

THE EMERGENCE OF QUILOMBOLAS MOVEMENT OF MARANHÃO (MOQUIBOM): notes on identity, territory, and memory

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the context of emergency of the Quilombolas Movement of Maranhão (Movimento Quilombola Maranhense - MOQUIBOM), in the middle of 2010, the politicization of identities, the processes of triggering the memory sustained on ancestrality, and territorial reconfigurations, which were provoked on quilombolas communities of Baixada Maranhense due to its geographical formation. This research is an investigation of qualitative approach with descriptive and exploratory goals made through bibliographic and documental studies. The theoretical contributions of Hall (2006), Halbwachs (1990), Raffestin (1993), Santos (1999), Sousa (2016), Araújo (2012), among others, allowed us to infer that the political fronts of MOQUIBOM act on the resignification of their identities, starting with the mobilization of their ancestrality with the intent of politicize their daily experiences, the construction of dignified conditions for social propagation, and the defense of their territories through the tensioning of the State for the assurance of public policies.

Keywords: Quilombolas Movement; Baixada Maranhense; Territory; Identity.

1. Introduction

The Baixada Maranhense is located in the Northeast region of the State, and is composed of 34 cities that have in common the development of familiar agriculture as one of the main activities and, also, the sectors of main occupation for laboring. It is formed by large lowlands that flood during rainy seasons, creating wide lakes between the months of January until June. It can be accessed through a *ferry-*

boat¹ system, which connects the city of São Luís to the harbor of Cujupe, in Alcântara, besides the connections by roads (BR-222, MA-014), and railroad (Carajás Railroad).

The Baixada Maranhense has a specific process of social formation for the constitution of their identity, starting with the occupation of their territories. In this process, it should be highlighted that there is a relevant network of knowledges on emancipation forged in the context of fights for political and social autonomy, which has been built by and within the territories occupied by specific communities, such as quilombolas, ribeirinhos, coconut breakers (quebradeiras de coco), indigenous people, and relocated families, which contributed for the composition of meanings of existence of these groups for the places occupied by them.

Regarding the preservation and usage of quilombolas territories, which are the focuses of this research, those communities have been creating collective movements that act on the assurance of their autonomy and to fight the interference of land invaders, landholders, and farmers that threaten their permanence in these lands. They also act on the complaint of the slowness of the State in the processes of demarcation and titration, the permissiveness, and the shady interests involving intimidation and expropriation of their territories. An example of this problem is the suffering of thirty communities of Alcântara during the pandemics, which are vulnerable because of the expropriation of their lands in favor of a predatory project of development thought by Brazil and The United States².

It is in the context of serious conflicts for lands with recurrent persecutions and murders of community leaders, also, for the construction of political fronts for action that the Quilombolas Movement of Maranhão (Movimento Quilombola Maranhense - MOQUIBOM) emerges as a resistance movement articulated to fight the retroces that threaten their lives and sociabilities constructed over the last decades through remaining quilombolas in Maranhão.

For that matter, this research has the goal of delineating a historical-interpretative analysis about the processes of mobilizations of identities and territories which culminated in the emergency of that group in 2010, in Baixada Maranhense. We discuss issues related to the fights for political representation, ancestry, memory, and fight for territorial demarcation, which are key points to understand the actions of that social movement.

By using a qualitative approach of research with the contributions of a bibliographical revision (GIL, 2007), we propose to establish reflections on the historical context of construction of MOQUIBOM and the intrinsic conflicts to that process (FURTADO, 2012; SOUSA, 2016; ARAUJO, 2012), interfaced with debates about identity (HALL, 2006), memory (HALBWACHS, 1990), and territory (RAFFESTIN, 1993; SANTOS, 1999; FERNANDES, 2009), which are categories to be analyzed and to conduct this discussion.

We highlight the inflections provoked by the Federal Constitution of Brazilian Republic of 1988 through the acknowledgement of the right to usufruct and to definitely occupy the lands by the

¹ A flat bottom ship used for navigation on rivers and sea. Due to its size, it is constantly used for transportation of medium and big sized vehicles. In Maranhão, the ferry boat system is responsible for travels between the island of São Luís and the countryside, precisely on the microregions of Baixada and the West Coast of Maranhão.

² Available on: <https://socioambiental.medium.com/quilombolas-de-alc%C3%A2ntara-sob-amea%C3%A7a-entre-a-pandemia-e-a-remo%C3%A7%C3%A3o-para-for%C3%A7ada-7349f78a987b>. Accessed on June, 27 of 2021.

remaining communities of quilombolas. Thereby, we interpreted the Art. 68 on the Act of Transitory Constitutional Dispositions (Ato de Disposições Constitucionais Transitórias - ADCT), the actions of the Center of Black Culture (Centro de Cultura Negra - CCN), the Project Black's Life (Projeto Vida de Negro - PVN), the Association of Black Rural Quilombolas Communities (Associação das Comunidades Negras Rurais Quilombolas - ACONERUQ), and the fights engaged by these ones for the titration of these communities besides the assurance of basic human rights for social propagation, such as: health, basic income, housing, and education.

Then, we use an approach on the historical context and the dissensions that occurred within the ACONERUQ, culminating in the emergency of MOQUIBOM in the middle of 2010.

In the next section, there are reflections and complementarities about the conditioning provoked by the Art. 68 of ADCT, the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988, and political and identity tensions that permeate the processes of readjustment of quilombolas territories in Maranhão with the intent to attend to the demands of these legal devices.

2. The art. 68 OF ADCT and the disputes for territorialities and identities

The promulgation of the Federal Constitution of Brazilian Republic of 1988 through the Art. 68 of ADCT, was a mark for Brazil to acknowledge one social demand historically engaged by the organized black movement: the right to own, to usufruct, and to get the titration of the occupied territories by communities of quilombolas (NASCIMENTO, 2019; MOURA, 1987). This legal device was included in the constitutional text because of inflections provoked by the movements of black community, which claimed the possibility of acknowledgement of the occupation of those territories. Thus, they wanted to assure good conditions for citizenship formation and the preservation of their ways of existence, which are constantly threatened by the violent scenery of conflicts for lands historically dealt with by them.

The process of territorialization does not happen harmonically, it is disturbed by interests and the power over subordinate social groups, which are contradictory and exclusionary (RAFFESTIN, 1993). The Art. 68 of ADCT represented a meaningful advance on the mediation and assurance of the acts of the government for the defense of interests of people who have been invisible by a social structure that could not settle the problems of an unfinished abolition without proper amends. Also, the aggravation provoked by the lack of an agrarian reform that would assure the equitable distribution of lands, as it is one of the issues of a country forged in the great land properties and as the inheritor of a colonial formation.

When the legal device of the constitution postulated that the remaining people of quilombolas communities that occupy some land are acknowledged as the owners by the State, which is responsible for the titration, it mobilized efforts of non governmental organizations, social and intellectual movements, and traditional communities to act on the opening of processes that would assure a definitive titration of those occupied territories (BRAZIL, 2016).

Araújo (2012) and Sousa (2016) point out that the Art. 68 of ADCT enables a broader discussion about transformations that occurred on the identity of those groups through the management of remaining categories of quilombolas communities.

Recognizing themselves as quilombolas means that they could assume the position of an

individual with rights before formal institutions of power, and to forge “a political identity, which enable them to negotiate the possibility of assurance of their rights with the State, and for other reasons”³ (ARAÚJO, 2012, p. 35). Thereby, the management of characteristics of identities connected to feelings of territorial belonging mobilized the processes of fight and political action. According to Santos (1999, p. 8):

The territory is not only a set of natural systems and of superimposed systems of things. The territory has to be understood as the territory in usage, not just the territory. The territory in usage is the ground plus the identity. The identity is the feeling of belonging to what belongs to us. The territory is the foundation for jobs, the place of residence, for material and spiritual exchanges, and to exercise life.

We understand that the usufruct of territories generates a meaningful potential for the construction and to refresh the identities of these social groups, and according to Halbwachs (1990), it translates the elements of group memories and of social life. It is important to highlight that the goal of this research is not to discuss the inciting of debates between legislators, anthropologists, and historians in the context of edition of that legal device, nor it is about the semantic limits of the concept of remaining communities of quilombolas to think about identities. The category defined by the Art. 68 has been meaningfully refreshed during the last years, and there are researches that discuss those topics already. For example, the discussions proposed by Araújo (2012), Almeida (2003), and Arruti (2006).

The intention is to reflect on how those legal devices contribute to the social process of attribution and construction of identities to become provisory, variable, and problematic, turning the identity into a “mobile celebration” in continuous transformation (HALL, 2006). Thereby, the legal device opens precedents for the construction of narratives that try to take care of quilombolas communities as static dimensions that are rigid and fixed, opening the possibility to “overcome their identification as groups definible by morphologic characteristics” (SOUSA, 2016, p. 56). Thus, it was understood that these groups are not homogeneous neither they converge in the same direction towards political actions.

By thinking about these issues, we understand that the matters related to the quilombola identity are present in the afro diasporic legacy, on effects of their resistance against oppressive structures, such as male chauvinism, racism, and other means of implicit exclusion or other kinds of manifestation through reparative policies and by defending their territories. Thereby, the processes of identity constructed in quilombos are permeated by aspects of region, ethnicity, procreation, gender, and race.

Therefore, the process of reassurance of their identity as quilombolas, which was seen as a shameful feature because of attempts to erase them from existence in the past, is resignified by these people because of their inclusion as formal-juridic concepts and, thus, assuming new meanings nowadays, according to political and social interests and new demands by these communities (ARAÚJO, 2012).

In the next section we will discuss the mobilization of the Black Movement of Maranhão to effectuate the prerogatives of human rights that are stated in Art. 68 of ADCT, focusing on production and actions of the CCN, of leaders like Mundinha Araújo, João Francisco, Luiz Alves Ferreira (Luizão), and the ACONERUQ.

³ All original quotations in Portuguese of this article were translated to English.

3. The Center of Black Culture and the Association of Black Rural Quilombolas Communities

Founded in 1979, preceding the Federal Constitution of Brazilian Republic of 1988, the CCN was born to be a non profit organization of the civil society, which was seeking to create public policies for educational, cultural, and social aspects that could enlighten the debates over social propagation and racism besides the way that these social facts relegated subordinate roles to black people over centuries.

By gathering a diversity of social segments of Maranhão, the CCN elaborated a political agenda of activities that included seminars about the social reality faced by the black community of Maranhão. They claimed access for the black community to formal institutions of education, for the organization of activities that would valorize their heritage and culture, for the construction of a new sociocultural and political context to affirm and acknowledge the contributions of the black community for the formation of the society of Maranhão (LEITE, 1987).

Also, it is relevant to mention that the protagonism of leaders of the black movement, as for example, Mundinha Araújo, João Francisco, and Luiz Alves (Luizão) that created a pioneer study that aimed to deal with the realities of quilombolas communities of Maranhão since the decade of 1970.

We can infer that the claimings proposed by the CCN are not limited to the historical context of the middle of the 20th century. These claimings have been elaborated by the Black Movement of Brazil and by the Black Movement of Maranhão:

Since the decade of 1930, leaders of the black movement were already pointing out the importance of reparative policies for afro descendants and the existence of a historical “debt” of the Brazilian government with the black population and the necessity of complementing the unfinished process of abolition of slavery that began in 1888. The black movement tried to show a political unit to the situations of exploration, marginalization, poverty, underemployment, and racism lived in urban areas, where they were inserted and had its main public, and to show the contexts lived by quilombola communities by pointing out similarities between black people experiences in Brazil (SOUSA, 2016, p. 37).

The context of political reopening of the decade of 1970, after the historical persecution against social movements by the Civic-Military Coup of 1964, provided the reorganization of these groups, such as the CCN, which dealt with specific demands of socially marginalized groups. These political and historical unfoldings culminated in 1988 with the elaboration of the Federal Constitution of Brazilian Republic that brought new possibilities for meaningful changes for these social segments. The new constitution and the Art. 68 of ADCT, in which they had a fundamental role in its process of construction, the CCN turned its efforts and actions for the acknowledgement and titration of quilombolas communities in Maranhão through the PVN.

The project mentioned above aims to deal with new demands of the brazilian constitution: to map black rural communities in Maranhão and to start a survey of socio economic and cultural aspects through historical researches and anthropological studies. The goal is to regularize the ownership and usufruct of territories occupied by these communities.

From the knowledge of Mundinha Araújo added to the fresh new political articulations surges a project, which aimed to cover the agrarian reality and the demands of quilombolas communities, the PVN. This project lasted from 1988 to 2005, in a partnership with SMDH. It aimed to put into practice the Art. 68 of the Federal Constitution of Brazilian Republic. Also, to record the ways of organization and socio cultural practices that exist in quilombolas communities, seeking an intermediate together with public State or federal services in the process of effectuation of legal assurances, as a place of systematic reflection about quilombolas mobilizations (SOUSA, 2016, p. 72).

The effectuation of the legal assurances mentioned by the author talks about the initial reports of PVN, which was elaborated by the decade of 1970 and were fundamental for the recognition of important quilombolas communities of Maranhão, such as the community of Frechal, the city of Mirinzal, and the community Jamarý dos Pretos, at city of Turiaçu. Furthermore, these documents were posteriorly used as supplementary materials for courses for leadership formation of quilombolas communities offered by CCN, serving as the base to create the ACONERUQ in 1997.

According to Sousa (2016), the ACONERUQ starts to deal with constant wishes and demands of quilombolas communities that were mainly related to requests for orientations about necessary procedures for the effectuation of titration policies and of land regularization, which were organized by State and federal instances, such as the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária - INCRA), and the Institute of Land Colonization of Maranhão (Instituto de Colonização e Terras do Maranhão - ITERMA). The ACONERUQ acquires the status of juridical institution before the State, representing the wishes of these communities.

However, the first decade of the 21st century brings meaningful changes for the Brazilian public social policies. The regularization of quilombolas communities territories characterized by a slow processing, which was overly bureaucratized. In November of 2003, the ex-president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, regulates the Decree nº 4.887, which defines the procedures for identification, acknowledgement, delimitation, demarcation, and titration of occupied lands by remaining communities of quilombos on the terms of Art. 68 of ADCT (BRAZIL, 2003).

One of the most significant gains of the Decree nº 4.887 is explicit on what is comprehended as quilombolas communities by juridical definitions, thus, seeking to unravel the historical conception of these territories as places for runaway slaves or as a museum of a distant past. According to Hall (2006, p. 7), "The historical context that began by the end of the 20th century evidenced the decline of this conception of identity as a static dimension". That decentralization is comprehended by the legal conception of what is a quilombola: "ethnic-racial groups, according to standards of self attribution, with a proper historical path that is related to specific territories with the presumption of black ancestry related to the resistance against historical oppression (BRAZIL, 2003).

In Maranhão, besides the advances brought by the Decree nº 4.887, it was a slow process of acknowledgement and titration of occupied lands, which was proved by constant pressions provoked by quilombolas movement to INCRA and to the representatives of Fundação Palmares in Maranhão. Also, there is the inciting of persecutions and murders of quilombolas leaders in many localities with recurrent incidence in Baixada Maranhense. In 2010, the leader of the community of Charco in São Vicente de Férrer,

Flaviano Pinto Neto, was murdered, becoming an emblematic inciting of these conflicts.

The new political scenario proposed by the Decree nº 4.887/2003 and by specificities of processes of territorialization demanded by quilombolas communities of Baixada Maranhense starts to happen in the middle of 2010 with an approach proposed by the movement that wanted to create an agenda with political emphasis and disposition specific to what had been fulfilled by ACONERUQ.

According to Sousa (2016, p. 66), this segment of quilombolas movements “starts to miss the feeling of belonging to the major movement of claimings for ethnic and territorial rights and, thus, forsaken when they need to deal with conflicts and demands of their territories”. Thereby, we will discuss the fights for new processes of identification and territorialization with the emergency of MOQUIBOM in the next section.

4. MOQUIBOM: processes of politicization of identities and territories

The MOQUIBOM bases its actions on a purposeful political agenda that respects emancipation, autonomy, and aspirations of quilombolas in discussions about territorialization and identity that emerges on the first decade of the 21st century, based on changes occurred in terms of mediation, hopes, and emphasis on a distinguished political reading provided by the new historical context.

In relation to the new context in which the movements surges, Furtado (2012, p. 260) says: Gathered by mystical grounds as a gift by God and a basic right of all who need it, the first meeting of MOQUIBOM happened in the site “priests” in Mangabeira, town of Santa Helena. Tuned and motivated by chants that denounce the negligence of public services and the necessity of fighting of dispossessed ones, this group marked the first semester of 2011 with mobilizations because of its characteristic as a quilombola movement.

Therefore, the main strategies adopted by the movement were occupancy of public institutions of the State or federation, marches, hunger strikes, and the construction of a network with other segments that experience analogous oppressions in their territorios, such as indigenous people, ribeirinhos, coconut breakers (quebradeiras de coco), and relocated families (SOUSA, 2016).

It is important to emphasize that the actions of MOQUIBOM are planned while in movement, in other words, its acts and protests are not limited to a specific place. Even though the debates and tensions that built the movement happened at Baixada Maranhense in the middle of 2010, the majority of occupations were in the capital of Maranhão in the last years. These occupations have been happening within the buildings of INCRA, ITERMA, and in front of the government office (Palácio do Governo do Estado) and the Justice Court.

Also, it is important to highlight the role of the Pastoral Commission of Earth (Comissão Pastoral da Terra - CPT), a confessional entity connected to the Catholic Church for the articulation between these communities and the State. Present in most actions organized by the movement, the CPT has been one of the main allies of MOQUIBOM.

To understand political and territorial strategies elaborated by MOQUIBOM through their agenda in movement, we will cast out two cornerstones of their acts defined by the ethnographic work

produced by Sousa (2016, p. 115): 1) ancestry; 2) fights for public policies.

The first cornerstone pointed out by the author is:

[...] to bring up for the communities in which they live or want to live, ways to comprehend the historical process that produced those communities, the ancestry that remarks the possible points for the foundation of that place, the feelings of belonging and relationships that organized life, the bonds between people and their daily life (SOUSA, 2016, p. 115).

The past operates with the intent of creating bonds of identity that brings closer the protagonists of that movement. Thereby, ancestry is an exercise of remembrance that intends to support their fight and to forge a new reality from current possibilities, but always having in mind that these are long steps, in other words, the past is the source to think the present.

For MOQUIBOM, the triggering of their ancestry was possible because memory is a social construction that intends to legitimize a feeling of belonging to quilombolas communities and to offer a subsidy for constant analysis, revaluations, and renewal of their fights. In this regard, it can be understood that this strategy can be read according to what Halbwachs (1990) understand as memory, in other words, a structural element for the construction of an identity, knowing that it surpasses individual and biological concepts of memories (personified by body and mind of a person), and is materialized through social relationships built by the group to reinvent their daily life actions. Thereby, it is historically defined.

Also, the ancestry promoted by MOQUIBOM can be interpreted as a collaborative process that is constantly reconstructed. “To evoke your own past, it is necessary to appeal to other people's memories. He talks about references that exist outside of him and are determined by society” (HALBWACHS, 2006, p. 54).

Therefore, the ancestry is configured as a fundamental resource for the movement, as it acts for the reflection about contradictions of their own actions, which contributes to think new political possibilities and reinventing the processes of identification linked to their fights and the propagation of their existences as a group in their territories. Sousa (2016, p. 117) says that:

The work of MOQUIBOM tries to point out where did those people that live in quilombolas communities came from, in other words, to point out bonds that go beyond of what can be perceived, seeking in history the ties that bond communities to black slavery and evidencing the processes of territorial occupation by quilombolas, and it can be understood as a two sided operation: to bring up black presence in Maranhão, and the process of territorial occupation of quilombolas communities, thus, trying to systematize the feeling of belonging among themselves as a great family.

The historical reference engaged by MOQUIBOM has the intent of relating identities to the fight to usufruct and to definitely occupy their territories. This is one of the main unfoldings of political tensions provoked by the Brazilian government since the end of the 20th century through the creation of legal devices. The claiming and appropriation of a memory and a quilombola identity based on ancestry meant a search for political representation.

The act of self affirmation as a quilombola presupposes the acknowledgement of their condition as individuals with legal rights before the State, which has been acting in some aspects on the erasure, isolation, and invisibility of historical paths of these communities.

According to Gomes (2015, p. 120), the process of invisibility of quilombolas communities can be seen as a lack of public policies that would assure basic human rights to these segments for a dignified life. The author points out that:

The invisible would be isolated, and then, stigmatized. Black rural populations - isolated by the lack of communication, transportation, education, health, and public policies, among other aspects of a citizenship - were stigmatized to the point that their habitants refused to be named as quilombolas or ex slaves (GOMES, 2016, p. 123).

It is through the search for a political articulation that we situate the second cornerstone of identity and territorial politicizations that have been stimulated by MOQUIBOM: the fight for their acknowledgement as quilombolas, as political people, and for the assurance of essential public services for these communities. For the second cornerstone, fighting for public policies means:

[...] the search for improvements, in which the movements are necessary and indispensable. Here, the MOQUIBOM aids leaders and quilombolas linked to the movement, strengthening through the feeling of belonging and courage for them to express themselves [...]. Thereby, ethnicity shows itself as a project for the future, in which it would not be given by the recognition of similarities previously constituted, having its explanation over the past or on bodies, but in a purposeful activity in that produces a common project, bonds and hopes are created, in other words, the bond's reason of being is found in future (SOUSA, 2016, p. 119).

The historical marginalization suffered by these communities is the fuel for their courage to express themselves, as pointed out by the author mentioned above. This process is possible because of the politicization of the experiences of these people as a community, aiming at a common project: to claim for basic human rights, such as education, health, defense and protection of their territories, political and economic autonomy, and the respect for their history and to their ways of existence as quilombolas.

The mobilization of memories and ancestry by MOQUIBOM is an important strategy for the politicization of their experiences and the daily life of these communities. Furthermore, it is relevant to mention the importance of the processes of territorialization as an element of belonging and bonding to the lands (SOUSA, 2016).

That phenomenon can be perceived through the occupation of public buildings as a strategy to pressure the attendance of their specific demands besides the defense of their territories. According to Santos (2014), we understand that the relations established between this social movement with the places occupied by them evidence economic, political, and social disputes that permeate their claimings across Brazil.

Therefore, it can be inferred that the processes of identity relaboration within MOQUIBOM

permeate the dimensions of ancestry triggered by the process of remembrance with profound social meanings that seek autonomy and territorialization through the politicization of their daily experiences of claimings for basic human rights. It is at the occupation of places that these groups create meanings and feelings of belonging as protagonists (HALBWACHS, 1990).

The mandala elaborated by the movement shown on the following image synthesizes the strategies of identity and territorial politicization stimulated by MOQUIBOM through their fights. Also, it is the personification of bonds of these communities with those elements.



Figure 1- Mandala of MOQUIBOM

Source: MOQUIBOM, 2013.

At the center of the image, it can be found the basis of the movement: the defense of their territory and the seek for a well being. It is a project of a new world forged by the fights of people of indigenous andinas and amazonian ethnicities, which seek to create alternative lives distanced from the imaginary engaged by the capitalist development that marginalizes, endangers, and exploits the experiences of traditional people (ACOSTA, 2016, p. 78).

However, the territory will be freed through the mobilization of the feeling of ethnic and identity belonging (which acquires meaning with memories, ancestry, and history) while seeking for the assurance of public policies that respect their autonomy, practices, knowledge, and diversity.

5. Final Considerations

The Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988, through the Art. 68 of ADCT, which is the result of political tensions provoked by the Brazilian Black Movement, is a fundamental instrument for the acknowledgement of their right of possession and usufruct of territories occupied by remaining quilombolas communities. It could be noticed that, before the unfoldings provoked by that legal device, these communities resignified their feeling of ethnic belonging and their identities with the intent of negotiating with the Brazilian State for the assurance of their processes of territoriality.

In Maranhão, the performance of CCN through actions of PVN and the pioneer studies of the Black Movement were crucial for the propagation and effectuation of guidelines present on the legal mark among quilombolas communities. We could identify the most promising results as the elaborated anthropological reports and the situation of lands of some territories of Maranhão, culminating on the immediate acknowledgement of some communities, the organization of courses for community leaderships formation to improve the dialogue about new political sceneries and the creation of ACONERUQ, the entity that institutionally represents this social segment.

Through the Decree nº 4.887 of 2003, which had the intent of regulating the processes of identification, acknowledgement, and titration of quilombolas territories, new political fronts were created inside of the quilombolas movement, and in Maranhão through the MOQUIBOM, at Baixada Maranhense in 2010. This movement acts on specific demands of their territories that have not been assured by ACONERUQ.

We have seen that the path of MOQUIBOM is based on two cornerstones: the construction of bonds with their ancestry for them to defend their territories, and the claiming for public policies for the assurance of a dignified social propagation. Thereby, the freedom at these territories presupposes the free access to public services, such as health, sanitation, housing, and education.

Therefore, this social group has been politicizing their identities through the mobilization of their afro diasporic ancestry with the intent of elaborating a political agenda of actions deeply connected to their daily experiences. The process of remembrance aims to build a political front based on the self determination of these communities, which means the effectuation of an alternative project of life as it is at the occupations of these places that they create the meaning of belonging as human beings.

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