

Dossier – Education and Diversity: a look at gypsy communities

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PRESENTATION

Despite being present on Brazilian soil since the 16th century and currently in twenty-one states, Brazilian educational historiography fails to document the gypsy people in its main works, their learning processes, and their forms of access to school education, from which they are just as excluded. The realization of this gap motivated us to access the CAPES Theses and Dissertations Database and search for the descriptor “gypsies”, which presented a total of 286 productions: 83 theses and 195 dissertations. However, when refining the search to the Education Area, we had only 19 productions, distributed in 8 theses and 11 dissertations.

The still timid number of studies and research on this subject shows a progress path aiming to give them visibility. However, it is necessary to expand this path and promote the dissemination of such studies, notably through periodicals in the Educational Area. That is because, to date, the Dossiers published on gypsy peoples discussed the areas of Anthropology and Sociology, which is why the Journal Cadernos de Pesquisa chose to publish a Dossier that would enable the participation of researchers on gypsy peoples and education. This choice implied our support for the publication of an article written by a young gypsy individual who reflects on the challenges faced in the education of gypsies and the job market’s reaction in the area where they live. Although he is not an academic researcher and thus does not possess the qualifications typically required by the journal, his presence and



collaboration with a researcher allows greater flexibility in overcoming the barriers that still exist in the academic world.

On the other hand, given the lack of productions that reflect upon the complex reality experienced by gypsies in Brazil and considering that it deals with such a vast and diverse scenario, we chose to give visibility to national productions, resulting in the absence of an article that presented the gypsy reality in another country or continent. This decision can be translated as an invitation for future research or articles to be submitted for forthcoming editions of the Journal *Cadernos de Pesquisa*.

This dossier presents articles resulting from research conducted on the gypsy theme, using approaches that build a direct interface with the field of Education.

As Maruchiakova and Popov (2019) demonstrate, the term “gypsy” is used to describe a diversity of peoples or social groups that live in a situation of itinerancy or sedentarization. Whether they are called Rom, Gypsy, Gitanos, Egyptians, or Ciganos, these groups are diverse and heterogeneous, regardless of their origins.

Historically, Roma/gypsy people around the world have experienced different forms of racism and discrimination, commonly referred to by scholars as “anti-gypsyism” or “gypsophobia” (Moonem, 2011; Scholz, 2014), as explored in the works included in this dossier. As Moonen points out:

In Brazil, the term “Anticiganismo” is recent, but it has existed for some time in other languages: in French “antitsiganisme”, in English “antigypsyism”, in German “Antiziganismus”. In Germany, there is currently the European Centre for Anti-Gypsy Research, which hosted the 2nd International Conference on Antigypsyism in 2005. Like antisemitism, antigypsyism can be defined as “doctrines or attitudes that are hostile towards gypsies and advocate for discriminatory measures against them” or “attitudes, acts or policies that are contrary to gypsy interests and rights” (Moonen, 2011, p. 06).

In different countries, particularly in Europe, gypsies fight against attitudes and policies that promote ethnic-racial confrontation by the non-gypsy population. Toyansk (2015, p. 361) points out that, during the Holocaust in Europe, gypsies were persecuted as an “impure race”, which led to the extermination of many gypsies in Nazi concentration camps.

Maruchiakova and Popov (2019, p. 51) recall that the Hungarian government implemented a series of measures aimed at the forced social integration of gypsies, with the intention of annihilating their existence as an ethnic community with specific and distinct rights. Research also indicates that in Spain, gypsies are among the most unwanted individuals in schools (San Román, 1986).

Legal reforms, the closing of borders against foreigners in various parts of the world, the rise of political groups linked to the extreme right, the revival of xenophobia, etc., are contemporary cases that raise serious questions regarding cultural diversity and the inclusion of minority ethnic groups, such as the gypsies.

Examples of gypsyphobia are repeatedly observed in several countries, exhibiting rejection and hostility toward the gypsy population. These attitudes are often normalized by the common practice of stigmatizing this social segment. Such practices are usually legitimized and/or supported by governments, as seen in France, which prohibited gypsy caravans from making temporary settlements within French territory, even though French law established that travelers could stop in areas of cities with populations exceeding 5,000 inhabitants.

In Brazil, anti-gypsy policies have existed since the colonial period, when gypsies entered the country through exile policies (Moraes Filho, [1843], 1981). This phenomenon reveals a process of exclusion reflected in various laws, decrees, and coercive codes against the gypsy community published in the 19th and 20th centuries (Andrade Júnior, 2013).

Since the 1980s, we can observe a development in academic works concerning gypsies in Brazil, which intensified from the 2000s onward, with research and publications that highlight the diversity of situations experienced by gypsies when facing Brazilian society and its government. This diversity is examined through various fields of knowledge, including history, geography, linguistics, anthropology, and sociology.

However, it is essential to emphasize the lack of publications regarding gypsies in the school environment, the impact of education on the daily lives of gypsy communities, and the ways in which gypsy people access formal education. We identified this gap through a bibliographic survey, which underscores the importance of this dossier. It aims to provide readers with an objective and up-to-date portrait of gypsy population in the Northeast and throughout Brazil.

The article that opens this Dossier, is written by Flávio J. de O. Silva, "On the Travelers Trail: Perspectives for a Pedagogy of Itinerancy". It provides the reader with a text that, by reflecting on the educational and cultural practices of the Calon, Matchuawa, Roraranê, and Kalderash, seeks to understand how their interlocutors experienced the educational processes that unfolded in Rio Grande do Norte. The research supporting the article was conducted qualitatively, and its investigation is affiliated with the History of Education, emphasizing Social History. The exercise developed by Flávio proves capable of providing innovative reflections on gypsy and itinerant ways of life, emphasizing alternative forms of human interactions with subjects constituted in diversity and found in almost the entire Brazilian territory, focusing on the space of Rio Grande do Norte, where many are still excluded from classrooms or attending them with significant difficulties. In conclusion, the author

sought to construct indications for potential changes, aiming to contribute to the fight against prejudice and to the construction of a quality social education based on a pedagogy that incorporates and values itinerancy. This approach allows for a discussion that fosters a better understanding of ethnic-racial relations and the diversity that constitutes Brazil.

Next, Mércia R. R. Batista, Maria Patrícia L. Goldfarb, and Tomke C. Lask authored the text “The Inclusion of Gypsies in the Quota System in State and Federal Higher Education Institutions: Presenting the Situation in the State of Paraíba”. In it, they invite the reader to learn more about the situation of gypsies within the quota system in state and federal higher education institutions. To this end, they present a historical overview of the situation of the gypsy community in Brazil, addressing the physical, racial, and cultural characteristics that are often attributed to them. The article is based on research conducted through document reviews and direct observations of planning committee meetings at the State University of Paraíba (UEPB), the Federal Institute of Paraíba (IFPB), the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB) and the Federal University of Campina Grande (UFCG). This analysis allows us to conclude that the quota system includes various minority groups, such as Black people, Indigenous people, Quilombolas, transgender individuals, and those with physical disabilities. Despite the significant presence of gypsy communities in the region, their process of inclusion remains stagnant. Finally, the authors emphasize that the quota policy is a vital tool for reparation and inclusion of gypsies. This policy helps combat stigmas and creates opportunities for future generations to achieve equality in the labor market.

In the third article, entitled “Municipal Day of the Gypsy Ethnicity of Penedo – AL,” Edluza Maria S. de Oliveira and Claudia Mura present an excerpt from the master’s dissertation of the first author. This dissertation was developed and defended in July 2023 as part of the Postgraduate Program in Social Anthropology (PPGAS) at the Federal University of Alagoas (UFAL). The study seeks to reflect upon the context in which Municipal Law No. 1.650 of 2019 emerged, establishing the municipal day of this community and analyzing tensions and challenges intertwined in instituting this law, with repercussions on the actions developed in the school environment. The research was developed along Calon gypsies, who live in the upper part of the city of Penedo, located in the extreme south of the State of Alagoas, in the region of Baixo São Francisco. To this end, the authors adopted the methodology of ethnographic practice and the technique of documentary analysis, which allowed the study of the law and the intricacies in which it was constituted. Regarding the results, the legislation, taken as a legal apparatus, proved to be an instrument of the fight for visibility and protagonism of the Calon, given that it presents itself as a milestone in the process of constructing a new memory regime in the city of Penedo, propelling the elaboration, expansion, and adjustments of public policies aimed at this local gypsy population.

Subsequently, Luan Gomes dos Santos de Oliveira, in the text “Encounters of Knowledge and University Extension: educational practices between the School and the Calon Gypsy Community in Sousa/PB”, brings to the public the exchange shared in the dialogue circle regarding the relationship between health, environment, art and educational practices. The proposal was made effective due to the collective experiences based on the daily life of the students who are part of the Calon Gypsy Community of Sousa at the M. E. F. Irmã Iraides Holanda Lavor School, located between the ranches that form the Gypsy Community. The school offers Primary Education and Elementary Education (1st to 5th grade), with children from 4 to 11 years of age in 2022 and 2023. The article presents the activity developed for the integral training of individuals and institutions involved in this proposal. Ultimately, this extension project proved to be capable of generating reflections by the students participating in the project, showing that they were able to perceive themselves as learning beings in dialogue with the Calon Gypsy Community of Sousa/PB. Additionally, the project made it possible to build a booklet that contemplates the primary human and social rights related to this traditional population.

In the fifth article, “Continuing Training of Gadjé Teachers in the Municipality of Raposa/MA”, Luane Mendes Gonçalves and Iran de Maria Leitão Nunes present a research situation that problematizes the education of non-gypsy teachers (gadjés) when facing the existent cultural diversity of the classroom. The investigation originated from some questions generated as a result of a teacher’s experience in the public-school system of the city Raposa, in Maranhão, when she came across a group of students composed of gypsy and non-gypsy children. Based on this exercise, the paper addresses the challenge involved in training non-gypsy teachers who need to deal with cultural and ethnic diversity in the school environment. The aim was to analyze the training of gadjé teachers in light of these issues, presenting the reflections of experts on teacher training, in which they highlight the importance of including diversity. Consequently, the authors adopted a qualitative approach, content analysis techniques (Bardin, 2011), and the methodological contributions of Historical-Critical Pedagogy. The conclusion was that the training of Gadjé teachers in the city of Raposa could be improved by incorporating inclusive and culturally sensitive practices that consider the seasonality and specific cultural habits of gypsy families, pointing out perspectives for training that reaches not only teachers but also the cultural diversity of students, emphasizing the potential challenges faced by both.

The following text of our studies is entitled “On the Waves of Communication: Gypsies and Podcasts,” authored by José Aclécio Dantas and Maria Patrícia Lopes Goldfarb. This work results from the extension project Gypsies and Podcasts: Anthropology as an Instrument for Democratizing Knowledge, carried out in collaboration with the Cultural Studies Group (GEC) of the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB). The project aimed to promote

workshops for young people from the gypsy community in Sousa-PB, integrating studies of gypsy culture and identity with local knowledge. It also sought to associate the practice of podcasting with the community's everyday needs. To the authors, the data indicated the engagement of young gypsies in the creation and dissemination of media that promote knowledge and appreciation of their culture in society, facilitating greater fluidity and mobility of identity boundaries between gypsies and non-gypsies.

The seventh article, "Games as Teaching Tools for Gypsy Stories: application and Implementation of the Game 'The Last Song of Birkenau'," presents an educational game developed to instruct players about the gypsy genocide carried out by the Nazis in the 20th century. Aquiles Medeiros Figueira Burlamaqui and Lucas Medeiros de Araujo Valle conducted research with ninth-grade elementary school students at the Vigário Bartolomeu State School, situated in the Morro Branco neighborhood of Natal, RN. Their aim was to promote an inclusive and diversified education. The authors reinforce that most students recognized the effectiveness of the game in acquiring knowledge about Nazi extermination practices and gypsy history, stressing the necessity of including historical narratives that are often marginalized in school curricula.

João Dias Pereira, a young Calon gypsy from the community of Sousa (PB), and Mércia Rejane Rangel Batista contribute to the article: "Professional and educational experiences among young Calon from the gypsy community of Sousa-PB", addressing some cultural changes and their effects on the community, as well as the interface between school education and job opportunities in the city's private sector. As a result of the interviews held with these young communities, the text emphasizes the sociability between gypsies and non-gypsies, especially in new generations, and the prejudice suffered by them, this last being the main factor for their lack of professional insertion. On the other hand, the authors recognize that there are positive expectations surrounding school education as a path for gypsies to overcome these barriers and expand their possibilities of working as professionals.

Finally, the last article is the result of a research project developed with administrators and teachers from the Celso Mariz State Elementary & High School and the Dr. Thomaz Pires State Elementary & Primary School, located near the gypsy community of Sousa, in Paraíba. Janine Marta C. Rodrigues, Silvestre Coelho Rodrigues, Maria José Rangel, and Anne Jaqueline Clark underline, in "Giving visibility to the gypsy people of Paraíba: rescuing citizenship, guaranteeing rights", the importance of making the gypsy existence a visible and valued reality; the need to offer teachers opportunities for discussions and guidance on education and its relationship with diversity, as well as the need to recognize the gypsy people as Brazilian citizens holding constitutional guarantees so that they are included, by right, in Brazilian society.

At the end of this brief presentation concerning the context of the dossier's proposal and the sequence of articles that compose this edition, we invite readers to explore through the different research exercises that present the experiences of gypsies in the states of Alagoas, Maranhão, Paraíba, and Rio Grande do Norte, demonstrating how we face a theme that still appears to be less studied than we would prefer.

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