



Epistemologies of the Agreste: reflections and constructs of popular knowledge in Agreste

Epistemologias do Agreste: reflexões e constructos dos saberes populares agrestinos

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ABSTRACT

This article is the result of a dissertation by Otávio A. Chaves R. dos Santos, under the supervision of Dr. Allene Carvalho Lage, as well as reflections of the Latin American Philosophy Study Group of the Federal University of Pernambuco - Agreste Campus (*Grupo de Estudo Filosofia Latino-americana da Universidade Federal de Pernambuco - Campus Agreste*). Based on the assumption that there is an epistemology of the populations of the Agreste of Pernambuco, the authors aim to understand the conditions of elaboration, organization, languages and production of popular knowledge constructed by men and women of the arts of letters, clay, therapeutic care (healers and *raizeiros*) and the cultivation of the land. The present study wants, specifically, to highlight the structuring, the dynamics and the specific processes of the Epistemologies of the Pernambuco Agreste. This study in question is based on the Epistemologies of the South, underlined by Santos (1983; 2010), Fals Borda (1995), Brandão (1994) and Arroyo (2012). The methodology adopted is of an exploratory nature, coined by the Extended Case (*Caso Alargado*) method (Lage, 2013) that provided both the election of the collection tools and the data analysis technique. The results obtained were: a) there is an intimate relationship between the conditions experienced and the elaboration of meanings and knowledge produced by the subjects; b) there is a structural and, at the same time, dynamic and proper framework to produce knowledge of the Agrestinas populations; c) Popular Education is invited to (re)visit itself from the Agrestinas epistemologies that raise other sources, instruments and organizational ways of the popular subjects to pronounce their cosmoperceptions and their contributions to a dialogical and critical-transformative education; d) these epistemologies emerge from the daily life lived and reflected from the cycles of nature, the exchange of knowledge and the (self)narratives of native and/or resident social subjects.

RESUMO

Este artigo é fruto de uma dissertação de Otávio A. Chaves R. dos Santos, sob orientação da Doutora Allene Carvalho Lage, assim como de reflexões do Grupo de Estudo Filosofia Latino-americana da Universidade Federal de Pernambuco - Campus Agreste. Apoiados no pressuposto de que há uma epistemologia das populações do Agreste de Pernambuco, os autores ensinam compreender as condições de elaboração, organização, linguagens e produção dos saberes populares construídos por homens e mulheres da arte das letras, do barro, dos cuidados terapêuticos (benzedeiros e raizeiros) e do cultivo da terra. O presente estudo quer, especificamente, evidenciar os estruturantes, a dinâmica e os processos específicos das Epistemologias do Agreste pernambucano. Este estudo em questão está fundamentado nas Epistemologias do Sul, sublinhado, sobremaneira, por Santos (1983; 2010), por Fals Borda (1995), Brandão (1994) e por Arroyo (2012). A metodologia adotada é de natureza exploratória, cunhada pelo método do Caso Alargado (Lage, 2013) que propiciou tanto a eleição das ferramentas de coleta como a técnica de análise dos dados. Os resultados obtidos foram: a) há uma íntima relação entre as condições vividas e a elaboração de sentidos e saberes produzidos pelos sujeitos; b) há um arcabouço estrutural e, ao mesmo tempo, dinâmico e próprio de produzir conhecimento das populações agrestinas; c) a Educação Popular é convidada a (re)visitar-se a partir das epistemologias agrestinas que suscitam outras fontes, instrumentos e modos organizativos dos sujeitos populares pronunciarem suas cosmopercepções e suas contribuições para uma educação dialógica e crítico-transformadora; d) estas epistemologias emergem do cotidiano vivido e refletido a partir dos ciclos da natureza, da troca de saberes e das (auto)narrativas dos sujeitos sociais nativos e/ou residentes.

INFORMAÇÕES DO ARTIGO

Histórico do Artigo:

Submitted: 03/11/2022

Approved: 17/07/2023

Published: 31/07/2023



Keywords:

Epistemologies of the Agreste of Pernambuco, Epistemologies of the South, Popular Knowledge.

Palavras-Chave:

Epistemologias do Agreste de Pernambuco, Epistemologias do Sul, Saberes Populares.

Introduction

This article is the result of a dissertation by Otávio A. Chaves R. dos Santos, under the supervision of Dr. Allene Carvalho Lage, as well as reflections of the Latin American Philosophy Study Group of the Federal University of Pernambuco - Agreste Campus (*Universidade Federal de Pernambuco - Campus Agreste*). We seek to understand and reflect on popular and ancestral knowledge as contributing knowledge to popular education, in particular, and to education, in general.

In this article, our research object refers to the Epistemologies of the Agreste. The subjects we researched in our study group are madwomen, midwives, healers; rooters, farmers and social collectives (Hare Krishnas) living in the agreste of Pernambuco, more specifically in the microregion of the Vale do Ipojuca, encompassing the Serra dos Cavalos (Caruaru), the Serra do Ororubá (Pesqueira) and some riverside communities to the Rio Ipojuca, such as the localities where reside the crockery artisans masters in the art of clay (Alto do Moura - Caruaru, for example). In this article, we will present theoretical reflections, highlighting the knowledge of some of these subjects and fragments of speeches of some of them. These are fragments that were collected through the dissertation of Otávio A. Chaves R. dos Santos, who is one of the members of this study group. In the impossibility of bringing all the speeches, we will highlight those that we consider relevant and that help us to better understand the modes of elaboration and the meanings attributed by the subjects themselves to their worldviews, cosmoperceptions, which we call Epistemologies of the South.

The problem is the following: how to understand theoretically and methodologically the Epistemologies of the Agreste and its contributions to popular education, in particular, and education, in general, which dialogues with popular and traditional knowledge. In this sense, the general objective is: To describe and analyze the Epistemologies of the Agreste and their contributions to popular education.

A starting point of these reflections springs from the relationship of empathy with something that touches us, which is linked to our biography, to our socio-political commitments - elements that relate to our subjective trajectory. This study does not arise by chance, but emerges from a disquiet before the long history of epistemicides, of subalternization of popular, peasant and traditional knowledge in the name of modern science, of the normative status in which reason and empiricism enthrone themselves as absolute and universal.

It's in this sense, when we focus our gaze on a geographical cut, in our case, on the reality of the Agreste of Pernambuco, we perceive the thriving presence of other knowledge that is woven and constituted in a popular and counter-hegemonic perspective. These knowledges, which we call Epistemologies of the Agreste, are often made invisible by the Status

Quo, by the monoculture of knowledge. Despite this, it's knowledge that can transform realities, because its tessituras turn with power to a socio-environmental dialogical relationship, to social transformation and to cognitive justice.

The relationship of non-indifference with something that touches us is fundamental in a research in the field of education. Those who live cannot fail to be citizens and take a stand, since indifference is parasitism and cowardice - it's not life (GRAMSCI, 2020).

We start from a theoretical-methodological perspective of popular education in a "sentipensante" approach. In this sense, the theoretical assumptions of this article are based on an education that brings "sentient" principles as exposed by Orlando Fals Borda (1995) in weaving an experiential wisdom that unites the care with life and the empowerment of people within a contextualization of autonomy that gives concrete possibilities of overcoming the most urgent social and planetary problems of our times, forming networks of alternative counterpowers to individualistic logics and epistemic separation between human beings and nature, which end up making an object-like construction of life, of the transformation of everything (human beings, nature) into objects of consumption trapped in inordinate logics of exploitation and productivity.

Theoretical reflections

Opposing the productivist logic, the sentipensant principles contribute to the other perspectives in relation to the world and to education. Thus, in view of contemporary problems such as: prejudice, intolerance, violence in relation to differences, proselytizing, religious imposition in the name of a single truth, as well as the constant degradation of the environment, among other violence of the current ethical and planetary crisis; in our teaching work we intend to open perspectives that can show alternatives to the problems of the destruction of nature and the inferiorizations and epistemological hierarchies present in the monoculture of knowledge (Santos; Fernandes; Nicolau, 2021).

We visualize the importance of overcoming the monoculture of knowledge, through the ecology of knowledge in a perspective of the construction of an alternative epistemology, invisible to hegemonic thought, but within the "post-abyssal" thought of the ecology of knowledge, acting within an "interaction between scientific knowledge and other knowledge" (Santos; Fernandes; Nicolau, 2021).

The contribution of Fals Borda and his reflections on participatory research/action - his pedagogy of praxis, serve as a basis. In his critiques of the Eurocentric epistemic model, the author suggests that the world horizons and wisdom of the pre-Columbian and Eastern populations - characterized by him as "sentient" - bring contributions to the overcoming of problems such as the explorations of human beings and nature (Santos; Fernandes; Nicolau, 2021).

He suggests an understanding of praxis - dialectical combination of practice and theory in which practice is determinant, but is subject to good judgment, inherited knowledge and the practical sense of life, but without pragmatic immediacy - which acts on the basis of differentiated experiential experiences stimulating popular participation, underlining a project of “committed social science”, in which the popular classes can participate and be social protagonists in the process of construction of knowledge, reason and power. The author reflects:

The proposal of today's renewed commitment is nourished by a type of experiential knowledge useful for human progress, the defense of life and cooperation with nature. Those of us who want to build this proposal speak of cultural, economic, political and social participation from the grassroots, of the construction of popular counter-powers through adequate educational processes, of the proclamation of autonomous regions and of the rehearsal of a libertarian federalism. We can still learn much from the sentient forms of cultural creation and defense, as well as from the secular resistance tactics of our grassroots groups. These are ways and tactics that can serve so that we can all face together successfully the time of grave dangers in which we have had to live (Fals Borda, 1995, *apud* Carrilo, 2010, p. 368-369).

We observed that important elements in the feeling practice and that can contribute in the educational field are characterized by the communitarian, by the valorization of memory through ancestry, therefore, by orality, also by the relations of exchange, of dialogues that allow different knowledge arising from the experiences of life, as well as a proper way of elaborating the languages and inferences.

Thus, the theoretical assumptions and the comprehensive frameworks of this article seek to enter the understandings and the ways of construction of the readings of the world that the populations of the agreste of Pernambuco draw their languages, appear their interpretations and performances of confrontations of the vicissitudes of life, as they present themselves and impose themselves daily. Moreover, how this epistemology produced by these native populations contributes, possibly, to the rereadings of Popular Education in contemporary times in which it allows a *sentipensar* that brings together and articulates diverse knowledge, sensibilities, meanings and practical sense of human coexistence.

Methodological trail

Our theoretical assumptions are constructed from methodologies experienced and guided by the epistemologies of the south, in which the subjects and the processes of elaboration of meanings considered peripheral and invisible acquire citizenship and epistemological relevance. Thus, it's about the empowerment of subalternized subjects, with a view to a reflection on education from culture and popular knowledge, in a horizontal relationship between academia and other knowledge that is produced by various subjects and collectives, with a view to citizen, pluriversal and political formation.

The choice of our study group to research this object is political and aims to analyze a context where there are inequalities, in the specific case, there are invisible subjects. As educators, this is a position and, in our view, taking a position is an ethical-political, epistemological and pedagogical implication.

Taking a stand doesn't mean it doesn't distance us. In this article and in our discussions we distance ourselves from a biased look at scientific research. Obviously, this distancing has nothing to do with neutrality. Neutrality is a myth. There is no possibility of doing research without being connected to it through some level/dimension of our existence. So we start from the assumption that there is no neutrality. Nevertheless, it's important to reflect on how not to get so involved and operate the necessary distancing so that production, in terms of knowledge, is not what we already know, but that, in fact, is a new knowledge about some expression of that reality that we are busy investigating. We see it as fundamental to make a movement to be linked to research, however, at the same time, that this connection does not prevent us from producing knowledge about those aspects that I am busy investigating. As researchers, we work on the border between the strange and the familiar (Da Matta, 1987).

Qualitative Research

From what was said, it's worth mentioning that we research aiming to learn from experiences and experiences, as well as enrich learning, through the encounter of theory with reality. Thus, we opted for a qualitative approach, so that research can contribute to expand knowledge about issues related to education, popular knowledge and Epistemologies of Agreste.

Research method

To develop our research in the Agreste of Pernambuco we used the extended case method. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1983), this method was developed by cultural and social anthropology and its potentialities in the scope of sociology are beginning to be recognized today. This method was used by the author in the research he conducted in 1983 in Recife, having as object of study the case of the Skylab favela. For Santos (1983):

He opposes positivist generalization, by quantity and uniformity, by generalization by quality and exemplarity. Instead of fixing the appropriate number of cases (observations), the extended case method chooses a case or a limited number of cases in which the most important structural vectors of the interactional economies of the different participants in a given sectoral social practice are condensed with particular incidence. Instead of reducing cases to the variables that normalize them and make them mechanically similar, it seeks to analyze, in maximum descriptive detail, the complexity of the case, in order to capture what is different or even unique in it (Santos, 1983, p. 11).

The richness of the case is not in what is generalizable in it, but in the breadth of the structural incidences that are denounced in it through the multiplicity and depth of the interactions that constitute it. Thus, this method proposes the leap of the sociological imagination between the most detailed and detailed and the most general and indeterminate. There is no isolation of the facts from the context of meaning in which they occur and that is why it privileges the registration of linguistic practices in which, to a large extent, interactional economies are manifested and the regions of meaning are delimited (Santos, 1983).

Delimitation and location of the search

The research that we socialized through this article was developed in the mesoregion of the Agreste region of Pernambuco. It's a large and important region, formerly composed of 71 municipalities divided into 6 microregions: Vale do Ipanema microregion; Vale do Ipojuca microregion; Alto Capibaribe microregion; Médio Capibaribe microregion; Garanhuns microregion; microregion Brejo Pernambucano.

There are social movements and popular collectives in all these municipalities. As an initial delimitation, our research group has focused on the microregion of the Vale do Ipojuca, more specifically, encompassing the Serra dos Cavalos (Caruaru), the Serra do Ororubá (Pesqueira) and some riverside communities to the river, such as the localities in which the crockery artisans, women masters in the art of clay, reside (Alto do Moura - Caruaru - for example).

Collection of empirical sources (data)

The research subjects by whom we collected the empirical sources of knowledge that weave the Epistemologies of the Agreste were Healers, Midwives, *Raizeiros*, Prayers and Hare Krishnas who live - with ancestral practices and knowledge - in Vila do Murici, rural area of Caruaru - PE. The empirical sources (data) were collected between 2016 and 2017. In total, ten subjects were interviewed and this was our sample. Nine interviews were conducted in the year 2016 and one, that of a Hare Krishna, conducted in the year 2017.

The criteria of choice were given, in the first place, by the ancestral and popular knowledge that these subjects have in their hearts and share them from generation to generation. Another aspect refers to the history of struggle and resistance, as well as their forms of popular education permeated by ecology, since they are situated in a territory of exuberant nature.

In this sense, one more criterion that led us to choose this experience refers to the specificities of the place, which presents living nature and knowledge that relates to the

exchange between human beings and dealing with the earth. The Murici is the only region in Caruaru that presents preserved Atlantic Forest and an ecological park of nature preservation - Municipal Natural Park Professor João Vasconcelos Sobrinho (*Parque Natural Municipal Professor João Vasconcelos Sobrinho*). These specificities make the region an ecological sanctuary, with great biological and cultural diversity.

The focus of observation and analysis for the experiences were the encounters - between knowledge, social groups and people, which includes contact and dialogue with the diverse subjects of the field. In this perspective, Lage (2013) says that, at each meeting, one must observe, “in addition to the speeches and silences, the spaces, the actors, the activities, the atmosphere of the environment, the behaviors and the feelings”. (Lage, 2013, p. 59).

Thus, we used some techniques to collect empirical sources, in order to meet the opportunities for understanding that the meetings can offer. Among these techniques we highlight participant observation, informal conversations, unstructured and semi-structured interviews and memories of life/orality.

The possibilities of experiences of field experiences provided by the process of collecting empirical sources, more specifically those that lead us to meet reality and its contradictions and social struggles, emerge as a space of differentiated academic-political learning.

When there is an active participant observation, there is an experience with the place, the people and groups that are part of it. In this sense, knowing how to arrive and be present and attentive to all aspects, sounds, gestures, speeches, movements etc. are important for there to be a participation and knowledge of the internal dynamics of the life of the community. This collection technique is very suggestive for the insertion in these peasant communities in which proximity and conviviality are translated as spectrums of trust, of openness of heart in which the development of the speeches takes place with spontaneity, with transparency, without general, superficial and abstract ways that the man and woman of the countryside do with great propriety when they want to dispel questions that sound strange and invasive to them.

Participant observation is a technique for fieldwork that provides great approximation with the sociological reality. Research is a path for the process of building knowledge about the world, as well as self-knowledge. One of the main research tools is the researcher's own perspective. However, this autonomy to build versions of reality needs to be clothed in a level of dialogicity with the subjects involved, in order to transform the unilateral look of the researcher into a democratic look and, thus, make a shared construction of data (Lage, 2013).

Field register

The field register is of fundamental importance, as it contributes to gather all the information of the field. It's also a way to ensure a credible analysis of empirical sources, since

the field is a place of significant learning and precious discourses. The field diary brings rich experiences because, at every moment, in the field, there are exchanges, learnings and reflections that bring various meanings and symbols that enrich the research. It's also a moment of introspection, of an internal journey, bringing the sensory experience into oneself and then transforming this learning into a written register.

Epistemologies of the Agreste

One of the research findings within the studies and investigations that we are developing refers to the concept of Epistemologies of the Agreste of Pernambuco; there are epistemologies proper to the Agreste with their own characteristics in terms of elaboration, organization and languages. When it comes to elaboration, we refer specifically to the origins, the founding references of worldviews and productions of meanings of extended flank, scope and impacts on daily life. In relation to the organization, it's noteworthy the logical-argumentative design associated with animal and plant life, in addition to religious references. As for the languages, the analogy, the proverbs and the sentential/reflective format gain prominence.

These characteristics emerge and announce that these epistemologies have an organization of their own; they are extracts of a wisdom fostered by benefactors, *raizeiros*, prayers, farmers, midwives and hare krishnas, gypsies, indigenous, quilombolas, among several other subjects and popular collectives.

The master's thesis that brought this finding and that the study group continues to deepen consisted of the result of an investigation that aimed to understand the processes of production, experience, circulation, dialogue and sharing of knowledge woven by the diverse and plural subjects, masters and masters of orality (healers, *raizeiros*, midwives, prayers, farmers and hare krishnas) and, especially, residents in the Serra dos Cavalos - Caruaru - PE. These subjects live through a dialogical understanding with the earth, with nature, surrounded by understandings of spiritualities, but without a formal and doctrinal religious contingency. In this perspective, the guiding thread of the research was the conception of Mother Earth inspired by the original peoples of the Americas and the Caribbean.

Thus, we start from the perspective that it's possible to speak of a philosophical and cultural doing in Latin America: gestures, postures, worldviews loaded with intense meaning for the collectivity, ancestry, struggles and resistances. We can also speak of a philosophical and cultural doing in the Agreste, of knowledge produced in the Agreste, of an epistemology of the Agreste, of Epistemologies of the Agreste. These epistemologies read the world from collective and popular rituals, in which the logic is of gratuitousness, with symbols that manifest a worldview. Dealing with land requires respect, characterizing a relationship of

otherness, of respectability, asking for permission and not committing telluric rapes, driven by deplorable greed similar to agribusiness (Santos, 2017).

These epistemologies distance themselves from the current system, having other lifestyles, other knowledge, other ways, by which the subjects act and live differently from the productivist system, bringing a perspective of good living, which is different from mere well-being. There is a living library, its own vocabulary with its own logic, which is not linear, but cyclical and is built by associations, having other focuses and its own way of constructing and elaborating knowledge and maintaining one's own life. In this sense, the Epistemologies of the Agreste bring a knowledge extracted and constructed by the observation of nature, of life, without necessarily going through laboratory scopes. It brings a perspective of life in relationships with nature, privileging orality, belonging (intimacy with the world) and anthropocentric displacement: settlement of the biocentric (SANTOS; LAGE , 2019).

Thus, the epistemologies in the Agreste provoke us to change our addicted gaze, hypnotized by the productivist, utilitarian and soil-exhausting logic. These epistemologies, which are ancestral knowledge, produce estrangements and, thus, allow us to see in a way that is out of step with the usual effectiveness and efficiency. It's a way of decolonizing the patriarchal, dualistic, oppressive gaze and, in this way, to look now with another worldview. The direct work with nature produces historical and millenary knowledge, accumulating, in an arch-secular way, knowledge:

The movement of the body is pedagogical and is made in a dialogue of knowledge in the encounter of cultures. The Epistemologies of the Agreste bring everyday practices as counter-hegemonic practices, addressing the ecological dimension of life, of popular conquests in territories of knowledge. And so, the masters and masters of orality live their lives, create their knowledge, share their struggles, transforming the world and writing their stories, bringing their ancestry, teaching in reciprocity, the ancestral knowledge of Mother Earth (SANTOS, 2017, p. 301).

The Epistemologies of the Agreste refer to the conditions of production of meanings, whose spatialities, temporalities and associations of knowledge woven in daily life serve as scenarios, of favorable terrains to the readings of the world that these subjects have been elaborating and recreating all the time. These comprehensive bases are fundamental to deepen the formation of the worldviews of a given culture or population in the perspective of the elaboration of the pedagogies of the production of living (Arroyo, 2012).

That said, delving deeper into this perspective of Agrestina Epistemology; We can think of the people who live in the mountains of this region. In our view, it's important to reflect, research and understand the human relations under complex interactions with the mountains in the context of the Agreste of Pernambuco, both to take care of these environments, and to recognize, learn and reaffirm the territorial identities of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and different communities that live in these environments, such as midwives, raizeiros, rezadeiras, hare krishnas farmers.

The occupations of the mountains sometimes occur occasionally, as refuges or persisting in modes of resistant permanence. Reflecting on the importance of these spaces, considering the sociodiversities and the significances involved in these relations is a way of thinking about research and extension activities engaged with popular and ecological knowledge, as well as a way of bringing to the academic agenda the importance of these environments for the ecological balance of the region.

For example, in the Serra do Ororubá, which is in Pesqueira - Pernambuco; we have the Xucuru peoples of the Ororubá. Teacher Edson Silva (2017) published a book - based on his doctoral thesis - on the memory and history of the Xucuru of the Ororubá. The author addresses various aspects and memories of the life of the Xucuru people.

In bringing the story of "His" Gercino, the author records:

He lived in Pedra d'Água Village, a place considered sacred, where, in the early 1960s, with the participation of Xucuru, an occupation promoted by the Peasant League, violently repressed by the coup forces of 1964, took place. In the mobilizations of the Xucuru of the Ororubá for their lands in the early 1990s, with the participation of "Seu" Gercino, Pedra d'Água was the first area to be retaken from squatters who were deforesting the locality. And, therefore, the site became a landmark in the organization and mobilization of indigenous people in the retaking of lands held by the farmers and in the claim for the official demarcation of the territory. With the demarcation of the lands in 2001, "Seu" Gercino saw the realization of the long-awaited dream, which has enabled abundance, the flourishing of life, dignity and a new stage in the history of the Xucuru people (Silva, 2017, p. 29).

In this fragment one can perceive several aspects related also to ancestral educational practices, such as: Resistance, struggle for rights, struggle for land, utopia, etc. These are aspects that are part, through our translation, of the Epistemologies of the Agreste.

The mountains have a production of senses and meanings. The people who live in these places have an ancestral and sacred relationship with these spaces. For the Xucurus, for example, it's a spiritual system of their people, for example, there is, as the main axis in the community, the stone of the Ororubá master. For several other peoples who live in these environments, the mountains also represent the space in which ancestral agriculture takes place, the relationship with the waters etc.

Both the peoples of Serra dos Cavalos and Serra do Ororubá bring knowledge and epistemologies that connect with very important and current themes, such as: Planetary health, folk medicine, recovery/regeneration of degraded areas, ancestral environmental education, sustainable management, organic agriculture, agroecology etc. These epistemologies, which I call the Epistemologies of the Agreste, teach a way of producing care: with the bodies, the human body, the body of the rivers, the body of the trees, etc. The rocks themselves, seen in many of these places as sacred spaces, are still indicators of the health of the environment. They are epistemologies woven through popular culture, ancestry, the culture of the enchanted.

These mountain populations have a production of meanings and meanings constituted of continuous resignifications in the face of the challenges of prolonged droughts, threats from land invaders and attempts to expropriate their ancestral knowledge. The people who live in these places have an ancestral and sacred relationship with these spaces. For the Xucurus, for example, it's a spiritual system of their people; there is, as the main axis in the community, the stone of the master Ororubá. For several other peoples who live in these environments, the mountains represent spaces as territories, that is, as spatialities with amplified meanings in which the cultivation of the land and the care of the sources of the waters take place under the inspiration of the "enchanted of light", of the ancestors, who continue to populate the guiding planting and internal tensions, revealing itself by the emblematic speeches of nature.

Both the peoples of Serra dos Cavalos and Serra do Ororubá bring knowledge and epistemologies that connect with important and current themes, such as: Planetary health, folk medicine, recovery/regeneration of degraded areas, ancestral environmental education, sustainable management, organic agriculture and agroecology. These epistemologies, which we call Epistemologies of the Agreste, teach a way of producing care for bodies: human body, body of rivers, body of trees and body of the community because of the ties of belonging, of kinship. The rocks themselves are seen as sacred spaces, because they come to be considered as indicators of the health of the environment and places of communication with the enchanted, through the annual rituals and also the extraordinary ones, when there are tensions that threaten the unity of the community. They are epistemologies woven through popular culture, ancestry and the contributions of the enchanted.

The mountains are also territories of conflicts, in which power relations take place. There are disputes over territories, explorations and troubled relations. Approximately 17% of the Brazilian territory is formed by mountain ranges and these are significantly exploited (such as mining, which transforms the mountains into dust), in which much of the natural wealth is becoming a commodity through a logic of exploitation of voracious capital (Marques, 2021).

Oposing this logic, the Epistemologies of the Agreste produce other knowledge that, in addition to resisting exploitation, can be paths to important transformations in the direction of more ecological, emancipatory and inspiring practices of a biocentric civilization.

We also highlight, in the agreste of Pernambuco, the riverside peoples that border the Rio Ipojuca, among others, are the crockery artisans. There are, in the neighborhood of Alto do Moura - Caruaru, PE, many artisans, and artisans of figurative art in clay: predominantly artisan neighborhood in the city, Alto do Moura, currently, brings together more than a thousand artisans in clay.

Traditionally, men have had greater recognition than women. Meanwhile, women's groups are making moves for recognition. In this sense, they refer us to the interpretative lenses of feminist thought in terms of mobilization in the process of struggle for gender

equality. Women's movements and agendas are also producers of knowledge and knowledge that significantly strengthen the counter-hegemonic struggle.

Many women became invisible in the process of recognition, as if they were shadows of their husbands in the production of clay pieces and restricted to domestic functions. Not accepting this position, many artisans transform these situations, creating groups of women, solidarity economy, women's crafts and, from these actions, they conquer their social spaces. Many men are considered masters; however, there has been the organization of women who also fight for this right and are already beginning to be recognized as teachers. This aspect is fundamental because, starting from the assumption that machismo is structural, then, it's also found in popular and resistance collectives. So it's through such attitudes that, increasingly, sexism will be transformed and the social movements of (women) will be closer to their ideals of social justice and gender equity.

That said, it should be noted that these diverse subjects, located in the global South, weave their epistemologies and knowledge and bring other paradigms, with community visions. Among some important findings of the subjects who weave the Epistemologies of the Agreste, we present, now, the speeches of some subjects that demonstrate the community perspective as an expression of their worldviews and as a way of producing meanings and knowledge in this Global South. On the horizon of the recognition of the knowledge produced in this portion of the Pernambuco agreste, we interpret the contributions of these subjects based on the extended case method, which translates our understanding of agrestinas epistemologies.

The *raizeiro* Alberto speaks of the importance of thinking about the other, of caring and caring for others: "First hand, we always care more for others than for ourselves. What is most needed is this" ("Raizeiro" Alberto, Diário de Campo: june, 25th 2016).

The expression: "always caring more for others than for ourselves", demonstrates a thought that is different from the capitalist logic of exploitation of the other for one's own growth. The perception of the world that Raizeiro Alberto brings, refers us to Santos (2010, p. 45) when affirming the "discontinuity with the modern vision of epistemology". He continues: "These initiatives, movements and struggles are animated by a redistributive ethos, in the broad sense of the term, which suggests the redistribution of material, social, political, cultural and symbolic resources" (Santos, 2010, p. 51).

The Epistemologies of the Agreste are characterized by the processes of circulation and sharing of knowledge that happen in life, as we highlight from Fals Borda (2010), they are sentient - in the practice of exchange and (re)distribution that happens in the community experience.

Midwife Marlene talks about issues related to community life and thus brings more consistency to the Epistemologies of the Agreste:

For the well-being of the community we always have to be seeing this, because a lot of people just look at themselves, but it shouldn't be like that. We have to live as a community and see how we are behaving. So, there has to be unity between people. You have to attend a meeting. This is to see what it should do about popular culture (MIDWIFE MARLENE. DIÁRIO DE CAMPO: Aug., 3rd 2016).

In Marlene's testimony, we perceive characteristics of the struggles of social movements. These characteristics are present in what she describes as popular culture that, for her, has the following characteristics: "For the well-being of the community", "because many people only look at themselves, but it should not be so" and "So, there has to be unity between people". Popular culture is a potent concept in the Epistemologies of the Agreste. We realize that there are several types of knowledge around the world that point to a more egalitarian and redistributive direction. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for Santos (2010) to affirm that "the diversity of the world is inexhaustible" (SANTOS, 2010, p. 51).

Marlene also highlights the knowledge of "being a midwife", tells us that these women become part of the family of the parturient. She explains that the midwife lives to take care of pregnant women and thus contribute, in some way, to these women and, consequently, to the community: "So, because I think the midwife, she takes a very firm trust to the person who is waiting who will deliver her and, in doing so, becomes a person closer to the family." (Midwife Marlene. Diário de Campo: Aug. 3rd 2016).

The healer Antonia presents the perspective of struggle in her day to day. She daily helps people, blessing and advising them: "So, I do it for anyone, I needed it, it's a son, it's a grandson, it's strange, if it comes home it's well received; the good I do for anyone and so I live. It's my mission." (Healer Antônia. Diário de Campo: June 13th 2016).

Both in the speeches of Marlene and Antonia some highlights are necessary: a) the common posture of readiness, of giving of oneself to other people, regardless of whether or not they are members of their community of belonging. What is more significant is the potency of the need brought, of the pain exposed that, in itself, cries out for initiative and proactive intervention; b) the self-identity of each one is pronounced: "... I do it for anyone and so I live. It's my mission." The term mission can be understood as predestination in the religious sense, as it can also be understood as a way of being and being in the world, as a guiding thread of placing oneself in the world, characterizing a self-portrait of oneself and of one's existential and social itinerary; c) the presence of ancestry and orality, namely, the former refers to the source that generates knowledge. This knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation, whose authorship is undefined and has a collective attachment as the origin and as a reach of this knowledge, because the source and the destination are communitarian and not of a personalized authorship. In relation to orality, it's the way of elaboration, fixation and transmission of this knowledge: Everything happens orally, verbally; nothing written, written, but of a testimonial character. It's the community itself that attests to the transmission and

coined the legitimacy of the social function of these services provided by these women midwives and healers.

In this perspective, HK Dhira, in his memories and life experiences, cites the Ajurí: traditional community practice of the interior of the Amazon, in which some help each other in various joint efforts. HK Dhira quoted the Ajurí when relating his childhood in the forest. He talked about it when he was asked if he could talk a little bit about his life memories and the knowledge he learned during his life. The Ajurí was a knowledge that marked HK Dhira; despite being an Amazonian practice, it was associated and inserted in the knowledge of the Agreste by the own actions and memories of HK Dhira, who seeks a community life in which there can be cooperation.

The practice of Ajurí dialogues with what Gandhi (1997) presents as a work focused on the well-being of others. The author, in explaining some Sanskrit terms such as, for example, Yajna (sacred office), brings interesting contributions to the Epistemologies of the South within this diversity of knowledge of the world: “Yajna means an act aimed at the well-being of others (...)” (Gandhi, 1997, p. 77).

HK Dhira explains that, in the interior of the Amazon, people work in a community way: “It was the Ajurí, the *mutirão*. All the people from the area came, people we sometimes didn't even know”. He concludes by saying that “People had a lot of satisfaction, it was a very happy place because of it, there was a lot of opportunity for each one with their whole plantation organized, because everyone helped, this was very interesting.” (HK Dhira. Diário de Campo: Oct. 20th 2016).

Added to this is the contribution of the farmer Osório da Serra dos Cavalos: “the land has its secrets given by God”; “From the earth, we extract food, vegetables, vegetables and also wisdom because the earth has its time, its secrets and teaches us to admire, to look at how God does everything wisely. It's a science given by God Himself...” (Farmer Osório. Diário de Campo: June, 10th 2016).

Sirs Dhira and Osorio express to us their familiarity with the knowledge of the land: In the former, they attest that the cultivation of the land is a collective task and not one of unilateral usufruct, of individual and exclusive exploitation. The land, in this community perspective, evokes expanded participation in the careful treatment and organization of tasks, characterized by mutual help, by complementarity; for Mr. Osorio, the land is a source of self-sustenance and wisdom: as food production, families are nourished and strength remade. At the same time, that the relationship with the earth is equivalent to a written text, now, produced by “science that is given by God Himself.” The cultivation of the land for these peasant subjects is a source of life lessons: to perceive and reflect the meanings of temporality, of the human capacity to wait, but beyond passivity, in an attitude of attentive observation and miring of interactions and interventions.

In living with these agrestine authors, we observed that there is a crossing of the capacities of working the earth with those of interpreting life and dealing with human coexistence. The handling of the land is the inheritance of their parents and grandparents and, at the same time, the result of the willingness to learn by repeating, recreating and “waiting” for the time of the responses of the earth related to the intensities of rain or sun. Added to this, the ability to establish analogies in how to deal with the education of children, intergenerational conflicts and how to face with balance family crises and with neighbors in the light of the rhythms of planting and harvesting in a predicted or delayed and/or even frustrating time. Historical patience, but not passive, is shown to be sedimented by the observation of nature, especially of dealing with the earth, imbued by religious faith in a deity that does not (neglect) the activities and human adversities that they face.

The Epistemologies of the Agreste can be perceived as flow and movement of transformative potential. This propitiates the metamorphosis of a possible individualistic state to the state that propitiates the flow of the direct relational encounter with the other. We can say that, in this worldview, instead of each one taking care of his house and his planting, everyone helps in the house and in the planting of all. This demonstrates relationships in a daily life of exchanges and complementarities.

Agrestina epistemologies and popular education

In this reflective route, we aim to dialogue with these other knowledges, learn from them and provide reflections and pedagogical experiences that connect theory with practice. They are “teaching” and “learning” knowledge (Fernandes, 2011).

According to Arroyo (2012), the rethinking of educations is urgent, especially popular education by allowing itself to be questioned to the “(...) to recognize with a positive look these pedagogies of liberation/emancipation, that knowledge, cultures and identities are produced in the diversity of struggles for liberation/emancipation” (2012, p. 15-16).

It means that Popular Education, by constantly (re)visiting itself, imposes on itself the primary task of “recognizing that [there are] people who have other pedagogies that produce knowledge, ways of thinking, liberating and humanizing themselves that destabilizes the very self-identity of hegemonic pedagogy.” (Arroyo, the same, p. 30).

By highlighting some characteristics of the Epistemologies of the Pernambuco Agreste, with their own ways of understanding the world, the set of relations, the productions of knowledge and their specific features of self-expression, some contributions and concerns are produced when related to Popular Education in a critical-transformative and emancipatory perspective of social subjects.

The agrestinas epistemologies emerge amplifications of the contextualities that cement the propositions of Popular Education. Commonly, the contexts conducive to the formation of

the subjects at the base of the social pyramid are interpreted by the key of the class struggle and popular culture. When listening to the agreste subjects, in their own worldviews and modes of knowledge production, other dimensions add up and present themselves as defining: the notion of temporality/spatiality, the wisdoms derived from the cultivation of the earth and the relationship with the sacred. Thus, these epistemologies demand from those who reflect the contextualities of popular education and Youth and Adult Education the broadening of the comprehensive range of knowledge production, of their own ways of producing readings of the world and of sensibilities.

The Epistemologies of the Pernambuco Agreste produce concerns in popular education while inviting it to resituate the understanding of the subject-community relationship. In general, it occurs by the immediate bias of political content, with a language of the political sciences and not by the path of sensitivity, of belonging to the affective territory that effectuates, in fact, the connection in terms of consideration, appreciation and reciprocal care. This aspect is quite relevant, because it's about weakening from within the neoliberal ideology of individualism, in addition to moving away from a universal, abstract and poorly communicating "We" of the relations that underline the daily life of social subjects. Daily life acquires a place of centrality and a starting point for perceiving the subject-community intertwining.

Finally, the Epistemologies of the Agreste suggest to the theorists of Popular Education more radical recognitions of the locus and of the subjects that produce knowledge. Usually, we situate the spaces/times of knowledge production by regions, much more in the case of Brazil in its continental extension. By evidencing the agreste of Pernambuco, located in the Brazilian Northeast, they make the folds and subtleties of the social imaginary flourish in the plural interior of the Pernambuco State. It highlights not only the geographical and topological specificities, but, above all, the ways of the subjects who reside in this territory to configure their performances of integration, interpretation, interactivity and intervention. It's, therefore, two relevant aspects: The real conditions that the vegetation, the waters, the relief and the climatic circumstances have and the social subjectivities that the interrelation of human beings and their conditioning factors enable, hinder and, dynamically, structure the modes of relation, the designs of the past, the present and the future and the ways of organizing meanings, meanings and knowledge. In this perspective, it's not enough for us alone to assess differences and identities through regional blocs; a new challenge is imposed: pedagogies and other subjects that figure subtle forms, unicities, formative potentials and hermeneutic and epistemological originality to be seen, heard and dialogued.

Final considerations

The perspective of the Epistemologies of the Agreste demonstrates how education is heterogeneous and brings multiple meanings and concepts. Thinking about the Epistemologies of the Agreste means reflecting on contexts (singular - plural), with the cultures lived in the daily life of groups, collectives, subjects, social movements that present epistemologies of struggle and resistance and that were and are marginalized and inferiorized by the colonialist, patriarchal and capitalist logic. Thus, this article focuses on the various histories of being and being in the world producing meanings and knowledge.

This article opens space for localized investigations about “ordinary people” (Felix, 2019) and, by making this movement, demonstrates the limits and possibilities of their peripheral, marginalized and excluded existences.

In this sense, we seek to provoke to pay attention to the small narratives produced and experienced by ordinary people in their daily lives. Thus, help to build research and studies that are implicated - with commitment to the research subjects so that the knowledge produced can return and contribute, in some way, to the social group, community etc. (importance of the return).

We start from a perspective of education and transdisciplinarity, with the approximation of the university with cultural practices. We hope, both through this article and the practices we developed in our study group, to bring students and the scientific community even closer to popular knowledge and collective care practices, to build other models from popular worldviews apprehended by the Epistemologies of the Agreste.

It's important for any university this transdisciplinary dialogue and approximation of universities with their surroundings, so that they can “decastelize”, leave their walls and, in fact, act in participation with several other institutions and unprecedented experiences that exist in the plurality of Brazilians.

Within these highlighted aspects, we also emphasize that research in these directions values and rescues local memory. It's through memory that we construct our identity and our difference and thus can get in touch with ancestry. To think of an emancipatory education, we have to be permeated by memory/ancestry. This makes it possible to re-signify readings of life, ways of learning and teaching, axiological references, production of other epistemologies and intercultural dialogues. This contributes to decolonize the patriarchal, dualistic, utilitarian and hierarchical looks and weave constructs and experiences of a sentient and popular education that opens and revisits itself daily.

Thus, these reflections bring a perspective of weaving knowledge that circulates in a transformative way in the populations. We can say about an epistemic decolonization, moving from a colonial logic to the understanding that many worlds coexist and interact. The popular imaginative is inventive, danceable and fluid, encompassing different temporalities, perceptions, creativity and senses that happen in everyday life.

The presence of the Epistemologies of the Agreste constitutes a fundamental tool to intelligible, translate, interact and intervene in a dialogical and democratic way with knowledge, whose places of enunciation and interlocutors originate in different ages, situations and diverse associative forms, which constitute and transversalize the dimensions of life that are shown in leaps and constantly surprising.

The culture of each community is a means of conceiving the universe through speaking/singing, planting, healing, corporeality - a body that dances and communicates. Thus, this article, contemplating other knowledge, evokes memories, knowledge, orality, ancestry, learning; it's a way of showing the importance of the diverse knowledge existing in the world and that education can be an instrument of sharing and valuing them.

Acknowledgments

To all the masters of popular culture.

Financing

Foundation for the Support of Science and Technology of Pernambuco (*Fundação de Amparo à Ciência e Tecnologia de Pernambuco - FACEPE*).

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