



Brazilian scientific production: Emerging epistemologies, ontologies and value systems

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BRAZILSKÁ VĚDECKÁ PRODUKCE: VZNIKAJÍCÍ EPISTEMOLOGIE, ONTOLOGIE A HODNOTOVÉ SYSTÉMY

ABSTRAKT Roste počet protihegemonických brazilských vědeckých produkcí. Postupný proces dekolonizace brazilských univerzit, který je výsledkem boje sociálních hnutí, otevřel prostor pro výzkumné pracovníky, aby představili alternativy vědecké produkce. V tomto článku budeme pracovat s hypotézou, že existuje značný počet brazilských vědeckých prací, které se snaží odpoutat od hegemonních teorií na základě nových alternativ epistemologií, ontologií a hodnotových systémů. Na její podporu poukážeme na deset prací, které využívají nové epistemologie a ontologie a hodnotové systémy k formulaci koncepcí a teorií o sociálně marginalizovaných skupinách.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA Dekolonizace; vznikající epistemologie; protihegemonické teorie; marginalizované skupiny

ABSTRACT There are a growing number of counter-hegemonic Brazilian scientific productions. The gradual process of decolonization of Brazilian universities, a result of the struggle of social movements, has opened space for researchers to present alternatives for scientific production. In this paper we will work with the hypothesis that there is a significant number of Brazilian academic works that seek to detach themselves from hegemonic theories based on new alternatives of epistemologies, ontologies, and value systems. To support it, we point to ten works that use emerging epistemologies, ontologies, and value systems to formulate conceptions and theories about socially marginalized groups.

KEY WORDS Decolonization; emerging epistemologies; counter-hegemonic theories; marginalized groups

THE POWER OF COLONIALISM

In recent years, a debate emerged within the human sciences about the pervasiveness of hegemonic theories in scientific production. These reflections point out that the hegemonic scientific productions are linked to a Eurocentric, and widely North-centric, vision. Such predominance is one of the consequences of the colonization process carried out in the southern continents, such as South America and Africa.

Social colonization was responsible for producing a historic tradition of political and cultural domination, which submitted to its ethnocentric vision of the knowledge of the world, the meaning of life, and social practices. Universities located in coloni-

zed countries did not remain exempt from this reality, they come from reason modern and do not constitute fully autonomous institutions. (Bruno 2019, 42)

For Boaventura de Sousa Santos,

we were all so socialized in the idea that the anti-colonial liberation struggles of the 20th century put an end to colonialism that it is almost heresy to think that colonialism did not end, it just changed its form or clothing, and that our difficulty is to name it properly, (2018, 50)

The colonialism pointed out by Boaventura de Sousa Santos also impacts scientific production and, as a consequence, pro-

duces Eurocentric hegemonic theories. Bruno (2019) relies on Mignolo (2010) to reflect on the concept of “Coloniality of Power” - initially formulated by Aníbal Quijano in 1989 - pointing out that the colonialist structure expands on several levels, involving the control of the economy, the knowledge, strength, and natural resources. Starting from this theoretical framework, it is possible to draw a parallel with the contemporary Brazil panorama. This country has a history tainted by three hundred years of slavery, was invaded by the Portuguese Empire, and passed only 134 years since the abolition of slavery. It still presents many characteristics of a not-so-distant past.

The colonialist and slavery heritage is reflected in different social spheres. It is possible to find it in the governmental structure, in urban production and configuration, in economic and power relations, in the educational and health system, in public security policies and socially accepted cultural productions. An exemplar case, the focus of this paper, is the universities.

The projects of Brazilian Universities were Eurocentric projects. The Federal Universities oldest in the country had a completely white profile and their social role was restricted to the formation of the country’s political and economic elite, whose transfer of knowledge European Union, since its formation, has been a source of pride and a way of regulating the of quality of the knowledge produced within it. (Bruno 2019, 51)

With the affirmative policies of racial quotas¹ and the whole struggle of racial movements there was a:

Expressive advances in the academic formation of ethnic-racially, socially segregated and/or under-represented in the power structures of Brazilian society, stressing not only from the outside but mainly internally. This advance has revolutionized the institutional dynamics of functioning, production and reproduction of knowledge and generated a great impact on the representation of these populations in the whole of higher education, both in the quantitative aspect and qualitative. (Idem., 42)

For this reason, in this paper, we aim to present some examples of counter-hegemonic Brazilian academic productions. Such productions are based on alternative research methodologies that claim to be more “sensitive” and “realistic” than Eurocentric conceptions usually adopted. This alternative approach is described as a consequence of researchers’ focus on presenting

1 “Art. 3 In each federal institution of higher education, the vacancies are referred to in art. 1 of this Law will be filled, by course and shift, by self-declared blacks, browns and indigenous people and by people with disabilities, under the terms of the legislation, in proportion to the total number of vacancies at least equal to the respective proportion of blacks, browns, indigenous people and people with disabilities. disability in the population of the unit of the Federation where the institution is installed”. Available in: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato20112014/2012/lei/l12711.htm Last Access on 19/06/2022.

the reality of the social phenomena studied as it is experienced by social actors. Additionally, authors emphasize their “being affected” by the objects they study as a crucial aspect of their academic effort. We intend to map some works that use alternative epistemologies and ontologies to formulate concepts and theories about and with socially marginalized groups.

The works we selected were produced by researchers who, in most cases, are part of these marginalized groups - *favela* residents, *quilombolas*, indigenous people, artists from the hip-hop world, etc. - and who, from their research, manage to present new perspectives on such groups and end up becoming symbols of resistance against colonial roots. In this paper, we will work with the hypothesis that there is a significant number of Brazilian academic works that seek to detach themselves from hegemonic theories proposing new alternatives for epistemologies, ontologies and value systems in scientific production.

WORK SELECTION METHODOLOGY

Between the months of January and March, as a part of the tasks of the UNIGOU International Exchange Program², we mapped academic works made by Brazilian researchers in different online repositories³. Since the first author of this paper resides in the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and more precisely in the city of Niterói, we opted to give preference for repositories from universities in Rio de Janeiro, such as Universidade Federal Fluminense, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro and Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. In addition, Rio has some particular and subjective characteristics making the place an ideal one in which to develop our effort. These are related to the presence of *quilombola* (communities originated by enslaved people who escaped by slavery) and *caçara* (communities living on the seaside and maintaining local social organizations) communities, violent and highly visible public security policies, and vivacious artistic movements. Because of these aspects, we consider it relevant to map academic works focusing on Rio de Janeiro as their territorial scope and produced with the aforementioned aim of suggesting alternative analytical frameworks.

We chose the online repositories of these universities because of our expectation that they would have offered the possibility to filter academic works according to specific criteria such as keywords, topics, titles, etc. We gave preference to monographs, dissertations and theses, searching for works that claim to use counter-hegemonic methodologies and with themes presented as different from the usual academic ones. We had

2 UNIGOU is an internship program managed by the Institute of Czech-Brazilian Academic Cooperation that offers Brazilian students the possibility to develop academic activities with Czech researchers. See: <https://www.incbac.org> Last Access on 19/06/2022.

3 Online repositories function as a database for publications carried out at the University. On the repositories websites we can find PDFs of Monographs, Dissertations, Theses and Articles.

some difficulties in finding these academic productions due to the formats of the repositories, since these, from a functional and technological point of view, are outdated and with little possibility of filtering. As there is a vast list of search options within the repositories, we experienced a filtering difficulty that often makes it very troublesome to access specific themes and keywords.

We aimed at finding emerging epistemologies, ontologies and value systems previously made invisible by the colonialist structure of scientific production. For this effort we selected around 20 works. As previously mentioned, there was a filtering option in the repositories of the mentioned universities. The academic productions were selected from searches for specific keywords: “quilombolas”; “territory”; “favelas”; “public security”; “popular territories”; “anti-racism”; “popular education”; “social movements”; and “culture”. We opted for these keywords since these cover topics in which debates about alternative approaches in universities in Brazil are more prominent.

However, for an analysis of these emerging counter-hegemonic theories to occur, we decided to select 10 among this sample of 20 works. The choice was related to the option of realizing a deeper survey in the works rather than focusing on quantification of them. For a better understanding, we organized the works according to three different themes, even when they presented similar methodological approaches: 1) artistic-cultural movements from the periphery that became symbols of resistance against the State’s power structure; 2) the relationship of *favela* residents with the State’s public security policy; and 3) the relationship of “traditional” communities with their popular territories.

In the selection of the works, we gave preference to the ones in which the researcher herself or himself would have a “place of speech” on the subject discussed. The concept of “place of speech” is linked to the claim for visibility within the social structure of marginalized subjects. Such individuals, for being part of socially oppressed groups, often affirm that their difference from the rest of the society is grounded not only in social and economic marginalization, but as much as, on their having alternative theoretical conceptions and constructions from the hegemonic ones. “The place of speech” is the claim for these individuals and groups to present their views, as stated by Djamila Ribeiro: “*Speaking is not restricted to the act of uttering words, but of being able to exist. We think of the place of speech as refuting traditional historiography and hierarchy of knowledge resulting from the social hierarchy*”. (Ribeiro 2017, 37). This aspect was decisive for our choices because the empirical experiences of the authors appear to us as crucial for their analyzes and perceptions about the particularities and subjectivities of the themes they studied. When the researchers themselves are part of the marginalized group or place they study, they bring with them a baggage of understandings and visions that reveal specificities that they highlight as not present in previous studies.

In the process of mapping the works, we started by reading the summaries, objectives, methodologies, and hypothesis, in

order to obtain a broader understanding of each of 20 works we approached and from this first survey select those to be analyzed. Finally, we seek to contextualize and compare the selected works, drawing parallels and highlighting common discussions, research methodologies, types of approach, theoretical constructions. This strategy led us to reach the final objective of this paper: to map the emergence of previously invisible and counter-hegemonic epistemologies, ontologies and value systems.

THE DECOLONIZATION OF UNIVERSITIES

Decolonization [...] continues to be an act of confrontation with a hegemonic system of thought; it is, consequently, an immense process of historical and cultural liberation. As such, the decolonization becomes the contestation of all dominant forms and structures, be they linguistic, discursive or ideological. In addition, decolonization came to be understood as an act of exorcism both for the colonized and for the colonizer. To the two sides, it must be a process of liberation: from dependency, in the case of the colonized, and, on the part of the colonizers, perceptions, institutions and imperialist and racist representations that, unfortunately, remain with us to this day. [...] Decolonization only can be complete when it is understood as a complex process that involves both the colonizer and the colonized. (Mehrez 2019, 31)

The Eurocentric influence is still very pervasive over the production of epistemologies and value systems worldwide. The colonialist roots erase, oppress, marginalize, and make invisible the knowledge produced by the colonized subjects (Fanon 2002). These characteristics are also reflected, for example, in the Brazilian educational system. The pedagogical methods applied aim to reproduce the contents and not to produce knowledge. According to Meneses, who bases his argument on the ideas of Achille Mbembe and Boaventura de Sousa Santos:

In many of the countries that left the colonial relationship the modern Eurocentric project continues to perpetuate itself through education, where school usually has the role of standardizing and homogenizing knowledge considered valid. Eurocentrism, as a civilizing project, is supported by an immense body of hegemonic knowledge: the epistemologies of the North. Insisting on the myth of ‘Europe’ as the center of knowledge (Mbembe 2014, 128), this modern project insists on imposing itself - at the level of fundamental categories - as a mirror of the knowledge society, thus generating an unknown arrogant abyssal cement on the colonized side. This is how the non-recognition of beings and knowledge that (re)exist in the territories, subject to systemic oppressions, the global South (Santos 2018a). (Meneses 2019, 21)

The erasure of the histories of the colonized sectors of the society is part of the colonialist structure. It works not only to eliminate the past, but also to build a new conception of the

world from a Eurocentric view. This is because for the control of power to be permanent, it is necessary to conceive pervasive forms of domination, such as westernizing educational institutions and scientific production. According to Achille Mbembe:

What does it mean ‘they are Westernized’? They are ‘Westernized’ in the sense that they are local instantiations of a dominant academic model based on a Eurocentric epistemic canon. A Eurocentric canon is a canon that attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production. It is a canon that disregards other epistemic traditions. It is a canon that tries to portray colonialism as a normal form of social relations between human beings rather than a system of exploitation and oppression. (Mbembe 2016, 32).

This hegemonization results in a pattern of scientific production in which oppressed and marginalized social groups are increasingly silenced since the university itself as institution maintains practices based on this Eurocentric axis. A consequence of this system is that it does not take into account real subjectivities and empirical experiences in the construction of new epistemologies, ontologies and value systems. Hegemonic practices of knowledge, at least until very recently, increasingly repressed alternative academic thinking suggested by those who do not occupy the top of the social structure or who do not fit with the requirements of a specific ideal figure of the intellectual worker. The westernization of academic institutions, as well as of others, also constantly seeks to erase the memory of those who were exterminated in the past, posing as if there was a single way of producing history, knowledge and science.

The problem – because there is a problem indeed – with this tradition is that it has become hegemonic. This hegemonic notion of knowledge production has generated discursive scientific practices and has set up interpretive frames that make it difficult to think outside of these frames. But this is not all. This hegemonic tradition also actively represses anything that actually is articulated, thought and envisioned from outside of these frames. For these reasons, the emerging consensus is that our institutions must undergo a process of decolonization both of knowledge and of the university as an institution. (Mbembe 2016, 33).

Mbembe’s (2016) approach to the question of the decolonization of the university and knowledge is very important for our aims to map and present works by black researchers, from *favelas*, from traditional communities, and from social movements who claim to affirm counter-hegemonic conceptions. Shaping light on the fact that there are authors who belong to marginalized social groups producing knowledge in the universities, and that they are emphasizing different ways of producing such knowledge, appears to us as crucial in the decolonization process. According to Bhambra, Gebrial and Nişancıoğlu:

‘Decolonising’ involves a multitude of definitions, interpretations, aims and strategies. To broadly situate its political and methodological coordinates, ‘decolonising’ has two key referents. [...]Indeed, one of the key challenges that decolonising approaches have presented to Eurocentric forms of knowledge is an insistence on positionality and plurality and, perhaps more importantly, the impact that taking ‘difference’ seriously would make to standard understandings. [...]The emphasis on reflexivity reminds us that representations and knowledge of the world we live in are situated historically and geographically. The point is not simply to deconstruct such understandings, but to transform them. As such, some decolonising approaches seek a plurality of perspectives, worldviews, ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies in which scholarly enquiry and political praxis might take place. (Bhambra, Gebrial and Nişancıoğlu 2018, 2)

In Brazil, affirmative action policies for “racial quotas” promote an initial and growing change in the profile of participants in Public Universities. For example, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics⁴ (IBGE 2018), between 2000 and 2017 there has been an increase from 2.2% to 9.3% in the number of self-identified black people with bachelor degrees in Brazil. However, the number of self-identified white people who graduated in 2017 was 22.9%. Clearly, this is an abysmal difference, but the impact of affirmative policies within the racial structure of Brazilian universities is becoming little at a time visible. Another interesting number, also raised by the IBGE, is that in 2005, one year after the formulation of racial quotas, the number of black people in universities was 5.5% and in 2018 this number rose to 50.3%, representing more than half of the number of enrollments in Brazilian public universities. However, this increase in enrollment only represents the number of people entering the university system, and it is not reflected in the number of people able to follow it until ending the courses. Therefore, as much as the quota policy increased the number of new entrants, staying within the university is still very difficult. This is reflected in the data collected in 2017 by the Institute of Applied Economic Research⁵ according to which only 32% of university graduates in that year were self-identified as black.

In any case, our objective here is not to detail all the impacts caused by affirmative action policies, but to contextualize them to highlight that they are having impacts on the Eurocentric structure of Brazilian universities. From the moment that the number of black people entering universities increases and they begin to occupy spaces that were previously completely infeasible for them, it is possible to track a change both at institutional level and in relation to an increased number of academics productions claiming to be based on counter-hegemonic perspectives.

4 See: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/educacao/noticia/2018-05/cotas-foram-revolucao-silenciosa-no-brasil-afirma-especialista> Last access on 19/06/2022.

5 See: https://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=35896 Last access on 19/06/2022.

Author	Title of work	Institution	Source of access to work
Marina de Oliveira Mendonça	Conflicts over use and definition of territories in traditional caicara populations	Institute of Research and Urban and Regional Planning of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro	https://pantheon.ufrj.br/
Marianna de Auravo e Silva	Counter-hegemonic cultural and communicational processes in Rios favelas: an analysis of the hip-hop	Center for Philosophy and Human Sciences at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro	https://pantheon.ufrj.br/
Diana da Silva Barbosa	Importance of territory for the identity process of the Quilombolas and their territorial conflicts: Pedra do Sal and Scopã - RJ	Institute of Geography of the State University of Rio de Janeiro	https://www.bdt.d.uerj.br:8443/
Eblin Joseph Farage	State, territory and daily life in the Maré Favelas Complex	Faculty of Social Service of the State University of Rio de Janeiro	https://www.bdt.d.uerj.br:8443/
Palloma Valle Menezes	Between the „crossfire“ and the „minefield“: an ethnography of the process of „pacification of Rios favelas“	Institute of Social and Political Studies at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro	https://pantheon.ufrj.br/
Ionara dos Santos Fernandes	Did he come to apologize to me? The look of poor children and adolescents on the Public Security Policy in Rio de	Postgraduate Program in Sociology and Law at the Federal Fluminense University	https://app.uff.br/riuff/
Mayte Rodrigues de Oliverira	The exchange of fire scares you, but exchange of looks with me is tender	Department of Anthropology at the Federal Fluminense	https://app.uff.br/riuff/
Renato de Souza Dória	Antiracist education, memory and identity in Quilombo of Camorim	Philosophy and Human Sciences Institute of Federal Fluminense University	https://app.uff.br/riuff/
Denilson Araujo de Oliveira	Territorialities in the globalised world: other readings of the city from the Hip Hop culture in the carioca metropolis.	Graduate Program in Geography at the Fluminense Federal University	https://app.uff.br/riuff/
Natã Neves do Nascimento	The favela is sending the message: constructions of new narratives in the Alemão Complex	Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro	https://orcid.org.0000-0003-4408-8991

Table 1 - Author, title, Educational Institution and access link of the selected works.

RESULTS

Our objective in this paper is to discuss some academic works that affirm to present counter-hegemonic conceptions and that corroborate our hypotheses that researches with highly relevant complementary and/or substitute theories are being realized. We expect that these works are producing alternatives of epistemologies, ontologies and value systems within the academic panorama. To describe this, we selected ten (table 1) academic works we identified as having a great relevance within this proposal.

The works carried out by Mendonça, Barbosa and Dória on the relationship of traditional communities with their territories, for example, are intriguing. We would like to draw attention to the way in which they approach the question of the identity of these communities. To do so, we call for the words of Diana da Silva Barbosa:

Quilombolas cultural practices enable the emergence of links between the group and its territory, as it is the form of these practices in certain spaces of their territories that attributes to these

meanings and that becomes what Bonnemaïson (2002) calls geosymbols, that is, for the author these places to which certain groups assigned meanings assume a symbolic dimension that strengthens their identity. Therefore, quilombola practices allow the characterization of the group differentiating it from others, and thus creating its borders. (Barbosa 2012, 12)

The specific relationships built among the social groups approached by the authors - *caicara* and *quilombola* communities - permeate an affective, symbolic, environmental and educational construction with their territories. The three mentioned authors' ethnographic approaches are able to capture specific particularities and subjectivities in their research and to present the territory as a place endowed with meanings and symbologies. The authors emphasize that the relationship of these social groups with their territories is a symbol of resistance, as they fight for their right to preserve their identities and memories, concomitantly seeking for the recognition of their cultures and for the preservation of their territories. In the case of the existing communities in Rio de Janeiro, much of this struggle for existence and preservation is concentrated

in the resistance against real estate speculation. These territorial disputes result in urban conflicts and aggressions between residents and the state police force. According to Dória,

Both memory and the identity of a social group are a social product and not a given, being therefore collectively constructed and subjected to fluctuations and transformations constants (Pollak 1992, 2). Thus, memory and identity are constructions triggered from the specifics of each social context in which they are made emerge, having its frames of reference (the social group), its contexts of disputes (places) and the traumas that make them emerge (events). (Dória 2020, 13)

The works of Farage, Menezes, Fernandes and Oliveira move toward a different object of study from the previous ones. This is the reality of the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro. More specifically, they focus on the daily life of the peripheral population living in these spaces and on their coexistence with an extremely violent public security policy. The narrative of the war on drugs promoted by the Brazilian state is dominated by the traditional media and the elite. Rio de Janeiro has the police that kills the most in Brazil and one of the police that kills the most in the world, generating a policy of extermination and barbarism⁶. In their respective works, the authors seek to bring the experiences of people who live in the middle of the urban war existing in Rio de Janeiro. In realizing their ethnographic research, the authors make explicit that they are part of this reality, since they live in these *favelas*.

Mayte de Oliveira's monograph is one of the most provocative. Living in a *favela* and experiencing the oppressive daily life of Rio de Janeiro, she conducts an ethnographic study, seeking to understand the processes of construction of the accusatory category "involved with crime". She deepens how it is manipulated by media and public discourses and its effects on identity inscriptions and trajectories of youth in the *favela*.

There are, through the structures that criminalize poverty and maintain structuralized racism, a profile that has local and cultural characteristics that inserts individuals into this category. [...] Living in the favela, dressing like a bandit – that is, dressing like the "trends", since the bandits are also inserted in the consumer society – without take excesses into account, articulate as a favelado, with whom they have etc., all this associates the individual to the involvement with the crime. [...] In the order of popular discourse, these worlds would generate subjects with bad intentions immersed in dangerous relationships. one and another world would produce white-collar and common collar "bandits". However, the latter, once recognized as fully involved-with the criminality, would be the killable. In other words, they would be owners of unqualified lives, as indicated by Agambem (2002), or of wasted lives that would not require rehabilitation, as pointed out by Bauman (2005). (Oliveira 2018, 51-53)

6 See: <https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/policia-que-mais-mata/>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/24/brazil-police-raid-río-favela-death-toll> Last access on 19/06/2022.

In a similar direction, also the works of Palloma Valle Menezes (2015) and Ionara dos Santos Fernandes (2017) bring an insight into the daily life of *favelas*. Menezes' research is based on almost four years of fieldwork in the Santa Marta and Cidade de Deus *favelas*, where the author delves into the relationships between the local inhabitants and the Pacifying Police Units (UPP)⁷. She points out that UPP' have changed the entire logic of socialization and organizations in these territories and for this she sought to investigate those who were directly affected by this "security policy". The author highlights that the police occupation of the neighborhood modified and transformed the ways of existence and local ways of life, destabilizing these territories.

Menezes (2015) describes how, in November 2008, the Military Police of the State of Rio de Janeiro carried out operations inside the *favelas* of Cidade de Deus and Santa Marta against drugs traffic. These appeared to be operations to which local inhabitants were already used to facing, being them traders, residents, community leaders and, as well, drug dealers. Initially, these police operations had the same characteristics: heavily armed police invading popular territories, exchanging shots with drug dealers, arrests in flagrante delicto, and seizures of drugs and weapons. However, at the end of these operations one thing surprised all those who lived in the two *favelas*. Instead of the police finishing the operation and going down the hill, they continued and settled in the territories. The author, based on philosopher John Dewey, states that:

It is possible to say that in November 2008 the residents of Santa Marta and Cidade de Deus fully lived what the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey defined as an indeterminate situation, that is, a situation "uncomfortable, problematic, ambiguous, confusing, full of conflicting tendencies", "obscure, etc.", a situation in which those involved experience it as "uncertain because the situation was inherently uncertain". (Menezes 2015:17)

Menezes addresses the perception of what the *favela* would be according to the middle and the ruling class. With the development and consolidation of drug trafficking in the 1980s and 1990s, these became the main areas of circulation of this illegal enterprise as they were far from urban centers and the richest regions of the city, at least initially. In the last decades, drug trafficking expanded and the *favela* was consolidated as a "criminal territory" in the perspective of the State and the elites. Rio's *favelas* became the base of operations for these criminals and, with the expansion of drug sales, rival groups were formed to compete for territories and businesses. Therefore, this evolution had and has a direct impact on the increase in armed confrontations between the factions themselves and between criminals and the police. As a consequence, the *favela* becomes the "main problem" to be faced by public security, since criminals are located there and they represent

7 See: https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2018/03/11/politica/1520769227_645322.html Last access on 19/06/2022.

a danger to urban centers and “good citizens”, making an incisive struggle within these territories something “necessary”. As a consequence, the peripheral population living in these places started to constantly experience conflicts between police and criminals or between rival factions. Their living spaces became a place for shootings, military interventions, drug and weapons trafficking. In these conflicts, many innocent people become a target and “collateral damage”. Menezes points out that these events end up becoming “*structuring principles of the phenomenology of everyday life in the favelas*” (Menezes 2015, 24). Starting from the constatation that the creation of the UPPs completely changes the structure of life in the periphery, she investigates, through extensive and detailed fieldwork, the adaptation process and the community’s view of the UPPs.

The work of Fernandes (2017) has a similar methodology but with a different and innovative focus: the children who live in the favela and their experiences. The author carries out a study based on reports of experiences of children and adolescents who live on the periphery, and who are inserted in a logic of violent public security. Her analysis focuses on understanding the perspectives of these young people on public security policy, since they are merged in the urban war between the State and criminal factions. The research was realized within a social project maintained by a large congregation of the Catholic Church that assists around 250 children and adolescents. The work aims to portray the multiple behaviors of children and adolescents of low income families in the face of the extermination⁸ policy promoted by the Rio de Janeiro State Government. Based on interviews and perception of experiences, she points out different types of domination, the relationship of these individuals with both parallel power and state power, the individual’s relationship with their territory of experience and obviously the perception of children and adolescents about rights and security. In her words:

Between May 2015 and July 2016, 397 children and adolescents were assisted by the social project. Among them, 174 were female and 223 were male. In terms of age, there are 251 adolescents (12 to 16 years old) and 146 children (08 to 11 years old). As for schooling, 47% have already repeated the school year at some point in their lives. Only 17 of the 397 students come from the private school system, with all 13 As for the location of the house, only 23 do not live in favelas, however, all of them live close to or within one. There are 214 students, whose family receives some amount related to income transfer programs, whether from the Bolsa Família program, better income or social rent. (Fernandes 2017, 24)

8 By „extermination“ we mean in relation to the number of deaths caused by the military police in Rio de Janeiro, since the number of deaths resulting from operations is enormous. For example, a recent operation in the *favela* of „Vila Cruzeiro“, on May 24, 2022, caused 25 deaths. See: <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-61574111> Last access on 19/06/2022.

Also according to her, it is important to use mixed methods of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in the research, in order to outline the profile of the children and adolescents involved in the research. From it, both the author and readers gain an understanding of who these young people are and in what context they are inserted, highlighting two conditions: poverty and living in slums or popular territories.

The last work we included in our selection with the theme focused on the criminalization of the *favela* is the one by Farage (2012). His approach is a little different from previous authors because in this work the aim is to criticize the bourgeoisie’s view of *favelas*. The thesis seeks to overcome homogenizing views on peripheral territories and their residents. These views treat the *favela* as a “space of absence”, which attribute to it its characteristics of being a “city apart” from bourgeois territories. The bourgeois hegemonic view describes these spaces as places of prostitution, crime, trickery, and disorder, which results in a segregation from both a spatial and social points of view, since the *favela* population is often treated as disposable or as non-citizens.

For the research, Farage deepens the daily life of the Complexo de Favelas da Maré, also in Rio de Janeiro, in an attempt to give visibility to the contradictions of that territory as well as to the social relations that exist there. The starting point is that understanding such relations can bring a new comprehension of this world, made of symbology and representations, of this marginalized population. The author suggests an interesting approach, understanding the *favela* as heterogeneous territories. Territories that express distant singularities from the point of view of both social relations and historical formations of the urban and political composition of the territory as well as of the capitalist relations of production. In the author’s words, “*the study seeks the existing connections between capitalist development and its materialization in the intra-urban space, considering the heterogeneity of the constitution of the territory and its population*” (Farage 2012, 25). This is because, “*the territory is both a product and a producer of social relations, expressing contradictions, disputes, tensions and resistances*” (Idem., 26).

Natã Neves Nascimento (2021), Denilson Araujo de Oliveira (2006) and Marianna de Araújo Silva, have as their research objects the hip-hop and “*passinho*” movements existing in the city of Rio de Janeiro. They seek to understand how hip-hop and funk music became important symbols of resistance in Rio’s favelas, and how these are often used to challenge the existing social order that marginalizes popular culture. Silva (2007), for example, draws on Gramsci’s concepts of hegemony and civil society, as well as other popular culture theorists such as Marilena Chauí. She works with the idea that hip-hop becomes a symbol of resistance against the idea of a “true culture”, that is, an elitist and hegemonic culture that treats popular culture as “empty” artistic manifestations.

To deepen this concept, the author observes the dualism between “culture of the people” and “culture for the people”, where the latter is a part of the hegemonic conception that peripheral communities do not present an “adequate” culture.

A characterization that justifies the elite to assume the position of producers of a “true culture” to reinforce its own values and to legitimize its leadership in front of the *favela*. Hip-hop culture is the way that the people living there find to reinvent themselves within a social organization of domination and oppression, in which the popular demonstration becomes a symbol of resistance.

In the opposite direction of the media empire that classifies the favela as a stronghold of criminals and who describes it as a space of need, graffiti artists show their communities from their own perspective, away from control and stereotypes of the dominant layers. In response to a high-rated program that makes misery, a consequence of exploitation and social inequality, a diversion, favelados sing the indignation of the periphery and turn it into poetry. And for the residents who are just another number on the count of deaths after the invasion violence of the police, the tribute is reserved in the form of a portrait painted on the facades of the community’s masonry houses. (Silva 2007, 11).

Large cities, in this view, become spaces of territorialization of globalized cultures where these are constantly re-elaborated and re-adapted to different specific realities according to their insertion in the places. In the case of Hip-Hop, the objective is to transfer the violence of gang wars to cultural disputes for music, dance and visual expression, such as rap, break and graffiti. Following this logic, the author suggests that hip-hop culture in Rio de Janeiro is appropriated as an instrument of struggle, mobilized by subjects from the periphery who seek to bring new identities and meanings to their everyday spaces. Through it, they are seeking to break stereotypes about the black and poor population. Its use has become an instrument for building an insurgent citizenship through which people affirm a denial of the socio-spatial place of this social group, generating territories as a form of struggle.

CONCLUSION

All the works presented have a differential peculiarity: they affirm the centrality of the researchers to have a “place of speech” about the focus of their research. All authors presented in this initial survey take the move of their research from their own experiences, seeking to show conceptions to the academic environment through subjective and more realistic perspectives. The vast majority carry out a dense ethnographic work, paying attention to details that researchers who do not belong to those territories could have a great difficulty to capture. The plurality existing in Rio de Janeiro demands attention to such details and unique specificities. The authors presented here also explicitly claim to mobilize counter-hegemonic and alternative methodologies. Through these approaches, based on first hand experiences and direct and personal engagement, they sought to understand the protagonists of social phenomena as subjects, and not treating them as simple objects of research.

Selected authors describe struggles of traditional communities against real estate speculation; they deepen in reflections about the different daily experiences lived by favela residents; and they produce reflections on how cultural movements function as symbols of resistance against oppression. In doing so, they demonstrate how much the sensitivity and subjectivity behind research is capable of generating new epistemologies, ontologies and value systems. The personal position of the researchers appears as crucial for this effort, highlighting the relevance of the transformation happening in Brazilian universities. People previously excluded by the academic environment, such as the authors presented here, once entering these spaces of intellectual production, at the same time produce a double twist. On the one hand they propose alternative methodologies based on the personal engagement of the observer with her and his interlocutors. On the other hand, they are also affecting the political environment of universities, taking back to the people the focus of the academic works, as demonstrated by the inclusion of *favelas* inhabitants’ concerns as focuses of their researches. Clearly, this is only the first step toward a more plural university and more egalitarian access to academic environment. Anyhow, the transformative power of these experiences is evident. They are promoting a redefinition of the aims and priorities of the universities, at least in Rio de Janeiro. Further studies would be relevant in order to compare the analysis we produced here with what is happening in other Brazilian cities, as well as with a global panorama in which more and more the academic environment is being mobilized as a tool for the resistance of marginalized sectors of the society and for the promotion of alternatives.

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