

INEQUALITY, DIFFERENCE, ARTICULATION¹

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This article studies the tensions and overlaps between inequality and difference starting from two complementary questions: When do differences become politically relevant? How do inequalities and differences correlate? The argument is first developed through a critical discussion of three influential approaches in contemporary academic and political debates: the recognition-redistribution paradigm, as developed by N. Fraser and A. Honneth, the categorical inequalities approach of C. Tilly and the horizontal-vertical inequalities approach of F. Stewart. In spite of their divergences, these three approaches present a common conceptual limitation, which is to treat dynamic differences as binary and fixed categories: black-whites, men-women, mestizos-indigenous, etc. To overcome this deficit, I develop in the present article, starting from the concept of articulation, an analytical matrix according to which differences represent positionalities or sites of enunciation within hierarchical social relations. The nexus between differences and inequalities is illustrated by the recent articulation of the quilombolas in Brazil.

KEY WORDS: Difference. Inequality. Articulation. Positionality. Quilombolas.

INTRODUCTION

The debates about inequality and difference are at least the age of sociology itself, since they were already outlined in texts by Karl Marx ([1844] 1976) or Max Weber ([1922] 1980).² Today, these discussions remain relevant. In a way, they have gained new relevance in the face of the unprecedented diversification of contemporary struggles for justice and the institutionalization of public policies based on criteria of belonging defined by their own or by ascribed identity attributes.

From an analytical point of view, the most difficult challenge is to know when differences politically matter, that is, when diffe-

rences such as those between whites and blacks or between men and women gain political strength, while other differences remain invisible. To say that politically relevant differences are those that express inequalities would be to simplify, inadequately, the issue. After all, inequalities between whites and blacks or between men and women, even if they accompany societies such as the Brazilian society for centuries, only very recently have they entered the agenda as a problem and an injustice to be fought against. At the same time, the difference that explains most of the contemporary inequalities – that is nationality or citizenship – remains not at all or very little problematized. In sum, questions about the political character of differences or about the correlation between difference and inequality remain unanswered.

In order to study the tensions and overlaps between inequality and difference, in the present text, I first discuss three approaches that have become very influential in contemporary debates because they link the discussions about inequality, that are typical of sociology and economics, to the discussions about difference, more extensively treated by philoso-

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² The well-known review essay published by Marx on the Jewish Question (Marx, 1976 [1844]) is an example. Less known, but equally relevant, given its constructivist character, as opposed to the essentialisms of its time, is Weber's chapter on the ethnic basis of community life, incorporating the discussion of race, ethnicity, people, and nationality (Weber 1980 [1922]).

phy, anthropology, and interdisciplinary fields such as gender studies or racial studies. They are: the recognition-redistribution paradigm as developed by Fraser and Honneth (2003),³ the categorical inequalities approach developed by Tilly (1998) and the horizontal-vertical inequalities approach developed by Stewart (2000). Despite their nuances and divergences, these three approaches present a common conceptual limitation, which is to treat fluctuating and dynamic differences as binary and fixed categories: black-white, male-female, Muslim-Christian, indigenous-mestizo, etc.

In order to overcome this deficit, I develop in the present article, starting from the concept of articulation, an analytical matrix according to which differences with reference to gender, ethnicity, religion, race, etc. represent positions or sites of enunciation within hierarchical social relations. Following this line of argument, those who claim for themselves some positionality or attribute a specific positionality to others are struggling to preserve or remove existing social hierarchies. Therefore, differences are not built independently from the social structure somewhere before or outside politics. Differences are articulated, politically, in the light of the structure of existing inequalities.

In addition to this introduction, this article is structured in three sections and a brief conclusion. The first section presents and critically discusses Nancy Fraser's, Axel Honneth's, Charles Tilly's and Frances Stewart's approaches for addressing questions of difference and inequality. The following section introduces the articulation model as an alternative to the limitations of the discussed approaches. Then, I seek to illustrate the process of contingent articulation of differences, with the purpose of overcoming inequalities through a

specific example, that is, the recent history of the political constitution of the quilombola populations in Brazil.⁴

RECOGNITION-REDISTRIBUTION, CATEGORICAL INEQUALITIES, VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL INEQUALITIES

First published in German and in English in 2003, the book *Redistribution or recognition? A political-philosophical exchange*, co-authored by Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (2003), was already born a classic. Conceived as a dialogue between the two most renowned representatives of critical theory today, the positions assumed by the two authors in the book are far from consensual. Honneth's contribution to the book broadly reaffirms the central thesis of his 1994 *Magnum Opus* "Kampf um Anerkennung" (Honneth, 1994), according to which "all struggles for justice can be understood as struggles for recognition"⁵ (Franco Elizondo, 2015, p. 81). According to Honneth's thesis, proper recognition in the three relevant spheres - love, law and social solidarity - is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for the good life. Material and pecuniary issues are not relevant here, since, for Honneth, a minimum of material security is a presupposition of a decent life. In this sense, inequalities do not matter in Honneth's theoretical reflection, since the supply of material needs is, by definition, given previously.⁶

Accordingly, in the book co-authored

⁴ Slavery of African and Afro-descendants was introduced in Brazil during the Portuguese colonial rule and was legally abolished in 1888, 66 years after the Brazilian independence. Quilombos are settlements created by former enslaved persons who escaped from slavery. Quilombolas are the inhabitants of these settlements (Costa, 2012).

⁵ All citations in foreign languages were translated freely by the author and/or translator.

⁶ Honneth's reflection presupposes the existence of a welfare state so consolidated and comprehensive, that matters of material survival are simply out of the horizon. Given this assumption, it is surprising and even inexplicable that his work has found a widespread empirical use in countries such as Brazil.

³ In referring here to a paradigm, I do not want to disregard the fundamental differences between Honneth's and Fraser's readings on how inequalities and differences interact. The deep disagreements between the two authors are mentioned below. Nonetheless, since the dialogue between the two authors inaugurates a specific field of study, I refer here to a single paradigm.

by Fraser, Honneth refers to struggles for redistribution, such as union struggles, as disputes over the implementation of social rights or over the modification of the dominant parameters of labor valorization. In this sense, even distributive conflicts ultimately have for the author a moral and cultural motivation, insofar as such conflicts only occur when expectations of valorization and social recognition of those who demand better wages or the extension of their social rights are frustrated. Therefore, struggles for redistribution would, above all, be struggles for recognition.

Fraser disagrees with Honneth and argues that societies go far beyond an ethical agreement among their members: they are also constituted by systemic imperatives. In this case, injustices linked to the unequal distribution of goods in a society are not exactly a consequence of the lack of recognition: they are, in fact, “intrinsic to an order of specialized economic relations whose *raison d’être* is the accumulation of profits” (Fraser; Honneth, 2003, p. 35).

Fraser identifies a polarization in philosophical debates at that time, involving, on the one hand, liberal approaches, such as theories of justice of J. Rawls and R. Dworkin, which tend to reduce all claims for justice to redistributive struggles and, on the other hand, approaches based on the idea of identity, such as the theories of C. Taylor, W. Kymlicka and A. Honneth, which insist on the need for new instruments for recognition of differences, especially cultural differences. Fraser’s particular contribution is the effort to combine these two forms of justice within the conception of justice that the author calls parity of participation. She argues that “justice requires social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers.” (Fraser; Honneth, 2003, p. 36). For this, certain objective and intersubjective conditions need to be met. The objective conditions imply the provision of material resources that assure all participants in the process independence and voice. The intersubjective conditions refer to the need

for “institutionalized patterns of cultural value express equal respect for all participants and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem.” (Fraser; Honneth, 2003, p. 36).

After this brief and certainly insufficient incursion into a very broad and complex debate, one can infer the answers that both authors offer to the questions that guide this article: How do politically relevant differences emerge? How do differences and inequalities correlate? If we accept the primacy of the recognition sphere over other spheres, as Honneth wants, we must conceive gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural differences as constituted on a pre-political level, that is, within the moral or cultural sphere. Consequently, political claims for the recognition of differences are reactions against violations and frustrations of expectations anchored on the moral grammar of societies. Fraser, on the contrary, assumes a more ambivalent position: in some passages, she refers to gays, women and blacks as if these categories referred to clear and stable groups, constituted on a pre-political level. At the same time, she emphasizes the political and dynamic character of these markers, revealing her poststructuralist inspiration. As for the correlation between differences and inequalities, the positions of the two authors also differ widely. While Honneth proposes to subsume social inequality in difference, that is, in the recognition dimension, Fraser’s dual model preserves the independence of the cultural or moral and economic dimensions of justice. From the separation of these two spheres of justice, she elaborates her argument to combine recognition and redistribution.

Following, we move to the second approach discussed in this article: the categorical inequalities approach developed by Charles Tilly (1998). Tilly seeks to study inequalities not only among individuals, but also among groups of individuals constituted on the basis of pairs of antithetic categories: black-white, male-female, etc. To the extent in which organizations such as families, corporations, and political parties,

among others, emulate these categorical distinctions, they become widespread and institutionalized in societies as a whole and contribute to molding everyday behaviors, strategies, and practices of institutions and individuals (Tilly, 1998, p. 22). Despite Tilly's innovative contribution to research on inequality, his theory of categorical inequalities, viewed from the contemporary state of the art, has several limitations and inconsistencies. First, it assumes a clear classification of groups and individuals around dual categorical pairs, ignoring that the ascriptions and self-identifications always encompass numerous intermediate categories located between the dichotomous poles: black-white, male-female, national-migrant citizen, etc. In addition, ascriptions and self-identifications, as research on intersectionality teaches us (Anthias, 2016), never obey the logic of a single axis of classification, since they combine positions relating to gender, class, ethnicity, race, etc.

An additional deficiency in Tilly's approach is related to the inquiry about the emergence of politically relevant differences and their correlation with inequalities. If Honneth derives inequalities from differences, Tilly commits the opposite error, that is, deduces differences from (categorical) inequalities. For Tilly, the existing categorical pairs not only shape social structures: they are largely learned and assimilated by institutions and individuals and thus also shape social and cultural identities. In this sense, it can be argued that Tilly does not really offer us a model capable of explaining the interaction between differences and inequalities; in his account, differences are only a by-product of inequalities.

Having identified these problems both in Honneth's and Fraser's approaches as well as in Tilly's categorical inequalities model, I discuss the horizontal and vertical inequalities approach. According to development economist Frances Stewart (Stewart, 2000, 2010; Stewart; Brown; Mancini, 2005), individual social positions, in a given social structure, correspond to the sum of vertical and hori-

zontal inequalities. The former refers to the distances between individuals in the social structure considering variables such as income, wealth, etc. Horizontal inequalities refer to social distances between groups of individuals. By focusing on horizontal inequalities, Stewart intends to broaden the conventional perspective, which tends to reduce the analysis of inequalities to economic inequality. Thus, she distinguishes groups not only by using economic factors, but also by applying political, religious, ethnic, racial and gender-specific criteria. Unlike Tilly's categorical pairs, which are established on the basis of historical persistence, the horizontal inequality approach, in each specific research, seeks the categories that are relevant for explaining social inequalities in a given case. Following this logic, empirical studies carried out in accordance to the horizontal inequalities approach have identified a multiplicity of relevant groups in different regions, as shown by, for example, Thorp and Paredes's (2010) research in Peru. These authors consider three main groups in their study: whites, mestizos and indigenous. According to the authors, in combination with other significant stratification axes - in particular, the place of residence (rural, urban, etc.), gender and class, - the belonging of an individual to one of the three groups (whites, mestizos and indigenous) configures its position in the Peruvian social structure.

The scholars linked to the vertical and horizontal inequalities approach defend a multidimensional perspective while identifying the determining factors for differences to become politically relevant. Nevertheless, concerning a crucial issue for the articulation between differences and inequalities, that is, what are the differences that define groups, the approach tends to economism, abandoning non-economic explanatory variables:

To some extent, then, group boundaries become endogenous to group inequality. If people suffer discrimination (i.e. experience horizontal inequality) they may then feel cultural identity more strongly,

particularly if others categorise them into groups for the express purpose of exercising discrimination (thereby creating or enforcing HIs [horizontal inequalities]) (Stewart; Brown; Mancini, 2005, p. 9).

In the end, the vertical inequalities-horizontal inequalities approach, despite its adaptability to different empirical contexts, presents very similar deficiencies to those of Tilly's theory when it comes to explaining the emergence of politically relevant differences and their correlation to inequalities. The approach derives, linearly, differences from existing inequalities, arguing that socioeconomic hierarchies automatically lead to group identity. Therefore, this interpretation is theoretically reductionist and empirically implausible, since it excludes the contingent character that characterises the correlation between inequalities and differences. That is, inequalities, even if very deep and clearly grouped through racial, ethnic, or gender differences, sometimes lead – but sometimes do not! – to populations using these differences to constitute themselves as groups.

The evaluation of the contributions given by Fraser, Honneth, Tilly, and Stewart to understand the tensions between inequalities and differences lead us to the conclusion that none of them offer a satisfactory answer to the questions that more directly interest us in this article: how do politically relevant differences arise and what is their correlation with existing inequalities. In the brief review of the models developed so far, we find culturalist responses, as in Honneth's case, that reduce inequalities to differences, or economicist responses, that subsume differences to inequalities, as in the case of Tilly and Stewart's contributions. Fraser's dual model presents important openness insofar as it treats differences as political constructs. Nevertheless, while defending the existence of two separate spheres of justice - the recognition and the redistribution spheres - the author breaks the close nexus between difference and inequality, contributing little to the understanding of the logical inseparability and the co-consti-

tution processes of these two terms and of the social spheres associated with them.

ARTICULATING DIFFERENCES AND INEQUALITIES

Since the 1990s, post-structuralist and postcolonial theorists have been sharpening their theoretical-analytical tools in order to illuminate the complex ties that link inequalities and differences. At the center of these reflections is the concept of articulation, as outlined especially by Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1996) in separate but complementary research programs. Both authors use the term articulation considering its two colloquial meanings: as the act of speaking and as a connection between two elements. Articulation, in these two senses, is contingent. This means that, first of all, it is not possible to define, *a priori*, what difference is articulated or when and how this will occur discursively, due to the fact that differences do not exist before or beyond discourses: they emerge with their discursive articulation, as Bhabha points out:

The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The 'right' to signify from the periphery of authorized power and privilege does not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by the power of tradition to be reinscribed through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are 'in the minority' (Bhabha, 1994, p.3).

The contingent character of articulation is also found in the second meaning of the term. That is, it is impossible to predict the elements that will be connected discursively and when. Therefore, studying articulations is a way of questioning why certain discourses become relevant to the constitution of certain subjects under certain circumstances, as Hall summarizes:

[T]he theory of articulation asks how an ideology discovers its subject rather than how the subject thinks the necessary and inevitable thoughts which belong to it; it enables us to think how an ideology empowers people, enabling them to begin to make some sense or intelligibility of their historical situation, without reducing those forms of intelligibility to their socio-economic or class location or social position (Hall, 1996, p.: 142).

Applied to the earlier discussion of the correlation between inequalities and differences, the articulation theory offers powerful arguments for overcoming both culturalism and economism, as well as for criticizing the combination of economism and culturalism in Fraser's dual model. Thus, existing struggles for justice are always a contingent articulation of a certain position in the social structure with a certain discourse on difference. Being contingent does not mean being random or arbitrary. Social researchers are able to reconstruct the circumstances that led a given discourse to find a particular subject in a given context and occasion. However, social analysts are not in the fortunate condition of being able to predict articulations that will form in the future due to the variety of existing structural positions and discourse positions, and also because of the multiplicity of possible combinations between structural and discursive positions.

In order to give meaning to the type of articulation between differences and inequalities proposed here, it is necessary to elaborate a broad definition of social inequality, as was developed in other contexts (Costa, 2013, 2017; Jelin; Motta; Costa, 2017). According to this definition, social inequalities correspond to the distances between positions occupied by individuals or groups of individuals in the social structure at the local, national or global level. This definition concerns economic positions (defined by income, wealth, control over resources, etc.) and power asymmetries in terms of political, social and existential rights, political influence and, also, epistemological capacities (Costa, 2017).

The groups that can be considered to describe the inequalities are countless. Individuals distributed over income quintiles and denominated classes or strata, not by themselves, but by scholars that study social stratification, constitute the groups most commonly found – at least in the academic literature. In addition, comparisons between the positions held at a national level mainly by men and women, blacks and whites, migrants and national citizens, children, adults and the elderly have become increasingly widespread.

In this article, *differences* refer to features associated with the multiple groups constituted in the process of articulating (in the sense of enunciating) inequalities, either to defend their own positions in social hierarchies, or to demand a mitigation of inequalities. This in no way implies economistic beliefs, as if differences could emanate from social positions. It is not a structural position itself but its cultural and political assessment – as just and unjust – that counts in the process of articulating differences. Culturalism also has no place in this understanding. It is clear that previous moral or cultural inclinations play an important role in mobilizing for or against inequalities; however, such provisions constitute a broad and ever-changing repertoire of possibilities that are contingently articulated according to contextual variables.

Empirically, this becomes evident in studies that focus on the recent revival of ethnic identities in Latin America, for example. According to these studies, the self-identities claimed by some Latin American rural populations have historically varied, shifting, during the twentieth century, from indigenous or blacks to mestizo peasants and from peasants to ancestral communities in the last decades. These variations can not be explained simply by shifts in the social structure, since this structure did not change substantially during this period. The variations seem more clearly to reflect the recent spread of multicultural legislation in the region, opening new access

channels to land ownership for rural populations - even if treated as ancestral territory - and other cultural rights (for a more in-depth discussion see Gonçalves, Costa, 2016). The example of the quilombola articulation, discussed below, serves to illustrate the argument developed here.

THE QUILOMBOLA ARTICULATION⁷

As is well known, the Brazilian constitution of 1988 was promulgated in the context of political euphoria triggered by democratization, after 21 years of dictatorship (1964-1985). The constitutional text is therefore progressive and open to the extension of political, social and cultural rights of different groups of the population. Among the many established guarantees, the constitution defines, in article 68 of the Transitory Constitutional Provisions Act, that: “Final ownership shall be recognized for the remaining members of the ancient runaway slave communities who are occupying their lands and the State shall grant them the respective title deeds.” (Brazil, [1988] 2010, p. 184).

According to Arruti’s (2000, p. 103s) accurate reconstruction, the quilombo category, used in the constitutional text, is “a ‘train-bearer’ of a repressive legislation of colonial origin that, to be effective was made generic and exterior to the ones it concerns, it refers to a kind of historical social formation that, at first, would have disappeared with slavery itself and that was characterized precisely by the pursuit for invisibility vis-a-vis the State.”

According to Arruti, on the occasion of the promulgation of the Constitution, there were no groups in Brazilian society clearly claiming to be *quilombo remnants*. There was a still very incipient mobilization of *rural bla-*

⁷ The purpose of this brief section is certainly not to reconstitute the extensive debate on the quilombola issue in Brazil. It is simply a retelling of the recent process of articulation of the quilombola actor in order to show how, in this example, inequalities and differences are associated and correlated. In this section, we return to arguments developed more extensively in previous works (see, in particular, Costa, 2012, 2015).

ck communities in the states of Pará and Maranhão. Nevertheless, two parallel movements explain the inclusion of article 68 in the Constitution of 1988, still according to Arruti. On the one hand, rural workers’ movements and government agencies identified the existence of different forms of rural land ownership without a clear legal status and that should be regularized. Among these, there were lands acquired or occupied by ex-slaves and on which their descendants continued to live. On the other hand, the quilombos occupied (and continue to occupy) a prominent place in the political repertoire of the black movement in Brazil, insofar as they symbolize resistance to exploitation and slavery. It is, therefore, the conjunction between the diffuse necessity of land regularization and the influence of the black movement that explains the inclusion of the reference to the “quilombo remnants” in the 1988 Constitution.

Article 68 unleashed an important set of political mobilizations and of identity reconfigurations in those rural communities that had a significant presence of black population. Many of them, in part assisted by anthropologists, religious people and activists from the quilombo remnants’ movement that started to develop, begin to identify, in article 68, the possibility of resolving land conflicts and conflicts of legal guarantee of ownership of the land on which they lived.

In 2003, a presidential decree gave the definitive form for the implementation of the regularization of the lands of the quilombo communities. According to the decree, the criterion of recognition of communities is self-identification, that is, it is the beneficiaries themselves who define themselves as quilombo communities.⁸ The decree also defines that

⁸ The definition of the self-recognition criterion, instead of an anthropological report, to define whether a group was quilombo remnant or not, represents an important step in the process that French (2009, p. 6) calls the “post-legislative negotiation” of article 68. The criterion of self-recognition is in line with the 169th Convention of ILO [International Labor Organization] and the interpretation of the Brazilian Association of Anthropology, which in 1995 created a special working group called “Terra de Quilombo”

the titling of the quilombo lands benefits not individuals, but the representative association of the community in question. In the decree, as Arruti (2009, p.85) observes, the land gains a territory connotation:

... it includes not only the land directly occupied at the specific time of the titling, but all the spaces that are part of its uses, customs and traditions and/or that possess the environmental resources necessary for its maintenance and the historical reminiscences that allow the perpetuation of memory.

In 2004, the Brasil Quilombola Program was created, which articulated the actions of 23 ministries and federal agencies that had been developing actions directed to the remaining communities of quilombos. According to the update, completed in December of 2017 by the Palmares Foundation, responsible for the certification of the quilombos, up to that date there were 3051 certified quilombola communities, most of them in the states of Bahia, Maranhão, Minas Gerais and Pará, in that order, who are, potentially, beneficiaries of the actions foreseen in the Brasil Quilombola Program (Fundação Palmares, 2018). These include regularization of access to the land and assistance in the areas of education, health, housing, local development, etc. Since Michel Temer assumed the presidency of Brazil in 2016, the situation of the Brasil Quilombola Program and the regularization of the quilombo lands have become more uncertain, due to the disarticulation of ministries and agencies dedicated to the issue, as well as the decision of the Civil Office in April of 2017, which suspended the regularization processes. The argument used to support the suspension was that the titling generated legal uncertainty, since the Direct Action of Unconstitutionality, filed by the DEM party (then PFL) in 2003, was still in the process of judgment by the Federal Supreme Court (Supremo Tribunal Federal - STF). The

[Quilombo Land], insisting on the need to “incorporate the point of view of the social groups that, in their actions, seek to validate the legal right granted by the Federal Constitution” (O’Dwyer, 2005, p. 94; see also O’Dwyer, 2011).

party questioned the rites of regularization and the criterion of self-identification of quilombos (Fellet 2017). In February of 2018, the STF rejected, with only one dissenting vote, the action of DEM, affirming the constitutionality of the process of recognition of quilombos and accepting the criterion of self-identification (Fellet, 2018). By the time this article was completed in July of 2018, however, evidence was lacking that the Temer government could contribute to advancing the regularization of quilombola lands due to its political vulnerability and its proximity to the agribusiness entrepreneurs and the mining companies interested in simply occupying or integrating the quilombola territories into the land market.

The anthropologist José Mauricio Arruti (2006) and the anthropologist Jan Hoffman French (2009) study the process of land regularization of quilombo lands in the town of Mocambo, in the state of Sergipe, in two very different but equally solid books. The case is very instructive to demonstrate how the constitutional change introduced by Article 68 triggers at the local level the construction of a new ethnicity.

The history of the Mocambo community is inseparable from the trajectory of the Xocó indigenous community, its neighbor. Both groups had lived, for many decades, an unstable land situation and were permanently threatened with expulsion from the lands they occupied. In the 1940s and 1950s, peasant mobilization movements in the region joined together as rural workers.⁹ Many families were also constituted by marriages of members of both communities, making it difficult to esta-

⁹ According to French Hoffman, the members of the two communities “[...] have been identified and have self-identified over the years in a variety of ways: as *camponeses* (peasants), *trabalhadores rurais* (rural workers), *caboclos* (mixed race with indigenous ancestry), *negros* (blacks), *católicos* (Catholics), *pobres* (poor folk), *sertanejos* (backlanders), *sergipanos* (residents of Sergipe), *nordestinos* (northeasterners), *meeiros* (sharecroppers), *posseiros* (squatters), *índios* (Indians), *remanescentes* (descendants of fugitive slaves), and *quilombolas*, sometimes simultaneously and other times sequentially, as the state, its agents, the people themselves, and their advisers took up or ignored one or another of these sociolegal identities.” (French, 2009, p. 13)

blish ethnic or cultural boundaries between the two groups. From the 1970s and 1980s, the indigenous Xocó, supported by the Missionary Indian Council, an entity linked to the Catholic Church, were more clearly assuming their indigenous identity, which allowed them, through the prerogatives offered by the indigenous law, to regularize land ownership of the territories they occupied (French, 2009, p. 49ss).

Meanwhile, the situation of the population of Mocambo remained precarious. It is at this moment that the pastoral agents working in this community, attentive to the progress of the land regularization of the remaining quilombo lands in other Brazilian regions after the constitutional prerogative introduced in 1988, sought to convince the residents of Mocambo of the advantages of this legal option. However, this alternative was, at first, rejected by the community, since

... the idea of identification as 'quilombo remnants' was not part of the kind of representation that Mocambo families had or would like to produce about themselves. The resistance of these families to the suggestion to think of themselves as "quilombolas" was so great that the possibility of changing the name of the community from "Mocambo" [synonym of quilombo] to "Mundo Novo" [New World] was discussed (Arruti, 2000, p. 110).

The legal advantages, however, prevailed, leading the residents of Mocambo, after much discussion and political disputes, to publicly assume themselves as a remaining quilombo community. This political reconversion was accompanied by the expansion of external interlocutors and the introduction of new cultural practices. Anthropologists, activists from the quilombo remnants movement and state agents involved in titling the lands begin to often visit Mocambo. Internally, the memory of resistance to slavery and racial oppression has been (re-) discovered, through the selection and re-signification of dances and songs traditionally sung in the community, as documented by French (2009, p. 149ss.). A theatre play performed by the adolescents of the commu-

nity and presented each year during the commemoration of the community's recognition as a quilombo community, a process completed in 2000, also played a fundamental role. Over the years, the play, which tells the story of a local family, was modified until it became "the foundational narrative of those in Mocambo who came to identify themselves as black people descended from fugitive slaves." (French, 2009, p. 154).

The process of introducing legislation to recognize quilombo remaining territories - both when viewed from the perspective of political negotiations for its implementation and when reconstructed from its local impacts in Mocambo - provides rich material for the study of inter- relations between law, inequality, difference and politics at the national and transnational levels.

Firstly, Brazilian legislation was developed in the context of the expansion of multiculturalism in the international agenda and is reformulated in 2003, in consonance with the criteria of the 169th Convention of the International Labor Organization. Transnational references are also observed in the political and cultural repertoire that guides the formulation of the law and its application even in the local context. Allusions to the African diaspora, to the global history of modern slavery, and to solidarity and transnational resistance to racial oppression are recurrent both in the political repertoire of the social movements involved in the process and in the very vocabulary used by the Brazilian government programs directed to the remaining quilombo population.

The role of new cultural rights to induce ethnic re-identification of the involved populations is also easily identifiable. Groups that previously identified themselves as rural workers or squatters rediscover themselves as quilombo remnants. The nexus between social inequality and cultural difference is obvious. The situation of deprivation of the right to land and the disadvantageous position in the social structure ultimately motivate Brazilian citizens

to claim the protection of the State as quilombo remnants. The role of cultural and political mediators is evident. At the national level, the black movement, political activists, the Brazilian Association of Anthropology and state agencies contribute to give the form and the meanings that the legislation is acquiring over time. At the local level, church-based advisors, individual anthropologists, political activists, and state officials allow the law to be interpreted and translated to the potential target group.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the identity politics adopted not only by social movements, but also by the State as a guideline for public policies, discussing the correlation between inequality and difference, a theme that has accompanied sociology since its establishment as a professional field, has also become a political necessity. In the present article, I first sought to identify three different paradigms that continue to influence the academic and political debate about the tensions and complementarities between inequality and difference: the recognition-redistribution paradigm, the categorical inequalities approach and the horizontal-vertical inequalities approach. It was sought to show that none of these contributions offer adequate answers to two central questions within this broad debate: When do differences politically matter? How do inequalities and differences correlate? The categorical inequalities approach and the horizontal-vertical inequalities approach do not seek to answer the first question, since they consider it as a historical fact. Regarding the second question, both approaches are structuralist, that is, they affirm that inequalities determine the perception and the constitution of differences, as if people treated unequally, sooner or later, discover the inequalities that unite them and constitute them as a group and as political actors.

The answer found in the recognition-re-

distribution paradigm for the two questions is more nuanced. While Honneth asserts that differences that count politically are those inscribed in the deeper moral grammar of a society or specific group, Fraser is open to accepting the contingent character of the politicization of differences, similar to the way I advocate in this article. Regarding the second question, Honneth's answer is clear: differences overlap, logically and ontologically, with inequalities, that is, inequalities are understood only as asymmetries in the levels of recognition of differences. Fraser's answer is twofold. She distinguishes two spheres of justice, that of recognition and that of redistribution, separating differences from inequalities. The interpretation based on the theory of articulation, adopted in this article, diverges diametrically from Fraser's reading. It is postulated that difference and inequality are two sides of the same medal. Both correspond to the way individual or collective subjects position themselves in the world. In a way, difference is the discursive articulation of the position of the subjects within the social hierarchies. As a product of discursive articulations, these positions are always contingent and changeable.

Under the terms of this article, differences become politically relevant insofar as the historical context and conjunctural circumstances make it possible to phrase through them the desire to preserve or abolish existing hierarchies and inequalities. This understanding also guides the answer to the question about the correlation between inequality and difference: both constitute one another, without precedence over one another.

The brief incursion into the example of the quilombolas in Brazil sought to give body and materiality to this abstract argument. First, the example highlights the contingent character of the politicization of differences. Remember that contingent does not mean arbitrary or random. That is, the constitution of quilombos, throughout the history of Brazil, is a fact documented by historiography and inscribed

in the collective memory of many communities. However, the politicization of the quilombola difference – and not another possible difference, such as being black, a rural worker without land, poor, *ribeirinho* (riverine), etc. – could only emerge in the context of changes in the political context and in the international and national legislation as well as because of the actions of brokers, such as the church, activists, etc. The example also makes clear the correlation of co-constitution of difference and inequality. As a relation, inequalities can be formulated in very different ways: inequalities between 1% of the population, the richest, and the remaining 99% as articulated by the *Occupy* movement; inequalities between men and women, as the feminist movements put it; inequalities between the global north and the global south, as anti-globalization movements prefer. In the specific case of the quilombolas, the inequalities between landowners and those who did not have duly titled lands were historically articulated in several ways: peasants *versus* farmers, poor against rich, and so on. The emergence of the quilombola struggles, as shown in the case of Mocambo, distinguished quilombolas from farmers, but also from indigenous and other poor peasants, from whom quilombolas previously did not distinguish themselves. This process is historical and contingent, that is, it is not a single product of inequality in the access to land, but of the circumstantial articulation between discourse and subject, inequality and difference.

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DESIGUALDADE, DIFERENÇA, ARTICULAÇÃO

Sergio Costa

Neste artigo, estudam-se as tensões e superposições entre desigualdade e diferença a partir de duas questões complementares: Quando diferenças se tornam politicamente relevantes? Como desigualdades e diferenças se correlacionam? O argumento é desenvolvido, primeiramente, mediante a discussão crítica de três abordagens influentes nos debates acadêmicos e políticos contemporâneos, a saber: o paradigma do reconhecimento-redistribuição, como é desenvolvido por N. Fraser e A. Honneth, a abordagem das desigualdades categoriais de C. Tilly e a abordagem das desigualdades horizontais-verticais de F. Stewart. A despeito de suas divergências, essas três abordagens apresentam uma limitação conceitual comum, que é tratar diferenças dinâmicas como categorias binárias e fixas: brancos-negros, homens-mulheres, mestiços-indígenas, etc. Para superar esse déficit, com base no conceito de articulação, desenvolve-se uma matriz analítica segundo a qual diferenças representam posicionalidades ou lugares de enunciação no âmbito de relações sociais hierárquicas. O nexó entre diferenças e desigualdades é ilustrado por meio da articulação recente dos quilombolas no Brasil.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Diferença. Desigualdade. Articulação. Posicionalidade. Quilombolas.

INÉGALITÉ, DIFFÉRENCE, ARTICULATION

Sergio Costa

Cet article étudie les tensions et les chevauchements entre inégalités et différences à partir de deux questions complémentaires: Quand les différences deviennent-elles politiquement pertinentes? Quel est la corrélation entre les inégalités et les différences? L'argument est d'abord développé à travers une discussion critique de trois approches influentes dans les débats académiques et politiques contemporains: le paradigme reconnaissance-redistribution, tel que développé par N. Fraser et A. Honneth, l'approche d'inégalité catégorielle de C. Tilly et l'approche des inégalités horizontale-verticale de F. Stewart. Malgré leurs divergences, ces trois approches présentent une limitation conceptuelle commune, qui consiste à traiter les différences dynamiques comme catégories binaires et fixes: blanc-noir, hommes-femmes, métis-indigènes, etc. Pour surmonter ce déficit, le présent article développe, à partir du concept d'articulation, une matrice analytique selon laquelle les différences représentent des posicionalités ou des sites d'énonciation dans des relations sociales hiérarchisées. Le lien entre les différences et les inégalités est illustré par la récente articulation des quilombolas au Brésil.

MOTS-CLÉS: Différence. Inégalité. Articulation. Positionnalité. Quilombolas.

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