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**TRANSFORMATIONS  
IN THE LIFESTYLE  
OF TRADITIONAL  
QUILOMBOLA  
COLLECTORS OF BRAZIL  
NUTS (*BERTHOLLETIA  
EXCELSA* H. B. K) FROM  
THE TROMBETAS RIVER  
BIOLOGICAL RESERVE,  
ORIXIMINÁ, PARÁ,  
BRAZIL**

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**Abstract:** This article was prepared to present part of the results of a research for the conclusion of the professional master's course in Management of Protected Areas in the Amazon, from the National Institute for Research in the Amazon (INPA). The objective was to analyze the transformations in the way of life of the quilombolas who collect Brazil nuts (*Bertholletia excelsa* H. B. K) in the Rio Trombetas Biological Reserve (RBRT). This is an exploratory case study carried out in the years 2018 and 2019. The primary data were collected through observation techniques, documentary research and semi-structured interviews carried out with traditional Brazil nut collectors, and the secondary ones, through bibliographical and documental research. The research revealed that the implementation of RBRT restricted the quilombola practice of moving their homes through the territory of common use, restricted daily territorial mobility and interfered in the choice of species to be cultivated by this traditional people.

**Keywords:** Lifestyle, Territory, Traditional people, Quilombolas.

## INTRODUCTION

This article is the result of the research entitled "Analysis of the way of life of quilombolas traditional collectors of Brazil nuts from the Rio Trombetas Biological Reserve (RBRT), Oriximiná, Pará, Brazil", linked to the Postgraduate Program in Management of Protected Areas in the Amazon, from the National Institute for Research in the Amazon (INPA).

Since they settled in the Trombetas River valley, the quilombolas have experienced profound transformations in their territories and in their way of life, due to the exploitation of the regatões and bosses, and, mainly, due to the implantation of the bauxite mining company Mineração Rio do Norte (MRN), from the 1960s onwards. In this context,

environmental policies that restrict the way of life of the quilombolas in the Alto Trombetas micro-region were also implemented, through the creation of the RBRT, both overlapping territories of common and collective use by the quilombola peoples. of this micro-region (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998; FARIAS JÚNIOR, 2016).

The objective was to analyze the transformations in the way of life and in the territoriality of the quilombolas traditional collectors of Brazil nut (*Bertholletia excelsa* H. B. K) who signed terms of commitment with the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio) for the collection of this product in the RBRT and offer subsidies for the management of this UC.

Territory and way of life are important elements for understanding the construction of social, cultural and economic relationships of groups (social, economic, political, cultural and others). The way of life is characterized by the way they produce and by what they produce, therefore the reproduced way of life and "what they are therefore coincides with their production, both with what they produce and the way they produce, what individuals are, therefore, depends on the material conditions of their production" (MARX; ENGELS, 1932, p. 44, apud COSTA; FERREIRA, 2015).

Santos (2000) corroborates this approach by stating that the territory is, above all, a social relationship, it is a conflict, resulting from an action conducted by a geographical subject that is subject and subjected to forms of territorialized social relations in different ways with different interests and visions (SANTOS, 2000). For this author, the territory is the space of interactions of the natural, built and social subsystems, subsystems that make up the national, regional and local environment. The territory is not only understood as a physical environment where

animal and plant life takes place and where material resources are contained, but also includes the activity of man that transforms this space, that is, “it is the basis of work, of residence, material and spiritual exchanges and life, on which it influences”. It is the ground and more the population, that is, an identity, the fact that we feel that we belong to what belongs to us (SANTOS, 2000, p. 96).

Thus, studying the way of life of traditional peoples and communities requires considering that it is constituted concomitantly with the construction of the territory, since a territorial base is necessary to guarantee the existence and reproduction of the ways of life of a social group. In the case of TQs in the Alto Trombetas micro-region, the territorial base is the same as for the RBRT.

Through the analysis of these categories and field research, it was understood that the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region establish their way of life and territoriality based on the conception they form of nature and the values added to each element of space. These traditional people have a peculiar and specific way of developing their way of life, which is explicit in their economic and cultural manifestations in their daily lives, with the territory being the space for the construction of their territoriality.

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The study area was the Alto Trombetas micro-region, located in the municipality of Oriximiná (Map 1), which, in turn, is located in the northwest portion of the state of Pará, in the Trombetas River basin, a tributary of the left bank of the Amazonas (ORIXIMINÁ, 2017).

The estimated population of the municipality of Oriximiná is 71,160 inhabitants (IBGE, 2019). The municipality has a territorial area of 107,603.392 km<sup>2</sup>, of

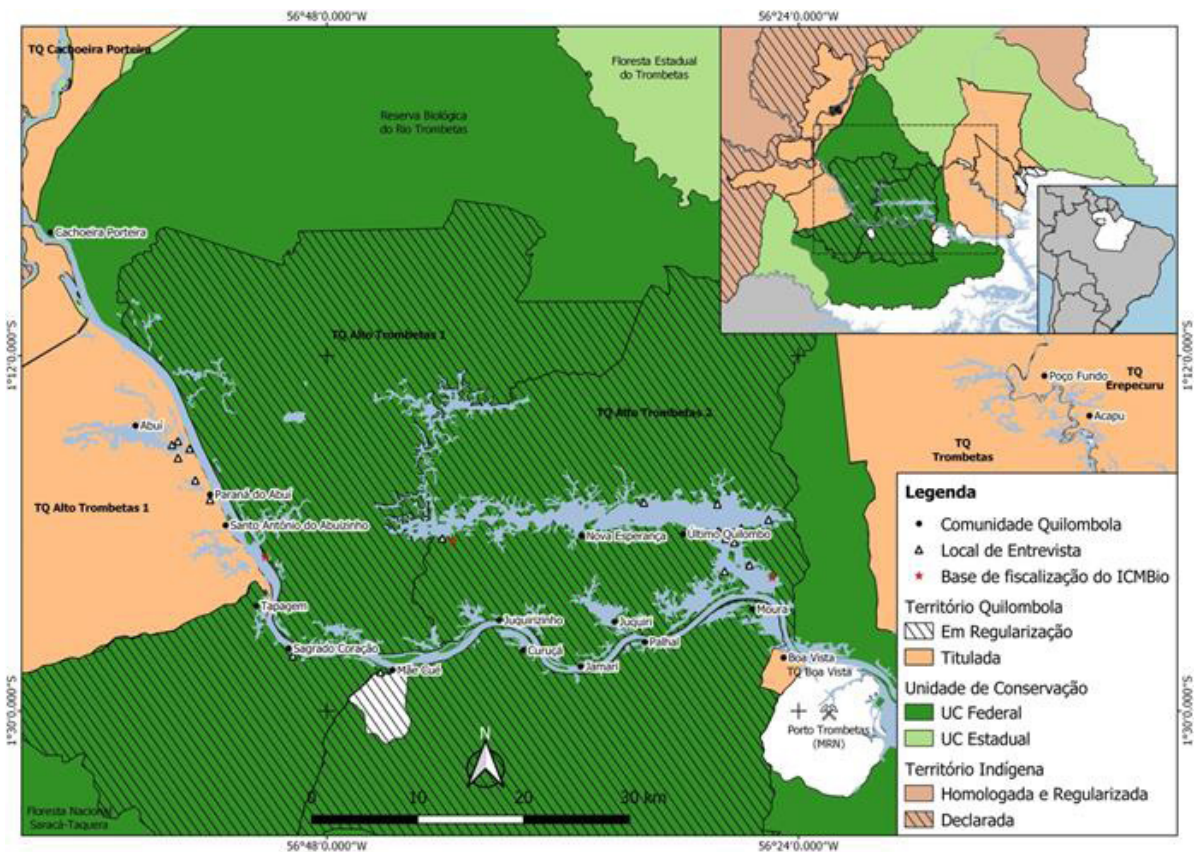
which 96.82% (104,177.6 square kilometers) are protected areas - indigenous lands, conservation units and quilombola territories (ORIXIMINÁ, 2017).

Administratively, in political terms, the Municipality of Oriximiná divides the territorial area of the municipality into fourteen rural micro-regions (TAVARES, 2006, p. 15). Among these, the Alto Trombetas micro-region, made up of fifteen quilombola communities and their respective Quilombola Territories (TQ): Boa Vista and Água Fria (titled TQ); Mãe Cué, Sagrado Coração, Tapagem (Trumbetas Area I – overlapping the FNST), Paraná do Abuí, Lake Abuí (Trumbetas Area 1 – TQ Mãe Domingas), Moura, Palhal, Curuçá Mirim (Trumbetas Area 2 – overlapping the FNST), Juquiri Grande, Juquirizinho, Jamari, Nova Esperança and Último Quilombo (Trumbetas Area 2 – superimposed on RBRT) and Cachoeira Porteira (titled TQ).

The research was carried out with the quilombolas traditional collectors of Brazil nut from the Alto Trombetas micro-region. The research was carried out under a qualitative approach. The Case Study was used as a procedure method for data collection, according to Yin (2005). Triangulation of the following techniques was used: document analysis, semi-structured interviews and field observation.

The research used primary and secondary data. Secondary data were obtained from publications on the subject, from books, theses and dissertations, to articles available on the internet. The primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and field observation. The collection of primary data took place during three field trips:

The first field trip was carried out from July 16 to 20, 2018 for documentary research at the Integrated Management Nucleus (NGI) Trombetas/ICMBIO - Porto Trombetas,



Map 1: Location of the Alto Trombetas micro-region in the municipality of Oriximiná.

Source: IBGE, IDEFLOR-BIO, INCRA, 2018.

Org.: Carlos Adriano Siqueira Picanço, 2019.

with the objective of obtaining data in documents such as: minutes of meetings, terms of commitment and reports related to the construction, evaluation and monitoring of the terms of commitment signed for the collection of Brazil nuts, among others. In addition to the documentary research, a semi-structured interview with the head of RBRT was also carried out.

The second field trip was carried out from August 9 to 17, 2018, in the Territory Quilombola Mãe Domingas, also known as the Alto Trombetas Area 1. During this period, sixteen semi-structured recorded interviews were carried out, fifteen with traditional chestnut collectors. Brazil; one with local irrigation; six with community

coordinators from TQ Mãe Domingas; one with the coordinator of the Último Quilombo community, located within the RBRT and overlapping the area of TQ Alto Trombetas 2; one with the administrative coordinator of TQ Mãe Domingas.

The third field trip took place from February 18 to 24, 2019. Sixteen (16) semi-structured recorded interviews were carried out with traditional Brazil nut collectors residing in the Último Quilombo community, located within the RBRT. In addition to the interviews, semi-structured observations were also carried out, recorded in a field diary.

The interviews were carried out with the residents of the communities interested in

participating in the research, aiming to collect diagnoses and speeches referring to the theme addressed. All participating interviewees signed the Free and Informed Consent Term (ICF), agreeing to carry out the same. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in full and are in the custody of the Social Studies Laboratory (LAES) of INPA.

As the present study was carried out in the natural environment of the “case”, there was the opportunity for participant observations, providing some unusual opportunities for data collection. Among these, the most important is related to the ability to gain access to events or groups that would otherwise be inaccessible to the case.

The field work was authorized by ICMBio, under Research Authorization n. 62814-1, of June 25, 2018, made available in the Authorization and Information and Biodiversity System (SISBIO), since the communities to be surveyed are within the RBRT or upstream of these UCs, and it is necessary to transit through sections of the RBRT.

In order for the field research to be authorized, the research project was approved by the Ethics Committee in Research with Human Beings of INPA (CEP-INPA), on May 11, 2018, through the Certificate of Presentation for Ethical Assessment (CAAE). ) number 88961318.2.0000.0006 and the opinion embodied by CEP number 2,649,978.

It was also necessary to obtain authorizations: from Arqmo; Associação Mãe Domingas, which owns the title to the TQ Alto Trombetas 1; of the Association of Remaining Communities of Quilombo do Alto Trombetas 2 (ACRQAT), which is the association that represents the communities of TQ Alto Trombetas 2, where the Último Quilombo community is located. It was also necessary to obtain authorization from seven coordinators of communities where

traditional Brazil nut collectors reside, who signed terms of commitment to collect this product at the RBRT.

Data analysis was performed using the content analysis technique, which comprises a set of communication analysis techniques, which uses systematic and objective procedures to describe the content of messages (BARDIN, 2011). This technique aims to verify what is being said about a given topic, admitting both qualitative and quantitative approaches, or even both. The content analysis was carried out in three stages: (a) pre-analysis of the material collected in the interviews, documental research and bibliographic research; (b) analysis and exploration of the material itself; and, (c) treatment of the results to constitute the reflective analysis. This way, the analysis carried out a dismemberment of the text into units, based on the different nuclei of meaning, and then the regrouping of these units into categories. Categories are classes that group elements, due to their common characters (BARDIN, 2011).

The treatment and systematization of the data collected in the field research are exposed in the body of the text of this article in the form of figures, maps and quotations.

## **WAY OF LIFE AND TERRITORIALITY OF QUILOMBOLAS TRADITIONAL COLLECTORS OF BRAZIL NUT FROM THE RIO TROMBETAS BIOLOGICAL RESERVE**

The quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region come from groups of blacks who resisted, through flight, slave labor on the large cocoa and cattle ranches installed in the region of the cities of Santarém and Óbidos, in the mid-1780s. During this period, the lower Amazon region achieved economic growth and became one of the most important in the regional scenario. However, these large properties were weakened by crises, stagnation

or environmental phenomena, which contributed to the conditions of escape for enslaved blacks (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998). After the flight, the blacks initially settled in the headwaters of the Curuá River, a tributary of the left bank of the Amazon, forming the “mocambos” of Inferno and Cipóteua, which, according to Rodrigues (1875, apud Farias Júnior, 2016), were destroyed by a punitive expedition in 1812.

With the destruction of the quilombos on the Curuá River, the Mocambicans moved to the Trombetas and Erepecuru rivers where they formed new quilombos (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998; FUNES, 1995; RODRIGUES, 1875, p. 25 apud FARIAS JÚNIOR, 2016). According to Rodrigues (1875), the “mocambo” formed on the Trombetas River was destroyed by a new expedition in 1822 or 1823. The quilombolas, then, were increasingly interned, seeking shelter upstream from the waterfalls, natural obstacles that provided them with protection against to punitive expeditions. In addition to the strategic location to prevent possible attacks on quilombos installed along the lakes and rivers of the Trombetas River basin, these areas also had an abundance of natural resources - timber and non-timber forest products, game, fish and turtles (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

The process of territorialization of the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region occurred with the expansion of extractive areas, an activity that contributed to the regional economy and was fundamental for the territorialization of these peoples in the Trombetas River valley. Quilombolas have increasingly entered the territory in search of forest products such as the: copaíba (*Copaífera* sp.), balata (*Manilkara bidentata*), salsaparrilha (*Smilax aspera*), cumaru (*Dipteryx odorata*), Brazil nut, in addition to the extraction of pau-rosa (*Aniba rosaeodora*)

and other woods and for hunting turtles (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

About the way of life of the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region, Castro and Acevedo (1998), portray that they develop a productive structure based on several productive activities, complementary to each other. Among these activities, extractivism (forest products, hunting, fishing) and small agriculture stand out, both for family sustenance, with part of the production destined for commercialization. They also raise small domestic animals for their own sustenance.

The artifacts necessary for survival were produced by the quilombolas in an artisanal way with materials extracted from nature - wood, vines and clay, important in the manufacture of household goods, fishing and hunting tools and in the construction of canoes, the main means of local locomotion (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

The Brazil nut is a product of great economic importance among the extractive products from the Alto Trombetas micro-region, whose production in the chestnut groves of Lake Erepecu was already remarkable since the mid-19th century, according to Derby (1898):

“Currently the population of Trombetas is very spread out. As far as Lake Arapicú, there are some scattered sites of whites and tapuios, who are mainly traders who trade in chestnuts. Between this point and the waterfalls, some negroes live at various points along the river to the main village, which is situated a few days’ journey above the first waterfall. In the months of October and November, many people from the lower part of the river and even from the Amazon, go to the sandy beaches, which are immediately below the waterfalls, in order to catch turtles and turtle eggs, while shortly afterwards, this same region is full of chestnut collectors. The Brazilian chestnut tree is exceedingly abundant in the river and in the lakes from the waterfalls downstream to Lake Arapicú, and large quantities of

chestnuts are exported every year” [sic] (DERBY, 1898).

It is important to emphasize that, since they settled in the Trombetas River valley, the quilombolas have maintained socioeconomic relationships with various sectors of the wider society. Tavares Bastos (1866), in his observations, found that in Lake Erepecu the exchange of goods between quilombolas and white traders based in the cities of Oriximiná and Óbidos was regular, even during slavery (TAVARES BASTOS, 1866). Tavares Bastos (1866) also observed that the regatões traded heavily with the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region.

As in other places in the Amazon, in the Alto Trombetas micro-region, the regatão was and still is a socio-economic subject of fundamental importance for the distribution and circulation of goods and products in the Amazon. A middleman trader who travels by boat powered by a diesel engine along rivers and streams, between regional centers and communities, trading goods with small caboclo producers and traders from the interior in exchange for “regional”, agricultural and extractive products. Generally, the regatão adopted the practice of exchange or barter in the commercial transactions that it carried out, with the use of circulating currency being rare (MCGRATH, 1999).

The territoriality of the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region was also expressed in the type of housing. According to Castro and Acevedo (1998), in general, the houses of the quilombolas were built with material extracted from the forest, such as wood and straw, giving them a temporary character, and one of their side walls could remain open to the wind. The relationship of these groups with the ecological systems to which they are integrated goes beyond the space surrounding the residence and invades the space of the forest, rivers, lakes, streams

and waterfalls. These environments served them to build, over almost two centuries, a particular way of life (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

## **THE MASTERY OF THE BOSSES: THE “OWNERS OF THE CHESTNUT TREES” IN THE ALTO TROMBETAS MICRO-REGION**

Until the end of the 19th century, in the section of the Trombetas River between the city of Oriximiná and the town of Cachoeira Porteira, the economy was based on small family farming, mainly focused on the cultivation of cocoa and also on small cattle ranches, which coexisted with extractivism, most notably, the collection of Brazil nuts.

However, according to Castro and Acevedo (1998, p.136), with the high appreciation of Brazil nuts, from 1894 onwards, the chestnut grove lands in the Alto Trombetas microregion, previously considered as vacant, were improperly appropriated. Such appropriations took place through the so-called “explorations”, which were organized by local businessmen to discover new rubber and chestnut groves. These “new areas” were incorporated by means of the definitive title of ownership, registered in a notary’s office or acquired from squatters, creating a new local elite formed by a group of non-direct workers on the land, called “owners of chestnut groves” or “bosses”. From 1894, for almost 60 years, 173 definitive titles were registered, however, these titles gained more importance in the period from 1920 to 1940, with the expansion of the activities of collecting, processing and exporting Brazil nuts (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

With the appropriation of Brazil nuts, the “bosses” began to monopolize the collection and sale of Brazil nuts. Traditional Brazil nut collectors were only allowed to trade with the bosses, and trading with the regatões



was prohibited. However, the monopoly of commercialization or the control of part of the productive chain of Brazil nuts only became effective through the control and concentration of products based on patronage relationships, also known as *aviamento* in other parts of the Amazon (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

In the patronage system, the bosses provided the extractivists, that is, they advanced them - in a credit system and at prices normally higher than the market prices - the groceries, work instruments and other items necessary for the collection work period in the chestnut trees. Afterwards, they bought the production of Brazil nuts from them at pre-established prices and, in general, below market value. After paying off the debts assumed with the boss, the extractivists ended the business at a loss, forcing themselves to work for the same boss in the harvest of this product the following year (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

With the insertion of *quilombolas* in the productive space circuit of Brazil nuts, they began to dedicate themselves to the work of collecting this product, reducing the cultivation of cocoa and tobacco for sale, for example. Other economic practices were also discouraged, commercially, since the economy encouraged the most important productive activities for its operation via exportable goods (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

With the monopoly of Brazil nut production in the Alto Trombetas micro-region, there was a dislocation of small traders and *regatões* (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998). However, the collectors secretly sold part of their production to the *regatões*. Seen as a problem for the bosses, they entered a relationship that implied trust and fidelity on the part of the traditional collector who became the boss's godson and bearer of moral obligations, such as not selling the nuts to other traders. These

bonds developed links between city dwellers and local residents, producers and traders, which changed the relationship of cronyism, which was previously intra-family and inter-community (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

Despite all the artifices created, the bosses and the regional society were not able or did not have the ability to subjugate these former occupants of the Alto Trombetas microregion, even using skillfully the artifices of the agrarian law of the Republic (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998). The *quilombolas* resisted these imposed forms of domination and compulsorily maintained the family tradition of the boss within the limits of compromised crops and in the presence of the person in charge or the owner of the land. However, they circumvented this system to extract the fruits and wood from the forest and to carry out fishing, hunting to extract the skins, and thus guarantee the reproduction of their peculiar way of life (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998, p. 146).

## **THE INFLUENCE OF LARGE PROJECTS AND UCS ON THE WAY OF LIFE AND TERRITORIALITY OF THE QUILOMBOLAS OF THE ALTO TROMBETAS MICRO-REGION**

The dominance of patronage in the Alto Trombetas micro-region began to decline in the 1970s, when the Brazilian Federal Government, through a political decision to physically integrate the Amazon region into the rest of the country, began to act with a true policy of regional intervention, with clear geopolitical inspiration from the military segment. It shifted its interests underground, to the mineral wealth of the Amazon, which became the target of major investments by the Federal Government, such as the National Integration Program (PIN). This program was responsible for opening roads and highways with the objective of physically integrating the



Amazon Region with the rest of the national territory (GONÇALVES, 2012). Through a developmental policy, it encouraged the installation of industrial extraction ventures of bauxite ore in the tertiary trays of the Alto Trombetas micro-region.

The decision to explore the bauxite deposits took place in the outlines of the Mineral Pole of the Trombetas River, which was carried out with the installation of the consortium of companies called MRN. For the implementation of the bauxite mining project in the Alto Trombetas micro-region, a local scale was created – company town, roads, railways, port – to receive the MRN enterprise (ICMBIO, 2013). In this context, the State has a fundamental role, as it holds the competence of the territorial planning necessary for the installation of the MRN, in addition to granting incentives for the construction of infrastructure in the district of Porto Trombetas, municipality of Oriximiná.

The implementation of the MRN had an effect on the way of life of the quilombolas of the Ato Trombetas microregion. There were “compulsory displacements” of these traditional people along the strip of bauxite mining concessions, as the implementation of the enterprise’s infrastructure requires drainage routes, energy and water for production.

For Farias Júnior (2016), according to the mining concession decrees, the traditionally occupied lands were made available on the land market for the purpose of bauxite mineral extraction, given that these were legally represented as “unclaimed lands”. In this regard, it is important to mention that after the formal abolition of black slavery in Brazil, there were no land policies that provided and guaranteed the domain of land for blacks who had been enslaved, or for those who had long guaranteed their ways of life and social

reproduction. in the so-called “quilombos” (FARIAS JÚNIOR, 2016, p. 271-273).

With the consolidation of mining interests in the Alto Trombetas micro-region, the Programa de Poles Agropecuários e Agrominerais da Amazônia (Polamazônia), the same public policy that encouraged the implementation of the bauxite mining project by MRN in the micro-region Alto Trombetas, also financed studies and approval of the project for the “Creation and Implementation of the Trombetas River Biological Reserve”, carried out by the IBDF (IBAMA, 2004).

One month after the first shipment of bauxite, the RBRT was created in the vicinity of the mining project, through Federal Decree nº 84.018, of September 21, 1979. three hundred and eighty-five thousand hectares). According to Acevedo and Castro (1998, p. 206), this demonstrates that the MRN acted as an adjunct to the creation of this UC. The PAs created around the mining project are MRN strategies, constituting buffer territories, that is, territories as a reserve of value and insulating strip that protects the mining area from possible territorial disputes (WANDERLEY, 2008; COELHO; CUNHA, 2007).

The RBRT was designed on territories traditionally occupied by quilombolas, which have caused territorial conflicts, as biological reserves are not intended to ensure traditional ways of life and access to the use of natural resources by the families who live in them (BRAZIL, 2000).

Consolidating the environmentally protectionist strategy used by MRN, the Saracá-Taquera National Forest (FNST) was created in 1989 around the areas of interest to this mining project. Adjacent to the RBRT, the FNST has an area of 441,152 hectares, covering parts of the territories of the municipalities of Terra Santa, Oriximiná and Faro, on the borders with the state of

Amazonas. According to Coelho and Cunha (2007), despite being a UC for sustainable use, the FNST was not created to consider the ways of life of the quilombolas and riverine people who live in this area, but to meet the mining interests of MRN, so much so that in the decree creating this flona, MRN acquired the concession to extract bauxite in its territory.

The implementation of the RBRT spurred changes in the way of life of the quilombola traditional collectors of Brazil nuts in the Alto Trombetas micro-region.

The work of collecting this product was totally prohibited by the Brazilian Institute for Forestry Development (IBDF), as well as by the supervisory body that succeeded it, the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA). These federal agencies that manage and inspect federal PAs considered the work of collecting Brazil nuts as “theft”.

The prohibitions imposed by the IBDF and IBAMA made the quilombolas “clandestinely” enter the RBRT to carry out the work of collecting Brazil nuts in the chestnut groves existing in this UC. These traditional people have had this productive activity as an important source of income since they settled in the Alto Trombetas micro-region, in the mid-early 19th century.

Another significant fact that imposed changes to the way of life and territoriality of the community was the development, from the 1970s, of the communities, which have their origin in the Catholic Movement of Basic Education (MEB). This movement was introduced by the priests of the Sociedade do Verbo Divino, a religious congregation linked to the Catholic Church (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998; FUNES, 2000; SCARAMUZZI, 2016). The MEB aimed to organize quilombola families into basic nuclei to carry out religious obligations and also to fight for their territorial rights (SCARAMUZZI, 2016; ACEVEDO;

CASTRO, 1998).

According to Scaramuzzi (2016), the organization in communities is perceived by the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region as a milestone of fundamental importance for raising awareness about territorial rights and for political organization (SCARAMUZZI, 2016). Aided by several institutions, most notably, the Pastoral da Terra and the Pro-Indian Commission of São Paulo (CPI-SP), the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region created, in 1989, the Association of Remaining Quilombo Communities of the Municipality of Oriximiná (Archimo). This association’s main objective is to represent and organize the struggle of the remaining quilombo communities in the municipality of Oriximiná to conquer the right to land ownership, guaranteed in Article 68 of the ADCT of the Federal Constitution of 1988. In this context, Arqmo contributed to the titling from the quilombola territories: Boa Vista (1995), Água Fria (1996), Trombetas (1997), Erepecuru (1998), Alto Trombetas (2003, partially titled) and Cachoeira Porteira (2018), located in the municipality of Oriximiná.

In addition to fighting for the right to own land, Arqmo fights against invasions and threats to the territories and way of life of the quilombolas. Among these, the following stand out: the struggles against the occupation of quilombola lands by the MRN; the struggles against the creation of the RBRT; the mobilizations for the departure of the bosses from Lake Erepecu, located inside the RBRT; and the struggles against the construction by Eletronorte of a village in Cachoeira Porteira and against the opening of the BR 163, works that preceded the implementation of the Cachoeira Porteira Hydroelectric Power Plant, on the Trombetas River (COMISSÃO PRÓ-ÍNDIO DE SÃO PAULO; ARQMO, 2018).

## **CURRENT ASPECTS OF THE WAY OF LIFE OF QUILOMBOLAS TRADITIONAL COLLECTORS OF BRAZIL NUTS IN THE ALTO TROMBETAS MICRO-REGION**

Regarding the type of property exercised by quilombolas who collect Brazil nuts in the RBRT, the territories are for collective use by those who reside in them, as informed by interviewees E06 and E09:

“There they don’t have this business of saying this is mine. Not. Wherever you enter, it’s just like being here [in Mãe Domingas Territory]. Here it is, it is..., as it is... collective. There are people here who already gather back here [pointing with their hands to the chestnut tip behind their house]” (E 06, 2018).

(...)

“I always work, like, in a free place, outside of where people are working that have the ends along the shore of the lake and also have the ends more towards the middle of the land. It is possible to collect everything, it is collective even that” (E 09, 2018).

The territory of collective use is the territorial basis of the socioeconomic organization for the reproduction of the way of life of the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region, both those who reside within this UC and those who live in its surroundings. It is free for those residing in this micro-region to circulate in the areas of fishing, hunting and collecting non-timber forest products.

However, the families exercise, in a particular way, the possession over a part of this territory, generally, the house, the backyard and the current and old swidden areas (capoeiras) and others, as the case may be. Access to these restricted areas by other members of the territory or by people outside the territory must be with the exclusive consent of the family, which must be requested with respect to certain local

rules (CUMBUCA NORTE, 2017; CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

With regard to the types of houses, in the studied micro-region, houses of the stilt or straw houses predominate. They are built close to the banks of rivers, lakes and streams, having a relationship with the ecological systems to which they are integrated that extrapolates the space that surrounds the house and invades the space of the forest and water bodies. In Figure 1, it can be seen that the house is practically inserted in the forest that surrounds it, with emphasis on the chestnut trees, the largest trees.

Around the house, in the so-called backyard, plants for medicinal uses are cultivated and chickens, ducks and pigs are raised. In another wider circle, they develop the cultivation of tubers, fruit plants and vegetables, build flour houses, chicken coops and barns to store chestnuts or other products. The houses have backyards and swiddens relatively close together.

Before the creation of the RBRT, according to Castro and Acevedo (1998), the houses of the quilombolas in the Alto Trombetas micro-region were built with material extracted from the forest, such as wood and straw (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998). Currently, quilombolas have difficulties extracting wood and straw from their territories, both those located inside the RBRT and those located in the immediate surroundings of this UC, as informed by interviewee E 14:

Because in those times we could plow wood, break a stick for a stake to sell, take a vine, take something to sell [...] Here people live a lot to make wood. To do these things, selling parts, working with parts, but you can’t take them. And then for me, I see that there is still room for improvement. [...] Look, the pieces, you can take them ready. In case you take an oar, take a hull to sell to Oriximiná, you can take it, everything is ready. Now, if you take a slat like this one... Now, I ask: why? Isn’t it the same wood? (E 14, 2018).



Figure 1: House in TQ Alto Trombetas 1.

Source: PIKANÇO (2018).

The quilombolas also have the habit of temporarily or permanently moving their homes across the territory, for several reasons: in search of more fertile soils to cultivate the fields, collect forest products and also due to the scarcity of hunting and fishing in certain places. Whenever the resources necessary for survival become scarce in some place, the quilombolas migrate to areas where there was more abundance of natural resources, thus managing and preserving these resources (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998). In this sense, the territory is a portion of the earth's surface, rich in natural resources (the livelihood of traditional peoples), appropriated and controlled by a human group (COELHO; CUNHA; MONTEIRO, 2009).

However, the implementation of the RBRT restricted the practice of family groups to move their homes through the territory of common use, since residency rules were inserted by

ICMBio, requiring the acquiescence of this UC management and supervisory body for the opening of new CUs. sites for building houses. The possibility of migrating from one community to another, as well as the entry of new non-Quilombola residents, is discussed and evaluated in community assemblies. In the case of inter-community migration, if the applicant has relatives residing near the place where he/she intends to live, the probability of having his/her application accepted is greater. These people are responsible for possible misconduct by the new resident, if they are not compatible with the rules of the territory to which they are inserted.

Access to communities in the Alto Trombetas micro-region, especially those located within the UC, must be previously authorized by ICMBio. The circulation of people and products takes place through the Trombetas River and its tributaries, which are

navigable at all times of the year. However, the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region were prohibited by ICMBio from using boreholes – fluvial channels that interconnect internal components of the same plain – natural shortcuts that shorten distances between places, which saves time and fuel costs. In addition, during the dry season of the rivers, circulation is only allowed during the day, until 6 pm. After this time, quilombolas must spend the night at ICMBio's inspection bases and only continue their journey at dawn.

In the movement of people and products, sterndrives, boats powered by diesel engines, canoes, or speedboats are used. A sterndrive costs less than a boat, being the same more used on short trips, while the boat is more used on long trips, mainly due to the safety and navigation stability that they offer. The boats are used for locomotion to the city of Oriximiná, where, while anchored in the city's port, it is common to serve as housing for people who travel on them and who do not have a home in the city. On the other hand, locomotion on foot or in canoes is usually done over short distances, between neighbors' houses, for example, or to hunt, fish, collect products or transport products from the gardens.

The quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region have their way of life based on extractive production (fishing, hunting and non-timber forest products – mainly Brazil nuts) and on small family farming, which are complementary to each other. Agriculture is practiced both for sustenance and for marketing and obtaining income, while extractivism is more practiced for sustenance, such as hunting, fishing and extraction of non-timber forest products, with the exception of the collection of Brazil nuts, açaí – allowed by ICMBio in RBRT areas – which are intended for commercialization.

The quilombolas are dependent on the resources of their territories, for which they are portions of nature and space that provide them with the means of reproducing their way of life. Therefore, they claim the guarantee to all, or to a part of their members, stable rights of access, control or use over all or part of the natural resources existing in these spaces (DIEGUES, 2001).

One of the main productive activities and the most permanent in the annual agroextractive calendar of the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region are the swiddens. The swidden is territorialized work, usually carried out with painstaking, due to the technical instruments being rustic and limited, in addition to the low capacity of capital management and of adding value to increase income. There is also low capacity to generate income and low capacity to territorialize this income in the form of socioeconomic and technical improvements, among others.

In the communities overlapping the RBRT, the quilombolas have ICMBio authorization to cultivate up to 01 hectare of fields, which is equivalent to one block, an agrarian measure used by the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region. However, it is important to emphasize that the quilombolas do not produce in large quantities, as it is not the culture of this traditional people to make large swiddens.

Most of the block is intended for the cultivation of cassava, the main crop grown in the countryside, being used mainly in the production of cassava flour or water flour, tapioca flour and beijus. In addition to cassava, the main products grown in the fields are: cassava, banana, pineapple, yam, sweet potato, pumpkin and others. The products from the countryside are destined for their own consumption, part of which is destined for intra-community commercialization

and also at the Community Fair, in Porto Trombetas and in the city of Oriximiná.

The choice of species to cultivate in the gardens and gardens located within the RBRT must be made with the consent of ICMBio to avoid the introduction of exotic species, since Article 31 of the SNUC says that:

Article 31. The introduction of non-native species into conservation units is prohibited. § 1º Environmental Protection Areas, National Forests, Extractive Reserves and Sustainable Development Reserves, as well as animals and plants necessary for the administration and activities of other categories of conservation units, of according to what is set out in the regulation and in the unit's Management Plan (BRAZIL, 2000, p. 21).

Access to farmland production by quilombolas depends on the profile of the RBRT manager. Thus, if the manager has the UC as a space that enables the transformation of local communities, and also the conservation of biodiversity as part of the ways of life of traditional peoples, he will encourage the participation of these communities in the management of the UC. But if the manager does not recognize and does not incorporate, in his management actions, the traditional communities in and around the UC in which he operates, the management of these territories becomes difficult.

Among the main products from the collection work in the forests of the Alto Trombetas micro-region, açaí stands out. (*Euterpe oleracea*), the Brazil nut (*Bertholletia excelsa*), the bacaba (*Oenocarpus bacaba*), straws, vines, pitch (*Protium heptaphyllum*), cumaru (*Dipteryx odorata*), copaíba (*Copaifera langsdorffii*), andiroba (*Carapa guianensis*), amapa milk (*Parahancornia amapa*), seeds in general, honey, the so-called medicinal plants, bark, resins, oils, splints and various fruits for food, etc.

However, it must be noted that, among the products collected in the RBRT, only the collection of Brazil nuts and açaí is authorized for marketing purposes. Brazil nut collection work in the RBRT and in the areas upstream of this UC is authorized by means of a Term of Commitment (TC) signed between ICMBio and the representative associations of the remaining quilombo communities, while the collection of açaí for marketing is authorized through informal agreements. The collection of other products that are not included in the TC is only authorized by ICMBio for the purposes of supporting local residents, being authorized through informal agreements between the representative associations of quilombolas and ICMBio.

The extractive practices of fishing and hunting wild animals (the latter, despite being prohibited by law) are only allowed by ICMBio for the purpose of supporting local residents, as they are practices considered traditional by this managing body, constituting sources of proteins that make up the diet of the quilombolas since they settled in the Trombetas River valley. Among the wild animals most used in the quilombola diet, the following stand out: pacas, agoutis, deer, wild pigs, monkeys, tortoises, the Amazon turtle and other chelonians (CUMBUCA NORTE, 2017).

Extractive fishing practices, hunting wild animals for the livelihood of communities and traditional peoples are provided for in the SNUC, which establishes that sustainable use UCs - such as Resex, RDS and, alternatively, the Flonas - have as one of the objectives to ensure traditional ways of life and access to the use of natural resources by the families who live in them. And there is no way to dissociate the use of natural resources from the maintenance of traditional ways of life, given that, in the Amazon, the way of life of traditional peoples is closely linked to the most basic activities

of sustenance and obtaining animal protein that, of course,, include hunting and fishing (FONSECA et al., 2017).

However, as it does not specifically address these issues in its content, the SNUC naturally demands new legal subsidies that complement it - as is the case with TCs - specifically dealing with activities that involve the use of fauna and promote their proper and sustainable management. on sustainable bases (FONSECA et al., 2017). This is important, because in the CUs of full protection in which the permanence of traditional peoples is not allowed, but there are traditional peoples residing, as is the case of the RBRT, it is necessary to offer the minimum conditions for these peoples to maintain their ways of life. activities, which include hunting and fishing, basic livelihood activities and obtaining animal protein for the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region.

The way of production of the quilombolas, traditional collectors of Brazil nuts in the Alto Trombetas micro-region, is based on family work and is based on the concept of possession and common use of land and resources of the territory, linked to collective productive practices based on mutual aid. and family cooperation. In production, there is a division of tasks among all family members, seeking to maximize and save efforts in the execution of activities. However, this organization is not restricted to the level of the family unit or family groups, but also extends to the level of intra and inter-community relations.

With regard to the social division of labor by sex and age, the results indicated that men from the family unit and the family group are generally dedicated to hunting, fishing, felling, planting and cleaning the fields, making tools of work. However, there is no male exclusivity in the development of these activities. Hunting is a task reserved for men, while fishing, despite being more practiced by

men, in their absence, women also practice or assist in carrying out this activity.

Women basically carry out household chores, which include taking care of children and making utensils, but they also perform important activities. They fish and also collect chestnuts in chestnut groves near their homes or near the chestnut tree shack. In addition, they help in planting and cleaning the gardens, cleaning the backyard that surrounds the residence.

Despite the divisions in tasks, there is no rigid division of roles between male and female work in production, but there are complementation in the performance of these tasks. Children also have a defined role in helping their parents with certain tasks, participating in moments of learning about the group's culture, such as, for example, fishing, treating the fish, making food, always under the supervision of the father, mother or a family adult. They also accompany their parents in activities in the fields and in the collection of nuts, which results in practices that ensure socialization and the learning of production processes by new generations.

Plant extractivism activities are also permeated by a division of labor between men and women. Men are responsible for collecting products in the forests, but this is not an exclusive activity for them. The extraction of copaiba, for example, is carried out by men, as the collector needs to travel through extensive areas in the forest, even being absent from the place of residence for up to two days. The collection of Brazil nuts is carried out by the family unit, where men, women and children, usually from eleven years of age, collect nuts. Young and adult women and children usually collect in chestnut groves closer to their place of residence, while young and adult men collect in chestnut groves farther away.

But it is in the organization of work in the fields that the division of tasks between men



and women is most visible. Although it is important in maximizing and saving efforts, this division translates another functional element to their way of life: the integration of all family members in production, since the preparation of the swidden is strictly a male activity, family work extends through the phases of planting, weeding and harvesting. The latter does not correspond to a particular period, but extends throughout the year, as roots, cereals and even fruits are harvested according to sustenance needs, in small quantities.

A technique of division of labor widely used by the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region, mainly in the work of preparing the swidden, in the 1990s, is called *puxirum* (CASTRO; CEVEDO, 1998), a technique of work organization widely used among peoples. traditional Amazonian products for their productions. It consists of the division of tasks among the members of the community, seeking to maximize and save efforts in the execution of tasks, mainly in the four main phases of preparation of the swidden: felling, planting, weeding and harvesting, or in other words, access to natural resources, strategy, mastery of techniques.

In the organization of the *puxirum*, each family prepares its swidden with the help of guests (about fifteen men carry out the felling and an agreed number of families for the planting phase), committing to repay the work time incorporated in their own swidden, participating of the knockdown phase of the others. The quilombolas explain this relationship as an exchange of days, a system of rules established in customs performs the function of controlling the commitments assumed in the exchange of working time, guaranteeing efficiency in the reproduction of this type of organization.

This procedure gives workers mobility, moving them through the families' swiddens

in the phase of performing more time-consuming and painful tasks (CASTRO; ACEVEDO, 1998).

According to Castro and Acevedo (1998), generally the *puxirum* was more carried out in the clearing phase of the swidden because this stage requires greater intensity of work. Cutting (or clearing) is done only by men, while women are in charge of food preparation. These practices are based on family work and the participation of the various family groups agreed in the collaboration contract, in which there is no remuneration of the workforce or partnership, but is governed by a system that organizes the exchange of relatively equal working times for similar and socially necessary tasks.

However, based on more recent research, such as the studies carried out by Scaramuzzi (2016) and Farias Júnior (2016), it is possible to affirm that the practice of *puxirum*, nowadays, it is hardly used anymore, as these authors do not mention this technique of work organization in their ethnographies on the traditional chestnut quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region. Currently, despite the quilombola family groups still maintaining their mode of production based on the organization of family work, collective and cooperative practices of mutual aid, at the community and intercommunity level, such as the *puxirum*, for example, they are little used, with the most used being the remuneration of the workforce through payment of per diems. The use of money is gradually replacing the technique of *puxirum*. It appears that these new working relationships disrupted those that were practiced in quilombola communities.

When it comes to income, it is necessary to understand that in the daily life of the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region, family income is a supplement to their livelihood. The livelihood comes from

the products of small family farming and extractivism (hunting, fishing and gathering of NTFPs). Income is the money acquired by the quilombola – whether through work, selling their products, or through social programs of income transfers from the federal government. With the money obtained, the quilombolas buy what they do not produce, such as industrialized foodstuffs, clothes, household items, gasoline, diesel oil, electric power generators powered by gasoline or diesel, sterndrives and small motor boats, etc. Clearly, a territorial income, since it is in the logic of the territorialized way of life that it is its Source. It is the same logic of use or expenditure for the satisfaction of material and symbolic needs.

The creation of the RBRT influenced the obtaining of income by quilombola families, since it prevented or limited agro-extractive practices (agriculture, fishing, hunting, extraction of timber and non-timber forest products) that were the main source of income for quilombolas traditional collectors of Brazil nut from TQ Alto Trombetas.

The implementation of the MRN also influenced the obtaining of income by quilombola families in the Alto Trombetas micro-region, since their income depended exclusively on the sale of work products based on agro-extractive practices, and came to depend on services provided to the mining company. These services are performed in Vila de Porto Trombetas by salaried workers, as well as through outsourced services provided by cooperatives (Cooperboa, Cooperbarcos and Coopermoura) and by self-employed or day laborers (cleaners, housekeepers, washerwomen, runners, gardeners, etc.).

However, even inserted in these new working relationships imposed by the MRN, many quilombolas, including those who live permanently in the village of Porto Trombetas, maintain their residence in their community

of origin. Many of those who work as public servants or who work as self-employed or in cooperatives that provide outsourced services to MRN, generally also maintain the cultivation of the swidden and practice extractivism, even though ICMBio prohibits the work of collecting Brazil nuts. Brazil, for marketing purposes, by quilombolas that do not have an important source of income and livelihood in this activity. Maintaining a residence in the community, even if only on weekends, as well as maintaining the garden or collecting Brazil nuts, is a way of maintaining the link with the quilombola way of life.

In terms of cultural representations, the main reference of the local cultural calendar is the festivities of the patron saints of the communities, which are usually mast parties – a wooden trunk decorated with fruits and other products of the community, planted vertically on the floor of the center. community near the front of the chapel (FIGURE 2 – A). The mast is erected and decorated on the morning of the Círio's day and when the saint returns from the river itinerary, in the afternoon, people go to the mast's location and each person in the community is called to strike the base of the mast with an ax until that it is knocked down (FIGURE 2 – B). People then carry the mast to the community shed, where the products are distributed to the people present (FIGURE 2 – C).

In general, the religious festival begins with the celebration in the chapel of the saint, with the litanies sung by the prayers, and extends into the afternoon, with a football tournament with the participation of football teams from other communities. At night, after the religious celebration, there is a social party, the so-called dancing party, with lots of music and performances of folk dances regarded by the quilombolas as traditional



Figure 2: Círio held in the Último Quilombo community.

Source: PIKANÇO, 2018.

in the community. Currently, there are many difficulties in carrying out the festivities, as there are not many litanies and salaried workers do not have time for festivities.

As for the standard of living, in the communities of the Alto Trombetas micro-region there is a lack of public services for water supply, basic sanitation, energy, transport and communication, among other services associated with the quality of life of a population.

There is no signal coverage for mobile phone services and there is no signal coverage for 3G or 4G internet. There is internet signal only in the polo schools, where people use the WhatsApp service to communicate.

In the Alto Trombetas micro-region there are Municipal Schools for Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education, the EMEIF's, also called schools-poles. They are managed by the Municipal Education Department of Oriximiná (SEMED) and offer public elementary and children's education. They are strategically located in communities with the largest population, serving other smaller communities in the surroundings.

In the communities of the micro-region of Alto Trombetas, there is no service at the health posts, but they usually have a Community Health Agent (ACS) to serve two communities, who work in educational and disease prevention guidelines. Emergency

cases are treated in the village of Porto Trombetas, as long as the patient is registered with the MRN, which is made available, as a rule, to employees and their dependents, and which extends to quilombolas in the Boa Vista and Moura communities, but not for those who live in other communities. For other care and disease prevention, residents who need medical care travel to the city of Oriximiná, since people who are not registered do not have access to the MRN hospital and outpatient clinic.

boat, canoe, speedboat or boat. In this sense, access was hampered by the need to rent a boat, hire a boatman, which increased the cost. Another hurdle regarding logistics was the time taken to reach the intended locations. The average travel time to the most distant community visited was 12 hours.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The present study showed that the implementation of the RBRT promoted changes in the way of life of the quilombolas traditional collectors of Brazil nuts in the Alto Trombetas microregion.

The implementation of the RBRT restricted quilombola territorial mobility, since the management of this UC imposed residency rules, requiring the acquiescence of the managing body to open new places for housing construction.

With the implementation of the RBRT, the quilombolas of the Alto Trombetas micro-region were also prohibited from using the holes, which are natural shortcuts that shorten the distances between locations, which saves time and fuel.

The RBRT management also interfered in the choice of species to be cultivated in the gardens and backyards by the quilombolas, since exotic species - such as mango trees, avocados, whose cultivation is very common among quilombolas in the Alto Trombetas micro region - are prohibited from being cultivated in the RBRT.

Finally, as recommendations for future work, it is important to mention that logistics was one of the main difficulties encountered during the field research. To reach most communities, the transfer is made by river,

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