

# FUNAI and INCRA PCI

## reflections on Anthropology and agribusiness

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### Abstract

Between 2015 and 2017, a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (PCI) took place in the Câmara dos Deputados (Brazil's lower house) of the Brazilian National Congress, which investigated the formerly named National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) and the National Institute for Colonisation and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) in their attributions of demarcating lands, Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands, respectively. This PCI was established by the Ruralista caucus, a group that represents the interests of agribusiness inside Congress.

One of the focuses of the PCI was to discuss the role of anthropology in the demarcation processes of Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands, questioning not only the work of anthropologists, but the field of knowledge itself. Through an ethnography of documents (shorthand notes of the meetings and reports presented) and by direct observation, the research that culminated in this article sought to reflect on the anthropological practice related to public policies for the redistribution of land to Indigenous peoples and *Quilombola* communities and their friction with agribusiness interests.

The centrality of the agrarian agenda and the model of territorial development defended by agribusiness clashes with public policies for the democratisation of access to land. The FUNAI-INCRA PCI reveals yet another articulated attempt by agribusiness to establish new benchmarks for these public policies, through the Ruralista caucus, and for this reason anthropology was included in the debate.

**Keywords:** Parliamentary Inquiry Committee; Anthropology of Politics; Brazilian Chamber of Deputies; Ethnography of documents; Rural Caucus.

# CPI da Funai e do Incra – reflexões entre Antropologia e agronegócio

## Resumo

Entre 2015 e 2017 ocorreu, na Câmara dos Deputados do Congresso Nacional, a Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito (CPI) que investigou a Fundação Nacional do Índio (Funai) e o Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (Incra) nas suas atribuições de demarcação de terras indígenas e quilombolas, respectivamente. Essa CPI foi estabelecida pela bancada ruralista, grupo que representa os interesses do agronegócio dentro do Congresso brasileiro.

Um dos focos da CPI foi discutir o papel da antropologia nos processos de demarcação de terras indígenas e quilombolas, questionando não apenas a atuação de antropólogos/as, mas também a própria área do conhecimento. Por meio de etnografia de documentos (notas taquigráficas das reuniões e relatórios apresentados) e por observação direta, a pesquisa que culminou nesse artigo buscou refletir sobre a prática antropológica relacionada às políticas públicas de redistribuição de terras a povos indígenas e comunidades quilombolas e seus atritos com os interesses do agronegócio.

A centralidade da pauta fundiária e do modelo de desenvolvimento territorial defendido pelo agronegócio colidem com as políticas públicas de democratização do acesso à terra. A CPI da Funai e do Incra revela mais uma tentativa articulada do agronegócio, por meio da bancada ruralista, de estabelecer novos marcos a essas políticas públicas, e, por isso, colocou-se a antropologia no debate.

**Palavras-chave:** Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito; Antropologia; Estado; Etnografia de documentos; bancada ruralista.

# FUNAI and INCRA PCI reflections on Anthropology and agribusiness<sup>1</sup>

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## Agribusiness interest in anthropology

The Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (PCI) to investigate the formerly named Fundação Nacional do Índio (FUNAI)<sup>2</sup> [National Indian Foundation] and the Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (INCRA) [National Institute of Colonisation and Agrarian Reform] in their attributions of the demarcation of Indigenous lands and *Quilombola*<sup>3</sup> territories, respectively, took place between 2015 and 2017, in the Câmara dos Deputados [House of Representatives]. Since this research deals with state practices and actors operating inside the Brazilian Congress, an ethnography of documents was used. Documentary ethnography has special relevance for situations in which the researcher's continuous presence is not facilitated or even possible, in which the interaction with the interlocutors does not provide insights, considering the formality and lack of empathy with these groups, as is often the case when working with political elites. These 'ethnographic barriers', as Teixeira *et al.* (2020) calls them, require the researcher to seek methodological alternatives.

In the case of the PCI, the focus was on events that took place in the public sphere, because in the world of politics, manifestations of power take place at the public level, in the clash between political forces. This does not mean that no negotiations occur or that political arrangements are not signed in restricted environments, inaccessible to public observation, rather that public action in a democratic regime provides central elements of analysis (Teixeira *et al.* 2020). It is understood, therefore, that the documents and public declarations of congresspersons in and around the FUNAI-INCRA PCI contain the speeches of the parties in dispute, demonstrating that the manifestation of power, the debate and the political clashes, must also take place in this arena, inside Congress, in a public space.

Thus, the preparation of records in the PCI is closely linked to the configuration of the meetings and the practices conducted in their midst. The production of documents generated extensive material that aligns and corroborates with the worldview of a specific group: the Frente Parlamentar da Agropecuária (FPA) [Agribusiness Parliamentary Front]. In this sense, the research that resulted from this work (Dalla Costa, 2019), and which this article elaborates on, sought to understand how the FUNAI-INCRA PCI constituted a planned political fact to materialise and legitimise, through state documentary production, the interests of a political and economic group (agribusiness) concerning land redistribution policies, including land regularisation for *Quilombos* and Indigenous peoples and agrarian reform settlements.

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1 This text was elaborated based on my Master's dissertation (Dalla Costa, 2019), in which, through an ethnography of documents, I analysed the FUNAI-INCRA PCI.

2 The former name is used here because all the documents pertaining to this study existed prior to a very recent change in name. On Jan. 1, 2023, one of the initial acts of the newly sworn in Lula government was to rename the FUNAI, now known as the Fundação Nacional dos Povos Indígenas [National Indigenous Peoples Foundation], which together with the new Ministry for Indigenous Peoples, seeks to rectify the wrongful and frequently pejorative naming of Brazilian Indigenous people as 'índios' [Indians] and move towards a new era in the government's relationships with the First Peoples of Brazil, one no longer regulated by military tutelage.

3 Ethnic-racial groups considered remnants of communities of *quilombos*, who have their own historical trajectory, endowed with specific territorial relations based on a presumption of Black ancestry related to the historical oppressions they have suffered. *Quilombos* are organised as spaces of resistance and the construction of freedom and Black autonomy, occupying land to achieve a dignified life for their communities, through the reproduction of their ways of life and their own customs.

The FUNAI-INCRA PCI is a prominent event for us to discuss the relationship between anthropology and agribusiness<sup>4</sup>. In truth, this debate did not originate in the FUNAI-INCRA PCI<sup>5</sup>. There have been numerous points of tension over the years<sup>6</sup>, but there was a marked change in the way the anthropological issue was addressed by agribusiness actors at this time.

Brazilian anthropology developed from a perspective of nation-building, understood as the development of national awareness, the participation of and an ethical commitment to the populations studied (Peirano, 1981). The discipline prospered in Brazil through deep relationships with historical, political and social contexts, such that it is associated with a commitment to defending the rights of the groups studied. This association is achieved through research and ethnographies that acknowledge the political and social contexts in which their interlocutors find themselves (Ramos, 1990). In this sense, anthropological work reveals the intricacies of logics and actions, often of domination, that encompass the groups studied, which, as seen in the case of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, places the anthropologist in a central position to confront actors of power (Silva, 2015).

In the processes of the demarcation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands, anthropology is the area of knowledge that focused on the histories, the founding cosmologies of the groups, the forms of appropriation and expropriation of land, retrieving for the literate world a collection of situations that were outside its purview (Leite, 2000). Through anthropologists, the points of view of these communities were and continue to be favoured, transforming oral traditions into documents that are also considered and presented as state documents (land demarcation reports). The demarcation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands is accomplished by FUNAI and INCRA, respectively, and both processes begin with the preparation of a technical report – a *Relatório Circunstanciado de Identificação e Delimitação* (RCID) [Detailed Report on Identification and Delimitation] for Indigenous lands, and a *Relatório Técnico de Identificação e Delimitação* (RTID) [Technical Report on Identification and Delimitation] for *Quilombola* territories – the centrepiece of which is the anthropological report<sup>7</sup>.

Despite the participation of several professionals and actors in the extensive and complex processes of *Quilombola* and Indigenous land demarcation, the FUNAI-INCRA PCI settled a recurring accusation: suspicion of the work of anthropologists. Silva (2015:158) emphasises that ‘suspicion, as a possibility, is something applicable to any expert professional; the fact that it falls on anthropologists in an *a priori* manner is the result of ignorance of our premises and methods, but perhaps also of something more serious: of their prior and ill-founded disqualification.’

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4 A Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (PCI) is a legislative instrument provided for in the Brazilian Constitution to fulfil one of the constitutional attributions of the National Congress, to investigate and supervise public administration. Any congressperson can propose a PCI, but to gain approval, the support of one third of the members of the respective house is required to verify a particular issue. The specificities of a PCI are established by its temporality, since it has a deadline to determine its conclusions (it is temporary), and in its investigative character, ‘that of judicial authorities’. With this prerogative, the committee can hold public hearings, summon any authority or citizen to provide clarification, including state authorities, receive petitions from the community in general, assess and issue an opinion on government programmes. In addition, these committees can travel to any place in the national territory to conduct investigations and public hearings and stipulate a deadline for complying with any measure or carrying out due diligence. This action of legislative control enables the referral of its results for investigation and accountability through the competent authorities (the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the federal police). The provision for a PCI in the Federal Constitution is outlined in article 49, item X; article 71, item IV; in paragraph 3 of article 58, in Section VII – The commissions of Chapter I – Legislative power, where the general lines for their creation and objectives are established.

5 Although they were formally constituted as two distinct committees of inquiry, FUNAI-INCRA PCI 1 and FUNAI-INCRA PCI 2, here I consider them as a single inquiry, since the second only concluded the works that were conducted within the scope of the first, thus it is impossible to dissociate them in terms of analysis.

6 To name a few: PCI on FUNAI’s activities in 1999 <<https://www2.camara.leg.br/atividade-legislativa/comissoes/comissoes-temporarias/parlamentar-de-inquerito/51-legislatura/cpifunai>>; PCI on NGOs in 2001 <<http://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/handle/id/194594>>; *Projeto de Emenda Constitucional* (PEC) [Draft Constitutional Amendment] no. 215/2000 <<https://www.camara.leg.br/propostas-legislativas/14562>>; among others.

7 The process of Indigenous land demarcation is regulated by Decree 1775/1996 and Ordinance MJ 14/1999 and establishes the rules for the elaboration of the *Relatório Circunstanciado de Identificação e Delimitação* (RCID). In turn, the emission of titles for *Quilombola* territories is regulated by Decree 4.887/2003 and the rules for the preparation of the *Relatório Técnico de Identificação e Delimitação* (RTID) are set out in INCRA Normative Instruction 57/2009.

Even on other occasions when the group that represents agribusiness in the legislative branch, popularly known as the *Ruralista* caucus, has presented criticisms of the work of anthropologists, this has never been the main point of the debate. In 1999, for example, when the PCI on FUNAI's activities was completed, the report highlighted the arbitrariness of the Indigenous body in the process of demarcating Indigenous areas. The principal difference is that the 1999 PCI report criticises the administrative process as a whole, FUNAI's administrative attributes as the body responsible for the demarcation of Indigenous lands, and the influence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the institution. In contrast, the FUNAI-INCRA PCI directs this criticism towards the work of anthropologists specifically, claiming that demarcation 'is based on a simple technical, unilateral, ideological and arbitrary report' and that this work is conducted based on 'the abusive actions of the FUNAI, NGOs and the anthropology departments of universities, all supported by the *Ministério Público Federal* [Federal Public Prosecutor's Office]' (Brasil, 2015: 04)<sup>8</sup>.

Therefore, the FUNAI-INCRA PCI demonstrated from the outset that anthropology was one of the focuses of its activities<sup>9</sup>. Since its inception, investigating this field of knowledge and its professionals pervaded the PCI. In the justification that supports the request for the PCI, the *Ruralista* representatives, who recognise the constitutional prerogatives for regularising Indigenous and *Quilombola* areas (art. 231 and art. 68 of the ADCT), argue that there is a distortion in the conduct of the administrative processes established for these purposes at INCRA and FUNAI, they are too subjective and biased, since 'the mere opinion of an anthropologist supersedes everything and everyone' (Brasil, 2015: 03). Thus, according to the requesting representatives, there is an 'anthropological problem' in these institutions that needs to be combated. As a strategy to delegitimise the demarcation of traditional lands, led by INCRA and FUNAI, representatives began directly attacking anthropology, claiming that there is no technical or scientific rigor to obtaining anthropological reports.

In this wake, it becomes evident why the approval of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI by the directorate of the lower house took place the day after the final report on *Proposta de Emenda à Constituição* (PEC) [draft amendment to the Constitution] no. 215 was approved<sup>10</sup>. In general terms, PEC no. 215 proposes a transfer of competence for approving the demarcations of Indigenous lands and the ratification of previously homologated demarcations exclusively to Congress. The objective of this series of coordinated actions in Congress, particularly by the *Ruralista* caucus, was the prioritisation of the agrarian agenda that is central to this group. To this end, the legitimisation of such a fact pervaded the investigation of the institutions entrusted with the task (INCRA and FUNAI), since according to the *Ruralista* discourse, they were riddled with illegalities in the conduct of this legal attribution, which the representatives aimed to investigate and disseminate within the scope of the PCI.

In this investigative spirit, the opening of the parliamentary inquiry alerted the public servants concerning the institutions that were to be investigated, including the anthropologists who worked at INCRA and FUNAI, and anthropologists outside these institutions who had directly or indirectly collaborated in the processes of Indigenous and *Quilombola* demarcations, together with the entire field of anthropology.

8 In October 2010, the final report of the PCI on NGOs, carried out by the *Senado*, was presented. It focused on the debate concerning the activities of these institutions and the amounts they received to act in Indigenous areas focusing on health, together with their presence in the Amazon, especially due to the absence of the state. The PCI on NGOs is part of a set of actions that seem to seek to undermine the participation of organised civil society in public policies aimed at sociological minorities. However, since it does not deal with land demarcation or refer to anthropology, this PCI was not included as a source of analysis and comparison.

9 The Request for PCI no. 16/2015 makes 27 references to anthropology in its 16 pages, while the Request for PCI no. 26/2016, has 85 such references in its 116 pages. In these documents, these references include the terms anthropology, anthropological, anthropologist and anthropologists.

10 PEC no. 215, presented for the first time in 2000, 'adds item XVIII to art. 49; modifies §4 and adds §8 both in art. 231, of the Federal Constitution', i.e., exclusive competence in approving the demarcation of Indigenous lands and the ratification of previously homologated demarcations passes to the National Congress. Furthermore, it indicates that the demarcation criteria and procedures must be regulated by law; they are currently regulated by Decree no. 1.775/1996.

The approval and creation of a PCI is made in the form of a formal written request, in which the justifications for the investigation are presented. The content of the Request for PCI no. 16/2015, which demanded an investigation into the INCRA and FUNAI, a small text of 16 pages, fulfilled the minimum requirement. In this document, the signatory representatives did not skimp on adjectives to expose their considerations on anthropological practice.

In order to accomplish their intentions, anthropologists do not have any ethical or legal limits, or even respect for people illicitly affected by their reckless, fraudulent and tyrannical actions. (Brasil, 2015: 08)

The main alleged reasons for the creation of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI were the invalidity of the demarcation processes, anchored in ‘fraudulent anthropological reports’. Thus, the role of anthropologists working for the state was under suspicion, particularly those working for INCRA, FUNAI and the Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office, but also those in civil society organisations, universities and the Associação Brasileira de Antropologia (ABA) [Brazilian Association of Anthropology].

The scope of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI must be seen in a broader political context. The debates and arguments that were repeated throughout commission hearings form part of a political discussion that intensified with the impeachment of the President of the Republic, Dilma Rousseff<sup>11</sup>, in 2016, and culminated in the election of Jair Bolsonaro to the office of president in October 2018. Arguments concerning anthropological practice, the general contribution of social and human sciences to national development, which were presented at the PCI, reached new heights during the government elected from 2019 to 2022.

Notably, we observe that the recognition of the coexistence of different peoples in the same nation, confirmed above all by articles 215, 216, 231 and 68 of the Ato das Disposições Constitucionais Transitórias (ADCT) [Transitory Constitutional Provisions Act] of the Federal Constitution of 1988, would be subject to severe attacks in this new context. The Federal Constitution represented a break with the preceding Brazilian constitutional system, ‘since it recognises the Brazilian state as pluri-ethnic, and no longer based on intended homogeneities’ guiding the actions of social actors, especially public agents and politicians (Pereira, 2002: 01).

Achievements by Indigenous and *Quilombola* social movements regarding the recognition of their territorial rights, especially in the years following the country’s re-democratisation, have faced serious setbacks that include the PCI examined here. The perspective that was taking shape – and that we have seen implemented – was meant to bring about abrupt changes in the inspiring legal principles of the rule of law that the 1988 Constitution inaugurated. Among the various events taking place at that moment in national history, the PCI is relevant in exposing the activities of an important group in the political and economic scenario, the so-called *Ruralista* caucus, and its agenda to maintain control over Brazil’s agrarian structure.

### **A brief history of the *Ruralista* caucus**

Considering the implications and developments of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, I understand that its analysis and dissemination of the debate on its effects is of ‘democratic relevance’, to use the terms of Nader (1972). For this, it is necessary to situate the PCI as a study on an elite group: politicians democratically elected to the national legislature, federal representatives that compose the *Câmara dos Deputados* (lower house). The position of congressperson itself can be considered an elite position, where the term *elite* means a group of power, one which occupies influential and important positions in social life, whose decisions shape what happens in society in general, and whose interests are hegemonic (Shore, 2004).

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<sup>11</sup> For more information on President Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment process, see Teixeira, Cruvinel, and Fernandes (2020).

Another inherent characteristic of the Brazilian political elite is that it is a family niche (Oliveira et al., 2018). The rationalisation, bureaucratisation and modernisation of the political field were unable to subdue the presence of families dominating politics in the most varied spheres of power, in the apparatus of state administration or in the presence and the direction of actions and trends of state political parties. Oliveira et al. (2018) draw attention to the process of metamorphosis that dominant groups, organised as families and kinship networks, have attained over time. After all, they were able to remain in power amid the processes of change in Brazilian society and improvements in its numerous institutions. It was no different in the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, where representatives who form part of certain traditional political families were readily identified<sup>12</sup>.

The FUNAI-INCRA PCI was a privileged space for the Ruralista caucus, the popular name for the group of representatives who are linked to the FPA, itself a fairly mixed association of members of various parties in both the Senado and the Câmara dos Deputados. The FPA currently has 280 signatories (241 federal representatives and 39 senators), which in relative terms represents almost half of the Senado (48%) and the Câmara dos Deputados (47%)<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the dominant political elite in the PCI was the agrarian elite.

The agrarian elite is one of the most long-established groups of the Brazilian elite. It is old, traditional, and does not merely form part of national politics, it shapes it. This group has its origins in colonisation and influenced the agrarian organisation of the country. It is not possible to discuss agricultural or land policy without a historical perspective of the formation of rural property in Brazil. The formation of the agrarian network, based on land grabbing and subsequent privatisation of land, reached its peak under the so-called Lei de Terras [Land Law] of 1850 (Law no. 601), issued two weeks after Law no. 581, which ended the slave trade. From the onset, the Brazilian colonisation process engendered the concentration of land by national economic elites. The Land Law of 1850 facilitated access to land for those who had the capital to acquire it, leaving a large part of rural workers, including Indigenous and traditional peoples, outside the system. Land concentration is a consequence of the Brazilian historical and economic process, based on slave labour (Alcântara Filho & Fontes, 2009; Leite, 2018).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, attempts to deconcentrate land were timid, supported by popular movements that began to organise themselves as a result of the struggle for land, but these were suppressed by the 1964 coup d'état. However, even the establishment of the military dictatorship did not mean the end of social movements, many emerged and gained strength during this period. The slow but progressive transition from the existing military dictatorship towards democracy mobilised civil society in defence of social and labour agendas, promoting an increase in progressive members of Congress (Kinzo, 2001). The struggles of Indigenous peoples and traditional communities, such as the *Quilombolas*, formed part of the democratisation process in Brazil.

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12 As the sub-rapporteur of the INCRA commission, Tereza Cristina (then a member of the PSB/MS) is the great-granddaughter of Pedro Celestino Corrêa da Costa and the granddaughter of Fernando Corrêa da Costa, both of whom are former governors of Mato Grosso (before it was divided into two states) as members of the *União Democrática Nacional* (UDN) [National Democratic Union]. The 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-chairman of the Commission Directorate, representative Mandetta (DEM/MS), is the nephew of former representative Nelson Trad (MDB/MS) and cousin of the former mayor of Campo Grande, Nelsinho Trad (MDB/MS), who unsuccessfully ran for state governor in 2014. He is also the cousin of Fabio Trad, federal representative for the PSD/MS, and Marquinhos Trad, former state representative for the MDB/MS and current mayor of Campo Grande for the PSD/MS. Among the PCI opposition members, it is worth mentioning federal representative Nilto Tatto (PT/SP), whose four brothers held positions as federal and state representatives and municipal councillors. The then federal representative Janete Capiberibe (PSB/AP), wife of João Capiberibe (PSB/AP), has held the positions of Mayor of Macapá, state senator and state governor. In the 2018 elections, the couple's son, Camilo Capiberibe (PSB/AP), was elected as a federal representative.

13 According to its statute (art. 1), the FPA is an associative entity that 'defends common interests, constituted by representatives of all currents of political opinion in the National Congress and aims to stimulate the expansion of public policies for the development of national agribusiness.' <<https://fpagro-pecuaria.org.br/estatuto/>>

Beginning in the 1980s, Brazil underwent a broad process of re-democratisation that enabled the inclusion of issues on the state agenda, which until that time were barely visible, generating innovative public policies. Demands for land redistribution and recognition of the ethnic groups that formed Brazilian society gained greater relevance from that decade onwards. The 1988 Constitution confirmed the existence of a pluri-ethnic state in Brazil, recognising and ensuring ethnic differences (Silva, 1994).

Despite this re-democratisation movement and the recognition of rights, the agrarian and rural elite showed concerns with the initiatives that were in progress, such as the foundation of the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) [Landless Rural Workers Movement], the creation of the Ministério da Reforma e do Desenvolvimento Agrário [Ministry for Agrarian Reform and Development] and the Plano Nacional de Reforma Agrária [National Plan for Agrarian Reform] (Pompeia, 2018). However, as Pompeia points out, the agrarian sector was fragmented, with its numerous actors experiencing a crisis of representation, different priorities and struggling with the country's fiscal crisis.

In this scenario, the political organisation of the Ruralista caucus began during the period of the Assembleia Nacional Constituinte<sup>14</sup>, when congresspersons from different groups in the agricultural sector began a conformation in defence of the interests of this field. It was initially named the Frente Ampla da Agropecuária Brasileira (FAAB) [Broad Front for Brazilian Agribusiness], and its composition presented a diversity of organisations and interests, including the União Democrática Ruralista (UDR) [Rural Democratic Union], the Sociedade Rural Brasileira (SRB) [Brazilian Rural Society] and the Organização das Cooperativas Brasileiras (OCB) [Organisation of Brazilian Co-operatives]. These entities, which had been the protagonists in disputes with each other in previous periods, formed the FAAB to oppose the growing demand for land redistribution through agrarian reform (Pompeia, 2018).

For these groups, represented by the FAAB in the Assembleia Constituinte (1987), the land issue was much more relevant than the agricultural issue<sup>15</sup>. Thus, the main agenda on which the FAAB sought to act was preventing large scale land redistribution, an objective of agrarian reform defended by entities like the Associação Brasileira de Reforma Agrária (ABRA) [Brazilian Association of Agrarian Reform], the Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT) [Pastoral Land Commission], and others. According to Pompeia, the FAAB's role in the Assembleia Constituinte achieved an 'innovative result' by bringing together representative associations in agriculture and livestock production, such as the Confederação da Agricultura e Pecuária do Brasil (CNA) [Agriculture and Livestock Confederation of Brazil], the aforementioned OCB, SRB and UDR, and industrial and service sectors. After the enactment of the 1988 Constitution, the Ruralista caucus continued to exist informally between 1990 and 1994. The FAAB was reorganised in 1995; in 2002 it became the Frente Parlamentar de Apoio à Agropecuária [Parliamentary Front for the Support of Agribusiness], and in 2008 was renamed the Frente Parlamentar da Agropecuária (FPA) [Agribusiness Parliamentary Front]. Regarding the organisation of the FPA in 2015, the year of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, and given the centrality of the theme for the group, the main political actors of the Ruralista caucus ran the commission. The entire Directorate of the PCI (all seven positions) was occupied by members of the Ruralista caucus.

<sup>14</sup> The initial government body was convened by then President José Sarney, in 1985. Working for 20 months, and involving 559 congresspersons (72 senators and 487 federal representatives) and direct participation by Brazilian society, the *Assembleia Nacional Constituinte* was vested with the power to draft what eventually became the Constitution of 1988, enacted on October 5 the same year.

<sup>15</sup> For a deeper analysis of this issue see Pompeia (2018), which involves a comparative perspective of a similar process in the USA.

Much like the period of the Assembleia Nacional Constituinte, these facts reveal the agenda of the Ruralista caucus, which while it includes other policies<sup>16</sup>, continues to be centred on the agrarian issue. Even though the articulation of the FAAB had managed to curb the establishment of broad agrarian democratisation during the Assembleia Constituinte, in subsequent years, public policies of access to land, notably agrarian reform and Indigenous and *Quilombola* land rights, were established through technical procedures, staff, and concrete results. Even considering that the demands are much higher than the execution capacity of the INCRA and FUNAI, these public policies are not aligned with the interests of the conforming agribusiness groups.

One of the factors that provided the growth and broad articulation of this group, and of parties mostly aligned with the right-wing in the National Congress, were the successive defeats in presidential elections between 2003 and 2014 (four victories for the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) [Workers' Party]: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva between 2003-2010 and Dilma Rousseff between 2011-2016). During the PT's period in government, agendas enabling social participation were widely disseminated, despite the fact that, from the perspective of numerous actors, certain issues dear to social movements more aligned with the left have not been translated into public policies and effective state practices.

In this scenario, there were several impasses between organised civil society and the government, especially related to environmental, labour and land redistribution issues (agrarian reform, demarcation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands). While the agribusiness entities strengthened actions in the Legislative branch, with the growing demand for arable land, they questioned the demarcation of *Quilombola* territories, Indigenous lands and expropriation for the creation of agrarian reform settlements, sealing the partnership between sectors of industry, agribusiness and congress (Pompeia, 2018).

According to research conducted by Pompeia, mobilisation for changes in the Forest Code was a determining factor for bringing these actors together. From the debates around this agenda, relationships between the various companies in the agribusiness segment became more systematic and institutionalised through the FPA. Amendments to the Forest Code, in 2012, weakened legal provisions for environmental protection, overcoming protests from civil society organisations, such as rural workers and traditional peoples and communities, and scientists, Sociedade Brasileira para o Progresso da Ciência (SBPC) [Brazilian Society for Scientific Progress] and the Academia Brasileira de Ciências (ABC) [Brazilian Academy of Sciences].

Therefore, the FPA began to play a central role in the political articulations of the agribusiness sector. Thus, it is not surprising that the Ruralista caucus won the vast majority of seats and the entirety of the Commission's Directorate in the FUNAI-INCRA PCI. It did so in compliance with the principle that the representation of political parties and congressional blocs in the legislature must be proportionally reproduced, as far as possible, in the composition of the Directorate and the Commissions, demonstrating the influence and power of the group within parties, and the importance of this agenda to specific parties<sup>17</sup>. The two Commissions (FUNAI-INCRA PCI 1 and 2) consisted of 66 representatives (48 in the first and 49 in the second), and of these, 31 participated in both Commissions and 42 were linked to the FPA<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> These policies include desired changes in the Forestry Code, such as Bill no. 2.362/2019, which proposes the extinction of the obligation for rural properties to maintain an area of native forest, the so-called Legal Reserve, and the growing number of pesticides approved for use in the country. In 2020, 493 new types were approved, 4% more than in 2019, also a record year, and following three successive years of record numbers of approved pesticides. <https://g1.globo.com/economia/agronegocios/noticia/2021/01/14/numero-de-agrotoxicos-registrados-em-2020-e-o-mais-alto-da-serie-historica-maioria-e-produ-to-generico.ghtml>.

<sup>17</sup> Provisions contained in the Federal Constitution, art. 58, §1º; Internal Regulations of the National Congress, art. 10; Internal Rules of the *Câmara dos Deputados*, art. 8, 21, §1, 25, §1 and 29, §2; Internal Rules of the *Senado*, art. 59.

<sup>18</sup> The pages of the two committees can be accessed on the website of the *Câmara dos Deputados*: <https://www2.camara.leg.br/atividade-legislativa/comissoes/comissoes-temporarias/parlamentar-de-inquerito/55a-legislatura/cpi-funai-e-incra>; <https://www2.camara.leg.br/atividade-legislativa/comissoes/comissoes-temporarias/parlamentar-de-inquerito/55a-legislatura/cpi-funai-e-incra-2>.

## Anthropological work as a fragile link in the chain of the demarcation process

As previously mentioned, the entire Directorate of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI was composed of members of the Ruralista caucus: Alceu Moreira (MDB/RS), chairman; Luis Carlos Heinze (PP/RS), 1<sup>st</sup> vice-chairman; Luiz Henrique Mandetta (DEM/MS), 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-chairman; Nelson Marquezelli (PTB/SP), 3<sup>rd</sup> vice-chairman; Nilson Leitão (PSDB/MT), rapporteur; Tereza Cristina (then PSB/MS, now DEM/MS), sub-rapporteur; Valdir Colatto (MDB/SC), sub-rapporteur. The effects of this comprehensive representation by the FPA were quickly visible in how the PCI operated, including but not limited to: decisions on the agenda of the Commission's meetings were taken by the chair; the preparation of the report was the sole responsibility of the rapporteur (incorporating suggestions from other representatives also occurred at his discretion); definitions concerning trips for due diligence (place, date, participating team) were taken by the Commission's Directorate; invitations for external actors to act as consultants and collaborators in the PCI were granted by the chair. Such attributions, typical of the chair of the PCI, provided for in the Internal Regulations of the Câmara dos Deputados, demonstrate the importance of ensuring these central positions by the Ruralista caucus. What was evident is how discussion agendas by non-FPA representatives, presented throughout the PCI, were not even considered.

Regarding its investigative objective, a PCI requires the collection and investigation of information concerning the 'specific fact' approved as the purpose of the work. Thus, its activities consisted of meetings that included internal, deliberative, public hearings for taking testimonies, and external due diligence (outside Brasília, DF). The PCI members presented requests as a way of participating and trying to influence the discussions<sup>19</sup>. In the first sessions of the PCI, a kind of tacit agreement was established among the representatives for all the requests presented to be approved. As explained by some representatives, this was to ensure counterpoints to the perspectives of the debate and broad participation. Thus, the approval of requests of different natures practically became protocol, and it was quite common for them to be carried out in blocks to speed up the process. Based on this recourse, what is evident was how disputes did not take place over the approval of requests, but over the selection of which of those approved would be acted on.

It is important to emphasise that the 14 representatives who opposed the creation of the PCI and the work carried out by its chair were essentially representatives who identify as centre-left and left<sup>20</sup>. While the FUNAI-INCRA PCI was in progress, these representatives from different parties and with distinct agendas formed an opposition<sup>21</sup>. Unlike the *Ruralista* caucus, which has an agenda that can be defined, together with a congressional front that unites them, the opposition representatives formed a temporary articulation in relation to the conflict established in the PCI, as a block of 'resistance' to this attack.

As presented, the dynamics of the PCI meant it was possible to identify the sides in dispute, the Ruralista caucus that supported the commission and the opposition group. As is characteristic of legislative activity, policy is carried out through debates, compositions and agreements. Even in an environment with clear dispute, such as the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, it is possible to perceive certain moments in which the opposition and Ruralista benches sought some kind of understanding for certain themes. Despite these, there were no changes in the way the chair of the commission worked.

<sup>19</sup> In total, 394 requests were presented at the FUNAI-INCRA CPI, 296 in the first (2015-2016) and 98 in the second (2016-2017).

<sup>20</sup> Federal representatives who were members of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), the Partido Socialismo e Liberdade (PSOL) [Socialism and Freedom Party], the Partido Socialista Brasileiro (PSB) [Brazilian Socialist Party], the Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCdoB) [Communist Party of Brazil], and the Partido Popular Socialista (PPS) [Popular Socialist Party], currently named Cidadania [Citizenship].

<sup>21</sup> As highlighted earlier in the text, considering both commissions (66 representatives), 42 were members of the FPA and 14 were from parties in opposition to the PCI. Thus, 10 representatives were not part of the *Ruralista* caucus; however, they made no form of alliance with the opposition.

The choice of activities that were carried out based on the approved requests, such as which deponent was prioritised and when, was arbitrary and unilateral, transferring the friction between the representatives from the approval of requests to the definition of the agenda of the meetings, since the conflicting positions in the commission were not respected. The PCI's agenda was defined by the chair, thus the strategy of facilitating the approval of the requests eased the pressure on the discussions regarding the pertinence of each of them, and above all enabled the chair and his colleagues on the Directorate the freedom to define the agenda. The chair of the PCI had space to establish its timetable and work pace, counting on the support of the federal representatives in the Ruralista caucus to echo any of the bloc's demands. This organisation of the work is of paramount importance for understanding the outcome of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI.

The majority of the meetings that involved the broad participation of representatives were those in which both invited and summoned deponents were present. The definition of invitations or summons was established in the requests presented and approved by the PCI, at the discretion of the member who prepared them. The main difference is that an invitation (or request) can be refused without sanctions, whereas with a summons (or subpoena), attendance is mandatory and punishment can occur in cases of non-compliance.

In the initial sessions of the PCI, when the procedures for its operation were established, there was intense debate with regard to the pertinence of the principal of a summons and when it should be activated. Several representatives, particularly those who were against the PCI's objectives, advocated for the use of invitations in all requests. For them, a summons should only be used when the person invited refused to participate. However, in organising the work of the PCI, the Directorate reinforced the importance of a summons to achieve the proposed investigation objectives on several occasions.

Despite efforts to reach an agreement between the parties, in order to transform the summonses into invitations, this procedure was unsuccessful among the agribusiness representatives. Everything indicates that the interest of the Ruralista representatives in using the mechanism of a summons, especially among members of the Directorate (chair and rapporteurs), was to ensure the presence of the actors that they considered essential, but above all, actors they considered to be resistant to the PCI, who could potentially refuse to appear, and those for whom the constraining effect of this mechanism indicated the relationship of forces to which they would be subject in the PCI.

As noted, the polarisation seen in the PCI reflected the interests in dispute around the issue of land. The themes dear to the Ruralista caucus, as previously announced in the requests for the creation of the PCI, made direct reference to the demarcation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands, as well as the responsibility of anthropologists in 'false' demarcations.

The regularisation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands, and agrarian reform, raise a factor important to the Ruralista caucus: they are public policies for land redistribution, which are contrary to the interests of this agribusiness alliance, but not to them alone. Land regularisation for traditional peoples and communities consists of a public policy that combines the dimensions of recognition and social redistribution. Demands for recognition are those that call for official acceptance of group differences and specificities, while demands for redistribution refer to better material conditions of reproduction. The allocation of land to traditional peoples and communities addresses this ambivalent demand for recognition of their specific history within Brazilian history and, at the same time, culminates in the delivery of traditionally occupied territory, guaranteeing formal access to land and permanence in areas sufficient for their physical and cultural reproduction, a basic condition for development and social inclusion (Fraser, 1995).

Thus, when resuming the requests presented in the PCI, it becomes apparent which themes focused on the representatives' political interests and for which actors coercion was considered necessary to ensure attendance. I observed that summonses were reserved for authors of anthropological reports on Indigenous and *Quilombola*

land regularisation processes, leaders of social movements, and members of NGOs linked to the defence of Indigenous and *Quilombola* rights. According to members of the *Ruralista* caucus in the PCI, these were the actors for whom a summons was necessary to ensure their presence and testimony<sup>22</sup>.

As I highlighted earlier, it is the responsibility of the chair of the PCI to define the agendas and organise the meetings. Based on the participants selected for these hearings, it was clear what the tone of the meeting would be. The majority of the testimonies recorded came from requests by members of the *Ruralista* caucus and, given this situation of control, the ease with which the chair conducted the meetings was visible. Invitations and summonses caused different interactions between members of the PCI<sup>23</sup>.

Of the 26 testimonies given during the 20 hearings, only three were from women and all those present were due to requests from members of the *Ruralista* caucus. In the sessions in which women were present as deponents, different treatment was observed, particularly regarding the anthropologists Flávia de Mello and Daisy Barcellos. As I have already highlighted, summonses were an instrument used by *Ruralista* representatives to ensure the presence of certain deponents and debate during the hearings. Both anthropologists were summoned, that is, they were seen as averse or resistant to the ideas of their summoners.

In another work, I focused on the PCI meetings in which the anthropologists were present in the role of invited and summoned deponents (Dalla Costa, 2019). Here, I briefly allude to some of these discussions. In almost all the meetings, there was at least some mention of anthropological practice. However, anthropologists were present to testify in the PCI on only four occasions, and on two of these, they were there to discuss the elaboration of specific works (identification and delimitation reports concerning Indigenous land and *Quilombola* territory). On these occasions, there were constant accusations by *Ruralista* representatives and their guests that the INCRA and FUNAI staff, together with the anthropologists/authors of the reports, presented clearly ideological and unethical conduct that focused on serving 'their own interests', rather than being guided by the rules and techniques that govern their activities. From this perspective, these professionals aimed to favour people or groups who had no rights on this issue, with the clear intention of harming those who are truly deserving of public policies, in addition to rural producers who would unfairly lose their properties.

One of the cases which representatives focused on intently is that of the Mato Preto Indigenous Land identified in the municipalities of Erechim, Erebango and Getúlio Vargas, in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, which threatened to dispossess around 300 non-Indigenous families who owned small rural properties. The document establishing the PCI, Request no. 16/2015, is emphatic in stating that the report prepared by the anthropologist Flávia de Mello 'is a fraud', 'During the work, it was proven that the anthropologist falsified information', 'Her performance as an anthropologist was completely unethical' (Brasil, 2015: 6-7). Among the accusations levelled at anthropologist Flávia de Mello was how her knowledge of the Guarani ethnic group, whose study she coordinated at FUNAI, made her unfit for the task, because she was too close to the 'object of study' and, therefore, impartial in the realisation of this task.

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22 When an invited or summoned deponent is participating, the PCI meeting is called a public hearing, since it consists of a space for debate. The public hearings of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI began with a 20-minute oral presentation by the invited or summoned deponent, followed by up to 30 minutes of questioning by the commission's rapporteur and replies. After this stage, the representative who requested the presence of the invited or summoned deponent was permitted five minutes of questioning, while others who had signed up during the oral presentation of the invited or summoned deponent were called individually to question them or offer some consideration, and used up to three minutes for their questions. At the end, the invited or summoned deponent was allowed to discuss their final considerations for up to ten minutes. The chair of the commission, in their commanding role, can speak at any time, using as much time as they choose. It is important to note that these are the norms established for the conduct of the commission. However, in some cases these times were not fully respected, depending on the deponent and the topic being addressed.

23 Of the 26 testimonies given, one was spontaneous (with no preliminary request), seven were based on summons or subpoenas and 18 were invitations or requests. Of the 25 statements made due to requests, 22 came from members of the *Ruralista* caucus and three from opposition representatives. What I perceived based on this is that the debate was set up according to the point of view of a political group with no regard to the right to defence, as had been stated by the chair of the PCI during the first meeting.

In her participation in the PCI, Flávia de Mello explained in detail the misrepresentation made by the request for the PCI. Indeed, opposition representatives and many of those present showed embarrassment at the fragility of the request for the PCI, confirming the weakness of the investigation of the facts by the requesting representatives and, by extension, the commission's object of investigation. This situation can be summarised in the manifestation of federal representative Erika Kokay (PT/DF) at a meeting on December 1, 2015, recorded in shorthand notes:

It seems to me, therefore, that in today's hearing, the explanations of the deponent demonstrate and expose how the purpose of the PCI is to criminalise even professionals, a profound disrespect of professionals and anthropologists in this country. I keep asking myself: if there had not been a report attesting to the Indigenous presence in this region, if there had not been occupation by settlers or farmers, would this act of questioning the report have taken place?

The report exists because representatives created, appended and copied part of a [civil] action. Look at what was read and spoken here by the chair of this PCI! What was read here as an argument for establishing this PCI was taken from a petition, it was taken from a [civil] action. Look at what we're discussing here!? Someone took the action of an interested party of settlers who were questioning a report by the FUNAI itself, that is, a report by anthropologist Flávia [de Mello], they copied this document from the action and constructed the elements and arguments for the creation of a PCI that, as I keep saying, has no determined fact—and all this without the anthropologist herself having been heard in this action.

As reported by representative Erika Kokay at the aforementioned hearing, the chairman of the PCI, Alceu Moreira (MDB/RS), had informed that the data presented in the request for the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, which accused not only Flávia de Mello, but the practice of anthropology as a whole, were obtained from a legal process in progress that sought to annul the process of demarcation of the Mato Preto Indigenous Land. Representatives from the *Ruralista* caucus limited themselves to minimising the huge mistakes highlighted by the anthropologist to document nonconformities. Even with the corrections and notes made by the anthropologist, the audience continued as if Flávia de Mello had not said a thing. Contrary to that determined by an argumentative logic, the representatives continued their questioning along the same lines.

Another example presented in the request for the PCI deals with the land regularisation of the Morro Alto Quilombola Territory, located in the municipalities of Osório and Maquiné, also in the State of Rio Grande do Sul. According to the document, the ongoing expropriation by INCRA of 4,564 hectares occupied by family farmers is a demand from the state's Black and *Quilombola* social movement in conjunction with academia. Numerous representatives accused the university of fomenting 'notions of *Quilombo*, *Quilombolas* and ethnicity' in mostly Afro-descendant groups (Brasil, 2015: 13).

In the case of Morro Alto, anthropologist Daisy de Barcellos was summoned, since she was responsible for the identification studies of the *Quilombo*. As occurred in Flávia de Mello's hearing, no one addressed questions with the view to debating the report she had prepared. The questions indicated revolved around the central argument of the PCI, the ideologisation of anthropology as a field of knowledge, and the partiality of professionals thus trained whose actions favoured their interlocutors.

In addition, some deputies understood that it was pertinent not only to discuss the capacity of these women regarding the activities they carried out, but that it was acceptable to present questions of a personal nature. In an attempt to discredit the testimony of anthropologist Flávia de Mello, a representative questioned whether she had a 'love relationship' with one of the Guaranis whose Indigenous land was the subject of her studies. During the testimony of anthropologist Daisy Barcellos, the rapporteur, Nilson Leitão (PSDB/MT), questioned her about her relationship with a member of the local Black movement, one of her interlocutors

in the preparation of the anthropological report. As previously discussed (Dalla Costa, 2019), the treatment given to deponents invited by the *Ruralista* caucus was the opposite, such that they were free to use the time, compose their explanations and expound their conclusions. These hearings were marked by the exchange of compliments between the Directorate and those invited to speak, encouraging them to fully express their opinions.

Based on the material presented in the PCI requests and participation in commission meetings, according to members of the *Ruralista* caucus, it was evident that ongoing collusion had occurred between anthropologists in state and academic positions and NGOs, with the protection of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office. They claimed that this 'conspiracy' acted with the intent to attack private property and rural producers, that 'the wave of demarcations has had ideological and financial motivations' (Brasil, 2015: 8). The 'denunciations of fraud' in relation to these 'groups with shady interests that take advantage of the good faith of humble people' are classified by these representatives as 'a genuine "industry" to legitimise third party lands' using constitutional demarcation devices as a pretext (Brasil, 2015: 14)<sup>24</sup>.

The participation of the aforementioned anthropologists in the PCI did not change the arguments of the *Ruralista* caucus. In the same manner that the request for the PCI made serious accusations of non-compliance with various laws, codes of ethics and conduct, the *Ruralista* caucus maintained its assertions that the unsatisfactory quality of the reports was the motive behind their questioning the demarcation processes, even after meetings that involved the participation of anthropologists. In this dispute, anthropology assumes the place of an imprecise, subjective, partial field of knowledge, responsible for causing bias in Indigenous and *Quilombola* demarcation processes.

As discussed at the beginning of this text, when we reflect on why anthropology is being attacked in this space of land dispute and redistribution, one factor that cannot be left out of the equation is how the histories of Indigenous peoples and *Quilombolos* have been essentially erased until recently. Brazil's official historiography has long-favoured other points of view. Indigenous peoples and rural Black communities have always been on the margins of formal land registration systems, the result of instruments created by those in power.

The lack of access to legal documentation of their lands, or even the impossibility of registering them in a registry office, adds to social and racial discrimination and the difficulties in overcoming the barrier of bureaucracy in the literate world. The rule for these groups is one of experiencing a profound strangeness in relation to bureaucratic-legal codes, facing difficult barriers to surmount regarding state services and structures. Sometimes official documents are defended as the only sources of reliable information. Written documentary sources are subject to subjectivities in their elaboration, which highlights the fact that their preference is to value an elite social group to the detriment of others, who live on the margins (Almeida, 2011; Paraíso, 1994). Thus, oral history is imperative to prevent persistent errors that exclude Indigenous and *Quilombola* communities from official historiography. In this sense, through oral history, anthropology accesses the collective memory of these groups as a means to bring their histories to the literate, bureaucratic and legal planes.

In the demarcation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands, anthropological work is central to the development of other technical works (agronomic, cartographic, administrative) and, as posed earlier, exposes and characterises a historical situation under dispute. By advancing in the recognition of the ethnic territory within the cultural and historical sphere to consolidate the right to restitution, anthropological work as state identification and delimitation reports becomes a potential instrument for changing the agrarian reality.

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24 By virtue of Request for PCI no. 16/2015, INCRA's Coordenação-Geral de Regularização Territórios Quilombolas [General Coordination for Regularization of Quilombola Territories] issued Technical Information no. 43/2015. In it, a table was compiled presenting a comparison of rural units, which lists the percentages of rural establishments in relation to the national territory (41.67%); conservation units (17.15%); Indigenous lands (13.33%); settlement projects (10.37%); and titled *Quilombola* territories (0.12%).

The demand for land from these groups, guaranteed in constitutional precepts and which use anthropological knowledge to ensure their materiality, leads to the exclusion of potentially productive areas from the real estate market, since Indigenous lands become the property of the federal government for the exclusive use of the group, and *Quilombola* territories are private lands that cannot be sold, divided or used as collateral.

Thus, the attack on the work of anthropologists seems to have been the strategy encountered by the *Ruralista* caucus to alter the current process required for the demarcation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands. Instead of criticising the process as a whole, like the 1999 FUNAI PCI did, the FUNAI-INCRA PCI sought to construct a vision of and simultaneously attack that which, from its perspective, was a kind of fragile link in the demarcation process: the anthropological report.

Accusations of fraud, lack of ethics, ideological and biased work were thrown around during the PCI to point out that this is not about scientific knowledge, that anthropologists are biased in how they favour Indigenous and traditional peoples. The former president of the ABA, Lia Zanotta Machado, noted that the PCI's accusations were directed at the ethnographic methodology, which demands that the researcher maintains a profound and continuous dialogue with the community in question. The narrative constructed from the PCI ignores that anthropological research is supported by scientific evidence, extensive research, and that ethnography enables studies that respect traditional peoples as holders of rights (Machado, 2020).

It is important to observe that in addition to summoning the anthropologists Flávia de Mello and Daisy Barcellos to testify, because they coordinated specific anthropological reports under investigation, the then president of the ABA, Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima, was invited. However, the chair of the PCI favoured other deponents on the same date as his participation and the ABA was not heard<sup>25</sup>. Like the ABA, civil society organisations and social movements were not offered the space to participate in the meetings. As can be seen in its documents (Brasil 2016, 2017), the PCI made abundant mention of organisations, including the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA) [Socio-environmental Institute], Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI) [Indigenous Work Centre] and the Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI) [Indigenous Missionary Council], with allegations of collusion, information trafficking, interference in the institutions and decisions of the FUNAI; however, no defence or counterarguments were allowed in the official spaces<sup>26</sup>.

Likewise, the participation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* organisations, such as the Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil (APIB) [Articulation of the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil], the Coordenação Nacional de Articulação das Comunidades Negras Rurais Quilombolas (CONAQ) [National Coordination of the Articulation of Black Rural Quilombola Communities] and the Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira (COIAB) [Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon] was not scheduled. What is clear is that the representative entities of Indigenous peoples and *Quilombolas* were completely ignored; they were not invited or summoned, nor were they discussed in the meetings, in the requests to establish PCI 1 (no. 16/2015) and 2 (no. 26/2016) or in the final report prepared and approved by the *Ruralista* caucus. Despite being silenced in the official records of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, several representative institutions and leaders made public declarations to address the issues disclosed by the commission.

As I have discussed, the space of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI was controlled by the *Ruralista* caucus so that the conclusions expressed in the final report reflected its political agenda. Even though anthropologists Flávia de Mello and Daisy Barcellos had made relevant, informative statements during the PCI hearings, the final report repeated the same arguments seen in the requests for the PCI and those presented during the commission meetings. Moreover, in the final report of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, the FPA representatives went

25 Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima spent an entire afternoon waiting to be called to testify in the PCI, in an internal room of the commission. The ABA's participation was not rescheduled.

26 There was an attempt to access banking and fiscal data of the institutions (ABA, ISA, CTI and CIMI), as well as that of their legal representatives, but this was prevented by the courts.

further, presenting requests for the indictment of around 130 people<sup>27</sup>, only four of whom had actually appeared in commission hearings, including anthropologists Flávia de Mello and Daisy Barcellos. Thus, the PCI's final report addressed several issues that were not even discussed in commission hearings, but nevertheless resulted in indictments.

## Final considerations

As I hope to have shown, the FUNAI-INCRA PCI constructed its own narrative concerning Brazilian anthropology and its professionals. As a group of the national political elite, the Ruralista caucus used this event as an expression and materialisation of their interests that dialogue directly with public policies for the redistribution of land to ethnically differentiated groups, Indigenous peoples and *Quilombolas*. In the broader sense, the centrality of the agrarian issue for agribusiness is evident. As Souza Lima (2015) pointed out, the idea of development for agribusiness implies progress over natural resources that naturally go against the territorial rights of traditional peoples and communities.

For the Ruralista caucus, the desired development for the country, in its various nuances – economic, social, political – collides with public policies implemented by the FUNAI and INCRA, and, consequently, with anthropology, the central discipline involved in the identification and delimitation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* traditional territories. The ideology of the Ruralista caucus, expressed in the PCI, is translated into its own agenda, into a project of power and development of their own, characteristic of an elite, to use Shore terms (2004).

The activities of the Ruralista caucus in the Legislative branch, a space where the conflict is legitimate, by means of an investigative instrument, the PCI, were marked by discursive practices and silencing that reinforced their worldview and their position of strength in the current configuration of power. The space of the PCI can be seen as a vector for the materialisation and conjunction of knowledges, shared values, ideologies and worldviews in physical documents, formal records that, based on their concreteness as state documents, could also be used in other spaces – other commissions, other spheres of public power, in conjunction with agribusiness sectors.

These projects were materialised in the final report approved by the commission. As the final report points out, 'misconceptions' of past public policies serve as a 'shield for a false protectionist discourse, hiding shady interests', such as personal enrichment, the weakening of national sovereignty, the 'expropriation and collectivisation of private property' and 'socioeconomic subjugation as an instrument for maintaining power' (Brasil, 2017: 2.523). This passage of the commission's final document highlights how representatives of the Ruralista caucus classified as deviations logics distinct from that of the private appropriation of land. Other forms, like holding collective titles to land for common use, do not fit into their concept of development and threaten the expansion of agribusiness, since they remove land from the real estate market.

The idea of land is linked to that of merchandise, one not aligned with the value attributed to land by Indigenous and traditional communities, for whom legitimate right is acquired through effective possession, based on consuetudinary or customary law. In this sense, Almeida (2010) emphasises that the growing global demand for land for agribusiness has triggered a process he called agrostrategies, where deterritorialisations imposed on Indigenous and traditional peoples are influenced by political actors. Agribusiness actors have

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27 The indictments are in chapter 9 of the final report of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI. Among the 130 requests for indictments, we identified 33 against indigenous persons, 23 against anthropologists, 18 against federal civil servants, 10 against former public administration managers (political appointments), 17 against federal lawyers, 2 against lawyers who represent the Republic, and 27 others.

made an effort to influence government policies aimed at the agribusiness sector, such as tax incentives, the regularisation of public lands, changes in regulations, including through the FPA (Almeida, 2010; Carneiro et al., 2017; Pompeia, 2018; Dalla Costa and Picelli, 2020).

Thus, agrostrategies have been intensified on several fronts within the state (Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches) aimed at removing administrative, political and legal obstacles that prevent the commercialisation of land, including those concerning conservation units and traditional territories. Regarding this point, as previously highlighted, anthropology has entered the sight of this political group for the role it plays, that is, when it enables 'a vision and a reality that previously had not found space (or power) for manifestation, and which, precisely for this reason, had not been codified' (Silva, 2015: 160).

Contrary to that presented during the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, the anthropological work of identifying and delimiting Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands does not give rise to local conflicts. Studies for the demarcation of ethnic territories, by means of the scientific techniques of anthropology, together with Indigenous and traditional knowledge, explain existing truths that were often suppressed in relations of force and symbolic violence (Ferreira, 2015). The social structure is based on latent, hidden ethnic and social conflict, in which the *Quilombolas* and Indigenous people unwillingly occupy the subaltern pole of this structure, often without the conditions to form open opposition. It is also essential to point out that the work of state agencies in the demarcation of traditional lands does not originate internally, rather it stems from the demand of the traditional group, that is, these demarcations occur as part of the community's internal process of fighting for its rights. It is based on contact between the different groups and, therefore, from the confrontation between the distinct logics of land appropriation, or in the terms of Cardoso de Oliveira (1976), in the interethnic friction that takes place during the process of affirming their identity. The anthropological report is not a cause of this process of self-affirmation, but a consequence, and during the report's elaboration, the conflicts are visible and previously established in the region.

Initially, the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, set up during the Ruralista caucus's defence of PEC 215, sought to gain more support for the draft amendment to transfer the constitutional obligation of demarcating Indigenous and *Quilombola* territories to the Legislative branch. However, during the PCI, President Dilma Rousseff was impeached, which led to the departure of the PT and its supporters from managerial positions in federal public bodies, including those responsible for land redistribution, INCRA and FUNAI.

Following the developments and the deepening consequences of the impeachment, the political groups that supported it gained wider access to the Executive branch after 13 years of PT governments. Thus, there was no longer a need to transfer the competence for the demarcation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands to the National Congress, since some of the representatives who worked for PEC 215 and were protagonists in the FUNAI-INCRA PCI began to occupy strategic positions in the Executive branch of the new government<sup>28</sup>. After this reorganisation of the Executive branch, a number of the actions that were under development to establish a larger role for the Legislative branch in the Ruralista agenda with regard to agrarian policy began to take a back seat, and this is what happened with PEC 215. In the PCI's final report, the chapter on propositions contains a request to the President of the Câmara dos Deputados that, when the vote on PEC 215 is inserted in the activities of the plenary, he should add the proposed suggestion to suppress the articles that had been inserted related to transferring the approval of demarcations to the Legislative branch 'in view of the latest events in this area' (Brasil, 2017: 3.083).

28 On July 3, 2017, during the PCI (at the end of the second commission), then-President Michel Temer appointed Osmar Serraglio (PP/PR), Ruralista representative and member of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, to the position of Minister of Justice. He was rapporteur for the special commission on PEC 215 [draft amendment to the Constitution], which approved the proposal that all demarcations should be ratified by the National Congress.

Based on the referral contained in the commission's final report, it becomes apparent that the impeachment of the President of the Republic, Dilma Rousseff, altered the course of the legislative dynamics that were being outlined, accelerating them. When the PCI was established, much was said about the use of this commission by the Ruralista caucus to support and consolidate the discourse that approved the legal-technical opinion of PEC 215 in a special commission, in order to put the vote to the plenary of the Câmara dos Deputados, with broad parliamentary support. On a macro level, the FUNAI-INCRA PCI was an important arena for the Ruralista caucus to present their alternatives for public land redistribution policies under the new national political scenario being constructed following the impeachment. The dynamics of the commission's operation provided a glimpse of the construction of the final report.

In its ethnographies, anthropology, as an area of knowledge that the state uses to identify the Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands that will be the object of demarcation, fully contemplates the various political, moral, ethical, and other elements involved in fieldwork. For this reason, not only was this area of knowledge on the PCI's radar, but also the ABA, which brings together researchers in the field. The ABA takes a public stand in defence of constitutional rights and guarantees, its practice in the public sphere, and its theoretical-methodological principles. Thus, Brazilian anthropology and the ABA can rightfully be considered 'engaged' and 'ideological', to use terms of the *Ruralista* caucus in the PCI, but only to the extent that they do not behave as passive spectators, nor do they ignore events in their scientific productions that affect the universe in which their research unfolds and which, for the majority of this group of anthropologists, is Brazil. There is no other way to conduct ethical, scientific anthropological research, that is, it is not possible to detach the field from the social and historical context in which it is inserted, to treat the subject as isolated in time and space, or avoid dialogues with traditional communities in order to apprehend their point of view to compose the analyses. As previously highlighted, the work of the anthropologist brings to light complex social entanglements that, in a latent form, are often taken for granted. By bringing dissenting voices to light, exposing the contradictions and differences in the forces at play, it is the work of the anthropologist, and no other, that puts the disputed issues on the table<sup>29</sup>.

Since the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, as anthropologists, we perceive that the allegation that something on which you disagreed is 'ideological' has become increasingly recurrent, when in reality, it is merely a matter of a divergent conception or orientation, that is, of another ideology. Since then, this has transformed into a widely used jargon, not only during the electoral campaign of the 2018 elections, but continues to be an important tool for differentiating the federal administration elected in 2019. Based on discussions in the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, the consolidation of a Ruralista project of power was observed that, following the election of Jair Bolsonaro as President of the Republic, became a government project for the demarcation of Indigenous lands, *Quilombola* territories and agrarian reform.

In the first few months of government, we saw actions aimed at implementing the conclusions presented in the final report of the PCI, with the extinction of Executive structures focused on family farming and traditional peoples and communities<sup>30</sup>, such as the Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário (MDA) [Ministry of Agrarian Development] and the Secretaria de Extrativismo e Desenvolvimento Rural Sustentável (SEDR) [Secretariat for Extractivism and Sustainable Rural Development] of the Ministério do Meio Ambiente (MMA) [Ministry of the Environment]. Bodies that concentrated activities of interest to agribusiness were reallocated

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29 As a result of the debates during the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, discussions among anthropology professionals concerning the regulation of the profession also intensified, since there was a noticeable increase in the number of self-styled anthropologists working in demarcation processes for Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands, whether hired by opposing interests, or inserted into institutions by the Bolsonaro government.

30 On the first day of government, Medida Provisória [Provisional Measure] no. 870/2019 was presented, which extinguished, renamed and united the ministries. In addition, the measure changed the attributions of the bodies. After a long process in the National Congress, the measure was transformed into Law no. 13,844.

to the Ministério da Agricultura e Pecuária e Abastecimento (MAPA) [Ministry for Agriculture, Livestock and Supply], including the *Serviço Florestal Brasileiro* [Brazilian Forestry Service] (previously housed in the MMA) and INCRA<sup>31</sup>.

An organisation of agribusiness agendas became evident in the government elected in 2019, particularly since we observed important actors from the Ruralista caucus who were involved in the PEC 215 and the FUNAI-INCRA PCI occupying positions in the upper echelons of the Executive branch under the new president. The Minister of Agriculture, Tereza Cristina (DEM/MS), was the rapporteur for the PCI; another commission rapporteur, Valdir Colatto (MDB/SC), was appointed chairman of the Brazilian Forestry Service; Luiz Henrique Mandetta (DEM/MS), 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-chairman of the commission, was appointed the first Health Minister in the Bolsonaro government, and tried to extinguish the Secretaria Especial de Saúde Indígena (SESAI) [Special Secretariat for Indigenous Health]. The president of the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, Alceu Moreira (MDB/RS), was re-elected as a federal representative and sworn in as president of the FPA in 2019, while another of the vice-chairmen of the commission, Luis Carlos Heinze (PP/RS), was elected as a Senator and secured a seat on the Comissão de Agricultura e Reforma Agrária (CRA) [Commission for Agriculture and Agrarian Reform], ensuring the continuity of the agribusiness alliance of the Ruralista caucus in Congress.

From these initial steps in government, the participation of agribusiness actors deepened within the structures of the Executive branch. At FUNAI, after an attempt to transfer the body to the agriculture portfolio at the beginning of the Bolsonaro government<sup>32</sup>, one of the advisors to the *Ruralista* representatives in the FUNAI-INCRA PCI, Marcelo Augusto Xavier da Silva, was appointed chairman. What we have observed in the FUNAI since then is the paralysis of the processes of demarcation of Indigenous lands, and the rigging of the FUNAI through the replacement of technical staff by trusted political appointees<sup>33</sup>. INCRA was similarly occupied by figures aligned with agribusiness and the land regularisation of *Quilombos* advanced no further, in addition to facing the sharpest budget reduction in the history of public policy<sup>34</sup>.

Following the first year of the Bolsonaro government, the onset of 2020 was marked by the arrival of a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Brazil. The gravity imposed by the disease weighed especially on socially vulnerable populations, due to the lack of measures by the federal government to adequately combat the pandemic. The absence of effective actions resulted in deaths, economic crisis, and deepening social crises. Despite the delicate moment experienced, the pandemic scenario did not curb the advance of agendas

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31 A Special Secretariat for Agrarian Affairs (SEAF) was created within the scope of Ministério da Agricultura e Pecuária e Abastecimento (MAPA) [Ministry for Agriculture, Livestock and Supply], to which INCRA was subordinated, and whose attributions included land management, environmental licensing of *Quilombos* and *Quilombola* demarcation. Nabhan Garcia, former president of the União Democrática Ruralista (UDR) [Rural Democratic Union], was appointed head of this secretariat.

32 Among the changes proposed in the ministerial organisation by the elected government was the transfer of the demarcation of Indigenous and *Quilombola* lands to the Ministry for Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA). However, considering intense Indigenous mobilisation, from numerous sectors of organised civil society, academia, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office, and international pressure, the National Congress did not approve this change, maintaining the attributions of Indigenous demarcation within the FUNAI. Aligned with the agribusiness sectors, the new government presented a new provisional measure, aimed at transferring the demarcation of Indigenous lands to the Ministry of Agriculture. Supported by article 62, §10, of the Federal Constitution, which prohibits the reissue in the same legislative session of a provisional measure that has been rejected, on June 24, 2019, the President of the Federal Senate returned it to the President of the Republic declaring loss of effectiveness. At the same time, several parties filed Direct Actions of Unconstitutionality with the Supremo Tribunal Federal (STF) [Supreme Court] in order to block the action of the President of the Republic. On June 24, 2019, a monocratic precautionary measure was granted by the STF, which prevented the effectiveness of the provisional measure. The precautionary measure was unanimously endorsed by the plenary of the STF on August 1, 2019, ruling out the possibility of other manoeuvres by the presidential office on the matter.

33 Among the changes at the FUNAI, changes in the members of Working Groups to identify Indigenous lands should be highlighted, involving the substitution of qualified researchers, PhDs in Anthropology with experience in the field, for persons known to prepare identification *contra-laudos* (reports that were contrary to or advocated for the denial of identification and demarcation), together with the appointment of an evangelical missionary to the agency's Coordenação-Geral de Índios Isolados e de Recente Contato [General Coordination of Isolated and Recently Contacted Indians].

34 In 2020, the budget for *Quilombola* land regularisation was approximately R\$ 3 million (US\$ 590,000). In 2021, the budget was less than R\$ 300,000 (US\$ 56,000), a 90% reduction compared with 2020, when resources were already insufficient to meet the demand. For 2022, the budget proposal was R\$ 405,000 (US\$ 79,000). (US dollar amounts are based on the exchange averages for each year)

of interest to political and economic groups, such as Medida Provisória [Provisional Measure] 910/2019, which dealt with the regularisation of public areas owned by the federal government, transformed into Bill 2633/2020, popularly known as the Grilagem Bill [lit. Land grabbing Bill]; Bill 191/2020, which provides for mining on Indigenous lands; Bill 3729/2004, which preceded the Lei Geral de Licenciamento Ambiental [General Law on Environmental Licensing], making existing environmental norms less restrictive; and several other measures.

In this context, it is important to emphasise that the political groups operating at the highest level of the Executive branch have not yet managed to change the procedures for demarcating Indigenous lands and *Quilombola* territories, which they had defended since the FUNAI-INCRA PCI. Nevertheless, public servants who work in this area are under constant scrutiny, such that their professional practices are often examined and called into question. However, even without ideal conditions for their actuation, these bodies still operate based on identification and delimitation sustained by anthropological work. Right now, I understand that we have not yet seen the full unfolding of this story. The effects of this political strategy are still under development and a greater historical distance is required to be able to map them adequately.

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