

# Knowledge Meeting and university extension: educational practices between the School and the Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa/PB

**Luan Gomes dos Santos de Oliveira**

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6642-0006>

**Abstract:** This text was written based on the sharing of the dialogue circle between knowledge, based on the relationship between health, environment, art and educational practices. It was a proposal built by collective experiences, that is, based on the daily life of students who make up the Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa/PB, at the M. E. F. Irmã Iraides Holanda Lavor School, located between the ranches that make up the Gypsy Community, where Early Childhood Education and Elementary School I (1st to 5th grade) are offered, covering children from 4 to 11 years of age, in the school years of 2022 and 2023. Thus, the intersectionality between gender-race/ethnicity (ecofeminism), health (users' rights to health from the Organic Health Law – LOS (8080/90), National Humanization Policy (PNH), Health Care Policy for Children and Adolescents) and environment (political ecology) mediated by educational practices from the Freirean perspective were fulfilled as an itinerary. This proposal was configured as an extension action, integrating health, education, art and the environment in the construction of educational practices for the integral training of individuals and institutions covered by this experience. Finally, this extension experience was able to provide reflections by the students participating in the project, so that they could perceive themselves as learning beings in the dialogue with the Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa/PB, as well as it was possible to prepare a booklet on the main human and social rights related to this traditional population.

**Keywords:** attention education; gypsy ecology; university.

## 1 Introduction

This text was written based on the experience of the Knowledge Meeting, a movement started in 2010 at the University of Brasília by the National Institute of Science and Technology for Inclusion in Higher Education and Research (INCT) for Inclusion in Higher Education and Research (INCTI/UnB/CNPQ), whose expansion has already reached 14 public universities in national territory, one in Colombia and one in Austria. The Project was carried out in a concrete and effective way, being a decolonizing proposal of academic thought and practice in the scope of higher education and research. The focus of this



Esta obra está licenciada com uma licença Creative Commons Atribuição-NãoComercial-SemDerivações 4.0 Internacional.

movement is the inclusion of masters of the knowledge of traditional peoples, indigenous peoples, Afro-Brazilians, quilombolas, gypsies and popular cultures in direct dialogue with universities and public schools. As a result, the proximity to the Calon Gypsy Community in the municipality of Sousa, in Paraíba's High Backlands, led to the construction of a Knowledge Meeting among university, school and community. Therefore, it is relevant to situate the Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa, Paraíba, Brazil, in this text as the field of this anthropological experience.

The Calon Gypsy Community, theme of this university extension, is located throughout the Brazilian Northeast. The *lóci* of extension action turned to Roma peoples from Sousa/PB, school and UFCG, a region of Paraiban backlands. It is in this city that one of the largest parts of the Roma population in Brazil is found. The community consists of three groups that are territorially located close to BR 230, 3 km from the municipality's center, on the city's outskirts, near the Federal Institute of Education and Technology of Paraíba/IFPB. For more than 30 years, approximately, since the 1980s, these groups have become sedentarized in the city's territory and, parallel to this, they have acted in the political and identity construction, building territorialities. We understand the concept of territory and territoriality as important dimensions for an understanding of the idea of land refusal by gypsies. Territory refers to "[...] a very broad sense, which goes beyond the use made of it by ethology and ethnology. [...] can be relative both to a lived space and to a perceived system within which a subject feels 'at home'" (Guattari; Rolnik, 2007, p. 388). It demands from the local government, the State and Federal sphere, responsibility to be collectively producing public policies with and for the gypsies in the health field.

The Knowledge Meeting movement is led in Brazil by the Anthropology area. Its main motivation is to propose and expand the dialogue between university and society. With the movement's success, Faculties of Education of the Federal University of Minas Gerais and the State University of Ceará got engaged, and later, that of the Federal University of Campina Grande.

Listening to experiences of the gypsy community, through people who stand out in its organization, such as: a gypsy teacher, a gypsy nurse, a political leader who understands about land regularization; was of paramount importance to promote an enhancement of educational experiences and practices around the Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa/PB. It is relevant, from now on, to situate the educational phenomenon beyond the formal context, inserting it in a broader perspective, which articulates education and anthropology, "education as correspondence" (Ingold, 2018).

From this meeting, new possibilities for partnerships with masters of popular culture are made possible, and thus more knowledge production emerges, as occurred with one of the students who experienced this experience during the process of preparing his thesis,

inspired by his listening, he chose to work on the following theme: *the Wisdom of a Guardian of the Dinosaurs Valley and the Reflections of this in the Formation of an Anthropological and Heritage Education*. From an ethical-political point of view, the Knowledge Meeting has collaborated directly with the creation of intercultural degrees in human sciences, allowing the entry of students from Traditional Communities and Peoples, who were placed on the sidelines and forgotten by the history of education of the Brazilian nation's training elites.

To this end, dialogue activities were offered between academic and civil society on the subject in focus, seeking to strengthen the inseparable tripod among teaching-research-extension. Events such as workshops, mini-courses, lectures and seminars were also promoted in person. Understanding the need to listen to the gypsies of Sousa through university extension, we carried out visits and experienced the community's environment, from their housing, sanitation conditions, water distribution, access to the city and their rights to education, health, housing.

Problems of the contemporary world express a high level of complexity of social reality, giving rise to contexts of historical, political, cultural, environmental, gender, race/ethnicity, health. These particularities cannot be understood from a fragmented perspective. Thus, an attitude based on praxis is required, enabling the politicization of life and ideas of both UFCG, school and the Calon Gypsy Community students.

Paraiban High Backlands, inserted in local and global dynamics, also reflect the need for extension actions to train critical people to combat problems related to health, ethnic-racial prejudice, housing, living with drought, gender equality and the construction of an awareness that includes the environment as a right of humanity, and art as an element of expression of the social existence of Gypsy peoples.

We understand that the fight against these issues occurs precisely from the clarification that people need to acquire during their development process, in order to make them aware and critical people, regarding their rights and duties in the social scenario. Therefore, this university extension project contemplated some Sustainable Development goals, such as: health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; peace, justice and effective institutions, sustainable cities and communities.

These problems have intensified in the context of the contemporary climate crisis, which affects gypsies with regard to environmental racism, due to the contradictory scenario that has massacred society, marked by the water crisis, investment in agribusiness, the growing number of violence against women, biopiracy of traditional knowledge, due to the deepening of social inequalities rooted in the capitalist production mode predatory of natural resources, racial and spatial segregation, privatization of health, and gender inequality.

The progress in tackling these problems is concrete, but we are experiencing a worldwide setback in terms of guaranteeing social, cultural and human rights. Such issues affect

in a harmful way the entire Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa/PB, which demands actions from the Government and recognition as Traditional Peoples, such as indigenous and quilombolas. These issues affect the community, which suffers from lack of basic sanitation, unequal distribution of water for human consumption and development of activities. Thus, the need for public investment in artistic practices, such as dance, music, craftsmanship. This demand still lacks public policies that value Roma culture.

Such themes are interconnected to the Pedagogical Political Project of the Social Sciences course, Rural Education, Social Work and Law at UFCG, and Humanities and Environment (Social Work, Law, History, Environment), especially when disciplines of Agrarian Question, Health Policy, Geography, History, Social Rights, Sociology, Philosophy are associated. They become a space for politicization, as well as an ethical and political commitment to build a society that breaks with gender, race/ethnic inequalities and biodiversity destruction.

The dialogue between knowledge, based on the University-Society relationship, will be the horizon for creating possibilities in this text, which is committed to a liberating and emancipatory educational practice. Therefore, we argue that the relevance of this text, in its social expression, is in strengthening the participation of students as people of rights, who engage politically in everyday life, become multipliers of a critical proposal of emancipatory education that passes through the school and goes to the streets. By understanding that the school is the space for citizens formation, and is also a space to teach participation in life in society.

## **2 The University and the dialogue with the Calon Gypsy Community from Sousa/PB – learning the education of attention**

The University maintains a relationship of knowledge exchange and social experiences to politically form a critical citizen, capable of recognizing himself as protagonist of its history in the context of collectivities. It is in this context that listening to the Calon Gypsy Community has posed a challenge to the University, in the sense that it is in a condition to learn from Gypsies about the reality in which they live, understanding that the relationship between traditional knowledge – expressions of ancestral wisdom of traditional peoples and communities that interpret the world through the dynamics of orality – and scientific knowledge operates by distinction and complementarity, not by hierarchizing knowledge.

For this, the relationship among University – School – Calon Gypsy Community, allowed the possibility of reflection on the phenomenon of education, specifically basic education and its repercussions on the Gypsy community. With Rodrigues and Paula (2021, p. 401), we understand that,

[...] the schooling of Roma children is still little discussed in the academic productions and educational practices of basic education schools in Brazil. It is necessary, in any educational environment, not only to comply with the curricula, but to humanize, to train for citizenship and emancipation. In the curricula it is necessary to respect students' cultural differences, particularities and characteristics of each region in which they reside.

So, how to guide, how to identify demands, extension actions with the Calon Gypsy Community from Sousa/PB in a context of struggles for access to rights to health, education, art and environment? Thus, this question, the basis of this paper development, starts from analytical categories of anthropological thought: claims for recognition and redistribution, identity/ethnicity and social and public policy rights, socio-environmental conflicts, health and environment, including the argument that differences are important markers, not only cultural, but that they institute inequalities in the field of rights (Fraser, 2007).

Once, when hearing about the Calon gypsy people in the municipality of Sousa/PB, curiosity was initially aroused by a motivation to know mythical narratives that involve this people's culture. The approach took place through readings in the field of political and cultural anthropology that researches the gypsies, having as political and epistemological matrix, the Latin American anthropologists Patrícia Goldfarb and Mércia Batista, references present in the reflections of this text. They have inaugurated, to a certain extent, in Brazil and Brazilian Northeast, a research field around the way of existing and acting of Roma ethnic groups. It was observed that among ethnic minorities and so-called traditional peoples, gypsy peoples are still one of the ethnicities made invisible by prejudice, which excludes and affects their material and symbolic existence; a fact verified when listening to an expression of indignation from a gypsy of the Calon people: "My people want the right to come and go, pass and stay if they wish" (Oliveira, 2023, p. 35).

Each of the agents collaborates in a unique sense with a way of being-feeling-knowledge in a cosmological horizon, capable of teaching a theoretical-epistemological principle, built at the interface between those who make up this experience:

We will evoke a field of study that would assume for itself the responsibility of learning with the widest possible variety of approaches; that would seek to rely, faced with the question of how to live, on the wisdom and experience of all inhabitants of the world, regardless of their origins, their livelihoods, their circumstances and their places of residence. This is the field I defend in these pages. I must call it anthropology (Ingold, 2018, p. 07).

Thus, the anthropological basis that was woven into this experience was accompanied by the social, material and symbolic mode of existence that each one composes in a particular way. That is, each community and movement also act as researchers who exer-

cise attention before the world. This type of attitude intends to anthropological science in the sense of including in it a self-questioning, in which anthropological doing incorporates a plural dynamic, which stimulates coexistence, and plurality of stories.

The Knowledge Meeting project has been working in a pioneering and horizontal way, enabling the “curricularization of extension” that is being placed within the grid formations of several courses in the university context. It has its version corresponding to UFCG-Public Schools-Traditional Communities – Popular Cultures nucleus in a dialogue that is based on academic-institutional interests of teachers from the following disciplinary areas, all with a transdisciplinary vocation: Social Sciences, environmental studies, Rural Education, Quilombola School Education, Reading Practice and Text Production, Literature and Culture, Psychology, Human Rights.

The conception of Gypsy School Education assumed in this text starts from the argument that, “[...] what if we started with the ‘e’ of education, and rewrote education as *e-education*? The ‘e’ comes from *ex*, meaning ‘outside’. Education, then, would not be about instilling knowledge *in the* minds of novices, but about how *to* lead them to the world”(Ingold, 2018, p. 43). It is in this sense that this conception of education meets the way of life of the Calon Gypsy Community, with regard to an education that walks towards life, to know the world, a type of education distinct from the Western educational molds.

When entering the Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa/PB to develop the Knowledge Meeting project, a participatory action methodology was proposed, having as its centrality the Freirean dialogue circle, which aims, in its primary intention, at the transformation of the people involved. As a theoretical-methodological foundation, we owe it to Popular and Dialogical Education, with scholars such as Thiollent (2008), Morin (2001), Freire (1979), Iasi (2004), Ingold (2018) as exponents. Because this experience consisted of a social, political and cultural action, in which there is a visceral relationship between University and Society, guided by the principle of interdisciplinarity.

In the first phase, we visited the collective actors of this process, the Calon Gypsy Community from Sousa/PB; M. E. F Irmã Iraides Holanda Lavor School, located between the ranches that form this Gypsy Community, which offers Early Childhood Education and Elementary School (1st to 5th grade) covering children from 4 to 11 years of age. At first, the project was disseminated to the partner institutions, motivating a process of participation and dialogue. In addition to listening through conversation circles to the problems related to the rights experienced by students and community, we, then, discussed the themes proposed in the project. It should be added that these themes were recorded in short videos on human rights related to Roma peoples in Brazil, as a product to be disseminated in Paraiban High Backlands.



In the second phase, we dialogued about the themes proposed in the project, building knowledge workshops among university's students involved in the project with the schools' students. We have recorded the experiences through photographs and collection of written information, so that they can express their interests by themes and, then, discuss, together with the subjects related to the proposal contained in this Extension Project.

In the third phase, we have built debates around the chosen themes and conducted by the health-art-education-environment relationship in the context of educational practices, and associated with the intersectional gender-ethnicity-race-class debate. In the fourth and final phase, we prepared the final report, with the presentation and analysis of all activities carried out in the project development process.

After the end of each activity it was proposed the construction of an evaluation space anchored in self-criticism, in order to understand the actions developed and allow the critical formation of individuals free, ethical and responsible for their word. The instrument of conversation circle was essential to establish a dialogical relationship. Evaluations were recorded in writing and, when possible, recorded in image and video, exposing the experience reports and evaluations related to the project.

### **3 The sociohistorical-ethnic-racial-gender and ecology contexts of the Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa/PB**

The scenario of this experience assumed praxis and interdisciplinarity as an extensionist horizon. The theoretical-practical fields that will be the basis for extension actions are health, education, art and environment, which are situated in the context of social life, through intersectional expressions of gender, race/ethnicity, as complex categories of the social being. Which means that the issues are crossed by this intersection of gender-ethnicity-race-social class. As an example, the privatization of health in the context of neoliberalism has affected mainly the poor, traditional (gypsies), black and women populations, which in addition to rebutting the class aspect, has repercussions on the dimension of ethnicity and race, since the perverse effects of health privatization policy fall on those deprived of existing material conditions.

With the environmental or ecological dimension, we must realize that we are experiencing a crisis on planetary scale, which has its consequences in the water crisis, in non-investment in family farming and support for large producers and agribusiness defenders, in addition to perceiving the fragile awareness of society in relation to specificities of environmental problems that affect the place where they live, the Earth. This tension between health and environment has been fueled by a model of development and economic growth that

prey on biodiversity, its native peoples and their traditional wisdoms. We live in a productivist, disposable logic that encourages consumption and commodification of life.

Schools are institutions that form people, so the relevance of this project is directed to them, as it contains in its constitution the diversity of cultures, knowledge, ethnicities, diverse gender expressions, becoming a fundamental space to think and elaborate actions to face the problems of daily life in the Calon Gypsy Community. In the work *Communication and Extension*, Paulo Freire (2018), when reporting his social and popular experiences, makes us think about the streets, as spaces of manifestation of the life and knowledge of historical subjects, as well as pointing out schools as spaces of expression of collective and social identities. All this, in addition to a colonial relationship, but emphasizing the horizontal, dialogical relationship between University and Society.

As a social experience of university extension, it includes complexity and interdisciplinarity in its fabric, opposing a dogmatic understanding of law. It does not commit itself to an explanation only of legalistic or normative bias, but submits them to the dynamics of social life. Take as an example the struggle for gender equality historically carried out by women, fighting for health rights, political participation, equal wages, contributed to the entry of these struggles into the 1988's Citizen Constitution in Brazil, with emphasis on promoting women's health, combating violence, and the Maria da Penha Law, which provided the implementation of public policies for women.

Allied to this context is the socio-environmental problem, in which many social movements are environmentalizing their struggles, such as feminism, and from this space ecofeminism emerged; according to Shiva (1990), "[...]a new term for a wise and old knowledge", emerged from several social movements of the late seventies and early eighties: feminism, the pacifist movement and the ecological movement. Although the term was first used by Françoise d'Eaubonne (Shiva, 1990), it only became popular in the context of many activities and protests against environmental destruction that began in the wake of recurring ecological disasters. Many women participated in the United States Congress, in March, 1980, this event was based on the relationship between feminism, militarization, health and ecology.

Ecofeminism refers to the relation and totality of theory and practice; it affirms the special strength and integrity of all living things. For us, the perch should be considered along with the community's need for water and sanitation. We are a movement that identifies with women and we believe that we have to do a special work in these moments of danger. We consider that the devastation of the Earth and its beings, at the hands of capitalist corporations, sometimes threatens life through annihilation. Ecofeminism also fights against the logic of patriarchy, which is the logic of capital, which dominates nature and destroys it, making it a commodity.



The ethnic-racial dimension cannot be decontextualized from the discussions of environment, art, education and health, historically it was the exploited black populations that served as a commodity to build the capitalist empire. Still present in Western societies, racism against blacks also accompanies racism against Gypsies and the places they inhabit, segregated as scum, poor, suffer discrimination that is reproduced in social relations until contemporaneity.

Socio-environmental approach is based on the health potential to boost a quality life, in which it is directed to meeting population's health needs, adopting as main strategies political actions, the promotion of healthy spaces, empowerment of individuals through the knowledge of their rights as users of social policies. This territorialization of health policy in Brazil, located in the context of the Unified Health System (SUS), was configured with the promulgation of the 1988's Constitution, as a universal right. In analogy and complementarity, environmental policy, also within the framework of the 1988's constitution, was configured as a right and duty of all. That is, health, education, art and environment underlie social life.

The extensionist path cannot be one of certainties, but a path of discoveries and multiple looks that are enlivened by social experiences, which reforms both university and thought. This vision is based on a teaching that is concerned not only with passing on content, or legitimizing "banking education" in the words of Paulo Freire (2018). This proposal can become a path to:

Teaching how to live the human condition by articulating the prosaic and poetic state of our existence; assuming uncertainty, indeterminacy and chance; exercising self-ethics as a presupposition of collective ethics, are some of the general guiding principles of a new educational practice. It remains to be seen how we have exercised our mission to educate for life. We certainly transmit, because we learn, the contents of techno-scientific culture, forgetting literary narratives and teachings of ancient knowledge about the physical world, society and the human condition. (Almeida, 2001, p. 19).

All these aspects presented put the contemporary education of humanity back at the debate's center, what do we want to be in the future? This question reinforces the prominence of a project with proposals and foundations exposed in this text, because it understands its relevance to the population, which despite all technological development, specifically mentioned here, its manipulation and access to social networks, still proves to be very lacking in knowledge supported by legislation that escapes the superficial debates fostered in common sense, which instead of clarifying, make, in most cases, people increasingly apathetic about the reality in which they are inserted.

Rural and environmental anthropology studies and research on Roma peoples in Brazil and Latin America are increasingly entering the research agenda of anthropologists. This epistemological dimension is accompanied by a political dimension that can enable the construction of anthropological and sociological research that includes Gypsy people in the production of knowledge and political activism. As part of this problematization, we situate some socio-historical categories that permeate this research: Roma identity and ethnicity, claims for recognition and redistribution, socio-environmental conflicts, environmental justice and health. Thus, “[...] environmental conflicts should be analyzed simultaneously in the spaces of material and symbolic appropriation of the resources of territory” (Acserald, 2004, p. 23).

These categories permeated the theoretical foundation based on the question capable of generating extension actions: where the idea was to dialogue through a circle of knowledge and workshops at school and in the community, emphasizing the invisibility of claims for ethnic recognition, for access to social rights such as health, housing, land, by the Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa/PB. Based on this idea of invisibility that directly touches on the issue of their ethnic recognition, as a traditional people protected by the 1988’s Constitution, because,

From then on, we began to face an interest and growing production of research and ethnographies that reveal the diversity of situations experienced by gypsies in the face of Brazilian society and State; a diversity that is recognized by gypsies themselves. As one of the developments, and considering the impact of the promulgation of the Federal Constitution in 1988, we have a scenario in which gypsies, with the presence of the Public Prosecutor’s Office, and in struggles for identity recognition, are confronted with challenges that involve a new agenda: the already traditional indigenous peoples are now ‘accompanied’ by quilombolas and others, identified as ‘traditional peoples’. To some extent, gypsies face great challenges, as they see themselves and are seen from multiple issues and criteria (Goldfarb; Batista, 2018, p. 18).

The construction of gypsies’ ethnic identity is configured as a collective process, so they begin to mediate their existence in national and local territory, drawing attention of public agencies in the demand for rights and public and social policies. With the Federal Constitution of 1988, the State acts as a protector and promoter of actions, policies and guarantees of rights to traditional peoples. Whereas, in the text of Decree Number 6.040/2007, Art. 3, item I, it is explicit that Roma people are a traditional people, as they are:

Culturally differentiated groups that recognize themselves as such, that have their own forms of social organization, that occupy and use territories and natural resources as a condition for their cultural, social, religious, ancestral and economic reproduction, using knowledge, innovations and practices generated and transmitted by tradition;

From the aforementioned Decree, claims for recognition and redistribution arise as a pertinent condition for access to demands for public health, housing and land policies as a State right. In the case of Gypsy Peoples in Brazil, there is an ongoing process of approval of Bill Number 1387/2022, called the Statute of Gypsy Peoples, which regulates and guides the Brazilian State in the elaboration of Public Policies that correspond to the territorial dynamics of the Calons in Sousa, Paraíba and Brazil. This is very significant for Roma ethnicities, as it cooperates in denouncing historical anti-Gypsyism, strengthening the perspective that they are traditional peoples and communities, who use the land in a particular way, to generate a future.

#### **4 Breaking with invisibility and denouncing anti-Gypsyism – stories of resistance of the Gypsy people in contemporary times**

We hear and read in specialized literature that traditional peoples and communities are made invisible. This statement needs to be analyzed from the perspective of unmasking what is behind it. It is worth emphasizing that traditional communities and especially Roma people are not made invisible! These populations were made invisible by a mercantile logic that kills millennial knowledge and wisdom. To break with this invisibility, Roma people have historically been recreating themselves and re-existing by building territories and territorialities. It should be noted that a traditionally based population maintains their bodies as territories, as means of life, that is, not a rupture with what was called nature. The colonial, patriarchal, capitalist, racist system underlies the Western worldview, which exploits the human being as a commodity, or worse as is the case with gypsies.

This socio-metabolic relationship of bodies as territories can be based ontologically from the Marxian point of view, when Marx (2015, p. 311) expands this idea, stating that:

Physically man only lives on these products of nature, may they appear practically in the universality that makes all nature his inorganic body, both insofar as it is 1) an immediate means of life, and insofar as it is 2) the object/matter and the instrument of his vital activity. Nature is the *inorganic body* of man, that is, nature insofar as it is not itself a human body. Man lives by nature means: nature is his *body*, with which he has to remain in constant process in order not to die. That the physical and spiritual life of man is in connection with nature, has no other meaning than that nature is in connection with itself, for man is a part of nature.

Women, men, populations of the forests, countryside, indigenous people, quilombolas, gypsies maintain a territorial link with the land, building their identities, their ethnic belonging in it. Each People, distinctly, has been building its territoriality, its values, its life

policies. With the Roma people, the challenge begins with a struggle for recognition and material and immaterial redistribution of the territory produced, as a traditional people. In pandemic capitalism this people is thrown into invisibility. Therefore, it has resisted, demanding public policies that contemplate its way of life.

State has historically ignored their territories and inscribed them in precarious lives. To break with the invisibility of the Roma people is to put on the scene of daily life the history that has been hidden, silenced and often killed.

Being a Gypsy is part of local and global stories that form a macro-gypsyism (Shimura, 2017). This means that there is a multiplicity of identities and belonging of Roma people, histories, memories of struggle for rights and public policies that begin in this ethnic recognition from an ethical-political perspective. The histories of Gypsy people are intertwined in the history of humanity, and probably have aspects of approximate origins, as studies report, in which the gypsies possibly depart from a region of India, which directly influenced the language formation regarding the Rom. It is believed that the diasporic process of Roma people has reached Europe, Africa, Asia and America (Moonen, 1996) in 1000 BC, constituting three best-known ethnic groups: Rom, Calon and Sinti.

With the Colonization process, dispersal via diaspora is intensified. Which meant death, the exile of Gypsy people in the world. In Brazil, due to the Portuguese Crown deporting a gypsy family, they have expanded throughout history in other Brazilian states. As a people of tradition, as well as the indigenous and quilombolas, Gypsy people were massacred and degraded in their rights and ways of life.

In Europe they are named Rom, with a language called Romani, Sinti, of the Senti language and Calon, with the Kaló or Calé language (Goldfarb, 2003). In the case of Brazil, and based on historical documents, it is known that the gypsy population inhabited this territory in the sixteenth century, however, it was identified that there was a document about the arrival of gypsies to Brazil, being a charter of D. Sebastião, from 1574, which forced in exile the punishment of galleys of the Portuguese gypsy João Torres. Documents from 1686 inform that gypsies are exiled to Brazil, especially to the states of Pernambuco, Maranhão and Bahia (Goldfarb, 2003).

This fact printed in their identities the dimension of nomadism, as they were marked by political processes of marginalization in everyday life, treated by the States as dangerous and dirty. Being forced to be on the move, as part of the hygienist logic, disseminated by a State, which did not recognize at a certain time Gypsy people as a collective subject of law. Because they have carried a history of discrimination, over time, they have built camps, and thus became sedentarized, building a way of living parallel to the world of non-Roma, which implied remoteness of life in society, where they began to manufacture their dwellings on land on the city's edge. Over the years, with the Citizen Constitution, democratic state of

rights was instituted, which recognizes traditional populations and minorities as collective subjects of rights, and with that, Roma or Gypsy peoples – Romani peoples.

When we ask ourselves whether the Roma population had conquered a space in the Federal Constitution of 1988, specifically, as a traditional people, we have a non-affirmative answer, in the sense that this population lived a diasporic process in the territories, with persecutions, expulsions and deaths. However, as pointed out in Complementary Law 75, of May 20, 1993, of action of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office, in Art. 6, VII, "c" include indigenous communities, and ethnic minorities, and this includes Roma minorities. And so, the Gypsy population would be protected as a traditional people, with the right to protection, non-discrimination and the right to come and go (Brasil, 1993).

Even with the inclusion as ethnic minorities, accompanied by indigenous and quilombola legislation, Roma people needed specific legislation that included their territorialities and territories (Santos, 1999), capable of welcoming their struggle for rights and public policies. In Brazilian territory, Roma people are territorialized, with Calons as the predominant ethnic group. There is an attempt to census Gypsy people in Brazil, but not so successful, which is explained by two issues, one of historical background, when Gypsy population, historically persecuted by the State, does not want to be identified, and hence nomadism as an imposed historical tragedy.

Another reason is that many Roma communities have become semi-nomadic, with dwellings built on the edge of the city's land. This makes them collective subjects demanding specific public policy actions that recognize them as traditional people. Still in the attempt of census, the survey of municipal information (MUNIC) accompanying the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), counted in the 2010 Census, 800 thousand gypsies, in almost 300 Brazilian cities in the South, Southeast and Northeast regions, with special attention from a more numerous Calon population in Bahia and Paraíba.

It is in Paraíba that a protagonism of struggles for rights and public policies begins. The state has Calon Gypsy populations, with more than 3000 inhabitants, located mostly in Sousa, in the High Backlands. This Calon Community exists and resists in the territory of Sousa for more than 30 years, its struggles for recognition and redistribution of access to social and environmental rights is a milestone in the struggle for the rights of Gypsy people. It is worth specifying that this struggle was and is monitored by the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (MPF), which has felt legally responsible for the protection of ethnic rights since 1991, proposing public and social policies that guarantee territoriality, in order to include the specifically Gypsy way of life in access to health, environmental sanitation, social assistance and education policies.

The attention of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (MPF) was based on the fact that a public civil investigation was initiated to investigate the living conditions of the Gypsy population in Paraíba, Brazilian Northeast. The situation of the Calon community in Sousa/PB

was precarious, regarding the unequal distribution of water, housing in need of sanitation, and land threatened with expropriation by large entrepreneurs from Paraíba Backlands. In addition, anti-Gypsyism (Moonen, 1996) still acts very strongly in the city, segregating them socially and spatially, which in the words of Pacheco (2007, p. 1) is configured as environmental racism:

We call Environmental Racism the social and environmental injustices that relentlessly fall on ethnicities and vulnerable populations. Environmental Racism is not only configured through actions that have a racist intention, but also through actions that have a “racial” impact, regardless of the intention that gave rise to them. (...) The concept of Environmental Racism challenges us to broaden our worldviews and to fight for a new paradigm of civilization, for an egalitarian and just society, in which full democracy and active citizenship are not the rights of a privileged few, regardless of color, origin and ethnicity.

Thus, the Gypsy population in Brazil lives between nomadism and semi-nomadism. Historically, this cultural and political condition marked the gypsy being, who was sometimes persecuted, sometimes sedentary and generated territoriality. It was with the creation of the National Human Rights Program (PNDH) in 1996 that Gypsy agendas began to be discussed, as gypsies were not mentioned directly. With Decree 4.229/2002 there was a review of the program, and in PNDH II, the following demands on Gypsy people were included in the document:

- 259. Promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Gypsies.
  - 260. Support the conduct of studies and research on the history, culture and traditions of the Gypsy community.
  - 261. Support educational projects that take into account the special needs of Gypsy children and adolescents, as well as encourage the review of documents, dictionaries and school books that contain derogatory stereotypes regarding Gypsies.
  - 262. Support studies for the creation of work cooperatives for gypsies.
  - 263. Encourage and support municipalities in which the presence of Gypsy communities is identified with a view to establishing camp areas equipped with the necessary infrastructure and conditions.
  - 264. Raise awareness among Gypsy communities of the need to register children's births, as well as support measures to guarantee the right to free birth registration for Gypsy children.
- (Brazil, 2002, art. 259-264)

With this inclusion, other political movements are associated with the struggle of Gypsy people for rights and public policies, with the establishment of the Committee on Minorities and Human Rights of the Chamber of Deputies, starting to discuss issues that were linked to Gypsy people's rights agenda. In this sense, there is a political, historical milestone in the field of rights



and public policies that include Gypsy population as a traditional people: the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in 2001 in Durban, South Africa. This conference meant the opening of a political field of inclusion and recognition of the struggles for rights of the Gypsy population. Contradictorily, it was recorded that there was no representation of the Gypsy people in the delegation, a point addressed by the Association. This fact is still associated with the Gypsy people creating a territoriality on the margins of the city's territory; anti-Gypsyism generated a racism that even today isolates and segregates them from society. On the other hand, this conference was a breakthrough because it allowed Gypsy populations to enter the scenario of socio-environmental struggles and guide their rights through their local and national leaders, constituting a Gypsy movement.

The Durban Conference was a milestone in the formulation of public policies in the space of anti-racist struggles and struggles for rights. It promoted the creation, in Brazil, of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality Policies (SEPPIR), in 2003. With this, there was the possibility of having representation in Councils of public policy managers with the leadership seat of Gypsy people. In addition to these movements in national level, it is worth noting that the Maylê Sara Kalí International Association (AMSK) has been guiding, since 2012, themes that touch the reality of Gypsy people in the world and in Brazil, demanding the creation, together with the Brazilian Gypsy Movement, of a Statute of Gypsy Peoples, by Bill 248 of 2015, in the Senate.

Gypsy population has rights and their lives are linked and circumscribed to the territory within another territory, generating territorialities, which requires social public policies to guarantee their ways of life. Thinking about an education policy for the Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa/PB involves the entire territory in its physical and symbolic dimensions, from education at school, art, environment, adequate housing, access to health.

Finally, this experience of Knowledge Meeting from/at the University with Roma peoples was of great importance for the process of human and professional training of all students who participated in the extension actions, providing a broader understanding of scientific knowledge; that is, not only the dialogue of knowledge between Modern Science and sciences of tradition, but also a greater proximity to individuals who are often in a situation of vulnerability and need professional intervention, in addition to showing a community that is sometimes forgotten and marginalized by the University itself.

## **5 Final Considerations**

Having the opportunity to participate in this experience with the Gypsy community was a process of education as correspondence, we have learned from the community about the history of its people, and we wondered how to create possibilities for alliances. An im-

portant moment was the community visitation, hearing directly from the gypsies how their daily lives are, their customs and their difficulties was remarkable, and it will certainly not be erased from our memories; seeing their reality and listening to them was crucial to understand why we need to look at them and help to value them.

The experience of dialoguing with the Gypsy community was enriching, while demystifying various stereotypes about traditional peoples. In short, they are a welcoming people with a very rich and millennial culture passed from generation to generation, but who have been suffering processes of exclusion and prejudice and this reflects the difficulty they still have to access the basic rights to education, fundamental to access other rights.

Having this proximity with these people have provided a broader, critical and less prejudiced look, since we entered this environment with limited knowledge and thought formed through what was passed on to us socially, but when we started studying with the Roma peoples, we were able to realize their difficulties, their knowledge and their culture. It is worth highlighting the dialogue with the gypsy of Calon ethnicity, Marcilânia, who commented on how difficult the life of the gypsy woman is, the difficulties in getting a job, the impacts of prejudice on their insertion in the labor market, as well as showed that even in the face of adversity, gypsy women continue to conquer their space, so much so that in the community in which they live it is already possible to find several professional and active women.

In order to record this experience of knowledge meeting between the Federal University of Campina Grande and the Calon Gypsy Community, a booklet was built, composed of poems, reports, drawings and images that tell a little about our project, highlighting important points such as: health, education and culture, underlining the resistance of these peoples in the context of environmental racism. The week of seminars, as another comment to be highlighted, invited gypsies to hold lectures and we created a conversation circle, in which the participation of Marcilânia, whom we had the honor of meeting and talking to in person, was crucial to hear her lovingly talking about her culture and people, her way of daily fighting so that they become recognized and respected.

## REFERENCES

ACSERALD, Henri. **Conflitos Ambientais no Brasil**. Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2004.

ALMEIDA, Maria da Conceição Xavier de. Reforma do Pensamento e Extensão Universitária. **Revista Cronos**, Natal, v. 2, n. 2, p. 11-22, 2001. Disponível em: <https://periodicos.ufrn.br/cronos/article/view/14194>. Acesso em: 19 dez. 2024.

BRASIL. Decreto n. 4.229, de 13 de maio de 2002. Dispõe sobre o Programa Nacional de Direitos Humanos – PNDH, instituído pelo Decreto nº. 1.904, de 13 de maio de 1996, e dá outras providências. **Diário Oficial da União**, Brasília, DF, 13 maio 2002. Disponível em: [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/decreto/2002/D4229impresao.htm](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/decreto/2002/D4229impresao.htm). Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.

BRASIL. DECRETO Nº 6.040, DE 07 DE FEVEREIRO DE 2007. Institui a Política Nacional de Desenvolvimento Sustentável dos Povos e Comunidades Tradicionais. Brasília: Casa Civil, 2007. Disponível em: [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2007-2010/2007/decreto/d6040.htm](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2007/decreto/d6040.htm). Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.

BRASIL. Lei Complementar n. 75, de 20 de maio de 1993. Dispõe sobre a organização, as atribuições e o estatuto do Ministério Público da União. **Diário Oficial da União**, Brasília, DF, 20 maio 1993. Disponível em: [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/leis/lcp/lcp75.htm](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/lcp/lcp75.htm). Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.

BRASIL. Ministério da Justiça. **Plano Nacional de Direitos Humanos – PNDH II**. Brasília, DF, [2002]. Disponível em: [https://www.dhnet.org.br/dados/pp/edh/pndh\\_2\\_integral.pdf](https://www.dhnet.org.br/dados/pp/edh/pndh_2_integral.pdf). Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.

BRASIL. MINISTÉRIO DA SAÚDE. **Política Nacional de Humanização - HumanizaSus**, 2003. Disponível em: <https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/humaniza-sus>. Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.

FRASER, Nancy. “Reconhecimento sem ética?”. In: **Lua Nova**. São Paulo: n. 70, 2007.

FREIRE, Paulo. **Extensão ou comunicação?**. 4. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1979.

GOLDFARB, Maria Patrícia Lopes. **Memória e etnicidade entre os ciganos Calon em Sousa-PB**. João Pessoa: Editora UFPB, 2013.

GOLDFARB, Maria Patrícia Lopes. **Os Ciganos**. Galante. Fundação Helio Galvão, n. 2, v. 3, Natal, Set. 2003.

GOLDFARB, Maria Patrícia Lopes; BATISTA, Mércia Rejane Rangel. DOSSIÊ CIGANOS NO BRASIL: um exercício de comparação etnográfica. **Áltera – Revista de Antropologia**, João Pessoa, v. 2, n. 7, p. 8-15, jul./dez. 2018.

GOLDFARB, Maria Patrícia Lopes. Ciganos Calon: a vida em movimento. In: JUBILIT, Liliana Lyra; REI, Fernando Cardozo Fernandes; GARCEZ, Gabriela Soldano (org.). **Direitos Humanos e Meio Ambiente: Minorias Ambientais**. São Paulo: Manole, v. 1, p. 261-278, 2017. (Coleção Ambiental).

- GUATTARI, Félix; ROLNIK, Suely. **Micropolítica**: cartografias do desejo. 8 ed. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2007.
- IASI, Mauro. **Educação popular**: formação da consciência e luta política. Centro de Estudo, Pesquisa e Ação em Educação Popular. Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ, 2004.
- INGOLD, Tim. **Antropologia e/como Educação**. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 2018.
- MARX, Karl. **Manuscritos econômicos-filosóficos**. Tradução de José Paulo Netto e Maria Antônia Pacheco. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2015.
- MOONEN, Frans. A História Esquecida dos Ciganos no Brasil. **Saeculum Revista de História**, João Pessoa, n. 2, jul./dez., 1996.
- MORIN, Edgar. **Os sete Saberes Necessários à Educação do Futuro**. 3. ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2001.
- OLIVEIRA, Luan Gomes dos Santos de Oliveira. **Diário de Campo**: os ciganos e o fazer futuro. Sousa: 2023.
- PACHECO, Tânia. Racismo Ambiental: expropriação do território e negação da cidadania. **Combate Racismo Ambiental**, [s. l.], 2007. Disponível em: <https://racismoambiental.net.br/textos-e-artigos/racismo-ambiental-expropriacao-do-territorio-e-negacao-da-cidadania-2/>. Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.
- RODRIGUES, Monique de Oliveira da Silva; PAULA, Ercília Maria Angeli Teixeira de. CRIANÇAS DE ETNIAS CIGANAS NO BRASIL: processos de escolarização na educação básica. **Cadernos de Pesquisa**, local, v. 28, n. 3, p. 401–418, 30 set. 2021 Disponível em: <https://periodicoseletronicos.ufma.br/index.php/cadernosdepesquisa/article/view/12184>. Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.
- SANTOS, Milton. **A natureza do espaço**: técnica e tempo, razão e emoção. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1999.
- SENADO FEDERAL. Projeto de lei do Senado nº 248, de 2015. Cria o Estatuto do Cigano. **Diário do Senado Federal**, Brasília, DF, 30 abr. 2015. Disponível em: <https://legis.senado.leg.br/sdleg-getter/documento?dm=4038455&ts=1655324480404&disposition=inline>. Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.
- SHIMURA, Igor. **Ser cigano**: identidade étnica em um acampamento Calon itinerante. Maringá: Amazon, 2017.
- SHIVA, Vandana. **O ecofeminismo**: expoentes e posturas críticas. Tradução Carolina Caires Coelho. Belo Horizonte: Editora Luas, 1990.
- THIOLLENT, Michell (org.). **Metodologia para projetos de extensão**: apresentação e discussão. São Carlos: Ufscar, 2008.

---

Received in June 2024 | Approved in September 2024

### **MINI BIOGRAPHY**

#### **Luan Gomes dos Santos de Oliveira**

Anthropologist, PhD in Education (UFRN). Adjunct Professor IV of the Academic Unit of Social Sciences (UACIS) and of the Postgraduate Program in Social and Human Sciences (PPGCISH-UERN), at the Federal University of Campina Grande and the Ecos/CNPq Group.

E-mail: [luan.gomes@professor.ufcg.edu.br](mailto:luan.gomes@professor.ufcg.edu.br)

---

Translated by Ivna Oliveira