



Working Papers

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**In Search for a Decolonizing Actor:
Contradictions Between Brazilian State Policies
and Social Emancipation of Quilombolas**

Tereza Ventura

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Content

1. Introduction	5
2. The recognition guidelines and constitutional rights for ancestors of slave refugees	5
2.1 Racial identity and public policy.....	6
2.2 Collective land rights and multicultural politics	7
3. Outline of a social portrait of Quilombola communities and the national sustainable policy for traditional populations	10
3.1 Identities and territories	11
4. The local communities and contention of global economy: The case of the social struggle against mining and eucalyptus corporations	13
4.1 Eucalyptus plantation sector	14
4.2 The case of Minas Rio.....	16
4.3 Natural resources and Brazil's integration into global economy	18
4.4 Contesting structural global coloniality	20
5. Conclusions	22
Bibliography	24

Abstract

This paper explores the articulations between the present social struggles of *Quilombolas* (Maroons' descendants of those who escaped enslavement), state policies, coloniality and global inequality. Two case studies illustrate how the infiltration of global mining and overexploitation of eucalyptus have diminished natural resources in the region and encroached upon the land rights of black communities. This paper first provides a comprehensive review of the policy changes that paved the way for the recognition of the land ownership rights of Quilombolas and displays how public policies have raised complex issues about the relationship between the Quilombolas' status as democratic citizens as well as an ethnic community. Bringing a decolonial theoretical perspective, the paper presents the Quilombolas' potential role of resistance in impacting the expansion of extractive global economy. Quilombolas' case shows that the political economic connection between Latin American territories and the operative rationality of transnational capitalism. This linkage can also be interpreted along the lines of the global coloniality theoretical perspective. The critical perspective of global coloniality from Quijano, Grosfoguel and Hall is employed in order to analyze the Quilombolas' political and social conditions to move beyond the narrow space between the recognition of their ethnicity and their history of slavery. However, in order to face global injustice, and its hidden face – coloniality – the Quilombolas would need to redefine themselves as global actors against the corporate-driven global economy. This political opportunity also calls for the constitution of other forms of relationships between African descendants, the Brazilian state and global economy in order to reinvent themselves within a decolonized democracy.

Keywords: coloniality, Quilombo, decolonial theory, race and identity rights, public policies

In Search for a Decolonizing Actor:

Contradictions Between Brazilian State Policies and Social Emancipation of Quilombolas

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze the relationship between the institutional mechanisms that underlie the politics of recognition of *Quilombolas'* rights and the persistence of political and economic injustice which prevents this group from realizing their rights and become socially emancipated. The paper introduces the legal changes which paved the way for land ownership rights of Quilombolas. Utilizing a decolonial theoretical approach, the paper presents the Quilombolas' role of resistance in impacting the expansion of extractive global economy. The global order is interpreted as a result of the 'coloniality of power', as well as a multi-centred configuration of black diaspora and discrimination. The critical perspective of global coloniality from Quijano, Grosfoguel and Hall is employed in order to analyze the Quilombolas' political and social conditions to move beyond the narrow space between the recognition of their ethnicity and their history of slavery. The policy analysis undertaken here shows the first time that Quilombolas' social life emerged from the deep invisibility to the legal sphere as bearers of social rights. However, I argue that Brazilian policies raise complex issues about the relationship between the Quilombolas' status as democratic citizens as well as an ethnic community. The paper introduces two case studies that illustrate how the infiltration of global companies of mining and eucalyptus has resulted in an attack towards human rights of black communities. The decolonial perspective is used as a framework to study the continuities within structures of domination that enforce restrictions of national policies and makes visible the violent character of global power relations. However, I argue that the global coloniality is also produced by peripheral state actors, and it is not a mere reflection of market institutions and global economy which also dislocate the centre-periphery dichotomy. I aim to integrate the contemporary historical and empirical analysis into the decolonial theoretical perspective. The Quilombolas case shows that the political economic connection between Latin American territories and the operative rationality of transnational capitalism can be interpreted along the lines of the global coloniality theoretical perspective.

2. The recognition guidelines and constitutional rights for ancestors of slave refugees

The Brazilian nation-state formation has, since its beginnings, found its ground in a celebrative discourse of the unity between Africans, indigenous people and Europeans. Built by the influence of the European slavery trade and internal colonialism, the Brazilian postcolonial state did not implement integration policies either for ex slaves or indigenous people. Brazil was the last country in the Western world to abolish slavery in 1888. However, different

from other postcolonial nations, in Brazil, race was not considered as a legal category or even as a cultural form. By the time slavery was abolished in 1888, the black population was estimated over five million, which was the largest black diasporic population outside of Africa. A constitutional reparation against slavery had not been debated in the Brazilian parliament until 1988. Brazil came to be seen from the colonial period as a country where miscegenation between European, indigenous and African people was articulated as natural and was generally incorporated as part of the Brazilian national culture and state formation processes. The nation-state popularized the country as a unique example of interracial sociability where the idea of “racial democracy” was established as a strategic pattern for the integration of black people and Europeans into the Brazilian emergent industrial society (Fernandes 1988). As a perpetual aspect of the continuity of colonial power structures, ideas and claims of racial equality have coexisted with the extreme poverty of black people and the hope for modernization distributive benefits. The Brazilian experience of centuries of slavery and the embeddedness of racialized social relations brings a unique perspective of shaping articulations between race and class. However, the limited space of democratic control of the postcolonial nation-state institutions was prevented by the same colonial structure of power. According to Quijano, the racial classification of the people represents an invisible aspect of the coloniality of power (Quijano 2007: 169). The democratization process of postcolonial states is intrinsically interrelated with the decolonization of the power relations, which has been fulfilling the social classification of race and all forms of social discrimination related to the European colonization. As colonialism denoted a political and economic relation in which the nation-state was subordinated to the power and violence of another nation, coloniality, instead, refers to the continuity of power patterns that emerged as a result of colonialism (Quijano 2007). Those patterns of power encompass culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production much beyond the strict limits of colonial administration. It was in the context of European colonization that new types of social and cultural classifications were invented: white, Indian, black and *mestizo*. These social and racial classifications legitimated the superiority of white Europeans over the “primitive” others, at the same time attributing different degrees of humanity to the former. In constituting this social classification, coloniality permeates all aspects of social existence and gives rise to new social, geocultural and racial identities. Under the hegemony of world capitalism “Eurocentrism naturalizes the experience of people within this model of power” (Quijano 2007).

2.1 Racial identity and public policy

It was only in 1988, after the Brazilian military dictatorship that, active black social movements succeed to bring forward questions of ethnic and racial identity to the new constitutional process. In the constitutional debate, race, ethnicity and cultural heritage related to black and indigenous communities were recognized as attributes of social identity as well as sources of discrimination, colonial violence and economic and political oppression. Within the new constitution (1988), the category *Quilombo* reemerged politically as part of the black minorities rights’ framework, as well as an opportunity to improve citizenship rights and solve land ownership problems in which many rural black communities were involved.

The construction of the political ethnic identity allowed a distinctive representation of black rural communities as descendants of slave refuges (Quilombolas). The collective ownership of Quilombolas and indigenous lands was formally recognized by the constitution in 1988 and was also acknowledged by the Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which was ratified by Brazilian state. The rural black communities were constitutionally recognized as descendants of Quilombos. The Quilombo is defined as settlements originally formed by people who had escaped slavery and have traditionally occupied the territory. Article 68 of the temporary constitutional provisions (“Ato das Disposições Constitucionais”) clearly states that “final ownership shall be recognized for the remained members of the Quilombo communities who are occupying their lands, the State shall grant the respective title” (BRASIL 1988).

The constitutional process took place in a period of strong debate inside the global development agencies on ecology, environmental protection and cultural diversity. This was a period in which global hegemonic power of capitalism supported worldwide implementation of the structural adjustment programs and their economic restrictions (SAP). The structural adjustment program brought about the opening of the markets of developing nations to foreign direct investments (FDIs). On the one hand, neoliberal reforms created new legal structures and institutions that allowed and supported transnational corporate activities, including extraction of natural resources. On the other hand, indigenous and black communities were mobilized against transnational corporations’ expropriation of land and natural resources. Remarkable examples are the organization of parallel meetings in the Earth Summit organized by the United Nations that was held in Brazil in 1992.

Before the constitutional process in 1988, there were no pre-existing settlements establishing any form of identities and lands rights protection for black communities, although claims based on historic settlements or territorial attachments were present in social movements and civil organizations’ strategies in Brazil and Latin America. Among them, I highlight the organization of the notable meeting of Latin American peasant, black and indigenous organizations which announced the political mobilization and resistance against the five hundred years of colonial power heritage in Latin America.

2.2 Collective land rights and multicultural politics

The topic of implementation of collective land rights and anti-racism policies were intensively debated inside the Black Movement since 1978 by the *Movimento Negro Unificado* (Unified Black Movement) and it culminated with the demonstration, march of *Zumbi dos Palmares* by citizenship and life. The march brought 30.000 participants outside the Brazilian congress in 1995. Zumbi dos Palmares was a legendary leader of the slavery insurrection movement who was killed in 1695 and who created the *Quilombo dos Palmares* in northeast of Brazil. The demonstration representatives delivered a program of identity recognition as well as supported anti-racist politics for the Republic Presidency. The Zumbi March inaugurated the National Day of Black Consciousness and every year on November 20th, social movements and organizations hold demonstrations throughout Brazil demanding racial justice. After the first demonstration in 1995, the national government established an inter-ministerial working

group through which the anti-racist and the Quilombo rights were finally integrated in the government's political public agenda. The national political mobilization of black rural communities gave birth to the National Coordination for the Articulation of Black Rural Quilombo Communities (CONAQ) composed by different units covering the country. The new institutional possibilities for Quilombolas' social integration at the same time exposed risks and lack of economic and political resources for the implementation of welfare state policies and land rights (Van Cott 2006). With the inclusion of Latin-American economies into the globalized neoliberal economy, the social and cultural politics has been affected by the growing privatization of national economy, as well as public goods as natural resources, social and public services. The market-oriented realignment of trade and finance called for a redefinition of the relationship between financial and national state institutions, civil organizations and the transnational capitalist class.

In the context of expansion of post-dictatorship social movements, Hale (2002) points out that Latin American states recognized minority rights, as a way to avoid more radical demands, which would prevent the neoliberal expansion of economic system. With the empowerment of social movements, the so-called racial democracy could no more be understood in terms of abstract equality among citizens. For Hale, the effort to probe neoliberal multiculturalism should be understood as an exploration of the 'menace' inherent to political spaces that have been opened. The author argues that the politics of identity recognition was a neoliberal strategy to promise rights without any structural change in the democratic regime and social economic distributive structure. As stressed by Walsh (2010), the multicultural policies have prevented the improvement of intercultural relations and neglected dynamics of inequalities of class, gender and race. The argument from Quijano is that "the liberation of intercultural relations from the prison of coloniality implies the freedom to choose between various cultural orientations" (Quijano 2007: 178). Based in a postcolonial reading of the culture, some authors (Gilroy 1993, Hall 1992, Spivak 1999, Mignolo 2000) emphasize that there are no cultural identities to be shaped as a unity symbolically and geographically established before the politics. In this way, they call attention to the idea of difference which must be represented and articulated contextually between the cultural borders, wherein difference would not symbolize "otherness". According to Kymlicka, multicultural policies would include demands for remedying economic and political disadvantages that people suffer as a result of their marginalized group identities. However, a hegemonic neoliberalism system could operate to disable their collective capacities and political projects (Kymlicka 2012: 99). The fact that the multicultural laws should be improved by the State, in order to expand universal legal equality for all citizens, does not nullify the challenge of how and under which judicial tools, institutional structure and political conditions, the state and sub-national public institutions would be able to fulfill the legitimate demands of those particular groups.

In order to take part in advocacy networks of identity struggles, the black social movements have made advances in their organization and their ability to forge an agenda for defending their cultural identity, collective rights and interests inside a global, as well a local political arena. Among others, main examples are the World Social Forum and the World Conference against Racism. Regular Social Preparatory Forum held in Durban in 2001, brought to the public sphere in precedent debate about the legitimacy of legal rights to black communities, also categorized as diasporic Afro-descendants and racialized groups. Some Brazilian NGOs,

such as *Koinonia* and *Fase*, delivered important data about the social cultural and life conditions of the black Brazilian rural communities. In 2003, the elected president Lula da Silva, from the leftist Labour Party (PT), enforced black movements' claim against racism in Brazil and tried to balance the neoliberal program with social policies. The president has also issued a public apology in Africa for the active participation of Brazilian elite in the transatlantic slavery trade. The Brazilian state founded the University for Luso-African descendants offering research and fellowship programs for African students. The government formed a specific ministerial department sector for improving measures for ethnic and racial equality and reshaping the state 's control over social policies. Among the measures were the first public policy for Quilombo communities and a vast database compiling racial information. The initiative confirmed by public statistics numbers the race as a main source of deep social inequality in Brazil, as well an indicator that relates access to public services and citizenship rights (Heringer: 2002).

Guideline of constitutional rights for descendants of enslaved refugees reached the legal status in 2003 by the Presidential Decree 4887¹. An average of 3.000 Maroon communities were acknowledged and empowered to take part in the national land titling program. However, some months later, the conservative party DEM (Democratic Party) which represents the interests of agribusiness and global multinational companies, de facto violated the Decree 4887, consolidating a political and violent struggle for the juridical control of the land property which is to day ongoing. Nowadays, among 3600 Quilombos, only 169 land titles were given to 253 Quilombo communities. The DEM Party is the political base for the agribusiness sector, represented as the rural bench with strong leadership inside the Brazilian parliament. The agriculture sector, which control the mining, cellulose, oil, sugar, wood, soy and meat production, represents 24% of the Brazilian GDP and 65% of total national exports (CEPEA 2017).

This chapter outlined the politics concerning basic social justice and land rights and the strong competition they face vis-à-vis the global market and economy, that is dependent on export of primary commodities. The opportunity for institutional arrangements to be put into effect for black communities was precluded by the increased direct investment in natural resources. Instead of a full citizenship attachment, or full recognition of the institutional lands rights and racism connected to colonial heritage, the public agenda defended a specific relationship between territory, nature and cultural rights. Despite the fact that struggles for land rights have not reached any legitimacy inside Brazilian parliament, the Program, *Brazil Quilombola* represented a novel initiative that unlocked the inefficiency of policy's enforcements for black rural communities. The weak capacity of the state to implement rights prevents Quilombolas and traditional communities to achieve their demands for increased democracy.

¹ The decree 4887 minimizes the legal bureaucracy when defines Quilombola as self-attribution and not as a legal proven historical descent. However, the process of legalization of collective lands rights is still very complex. The legislation embraces, beside a specific investigation about the land's occupants, the collective memory and local interviews, reports from lawyers, judges, documentations from anthropologists, archeologists, state and federal public ministries, as well specific agencies from the state and government. In many cases, the land is already used by farms and another juridical long process start for land's evacuation. The state must still purchase the land and offer technical assistance for the establishment of the rural communities.

3. Outline of a social portrait of Quilombola communities and the national sustainable policy for traditional populations

In 2004, the State, through the Secretary of Public Policies for Racial Equality (Secretaria de Política Promoção da Igualdade Racial), launched the social program *Brazil Quilombola*, executed and coordinated along with the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Combat (MDS). In practice, the execution of the program consisted in coordinating basic public social protection programs for black communities, mainly articulated inside the agenda of Food and Nutritional Security and civil rights. In order to include Quilombolas and indigenous people into the Brazil's family grants program, the government received a US\$ 572.2 million loan from the World Bank². The program did not start until the national law of food security was implemented in September 2006 (Brasil 2006). The legislative acts 11.346 law have established a Food and Nutrition National Security Council with local institutional representatives and civil organizations as stakeholders. It is worth mentioning that the so-called extractivist boom during 2000s increased the flow of natural resources and deepened the displacement, as well as the food insecurity of traditional communities. It is no coincidence that *Brazil Quilombola* reached specifically rural communities that were affected by the expansion of extractivism. By the time the food security law was structured, the local forum from the State of Espírito Santo started a public campaign against the expansion of the Company Aracruz's eucalyptus monoculture plantation in Quilombola territories in Sapê do Norte. The NGO FASE reported the situation of food insecurity and undernutrition of the Sapê do Norte communities affected by the expansion of eucalyptus plantation (FASE 2008).

The Quilombola Program allowed access to basic food distribution, civil documents, electricity and basic social assistance. For the first time in the history of Brazil, an extensive database was composed involving basic information about black rural communities in the country. The last report of the *Brazil Quilombola* in 2014 (MDS 2014) illustrated that 41% of the children still face food insecurity and suffer health problems due to undernutrition, 62% of those 169 communities never had a contact with health services. Only 3% had a sort of waste water system, while the number for an average impoverished Brazilian is 22 % (MDS 2014: 130). The fact that 75% of the Quilombolas survive with less than US\$ 18 a month and 10% survive with less than US\$ 35 until the last report in 2014, shows the community's neglected incorporation in the market relations as well in public services. The Quilombola Program made the conditional cash transfer initiative *Bolsa Família* more effective among black communities. Despite this, it is estimated that 25% of Quilombolas did not have any access to any public service, along with a large number of families not being considered eligible for the cash transfer. The politics of cash transfer is made conditional upon enrolment of children at school and actualized on health check. One important reason is that in order to be entitled to receive the conditional cash transfer, a list of documents are needed to attest the physical existence and the local residence of the individual. Without these documents, the individual is invisible, and there is no possibility of benefiting from social benefits like electricity, food assistance, family agricultural technical assistance and institutional purchase. These examples clearly show

² The *Bolsa Família* program targets two groups: extremely poor families, with per capita monthly incomes below R\$50 (US\$17), and poor families, with per capita monthly incomes below R\$100 (US\$34). Payments are made to the mothers.

how the state, under the *Multicultural Constitutional Law*, has been recognizing basic citizenship rights of minorities. Although the access to basic rights has been legally formalized for traditional communities, most of them are still living outside the jurisdiction of the civil law and therefore invisible for the state. The budget analysis made by the Brazilian Institute for Socioeconomic Studies (INESC) demonstrated that less than 40% of the resources was used by the Program in the period between 2005 and 2014. Verdum explains this as:

Public policies designated to quilombolas communities are interconnected to the institutional performance of local state and district offices, which in many cases, has no particular concern in give any priority for those groups. Local administrations are influenced by interest from big farmers and corporations which avoids any possibility of dropping their power over lands (INESC 2011: 2).

Nevertheless, in contrast to exotic African cultural heritage traditions, the Quilombola program publicly revealed the deep impact of poverty and social problems that affect the communities' existence. The reports from the *Brazil Quilombola* program show that the vulnerable conditions for a sustainable life has been forcing the communities to migrate to urban areas. The limited access to state policies, as well lack of full participation in the local market economy affect the continuity of their cultural traditions and way of life. The lack of sustainable basic life, combined with the tentative access to rights, is intrinsically interwoven with the existence of state policies in their everyday life. The cash transfer is dependent on education and health services for the children, services which are not available for those communities. Among the Quilombola population, 35% of individuals between 18 and 25 years old are illiterate. This number in Brazilian society is 9%. This rate is not explained by the confinement of Quilombolas to the rural area, because within highly urbanized centers such as Rio de Janeiro, the illiteracy percentage among Quilombolas is 30%. The outcome of the Quilombolas Program shows the state's ambivalence between employing sustainable policies for traditional communities and supporting major direct investments in extraction of natural resources, which has resulted in forceful displacements of traditional communities. In searching for an answer to political demands from the Landless Workers Movement (MST) and traditional communities, the state announced the Decree 6.040 in 2007, through which it strengthened Quilombolas as well as all traditional people as extractivists, riverside and fishermen communities to use their ethnic and cultural title in order to redefine the terms of relations between the state and sustainable territory rights. However, parts of their lands, river and ocean shoreline, without any warning, have been transformed into a national park or a biological reserve where they are not able to use their own development perspectives. Furthermore, their abilities and skills are not integrated in their respective sustainable development projects.

3.1 Identities and territories

The state assumed that the “[t]raditional territories are spaces needed for the cultural reproduction of the traditional people, as culturally differentiated groups” (Decree Presidential nº 6.040/2007, own translation). With the opportunity to be recognized as a culturally differentiated group, Quilombolas turned out to be eligible as land protectors of traditional

territories. On the other hand, this identity attribute may imply that they are ecologically adapted, and they have to maintain their life styles culturally, economically, and demographically in its original historical form. This historical imagery confines Quilombolas back to an idealized, pre-colonial and pre-social contract world. By neglecting the complex intersections with questions of class, gender, race as well the different ethnic background among the communities, the politics tend to homogenize their cultural identities and life conditions. In this way, the state leaves the main issue unresolved: the extension of equality rights for traditional communities, as well their inclusion in the distributive regime of welfare and social structure. The public policies raise complex issues about the relationship between Quilombolas' status as democratic citizens as well as actors of an ethnic identity movement. Their claims are increasingly linking their quest for recognition for modernity; school with quality education, medical assistance, land reform, water sanitization, electricity and public transport. They are searching for finding of a democratic path toward decolonization, a compensation against past oppressions, as well as, integration as equal citizens within a democratic society.

In conclusion, public law is used for keeping populations or ethnic categories of individuals as of recipients of recognition, instead of bearers of equal rights and basic respect. They are hardly ever consulted or even informed about the decision-making process concerning their lands, but they have been transformed by public and global governance institutions in active partner of sustainable development. For those oppressed and racialized rural communities, appealing to their Quilombola origins is the only avenue for gaining a legal title to land, they have been residing, in some cases, for more than 200 years. The social and economic isolation from the public policies affect and threaten their life conditions, deepening the inequality traps for these extremely poor people.

Moreover, state policies are designed in the way that Quilombolas cannot fulfill the conditions to maintain their culture alive or access the basic public law. This showcases that there is a selective process of benefiting from legally recognized rights in Brazil. Cultural identities, racism and land rights struggles are judged by different economic, juridical and political arenas, where the constitutional rights are glossed over. The struggles of recognition for ethnic, racial and cultural dynamics that improve the eligibility of territorial rights, are, semantically and symbolically, mixed with political struggles concerning land reform, national reserve demarcations and the reparations for the groups affected by the huge private investments from global and local corporations. These communities' basic human rights are continuously violated by local and global corporations, since they are saved by the social contract made with the national state, the ethnic ecological approach of global governance agencies and transnational investments agencies.

Although the ethnic identity and colonial past has become an important political and social tool in social justice struggles, to what extent is being articulated as representatives of the African colonial past, is potentially functional for democracy under such an extensively asymmetrical power regime? The opposite can be the case, reinforcing colonial past, without changing the system of power that emerged from the colonial rule, can also make stronger the structural internal and global coloniality over black rural communities (Grosfoguel 2007). By confronting the power system which supports the national institutions, the Quilombola communities are struggling for controlling resources distribution, political representation and

social justice. As Grosfoguel have been emphasized since democracy is not a western natural attribute, there are other possibilities to reach a critical decolonial redefinition of democracy. As exploration of natural resources has expanded the base of Brazilian integration inside global economy, Quilombolas and indigenous communities receive an extraordinary visibility inside the local and global political struggle against development politics and extractivism expansion. In the next section, I will bring two remarkable examples from mining and eucalyptus plantations economy, which illustrates the increasing displacement, violation of rights and conflicts relating natural resources appropriation and the traditional communities.

4. The local communities and contention of global economy: The case of the social struggle against mining and eucalyptus corporations

The global market for iron ore mining and cellulose has increased in size due to the growth of global consumer demand and consequently contributing to the creation and reproduction of new regimes of poverty, racism and weakening of cultural communitarian networks in Brazil.

The economy of Brazil and Latin American countries is reliant on export-based raw materials; as a consequence, there is a remarkable growth in the extraction and production in mining and eucalyptus industries. The neo-extractivist strategy was realized in 2003 by the Lula government, as part of a structure of political opportunity to combat poverty and improve the social conditions of local communities. However, the state has been an active partner of the corporate economic planning. Although national institutions are legally responsible for the regulation of industries regarding their social and environmental impact, there is increasing poverty, displacement, conflict and a loss of food sovereignty for the environment and traditional communities (Zouri 2010). The state institutions offer a unique opportunity for global corporations through tax cuts, loan programs, land access, subsidies as well precarious legislative frameworks for rural natives (Kroger 2014).

The process of reprimarization of Latin American economy which was seen as a new commodities consensus, brought the deepening of the dynamic of dispossession of land, natural resources, and territories (Swampa 2015). Latin America has shifted from the Washington Consensus, with its focus on finance, to the commodities consensus, based on the large-scale export of primary products. According to some authors (Acosta 2016, Gudynas 2015) the extractivism has become a model of growth in Brazil, which increases the legal insecurity of traditional communities vis-a-vis the state and the global market. Mineral, agricultural and other primary products constitute more than 65 percent of Brazil's total exports (CEPEA2017).

In this section, I will introduce two notable examples from mining and eucalyptus plantations economy in Brazil from the Finnish-Swedish Aracruz and Store Enso production of eucalyptus and the mining project Minas Rio from the ANGLO AMERICAN company. The scale of resources removal is based in millions of tons which cause displacement of traditional communities, the destruction of the local environment and natural resources.

4.1 Eucalyptus plantation sector

The Finnish- Swedish corporation Stora Enso, Veracel and the Norwegian-Brazilian firm Aracruz are among the major corporations involved in the paper and pulp sector in Brazil. The eucalyptus monoculture started in the mid-70s, through the initiative of Norwegian entrepreneur Erling Sven Lorentzen, who was the founder of Aracruz under the consultant Jaakko Poyry, employed at the Finnish corporation. Stora Enso owns the Swedish-Finnish Veracel factory, which was built in the south of Bahia in 2005, together with the Norwegian-Brazilian corporation Aracruz.

Although the European Union requires the countries seeking to join the Union, to respect the rights of national minorities, this is not the case in Brazil. In 2001, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the financing institution of the European Union approved a US\$30 million loan for its plantations in Bahia. In 2004, the Nordic Investment Bank Finland (NIB) invested US\$70 million, the EIB, US\$80 million and the Brazilian Social and National Development Bank (BNDES) approved financing US\$640 million for the pulp mill factory Veracel.

The Brazilian state partnership in the natural resources extraction is mainly concerned with the aim of being integrated in the international markets. The total investment of the project is US\$1,25 billion, which was the biggest private investment in Brazil until 2005. The increased growth of investments in production of eucalyptus seems to be unaffected by the increasing conflicts between corporations and the traditional communities. In 2005, Tupinikims indigenous people and Quilombolas initiated a judicial process to reclaim their rights over the lands that had been seized by Aracruz. In January 2006, during a violent eviction carried out by the Federal Police, two indigenous villages were burnt down, and upon further investigation, the machinery used for the destruction of the indigenous houses were revealed to belong to Aracruz cellulose. In 2006, a group of people from indigenous and black rural communities occupied and burned 36 hectares of eucalyptus plantations from Aracruz Company (Campos 2007). In spite of the intense conflict over the forced destruction of indigenous and Quilombolas' lands, Aracruz received a US\$50 million loan from the IFC-World Bank that year, having been considered a 'socially sustainable' company with FSC and Brazilian Forest Certification (CERFLOR) for some of its plantations. In 2008, the Ministry of Justice accepted the indigenous communities' claim and ordered the demarcation of indigenous Quilombolas' lands, which had been identified as such in 1973. However, it was only in 2015 that the indigenous communities received the official documentation of their property, reintegrating themselves back to their piece of land ruined by the plantations. The struggle between Quilombolas and the Aracruz company has resulted in the official demarcation of 1,219 hectares of territory belonging to the communities of Serraria and São Cristóvão, in São Mateus. Nonetheless, Aracruz corporation has interposed a legal action against the demarcation process. The company's lawyers objected against the court rule which considered the legitimacy of Quilombos. The court accepted the company's claim and interrupted the territory process of technical analysis of the Linharinho community who had lost 9.500 thousand hectares land to Aracruz. In 2009, Aracruz merged with Votorantin and was renamed as Fibria. The partnership of Stora Enso and Aracruz was transferred to Veracel factory. The two companies have succeeded in contesting all processes of demarcation and property recognition of different Quilombola communities in the region of Conceição da Barra e São

Mateus. On the other hand, the judicial process as well the company ownership of the land has been contested by the local and federal public ministry³ which represents the defense of constitutional rights as well the Quilombolas' rights. The battle over land in the region of Sapê do Norte demonstrates how black rural communities are locked in juridical struggles against local and national governments as well as transnational companies, which, in the case of Aracruz, was also financed by the Brazilian National Development Bank (Pinto & Mansoldo 2018).

The Finnish-Swedish company Stora Enso has been producing millions of tons of cellulose (a component of wood) per year. The pulp is used 100% for exportation and the paper industry is located in Finland. Stora Enso owns 3,500,130 hectares of land in the Brazilian territory, while the total Quilombo land is 2,570,579 hectares. Together with Aracruz company, Stora Enso have been occupying 4000 km² with plantations only in the same area in south of Bahia and North of Espirito Santo. From nearly 10.000 small Quilombo families' properties in the region of North Espirito Santo, today 1200 black rural families and 6 indigenous communities remain (Calazans 2010, Mação 2016). Among thirty-two Quilombos in the region, only three have had their land legally recognized. The roots for their lands are mainly inaccessible inside 100,000 hectares of eucalyptus, some small local rural owners have been coopted by companies to rent their land for eucalyptus plantation. Among the thirty-two Quilombos in the region, only three have had their land property legally recognized.

Apart from the violation of the memories and local communities' ways of life, the destruction of the Atlantic forest, as well diseases caused by herbicides, pesticides used by monoculture of eucalyptus create further damage. The communities report that 130 rivers have dried up in the area. The companies have never paid for the water it consumes on a daily basis. The communities still have not received the final title of their 50,000 hectares land appropriated by the Aracruz Company, which was sold in 2010. Part of the land has also been contested by the Federal Public Ministry (Ministério Público Federal) , as public land was illegally negotiated with Lorentzen group during the dictatorship in the 70s.

The social and political conditions of local people, as well the strong network of civil society organizations around the Green Desert movement, still has not affected the economic growth of the extractivism business in the region. The success of the ethnic communities' campaign in generating international and local support to their struggle to recover their lands, are not comparable with the broadcasting spaces through which the companies try to capture huge local and global audience.

3. The Public Ministry is a constitutional dispositive created in 1988 composed by an independent body of persecutors and lawyers with legal attributes of defending constitutional rights, human rights and control of public policies. The MP has also played a significant role in fighting corruption.



1. The Aracruz brought the progress while the National Indigenous Foundation brought the indigenous 2. Stop indigenous threatening labor force (CIMI 2006)

At least sixty-one people were killed in rural land conflicts in Brazil in 2016, and sixty-five in 2017, among 180 and 190 murders in the world, based on the coverage of Pastoral Land Commission (CPT 2017). Brazil has the highest number of people who were killed due to land conflict in the world. The verbal, moral and physical violence towards the traditional community members has been part of the latter's everyday life, having increased 86% in the last ten years. More than 50% of the conflicts occur between traditional communities and mining companies. The violent character of global relations, as well as the exploitation and forced transformation of entire communities exemplify how coloniality (Acosta 2011, Quijano 2002) influences the power relations in Brazil. This process has been contributing to the creation and reproduction of growing poverty and strong violence in the region. The local population also survives collecting waste wood for the charcoal production. Under the intense contestation from the Corporation, the communities found in the waste wood collection a possible means to earn a daily bread. The social and political conditions of local people, as well the strong network of civil organizations around the Social Movement Green Desert, still did not affect the economic grown of the extractivism business in the region among 11% year.

4.2 The case of Minas Rio

Another exemplary case is the mining project Minas Rio from the ANGLO AMERICAN (AA) UK mining company. The company is also responsible for the construction of 525 km slurry pipeline (the longest of its type in the world) to a dedicated export terminal at the port of Açu in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The system Minas Rio was designed to produce a maximum of 90 million iron ore tons per year. The mineral reserve is completely owned by the company and was calculated in 1.45 billion tons. The company invested US\$8 billion to bring an iron ore to Conceição do Mato, a small heritage colonial city in the state of Minas Gerais (center of Brazil's mining industry).

The central area for mineral removal is located in a Quilombola territory and has been directly affecting more than 1500 thousands of people (Diversus 2011). At the beginning of the process, the communities were asked to leave their territories since they did not have legal

documentation of their properties. Some of the families had presented documents from their ancestors, but these were not accepted. The formalization of heritage is not a usual practice among the peasant communities, since they are not treating the land as a commodity. Although there are legislative tendencies which recognize the need to preserve the land, the epistemology and life vision of the communities, the majority of the Quilombolas still do not have their property ownership documents. As territories have not been delimited, the company also started to build roads, water canalizations and isolating areas without consulting the affected communities. Some families had been prevented by Anglo American security guards from accessing their land and their homes. Arguing that a social impact report was accepted by the environment authorities, the company denied any cash compensation for the majority of the Quilombolas. Black rural communities were mentioned in the report, although the company used the opportunity to negotiate with some members of the community privately.

The weakening of regulatory norms and procedures of licensing along with the inefficiency of enforcements, often open up spaces for the emergence of violent actions on the land in question. The report presented by the company and accepted by local public authorities did not describe any detail concerning the living conditions, economic practices, cultural heritage or the constitutional rights acquired by those communities, some of whom were settled there more than 200 years ago. The public ministry confirms that the corporation's document ignored the constitutional amendments, through which, the communities have made official claims for their land rights. Converted in members of the social movement "affected from the mining Anglo America" (Atingidos pela Anglo American), the Quilombolas filed a case against the AA company - through the Public Ministry. Since 2010, they have established a judicial fight with the Anglo-American corporation. The company had to sign a specific agreement of legal and social reparations with the affected communities. Shortly after the beginning of the mining operations, water in rivers and streams became unusable for consumption and forms of vegetation and life in the region gravely suffered as a consequence. In turn, the company offered water tanks to the communities, but since they lack maintenance and do not supply all the villages affected, their use remains questionable. Some communities were not mentioned in the report and have not been offered compensation nor the possibility of moving out of the area. The Quilombo families who were forcefully displaced 220 km from their original lands complain that they are not able to reproduce their living conditions and economic subsistence, on top of not having been compensated neither financially nor for their collective land property (Diversus 2011).

In spite of all these violations of human rights, Anglo American was granted a final environmental permit in 2014. Since 2010, many of the local communities were forced to resettle through coercive use of private militias as well the local military police, as requested by the local government. However, thanks to a juridical action filed by the communities, the company lost the license to enlarge the cave of extraction in 2017. Beside destroying the social, cultural and human conditions of those remote remnants of slave from the colonial past, the Anglo American reproduced a form of modern slavery in the region. The company hired hundred Haitian migrant workers in conditions equivalent to slavery in 2013. In November 2013, the company was accused of using workers as slaves and according to public defender Marcelo Gonçalves Campos, "one of the houses was like a slave quarters from the

colonial period” (Wroblewski 2014). The Anglo-American Corporation fulfilled the payment penalties and is currently involved in a legal proceeding. However, it seems that the company did not suffer any restrictions of international trade and/or reputational damage on the market. The company was also accused of abusing black miners within the apartheid economy of South Africa, in Ghana, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Peru. (Matera 2007). The local communities, now organized with the “Social movement for the mineral extraction sovereignty” (Movimento Popular pela Soberania na Mineração) blamed, through a public audience at the legislative assembly of the state of Minas Gerais, the company for violation of human rights. The legal battle in order to interrupt the license for 2017 started in 2014. The company did not succeed in receiving approval of their license for an expansion of the cave in order to fulfill the production of 26, 6 million tons until the end of January 2018. In February 2018, an unexpected decision from the judicial audience has finally granted the license through which the Anglo American will operate in Conceição do Mato Dentro for the next 15 years. The licensing project was signed by a former senior environmental expert, who had demanded a temporary removal from her position as an official member of the Minas Gerais state environmental agency in order to be hired as a licensing manager of Anglo America Company. The communities of Conceição do Mato Dentro have been resettled by Anglo American with the partnership of the International Finance Corporation from World Bank. The communities of Sape do Norte are waiting to achieve the final title of their 50,000 hectares land appropriated by the Aracruz Company.

4.3 Natural resources and Brazil’s integration into global economy

The mining and the agribusiness sector have led to increased export revenues which has increased the balance of trade in Brazil. The participation of mining sector in exports jumped from 5% to 20% between 2000 and 2016 and achieved 8% of the GDP in 2017. The participation of cellulose increased from 1.8% to 4.5% between 2000 and 2016. As the market for products such as iron ore, oil, gold, cellulose, sugarcane, ethanol, soy beans, and meat continue to grow (Gomes and Cruz 2015), the competitive advantage of a Brazilian continental territory is irrefutable. Local community representatives have no legal seat in the decision-making bodies concerning investments in their territories; furthermore, the community representatives are not officially consulted during the environmental licensing process in public audience. This shows how few powerful actors take part in the decision-making processes concerning the extractivist economy in Brazil. The direct relationship between international capital investment and primary-based export illustrates that the capitalist accumulation is rooted in the ecological system of appropriation. As exploration of natural resources has been expanding the base of Brazil’s integration to the global economy, Quilombolas and indigenous people get an extraordinary visibility inside the local and global political struggle against development politics and extractivist expansion.

Supported by social movements as Landless Workers, Movement for Popular Sovereignty over Mining (MAM) and critical intellectuals from *Buen Vivir* movement as well the Organizations as *La Via Campesina Brazil* and *Pastoral da Terra* (CPT), Quilombola struggles can contribute to the repoliticization of the ideal sustainability, meeting the aims of intercultural conviviality as well as an alternative relationship with nature.

The national judicial sphere has been a fundamental field of struggle for the enforcement of Quilombolas' constitutional rights. The Quilombola Movement has mobilized and stretched the action of the Brazilian Public Ministry -which is the state's body of independent public legal protection. Through the local and national public ministries' judicial arenas, traditional communities have been interposing both the nation-state and corporations on the violation of their rights. Various formal complaints have been filed with the State Prosecutor's Office contesting powerful economic groups which, for other side, have lobbied strongly against the Quilombolas', as well traditional communities' land rights. A landmark case is the rupture on November 2015, of the dam of muck of the mining company Samarco in the colonial heritage village Mariana. Beside killing 19 people, the disaster also damaged the local river over 700 km all the way to the sea. Reparations for Samarco disaster are still slowly processing at the court. Another case is the Norwegian mining company Norsk Hydro, the world's largest producer of aluminium. Located in the heart of Amazon, is responsible for the terrible damage in the communities of Barcarena on 18 February 2018, where a metal toxic spill completely contaminated the forests, rivers as well sources of fresh water consumed by the local indigenous and Quilombola communities. The Norsk Hydro company is responsible for other serious accidents in the region, as well as displacements of communities who have been waiting since 2009 for the compensation of their lands. The company belongs to the Norwegian state and is owned by *Folketrygdfond*, which manages the Norwegian government's pension fund. The Norsk Hydro company received tax exemptions of R\$7 billion from the Brazilian government and is involved in more than 5000 legal actions on socio-environmental crimes (Senra 2017). The last report from the German NGO Facing Finance (2018) shows how selected European banks has no concern to violations of human rights, in their provision of finance for extractive companies.

A decolonial perspective is also important to show the hidden side of the Norwegian government, recognized worldwide as environmental friendly and exemplar democracy. At least 500 families were contaminated with lead and aluminum for many weeks until the company recognized the rupture of red mud and offered clean water supply. Medical examinations already announced a high amount of lead collected from the hair of some members of the communities. The Quilombola communitarian leader Maria da Silva blamed that the families are already affected, and some have died without any medical assistance (Oliveira & Soares 2018). The irony is that in July 2017, the Norwegian government announced that it would end its support for preservation of Amazon rain forests in Brazil.

The contention program for rural communities includes their participation in the decision-making processes regarding investments in extraction, reports of ecological impact on land production, impact of the project over energy and water resources, demarcation as well the enforcement of traditional communities' land rights. Quilombolas and indigenous people are political actors and could be potential stakeholders inside multinational-driven global economy, since their struggle and resistance are able to represent enmeshed injustices concerning environment and protection of the planet. There are possibilities to resist extractivism and deal with it differently.

A remarkable case is the relocation of the city of Kiruna and the Kiruna Sami indigenous community in the north of Sweden for the establishment of an iron mine. The company LKAB (Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara Aktiebolag), located for 125 years in the region, has been

rebuilding the city in its original form since 2004. Even the old church, elected Sweden's most beautiful building, will be demolished and then rebuilt exactly as before. The population is protesting against their displacement without a formal consultation process, although the city has been transformed in a model case of sustainable architecture. The Sami community of reindeer herders have also been victims of forced displacement, losing the land that they have farmed for more than hundred generations to the mining corporations. Apart from the use of sustainable technology of architecture and human rights warranty, the community's imminent precarious future is exacerbated through displacement. The new Kiruna is built in a mobile, modular form. Despite the differences between South Americans and North Europeans, their agenda for reparations and moral respect are similar. The fundamental difference is that corporations do not have the same procedure in Global South, as they have in Northern Europe. The case of Kiruna city is far from reality for traditional communities in Brazil, for whom human rights are still deeply subjugated by the coloniality of power.

4.4 Contesting structural global coloniality

According to Anibal Quijano (2000 b), coloniality is still the most general form of domination in the world today. The end of colonial administrations did not erase the continuity of the colonial matrix of power structure of social and cultural domination of the global capitalism. Coloniality is understood as a source of power that engenders not only economic and administrative relations, but as well epistemologies, gender, ethnical and racial relations of hierarchies. This process still embraces manifold contemporary and heterogeneous global hierarchies. Global hierarchies are entangled with different historical and geopolitical situations in which exploration and violation of traditional communities rights can be associated with mobilization of important political struggles against global capitalist oppression.

The same holds true for the formal abolition of slavery. Unlike the classical pattern between 16th and 19th centuries, articulated with a complexity of other forms of inequality, contemporary relations of coloniality can be illustrated through territorial possessions, the direct extraction of natural resources and increased exploitation of slave labour. It is plausible that Quilombolas act inside a confrontational relationship with the structural global coloniality. Quilombolas' political activism brings an opportunity to denounce racism beyond a conceptualization of a racial category and an ethnic identity, but as a central mechanism entangled with relations of contemporary global capital. Quilombolas', as well minorities' rights must be seen not as a democratic path for development, but as part of a conflictive field of symbolic, moral and powerful material disputes, which comprise interests of governments, farmers and transnational corporations. If coloniality can be regarded as the reproduction of logic(s) of injustice, it can be assumed that it must comprise the deep contradictions and conciliations between actors of global economy, public state policies and social rights. The Brazilian state keeps the Quilombolas locked inside the national juridical framework, transforming the legal rights defence into a hard trap to local communities.

According to Grosfoguel, social struggles, at and below nation-state level, are strategic spaces of political intervention that are frequently ignored when the focus of the movements

privileges the nation-state. The author assume the perspective to bring to the fore not whether economic financial world structures and colonial culture are relevant to racial discrimination and land dispossession, but how they are interconnected.

Annexed to Europe as possessions, the colonies and exploration of their raw materials brought capitalism to a scale of a global market (Quijano: 2000b). Such a confluence between coloniality and the elaboration of rationality/modernity was not in any way accidental, as is shown by the very manner in which the European paradigm of rational knowledge had evolved.

In fact, the coloniality of power had decisive “[...]implications in the constitution of the paradigm, associated with the emergence of capitalist social relations, which in their turn could not be fully explained outside colonialism and coloniality particularly not as far as Latin America is concerned” (Quijano 2007: 169). Latin American regions were confronted with the modern condition since colonial times and the challenges that they now face in the concretization of equality rights cannot be understood without recuperating the historical interconnection that links them to “European Western modernity”. The European Western domination regime was established and measured within the context of these entangled relationships among cultures and people who globally divided in the two poles of the colonial / modernity. West European countries acquired their strong sense of identity by “contrasting themselves with other cultures, representing the world as divided according to a narrow dichotomy the west and rest” (Hall 1996). The powerful effect of this relationship is that without the rest - or its internal hidden other- Western Europe could not legitimize itself as a yardstick of modernity and the ideal model of social progress. According to Hall, the concept of Western Europe does not stand on geographic positions, it concerns a procedure to reconfigure the discursive field wherein the hierarchical relationships are signified as based on differences of coloniality, race and gender. A decolonial project grounds the destruction or deconstruction of the West/ rest polarization in the construction of a horizontal dialogue as an alternative of a vertical monologue managed by the West.

Unlike Hall, Grosfoguel connects coloniality to the narrative of modernity and connects the latter to as well as racialised epistemic structures, which were historically constructed in the course of the colonization of Latin America and the Caribbean from the 16th century onward. Gilroy and Hall expand this analysis by pointing to the role colonial and post-colonial migration played in the constitution of modern Europe, demonstrated by the contributions of black communities in the construction of British national identity.

Global hierarchies are entangled with different historical and geopolitical situations in which exploration and violation of rights of traditional communities can be strategically linked to mobilize important political struggles against global capitalist oppression. The current asymmetrical global power relations between the Global South and Global North have been renewed by the contemporary transnational expansion of extractivism-oriented economy. By denouncing the entangled relationship between global economy and the experiences of cultural minorities worldwide, the decolonial perspective offers visibility to the violent character of global relations, as well as the exploitation, forced displacement and transformation of entire communities. The case of Quilombolas underlines that the economic connection between Latin American territories and the operative rationality of transnational

capitalism can also be interpreted along the lines of the global coloniality theoretical perspective.

5. Conclusions

The aspect of global coloniality of nature and people's knowledge appropriation can be seen as a contemporary mechanism of power which reinforces the hegemonic conception of nature as commodity. As nation-state is also embedded in the structures of global coloniality, it has had limited conditions of deconstruction of colonial heritage. Traditional communities have not benefited from extractivism of natural resources, which has consequently led to a large-scale influx of population into their territories, erosion of traditional livelihoods, loss of territory, and forced displacement. This process simultaneously violates not only the subaltern's ways of living with the environment, but their specific conception of knowledge. The debate should also move beyond the cultural, juridical and economic sphere towards the deep moral meaning of recognition of social suffering caused by the slavery and colonial system (Honneth 2004). Decoloniality proposes that "an epistemic perspective from the subaltern side of the colonial difference" can contribute to a critical perspective beyond the outlined dichotomies of the 'West' and the 'Rest' and towards a redefinition of capitalism as a world-system. It brings an opportunity to denounce the racial, ethnic classification and coloniality beyond a racial category as well as an ethnic identity. (Grosfoguel 2007: 14).

The critique of coloniality of power is not materially and empirically visible, but it is able to fulfil the normative power of disclosing new possibilities of struggles inside which, emancipatory enunciations still remain invisible. The extractive model of growth in Latin America is among the grand societal challenges of our era, not only because it extinguishes natural resources and subverts a set of ethnic and cultural notions of survival which are territorial; but also because it demonstrates the hopelessness of another development perspective to overcome economic dependency on export of primary commodities.

The regime of global coloniality is described by Grosfoguel as a power imposition from global multilateral organizations. However, decision-making processes inside those global institutions are also fulfilled by strategic local organizations and state actors. The global coloniality is produced by peripheral state actors and development experts, it is not as a simple reflection of global governance and market institutions. The case of the international expansion of the Brazilian corporations can also be considered. The presence of Brazilian multinationals in Latin American and African countries has been contributing to the expansion of the neo-extractive economy. It can be assumed that, in some respects, global coloniality is a supplement and simultaneously a displacement of the centre-periphery, seen with the emergence of a new centre as China, which is not only a consumer, but also a stakeholder of extractive projects. Analyzing the contemporary regime of global coloniality must take into account the different reproductive dynamics of the power asymmetry and economic coercion, wherein the global and local politics are reciprocally reorganizing and reshaping one another. The Quilombolas' emancipatory political project represents a counter-hegemonic power against extractivism, which brings, along with the legitimated expectative of justice, a deep claim for recognition of another community of values and model of society.

This study shows that black communities achieved the constitutional recognition of the collective land ownership rights. The Brazilian state introduced special policies concerning social protections politics as well as land entitlement of Quilombolas. However, I have tried to show the entangled and unequal relationship between the expansion of global extractivism and the instances of violations of human rights of cultural minorities. The challenge which remains is how to reinvent themselves as Quilombo descendants, as well as equal bearers inside of the present struggle for a decolonized democracy.

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