

BEING A QUILOMBOLA WOMAN: UNVEILLING FEELINGS AND IDENTITIES

SER MULHER QUILOMBOLA: REVELANDO SENTIMENTOS E IDENTIDADES

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ABSTRACT

Aim: to unveil the feelings that emerge in a group of women regarding their quilombola identity. **Method:** field research with descriptive and qualitative approach and anthropological dimensions. The study involved 13 women of a quilombola community of the countryside of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The data were collected through the Focal Group technique in February 2014. We used the technique of drawings to allow interaction and expression of the feelings of the participants. Thematic content analysis of operative proposal was adopted and data were interpreted in the light of interpretative anthropology. **Results:** feelings of happiness and pride towards the quilombola identity were identified. Life in the quilombo causes in women a sense of freedom. **Conclusion:** feelings of anguish, insecurity and hope are mixed in the expressions of the women, due to adverse conditions experienced in the place.

Keywords: Women's Health; African Continental Ancestry Group; Culture.

RESUMO

Objetivo: desvelar os sentimentos que emergem, em um grupo de mulheres, em relação à sua identidade quilombola. **Método:** pesquisa de campo, descritiva, com abordagem qualitativa e vertente antropológica. Foi realizado com 13 mulheres de uma comunidade quilombola do interior do estado do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. Os dados foram coletados por meio da técnica de grupo focal, em fevereiro de 2014. Utilizou-se a técnica de desenho para permitir a interação e a expressão dos sentimentos das participantes. Aplicou-se a análise de conteúdo temática da proposta operativa, sendo os dados interpretados à luz da antropologia interpretativa. **Resultados:** foram atribuídos os sentimentos de felicidade e orgulho à identidade quilombola. A vida no quilombo imprime às mulheres um sentimento de liberdade. **Conclusão:** os sentimentos mesclam-se a sensações de angústia, insegurança e esperança, devido às condições adversas vivenciadas no local.

Palavras-chave: Saúde da Mulher; Grupo com Ancestrais do Continente Africano; Cultura.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Revelar los sentimientos de un grupo de mujeres sobre su identidad quilombola (perteneciente al quilombo). **Método:** Investigación de campo descriptiva, de enfoque cualitativo y dimensión antropológica, realizada con 13 mujeres de una comunidad quilombola del interior del estado de Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. Los datos se recogieron en febrero de 2014 mediante la técnica de Grupo Focal. Se utilizó la técnica de dibujo para permitir la interacción y la expresión de los sentimientos de las participantes. Se aplicó el análisis de contenido temático de la propuesta operativa; los datos se interpretaron según la antropología interpretativa. **Resultados:** Las mujeres sienten orgullo y felicidad de su identidad quilombola. La vida en el quilombo les transmite a ellas la sensación de libertad. **Conclusión:** Los sentimientos se mezclan con sensaciones de ansiedad, inseguridad y esperanza, debido a las condiciones adversas que se viven en el quilombo.

Palabras clave: Salud de la Mujer; Grupo de Ascendencia Continental Africana; Cultura.

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INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, black women have always been threefold discriminated against because they are women, because they are black and because of their financial condition. This group brings in its trajectory marks of a social construction of what it is to be a woman, as a subordinate, associated to the myth of inferiority of this ethnic group, conditions that are accentuated when manifested in a vulnerable economic situation.¹

From a cultural perspective, the meaning of being a black woman over the years has encompassed aspects such as discrimination, racism and sexism.² Therefore, the historical, social and cultural constructions surrounding black women have historically reproduced negative prejudices and stereotypes.³

These constructions are usually internalized in childhood, from primary socialization,⁴ and may interfere in the creation of identity and self-esteem of black women. It is noteworthy that identity in this context involves a concept that is produced in reference to others, to the criteria of acceptability, admissibility and also credibility.²

Later, all the stigmas and stereotypes that were gradually introjected into the process of socialization of black women can be reinforced during their secondary socialization as women in various contexts. In this context, a tangle of “nodes” is started, which may hinder or prevent the development and, consequently, the creation of identity, and may also trigger the manifestation of innumerable feelings of inferiority. It is worth mentioning that feelings in this study involve the reactions that individuals manifest and that may be pleasant or unpleasant, given a particular situation, event or before other people.⁵

Thus, it is considered that interactions and personal and collective representations, internalized in the primary and secondary socialization embraced in the culture of each group, are the starting point from which a person occupies space and finds singularity amid the others. Culture, in this sense, is understood as a system of interpretable symbols woven by men that direct their behavior and attribute meanings to their existence.⁶

Culture can and tend to continuously change from the symbolic interactions established between individuals, and between them and their context.⁶ Therefore, living within a group can influence the way an individual perceives himself, and the way he perceives his peers, as well as the feelings that derive from these perceptions. Moreover, these constructions are believed to lead to the manifestation of feelings that can also influence the attitudes, behaviors, meanings and practices adopted by black women in the most diverse events experienced, especially those involving the health-disease process, which is socially and culturally shaped by these aspects.

In this sense, there is an obvious importance of understanding and interpreting the life experiences of these subjects from a cultural perspective, in order to understand how their

identity has been constructed as quilombola women and the feelings that emerge in this scope. Moreover, the knowledge of feelings about oneself helps to give visibility to the behaviors of a given community, and can lead the researcher to the core of what he hopes or intends to interpret.⁶

In the light of the above, we present, in this work, the results of a Master's thesis,⁷ which were guided by the following research question: “what are the feelings that emerge in a group of women in relation to their quilombola identity?”. This question was established based on the objective of unravelling the feelings that emerge among a group of women in relation to their quilombola identity.

METHOD

In order to meet the proposed objective, this study was methodologically designed as a field descriptive research with a qualitative approach⁸ and with anthropological dimensions.⁸ Thirteen quilombola women between the ages of 14 and 56 years participated in the study. Only those residing in the community and with a minimum age of 12 years were included.

The goal was to include women who were experiencing periods of life encompassed between adolescence and old age. It is believed that by covering these periods, the research allowed the deepening, the comprehensiveness and the diversity in the process of compression of symbols and meanings that permeate the life of these participants.

In this sense, women had homogeneous characteristics because they belonged to the same group and divergent opinions because they are in distinct phases of life, thus enriching the process of data production. Throughout the meetings, it was verified that this conformation in the group made it possible to achieve the expected results, allowing the revelation of emotions, perceptions, singularities and some similarities about the meanings linked to being a quilombola woman.

The focus group (FG) was chosen as main technique for data production because this method facilitates a climate of exchange, through approximation, interaction and debate, in which singularities and a multiplicity of emotional processes present in a particular cultural context are unveiled.⁹ Three outdoor FG sessions were held in the open air, in the Quilombola community, in February 2014. Each meeting lasted approximately one hour.

Each meeting was planned based on a specific theme and, to stimulate the debate around it, some dynamics were proposed as described below. Regarding the themes, the first meeting discussed issues related to women's health care. In the second, the feelings that emerged among the participants regarding the quilombola identity were discussed. And in the third meeting, the participants' perceptions about women's health care in different contexts were discussed.

In the second FG meeting, the drawing technique was used to promote the debate. This consisted of a representation, requested from participants, about how they felt as quilombola women living in a community. The choice for this technique was based on a study¹⁰ which states that drawing allows a graphical representation of perceptions and feelings, as well as the understanding and interpretation of group and cultural values. Therefore, it was proposed that the women expressed their feelings about themselves and their quilombola identity through the drawing technique.

Thus, this article presents the results obtained in the FG produced through the drawing technique, following the guiding question: "How do you feel as a quilombola woman living in this community?". After applying the technique, the participants presented their drawings and expressed through verbal or nonverbal demonstrations their feelings as quilombola women. Digital recorders and field diaries were used to record the data.

The data produced in the study were analyzed through thematic content analysis,⁸ which presupposes two operational moments, the first of which is called the exploratory phase and involves the exploration of the research material to understand the profile of quilombola women. And a second moment, called the interpretative phase, when the feelings and identities expressed in the participants' speeches were interpreted. This interpretation was anchored in interpretive anthropology.⁶ This step was divided into data organization, which consisted of the transcription, rereading and organization of the speeches; data classification, which covered the horizontal and exhaustive reading of the material produced; transversal reading; final analysis; and final report, culminating in this article.

An alphanumeric system was used to identify the participants, with the letter "Q" (quilombola) followed by a number (Q1, Q2, Q3, and so on). Besides the anonymity of the participants, other ethical aspects mentioned in Resolution 466/2012 of the National Health Council of Brazil were respected. In December 2013, the study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee under process number 25345113.7.0000.5346.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the cultural context of quilombola women, innumerable feelings that permeate their life trajectories are unveiled and internalized in their processes of primary and secondary socialization. Through the analysis of the drawings produced, from a cultural point of view, the participants expressed feelings of happiness, freedom and pride, mixed with feelings of anguish, insecurity and hope. The knowledge about these feelings is considered fundamental because they can have implications for the lives of these women, determining their behaviors, attitudes and even the meanings about aspects such as health care and, consequently, their self-care practices.

The feeling of happiness emanated from several responses; the women reported that they felt happy for their quilombola identity or for living in the community, as the statements below confirm.

I really like the quilombola community, because I was born and raised here. I'm very happy here (Q1).

I feel happy. Thank God we're here. It's good here (Q2).

I'm happy here in the quilombos. I thank God for living here with my family (Q3).

I'm happy being a quilombola woman. Very happy (Q5).

Figures 1, 2 and 3 also illustrate the participants' statements and demonstrate, in addition to the daily activities, the happiness of being quilombola women and living in the quilombo.



Figure 1 - Drawing of Q1. Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.



Figure 2 - Drawing of Q2. Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

The speeches indicate that "being a quilombola" woman and living in this space has a positive meaning, related to the environment and the domesticity that the environment promotes. In this same perspective, in his study, an author¹¹ also identified some positive representations about the quilombola identity and community life among quilombola women and men interviewed.



Figure 3 - Drawing of Q6. Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

This author also emphasized that the participants of his study considered the community as a wonderful and tranquil place, where they lived with their relatives and in which the union was manifested in all interpersonal relations. These characteristics were observed in the speeches of the quilombola women of the present study.

Thank God we're here. Here is good (Q6).

I like the community, because everyone here is related (Q7).

Here we do not feel isolated because we have each other, we are always close to each other (Q8).

In this line of perceptions, authors¹² point out that the quilombola culture understood as a social sphere makes it possible for subjects to feel that they belong to a particular historical-cultural context and enable them to express their values, customs, principles and care practices, giving them the possibility to be symbolically and affectively connected. Therefore, the senses and meanings attributed to the community and to the bonds established among the residents were translated, for women, into feelings of joy and belonging to a group.

The feeling of belonging to this community is positive in the history and day-to-day of these women, making them feel understood, welcomed, supported and also cared for by the other individuals who reside in the same place. From the perspective of health care, researches¹³ have revealed that the manifestation and existence of this type of sensation are important because they demonstrate that the women can find in this scenario, besides other types of social support, the necessary care for their survival.

It is worth noting that, social support is understood as any process in which the relationships established among individuals are capable of promoting health and well-being in the social, psychological and behavioral dimensions. Through these inter-

actions, individuals are able to face the challenges and adversities that appear in their life trajectories.¹³

"Being a quilombola woman" was also associated with a sense of pride in the view of some participants. Women are aware of what it is to belong to this group, the importance and symbolism that this identity carries, historically and culturally.

I like being part of the quilombo (Q3).

I feel proud to be part of the quilombola people (Q6).

It was possible to perceive that the quilombola identity has a special meaning in the life trajectory of these women, and this is justified by the fact that the quilombo symbolizes the struggle, the resistance and the freedom conquered by the ancestors.¹¹ The term "quilombo" can be understood as one of the forms found by slaves to resist slavery and oppression, and currently represents the struggle against racial inequality, prejudice, discrimination¹² and land ownership.

The meaning that the quilombo assumes for these women is rooted in conceptions, ideas, attitudes, judgments, and beliefs that have historically been transmitted in the place. These are expressed as symbolic elements through which these women perpetuate and develop their knowledge, attitudes, care practices, and daily activities.⁶

Other studies^{11,14,15} have also identified the feeling of pride among quilombolas. In one of these studies,¹¹ in line with the present study, the participants were proud of their ethnicity and of the place where they lived. Especially in the view of some women, pride comes from the awareness that they were born in a quilombo and, therefore, they are not only women but quilombola people and belong to a group socioculturally characterized and recognized.¹⁶

Regarding the community, it was noticeable that the participants of the present study also mentioned their pride about the recognition of their site, since they knew that other localities still did not have a name, and therefore were not recognized as quilombola communities. Therefore, recognition and titling generated satisfaction among participants.

We were also recognized, because there are many quilombola places that are not recognized. I think, for us, this is a reason of pride. I feel proud (Q9).

Recognition and certification as a remaining quilombola community have been fundamental for these scenarios, because although in physical and material aspects being recognized does not bring about great changes, the titling facilitates the reconstruction of the black identity and reawakens the pride about the historical context of the ancestors, thus generating a new perspective of these communities upon themselves. Certifica-

tion also allows communities to benefit from parallel sector affirmative policies and other health actions directed to this group.¹⁷

Moreover, happiness and pride and the feeling of freedom was also linked to life in the quilombo. Women exalted the differences between urban and rural life, highlighting the possibility of feeling “free”, not being afraid to live in situations of risk or danger and ensuring a better childhood for their children.

In the city you do not have the freedom you have here. I think one of the advantages of people living out is this. You have your freedom, even in your house. You can not open a door, because a thief can pass by in a little while, but that doesn't happen here. Here you have freedom with your neighbors. Of course there are people who say: “- I am isolated”. But here we do not feel isolated (Q8).

I have lived here for years, I had to go to a city where I had to raise my little one. He was about a year old, it was like hell. The child without having a penny just to walk and play. He went there, he changed, he became aggressive and angry. Because he was not free. Thank God that after we came here, he changed. He is a calm child (Q3).

These considerations show that living in the community generates in these women feelings of security and confidence that were not possible in other places. It was noted that growing up and living in a setting other than the community had negative implications and therefore was not something they wanted for themselves or for their children.

The situation experienced by the participant's child can be seen under the cultural perspective of stress.¹⁸ Thus, the change in the environment had an effect on the child's behavior; the child identified the situation as a stress factor. In an anthropological view,¹⁸ the response to the stressor may take place at a moderate level, which is called “eustress” or, at a highest level, “distress”. The participants said that the response was abrupt and intense, because it generated a considerable transformation in behavior. Anthropology explains that depending on the meaning that the individual gives to his stressful experience, *distress* can cause pathological changes.

In general, positive feelings about identity and community life predominated over negative ones. However, one of the participants revealed some negative aspects regarding life in the Quilombo. Although she declared herself to be happy and proud of her identity, she said that the location of the community entailed a number of difficulties, including poor access to health and education services and a lack of job opportunities.

It's not that I do not like it here, I like the community. Because everyone here is related, but it's not a matter of

not liking the place. It is simply for the sake of employment really. There is bakery and stuff, ok. But I, for myself, I want more. I want to have a source of income that I do not need to depend on my parents (Q7).

It is evident that the complaint is not directed to the quilombola community, but to the distance from an urban center that allows access to more resources for her independence. In this context, the feelings of lack of more opportunities and the awareness of the need to search for financial independence are revealed. These sensations were associated with the absence of perspectives for the future, a lack of training and courses aimed at the quilombola population, the difficulty of access to health services, among others. In this sense, one of the women expressed how the young women feel before these problems:

I think I understand her on the one hand, because she works well here, but she does not have the dream to say like this: “A year from now, I'm going to have my house, I'm going to leave my parents' house and I'm going to support myself with my job at the bakery”. She will not be able to do this (Q8).

Given this, the solution found by most young quilombola people is to leave the community in search for better opportunities in the urban zone.

What young people need is an opportunity to avoid seekin the city. If young people could keep working here. They wouldn't have to leave. We are losing many young people here, because they are going there [city] and the community is shrinking. If we had plenty of job, of course, people would come from the city to live here (Q5).

There is a kind of uncertainty about opportunities for the young people, who, because of lack of other possibilities to continue their studies or professional improvement, have to leave the environment in which they grew up. The sense of insecurity about the future is detected, in which the participants fear that the community may eventually become unstructured and disappear.

In the literature, it is possible to identify other authors¹⁹ who also had the same findings. Young people were concerned about the future, as they had few opportunities for employment and professionalization within the community. To change this situation, they also moved away from the quilombo. Therefore, the difficulty of finding income-generating activities is also found in other quilombos.¹⁹

There should be more jobs for the young people, who do not have the opportunity here for this (Q3).

They finish the studies here and then they have to leave, and the mother also has to go along (Q10).

The Q10 participant highlights the fragmentation of the family as a problem generated with the need of youth to leave the place and go to urban areas. As they are young, mothers feel the need to accompany their daughters in search of work or continuity of their studies. Men continue to work in the community, women move to the city and the family structure needs to be reorganized. The tasks that used to be performed by the woman in the family need to be assumed by someone else.

Women who do not choose this alternative depend on their parents or partners and do not have positive expectations about the future. It is evident therefore that the lack of perspectives about future days reverberates directly in their lives, changing their dreams, desires, attitudes, conceptions and meanings. Their perspective about the future in relation to the community, the identity and the health-disease process itself is also influenced by the choices, as well as the perceptions about the needs of caring for themselves and of others, because in this context feelings of discouragement, low self-esteem and self-depreciation can emerge.

It was also noted that the lack of employment bond is something that causes feelings of insecurity about the future, especially among the young women and their mothers. Although there is a desire to seek opportunities in the city, they face difficulties when they leave the community.

It is not that we want very much: "– I am going to the city". Then you get there, and you do not get a job (Q8).

If you do not have a job opportunity, you will never get it. In your resume, the first thing they ask for is experience. How will you have experience if you do not have an opportunity? It's no use having a course if you do not have experience. You do the course only to say that you have a diploma (Q9).

At the same time, in the following speech, it is possible to see that the women who were successful in finding job are valued and seen with pride by the others. In this direction, authors have demonstrated, in their study,²⁰ that formal employment generates in women the feelings of empowerment, valorization of their workforce and gender equality, causing them to take on the control over their own lives in search of what they want. In this perspective, it is believed that quilombola people also value paid and formal labor activities.

It is also noted that some participants still face a cultural context that determines the activities that should be developed by men and women. These activities are presented as values that do not involve subjective preferences, but living con-

ditions that are imposed and that are implicit in the cultural context.⁶ However, it was possible to verify the condition of disruption of the female submission through work, as the following statement shows.

We feel proud that they are representing, because there are many macho husbands, that woman is not going to work, woman has to stay at home. They are showing that it is not to be like that. It is not their business as a tractor drivers, field workers, but an equal, competent service just as they have. They are showing that any woman can do it. I am proud to see them work, because there are many men who do not allow that to happen, because they think that our work is worthless (Q8).

Regarding the daily life of these women, there was a reality very similar to that found in the study,²¹ in which most of the companions also work in rural areas, while their spouses stay at home every day, developing domestic activities, caring for their children and gardening. The difference between the two scenarios seems to be that the participants' scenario was built on the lack of job opportunities and not on a demarcation of roles imposed by men.

In addition to the lack of employment and perspectives to women, the participants also highlighted the problems experienced to access health services, which directly implicate other aspects of their lives and their feelings.

I think if I had a good job and the health issue, we would have everything (Q5).

When doctor comes to us, we'll be happier (Q6).

Difficulties in accessing health services and health professionals, as well as the lack of perspectives regarding the possibility of finding job, generate a sense of anguish. However, these feelings are mixed with a sense of hope in the expectation that access to health services be resolved with the presence of a health professional in the community. It is observed that this possibility represents an aspect that generates happiness in the lives of these women.

In the meantime, the difficulty to access health services is also experienced by other quilombola communities.¹⁹ In general, it is inferred that the black population still lives a situation of inequality regarding access to health. Despite the above mentioned difficulties, it was possible to see, among some participants, a feeling of hope motivated by faith in better future days. In this direction, faith emerges as a cultural system of symbols,⁶ which substantially motivates these women in one direction and helps them adjust their actions, allowing them to

have the courage, persistence, energy and perseverance to face an unknown tomorrow.

We have some difficulties but we believe that things will improve (Q1).

We have health and trust in God. God willing, I hope one day everyone here [...] Everything will improve for us all, if God allows it. I'm sure about that (Q5).

Only God Himself to solve the problem of people (Q6).

Because we get things here in little bits. In former days, we did not have high school, now we have [...]. We want jobs, God willing, we will have them. God willing will have it. That's something we need, we do not want to leave here (Q8).

I'm happy here. Waiting for a job and God will give it to me. For me, for my daughter, for all who need it. We trust in God, God will give us. Because everything that we have asked for here, we have succeeded. More today, and more tomorrow, we have achieved (Q10).

In this sense, in spite of the adversities faced in the present, the women still believe that, in the future, their life conditions can improve and they seek to awaken this hope in the young. These beliefs come from divine inspiration, which gives them support to live, to endure the difficulties imposed by life, and they believe that something better is yet to come. Therefore, according to interpretive anthropology,⁶ it can be considered that this religious perspective, which generates confidence in a better future, involves a particular way of seeing life, building the world and establishing motivations to continue living and fighting for better living conditions.

This religious dimension reflected in the words of the participants demonstrates the meanings they attribute to faith and to God, with faith being something that motivates them and God Someone or Some Divinity to whom they trust their lives. In this cultural context, the perplexity and the unknown emerge imbricated in the future and impelling the belief in God, which begins to assume the symbology of a supernatural condition that protects them and that will help to improve their lives.⁶

In addition, the sense of belonging to a group is considered to produce positive meanings in these women and reduce the stress they may experience regarding the uncertainty of the tomorrow. Thus, the group's cultural values can protect members against this type of stress, strengthening unity and support.¹⁸ This notion of belonging implies that they have formed ties of mutual recognition and that in this cultural context there are similar principles, values and worldviews.

Young women also envisage the possibility, for example, of developing academic-professional activities that may later bring benefits to the community.

That's why I told you, I want to do Veterinary Medicine, because I want to work here and I want to help the community (Q9).

It can be seen in her speech that her choice of career is much more linked to a spirit of fellowship and to being able to contribute to the context in which she was born and raised than to a personal desire. She feels that she belongs to a group and cares about the well-being of this group, thus identifying the need to help there by means of her professional choice.

It is possible to see the quilombo as a cultural medium^{6,22} in which are reflected symbols, meanings, conceptions, patterns, practices and characteristics that have been expressed and transmitted between generations and that allow individuals to conform, order and direct their lives, as well as to give value to their existence. Therefore, the feelings expressed by these women evidenced their social insertion as quilombola members and, at the same time, the afflictions imposed by the lack of opportunities in that place and due to the distant access to urban centers. Such feelings expressed by them result from the cultural environment in which they were socialized and where they live. It is from this environment that they communicate, perpetuate themselves, and develop their knowledge and activities in relation to life and self-care. Therefore, knowing this aspect with this specific group is important.

CONCLUSION

It was found that the quilombola identity is seen among the women of this study as something special that generates positive feelings, including happiness and pride to belong to a group and to live in a quilombola community. Living in this place also gives women a sense of freedom because they can lead their lives and family quietly without worrying about dangers or risky situations found elsewhere.

It is considered that the feelings expressed by the participants are influenced by social and cultural factors, which have been built historically in the place. Thus, in some moments, it was noticeable that the older women seek to transmit to the young people the same positive feelings regarding the identity and the quilombola community, symbolically transmitted to them in the past.

These positive feelings are believed to have significant repercussions on women's health care, encouraging them to develop self-care practices, as they will continue working, studying and striving for better living conditions. At the same time,

the sense of belonging to the group encourages them to care for other members of the community, making them propagate care practices, and bonds of solidarity, trust and zeal.

In contrast, the adverse life conditions mentioned by women have also generated negative sensations like anguish and insecurity. However, it is evident that it is from these conditions and from the feelings that they cause that women shape the way they see life, take care of themselves and of others and face adversities. Given this, faith stands out as a strategy to help women overcome the obstacles encountered and represents something that motivates them towards a future that they believe will be better.

The results found in this study highlighted the technique chosen to produce the data as a positive element. The method favored the interaction and expression of quilombola women through a discussion group, assisting them in their statements and allowing the understanding of the meanings of their feelings, behaviors and experiences. In this sense, it is emphasized that the understanding of a particular group or phenomenon requires that researchers make an effort to look beyond the individuals' shoulder, seeking to see and understand what they feel, how they think and what they believe

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that no studies were found specifically addressing the feelings of quilombola women towards their identity, which is a limiting element. However, this study did not propose to exhaust the theme, since investigations, from the cultural perspective, do not intend to discover all the meanings implied in a context, but to explain conjectures in the attempt to understand the construction of meanings and subjectivities. Thus, there is a need for further studies and different perspectives on the theme. Therefore, it is expected that the data produced herein may contribute to the reflection of society, as well as to the elaboration of strategies to produce transformations in the life of these individuals.

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