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The Decision to (Re)Exist: Histories and Organizational Dynamics within a Quilombola Community in Minas Gerais, Brazil

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Abstract

This study aims to delve into the mechanisms by which the establishment of ethnic-racial identity safeguards the continuity of a Quilombola Remnant Community (CRQ). Employing psychosociology as its theoretical underpinning and adopting a collective life history methodological approach, this research was conducted within a CRQ situated in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Findings underscore the quilombo's foundational structure, rooted in an ethnic-racial identity that galvanizes the elements of resistance, belonging, and lineage, all of which are pivotal for both the individuals and the quilombo's continued existence. Identity formation emanates from the acknowledgment of ancestry, as individuals align themselves with their historical lineage, recognizing these forebears as integral to their own composition. Such identities foster a sense of belonging within quilombola subjects, thereby perpetuating the group's (re)existence through a reappropriation of ancestral resistance. Resistance is intrinsic to identity

because, prior to the decision of the quilombola subject to exist, resistance is imperative, given that external forces wish to undermine their existence. These markers not only underscore the resilience of the Arturos Quilombola Community (the CRQ under study) in sustaining life and rallying its constituents but also highlight its proactive stance in instituting organizational structures and adaptations in the face of the prevailing status quo.

Keywords: collective life history; psychosociology; quilombo; ethnic-racial identity.

Introduction

Brazil's history bears the scars of colonization, marked by pervasive racism across its multifaceted landscape (Nogueira, 1998). This legacy includes a historical process of erasure that has impeded the construction of a robust Black racial identity. Positioned as objects rather than subjects within society, Black bodies have been marginalized from the social fabric, a systemic condition deeply ingrained in Brazilian history and perpetuated in the collective consciousness (Nogueira, 1998). Against this backdrop, this study endeavors to explore how the establishment of ethnic-racial identity safeguards the continuity of a Quilombola Remnant Community (CRQ) situated in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Within the Afro-diaspora, alongside the focus on bodies and practices that served the interests of capital, the diverse ways of life and existence inherent to various African ethnic groups were also transplanted (Gontijo & Leite, 2020). Indeed, these divergent modes of being stood in stark contrast to the often violent logic of the capitalist world-economy. In an act of resistance aimed at survival, quilombos emerged as agents of transformation within the entrenched colonial order (Neves, 2019). The quilombo can thus be comprehended as an organization where individuals converge around the collective aim of fostering communal life. Here, they establish distinct modes of existence aligned with their cultural values and beliefs, forging their own path or *modus operandi*.

These organizational structures should not be relegated to mere relics of a colonial past; instead, they represent potent forms of political and social organization carrying significant historical and cultural legacies, persistently striving (and resisting) to assert their rights (Campos & Souza, 2015). In this study, the terms "quilombos" and "Quilombola Remnant Communities" (CRQs) are employed interchangeably. This is due to the fact that both terms encapsulate the historical narrative woven throughout the trajectory of this community.

To grasp the essence of this organizational framework and the individuals within it, we have adopted an approach rooted in psychosociology. We chose the collective life history approach as our methodological framework. This decision was based on the understanding that the history and memory of CRQs serve as avenues for uncovering, through the discourses generated by and for them, the process of constructing ethnic-racial identity within these communities. The synthesis of quilombolas' memories and narratives of resistance offers a precious reservoir for Black Brazilians, facilitating the recognition of their ancestral roots, cultural heritage, and collective identity, thereby fostering (re)existence amidst the currents of contemporary culture.

In addition to the introductory section, this study incorporates a theoretical framework delving into the phenomena of Black identity erasure and identity assumption. Furthermore, we expound upon the theoretical lens utilized: French psychosociology. Following this, we outline the methodology employed, detailing the methodological framework, research typology, procedures

and techniques utilized for data collection and analysis. Subsequently, we present the analysis and discussion of the collected data. Lastly, the study concludes with a summarizing conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

Psychosociology, as defined by Barus-Michel, Enriquez, and Levy (2011), "constitutes a branch of psychology focusing on individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions within everyday contexts, employing a clinical approach for intervention and analysis" (Pinto, Carreteiro, & Rodriguez, 2015, p. 977). Our adoption of this approach stems from the recognition that identity construction entails a complex interplay of self-recognition and recognition of others, involving processes of affiliation and disaffiliation (Castel, 1997, 1998). Additionally, it acknowledges the interconnection between subjective dimensions and social contexts, emphasizing the impact of collective dynamics on individual experiences (Rheaume, 2009).

To understand the construction of ethnic-racial identity in Brazil, it is imperative to scrutinize the country's process of racialization. Despite nominal legal recognition, Black individuals, in practice, continue to endure marginalization due to the historical-political complexities embedded in their societal integration, perpetuating a status reminiscent of enslavement (Nogueira, 2019). Concurrently, alongside efforts to erase Black presence, there has been a reinforcement of the myth of racial democracy in Brazil. This myth purports that race relations in the country are harmonious, thus obfuscating the existence of social issues stemming from racial disparities. This illusion of harmony is manifested through mestizaje, wherein individuals identify as brown, mulatto, or *moreno* – anything but Black – thereby rendering Afro-descendants invisible (Munanga, 2019).

Recognizing that socio-economic circumstances, ideology, and other factors mold the psychic structures of individuals (Nogueira, 1998; Carvalho, 2015), it becomes evident that individuals may become captive to and perpetuators of prevailing conditions, assimilating and internalizing them. Deepening our understanding of subjectivity necessitates exploring the psychic dimensions intrinsic to individuals, such as their history and identity, through avenues of expression (Justo & Vasconcelos, 2009), including historical retrieval, facilitating the emergence of these aspects.

Being Black or Becoming Black: Identity and the Process of Black Consciousness

In his seminal thesis "Tornar-se Negro" ("Becoming Black"), Souza (1983) posits that Black Brazilians lack a predetermined Black identity to reject, as throughout their history, they have not developed an awareness of the ideological processes reinforcing their racial identity. His thesis delves into the intricate psychic structures shaping and perpetuating prejudiced and discriminatory necropolitics emanating from the egoic fragility of white individuals toward Black bodies.

This notion aligns with the concept of the "place of Blackness" (Gonzalez & Hasenbalg, 1982), which delineates a predetermined societal role for Black Brazilians in the post-abolition era, limiting their ability to embrace their ethnic-racial identity without significant repercussions (Silva, 2020). Kilomba (2019) describes this subjective tool of silencing Blackness as a "mask of silencing," a direct reference to the iron mask, a torture device employed by enslavers to hinder swallowing – and thus, the voice – of enslaved individuals.

In the intricate interplay of ethnic-racial dynamics, identities are often constructed in juxtaposition to whiteness, with Black identity serving as its antithesis. This dynamic engenders processes of denial and suffering, as well as resistance and re-signification of identities (Santos, 2015). Souza (1983) delineates the racial dynamics within Brazilian society, where individuals either conform to "Black life," tacitly acknowledging their "inferiority" and embracing self-deprecating evaluations or aspire to "move up in life" by distancing themselves from Black identity and aligning with white values and interests—an action of "self-denial both individually and racially, aimed at social acceptance" (Souza, 1983, p. 23).[1] Viewed from this perspective, identity embodies a paradox, entailing an ongoing interplay of recognition and distinction, symbolizing both likeness and individuality (i.e., what renders it unique) concurrently.

To challenge this implicit social hierarchy, individuals must transition from being born Black to actively becoming Black. For Gonzalez, being born Black perpetuates the colonial narrative, relegating Black individuals to positions of inferiority, subordination, and estrangement from their humanity (Silva, 2020). The construction of Black identity hinges upon the acknowledgment of one's Blackness in defiance of the whitening process dictated by whiteness (Gonzalez & Hasenbalg, 1982). "Becoming Black entails the discovery of a subjective experience that affirms and reaffirms one's Black identity" (Silva, 2020, p. 148).

From the perspective of psychosociology, identity emerges as a relational and dynamic construct, an ongoing process subject to evolution over time. Ardoino and Barus-Michel (2011) define identity as "the incessant and fragile construction of a representation of oneself that aspires to a singular, continuous, and recognized unity, which may be reinforced or challenged by external factors the environment provides" (p. 204). Hence, it can be inferred that the psychosocial concept of identity emerges from the interplay between the self and others, wherein social and legal attributes are bestowed upon individuals, defining their social standing and positioning them within society (Gaulejac, 2011).

Lastly, psychosocial identity is shaped by the individual's self-perception (self-attribution) juxtaposed with the perceptions of others (other-attribution), with the onus falling on the individual to construct a coherent identity, reinforcing the ties between individual and collective identities, which are mutually constructed (Gaulejac, 2011). Souza (1983) asserts that "being Black entails embracing this consciousness and forging a new awareness that upholds respect for differences and reaffirms a dignity immune to any form of exploitation" (p. 77).

Despite enduring physical and psychological hardships during the era of slavery, enslaved blacks exhibited various forms of resistance and yearned for liberation. The process of constructing one's identity, which entails reshaping personal history, involves reclaiming alternative narratives and sharing a collective memory deeply rooted in one's experiences. In this regard, we portray quilombos as entities embodying resistance and anti-colonial struggle at their core, encapsulating, fundamentally, the collective survival/experiences, narratives, and history.

The Quilombo, black racial identity, and choices of the self: every black body is a living quilombo!

The quest for the acknowledgment of an authentic culture within Black communities in Brazil, pivotal for the expansion of their rights at a national level, finds support in the emergence of quilombos (Marinho, 2017). These groups' authenticity lies in their defiance of the oppressive colonial system, challenging the dissemination of false realities. Through an examination of identity and its significance for individuals, the notion of presenting a homogenized identity to access rights is problematized, as exemplified by the adoption of the term CRQ (Quilombola Remnant Community), a novel concept within the community, which is learned/apprehended differently in the quest for rights (Antunes, 2011).

Quilombos were officially recognized by the Brazilian Empire as political and social entities operating on the fringes of legality, posing a threat to the prevailing colonial order and serving as potential instruments of contestation against the status quo (Moura, 2001). According to Moura (2021), quilombos epitomized political organization rooted in resistance: "Faced with periodic invasions by repressive forces, they had to establish a form of power capable of repelling enemy attacks" (p. 45).

Nascimento (1985) offers a historical perspective on the quilombo as an institution, tracing its origins to Africa, where the meaning of the word "quilombo" encompassed both territory and a social institution, that is, "the Kilombo would represent the individuals themselves as they integrate into society" (p. 43). Subsequently, Nascimento delves into the colonial-era quilombo as an "alternative social system" (p. 44) "organized within an ideological framework, framing escape as a response to colonialism" (p. 46). The author concludes by portraying the quilombo as a conduit for ideological principles, wherein "the quilombo serves as a countermeasure to cultural colonialism, reaffirming African heritage and striving for a Brazilian model that strengthens ethnic identity" (p. 47).

> The quilombo is not merely a refuge for escaped Blacks, as historiography has often portrayed it. It is not solely a flight from physical punishment or an attempt to evade an oppressive society. Instead, it represents an endeavor for autonomy by individuals seeking to carve out a life and establish **their own social order**. (Nascimento, 1977, p. 129, emphasis added)

The amalgamation of the legal-historical term "quilombolas" with the evocative notion of "slave remnants" forms the crux of discussion within CRQ regarding attributed versus self-attributed identity. This association of racialization with the interplay between past, present, and future is intrinsic to the identity construction rooted in the group's lived history, particularly within the context of striving for targeted rights (Antunes, 2011). The construction of quilombola identity can amplify the visibility of a marginalized segment of citizens, assuming a socio-political, cultural, and spatial dimension that molds the collective imagery of this shared heritage and history (Kenny, 2011).

According to Castel (2009), if individuals are active agents in the processes of subjectivation, the historical determinisms they internalize are perpetually reshaped through the socialization experiences they undergo. Blondel and Delzescaux (2014) posit that comprehending, from the

individual’s standpoint, the resources they harness in navigating “unstable” and precarious situations leads to either affiliation or disaffiliation,[2] with outcomes that are unpredictable to the subject.

Castel (1998) delineates disaffiliation as “the displacement of regulations through which social life is reproduced and reconducted” (p. 174). It can also be construed as “situations wherein individuals cease to belong, severing ties with the world of work and/or broader social networks” (Castel, 1997, p. 19). The author illustrates this concept using employment as an example: an individual engaged in paid work is affiliated and enjoys a positive social identity; conversely, when unemployed, they experience disaffiliation, severed from collective affiliations and thus “left to fend for themselves” (p. 11).

Pereira (2009) elucidates affiliation, familial lineage, and integration into a community as “coordinates that delineate the subject’s position in the world, encompassing citizenship, belonging, and identity” (p. 130). The author advocates for broadening the concept of affiliation to encompass its significance in identity construction. Meanwhile, Zioni (2006) interprets disaffiliation as “a spectrum of diverse situations united by the dissolution of social bonds due to a dynamic of precariousness and fragility” (p. 23), laying bare the individual’s vulnerability as protective collectives disintegrate.

For the process of subjectivation to facilitate the entry of the social subject into a new realm of social existence, the individual must confront and grapple with the social conditions that enable the emergence and realization of this realm. Thus, the awakening of self-awareness is not an instantaneous occurrence but rather arises when socialization encounters experiences that deviate from conventional thought patterns (Blondel & Delzescaux, 2014).

Conceptualizing disaffiliation as a vehicle for the emergence of novelty in history, collective affiliation strategies can contribute to the construction of individuals’ life narratives (Castel, 1998). Contemplating the notions of affiliation and disaffiliation in the context of quilombola racial identity is imperative, as every individual has the right to trace their lineage. For Black Brazilians, this quest begins with enslaved ancestors whose records have largely been expunged. Consequently, genealogical recovery poses significant challenges, necessitating collective efforts to forge conventional and historical connections in assuming these identities and roles (Pereira, 2009).

Identity is not static but undergoes continual transformations influenced by territory, environment, and social experiences (Elias, 1994). The presence of CRQs in diverse contexts, urban and rural alike, leads to distinct trajectories for these communities, consequently shaping varied strategies for the recognition and establishment of racial identity. The territory, therefore, should not be excluded from the process of identity construction, as it is not merely a physical space that houses the communities. The quilombo (territory) is also the locus where individuals reclaim the stories, events, and everyday practices of the communities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1997).

Beyond the symbolic significance associated with quilombo territory, it is imperative to underscore the role of land regularization as a means to promote citizenship equality in the post-abolition era and affirm Black Brazilian identity (Leite, 2000). This imperative is exemplified by the proposal articulated by the Socio-Political Movements Group at the 3rd Congress of Black Culture of the Americas, six years preceding the promulgation of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, advocating “for Black movements to identify lands occupied by Black communities and legally

pursue their ownership, utilizing adverse possession to prevent land usurpation. The struggle to defend squatters, primarily Black and mixed-race, with the application of laws disregarded by the state itself" (Ratts, 2007, p. 54).

As a form of social organization, the CRQ acknowledges its territory as a space intrinsically intertwined with the collective identity of its residents, manifesting through their cultural expressions and socio-economic circumstances. While skin color and African heritage play pivotal roles in shaping individuals' life choices, they do not singularly dictate the social and cultural organization of the group. The alignment of respect and appreciation for the knowledge essential to preserving identity and safeguarding interests is foundational to the identity choices of the subjects (Antunes, 2011; Farfán-Santos, 2016).

To contemplate identity, it is imperative to grasp how individuals, within their spheres of interaction, define themselves and others in terms of belonging to specific social groups. Depending on the social and political milieu, individuals may selectively emphasize or suppress certain aspects of their identity, determining their identifications based on contexts of interaction and change. Indeed, individuals who identify as Black in one context may not necessarily maintain the same identification when removed from specific social situations (Sansone, 2003). Given that identity construction and reconstruction unfold diversely across contexts (Castel, 2003), a nuanced examination of Black racial identity necessitates a thorough contextualization of the intricacies of the social relations experienced by the individuals involved.

Approaching the construction of racial identity as a series of choices empowers us to view individuals as active agents capable of shaping and molding their culture, adapting it to their values, experiences, and political leanings. Even though individuals may often unconsciously participate in this process of cultural transformation and identity formation (Antunes, 2011; Farfán-Santos, 2016; Silva, 2019), it is imperative to recognize their agency in constructing their own narratives. Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge that the development of Brazil's racial identity as a society has systematically overlooked the opportunity for Black individuals to seek reparations for centuries of enslavement. Hence, the history and memory preserved within CRQs serve as windows into understanding how racial identity is constructed within these communities, as revealed through their discourses and organizational practices.

Self-narrating black experiences: employing collective life history as a methodological approach

To fulfill the objectives of this study, the life history of the CRQ, known as *Comunidade dos Arturos* ("situated in Contagem, Minas Gerais, Brazil, was collected. From the initial conceptualization of its theme to the initial engagement with the community and later interaction with its members, this investigation prioritized "treating them with dignity, respecting their autonomy, and safeguarding their vulnerability" (Tengan, Venancio, Marcondes, & Rosalen, 2005, p. 27). Adhering to this stance and the ethical precepts essential for research, authorization to conduct the study was duly obtained from the Research Ethics Committee (CEP), granted on September 8, 2020, under the Certificate of Submission for Ethical Appraisal (CAAE) 34488720.9.0000.8507.

Conventional approaches in management research often fall short of comprehensively elucidating social realities. Hence, the adoption of methodologies facilitating deeper exploration of specific issues becomes pertinent and indispensable (Mageste & Lopes, 2007). The life history approach enables the exploration of the subjective dimensions of individuals as social agents, not merely focusing on individuals but also embracing the analysis of social entities wherein their experiences are contextualized within their unique narratives. Indeed, this approach unveils societal values that influence organizational realities, offering profound insights into the lives of social actors and comprehending the dynamics of the relationships they forge over time (Spindola & Santos, 2003; Mageste & Lopes, 2007).

Life history, through their narration, revisitation, and retelling, ultimately serves to unearth the histories of individuals and, as tools of psychosocial analysis, can catalyze personal and societal transformation. This rationale underscores the selection of collective life history as the methodological cornerstone of this research, grounded in the belief that reconstructing the group's history within the context of their historical and social milieu enhances comprehension of their identities. As Rheaume (2014) elucidates, "the collective life history is the story of a group that collectively develops a voice related to its life experience as an established group, the carrier of a more or less long history" (p. 71). Rappapourt (2000) further characterizes collective life history as the aggregation of narratives within a community, wherein individuals share common stories about their origins, identity, and aspirations, thus underlining how shared narratives index the psychological sense of community.

To compile this collective life narrative, we employed a range of data collection techniques, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and consultation of public records. By amalgamating narratives from diverse sources, we aimed to gain a deeper psychosocial insight into the narrative identity of both the individuals and the community as a whole (Gaulejac, 2006). In this context, it is crucial to recognize that "narrative identity is not static; instead, it evolves and can manifest in multiple versions, sometimes complementary or even contradictory, which are shaped by factual history, the accounts of historians, and fictional elements reminiscent of family sagas" (Gaulejac, 2006, p. 107).

It is noteworthy that the narrative identity of the individuals and the community "nourishes their respective identities through the foundational stories of their history" (Gaulejac, 2006, p. 107). Therefore, our study did not aim to merely replicate official historiography but instead sought to capture the history as constructed within the collective sphere. However, it is essential to acknowledge that, similar to official historiography, there was an omission of gender categories in the narratives, indicating a marginalization or erasure of women's roles despite the active engagement of quilombola women in political, social, and cultural affairs. They were not prominently featured in the narratives or documentary records, and there was a lack of comprehensive information about these women. To address these gaps, we explicitly mention these women by name and initiate the collective life narrative with Felisbina, the matriarch of Arturos.

The in-depth interviews conducted to construct the collective life narrative (Ferrarotti, 1983; Gaulejac, 1988, as cited in Carreteiro, 2009) involved five participants (see Table 1). The individual interviews align with the methodology of collecting collective life histories, wherein "the narration concerns primarily the story of the group's experience even if it is, of course, based on an account

rooted in the subjective experience of individual members” (Rheaume, 2014, p. 60). Participants were recruited using the snowball method (Handcock & Gile, 2011; Biernarcki & Waldorf, 1981).

The interviews were conducted between September and December 2020, utilizing an online format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They typically lasted between 45 to 75 minutes and were facilitated through platforms such as Google Meet and WhatsApp, chosen based on the respondent’s convenience. Recordings were made using the Voice Recorder app and transcribed using the “Voice typing” feature of the Google Docs suite, as well as the Telegram app with the assistance of the “Transcriber” bot. Each transcript underwent a thorough review, accompanied by the original audio, to ensure the capture and understanding of the revelations and meanings, as recommended by Queiroz (1991).

To safeguard the anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms were employed. Given the close familial and social bonds within the community, and to ensure the confidentiality of the research participants within this context, Adinkras ideograms were utilized for their pseudonyms. Adinkras are symbolic representations originating from West African linguistic groups, each representing a word or abstract concept (Silva, 2018). This decision also honors the heritage of Felisbina, the matriarch of the Arturos family lineage, whose ancestry traces back to West Africa (Minas Gerais State Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage [IEPHA], 2014). The Adinkra symbols chosen by the authors (Dybax, 2016) corresponded to the characteristics of the participants identified during the interviews.

Table 1

Summary of the research participants

Respondent	Adinkra Symbol	Verbal Representation	Generation	Gender
Fawhodie		Independence, freedom, emancipation	Third	Female
Mate Masie		Knowledge, wisdom, prudence	Third	Female
Aya		Endurance, resourcefulness	Third	Female
Nkonsonkonson		Union, human relations	Parentage by marriage to a member of the second-generation	Female
Dwennimmen		Humility, strength	Second	Male

Source: Prepared by the authors.

In addition to conducting in-depth interviews, we gathered data from conversations with community members via instant messaging apps and examined posts published on Arturos’ social networks. Moreover, we utilized documents provided by the Minas Gerais State Institute for Historical and Artistic Heritage (IEPHA), which registered the community as an Intangible Cultural

Heritage, to corroborate historical information with the narratives obtained from the respondents. Despite the challenging health conditions during the research period, we managed to visit the community in person. During this visit, we engaged in informal conversations, observed community practices and rituals, met various members of the family branches, and visited significant places and spaces within the community. Impressions from these encounters were meticulously recorded in a field diary. The utilization of multiple data sources for collecting life histories aligns with the recommendations put forth by Riessman (2008).

For data analysis, we employed thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clark (2006), which can be defined as "a method for identifying, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting patterns (themes) from qualitative data" (Souza, 2019, p. 52). Our aim was to uncover underlying themes that emerged from the narratives, even if they were not predefined within the scope of the research (Queiroz, 1991). This approach resonates with Atkinson's (1998) perspective, which suggests that the analysis should arise organically from the narratives themselves.

The history of Arturos: documented or attributed origin

Felisbina, born on the Bom Jesus farm in São Gonçalo de Contagem, was the daughter of Maria and Felipe Congos. The surname "Congos" attributed to her parents suggests their Central African origin. In the case of Camillo, the son of Maria Silvéria, born in 1840, there is no precise information available regarding his ancestors. Both Felisbina and Camillo were enslaved by Rita Cândida Costa and João Teixeira Camargos, prominent landowners in the region who cultivated relationships of friendship and godparenthood[5] with their descendants. Felisbina was also enslaved by José Antônio da Costa Ferreira, Rita Cândida Costa's father, and João Teixeira Camargos' father-in-law.

The Church has consistently played a role in these dynamics, baptizing enslaved individuals and bestowing upon them new Catholic names and surnames to document their origins. This practice was facilitated through the formation of black religious brotherhoods as components of the Portuguese colonial agenda, serving to regulate and validate State hegemony. Additionally, Catholic catechism served as a means of social control over the enslaved population. Some Black religious brotherhoods were established as a result of enslaved or freed blacks seeking identity, while others were formed through associations between Blacks, mulattos, and whites or by the local elite. The Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary of Contagem, founded in 1867, had minimal participation from the enslaved population, and its statute was signed by the regional elite.

By 1888, Camillo held the position of Regent of *Congado*, a prominent position indicating his strong connection to the Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary. At some point in his life, Camillo achieved his "freedom," working as a rural laborer on the farms of São Gonçalo da Contagem. There are no records regarding the date of this event; however, it can be inferred that Camillo gained his freedom following the promulgation of the Lei Áurea ("Golden Law"), as he acquired land on November 2, 1888, just a few months after the abolition of slavery.

Camillo and Felisbina had children, one of whom was Arthur. He was born on December 21, 1885, a period when the Free Womb Law was already effective. This legislation decreed that starting from September 28, 1871, all children born to enslaved women would be legally free. Therefore, according to the law, Arthur was considered free from birth. Arthur was taken under the

guardianship of Benjamin Camargos, the son of Rita Cândida Costa and João Teixeira Camargos, who were considered the "owners" of his parents. The godparenthood relationship established was marked by control and coercion, characterized by servitude, pain, torture, and suffering.

On August 17, 1893, Camillo passed away at the age of 53. Upon his death, the land he acquired in 1888 was inherited by his children. At that time, Arthur was eight years old. After a full day of work, he requested permission from his godfather to bid farewell to his father. In response to his request, which was denied, Arthur was assaulted. Arthur endured further abuse from the family whose members were his "godparents." At the age of 15, tired of his circumstances, he fled to Fazenda do Morrão, where he worked as a cart driver, cowboy, and muleteer.

Arthur married Amélia Philomena Diniz, daughter of Maria do Amparo and Francisco José da Silva, on November 15, 1906. The couple was sponsored by Antônio Olinto Costa Ferreira, grandson of José Antônio da Costa Ferreira, Felisbina's former owner. Four years later, Amélia passed away at the age of 19, and the couple remained childless. On November 16, 1912, Arthur married Carmelinda Maria da Silva, his late wife's sister. After their marriage, Arthur and Carmelinda relocated to Mata do Macuco or Mata do Curiangu, situated in Santa Quitéria, now Esmeraldas, Minas Gerais, where they raised their ten children.

Despite living in another city, the family maintained strong connections with Contagem municipality: their children were baptized there, and they regularly journeyed to celebrate the *Reinado*[4]/*Congado* of Our Lady of the Rosary in Contagem. While Esmeraldas was their place of residence, Contagem served as a hub for social interaction and religious activities. Contagem eventually became the permanent residence for the family in 1940, when Geraldo, Arthur and Carmelinda's eldest son, secured employment in the region after facing challenges finding work in Esmeraldas. Following Geraldo's lead, his sisters also relocated to Contagem to work and assist the family. Their work schedules typically spanned from Monday to Friday, with weekends spent at their parents' residence.

To streamline their children's commutes between the two cities and alleviate logistical challenges, Arthur advised Geraldo to relocate his family to the inherited property. Geraldo embraced the suggestion, constructing a thatched-roof ranch on the land. Subsequently, Arthur, Carmelinda, and their other children also settled on the property, initially residing in a similar thatched-roof structure. Over time, this dwelling was replaced, and in 1956, construction was completed on the Casa Paterna, which remains standing today.

Between the 1940s and early 1960s, most of Arthur and Carmelinda's children married. At Arthur's behest, and to maintain familial closeness, they built homes on the land and established their families there. Apart from their biological children, Arthur's adopted son, Raimundo, and Joaquim Quadros, father of Maria Auxiliadora and Lúcia, the wives of Mário and Raimundo, respectively, also settled on the property, consolidating the family unit.

Arthur passed away on December 19, 1956, due to heart failure. Following his demise, Carmelinda assumed primary responsibility for upholding the Arturos family structure, preserving the desire for family unity and upholding traditions. This family nucleus constitutes the first generation of Arturos. The property inherited by Arthur not only served as their residence but also as a space where they practiced the African traditions inherited from their ancestors in their daily lives and during ritual occasions.

The Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary experienced a period of decline starting in 1897, just four years after Camillo's passing. However, there was an attempt to revive it in 1920 by the affluent families of the city, with the leaders of the Brotherhood being the masters of the Arturos' ancestors. As we discovered, Rita Cândida and João Teixeira Camargos (mentioned earlier as the owners of Camillo Silvério and Felisbina) were the parents of Augusto Teixeira Camargos, Joviano Camargos, a judge, Manoel João Camargos, and Antônio Benjamim Camargos – all members of the Brotherhood and godparents of Arthur Camilo. This illustrates that, in addition to the ties of servitude and patronage, the lords also held positions of authority within the religious structure of the Arturos (see Figure 1).

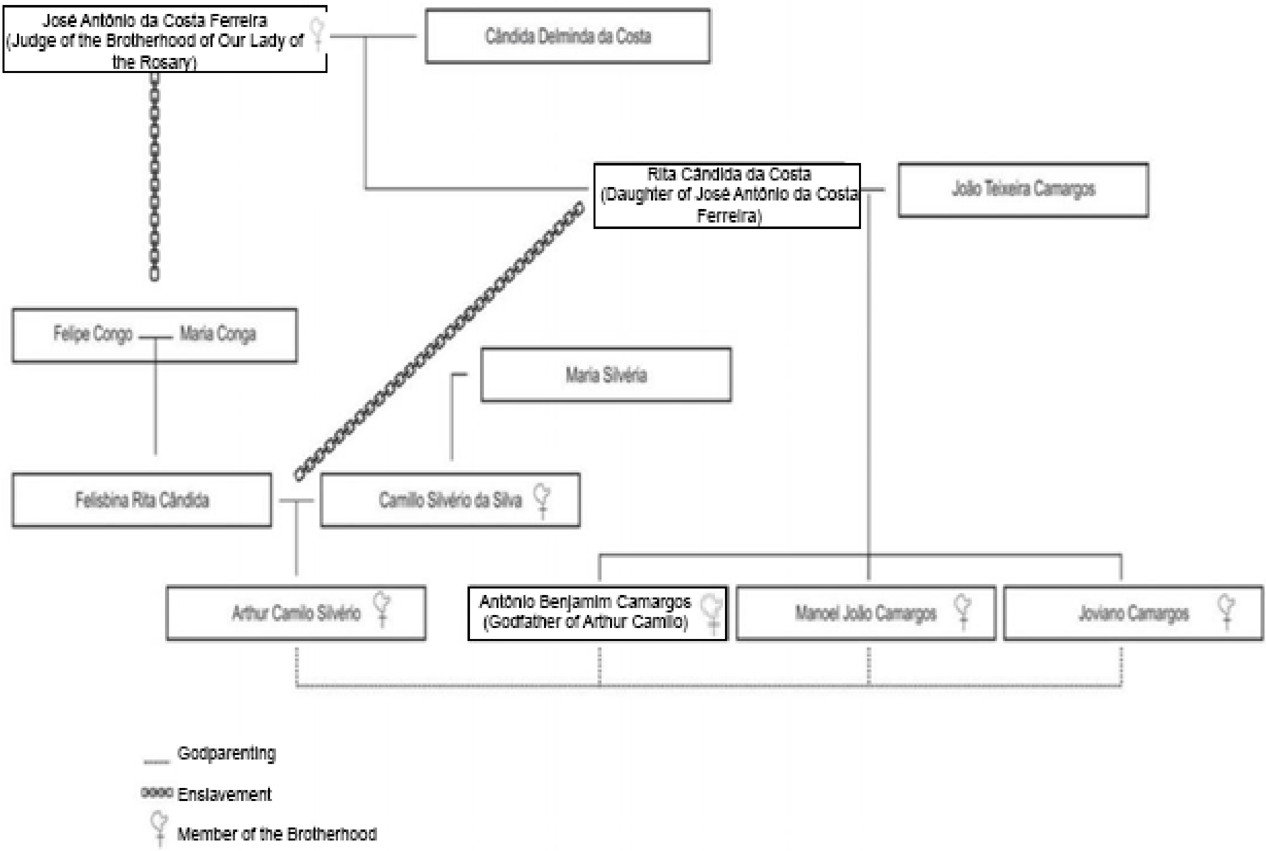

Figure 1. Relationships between the lords associated with the Brotherhood and the Arturos.[6]
Source: IEPHA (2014).

This dynamic shifted in 1972, nearly a century after the Brotherhood's establishment when a new statute was formulated for the Brotherhood. Arturos, already established as a community, actively participated and emerged as the principal leader of the Brotherhood. Geraldo Arthur Camilo assumed the role of captain-major, Izaíra Maria da Silva as second secretary, and Mário Braz da Luz as second treasurer. The revised statute incorporated not only the traditional Catholic rituals but also the cultural aspects of the community, such as the *Congado* and the festivities dedicated to the

Saint. Despite their pleas, the Chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary was demolished in 1973 due to urban renewal efforts, and the new chapel was completed in 1976.

For the first time, Arturos held critical positions within the Brotherhood and significantly contributed to its maintenance. Since their involvement, religious worship, devotion, and the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary have become regular occurrences. The legal formalization of the Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary took place in 1978. However, from its formalization until the early 2000s, the registration remained inactive until its reactivation in 2005. In 1992, the community established the *Filhos de Zambi* Afro-Brazilian Group with the objective of disseminating their culture, heritage, and traditions to younger generations in a relatable manner.

In the 21st century, the community has been actively pursuing territorial regularization. Although Camillo legally acquired the land, the community does not possess legal ownership. Consequently, the community sought recognition as a Quilombola Remnant Community, receiving certification in 2004. In 2011, they applied for land regularization, which remains pending to date. Additionally, in 2011, Arturos applied for registration as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Minas Gerais, a process completed in 2014. In 2021, Arturos mourned the passing of the last member of its first generation, Mário Braz, who succumbed to COVID-19. Figure 2 visually depicts the timelines of the Arturos community.

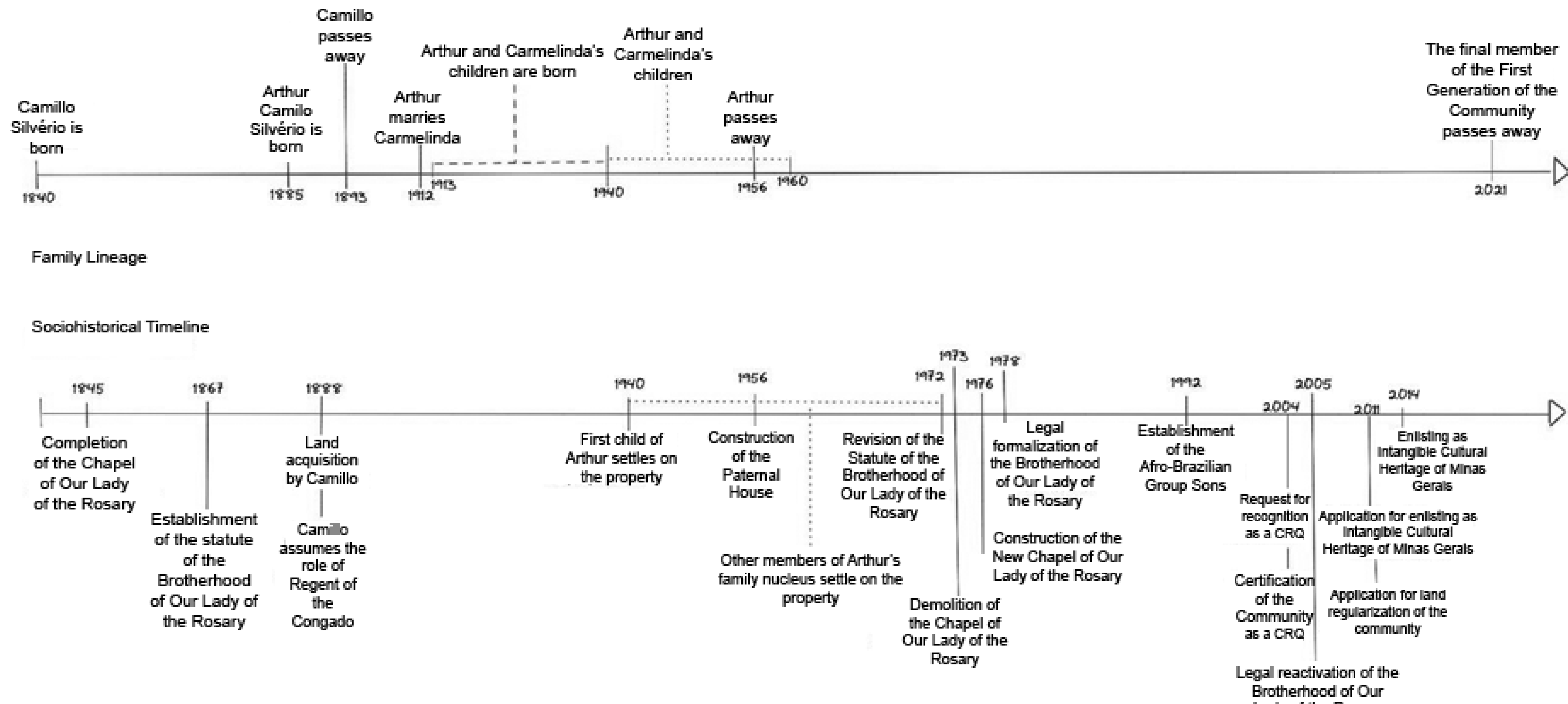

Figure 2. Timelines of the Arturos Quilombola Community

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Analysis

The analysis was structured around two primary themes. The first theme revolves around the discourse surrounding the adoption of racial and quilombola identities, while the second theme delves into decision-making as a historical construction process. Throughout the data analysis, a cohesive integration between the research findings and the proposed theoretical discussions was maintained. This approach aligns with the dynamic nature of psychosociological theory, which necessitates a synthesis that reflects the continuous interplay and engagement between theory and empirical observations (Guimarães, 2014).

"I am because we are": assumption of racial and quilombola identity

The Brazilian social fabric is deeply woven with racist stereotypes and imagery, which significantly influence the formation of positive identities among Black individuals. When examining the construction of ethnic-racial identity within the Arturos Community, it becomes evident that merely being born in a quilombola community does not automatically imbue individuals with this identity. Similarly, racial identity is not inherent solely to being an Arturos and residing within the community's geographic confines. Instead, the identity within Arturos is cultivated through the "acceptance of social norms dictating one's 'peers' and the acknowledgment of one's uniqueness and distinctions from others". Indeed, it is through interaction with others that individuals become aware of their own existence (Gaulejac, 2006), as illustrated by Fawhodie's statement: "*In my case, my father is from the community, my mother is **an outsider**, but they got married here.*"

Ethnic-racial identity among community members is shaped through familial, cultural, and historical socialization. Affiliation as quilombola individuals hinges upon their lived experiences and encounters within the community and the significance they attach to these experiences. Conversely, disaffiliation may occur if individuals relocate, leading to what Aya describes as a "*lost generation of quilombolas*." The initial act of resistance against society's imposed negative identity occurs when Arturos members embrace their history, memories, and traditions while maintaining their authenticity in the face of external scrutiny (Castejon, 2009).

Engagement in ancestral traditions, such as celebrations, plays a pivotal role in fostering a positive ethnic-racial identity among Arturos members. Second and third-generation community members proactively involve young people in these activities, ensuring their continuity and reinforcing their status as descendants and custodians of these age-old customs. Notably, the establishment of a community council to address communal needs has been instrumental. The inclusion of individuals who do not actively participate in festivities in the decision-making process has further bolstered identity formation. This shift in perception regarding Arturos identity, extending beyond mere celebrations, is a result of the experiences and discontent of younger generations who have felt estranged and disconnected. Consequently, the creation of the community council has not only enhanced the positive appreciation of Arturos identity but also served as a strategy for community cohesion.

The ethnic-racial identity of Arturos is also shaped by societal and state perspectives. The community takes pride in hosting visitors from various countries and sharing its traditions with other cities. However, this construction is not immune to society's hostile gaze. Arturos members recount experiences of racism but have devised strategies to reaffirm their identities and alleviate their

suffering. They initiate projects in regional schools attended by their members to counter racist incidents, showcase their culture and lineage, and foster a positive understanding of Black and quilombola identity. Moreover, anti-racist education occurs when society visits the community, engaging in discussions about diversity and instilling pride in their ancestry, origins, and customs.

Additionally, to establish Arturos' ethnic-racial identity in the eyes of the state, the community and its members had to attain political, civil, and social rights. As legal entities, the Arturos manage to gain recognition within society, being safeguarded by the same laws that protect others (Enriquez, 2006). This positive recognition is evident when Camillo, as a freed individual, acquires the property where the community would settle. Furthermore, it manifests in the state of Minas Gerais' recognition of Arturos as an Intangible Cultural Heritage and the federal government's certification as a quilombola remnant community.

Examining Arturos' constitution and registration history reveals its evolution from a mere residential space to a symbolic repository of ancestral practices. This transformation was catalyzed by Arturos' assumption of responsibility as custodians of the Our Lady of Rosary Brotherhood. Consequently, the property transcended its territorial confines, undergoing re-signification as a symbolic arena for preserving practices and knowledge forms. Arturos no longer solely serves the interests of a familial unit but garners recognition externally from the perspectives of others.

Drawing from Arturos' experience, it becomes clear that **ethnic-racial identity within the community** is formed **from the inside out**, shaped by lived experiences within the community environment, informal education in communal spaces, immersion in ancestral traditions, and communal religious practices. Conversely, it is also influenced **from the outside in**, through recognition by society and the state. Hence, being identified as quilombolas transcends mere land ownership; it hinges on active membership in the community, involvement in collective decision-making processes, and the ability of communal organization and self-governance to recognize its constituents beyond familial ties.

Subsequently, it became evident that the key milestones in quilombo formation are delineated by (a) **subjective acknowledgment**, wherein the community itself recognizes the essence of quilombos, extending beyond individual land holdings; (b) **social recognition**, as society acknowledges Arturos as a quilombo through participation in festivities, seeking *benzeção* ("blessings"), attributing names to the territory and its inhabitants, thereby assigning symbolic significance to the quilombo; and (c) **legal recognition**, underscored by titles and certifications bestowed by the state. Notably, this final milestone underscores that recognition is not a result of state benevolence but rather the outcome of community action, mobilization, and advocacy efforts, reflecting their ongoing struggle for (re)existence.

Decision-Making as a historical construct in the Arturos Quilombola Community

The experience of Arturos highlights the difficulties and challenges encountered by quilombola communities, encompassing micro-level decisions vital for their self-preservation, as well as a fundamental aspect that shapes their entire historical trajectory: governmental decisions aimed at providing support to this population.

It is crucial to acknowledge that Arturos, as an urban community, grapples with distinct challenges compared to their rural counterparts, such as territorial disputes arising from ecological conflicts. Nonetheless, Arturos members also contend with land tenure insecurity due to the absence of land titles. Arturos possesses the peculiarity of having the purchase registration of its territory, yet this has not influenced governmental efforts to expedite the land regularization process currently. This territorial uncertainty profoundly impacts their way of life, as indicated by Aya, who highlighted the emergence of rental properties within the community.

Moreover, the emergence of representative institutions like the National Coordination of Quilombo Articulation (CONAQ) warrants consideration. Initially, Arturos had limited involvement with CONAQ but maintained ties with other mobilization networks like the Quilombola Network. However, amidst the pandemic, with CONAQ assuming a predominant role in monitoring COVID-19's impact on quilombola communities, Arturos forged closer ties with the organization, underlining the necessity of such alliances to bolster community resilience. The necessity for this form of arrangement is underscored in the context of bolstering communities.

There has been a notable transformation in the perception of community organization within Arturos, transitioning from a primarily knowledge, festivity, and religious-focused setup to one that has integrated social welfare and structural enhancements within the territory. Community members assuming strategic roles in municipal governance have facilitated engagement with policymakers, advocating for progress. These personal choices, guided by models constructed by individuals throughout their lives, reinforce the understanding that the decision-making process is fundamentally the essence of administrative activity and an inherently human endeavor, with collective implications in the case of Arturos. Nevertheless, the absence of land titles presents a formidable barrier, hindering comprehensive structural improvements.

Regarding the organizational structure of Arturos, the prevailing model has transitioned from one centered solely on the *griôs*,[7] as witnessed in the first generation, to a hybrid model in the 21st century, akin to a council. In this council, members elected in assembly to legally represent the community through the Our Lady of Rosary Brotherhood articulate and/or receive the community's demands. Additionally, they convene two representatives from each family to present the demands (the family nuclei within the community are delineated by the descendants of each of Arthur's sons, and their representatives are selected accordingly). These family representatives then deliberate with their respective family nuclei and relay the decisions back to the Brotherhood. Should disputes arise that cannot be resolved internally, the matter is referred to the *griô* for a final ruling. The redefinition of the Brotherhood itself is significant: from being an instrument of catechism established by the slave-owning elite, it has transformed into the legal representative of Arturos, with both entities now inseparable.

Throughout the existence of Arturos, resistance has been evident, both in terms of collective organization and from an individual standpoint, initially in the fundamental act of survival and continuity and subsequently in the development of strategies and innovative approaches to sustain life (Théry, 2009). The Arturos community has made a conscious decision to persist and thrive within a territorial space that extends beyond its physical boundaries. Arturos embodies a space of resistance where individual discussions evolve into collective debates and actions for the community (Théry, 2009). In essence, it represents a model defined by resistance (Monceau, 2009), collectivity, and positivity (Théry, 2009), which translates into institutional evolution.

In the socio-historical trajectory of Arturos, several pivotal moments can be discerned, representing acts of resistance against prevailing circumstances. When Camillo acquired the property in 1888, it constituted an individual decision, unforeseen for a Black man at the time, yet with profound ramifications for the collective, his family. Notably, this property acquisition occurred six months following the abolition of slavery (in May 1888), indicating Camillo's prior emancipation.

However, we cannot overlook the role of religiosity in perpetuating the system of domination, historically wielded by the slave-owning elite, in the lives of Camillo's descendants. The suffering endured by Arthur serves as a poignant example. Through the Brotherhood, the connections between slaveholders and Camillo's progeny persisted. This cycle was only disrupted in 1972, with the revision of the Brotherhood's statute, marking the Arturos' assumption of the role of custodians and protectors of the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood underwent a definitive redefinition when, in 2005, it was reactivated and assumed the legal representation of the Arturos.

There exists a nearly 30-year gap between the legal formalization of the Brotherhood and its reactivation. While no information has been unearthed regarding the reasons for its dormancy, it is inferred that its reactivation was spurred by the requirements of Article 17 of Decree No. 4.887/2003, which stipulates that "the territory must be recognized and registered through the delivery of a collective title to the communities, which will be represented by their legally constituted associations", thereby mandating the formation of a community association for land titling. Although Arturos does so to fulfill a mere governmental obligation, it leveraged the opportunity of using this legal mechanism to request the regularization of its land.

Concerning the information gap regarding the Brotherhood, following Arturos assuming the position as its maintainer, there was an observable shift in the understanding of its own organizational structure. In the initial generation, the focus was primarily on preserving ancestral customs, religious practices, and festivities, with Arturos assuming a symbolic significance, later validated by its designation as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. The establishment of the *Filhos de Zambi* Group exemplifies an initiative aimed at instilling new significance to ancestry for the succeeding generations of Arturos. Concurrently, there is a concerted effort among the newer generations to uphold familial bonds and connections, transcending ancestral customs and festivities to encompass concerns for the structural development of the territorial space and the livelihood of Arturos' members.

These historical milestones, which have redefined, constructed, and innovated to ensure Arturos' (re)existence, can be delineated as milestones against colonizers (Figure 3). These milestones highlight that Arturos' resistance operates beyond the commitment to the life and mobilization of its subjects but also in the decision to create new forms of organization and reinvent approaches to challenge the prevailing status quo.

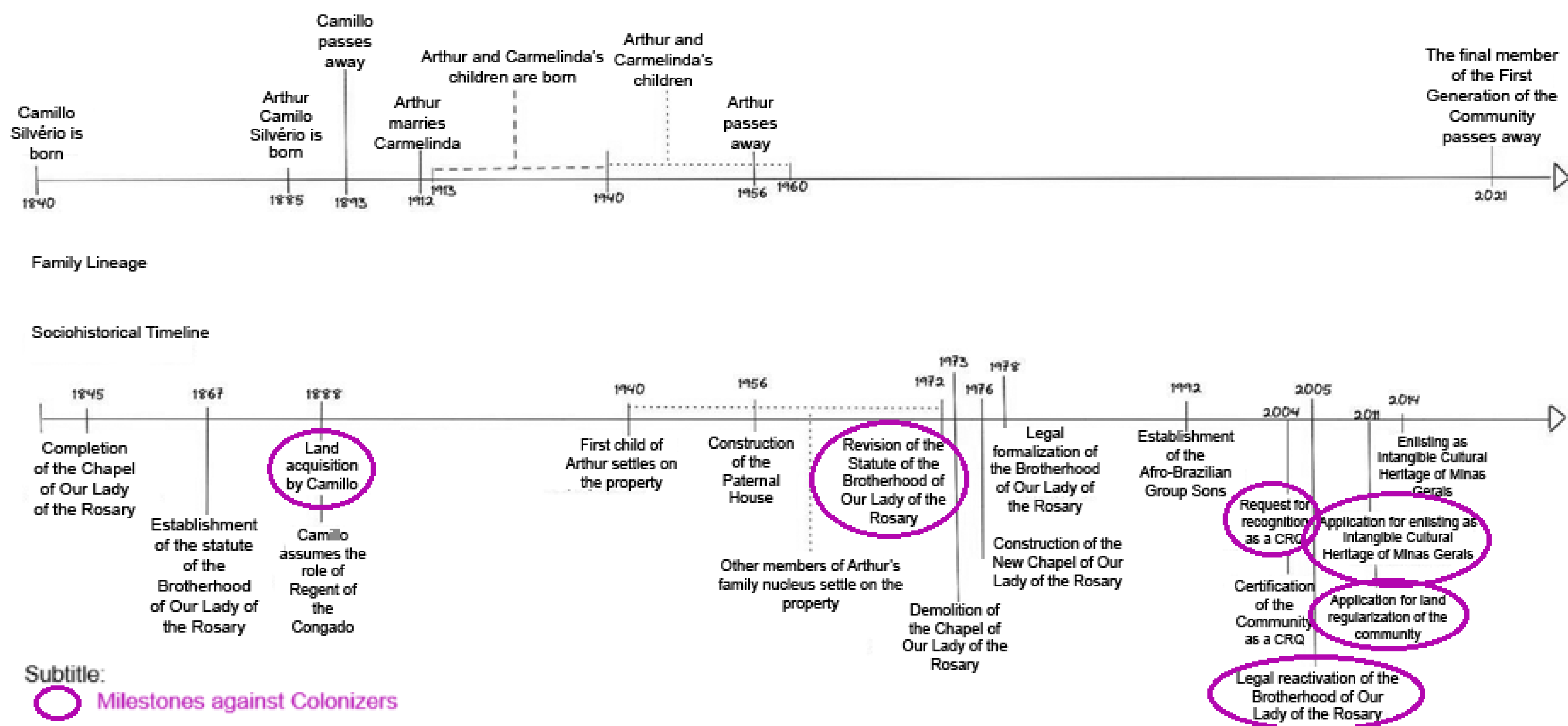

Figure 3. Milestones against Colonizers in the Quilombola Community of Arturos
Source: Prepared by the authors.

Discussion

Considering the process of colonization and its aftermath, it becomes apparent that in both political maneuvers and everyday interactions – as well as its underpinning, collective mindset – there exists a systematic perpetuation of violations against the rights of Black individuals on Brazilian territory. These transgressions are not merely condoned but actively sought after and accepted as usual. Reflecting on the enduring tragedy experienced by Black individuals since the era of enslavement underscores how deeply ingrained national racist attitudes hinder their access to freedom, life, legality, and dignity, exacerbating their dehumanization across various social spheres. Embracing an identity, even prior to securing specific rights or governmental attention, empowers individuals to align themselves with a particular group and redefine their societal position.

For quilombola communities, asserting their identity is indispensable for their members, both individually and collectively, to gain recognition and engage in meaningful dialogue on equal terms with other societal groups and sectors. This assertion also enables community members to find resonance and affirmation within their collective identity (Leroy, 1997). The investigation into Arturos sheds light on its unique characteristics, revealing that identities within the community are shaped by three interlinked dimensions: ancestry, resistance, and a sense of belonging to the community. This mobilization, fueled by Arturos' ethnic-racial identity, serves as a cornerstone for the community's existence, as depicted in Figure 4.

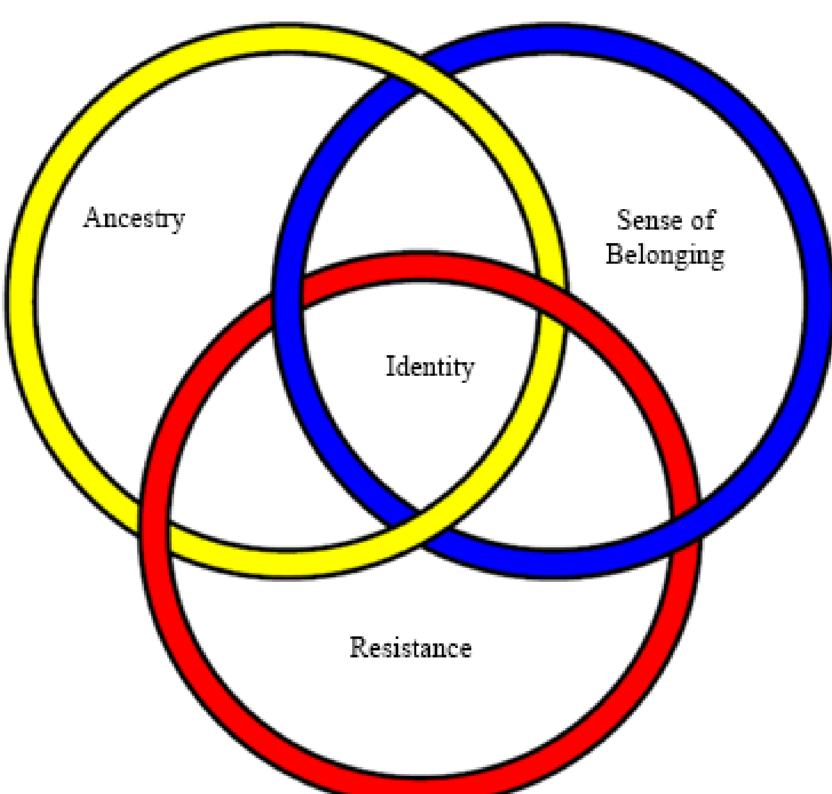

Figure 4. Ethnic-Racial Identity as a Mobilizing Force for CRQs.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Ancestry within the CRQ serves as a pillar for ethnic identification, where the preservation of ancestral roots reinforces social bonds as strongly as familial ties. It also plays a crucial role in the racial identity of Arturos' members and in the reclaiming of their origins. By recounting its narrative, Arturos fortifies these connections. The continual retelling and appropriation of this history serve to perpetuate these bonds, ensuring that the quilombo's heritage remains vibrant and enduring.

The sense of belonging is deeply rooted in both the physical territory and the community itself. As Arturos' members reaffirm their identity as quilombolas and Black individuals – and exchange these lived experiences and encounters – the geographical and symbolic landscape of the quilombo is cherished and perpetuated. However, this sense of belonging extends beyond mere territorial boundaries. Quilombolas often expresses that returning to the community "*feels like entering a completely different world*." This communal ethos is a distinctive feature of the quilombola organization, reflecting its original ethos of solidarity and mutual support for survival and resistance.

Recognizing the fact that there is (and there has always been) ongoing genocidal dynamics against the Black population in Brazil, quilombola communities have historically developed strategies of resistance to mitigate the harm to their lives and livelihoods. In this context, resistance functions within the quilombola organization as a dynamic force that instigates movement and change. It is an integral part of social – and organizational –dynamics, capable of manifesting itself as a counterforce to power or domination, thereby reshaping the communities' position within society. Thus, resistance emerges as a fundamental element in the formulation of organizational strategies (Rantakari & Vaara, 2016). In the case of Arturos, obtaining recognition as an Intangible Cultural Heritage and certification as a quilombola community represents contemporary acts of resistance aimed at challenging the existing system and redefining their social standing.

Identities are forged through the acknowledgment of ancestry, wherein individuals affiliate themselves with their historical lineage, recognizing their forebears as integral to their own composition. Such identities enable quilombola individuals to embrace a sense of belonging to their community, which persists due to ancestral resistance and is reappropriated through the lens of both personal and communal history. Ancestry, beyond mere historical lineage, harkens back to the skin color and the enslaved quilombola ancestors. Resistance is intrinsic to identity because, prior to the decision of the quilombola subject to exist, resistance is imperative, given that external forces wish to undermine their existence.

In addressing the aim of this study, it is evident that identity serves as the primary facilitator of the dimensions depicted in Figure 4. Without ethnic-racial identification, there can be no acknowledgment of ancestry, or if present, the impetus for its perpetuation may be lacking. Moreover, in the absence of ethnic-racial identification, individuals do not foster a sense of belonging to the collective, thus hindering their engagement in collective resistance. Ultimately, ethnic-racial identity underpins the endurance of a CRQ.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how the establishment of ethnic-racial identity safeguards the continuity of a CRQ situated in the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. To achieve this goal, the collective life history of the Arturos Quilombola Community was examined.

Through the gathered historical data, it became apparent that simply being born in a quilombola community does not automatically confer quilombola identity, nor does one's racial identity inherently manifest; instead, it is a product of construction. Hence, the recognition that ethnic-racial identity secures the existence of the CRQ stems from the acknowledgment that the identity of these individuals is co-created in conjunction with the quilombo. Thus, the principal insight derived from this study is the realization that the identity formations of quilombola individuals are intrinsically linked to the history of the quilombo, which is ultimately collective.

In summary, the construction of ethnic-racial identity in Arturos is twofold: (a) **from the inside out**, shaped by lived experiences within the community environment, and (b) **from the outside in**, through recognition by society and the state. On the one hand, there is an internal construction stemming from community practices such as festivities, efforts to preserve traditions and ancestry, and engaging youth in their continuation. On the other hand, there is an external construction shaped by societal and state perceptions, legitimization, and interaction with the CRQ. These dimensions are in constant flux and interaction. It is essential to highlight that these movements are permeated with tensions, as it is possible to identify both affiliations and disaffiliations from the CRQ by individuals, as well as recognition and delegitimization by institutions. It is this constructed ethnic-racial identity, always in flux, that secures the existence of the CRQ.

Regarding the contributions of this research to organizational studies they are both theoretical and methodological. Firstly, this study contributed by focusing on a non-hegemonic organization. In addition to the research findings providing reflections on unconventional social organizations, which are still relatively underexplored in management studies, they underscore the need for further research to be conducted on these organizations. Secondly, it advances the discussion on quilombos beyond mere social organizations, positioning them as anti-colonial entities fundamentally rooted in resistance and struggle against colonialism. The research findings suggest that quilombos should be perceived as anti-colonial entities, embodying modes of existence and organization rooted in resistance and opposition to colonialism. The milestones against colonizers outlined in this study encapsulate the essence of their survival/experiences and the history of these organizations.

Analyzing the history of Arturos' constitution and registration revealed a shift from being merely a mere residential space to becoming a symbolic repository of ancestral practices. This transformation was catalyzed by Arturos' assumption of responsibility as guardians of the Our Lady of Rosary Brotherhood. Consequently, the property transcended its territorial confines, undergoing re-signification as a symbolic arena for preserving practices and knowledge forms. Arturos transitioned from being significant solely for a family group to garnering recognition externally.

In this context, three pivotal moments in the establishment of a quilombo have been identified: (a) subjective acknowledgment, wherein the community itself recognizes the essence of quilombos, extending beyond individual land holdings; (b) social recognition – as society acknowledges Arturos as a quilombo by participating in festivities, seeking *benzeção* ("blessings"), and attributing names to the territory and its inhabitants; and (c) legal recognition – underscored by titles and certifications bestowed by the state. Notably, this final milestone underscores that recognition is not a result of state benevolence but rather the outcome of action, mobilization, and advocacy efforts by the communities themselves.

As for methodological contributions, particularly in the realm of race relations within organizational studies, this research offers insight by addressing racial issues from the perspective of racialized individuals. Moreover, employing collective life history as a methodology adds depth. The adoption of the collective life history methodology from this perspective prompts future researchers to contemplate the myriad of resources, potential applications, and methodologies that are yet to be fully explored in the field. Such approaches depart from the positivist paradigms of scientific inquiry, which frequently aim to neutralize the subjectivity of the researcher, validate hypotheses, or prioritize objectivity.

However, the study faces certain limitations. Initially, there were challenges in establishing initial contact with the quilombos to commence the research. Furthermore, the pandemic hindered progress, impacting both society and the researchers' lives, making safe travel impractical and access to participants difficult.

Beyond the constraints of this research, the insight gained from conducting it suggests that while the system of enslavement during the colonial period in Brazil has been eradicated as a political and social structure, racist and prejudiced attitudes persist, interwoven within the social fabric across diverse situations and within different social spheres. Even after emancipation, Black individuals continue to contend for their rights and rightful place in society. Nevertheless, quilombola communities persist, resist, and endure. This research serves as a vital platform for stimulating discussions on organizations, society, and race. Just as the myth of racial democracy and racist narratives shape identity formation and subjectivity, recognizing this study as a part of humanity's knowledge construction underscores the power wielded by those engaged in scientific inquiry. Consequently, research endeavors like this dissertation, authored by a Black researcher, serve as acts of resistance against academic orthodoxy.

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Notes

1. All translations from non-Portuguese sources are freely translated by the authors.

2. Filiation and affiliation are synonymous nouns (Michaelis, 2021). Despite having variant spellings, both are correct in the Portuguese language (Neves, 2021). The same applies to their antonyms, *desfiliação* and *desafiliação*. Thus, both spellings will be used in this research, respecting the spelling used by the cited authors.

3. The *Congado* is an Afro-Brazilian cultural and religious tradition that combines Catholicism with African beliefs, featuring processions, music, and dances in honor of Africans saints and kings (definition prepared by the authors).

4. The *Reinado* is a celebration within the *Congado* tradition where participants crown symbolic kings and queens, reenacting the coronation of African royalty and paying homage to Afro-Brazilian heritage and Catholic saints (definition prepared by the authors).

5. “Godparenthood” (“*apadrinhamento*,” in Brazilian Portuguese) is a social system adopted during Brazil's colonial period where free individuals, usually white and members of the economic elite, offered protection and support to enslaved and freed people in exchange for loyalty and

services, creating a network of mutual dependence and social control (definition prepared by the authors).

6. The caption of Figure 1 has been retained as in the original. However, we must underscore that in the context of this research, it concerns relationships of enslavement, considering that the individuals were enslaved by someone. Enslavement does not refer to an intrinsic constitution of being but rather to an action provoked by another. Thus, the term "escravidão" (slavery) is inadequate as it erases the agents of this process.

7. The term "*griô*" stems from the French "*griot*" and designates masters and carriers of wisdom in African culture, who have the function of preserving history and passing it on to other generations. In Brazil, its use aims to valorize agents of oral tradition, identifying them as representatives of wisdom and oral tradition and as references for ancestry, identity, and culture (Sampaio & Pacheco, 2015).

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The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Inclusive Language

The authors use inclusive language that acknowledges diversity, shows respect for all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities.

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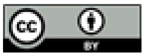
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