

Communication technologies in the construction of identity and social memory

Tecnologias de comunicação na construção da identidade e da memória social

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Abstract

New communication technologies have been used by different social groups, in order to integrate diverse skills in a complex context in a use of language. With the proposal of bringing informative, cultural, and essential contents to organization and valorization of the work developed by social movements organized networks of partners whose objective is the construction of a permanent nucleus of communication, with the perspective of strengthening communication as a tool for the land struggle. Through field observations and the development of qualitative research research through oral history, it was possible to apprehend that communication through digital and radio media has contributed to the organization of the struggle for land, of collectives to discuss sociocultural aspects and as a basis for multiliteracy. This communication network has made it possible for these groups to exceed the local protagonism and promoted the articulation of social memories correlated to the fields of affections.

Keywords

Social Movements, Technological Media, Memory.

Resumo

As novas tecnologias de comunicação têm sido utilizadas por diferentes grupos sociais, a fim de integrar diversas habilidades em um contexto complexo no uso da linguagem. Com a proposta de trazer conteúdos informativos, culturais e essenciais à organização e valorização do trabalho desenvolvido pelos movimentos sociais organizaram-se redes de parceiros cujo objetivo é a construção de um núcleo permanente de comunicação, com a perspectiva de fortalecer a comunicação como ferramenta para a luta pela terra. Através de observações de campo e do desenvolvimento de pesquisas qualitativas através da história oral, foi possível apreender que a comunicação através dos meios digitais e radiofônicos contribuiu para a organização da luta pela terra, de coletivos para discutir aspectos socioculturais e como base para o multiletramento. Esta rede de comunicação permitiu que estes grupos superassem o protagonismo local e promoveu a articulação de memórias sociais correlacionadas com os campos dos afetos.

Palavras-Chave

Movimentos sociais, Meios tecnológicos, Memória.

Introduction

According to Castells (1999) social movements must be understood in their terms, that is, they are what they say (emphasis added). Their practices especially discursive practices, are their self-definition. Social movements can be conservative, revolutionary, both, or neither, however, they are symptoms of our symptoms of our societies, and all impact social structures. A communication has always been considered an important political action in the process of organizing the social struggles of the movements (BARBOSA, 2014).

Faced with the need to establish new links and adapt to the digital reality that prevails today, social movements have managed, some with difficulty accessing the internet due to their peripheral location, to promote actions to fight for dignity, better living conditions and valorization of peasant work in so-called online communities. The participation of people linked to these movements, as well as members who share the same ideals and support the causes of such movements, has contributed to the strengthening of the struggles of social movements around the world.

The use of new communication technologies by different groups (Indians, social movements, quilombolas, feminists, unemployed among others), aims to integrate various skills in a complex context of language use by such groups. In this sense, the new media connection is characterized by diversification and autonomy of a public for whom every collective mental experience is virtual. For Ianni (2000) the hegemonic and resistance groups, nowadays, necessarily go through the use of electronic means of communication and, in this context, the media starts to play the role. In this context, the media begins to exercise the role previously assigned to the classic figure of politics.

Selber (2004) describes technology as a formation constituted of discourses inserted in social, political, historical, and material relations and that, therefore, the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) uses technologies and their languages as a means of political and integrated awareness into the pedagogical project of training members. However, the proposal to bring informative, cultural, and essential contents to the organization and valorisation of the work developed by the MST in the South of Bahia was the starting point for them to collaboratively organize networks of partners whose goal is the construction of a permanent communication center, with the perspective of strengthening alternative communication as a tool for fighting for land.

Through field observations and the development of qualitative research through oral history, it was possible to learn that communication through digital and radio media has contributed to the organization of the struggle for land, of collectives to the discuss sociocultural aspects and as a basis for multiliteracy¹. In this context, between 2012-2013, the Cabaça Collective and the Teia dos Povos (Peoples' Web) emerged, which seek to collaborate for the dissemination, organization, and maintenance of activities related to education, training, and the carrying out a joint effort in areas of agrarian reform, indigenous, quilombolas, and caiçaras.

This paper aims to present some of the digital and radio media used for the dissemination, valorization and strengthening of the actions developed by social movements located in the southern region of the state of Bahia as a way to transmit knowledge and promote agrarian reform actions as a political, social, environmental and cultural act that aims at the dignity of the subjects, as well as their individual autonomy and collective collaboration for the development of the living and working environment housing and work.

¹ Multiliteracy is a term created in the 90s by a group of academics (new london group) committed to the development of a new literacy pedagogy. Therefore, multiliteracy proposes a literacy that is a tributary of contrasting linguistics and explores language variants.

Material and methods

According to Portelli (1997) oral history is a science and art of the individual, which concerns cultural patterns, social structures and historical processes, which are deepened through conversations between people who share their experiences and memories. For Joutard (2000) the strength of oral history is to give voice to those who usually do not have it: the forgotten, the excluded the defeated. According to Delgado (2003), this is an exquisite methodology aimed at the production of narratives as sources of knowledge, but mainly of knowing.

Within this context, using information from the narratives of oral sources that were part of the doctoral thesis entitled *Memory, Education, and Agroecology: land occupations and the biocultural heritage of social movements in the southern coast of Bahia*, submitted to the Graduate Program in Memory: Language and Society at the State University of Southwest Bahia in the year 2021, it was possible to organize information about the importance of digital media in the actions of the struggle for land reform.

Through the narratives of some of the interlocutors, it was possible to discover public domain web pages specifically focused on the organization of agrarian reform actions, dissemination of cultural, political and social content, and that store interdisciplinary and multilingual content, which are used as pedagogical tools in the training of their subjects. Between the months of September and October 2018, web pages presenting content focused on popularizing struggle actions and peasant empowerment were visited, with the aim of analyzing the available content, verifying the reach of the publications, and projecting the importance of these communication vehicles in the actions of struggle for agrarian reform.

The PhD project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee because it was a research with human beings, but since in this article research results were presented in online platforms and in the public domain, it was not necessary to present the approval record from the Ethics Committee (CEP-UESB).

Results and discussion

Linked to the third sector, social movements are increasingly seeking, through their ideology ways to acquire visibility, and thus, through of media strategies, they seek to be visible in order to gain more supporters and disseminate their claim platforms, ensuring permanence of their ideals to achieve changes in the social sphere. Currently, the use of the media by Social Movements is one of the main sources for the engagement of new participants (MACHADO, PÉRSIGO, 2015).

For Gohn (2013) the internet has been the vehicle for articulating the collective actions of social movements, and which enables the creation of virtual networks that enable the organization of online groups and communities, among which are those who fight for the democratization of the media. in Brazil. According to Aguiar (2018) the internet network has become the fabric of modern society, which will fragment with the aim of bringing together partnerships and thus influencing public opinion, propagating its work platforms, that is, it will become the main means of political and social organization to build new movements of social struggles, being able to popularize actions worldwide.

In 2012, the need arose to unify the various struggles for land scattered throughout the state of Bahia from the discussions that took place during the 1st Agroecology Journey of Agroecology of Southern Bahia, which took place in the settlement Terra Vista municipality

of Arataca. From this meeting, which was attended by indigenous people, quilombolas, small farmers, caixaras, organized civil society NGOs, representatives of the state government and researchers, the Cabaça Collective emerged (Figure 1-A) and the Teia dos Povos (People's Web, Figure 1-B), which proposed to collaborate for the organization and maintenance of activities related to education, capacity building, and community work in agrarian reform areas.

Figure 1-A



Source: <http://assentamentoterravista.com.br/cabaca/>

Figure 1-B



Source: <http://teiadospovos.redelivre.org.br/>

For both cases above, aiming to broaden their proposals, web pages were organized with specific and directed about the actions of the struggle for land, improvement of the farmer's quality of life, and multiliteracy, in other words, interaction of the skills and competencies of these subjects. Considering that the media of the society has a great variety of communication channels, these strategies play an important role in the ways of constructing meanings that are extremely important to the work with the land, and for the transformation of the different social realities (ZACCHI, 2016).

Relying on the Internet to popularize actions of struggle for land and agrarian reform, better conditions of education, health and basic sanitation for rural populations and traditional communities, has been of paramount importance for the growth and strengthening of these social movements. By promoting knowledge through photographs, footage, documentaries, and news about what these characters face daily, it is possible to attribute value and strengthen the ideals of struggle for the well-being of the rural worker and his family. In this way, the Internet has contributed to the visibility and appreciation of these themes, communities and the social movements themselves have demonstrated their real intentions and future projects, which count on environmental justice and social and economic equity.

Considered an important tool of political action for the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) in southern Bahia, the internet and its media platforms have been used for popular communication of this and other groups, and have been consolidated as an autonomous space within some areas, which used to be of conflict, and are now determinant for the validation of this process of popularization of the actions organized by the social movements, among them are: Casa do Boneco, municipality of Itacaré (Figure 2-A) 2-A), the indigenous village Pataxó HãHãHãe, in the municipality of Porto Seguro (Figure 2-B) and the Settlement Terra Vista (AVT), located in the municipality of Arataca (Figure 2-C). Achieving a greater amplitude and greater possibilities of becoming effective over time, generations, minimizing a possible past of negative image or even of forgetting the values and objectives of the movement (MACHADO, PÉRSIGO, 2015).

Figure 2: Places where there are communication points A (Casa do Boneco - quilombola station in Itacaré-BA); B (Pataxó indigenous village, Porto Seguro-BA); C (Terra Vista Settlement - MST station, Arataca-BA).



Source: A and B (taken from the internet); C (personal collection).

The use of the web to disseminate actions and ideas makes clear to the public the repressions and contradictions of the government's arguments that these social movements do little to contribute to the struggle for social, political, and economic equity. By exposing numbers in a simple statistic, the landless rural workers' movement has managed to garner support among the intelligentsia and other sectors, beyond the political struggle waged in the occupation of land and public buildings, in marches and demonstrations, the MST, on a national scale, also occupies the field of communication to produce its own media and advocate that other popular organizations do the same (BARBOSA, 2014).

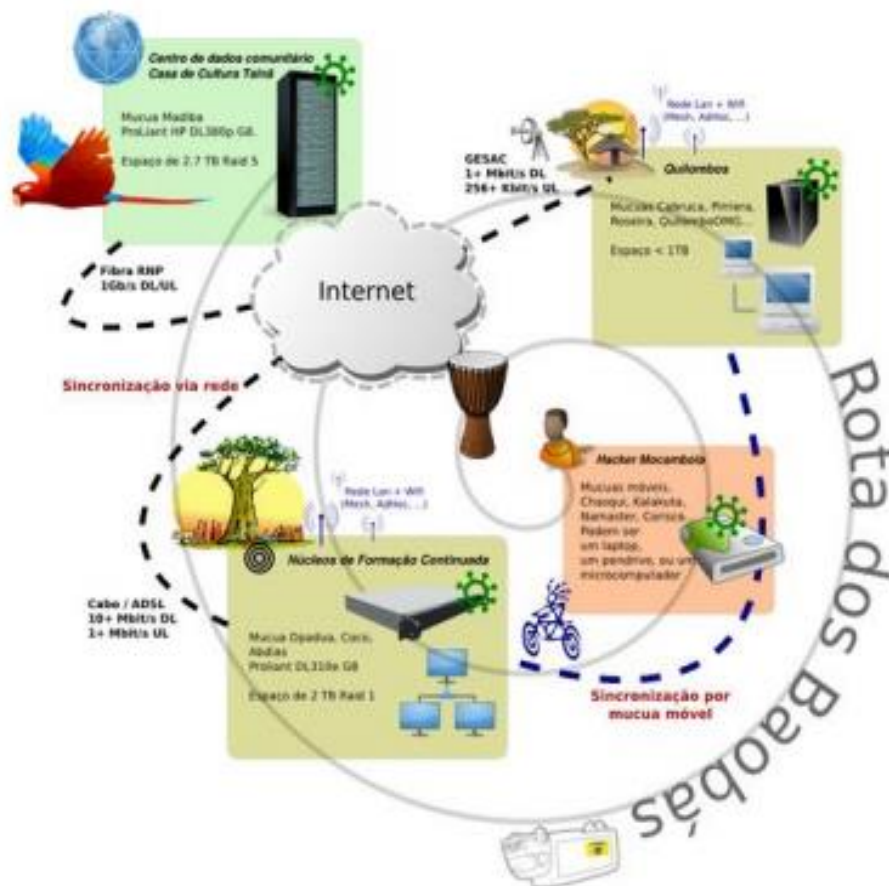
The Movement's website states that:

The people have the right to organize their own media, in an associative way. And the State must ensure the resources to exercise this right. It is necessary to democratize the means of starting with putting an end to the private monopoly of the media. Currently in Brazil, less than ten groups - made up of families or religious groups - control the largest communication networks, including television, radio, newspapers, radio, magazines, and Internet portals. The State should stimulate, with policies and resources, the expansion of the largest number of media under social control, in the most different forms of popular organization. We should. We must fight to guarantee the functioning of thousands of community rádios in the country and not be in collusion with the bureaucracy created by the State to maintain the power of communication in the hands of a few. We believe that the broadcasting concessions (radio and TV) that have a public character should be discussed within the framework of society, so that society can debate about concessions and renewals. The use of public media concessions as a means of making a profit should be prohibited. Communication is not merchandise. It is a public service for the benefit of the people, as determined by the Brazilian Constitution and cannot be subordinated to financial logic. Any foreign investment or interference in any social media communication should be forbidden. (MST, Our Flag).

However, not all agrarian reform settlements and localities that have subjects involved in the land struggle have Internet connections, because due to the distance from urban centers, it is not possible to set up a signal reception point. In order to solve this absence, it was created by the Mocambos network in 1996, in partnership with the Banco do Brasil foundation, Casa de Cultura Tainá and Núcleo de Pesquisa e Desenvolvimento Digital, a national network of black men and women who believe that being an educator and disseminator of knowledge goes far beyond the diplomas and merits conferred by formal education, the Baobáxia (Figure 3), a multimedia repository designed to operate in rural

communities without or with little internet (MOCAMBOS.net), promoting the valorization of identity and ethnicity, especially of quilombola groups, who, through this platform can popularize their culture, highlight their relations with the environment, and become interlocutors of their realities.

Figure 3: Schema of the Baobaxia platform's operation. The Baobáxia network is a collection of mucúas or nodes (nodes), where each mucúa is a computer connected to the community network.



Source: Mocambos.net

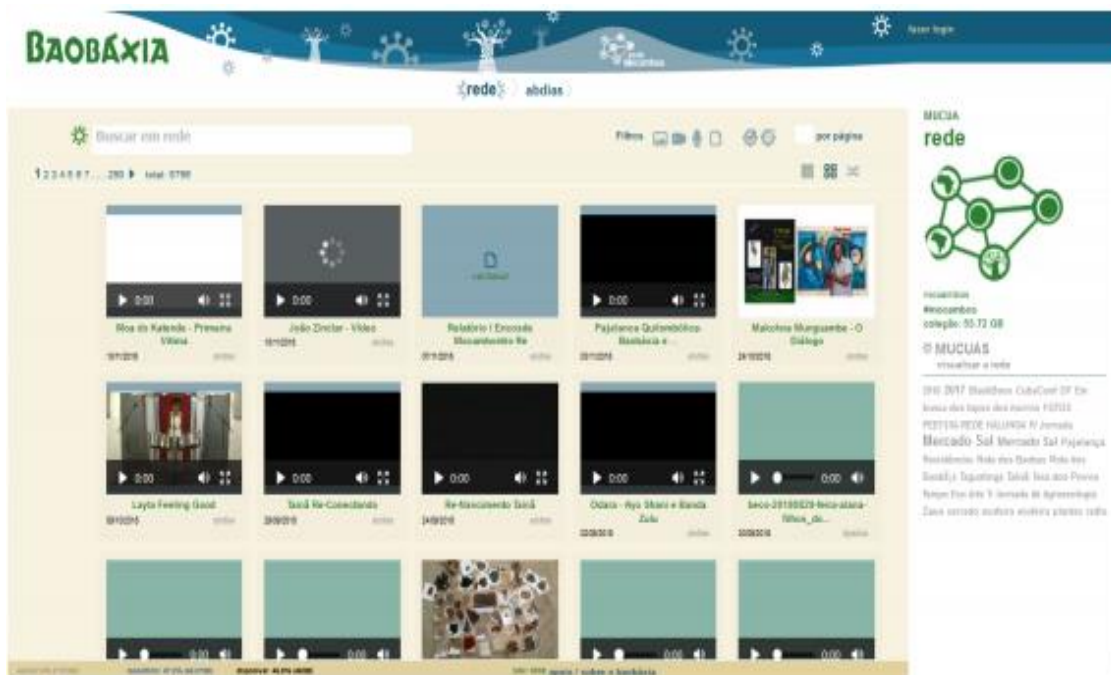
The Baobaxia network was organized to present to the world how quilombola communities, and social movements linked to ethnic and cultural issues, with little infrastructure and financial support, have managed to develop social and educational mobilization actions. The videos available on the online platform have free access, and promote knowledge about what is being done within the communities that have the internet points.

The Baobáxia domain is composed of a collection of mucuas or nodes (nodes), where each mucua is a computer connected to the community network. Users can upload their own cultural production, in the form of audio, video, text, and images (Figure 4). The content of each mucua can be synchronized with other mucuas, online or offline, through the mucua of the people circulating in the communities. Memories in this way are spread so that each node can potentially contain all the content of the entire network (MOCAMBOS.net), contributing to the construction of social representations and collective imaginaries.

The idea of the Mocambos network allowed the popularization of content among the communities, which represented an exchange of experiences among children, young people, and adults, who, by seeking to create content, were able to organize a collection of memories of their communities, which would help them in the near future to understand how the society

in which they are inserted was built, the importance of cultural identity to value their ethnicity, and the need to multiply traditional knowledge as a way to preserve the identity of their group.

Figure 4: Video content available in the Baobaxia repositior



Source: <https://baobaxia.mocambos.net/#mocambos/rede/bbx/search>

Each video recorded, produced, and made available on the platform has a specific theme, i.e., each production is designed to present a particular moment that helped in a particular perspective in the development of important actions to build future projects. The valorization of the quilombola culture is what prevails among the videos, and important personalities are presented who expose stories, tales, songs, and art that express the creativity and achievements of this segment. But there are also files for reading, and that can be downloaded as support material for the development and organization of socio-educational activities.

In this space created by the Internet, it is the subjects themselves who filter and select the contents that they consider important and useful for the preservation of historical heritage and memory. The Mocambos network, through Baobáxia offers reciprocal support to the communities that participate in it, integrating different projects and actions aimed at human, social, economic, cultural and environmental development, thus gaining new readers and supporters for land reform campaigns. Furthermore, through the Internet points, it has become possible to provide continuing education for educators and young people who seek to train themselves for better jobs.

Other digital platforms are used as a vehicle for dissemination and ethnic and cultural valorization of popular groups and social movements, especially groups like the MST, which in Latin America has a large participation in claims for better living conditions, health and housing for peasants, indigenous and quilombolas. The use of social networks, such as Facebook and Instagram, involves the publicizing of actions in the struggle for land, training meetings, and socio-cultural and environmental actions, which allow us to get to know the ideology and the actions employed by the Social Movements. The following are examples of the pages found on the Internet (Figure 5), as well as the radio used to bring the communities closer to each other, and to organize at a distance the events, marches, and actions that involve community mobilization, whose purpose is the conquest of rights guaranteed by the Brazilian

State, but that in many cases are not fully fulfilled.

Figure 5: A. Instagram of the Terra Vista settlement; B. Blogspot Casa do Boneco; C. Radio linked to the MST.



Source: taken from the internet

The Instagram, Facebook and blogs are the main means of dissemination and social mobilization in the bias that uses information technologies as tools of opportunity. They provide, independently of traditional means of social control, a huge circulation of information, resulting in a level of awareness and an efficient articulation of means, resources, and strategies for large mobilizations (MACHADO, 2002).

Dealing with the new technological demands is a challenge for social movements, which depend on the collaboration of many to advance in the search for better living conditions, health, education, work and housing. Knowing these platforms and their contents brings together different subjects and allows us to understand how the resistance of different peoples in preserving their cultures collaborates so that the multiethnic identity of Brazil can be understood and valued in order to ensure the rights of all to their human dignity.

Final considerations

The Internet influences groups, promotes deep debates, gives visibility to problems and specific situations, in addition to contribute to solidarity communication among communities linked to social movements and the dissemination of intelligible values related to their struggle and ideology. The emergence of these networks of articulated popular communication networks occurred due to the need to exceed the local protagonism of the fight for citizenship to the global scope.

For Barbosa (2014) since the end of the first decade of the 2000s, the movements began to realize that, in order to have a greater expression in this new stage of the struggle in the field it is necessary to bet on three fronts: the expansion of the alliance with other social movements, strengthening alternative communication, and increasing the training of internal staff.

In this sense, the land struggle that takes place in southern Bahia is seen around the world through Internet pages, which facilitates the dissemination of both positive (construction of houses) and negative actions (violence). Besides this, these sites are used as a form of denunciation and as a way to articulate social memories related to the fields of affections and sensibilities that involve the ethnic, cultural, and social imagery of these people.

The web pages, social media, and collective radio have collaborated for the construction of the identity of these groups, and the organization of their memories related to the processes of social construction, which seek to understand, through re-significations, the social relations involved in the processes of composition of the past through the objects of interest in the present.

Memory presents a collective character that cannot be denied. However, the subject has his own memories, and also enjoys a certain level of freedom awareness at all levels of social life, therefore, the construction of a web page not only collaborates and amplifies the ideas and actions of the struggle for land, as well as combines testimonies that internalize the memories of these different subjects and communities.

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