead to substantial cultural loss (Cardoso, 2008). Bhabha's (1998) concept of the “third space” suggests the creation of something different, new, and unpredictable that challenges entrenched binaries. This "third space" is where hybridization intervenes disruptively, preventing cultural essentialisms and hegemonies from stagnating. Cardoso (2008) adds that the degree of contact between cultures varies based on the development of each culture, which, in turn, defines whether the interaction is peaceful or tumultuous.

As Hall (2003) argues, hybrid identities are constantly displaced relative to themselves, becoming something other than what they were. Quilombola identities, therefore, cannot be viewed as fixed or stable hybrid elements resulting from colonial encounters. Instead, they constitute an ongoing process of translation, where elements considered essential or external are continuously deterritorialized and reinterpreted in insurgent ways in response to new contexts and challenges. Ovalle and Ribeiro (2018) discuss how the complex negotiations and resistances of the Black diaspora in Brazil underscore this relentless becoming of quilombola cultures. Black presence in Brazilian lands gave rise to a quilombo of aesthetic matrices, a testament to the fertile creativity of men and women seeking connection with their origins (Ferreira & Silva, 2022).

Thus, more than a result or synthesis of hybrid elements, quilombos express an endless process of creative existence, continuously reconstructing multifaceted identities.

**INTERSECTIONS AND MULTIPLICITIES**

When characterizing the complex dynamics of cultural hybridization that shape quilombola identities, it is crucial to recognize that these processes do not occur in a social vacuum. They are deeply influenced by markers of difference such as race, gender, class, and generation. These multiple axes intersect and mutually shape the processes of subjectivation within these communities. Pereira’s (2019) study on the inclusion of marginalized populations highlights that Black populations continue to be insufficiently addressed by public policies. The intersectional perspective, introduced by Crenshaw (1989), examines how various vectors of oppression and privilege intersect and uniquely shape the lived experiences of subalternized groups. Collins (2015) further argues that intersectionality is an indispensable analytical tool to capture the depth with which race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity interact—not as isolated or exclusive entities but as mutually complementary phenomena that create complex social differences.

In the quilombola context, race is undeniably a central axis in the formation of hybrid identities, shaped by the African diaspora and the centuries-long struggle against structural racism perpetuated through constitutional omission (Pereira, 2019). However, this ethnic-racial marker intersects with others, such as class, as quilombola groups often endure economic precariousness and subordination within the capitalist model, coupled with the limited recognition of Black cultural heritage (Chuva, 2020). Equally significant are gender perspectives, as quilombola women face unique intersections of racism, sexism, and exploitation that influence their identity hybridizations in ways distinct from those experienced by men (Nascimento et al., 2022; Pereira et al., 2022). The preservation of quilombola traditions is deeply connected to the daily efforts and struggles of Black women striving to reinvent their social roles (Rios & Maciel, 2021).

Moreover, the generational dimension is integral to understanding the tensions and negotiations between traditional matrices and the creative reinterpretations by quilombola youth. These younger generations reframe elements of urban popular culture in hybridized forms with their Afro-Brazilian heritage. Examples include the Jongo Dito Ribeiro community in São Paulo, where identity is expressed through dance and music (D’Esposito, 2019), and embodied practices that merge cultural and political perspectives (Goulart & Tavares, 2021). These cases demonstrate that focusing on a single dimension is insufficient to capture the multilayered nature of quilombola identities, which are historically and politically situated within intricate power dynamics.

Understanding the intersectional nature of cultural hybridizations, with their references to race, gender, and ethnicity, is essential for appreciating the diversity within quilombola communities. As Collins (2015) asserts, such an approach enables us to grasp the complex social inequalities that these communities navigate and resist.

When discussing quilombola identities as hybrid, multifaceted, and intersectional, it is essential to recognize that these communities are not monolithic or homogeneous entities. Instead, they are marked by ongoing tensions, disputes, and internal negotiations regarding the meanings attributed to these hybrid identities (Crenshaw, 1989; Rios & Maciel, 2021). As Arruti (2006) points out, modern quilombos should not be seen as consensual totalities but as fields of dialogue—arenas woven with lines of divergence as significant as the affinities that traverse them. These are distinct trajectories that converge in continuous symbolic disputes over the definitions and boundaries of these hybrid identities.

Complex interactions and power dynamics within these communities further underscore their fluidity and resilience. Their identities are shaped by exchanges within the communities themselves, intricately linked to territory, space, and survival conditions. As Freitas and Santos (2021) note, modern quilombos are dynamic, multifaceted entities shaped by various actors and ongoing struggles for identity and meaning.

Silva (2021) highlights the role of quilombola leadership in preserving and reconfiguring cultural practices, with a specific focus on the empowerment strategies of female leaders. Oliveira (2013) emphasizes the importance of quilombola associations in transmitting and preserving cultural knowledge, particularly their role in safeguarding cultural heritage. However, the dynamic nature of leadership in shaping and reshaping cultural traditions within quilombola communities can also lead to gender conflicts. For instance, dissident voices among quilombola women challenge patriarchal hierarchies and propose reinterpretations of female roles. Gonçalves (2021) observes that these cultural reconfigurations inevitably create tensions within certain traditional interpretations.

Despite internal disputes influenced by generational and gender dynamics, some scholars argue that the participation of women as entrepreneurs can foster greater equality in family dynamics. Montero's (2020) study of the Campinho community in Rio de Janeiro, where ethnic tourism initiatives have empowered women, illustrates this potential. Although projects like ethnic tourism often face challenges—due to the inherent heterogeneity of these communities—cases like the Grotão community in Rio de Janeiro demonstrate the potential for success when a significant portion of the population (approximately 30% in this case) participates in initiatives centered on quilombola culture. Lusby and Pinheiro (2019) highlight that community participation, despite its heterogeneity, can be a key indicator of success.

Cultural hybridisms are continually negotiated and contested within quilombola communities by various intersectionally situated groups. Far from implying mere acculturation, these translational processes are fertile grounds for disputes over meanings and paths to be taken in the ongoing creative reinvention of these plural identities. Collins (2015) underscores that identities become more visible at different historical moments, such as racial hierarchies that persist as structural forms of power in Brazil.

Considering quilombola identities as dynamic processes of hybridization, shaped by intersections of race, gender, class, and generation, reveals that even within a single community, multiple hybrid identities coexist (Crenshaw, 1989). Far from a supposed homogeneity, there exists a diversity of experiences, trajectories, and cultural negotiations in constant flux. This makes it untenable to rely on unitary or homogeneous models. As Hall (2003) argues, cultural belonging is constructed through broad processes that ultimately transform culture itself.

As Bhabha (1998) observes, the recollection of popular memory has the power to reshape the present, becoming a space both for understanding identity and negotiating new interpretations of history. Identities are not unitary or stable entities but are relationally constituted amidst complex interweavings and continuous negotiations of disparate elements. This multiplicity of coexisting hybrid identities is evident, for example, in the distinct ways men and women within the same quilombola community incorporate external influences and reinterpret their cultural traditions. A study of the Kalunga community illustrates this through varied territorial organizations shaped by elements such as homes and villages, farms, and sacred spaces (Marinho, 2017). In this context, Mello and Froehlich (2021) emphasize territory as a symbolic dimension representing territorial identity, where new narratives are created or reconstructed as a means of exerting symbolic control over the land. Processes where previously distinct structures are combined into new ones are defined by Canclini (2001) as hybridization, and their continuous evolution is described by Stross (1999) as the hybridization cycle.

The concept of hybridity in Afro-Brazilian culture emerges prominently through actions aimed at affirming and constructing identities. One example is the musical education project in the Lagoa Rara quilombola community in Pernambuco (Oliveira, 2018), which explored Black identity through rhythms like samba while preserving ancestral manifestations such as coco de roda and ijexá. Similarly, in the realm of music, hip-hop serves as a tool of resistance and empowerment for marginalized youth, especially in confronting violence (Imbrizi et al., 2019). It also broadens young people's awareness of their identity and their assertion of it (Silva & Teixeira, 2021).

The fight for recognition and cultural preservation in quilombola communities places intercultural education as a key tool for combating racism and promoting cultural visibility (Lima & Crocetta, 2019). This coexistence of multiple identity hybridisms underscores that quilombola communities cannot be reduced to essentialisms. Instead, they are living spaces of partial encounters, negotiations, and creative recompositions among diverse individuals who continuously reinterpret their identities through various intersectional manifestations.

**RETERRITORIALIZATION AND HYBRID REINTERPRETATIONS**

Far from being mere remnants of the past, quilombos must be understood as dynamic spaces of ongoing cultural hybridization. As Munanga (2015) observes, quilombos were organized as alternatives for a new society. Within them, diverse African ethnic groups were compelled to reinvent communal solidarities through negotiation and transcultural amalgamation of different knowledge systems and worldviews. This hybrid character is also evident in Beatriz Nascimento's (1985) analysis of quilombos as territorial and institutional spaces for cultivating a culture capable of transfiguring the symbols and values of entire societies, simultaneously representing ethnic and political resistance.

Quilombos, therefore, became cultures of translation (Bhabha, 1998), where enslaved Black populations subverted colonial cultural codes, reinterpreting them in cycles of transformation that align with the concept of hybridization to foster a sense of belonging to a reshaped culture. This insurgent nature of quilombola hybridisms is reinforced by Arruti (2006), who highlights these communities as sites of relentless cultural renewal in Black resistance, using their history as a memorial marker of the past. Even in contemporary quilombos, this counter-hegemonic spirit is renewed through education and other negotiations. As Carril (2017) notes, no social group is formed in isolation; there is a dynamic of conflicts and negotiations that reterritorialize cultural difference.

Understanding quilombos through the lens of hybridisms highlights their historic cultural and political capacity in the anti-racist struggle, fostering creative ruptures that challenge the universalist pretensions of Western modernity. A key aspect of comprehending quilombos as spaces of hybridization lies in their ability to creatively reappropriate and reinterpret external elements. Far from merely rejecting or passively assimilating the influences of the oppressive colonial society, quilombola communities reinvented these codes according to their own logics, worldviews, and demands for resistance.

These hybrid reinterpretations were not acts of passive absorption but deliberate acts of reinterpretation through which quilombolas redefined external elements according to their ethical and political frameworks for identity affirmation and the fight for freedom. This was a continuous strategy for physical and cultural survival through transcultural creativity.

Quilombola identities, forged through complex hybridisms, are also expressed in their relationship with territories—both traditional spaces and the new urban environments in which these groups increasingly circulate. Rather than adhering to a presumed geographical fixity, what emerges are hybrid experiences marked by constant negotiations, transitions, and territorial reinterpretations.

The ways in which quilombola communities engage with their ancestral territories are constantly redefined by external influences. These displacements also reshape the significance of their places of origin. As Souza (2002) observes, some quilombos have become multilocal territories, with cooperation between Black and Indigenous groups resulting in spaces established as alliances outside colonial control. Even in cases of geographic specificity, quilombolas have developed creative strategies for multiplying hybrid territorialities (Arruti, 2008; Gomes, 2015; Treccani, 2006), subverting boundaries through symbolic, ritualistic, and linguistic processes of reterritorializing difference. These examples highlight that quilombola identities are shaped through territorial hybridizations, which challenge rigid dichotomies such as rural/urban and tradition/modernity, constantly reshaping their multilocal relationships with spaces in a transcultural flux.

**FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Quilombos have historically emerged as spaces of hybridization where enslaved Black populations subverted and reinterpreted imposed cultural codes. This drive for hybrid reinterpretation permeates all aspects of quilombola experiences, from their linguistic, aesthetic, territorial, and religious expressions to others. Quilombos are characterized, above all, by their continual capacity for identity reinvention in response to constant flows, displacements, and contemporary complexities. The transformations experienced by quilombos are not mere mixtures or stable syntheses but dynamic and relational strategies of cultural translation forged in the praxis of anti-racist struggles and resistance to colonial violence.

These hybridisms are profoundly intersectional, shaped by race, gender, class, generation, and contradictions within the groups themselves. Recognizing the need to understand quilombola identities as hybrid and dynamic is essential to overcoming analytical errors and addressing inadequacies in public policy. Rigid perspectives that frame these communities within preconceived paradigms of authenticity risk perpetuating their historical invisibility, precarity, and violations of fundamental rights.

Viewing quilombola identities through the lens of hybridisms entails acknowledging their nature as continuously reinvented and interactively fluid with various cultural matrices. It requires rejecting essentialisms that conceive of these identities as sealed totalities, residues of an immutable past, or mere repositories of traditions. The evidence and theoretical contributions presented in this study underscore that these communities are constituted through complex processes of negotiation, creative reinterpretation, and continuous reconfiguration of heterogeneous elements. Their identities remain in a perpetual state of transformation, navigating between diverse spaces, temporalities, and external influences.

Recognizing this hybrid dynamism means valuing the multiple strategies of physical and cultural survival developed by these groups throughout their struggle for freedom and ethnic-racial affirmation. Embracing this dynamic perspective also involves acknowledging the tensions, dissensions, intergenerational hybridisms, and gender dynamics within these communities. Above all, it values their internal diversities and the negotiations, disputes, and dissent surrounding the meanings attributed to these constantly evolving identities.

Only by understanding the multiple, fluid, and hybrid nature of contemporary quilombola experiences will it be possible to formulate inclusive policies that recognize their full rights to difference in their interactions with broader society. Moreover, incorporating traditional knowledge—hybridized with contemporary knowledge—into environmental management processes becomes crucial to ensuring the protection of quilombola territories and the sustainability of their land stewardship practices.

Decision-making processes must actively engage diverse intersectional subjects from quilombola communities as protagonists. Territorial and ethnodevelopment policies need to transcend rigid rural-urban dichotomies, recognizing the flows and multi-territorialities that quilombolas navigate and ensuring their rights across various spatial contexts.

From an academic perspective, this analysis underscores the necessity of interdisciplinary studies, ethnographies, and participatory approaches that illuminate the complexities of quilombola identity hybridizations. Intersectional investigations are equally vital to understand how race, gender, and generation intersect to shape hybrid identification processes within these groups. Listening to the voices of quilombola youth, women, and religious leaders is essential for fostering an open and reflective process.

Finally, paying close attention to quilombola hybridisms invites an exploration of their interfaces with both decolonial insurgency movements and contemporary Black diasporas, which creatively reinterpret urban, artistic, and media references in projects of identity affirmation. Recognizing the complexities of hybrid quilombola identities equips us with tools to combat their historical subalternization and to formulate policies and research initiatives that advance an anti-racist, multicultural, and democratic society.

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**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION**

We, Fabio Gimovski and Cíntia Mara Ribas de Oliveira, declare that the manuscript entitled *Quilombola Identities: Rethinking Hybridization Beyond Dichotomies* has no conflicts of interest as outlined below:

**Financial Relationships:**
No financial ties that could influence the results or interpretation of the work. This research was funded by Project No. 88887.798674/2022-00 – Graduate Development Program in the State of Paraná in the areas of Agriculture & Agribusiness and Sustainable Development (Strategic Partnerships – Capes/Fundação Araucária).

**Professional Relationships:**
No professional relationships exist that could affect the analysis, interpretation, or presentation of the results.

**Personal Conflicts:**
No personal conflicts of interest related to the content of the manuscript.