

Quilombolas in WhatsApp: the role of collective learning in recognition struggles

Quilombolas no WhatsApp: o papel do aprendizado coletivo nas lutas por reconhecimento

Janine de Kássia Rocha Bargas¹

Rousiley Celi Moreira Maia²

Abstract: *This study analyzes the interactions of a group of quilombolas from Pará in WhatsApp about the Special Selective Process of the Federal University of Pará. It seeks to understand if and how such interactions allow collective learning about the PSE, and the importance of learning in their political actions. The analysis reveals, from data collected between 2015 and 2016, that WhatsApp, for its instantaneousness, informality and simplicity, enables conditions for collective learning through: the exchange of information; adjustment of opinions; and the prescription of actions, from which also emerge possibilities for strengthening political actions to struggles for recognition. Thus, the findings contribute to show the political and social relevance of everyday interactions and the complexity of the communication networks provided by social media.*

Keywords: *quilombolas; WhatsApp; collective learning; recognition*

Resumo: *Este estudo analisa as interações de um grupo de quilombolas do Pará no WhatsApp sobre o Processo Seletivo Especial da Universidade Federal do Pará. Busca-se compreender se e como tais interações possibilitam aprendizado coletivo sobre o PSE e a importância do aprendizado em suas ações políticas. A análise revela, a partir de dados coletados entre 2015 e 2016, que o WhatsApp, por sua instantaneidade, informalidade e simplicidade, possibilita condições*

1 Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. Belo Horizonte, MG, Brasil. E-mail: ninebargas@gmail.com

2 Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. Belo Horizonte, MG, Brasil. E-mail: rousiley@gmail.com

para o aprendizado coletivo por meio da troca de informações; do ajustamento de opiniões; e da prescrição de ações, dos quais emergem, também, possibilidades de fortalecimento de ações políticas de luta por reconhecimento. Assim, os achados contribuem para dar a ver a relevância política e social das interações cotidianas e a complexidade das teias comunicacionais proporcionadas pelas mídias sociais.

Palavras-chave: quilombolas; WhatsApp; aprendizado coletivo; reconhecimento

1 Introduction

The democratic potentials of the internet and of the appropriations of the social media through mobile technologies are occupying the limelight of investigations of different areas in the field of communication. For this research, it is particularly interesting the uses that the quilombolas³ in the state of Pará have been doing of WhatsApp,⁴ understanding these uses as permeated and incorporated (HINE, 2015) in their daily practices. In a specific manner, we made a reflection on the online conversation around the Processo Seletivo Especial (PSE—Special Selective Process), affirmative action that gives quilombolas the right of entering higher education at the Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA).

It is important to highlight the reality of the hardship of access of the quilombolas to broadband internet and the considerable territorial distances amongst quilombola communities in Pará. Usually immersed in conflict, with their territories under threat, quilombolas have been intensifying their bonds and going towards the fight for their rights, especially since 1988. In this context, our intention is to perceive how the interactions through WhatsApp contribute to a process of collective learning of the quilombolas about the PSE and in what way such learning possibility reverberates in their organization and political action in terms of fights for recognition (HONNETH, 2003).

Many researchers have already developed experiments, analysis and revisions about the importance of informal conversations (CONOVER e SEARING, 2005; MARQUES e MAIA, 2010; MAIA, 2012, 2017) and the collective learning of political practices (HAMPTON, 2012; KANRA, 2012; KILGORE, 1999). Other scholars dedicated themselves to analyze online practices as “real social activities” and about their socio-cultural and political significance (HINE, 2015).

3 Quilombolas are communities of descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves who escaped from slave plantations that existed in Brazil until the abolition in 1888.

4 Whatsapp is an instant messaging app bought in 2014 for 16 billion dollars by the social media website Facebook. According to data shared by Whatsapp itself, Brazilians were, in February 2014, about 8% of their users around the world, which translates to over 38 million people.

However, researches that seek to articulate in a more detailed manner the interactions within WhatsApp and their implications seem incipient, given the restricted character of data access, methodologic challenges, among other aspects.

Thus, this study is developed around two main issues: 1) Is it possible to notice any dimension of collective learning around PSE in the daily flow of communicational exchanges on WhatsApp amongst quilombolas? If so, which one? 2) What is the meaning of this collective learning for the organization and political actions about PSE?

We examined the Abayomi group on WhatsApp and, with our participation in the group, it was possible to follow the interactions and discussions about PSE. We chose to focus our analysis in the textual aspect due to the complexity of investigating, conjointly, images, audio and text, which would demand a bigger space than the one available here.

Thus, this work is divided in the following manner: in the first section, we presented information about the *quilombola* community in Pará and their struggles, understood as fights for recognition, and we described PSE as a theme of common interest among *quilombolas* and an object for fight; in the second section, we discussed the notion of collective learning that we've adopted in the article; next, we've detailed our methodologic procedures, the configuration of online interactions and the characteristics of the debate around PSE. Finally, we made an analysis about the role of collective learning in the widest perspective of the recognition theory.

2 Quilombolas and the fights for recognition

Quilombola communities are considered traditional populations - concept registered in the Brazilian legislation⁵ that seeks to give support to the specific groups that live in strong relationship with natural resources, constituted by solidarity bonds in which the ethnical aspect is central

5 Decreto presidencial 6.040/2007.

(ALMEIDA, 2010). The case of quilombola communities has a specific norm. After one century of abolishment of the slavery in Brazil, the term “communities remaining from the quilombos” written in the Article 68 in the Act of Transitory Constitutional Dispositions (ADCT) from the Constitution of 1988, became a big milestone of political actions in these groups.

Enslaved black people in the past, as well as their descendants, have a complex history of fight coming from forms of disrespect and violence. Situations like these are perceived by Axel Honneth (2003) as part of a moral grammar that guide our society, born out of social conflict and struggle. According to Honneth, it is possible to understand these forms of disrespect as moral damages, or as impacts that harm the “practical relations to self” (HONNETH, 2003, p. 214) of the subjects. These damages, in turn, manifest themselves in three main spheres of recognition:⁶ in the intimate sphere, circumscribed to close, affectionate relationships; in the sphere of law, manifesting itself in the consecution of norms that ensure equality between subjects; And in the sphere of social esteem, in which everyone can be considered as capable of positively contributing with the society (HONNETH, 2003)

Under this perspective, damages are understood as the motion power of political battles. In the case of quilombolas, the struggles which they went through historically - physical violence, privation of freedom and rights and vexation or degradation of the social esteem – created an inter-subjectively built strength that propelled these fights as we know them today. The bonds between the suffering these groups went through in the past and the resistance of these groups are presented in the form of collective actions that varied throughout the socio-historical context: escapes, rebellions in the past; fight against racism from the abolishment of the slavery onwards; constitution of a quilombola political project in 1988.

Thus, the category “quilombo” nowadays, does not only make reference to a place of refuge of their ancestors, but it also marks a process of resistance written in the constitution of collectivities oriented for political actions (BARGAS and CARDOSO, 2015. Among them, the fight for

6 Honneth based his study on Hegel’s and Mead’s writings to ground his recognition theory. From Hegel, he develops, in a nuanced form, the spheres of recognition. From Mead, he used the notion of inter-subjectivity, grounded on social psychology and in processes of subjectivation.

territorial titles, for the grant of compliance of other laws, such as those related to education, and in the positive affirmation of what it means to be quilombola, granted, therefore, as fights for recognition.

2.1 Legal recognition: the case of the Special Selection Process (PSE)

Amongst the institutionalized accomplishments of the quilombolas is the Special Selection Process (PSE), which is a part of UFPA's policies of affirmative actions. Approved by the Superior Council of Teaching, Research and Extension (Consepe) of the university, the process was applied for the first time in the selection of the years 2012/2013. In the first call, quilombolas were running to fill two positions in each course of UFPA, in a total of 117 positions.

The selection has two stages: the first, eliminatory and classificatory, consists in an essay and a general knowledge test. The ones who pass this first stage go to a second stage, classificatory only, in which they go through an interview. At this point, the candidates are appraised on their historical-social relationship with their community, their participation on civil organizations and their intentions regarding university. Still in this process, the quilombola identity of the candidates is "checked" through a letter of belonging sent by the association of their community.

According to Honneth's (2003) thoughts, we consider the PSE as part of the legal recognition of the quilombolas, therefore, the sphere of recognition related to the legal dimension of relations, which generates a pattern of recognition named "author-respect" (HONNETH, 2003, p. 216). It is about conceiving the satisfaction of pretensions starting from the idea that there is equality amongst individuals and an equal participation in institutions.

Thus, PSE represents a political-institutional win that promotes to the quilombola subjects opportunities of getting in the university, in a way that softens the inequalities of opportunities in this field, built historically through racism and material and structural inequalities.

3 Collective learning: from conversation to political action

In this study, we argue that online interactions among quilombolas from Pará may contribute for the constitution of a collective learning about PSE and this type of learning can be converted into chains of a collective semantics in fights for recognition.

This denomination of collective learning has its roots in the 70's with the writings of Vygotsky (1978), especially the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) in the study of pedagogic processes and their ideas about the distinctions between individual learning and group learning. According to this idea, there are two levels of development: the real, i. e., “the level of development of a child's mental functions that was established as a result of certain cycles of development that were already concluded” (VYGOTSKY, 1978 p. 85), and the potential, that is “determined by the resolution of problems under adult's supervision or in collaboration with more capable colleagues” (VYGOTSKY, 1978, p. 85). Thus, ZDP is the gap between these two levels; it allows us to understand how someone who learns something with the help of others today can also be able to teach tomorrow (KILGORE, 1999; VYGOTSKY, 1978).

In more recent studies about the processes of teaching and learning, for example, the idea is more commonly associated to the term “collaborative learning” (BRUFEE, 2006, p. 635; WIENER, 1986; TRIMBUR, 2003) to designate a tool of pedagogical work in which two or more people learn or try to learn together. Or, more than that, “to engage people in processes of intellectual negotiation and collective decision-making processes” (TRIMBUR, 2003, p. 461)

In the field of social psychology, Schudson (1997) makes a distinction between sociable conversation and conversation geared towards problem resolution. Informal discussions (sociable) tend to be trivial, without defined focus and they lack public reasoning. Discussions geared towards problem solving focus on subjects of public interest and tend to be uncomfortable, developing themselves through arguments.

The author questions the political importance of such conversations, confining their value to the aspect of making decisions. However, in the sociable discussion of concrete groups, in which bonds of solidarity are some of the main bonds between members, the sociable conversation can comprise multiple forms of cohesion that can lead to a legitimate political process in increasingly bigger scales (HABERMAS, 1979)

In another perspective, according to Kanra (2012), deliberative situations can comprise to distinct moments: learning and decision-making. In this sense, reciprocal learning can contribute to supplant sensations of dismay or disengagement of social actors that, facing a system in which their interests are taken by others, in formal instances, are seen as autonomous in their issues and compelled to mobilize. Thus, another brief definition of collective learning can be the one who deals with a intersubjective process of search of mutual understanding around certain issues (KANRA, 2012).

When we brought this definition to our study, we also put the idea of group and social conscience of justice (KILGORE, 1999) in the center of the analysis. That is because it is just over the terrain of collectivity in which learning and action come about. Thus, collective learning is also related to conditions of emancipation. Merizow (1996) argues that a relation of teaching-learning has the mission of promoting understanding and ideal conditions of speech that, through critical reflection, become possible to generate what he calls emancipatory learning.

Coming from the idea of ZDP, Kilgore (1999) defends the idea that looking at processes of collective learning, instead of individual learning, is a useful way of understanding how actions of specific groups and social movements occur. She adds to Vygotsky's idea the widening of the concept of ZDP made by Wells (1996), which explains gains of learning that are made beyond the peer's abilities. In other words, "a group has innovative abilities of development, due to the diversity of its members" (KILGORE, 1999, p. 198).

4 The internet, mobile technologies and the Quilombolas

As one of the forms of self-expression of communities united by a collective identity, either on political or sociocultural terms, quilombolas of Pará began to use the technologic devices available to them. Their presence on social media websites such as Facebook and in groups for the most different reasons on WhatsApp is incorporated in an almost naturalized way (HINE, 2015).

About mobile technologies, what is particularly interesting to us is the forms of use and the issue of sociability, i. e., forms of interaction resulting from relationships between individuals in which effects are produced on one over the others (SIMMEL, 2006). With that, our intention is to promote a type of readjustment of the look on the processes of construction and maintenance of social bonds and individual and collective identities (KILGORE, 1999), now going through apps and social medias.

Thus, in the intensification of organization and the political actions of quilombolas in Pará, what has been happening is what McAdam (1999) considers as cognitive liberation of new milestones of reference for the collective action. The diffusion of mobile phones, smartphones and mobile internet to these groups levered the use of social media both in political mobilization, sharing protest messages and asking for justice and messages of self-affirmation and in the exposition of mundane elements, them being individual or in groups. Thus, the medias are present in an strategic way in the quilombola movement and, in an informal way, in the daily life of those who aren't necessarily engaged in political actions.

4.1 Interactions on WhatsApp

Given the difficulties of internet access of many quilombola communities in Pará, usually located in rural spaces, as it is the case of the communities of Salvaterra, mobile devices and the use of WhatsApp

enable easy communicative exchanges. Three characteristics seem determining for that:

- a. Immediate interaction. Considering that the groups analyzed here are composed by people who already have previous contact and, in many cases, established social relationships, the instantaneity of message exchange enables something close to a reproduction of “natural” conditions of face-to-face conversation. This attribute coincides with the interest in argumentation in relation to certain subjects, with immediate reply.
- b. Less exposition of the user profile. Engaging in discussions about complex and, sometimes, polemic themes creates the need of identification and action of the involved subjects, as well as their position on the matter. On the contrary, the fear of the invasion of privacy, of a public change of opinion and the “embarrassment” of public scrutiny (CONOVER, SEARING e CREWE, 2002) may compromise the engagement. Therefore, the pre-selection utilized to compose WhatsApp groups constitute a factor to create a lack of inhibition in the participation.
- c. The simplicity of the interface - similar to the SMS - linked to a tool of compression of images and video that makes the exchange of data easier. Facing the difficulty of internet access, the sharing of text, images, videos, audios or documents require mechanisms to make this task easier. In this case, WhatsApp offers this possibility and complexifies the conversation, now multimedia conversation, making it more attractive in many cases.

5 Methodology

This study concentrates particularly in the WhatsApp group Aba-yomi, one of the most active amongst those we had access, in terms of conversation. The group, composed by 33 members, was created in July 3rd, 2014 with the objective of gathering the quilombola youth of the

communities of the city of Salvaterra, in the island of Marajó,⁷ to promote the formation of new leadership figures. This formation started with the project Ije Ofé, promoted by the Fórum Amazônia Oriental (Faor)⁸ in the states of Pará, Maranhão, Tocantins and Amapá.

Starting in this project, that had the objective of working with quilombolas from the age of 18 to 26 to promote youth protagonism, the preservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources, Salvaterra youth decided to maintain this articulation through WhatsApp. The group is formed by youngsters that already act or acted in the political organization of their community (associations) and other youngsters that do not have a formal political activity in the quilombola movement, youngsters that participated in the project and/or that were added after the project.

The authorization for our participation in the group and the completion of the study was given by the admin and the other members, with which we have had relationships prior to the research. Our participation generally varied between the roles of “viewer” and “interlocutor” in terms of a participating observation (FLICK et al., 2007)

We also performed, through the backup of the history of conversation, available through a tool inside WhatsApp, a quantitative study of speeches and themes in which there were a greater engagement of the members.⁹ The period analyzed was from July 3rd, 2014 to March 29th, 2016. In our codification, the theme PSE was the highlight, with 308 speeches, 21.76% out of the total.

In this study, examples of speech were considered unit of analysis, being seen as content in themselves, who had written these sentences and

7 Salvaterra is one of the major cities in the region of Marajó and has 15 quilombola communities certified by the Fundação Cultural Palmares. They are: Bacabal, Bairro Alto, Boa Vista, Pau Furado, Vila União, Salvá, Campina, Caldeirão, Mangueiras, Providência, Deus Ajude, São Benedito, Paixão, Siricari and Rosário. Other two communities that are demanding recognition: Boca da Mata and Cururu África.

8 Organization without lucrative means geared towards the promotion of the sustainable development in the Eastern Amazon. The project Ije Ofé was performed from 2011 to 2014 through workshops and meetings in many quilombola communities of the region.

9 The themes were categorized as: complaint, events, women, works, partnerships, PSE, informal. N= 1.145.

the sequence of conversation¹⁰ in an qualitative approach. From the sentences, we highlight, after an exhaustive reading of the material, three big groups that make reference to the “type of relationship” established between the interlocutors, having as base the idea of collective learning (KANRA, 2012; KILGORE, 1999). We highlight that our intention was not to develop a content analysis. Instead, we proposed an interpretative analysis of the speech considering the empirical context and the concepts that were adopted.

We also chose to literally reproduce, in this study, the excerpts of speech that serve as example for our analysis. The intention is to keep the original characteristics of the interactions, which will help us reveal and reinforce the typical traits of conversation through WhatsApp, according to what we showed in the previous item, as well as aspects of the social relationships between group members, as certain proximity, distancing, empathy, etc.

6 Analyzing aspects of collective learning

Starting from what was exposed here, we listed three characteristics that seem to promote or build conditions for collective learning about PSE through WhatsApp amongst quilombolas: 1) Sharing of information; 2) Expression of an opinion; 3) prescription of suggestions or recommendations aiming at problem solving.

6.1 Information

In the interactions on WhatsApp, it is possible to provide information between the people involved in the communicative exchange. Such information can be absorbed, acted on or not, explicitly or implicitly, while the conversation or face-to-face practical actions occur. In this case, it is not possible to measure exactly how does that occur, we can only identify the provision of information put into the app:

10 The participants of the group are identified as fictional names with the intention of preserving their identities and relations with the researchers and their communities.

Dilberto: Hello everyone, good evening. Jamile, I'm confused with this year's PSE notice and I would like to know if there's been any change. If so, send me the number, I have some doubts, ok? I hope hearing from you soon (Grupo Abayomi, Apr. 19th, 2016).

Luíza: Elaine, you could have asked to have the test delivered to the hospital!

Dilberto: But she came to the hospital on Saturday. I don't think she could then.

Luíza: She could've sent an email! Registered and then asked!

Elaine: 🙄🙄

Luíza: This is how we do it! (Grupo Abayomi, April, 19th, 2016).

In the isolated speeches or in sequence, it is clear the possibility of exchange of information specific about the PSE. In the first example, Dilberto asks for details about PSE's notice to Jamile, leadership figure who's already studying at UFPA and participates on meetings about the theme at the university. Dilberto thinks the answer will help other members of his community. In the second example, it is exposed a possibility of taking the test that was unknown by one of the candidates. Because she was sick, the candidate would have the right to have the test taken in the hospital, information that could be used on other similar situations.

We defend that, facing that, this information exchange works both for improving the communication among members of the group and understanding a topic and strengthening the trust (KANRA, 2012; KILGORE, 1999). The socialization of information tends to reduce noise about basic questions while content of discussion.

Therefore, the publicity of information, along with previous relations between the participants, potentially reduces the uncertainties around the subjects themselves, about their place of speech, enabling the judgement of coherence between one and another - publicity and accountability (GUTMAM and THOMPSON, 1996) creating trust or lack thereof. In addition to that, it is possible to check, among the menu

of information, these subjects of bigger or smaller relevance, enough to maintain the topic in discussion.

6.2 Position

When people express their position on something, with the interlocutor's nod (EGGINS et al., 2002), the speaker shows their opinion about the theme, sharing their experiences and delimiting their action on the conversation and their references about the subject (HASLAM et al., 1996). In the context of conversation, the position also contributes for the formation of opinion of other participants in the interaction:

Nelson: 🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉! Congratulations. I hope everyone pass and bring benefits to their community, and work towards the common good.

Sandro: I feel happy to help the people who passed the test there [comunidade de Vila União]. And to those who passed from the other communities as well.

Lúcia: I am rooting for you, I hope you collaborate both for the community and the city.

Luíza: Congratulations to the ones approved in this first phase (Grupo Abayomi, Feb. 12th, 2016).

Dilberto: People, I found 37 quilombolas approved in the essay of ethno[-development] only from Salvaterra, I think we will paint UFPA black and show that now it is our turn.

Manuel: Hooray, what a victory (Grupo Abayomi, Feb. 17th, 2016).

In the first sequence of speeches, Nelson shows his position about the quilombola approved candidates for the university. According to his point of view, which can influence or not the position of other members of the interaction, the knowledge acquired in the university must be at service of the “common good”. The same way, Lúcia adds a new component to the argument, saying that this knowledge must extrapolate the limits of the communities, changing the city as a whole.

Next, Dilberto, in addition to giving information about the number of people approved in the first phase of selection, strongly sets his opinion about the meaning of the approvals for the quilombolas. When

He says, “let’s paint the university black and show them that now it is our turn”, Dilberto makes reference to the social aspect of the affirmative policy of UFPA - which would reset, in racial terms, the student body – and the process of exclusion of black groups from the university.

When exposing his opinion about certain aspect of the theme and having the freedom to do so, the participant of the group builds the idea of mutual respectability, which comes from the authority conceived by others to his possibility of speech (EGGINS et al. 2002). In addition to that, the expression of feelings, thoughts, opinions, etc. strengthens the connection between members, in which the self-definition or identity is also adjusted and updated (KANRA, 2012).

Therefore, either agreeing or disagreeing with the position, the interlocutors have the possibility of producing adjustments of their opinions, since the position expressed becomes a reference on the theme (HASLAM et al., 1996; KANRA, 2012). This last point is fundamentally linked to the third aspect of the collective learning, which we will approach next.

6.3 Prescription

The function of prescription is not necessarily about the decision-making process, but a suggestion or recommendation of actions or solutions to certain issues.

Suzana: We have to gather and schedule a meeting in Belém with the dean, Ceps, Academic Center and leaders of the group of recognition! To discuss this subject [notice from the PSE]!

Jamile: Tomorrow there is a meeting to discuss how the process of interviews is going to be. I want to come. Whoever wants to state their opinion I can also add it, I will come as a student (Grupo Abayomi, Jan 18th, 2016).

Dilberto: We should schedule a conversation with the people interested, i. e., give some tips about the interview, if the leaderships could map the people approved in their communities so any declaration wouldn't leak for the ones who don't belong or deserve to hear it.

Suzana: It's up to us (Grupo Abayomi, Feb. 17th, 2016).

Suzana, in the first sequence, suggests the creation of face-to-face meetings with the institutions who make decisions at UFPA with the objective of minimizing the problems of the notice - from the point of view of the quilombolas. Jamile, in this same sequence, adds the suggestion, making herself available to take opinions from other people to the university, expressed in the WhatsApp group, for the previously scheduled meeting.

In the second excerpt, Dilberto also suggests meetings to gather the candidates who got approved in the first phase of the PSE, reinforcing the importance of a specific preparation for the interview and seeking protection from the quilombolas from possible problems in granting the declaration of belonging - demanded by the notice to "prove" the quilombola identity.

Here, the constitution of a point of reference coming from clarifications of certain positions establish a kind of synthesis of common points put into circulation in the flow of discussion (HASLAM et al. 1996). The possibility of changing or taking an attitude, in turn, becomes viable when there is a consecration of these common elements between the participants.

Such meanings take us, thus, to respond affirmatively to our first question, which asks about the possibilities of building collective learning about the PSE in interactions through WhatsApp among the quilombolas. In this first analysis, where we can highlight three basic aspects about the collective learning, we go through, then, the reflection about the role of this learning for the political actions of quilombolas about the PSE.

7 Collective learning and fights for recognition

Keeping oneself in the online conversation providing information, giving one's opinion and prescribing attitudes or solutions to a certain problem does not exclude them from the interaction processes of maintaining social hierarchy present in the groups or the occurrence of a "contest of identities" (DRYZEK, 2005), among the participants, i. e. a dispute among the social places filled by the group members. Despite that, the exposure to an argumentative exchange in a certain way free from pressures of time (typical of formal decision-making processes) opens up possibilities for the qualitative construction of opinions and for the definition of situations (KANRA, 2012).

Despite the cognitive and moral competences immanent to the individuals (HABERMAS, 1979), such aspects reinforce the importance of cooperative processes of learning. In this sense, the process of collective learning aims at developing an understanding of the other, or, in other words, the approval and appraisal of other perspectives (KANRA, 2012; KILGORE, 1999).

According to Honneth (2003), starting from forms of disrespect that impute to the individual negative feelings and reactions, it is possible to emerge to a collective action. The author explains, however, that the disrespect is not converted automatically into resistance: the change in nature of the consequences of lesion, i. e., the displacement of the subjective plan for the action plan depends on the existence of a context that offers possibilities and political and social content to the harmed subject. In other terms, so that the disrespect is converted into political resistance, it is necessary there is a fertile terrain constituted with political content that strengthens and legitimates the collective action (HONNETH, 2003; YOUNG, 2000).

In this sense, online interactions through WhatsApp around the PSE make clear the relevance of reciprocal interactions and actions geared towards the understanding of the construction of a useful content for the political actions in a wider context in terms of collective semantics (HONNETH, 2003). In this perspective, it is possible to affirm the

favor of online interactions for the inter-subjective construction of what is justice or common good.

About the legal sphere of recognition, constitute oneself as subject of right in the field of intersubjective exchange (GARCES, 2011; HONNETH, 2003) act as a cognitive bond between self-conscience and revindication, as an epistemic gain for political actions.

Here, quilombolas see themselves as leaders of situations that can define future paths, for instance, mutually inviting themselves to act incisively in the preparation of candidates for the second step of selection at the PSE, where they would be inquired about their belonging to communities, or even when they claim the importance of not loosening the liberation of letters of association for subjects that do not maintain bonds of solidarity and belonging and that, therefore, “do not deserve” to be considered quilombolas. That differs from the systematic forms of disrespect for these subjects, in which, for centuries, weren’t even considered as rightful subjects. The status of “thing/object” obstructed, in this sense, the constitution of self-respect.

In addition to that, the board of intersubjective interpretation (HONNETH, 2003; MAIA, 2014), as substrate of collective actions, depends on this internal adjustment in which the feelings of injustice and the meanings of justice are permanently constituted and shared. Thus, the uses of the WhatsApp group and the interactions that happens inside of it certainly contribute to these adjustments, that already belong in a complex web of appropriations and practices of these subjects in their communities and social context.

The functions highlighted here in this process of collective learning through interactions on WhatsApp – information, positioning and prescription – fill the role of a semantic bond between individual experiences and the collective level, promoting and/or strengthening identifications, refutations, sensitizations and/or mobilizations around the lived situation. Specifically, about the PSE, online interactions allow the participants to thicken their practices around the theme, strengthening their political competences and individual capabilities. In addition,

this thickening process can transpose to social relationship in which they are a part of, replying knowledge and upgrading the application of PSE according to what is defended as intersubjectively fair.

In the process of intersubjective “gain”, it is possible, then, according to Honneth (2003), to deconstruct historical forms of disrespect, build new moral codes and institutionalize them. Thus, the struggle for recognition has a structuring role in a process of moral evolution of societies, based then in the historical construction of normative ideals centered in the self-realization of subjects.

9. Conclusion

To respond the questions that initiated this study, we start from the assumption that from the simplest interactions in daily life can emerge the most complex social processes, useful to the establishment of patterns of recognition considered fair by the subjects involved.

The focus on the online interactions among quilombolas calls attention, at the same time, to the alterations in the ways of sociability enabled by appropriations of social media, as well as the specificity of quilombolas while social group in strong fight with historically built patterns of non-recognition and their attempts of reversing it. The case of the PSE for quilombolas comprises, in this sense, new ways of engagement in a common issue, without any definitive outline yet, but it already reverberates in the construction or maintenance of parameters of belonging and positioning of subjects around the theme.

It is not possible to affirm now that the online interactions and the uses of WhatsApp have the power to produce, in the three spheres of recognition shown by Honneth (2003), wider effects. It happens because these processes are linked to other variables, as the own vicissitudes of prior relationships, hierarchies, access to the app and to the internet, among other structural aspects.

Nevertheless, facing territorial limitations and the precariousness of access to the internet and to quality information, WhatsApp interactions became an important tool of collective learning for quilombolas in which

is possible to make exchange of information, the adjustment of opinions and the construction of solutions for the struggles they live with. This set of possibilities overflows, also, through leadership, for political practices that are more organized in the form of social movements.

It is obvious that, from the more informal interactions to the centers of decision-making processes, the road is long and complex, and not always linear. However, if the processes of intersubjective adjustment are primordial for the construction of a struggle for recognition built over solid basis, it seems to us that we have found a fertile ground to understand how these adjustments have been occurring in the complexity of social webs.

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About the authors

Janine de Kássia Rocha Bargas – PhD student at the Post-Graduate program in Social Communication at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. Masters degree in Social Sciences, with minor in Sociology, and graduated in Social Communication, habilitation in Journalism, both by Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA). Participant in the research groups Media and the Public Sphere (EME/UFMG) and Communication, Politics and the Amazon (COMPOA/UFPA).

Rousiley Celi Moreira Maia – Professor at the Department of Social Communication at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais and in the Post-Graduate Program in Social Communication (PPGCOM/UFMG). Masters and PhD in Political Science at the University of Nottingham, England (1989 and 1992, respectively). Post-Doctorate degree at the Boston College, United States (2010-2011). Leader at the research group in Media and Public Sphere (EME/UFMG).

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