

NATURE AND HEGEMONY IN THE WAYS OF LIVING *SEMPRE-VIVAS* FLOWER PICKERS
NATUREZA E HEGEMONIA NOS MODOS DE MORAR DOS APANHADORES DE SEMPRE-VIVAS
MARIA CLARA CERQUEIRA

Maria Clara Salim Cerqueira is an Architect, holds a Master's degree in Geography, and is a doctoral candidate in the Graduate Program in Geography at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Brazil. She studies the struggle for land, socio-environmental conflicts, housing and ways of living, traditional peoples and communities, the State, politics and food sovereignty. mclaracerqueira@gmail.com.
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/6584339876404483>

ARTICLE SUBMITTED ON AUGUST 15, 2022

How to quote this text: Cerqueira, M. C., 2022. Nature and Hegemony in the Ways of Living of Sempre-Vivas Pickers. *VIRUS*, 25, December. [online]. Available at <<http://www.nomads.usp.br/virus/papers/v25/611/611en.php>>. [Accessed dd Month yyyy].

Abstract

Traditional communities in Brazil are historically marked by situations of conflict, lack of autonomy and denial of rights. We address the issue of housing in the Mata dos Crioulos community, located in Diamantina, Minas Gerais, southeast Brazil, which identifies itself as a *quilombola* and *sempre-vivas* flower pickers. Amidst the territorial conflicts in which it is inserted, their ways of living are closely related to the ways of life and the “picking” of flowers, a characteristic that underlies its collective identity. During the “picking” period, the families live in caves, and when they tend the field, they live in houses built using traditional techniques, a practice that can be understood as counter-hegemonic because it is not guided by the socially accepted forms of the ideology of the capitalist mode of production. These practices were threatened by the implementation of Conservation Units of restricted use, which overlap the community's territory. This text reflects on why these ways of living are not considered legitimate by the western urban society, and whether counter-hegemony can be a key to understanding these ways of life. Based on the understanding of ideology as a form of specific social awareness and an investigation into the society/nature relationship, we conclude that the neglect of caves and houses that articulate the territoriality of flower pickers are directly linked to the hegemonic notions of external and universal nature.

Keywords: Ideology, Conflicts, State

1 Introduction

In the midst of a context of dissolution of the rights conquered by Brazilian traditional communities in the early 2020s, the ways of living are presented as territorialities and objects of vindication by these social groups. In a situation of fragility and constant disputes, traditional communities – *quilombolas*, indigenous people, extractivists, etc. – claim to be recognized by the State in order to have their ways of life legitimized and (re)produce their lives. The case of the *sempre-vivas* flower pickers, communities located near Diamantina, Minas Gerais, southeast Brazil, in the southern portion of *Serra do Espinhaço*, serves as an example to demonstrate how the ways of living are inserted in the struggle for the territories of traditional communities in a wider context, as a counter-hegemonic practice in a way.

After the overlapping of the communities' territories by Conservation Units of restricted use in the 1990s, the families of the *Mata dos Crioulos* community – distributed in five different locations – were deprived of part of their territory. Although this territory is necessary for the reproduction of their ways of living, the access to the fields where they carried out extractive activities and some of their homes have been restricted. The dynamics of these families' ways of living is marked by the phenomenon of transhumance, described by the speech of a resident in the documentary *Sempre-Vivas* (2014, our translation): “the time for us to take care of our gardens is not the time of the meadows. And in the time of the meadows we already take care of our crops”. Part of the year, the families live close to the farmable areas, usually in wattle and daub or adobe houses, and when the *sempre-vivas* bloom, they live close to the flower fields, in caves – and these were taken over by the parks. From the debate about the ideologies of nature, we seek to demonstrate the limits and contradictions of State actions (in its various spheres) in recognizing the territorialities of these communities, which perpetuates and deepens the political disputes and conflicts that mark life of these peoples. In addition, we seek to reflect on the possibility of thinking about the practices of traditional communities as counter-hegemonic.

To substantiate the nature debate, we use authors from the Marxist tradition, especially Neil Smith (1988), and make our observations based on the notes from a fieldwork with an ethnographic report presented in Cerqueira (2019). The observations related to the ways of living, of constituting and building their housing in the *Mata dos Crioulos* community allows us to glimpse counter-hegemonic practices, in the sense of not fully adapting to the dominant ideology and values. However, we consider that the notion of cultural hegemony in the Gramscian sense results more in a concealment of aspects of the reality of these practices than in any aid to its understanding.

Nature – and the ways of knowing it, mastering it, etc. – is one of the main and oldest issues that refer to Western science, and we can say that it remains a mystery in the eyes of many. By pondering how a bourgeois ideology of nature was constructed, we will draw some parallels that elucidate the ways in which the State deals with the issue of housing in the

Brazilian countryside, which in our view are linked to the conceptions of external and universal nature. We do not consider that the lack of legitimacy given to the ways of living in houses with construction techniques of raw clay or living in caves are a direct consequence of the exclusion condition of this specific social group. This phenomenon is the result of a historical construction that involves several subjects over time. It is necessary to think about how the universality of the economic productive system governed by capital allows the existence of these particularities, as is the case with the ways of living in the *Mata dos Crioulos* community.

2 *Mata dos Crioulos: Traditional Practices and Ways of Surviving*

There are many traditional communities who occupy the southern region of Serra do Espinhaço in Minas Gerais, southeast Brazil, such as the *quilombolas* and indigenous people, who have, for long, inhabited that territory. Over time, these peoples have developed land occupation and survival strategies, in which their ways of living are transformed and reconciled with economic, cultural, and environmental activities.

The black population there is numerous, and was initially taken to the region by the Portuguese colonizers, who in the 18th and 19th centuries used their slave labor during the peak of the mining economic cycle. The presence of diamonds in the locality was “discovered” in 1729 (IBGE, 1959, p. 21), leading to an accelerated occupation of the place due to the promise of quick richness, a process that formed a small aristocracy and consolidated the rest of the population in evident poverty. Unlike other colonial Brazilian economic activities under the slave regime, such as, for example, sugar cane mills, mineral extraction provided a different spatial organization. Instead of masters and slaves being concentrated in the same place, as was the case with sugar mills, mining, due to the way its work is carried out, required the presence of an urban center of power control, while the activity was carried out elsewhere. Besides being considerably more dangerous and dirty than agriculture, the wealth generated by the mineral exploration activity is disproportionately greater, which enabled the configuration of a powerful and concentrated elite, which, as in any colony of mineral exploration, was abandoned after the period of abundance (Galeano, 2015).

As is common in the official Brazilian history, there is little information about the many enslaved black people who sought freedom and formed the local *quilombos* in the recorded history of the exploitation of diamond mines. Their presence was fundamental for the production of wealth that consolidated the local elites, and the erasure of the historical relevance of the black population is also an instrument of hegemonic social control.

In recent centuries, many conflicts have occurred in the territories around Diamantina/MG, but the situation has worsened in recent decades, since the implementation of the Rio Preto State Park (RPSP) in 1996 in the municipality of São Gonçalo do Rio Preto/MG, and expansion of the same park in 2005 in southern direction. This area corresponds to part of the territory of the *Mata dos Crioulos* community, where the “picking” of *sempre-viva* flowers takes place, one of the main economic activities of the community, which integrates the identity of this social group (Minas Gerais, 1994; 1998; 1998b). This overlapping of the areas of the RPSP and the community led to many changes in their ways of living, and especially in their ways of occupying, circulating, walking and establishing residences on the territory. At the time of flower “picking”, all the people of the community went to the tops of the mountain range, and stayed there for the entire time that the *sempre-viva* species flowered, something around four or five months. At that time, the flower pickers and *quilombolas* leave the houses located in the lower part of the territory and live in the *lapas*, which are types of caves, where they install fences and internal divisions for the accommodation of families with materials commonly found at that site and building techniques they've mastered for generations. In figures 1, 2, and 3, specimens of *lapas* still used by the population can be seen. In figures 4 and 5 it is possible to see one of the only houses in the community that preserves the thatched roof and the *barreamento*¹ as a form of maintenance and cleaning.

¹ *Barreamento* is a process in which clay is diluted in water and other materials – such as lemon juice, cattle manure, dyes, etc. – and ironed with fabric cloths on the surfaces of walls and floors for their maintenance.



Fig. 1: Entrance of a *lapa*, once used as a sale. Source: Cerqueira, 2019.



Fig. 2: Entrance area of a lapa. Source: Cerqueira, 2019.



Fig. 3: External view of the entrance and fence of a *lapa*. Source: Cerqueira, 2019.



Fig. 4: Facade of one of the only thatched roof houses in the *Mata dos Crioulos* community. Source: Cerqueira, 2019.



Fig. 5: Furnace and clay floor. Source: Cerqueira, 2019.

These Parks were implemented in a Conservation Unit (CU) regime of restricted use, which restricts the community's access to its own territory, where the fields with the greatest diversity of species of *sempre-viva* flowers were located; as well as the caves considered best located by them, in an area that constituted a “neighborhood” of *lapas*. That is, the community had its territoriality affected after part of its area was subtracted by those who arrived from outside, claiming they wanted to “protect nature”. From the moment the Park was implemented and its area fenced, the ways of living in the territory of the people of *Mata dos Crioulos* were substantially modified to adapt to the new reality of restrictions to which they were forced to adapt.

The lack of recognition and neglect of this way of living by the State, both in the fields where they picked flowers and in their homes during the traditional practice, resulted in conflicts that still exist in the daily life of the community and that causes significant changes in their ways of living.

Previously, the community lived in conditions of relative invisibility before the State, as their lands were not the target of any kind of political, economic or cultural interest, except for recent investments by mining companies that aimed to settle there in the last decade. After suffering the violent and truculent actions of the State through environmental agencies to remove them from their territory, visibility became necessary for their survival. It is in this context that an investigation into the ways of living and the ways of housing of the people of *Mata dos Crioulos* is relevant.

Mata dos Crioulos and other *sempre-viva* flower picking communities, at a time of intense territorial disputes and conflicts with environmental agencies, started a joint organization, which gave rise to the Commission in Defense of the Rights of Extractive Communities (CODECEX in Portuguese). This articulation of the various flower-picking communities occurred during the implementation of the *Sempre-Vivas* National Park (Sempre-Vivas NP) in the mid-2000s, which was also a source of conflicts related to the restriction of the use of the territory of other communities of flower pickers.

The housing issue, generally in Brazilian human science, is a topic that has been extensively studied in urban contexts, in which contradictions are highlighted by existing conflicts due to social inequality expressed in the production of space in cities. When this topic is addressed in rural spaces, normally the focus of studies is on public policies that interfere in the dynamics of the countryside and reconfigure the peasants' ways of life through State action. In order to understand the housing issue in *Mata dos Crioulos*, a *quilombola* community, or rural black community, and *sempre-viva* flowers pickers, which has already had its existence ignored or devalued by the State on several occasions, it would not be possible to rely on any of these approaches.

We believe that the way that enables greater understanding of the housing issue in this context is by relating what was observed in a fieldwork that used the participant observation methodology, carried out in 2018 (Cerqueira, 2019), with the notions of nature and hegemony of Western society from a Marxist perspective. We believe that these notions are central to the conflicts observed in the *Mata dos Crioulos* community, and from these it is possible to make fertile observations that contribute to the understanding of these practical problems.

Participant observation was considered the most appropriate methodology for fieldwork in a community in a situation of conflict, as it allows for a closer relationship between researcher and the researched person/people. We followed the guidelines of Foot-Whyte (1980) who reported his research experience stating the importance of the process of entering the group and the insertion of this strange subject, and the way in which the social practices of the community are altered by his presence, as a subject who is active in that context. To condense the information collected, the ethnographic report was the most appropriate form considered in Cerqueira (2019), as it allows the researcher's perceptions to be pointed out at the same time as the narrative unfolds. To elaborate the present reflections in this text, we appropriated the experience of participant observation reported in the aforementioned text to formulate theoretical elaborations from the keys to understanding the ideology and hegemony of the notions of nature.

3 Ideologies and Notions of Nature: Hegemony?

Initially, it is worthy to point out that we consider the term ideology according to the notes of István Mészáros (2004, p. 65, our translation), who defines it as a “specific form of social conscience”. This is not dissociated from and is not opposed to science, as any neutrality promised by it is not possible, and the search for knowledge comes from the purpose of transforming reality. The knowledge produced is not neutral, and neither is the role of the researcher in the field. With this awareness, the surveys of the research and the writings elaborated here were carried out.

We chose in this text to work with “notions” and not with “concepts”, because we do not necessarily deal with the academic dispute between the definitions of housing, ways of living, ideology or hegemony. These conceptions are linked to social world views, related to ideology according to Michel Löwy (2002, p. 13, our translation): “a structural and organic set of ideas, representations, theories, and doctrines, which are expressions of social interests linked to the social positions of groups or

classes.”. We see the housing issue in this specific case as the clash of hegemonic notions linked to the ideology of nature, which has different meanings in relation to the social group that appropriates it.

It is possible to state that construction techniques that use raw clay are depreciated in Brazil, even when we observe common sense comments from community residents. This is mainly due to the Brazilian concrete industry, which established its hegemony throughout the 20th century in the country, according to Roberto Eustaáquio Santos and Bernardo Oliveira (2006). This gave rise to the myths that wattle and daub constructions are the cause of the proliferation of kissing bugs that transmit Chagas disease, among other beliefs that devalued these traditional construction techniques. This traditional knowledge was disappearing from the life of the Brazilian population in general through this devaluation. Santos and Oliveira (2006, [no pagination], our translation) also point out that “[concrete] is seen as the natural result of a long evolution: the adobe from the colonial period would have been replaced by brick masonry from the 19th century, to finally arrive at concrete, a sign of modernization, progress and development”. Clay buildings are commonly seen as a synonymous of poverty – antagonistic to the hegemonic notion of progress and well-being. In other cases, these constructions are observed from a romantic point of view – originating from a predominantly urban population that seeks refuge from urban life in a supposed proximity to nature through permaculture², without realizing the artificiality of it. These positions are intrinsic to the ways of seeing and perceiving the rural and the countryside in Brazil, and also to the vision of nature, which Neil Smith (1988) presents as the bourgeois ideology of nature, consolidating conceptions of nature as *external* and *universal*, a relationship that we explain below.

When thinking of nature as external, it is considered as something that does not relate in any way to society or culture, static and unchanging. In this way, clay constructions are seen as incompatible with the development already achieved by society, if there are more suitable techniques, why continue using something old? However, it is not taken into account that in Brazil, these materials are more suitable for the climate, mainly due to their thermal inertia. (Cerqueira, 2019, p. 159, our translation).

The conjuncture that built the characterization of these techniques as inferior to others in the population's imagination is fundamental for understanding the existing conflict between traditional knowledge and the hegemony posed by the most diverse agents of capitalism. If the *quilombola* population itself says that a “house” is defined only by the construction with ceramic bricks and cement, and that houses built with traditional techniques were considered shacks, in a pejorative way, what do they think of these people who live in caves for part of the year?

When nature is considered a universal notion, a romantic vision is created around nature itself, and human beings and society in general are just one element among all of nature. This bucolic aspect also fails to perceive nature as something socially produced, and disregards the role of anthropic interventions in the environment in a dialectical relationship, and places society as just another subject, subjected by nature, which is not capable of affecting it in any way. Thus, we see how a conception that romantically exacerbates clay constructions can be constructed. This is “permaculture” – a term used in urban and academic circles –, which enables proximity to the earth and brings a supposed individual well-being built on the ideal of a harmonious relationship between society and nature.

The definitions of permaculture mentioned above relate to a vision of universal nature, as defined by Smith (1988), in which human society appears only as one of the parts of a natural system that is supposedly harmonious. Realizing an imbalance in the relationship between society and nature, a group of environmental activists created this term in an attempt to regulate this relationship. Not only that, those who use this term still make use of an appreciation of ancestral knowledge, attributed precisely to traditional communities, but only in this way can they be estimated for being in agreement with the subjects who found dissatisfaction with the hegemonic ways of life of urban centers. Construction techniques that use clay are romanticized

² Permaculture was a term coined from the junction of the words permanent and agriculture, “permanent agriculture”, created by an Australian in the year of 1976. The term is defined as “a system of planning, project and design of properties (rural or urban) and of sustainable and productive communities (neighbourhoods, towns, cities)” (IPOEMA, 2016, p. 15, our translation) and the “systemic and holistic thinking that we are led to develop for the implementation and readaptation of our systems (residences, properties, cities, bioregions) towards Permanent Culture” (IPOEMA, 2016, p. 15, our translation).

as a way of returning to nature, to bucolic life – as criticized by Raymond Williams (1989), to harmony between man and nature.

Fernanda Monteiro (2011), who deals directly with the issue of *sempre-viva* flower pickers, states that

the historical materialization of the ‘cult of the wild’ through the creation of parks takes place mainly in former tropical European colonies, in rural areas often occupied by indigenous peoples and traditional peasant communities. Such groups carry other myths and signs related to nature, which support other social worldviews and other ways of relating to it, not recognizing themselves in the society/nature dichotomy. (Monteiro, 2011, p. 78, our translation).

This so-called “cult of the wild” can be understood within a dichotomy between society and nature, perpetuated by the external and universal conceptions of nature, as presented by Smith (1988). Traditional communities, however, do not recognize themselves in this dichotomy.

If for bourgeois society, at a certain point, nature was considered hostile, now it is found in a “[domesticated] form, sanitized, spread out on coffee tables, nature was a belonging, just like the cat in the house. family” (Smith, 1988, p. 38, our translation), subservient to man. Smith (1988) also states that “just as the vision of a hostile nature had its social function – legitimizing the attack on nature – the same occurred regarding the vision of a virtuous nature.” (Smith, p. 39, our translation). Each of these conceptions has a very specific social function, which perpetuates the hegemonic and dichotomous notion of nature.

Virtuous nature, which can be worshiped by society, promotes the nostalgic vision that reinforces the ideal of that supposed “return” to nature and subsequently legitimizes the urban bourgeois thought of “preservation” of nature (Williams, 1989). Traditional communities are seen by Western society at the same time as hostile, the wild to be dominated; and as a friend, who represent direct contact with nature, who serve as an example to be followed in solving environmental problems. The same applies to the perception of the ways of living in the *Mata dos Crioulos* community: the *lapas* and clay houses are considered socially backward and obsolete, and, for that, must be transformed to make way for the technological and modern, which would currently be masonry and concrete. When these techniques are appropriated by an urban middle class that seeks the aforementioned “return” to nature, clay buildings are praised and seen as something desirable for urban life, which is supposedly no longer able to “connect to nature”, as if this was a universal entity of which humans are only part of the totality. The same can be said about the *lapas*, which can serve as shelter for backpackers who spend their weekends in the aforementioned Parks, but cannot shelter the families that have occupied them for generations.

On the subject, Smith (1988) continues: “[a] exteriority is replaced by universality, at least on the weekend.” (Smith, p. 44, our translation). Thus, nature becomes a vacation trip, something temporary, which each one chooses when they can “reconnect”. In the unequal social structure consolidated by the capitalist system, this implies unequal access to nature and its conceptions by different social groups. These two conceptions are related and contradictory to each other. “The external conception is a direct result of the objectification of nature in the production process.” (Smith, 1988, p. 44, our translation). It is then possible to state that both conceptions have a social and political function: the ideology of bourgeois nature.

It is important to understand that the human-nature argument is not valid if, for whatever reason, nature's condition of exteriority is denied. For ‘human nature’ to fulfill its ideological function, there must be a separate nature with its own inviolable powers, for it is in this nature that the human-nature argument has its basis. To maintain this powerful ideological concept with all its fragile contradiction, there is a singular and revealing omission of the concept of nature. By definition, external nature excludes human activity, and so does universal nature, except in a more abstract sense that labour is necessary and dignified. (Smith, 1988, p. 46, our translation).

If both conceptions exclude the presence and human activity – considered by Neil Smith in a Lukacsian reading as “labour” in general – from nature, how are these ways of living considered within these conceptions? In the case of *lapas*, they can serve travelers as a temporary shelter, or they can be appreciated as an archaeological site, as this way of living was only acceptable when the human species “was not evolved”, and can only be recognized as a museum piece, symbolizing part of human evolution, untouchable. For the *sempre-viva* flower pickers, who use these *lapas* as shelter in the 21st century as

a way to help and optimize their activity in the flower fields, the right to use the caves is denied by the State, as these cannot actually be homes within these conceptions of nature that exclude human activity from its essence, a fact that we seek to oppose based on the unity between society and nature.

The ideology of nature, here, operates in this process of dissolving the “blame” for the environmental crisis on society as a whole from the denial of practical activity: at the same time that it is presented as an agent, part of nature that destroys it (universal), it is outside (external), observing its own performance, and no viable solution is presented. When everyone is responsible or guilty, it is not possible to identify who or what is truly responsible. We understand that this

starts from an abstract conception of equality in which everyone is supposedly equal in the face of the environmental liabilities produced, as if everyone had the same degree of responsibility in the face of the problems generated, forgetting that we are unequal in terms of the economic assets produced. (Lima, 2015, p. 111, our translation).

In the case of *quilombolas* and *sempre-viva* flower pickers, on the contrary, the blame for environmental problems is not attributed to society in general. The subject who supposedly damages nature is very well identified, blamed and even criminalized. Not only because of the physical and verbal violence reported by residents, but also the lack of recognition of their ways of living and housing can be considered institutional violence. If we consider, in addition to these issues raised, the territorial division of labor worldwide, we can reflect more deeply on the Brazilian case.

Colonies were exploited for their resources, with no regard for the well-being of local (usually indigenous) populations. Mining and exploitation of energy and forest resources tend to follow a similar logic. But the environmental effects are localized: they leave behind an uneven geographic landscape of abandoned mining towns, depleted soils, toxic waste dumps and devalued heritage values. *The environmental benefits lie elsewhere* (Harvey, 2016, p. 238, our translation and emphasis).

Ideology continues to reaffirm, based on the dichotomous conception of society and nature, social inequality on the most diverse scales. As Mészáros (2004) observes: “[the] dominant ideology tends to produce a categorical structure that mitigates the current conflicts and eternalizes the structural parameters of the established social world” (Mészáros, p. 69, our translation, original emphasis). When the responsibility for the environmental crisis falls on the entire population in a generalized way, this is exactly a denial that classes consume, appropriate and produce nature in different ways, and once again directs the resolution of problems to a dead end.

We see that ideology, especially that imposed on nature and its relationship with society, plays an important role in defining the paths of the ways of existing in traditional communities.

We emphasize that the notions of nature, understood here in terms of the ideology of nature posed by Neil Smith (1988), corroborate with the perpetuation of the hegemony of capital as a social relationship – both in its dimension of universality and externality in relation to society. It is precisely through readings that place only the notion of hegemony at the center of the debate that we lose sight of the contradictions of reality, as an appearance is created that what is not identical to the hegemonic can automatically be considered a counterposition. The contradictions of the conflicts of traditional communities in the political field are evident from the policies of cultural heritage and natural heritage, as we point out from the study of the same case in Cerqueira (2021). The issue on the ways of living of the *Mata dos Crioulos* community shows us that, despite having non-hegemonic elements in their traditional practices, their way of existing still occurs in terms of hegemony or universality. This way of living is not necessarily opposed to such terms, but is amalgamated in such a way as not to lose its essence. Therefore, hegemony (re)poses counter-hegemony in a dialectical relationship.

4 Final Considerations

The transformation of the condition of traditional communities is not feasible through the romanization of the communities or the attempt to simply exalt their ways of life. As we can see in the case of *Mata dos Crioulos*, the State's indifference to the community's problems is not news. The condition of enslavement of the black population, now a remnant of *quilombolas*, left

this portion of the population in the ruins of a homeland built from the exploitation of the land, and the most isolated communities remained for a long time without access to basic rights as Brazilian citizens. The recognition of the remnants is nothing more than an attempt to correct a historical debt, something necessary, but that does not guarantee this population a worthy condition of existence.

The relations of social domination are not a consequence of a specific consciousness of the dominant class towards the dominated, but it happens that way because it is the only possible way to allow the accumulation of capital. If we do not take into account that social relations are guided and increasingly deepened in this logic, it will not be possible to overcome the logic of class society and commodity fetishism, where relations between people seem to be relations between things, and vice versa, as Marx (2017) states in the first chapter of his most relevant work.

We do not consider that the lack of legitimacy given to ways of living in houses with construction techniques made of raw clay or *lapas* is a direct consequence of the condition of social exclusion of this group, or even of considering these as hegemonic or counter-hegemonic. This phenomenon, permeated by several contradictions, is the result of a historical construction that involves several subjects over time. It is not possible to state that only the ideology built from the conceptions of nature is the reason why these ways of living are not recognized, but this ideology certainly helps us to reveal the fact that there are countless factors that contribute to this reality. By considering an architectural practice as counter-hegemonic, based on the Gramscian notion of cultural hegemony, as a series of ideas, values, beliefs and behaviors proposed by dominant groups, naturalized and reproduced by the social body, we are at risk of just replacing the condition of hegemony that places dominant groups as conscious agents of the social relationship of capital, and not as subjects conditioned by the fetishistic character of this universal social relationship. This demonstrates how the search for the transformation of reality is not an easy task, and it is essential that we have in mind the construction of a critique of reality, and not just reduce observations about reality to any concepts. Understanding the hegemonic condition of reality not as an absolute reality, but as an appearance of capital's social relations, as we presented in the case of the ways of living and housing in the *Mata dos Crioulos* community, is just one more step towards the critical construction of reality.

References

Cerqueira, M. C. S., 2019. *Andanças e territorialidades: As contradições da questão da moradia na comunidade da Mata dos Crioulos*. Master's Thesis. Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora (Instituto de Ciências Humanas).

Cerqueira, M. C. S., 2021. 'As contradições do patrimônio cultural e natural na luta pelo território dos apanhadores de flores sempre-vivas / Contradictions between cultural and natural heritage in the sempre-vivas flower harvesters territorial struggle / Las contradicciones del patrimonio cultural y natural en la lucha por el territorio de los recogedores de flores siemprevivas', *Revista Nera*, (56), pp. 72–92. DOI: [10.47946/rnera.v0i56.7147](https://doi.org/10.47946/rnera.v0i56.7147). [Accessed 1 February 2022].

Foot-Whyte, W., 1980. Treinando a observação participante. In Guimarães, A. Z. (Ed.). *Desvendando máscaras sociais*. pp. 77-86. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Francisco Alves Editora S.A.

Galeano, E., 2015. *As veias abertas da América Latina*. Porto Alegre: L&PM.

Harvey, D., 2016. A relação do capital com a natureza. In Harvey, D. (Ed.). *17 contradições e o fim do capitalismo*. 1 ed., pp. 229-243. São Paulo: Editora Boitempo.

IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística / Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), 1959. *Enciclopédia dos Municípios Brasileiros*. XXV Volume. Jurandyr Pires Ferreira (Org). Rio de Janeiro, IBGE.

IPOEMA (Instituto de Permacultura / Permaculture Institute), 2016. *Introdução à permacultura: seja responsável por sua própria existência*. Training course booklet. Brasília. Available at: https://materiais.ipoema.org.br/download-e-book-permacultura?utm_campaign=24-11-18_entregaagradecimento_e-book_introducao_a_permacultura&utm_medium=email&utm_source=RD+Station. [Accessed 27 Jan. 2018].

Lima, E. L., 2015. O mito do “fator antrópico” no discurso ambiental geográfico. *Mercator*, 14(3), pp. 109-122. DOI: [10.4215/RM2015.1403.0007](https://doi.org/10.4215/RM2015.1403.0007). [Accessed: 13 July 2018].

Löwy, M., 2002. *Ideologias e Ciência Social: elementos para uma análise marxista*. São Paulo: Cortez.

Marx, K., 2017. *O Capital*. Livro I – O processo de produção do capital. São Paulo: Boitempo.

Mészáros, I., 2004. *O poder da ideologia*. São Paulo: Ensaio.

Government of Minas Gerais, 1994. *Decreto no 35.611, de 1 de junho de 1994*. Cria o Parque Estadual do Rio Preto, no Município de São Gonçalo do Rio Preto. Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais.

Government of Minas Gerais, 1998. *Decreto no 39.398, de 21 de janeiro de 1998*. Cria o Parque Estadual do Pico do Itambé, e dá outras providências. Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais.

Government of Minas Gerais, 1998b. *Decreto 39.399 de 21 de janeiro de 1998*. Cria a Área de Proteção Ambiental das Águas Vertentes. Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais.

Monteiro, F. T., 2011. *Os(as) apanhadores(as) de flores e o parque nacional das sempre-vivas (MG): travessias e contradições ambientais*. Master's degree. Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (Instituto de Geociências).

Santos, R. E., Oliveira, B., 2006. A cultura do concreto armado no Brasil: educação e deseducação dos produtores do espaço construído. In: *Anais do IV Congresso Brasileiro de História da Educação*. Goiânia: Universidade Católica de Goiânia.

SEMPRE-VIVAS, 2014. [film] (23min59s). Directed by Tiago Carvalho. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quD0HPYOxRo>. [Accessed 1 Aug. 2022].

Smith, N., 1988. *Desenvolvimento Desigual: Natureza, Capital e a Produção do Espaço*. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil.

Willians, R., 1989. *O Campo e a Cidade na História e na Literatura*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.