# International Journal of Human Sciences Research

# THINKING ABOUT ANALYSIS CATEGORIES FOR THE STUDY OF BAIAN SAVES AS CULTURAL HERITAGES

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**Abstract:** This article aims to present some of the theoretical foundations the research entitled "Saveiros Baianos do Recôncavo: trajectories and difficulties for their preservation" which is being developed within the scope of the Postgraduate Program in Archeology and Cultural Heritage at Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia''. For tact, we present a discussion through a bibliographical review on the following categories of analysis: community, social memory, identity and cultural heritage, commonly used in sociocultural studies. Bahian sloops are wooden sailing vessels, produced by hand, recognized by IPHAN as a cultural asset of Brazil. According to patrimonial discourses, the intense presence of sloops profoundly marked the collective imagination, the landscape and the cultural identity of the population of Recôncavo the work presents This way, reflections aimed at elucidating some possible interpretative paths for understanding the process of patrimonialization of Bahian sloops, as well as perceiving other challenges. Keywords: Saveiros Baianos; Community; Social Memory; Identity and Cultural Heritage.

### INTRODUCTION

The Bahian sloop is a wooden sailing vessel, considered traditional in Brazil, recognized by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN), for being handcrafted by master carpenters based on secular, nongraphic knowledge, transmitted from oral form between generations (CASTRO & DIAS, 2015).

It is not known exactly when the Bahian sloops appear. However, written documents and iconography from the period show that between the 17th and 19th centuries, these vessels dominated the Baía de Todos-os-

Santos. There were thousands of copies that were dedicated to transporting goods and people between the interior towns and the capital Salvador, in addition to the vessels that were exclusively dedicated to fishing (AGOSTINHO, 1973; SMARCEVSKI, 1996; ZACARIAS, 2001; RIBEIRO & BOCCA, 2013; BATISTA, 2020).

Given the speech presented by bodies linked to heritage preservation in the country, it is understood that the intense presence of these vessels over the centuries ended up marking the landscape, the collective imagination and the way of life of the people who interacted or still interact. with these vessels. Acquiring a certain mythical value, sloops were also celebrated by artists such as Carybé, Pierre Verger, Dorival Caymmi, Jorge Amado and Gilberto Gil.

In 2010, a survey carried out by: ``Associação Viva Saveiro``¹ counted 22 (twenty-two) Bahian sloops in Recôncavo, considered to be the last examples in existence, with 2 (two) already out of circulation due to the high degree of deterioration. That same year, following the activities of this association, IPHAN proceeded with the listing of the sloop "Sombra da Lua", with the boat being registered in the Historical, Fine Arts and Archaeological, Ethnographic and Landscape Books. In the Technical Listing Opinion (Iphan Process, number: 1.615-T-2010), the vessel was considered as the example that best met the conditions of originality and was presented as a representative of the last sailing sloops (WEISSHEIMER, 2010).

The research surrounding the Bahian sloops presented here has the general objective of understanding the relationship between the Jaguaripe community in Recôncavo Baiano and the artisanal sloops and their views regarding the preservation and patrimonialization of these vessels. To this end, we began our

<sup>1.</sup> It presented itself as a non-governmental, non-profit organization to facilitate projects to preserve the Bahian sloop. Official website: https://vivasaveiro.org.br/quem-somos/ Accessed in April/2022. The Association was closed at the end of 2022.

work by outlining the categories of analysis: community, social memory, identity and cultural heritage, with the intention of building the interpretative bases for understanding the patrimonialization of sloops.

# SOME ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Studies linked to cultural heritage have increasingly demonstrated their intimate relationship with theoretical-methodological contributions from Social Sciences. Gilberto Velho (1981) considers in one of his first lessons on this type of study that there must be a minimum distance between the researcher and his research object, aiming to guarantee a certain objectivity in the work. However, this objectivity will always be relative, and the interpretations will carry the author's subjectivities, revealing an approximate nature of the studied reality and not definitive. Through education and socialization, each individual is endowed with knowledge of the surrounding reality through a historically established system of cultural interactions, this leads us to build hierarchical mental maps for the interpretation of situations and individuals in society. However, reality is always being negotiated between actors with divergent interests. This game of forces causes concerns, conflicts and constant changes in society that are perceived through historical processes that involve permanences and ruptures, tradition and novelty (VELHO, 1981).

To seek to understand people and their symbolic constructions we need to denaturalize our gaze, and analyze both the familiar and the exotic with estrangement through qualitative methods that lead us to observation, experience and empathy through a critical and desacralizing examination of society.

These are some of the important premises

that will need to be observed and practiced during the course of any research in the humanities.

Seeking to understand human experiences and their meanings, Social Sciences has dedicated itself to understanding some phenomena that explain our social fabrics: what they are made of, how and why they are formed, and how they are transformed, in a link between tradition, resignification and innovation. In this context, some categories of analysis have been exhaustively debated. The concepts selected here: "community; social memory; identity and cultural heritage" fit into these essential analysis tools that can provide the interpretative bases for the problems proposed in the research.

# THE CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY

The discussion around the concepts of community and society has been fruitful in both classical and modern sociology. Mocellim (2011) informs us that in general, it is accepted that communities are related to a traditional way of life, marked by emotional bonds and strong bonds of intimacy, homogeneity and social cohesion over time, the archetype of which would be the family. The concept of society is related to the form of social organization of the postindustrial period and is linked to experiences in metropolises, marked by individualism, heterogeneity and impersonality. Despite the dichotomy, community and society coexist and mix.

For Durkheim (1978), community life is synonymous with mechanical solidarity, noticeable in small villages, for example. Collective consciousness acts as a norm and as an imaginary that guides social life and its maintenance depends on the perpetuation of customs. Max Weber (1987) understands the community as an ideal form of social

relationship that results from emotional or traditional connections between participants, guiding social life based on solidarity.

For Tönnies (1995), the community is strongly linked by knowledge, objectives, daily practices and ways of acting and thinking. Norms occur specifically through customs, habits, traditions and values. Solidarity is present and develops from three instances – kinship, neighborhood and friendship.

Faced with the phenomenon of globalization, Bauman (2003) differentiates ethical communities from aesthetic communities in contemporary times. This way, identity would replace community through temporary belonging to groups or affiliations to lifestyles.

Everything that characterized the tribes is also present in urban communities, each with an ethical and moral code. The concepts of aesthetic communities and tribalism indicate a shift from community to identity, which is decisive for contemporary sociability. (MAFFESOLI, 2006).

Given these perspectives, we cannot help but think about the relationship established between the concepts of community, locality and region. The notion of local revitalization today can be understood as a response to the homogenization resulting from globalization and flexibility of space-time (CASTELLS, 1999). Therefore, the place, the community and the family tend to represent security and protection against this "borderless" world.

For Palácios (2001), the concept of community is an invention of Modernity. According to this author, the characteristics of the community today are:

a) feeling of belonging; b) feeling of community; c) permanence (as opposed to ephemerality); d) territoriality (real or symbolic); e) own form of communication between its members through specific vehicles. (PALÁCIOS, 2001, p. 4).

For Buber (1987), communities in the future will not be based on blood ties, but rather on choice, guided by the same ideal, as in virtual communities.

So, at this point, we need to ask ourselves: can we understand the 'saveiristas' as a community today? Is there a notion of a group that calls itself saveiristas? What unites these groups and what are their interests?

As a hypothesis to answer some of these questions, we believe that it is likely that dealing with these boats marked a way of life with daily rituals linked to checking the wind and tides, handling and repair techniques, travel routes, crew training, bonds of solidarity in the group, among others. Also linked to subsistence conditions (material/financial issues). The establishment of these habits must have marked the life history of these people and the community, creating bonds of coexistence, affection and a sense of identity.

# THE INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL MEMORY, IDENTITY, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Human beings attribute meaning to things and this network of meanings guides their existence in groups, their reading of the world, their behavior and, therefore, their way of life. For Geertz (1973), culture is a web of meanings woven by man himself. Trying to understand this web of meanings is the task implemented by researchers in the human sciences.

Given the perspective formulated by Geertz (1973) who takes social constructions as "systems of representation and meaning collectively constructed, shared and reproduced over time" (RODRIGUES, 2017, p. 338), we can realize that social memory, identity and cultural heritage can be analyzed together, aiming to understand their interrelationships.

Much has been discussed about the "homogenization of the masses" as a cultural phenomenon arising from globalization. However, with a closer look at the local and regional, we can see that cultural diversities continue to thrive in the world (PAIVA, 2000).

Thus, it is clear that different ethnic, cultural and religious arrangements coexist that not only produce multiple identities, but also make up the so-called "contested identities", which are in processes of construction and affirmation, characterized as fluid and under negotiation (LOIZOS & PAPATAXIARCHÊS, 1991).

We can affirm that identities are constructed throughout each individual's life, based on experiences lived in everyday life through real and symbolic exchanges in groups through the exercise of otherness, when we identify with the 'I' and the 'I' us' as opposed to 'them' and 'others' (MAALOUF 1998, 2003).

According to Hall (1992), throughout life we become affiliated with various identities, fragmented and at times contradictory and unresolved. In the author's words, we have:

The question of identity is being extensively discussed in social theory. In essence, the argument is this: the old identities, which for so long stabilized the social world, are in decline, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual, hitherto seen as a unified subject. (HALL, 2016, p. 7).

Currently, we cannot think of fixed identities, carrying some essence or immutable, these are rather the results of fluid and transitory identification operations, loaded with subjectivities and renegotiated over time (RODRIGUES, 2017). We can therefore speak of ongoing identities (SANTOS, 1994).

By building unique ways of existing, the human species produces ideas, behaviors, objects and symbolic representations. This way of positioning oneself in the world is shared by the group and perpetuated between generations. This range of knowledge particular to each group is called cultural heritage, which is reproduced, preserved and, at times, modified through social memory.

We can define cultural heritage as follows:

A cultural asset can be included in the heritage category when meanings and meanings are attributed to it that make it a reference for a group, which identifies with that asset, being a link between all those who make up that group. Therefore, all heritage is constituted from a strong symbolic charge, which is immaterial or intangible. (CHUVA, 2015, p. 1).

However, when problematized, the theme of cultural heritage hides another face, as researcher José Reginaldo Santos Gonçalves (2015) reminds us:

From the point of view of the State and its policies, specifically its heritage policies, "identifying" a group and its heritage is equivalent to positively exercising its function as an agency of power. From this angle, the notion brings with it a certain ambiguity: if, on the one hand, it is the way in which a group publicly asserts itself, on the other, it is the way in which the State exercises its control over society [...] In this sense, heritages are less expressions of identities than means of production of certain forms of individual and collective self-consciousness. The debate on heritage must not, therefore, from an analytical point of view, be limited to the tasks of discovering, defending and preserving supposedly given "identities". This notion must be problematized, and it is also necessary, at the same time, to discuss the notion of "heritage", how it emerges in the history of modernity and what semantic profiles it came to assume (GONÇALVES, 2015, p. 213-214).

According to Menezes (2009), the delimitation of what will receive the status of cultural heritage is closely related to issues of symbolic valuation, linked to objects and rites. However, not everything in culture or memory can be preserved. Therefore, what

will be selected and valued goes through a process of ideological manipulation in society, which in turn demonstrates the selective and fragmented face of identities and cultural heritage (PRATS, 1997). In this context, records of expressions of representative heritage of certain communities will respond to the interests of affirmation and recognition linked to the group's self-esteem (MENEZES, 2009).

One of the great exponents in studies related to social memory is the French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. Based on his reflections, we can understand memory as a social phenomenon built collectively and reproduced over time through the sharing of values, ideologies and meanings. For this author, individual memory (if it exists) is constructed within a group, making it collective and historical. (HALBWACHS, 1950).

For Andreas Huyssen (2000), memory is alive, active and incorporated into the social, present both in individuals and in families, groups, nations and regions. It is constituted through narratives that marked group experiences, legitimizing, reinforcing and reproducing identity (CRUZ, 1993).

Michael Pollak, Austrian sociologist and historian, also understands memory as a social phenomenon, constructed and organized from the present; however, this author admits the existence of an individual memory that is formed from the collective. When relating memory and identity, the author states:

Memory is a constituent element of the feeling of identity, both individual and collective, to the extent that it is also an extremely important factor in the feeling of continuity and coherence of a person or a group in their reconstruction of themselves. (POLLAK, 1992, p. 5).

According to Maurano (2016), memory is always transitory, as it is always accessed and re-edited from the moment of recollection, in addition to presenting psychic mechanisms related to interactions between the conscious and the unconscious, such as repression. Thus, memory reveals an unreliable aspect, subject to forgetfulness because it is human and social.

However, if we admit that our reality is constructed and interpreted from our psyche, it becomes clear that everything around us is heavily loaded with subjectivities, in this case, we do not need to take subjectivity as something to be overcome, but as an inherent element to the entire field of investigation in which the human element is involved, admitting the existence of a field linked to the "sciences of subjectivity" and the impossibility of scientific neutrality (MAURANO, 2016).

For Jô Gondar (2016), there is a difficulty in establishing a ready-made concept for social memory. This, by articulating past and future outside a chronological, diachronic or evolutionary order, appears to be fragmented, mobile, unstable and subjective as a device loaded with beliefs, norms and rites, comprising memories and forgetfulness. In this sense, when establishing "five propositions about social memory", the first proposition is that social memory is polysemic and transdisciplinary.

In this mobile and multiple field, we are constantly making choices that imply selections and cuts. When we adopt certain concepts and authors, as well as when we select certain aspects of the past based on a desired future, we are making partial decisions with ethical and political consequences, which would be the second proposition formulated by Gondar (2016).

Faced with the perception of the acceleration of time, after the phenomenon of globalization, we can be overcome by the feeling that tradition is being lost in the present, which leads us to the desire to create "places of memory" (NORA, 1993) as

a reaction conservative. However, changes are inevitable, while some memories recede, others are highlighted. Thus, as a third proposition, we have that memory implies remembering and forgetting through a link of paradoxical coexistence.

In his fourth proposition, Jô Gondar (2016) also reminds us that memory cannot be reduced to identity. From the moment the world increasingly "creoleizes", that is, interethnic interactions multiply, political and affirmative disputes of the most varied types become evident; Therefore, it is necessary for researchers to be aware of these power games, moving from the perception of the root system – those that want to eliminate other roots around them – to the rhizomatic system – those that meet other roots (GLISSANT, 2005).

In this sense, a warning is established so that discourses around the defense of identities do not lead to movements of intolerance and the elimination of difference. Speeches must no longer be thought of in defense of the conservation of the past but rather of a memory of traces and residues, porous and open to the new and resignifications.

In the fifth and final proposition, Gondar (2016) teaches us that memory cannot be reduced to representation. Although memory is the field of collective representations, these reflect only a part of the process that has solidified in a given collective, since memory also presents an unrepresentable sphere expressed through the body, sensations, affections and practices.

In summary, seeking to establish and understand our categories of analysis in social studies, we cannot fail to realize that both memory, identities and cultural heritage are immersed in a field of forces and processes of permanent tension, where Groups compete for space, relevance and narratives of self-affirmation, making it necessary not to lose

sight of an ethical, flexible and open-to-new stance in our research.

In this sense, we can note that the preservationist interest of some communities in Recôncavo is directly linked to the creation of associations, organization of annual regattas, meetings and thematic workshops, construction of content for the Web and social networks, aiming for visibility and mobilization around the theme. All this investment seems to reflect the defense of an identity reference, following the idea that "we need to preserve our history, who we are, our cultural heritage".

Furthermore, it is clear that associations have been a way for communities to strengthen their cultural and economic ties. This model has no links with the State, but is formally constituted and autonomous. This gives rise to several questions about how the State can dialogue with associations, vice versa.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In a simplistic and summarized way, we can state that humanity is organized into communities through bonds of parentheses, spatiality, common experiences, and a shared code that provides the tools for reading reality. This identification provides a feeling of belonging to a group.

One of the problems that arises in the research is to understand how the process of patrimonialization of sloops occurs, that is, how this artifact becomes the symbol of a historical and cultural reference, acquiring a certain mythical value for these groups. To shed light on this, one of the paths considered is to access the memory narratives of these groups.

This interpretative path is conceived based on the assumption that identity is reaffirmed and reedited through social memory that provides narratives of instruction for the cohesion and identification of groups. It is through this constant re-editing of collective memory that cultural heritages are formed that present themselves as landmarks of this community/tradition/identity.

And after all, what could be motivating some communities in Recôncavo Baiano to want to preserve these vessels?

Exercising the construction of the first working hypotheses, we are inclined to think that the drastic decrease in Bahian sloops in the Recôncavo is a triggering factor for a feeling of loss for these communities that organized themselves or were organized around this shipment.

Adopting the concept of "places of memory" formulated by Pierre Nora (1993), the desire to preserve sloops in the present can meet a desire of memory that seeks to compensate for the feeling of loss of this way of life that remained or is remaining in the past (related to tradition), and these vessels

symbolize to a certain extent a representative landmark of social connection and belonging for these groups.

In view of the above, it is clear that reflecting on the categories of analysis community, social identity, social memory and cultural heritage can contribute to the interpretative bases of the research.

It must be noted that the discussion here presents initial reflections and hypotheses of the work and still needs to be matured throughout the development of the research. We also believe that when we contact the community, when carrying out the interviews, we will come across other categories such as associations, for example, and how this has been structured in the present. Another issue is communication, visibility of the cause and the search for social support through the Internet by saveiristas associations [or groups].

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