

# Quilombo as the place for Black People to reimagine their subjectivities

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The quilombo in the colonial context was a social resistance organization founded by black people in the Americas enabled black people to develop alternatives to society in opposition to slavery, allowing the enslaved to reclaim their liberty and human dignity through the organization of free and economically viable communities. The quilombo became the main symbol of resistance against slavery, which consumed approximately 12 million black people forced into the diaspora (Gilroy, 1993).

Even in a context conspicuous for its politics of oppression and extreme persecution, quilombos coexisted with colonial society and became the principal black institution to confront the colonial system. These black diasporic institutions shaped collective identities in line with criteria internally established by each community. The quilombo constituted an alternative for the enslaved, representing a possibility for the enslaved and marginalized groups, such as indigenous people (Moura, 1988), to produce a new social, economic, and political environment and subjectivities.

The quilombos, like other similar institutions of Black resistance against enslavement in the Americas such as Palenques, Cimarrones, and Garrifunas must be understood within the historical context lived by Black People trafficked across the Atlantic and sold as enslaved in the Americas, as well as their descendants in American colonial societies. The colonizers sought to destroy any affective ties existing among the enslaved

to facilitate the process of domination and reification while hindering the creation of bonds of collective solidarity among the captives. In this sense, the quilombo was a space for reimagining and rebuilding the conception of community and identity itself.

Quilombos were and still are spaces built on resignification, reimagination and reconstruction subjectivities for Blacks peoples who have lived and continue to live the diasporic experience. The quilombo denotes an institution of reception and solidarity, especially in the Amazon region, and represents a Black diasporic institution that symbolizes the struggle against all kinds of oppression in the colonial world.

Faced with the violence to which enslaved blacks were subjected in the colonial world, the quilombos provided the enslaved the freedom to reimagine, resignify and rebuild the meaning of institutions such as family and religion, along with social relations, ideas of identity, community, and affectivity. Modes and forms of communication also needed to be fundamentally reimagined, signified and reconstructed from the conditions and experiences lived in the context of the diaspora.

I think of the quilombo as the diasporic place that allows the black who escaped enslavement, to re-imagine himself, to re-signify himself, to rebuild himself. I also think of the quilombo as a place of coexistence with a difference. We must not forget that many times, the only common points shared between those who live or form the quilombo is the fact that they are victims of the same crime, which was the transatlantic trade of human 224 beings as enslaved from the African continent to the Americas.

The differences between the enslaved will be confronted on this side of the Atlantic: after all, the fact that they come from the same continent does not eliminate the differences. In this sense, the subjectivity reconstruction process is important because it guarantees individual survival and collective existence. The quilombo is an institution that, in principle, is an instrument of struggle against colonialism and the colonial world.

The quilombos contributed decisively to the destructuring of the mode of production based on the exploitation of the labor of the enslaved, since it constituted an alternative for a safe life in a community that welcomed the enslaved who managed to escape captivity. The quilombo became an omnipresent institution in the colonial world, multiplying everywhere there were enslaved people, keeping the dream of freedom alive.

The quilombo challenged the colonial world by promoting access to land outside the norms established and controlled by the state, and by subjects considered by the colonial state as lacking in citizenship and humanity. The quilombo thus represents the subversion of the colonial mode of production by guaranteeing productive autonomy to its members and an experience of free, collective work based on family ties or other types of cooperation rooted in solidarity.

Through the collective ownership of the common use of land and natural resources, diversity in production to meet the needs of groups, and the production of surpluses to be sold to communities located in the surrounding areas, the quilombos attacked the foundations of the colonial world, contributing decisively to the fall of the slavocracy in Brazil. However, the quilombos and the quilombolas have been unable to escape the racist logic of post-colonial societies, which has made it difficult for the quilombolas to gain recognition of their territorial rights, and especially of land redistribution because constitutional rights and transnational provisions are not enforced by racist nation-states.

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