Global Feminisms
Comparative Case Studies of
Women's Activism and Scholarship

BRAZIL

Luciana Adriano da Silva and Angélica Souza Pinheiro

Interviewer: Sueann Caulfield

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Luciana Adriano da Silva was born in 1981 in the city of Angra dos Reis, where she completed her elementary education. She went on to study at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, and received a graduate degree in Rural Education. Luciana is a community leader of the Quilombo Santa Rita do Bracuí and also works with a number of other social movements and institutions.

Angélica Souza Pinheiro was born in Angra dos Reis on March 5, 1982 and attended primarly school at Áurea Pires da Gama. She received her teaching degree from the Roberto Montenegro State College when she was seventeen, and then went on to get a Bachelor's Degree in Rural Education at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro. Together with fellow students, quilombola leaders, and professors from the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, Angélica worked with the Áurea Pires da Gama School and the Secretary of Education of Angra dos Reis to turn the local school into a quilombola school, which was accmplished in 2015. Angélica defined herself as a black woman, a jongueira, a Quilombola, and a researcher of her own history. She completed her graduate studies in tourism, specializing in tourism of traditional communities, and she was a representative of her own community along with other social movements and institutions. Shortly before her death in 2016, Angélica had represented the Quilombo Santa Rita do Bracuí in the Forum of Traditional Communities of Angra dos Reis, Paraty, and Ubatuba. She was committed to the field of Community Based Tourism, and her plans and dreams included pursuing a master's degree. But after battling kidney disease for three years, Angélica died on September 7, 2016. Angélica was an important and vibrant presence at the Quilombo Santa Rita do Bracuí and also other areas of her life, and she left a legacy of struggle, commitment, integrity, and determination that will surely be an inspiration for those who go after her—those she helped to educate as well as future generations who will be at the Quilombola Áurea Pires da Gama School.

"In a society where being black was bad, accepting my cultural heritage is very important, because we can show society how much blacks have contributed culturally to the country's development. I look at it this way because it's a matter of identity, of roots, it's in my blood, a question of honor. If I deny this, I devalue the struggle of my ancestry, because it was not in vain that many fought and some lost their lives, so I can admit I am a JONGUEIRA YES, a QUILOMBOLA YES, and BLACK , and a RESEARCHER OF MY OWN HISTORY." (Angélica Souza Pinheiro, 12/13/2014)

Sueann Caulfield is Associate Professor of History at the University of Michigan, where she was the former director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and currently heads the Brazil Initiative Social Sciences Cluster. She specializes in the history of modern Brazil, with emphasis on gender and sexuality. She has won awards and fellowships from the Fulbright Commission, National Endowment for the Humanities, and American Council of Learned Societies. Her publications include *In Defense of Honor: Morality, Modernity, And Nation In Early Twentieth-Century Brazil*, the co-edited volume *Honor, Status, and Law in Modern Latin American History*, and various articles on gender and historiography, family law, race, and sexuality in Brazil. Her current research focuses on family history with a focus on paternity and legitimacy in twentieth-century Brazil. She

is particularly interested in questions of human rights in Latin America, and has participated in a number of workshops, cross-country teaching projects, and exchanges around topics of social justice and social action.

The Global Feminisms Project is a collaborative international oral history project that examines feminist activism, women's movements, and academic women's studies in sites around the world. Housed at the University of Michigan, the project was started in 2002 with a grant from the Rackham Graduate School. The virtual archive includes interviews from women activists and scholars from Brazil, China, India, Nicaragua, Poland, and the United States.

Our collaborators in Brazil are at the Laboratório de História Oral e Imagem - UFF (the Laboratory of Oral History and Images at the Federal Fluminense University in Rio de Janeiro, LABHOI) and Núcleo de História, Memória e Documento (the Center for History, Memory, and Documentation at the Federal State University in Rio de Janeiro, NUMEM). The Brazil interviews were conducted with support from the Third Century Learning Initiative and the Brazil Initiative (Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies), both at the University of Michigan, FAPERJ (The Research Support Fund in Rio de Janeiro), and CNPq (The National Council for Scientific and Technological Development in Brazil).

This interview was translated by Lucas Limoncic and Kristin McGuire.

Keywords: land rights, social movements, race, domestic violence, marriage, education

Sueann Caulfield: I'm Sueann Caulfield, a professor at the University of Michigan in the United States, and I'm here today to talk with Luciana Adriano da Silva, here, and with Angélica Souza Pinheiro on the other side, two women who are leaders in the quilombo movement[1] of Bracuí. So I wanted to start by asking you how long this movement has existed? What are you claiming, and what have you succeeded in accomplishing? With your involvement in the movement, what have you managed so far? You could start [pointing at Luciana], and then you.

Luciana Adriano da Silva: Well, I began in the movement…. I think it's been forever, because my father was part of the fight, for the issue of the land, here in the Santa Rita do Bracuí quilombo.[2] Now we use the term quilombo, but before it was just a rural black community.

SC: Do you know when you started to use the word "quilombo"? Was it right after the constitution was passed,[3] or was it more recently?

LAS: No, it's more recent, for us it's more recent. It wasn't after the constitution, no. It was back in 2003 when we started, through our friend Délcio, we started a process to start an association for the descendants of quilombolos.[4] So that's when we started using the word "quilombo," so it's pretty recent.

SC: And who suggested this, moving in this direction? It's a choice, after all, to move toward becoming a quilombo.

LAS: Yes, it's something that you build. In part it was through my nephew, who got to know the quilombo of Campinho,[5] which is a quilombo that got its land title well before us, well, we still don't have that title. He is the one who began with this question about the land. He always liked the land. He doesn't make a living from it, but he always liked it and he liked hearing the stories.

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[1] In the 17th century, enslaved blacks shipped from Africa to Brazil escaped harsh conditions in mines and plantations to form communities with indigenous people in rural areas. Together, they created hybrid settlements known as maroon communities after the Spanish *cimarrón*, or runaway. These maroon communities are called quilombos, the word for settlement in the Angolan language of Kimbundu, or from the African term quimbundo, meaning "society made up of young warriors belonging to ethnic groups uprooted from their communities." These villages incorporate African and Indian traditions into their culture. There are over 3,000 quilombos throughout Brazil. See "Maroon People," National Geographic, April 2012. http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/04/maroon-people/mann-hecht-text (accessed 03/30/15).

[2] Angra dos Reis is the name of the town, located in the southern part of the state of Rio de Janeiro, and Santa Rita de Bracuí is the name of the quilombo community.

[3] In 1985, Brazil returned to civilian rule after 23 years under the military. Almost four years later, in September 1988, a new Constitution was put into place. See http://www.nytimes.com/1988/09/03/world/brazil-complete-new-constitution.html (accessed 12/1/15).

[4] Quilombolos or quilombolas are residents of Brazil's quilombos.

[5] The quilombo of Campinho is located southwest of Rio de Janeiro, twelve miles from the town of Paraty in the middle of lush jungle that forms part of the Atlantic forest. See http://www.ipsnews.net/2009/11/brazil-quilombos-keep-black-cultural-identity-alive/ (accessed 2/11/16). Bracui and Campinho are about sixty miles apart.

SC: He doesn't make a living from it, but he lives here?

LAS: Yes, he lives here.

SC: And how old is he?

LAS: I think he's 27. I think it was his birthday yesterday (Laughs.) I'm not sure.

SC: Oh yes, so your nephew, he's about your age.

LAS: Yes, more or less.

SC: And how old are you?

LAS: I am 33.

SC: Okay.

LAS: So he was the one who got this all going. He met the people in Campinho, which was already a quilombo. We participated in a few meetings – first he went, and then I went, we went together to a few meetings. And from there we started to think about the possibility that we could also be quilombolos, you know. And as time went by, with our studies, anthropological studies, this kind of stuff, we discovered that we really are quilombolos, because we are the descendants of former black slaves. And so we started to use the word quilombola, quilombo. There are some people who don't accept that term, but we use it as an identity, for the fight that our ancestors went through.

SC: And you, Angélica? How did your participation in the movement begin? Are you about the same age?

Angélica Souza Pinheiro: I'm 32. Actually my dad was always part of the religious movement at the church of Santa Rita.[6] So since I was very little, I was always at the church with my dad. Then my mom got sick. And there was an assistant, well no, a social worker from Paraty.[7] And she said – I hadn't been going to church for a while – she said, not Paraty, sorry, Praia Brava,[8] and –

SC: A Catholic church?

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[6] The full name of the quilombo is Santa Rita do Bracuí, so Angélica is referring to the local church.
[7] Paraty is a small town between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and a popular tourist location for both Brazilians and foreigners. It was a bustling port in the 17th and 18th centuries. It's actually about 35 miles from Angra dos Reis, and Angélica was actually meaning to say a different town, closer by.
[8] Praia Brava is a beach in Angra dos Reis.

ASP: Yes, the Catholic Church of Santa Rita of Bracuí. And she came to visit my mom, every fifteen days. She would come to visit my mom, she was from the church. And so she said, she brought a bunch of magazines and said, "You have to do something with the church. You have to help." And then I started helping with catechism with the children, together with Celina, it was more of a religious movement. And then in 2003 – I don't quite remember if it was 2002 or 2003 – when the board of Arquisaba[9] was being put together, then Anderson, who was the former director, he invited me because he didn't have enough people for it, and no one really understood what the movement of the quilombolo people was. It was something that was being built. So he invited me to be part of this board, to take a position on the advisory board. So then I was part of the advisory board. At the time the board was for two years, then I was part of the advisory board, and the board changed, and I can't remember anymore the position I got. (Laughs.) At that time there was a project – a while before, Luciana and Délcio had written a proposal, "Pelos caminhos do Jongo."[10] I wasn't part of that process. I didn't know what the project was about. I didn't understand anything. And then as we say here, "my parachute landed me right on the boat" because Bracuí won the project. It was honored, and it won first place as a site of culture by the Minister of Culture. We had some workshops throughout Brazil in the context of that project, because the NGO that organized this project, they had a few workshops for the people inside the community. And Luciana was working at that time, supporting [her son] Patrick. She couldn't leave, and this was for a week, I remember this was in 2006, it was in São Paulo. And Délcio, who had had written the proposal – and Flavia was working as a monitor, of handicrafts I think, and she couldn't get off from work either. So then Délcio asked me if I could go. And I didn't know, really I knew very little about the jongo,[11] it wasn't something I participated in. I was from a different movement, the religious one. I wasn't in the jongo and I knew very little about it. But Délcio told me a few things, he explained a few things to me about the jongo and I went to the meeting, and then I kept going. I kept going for two years, not all the time, but every now and then, every time they called me or sent me an email saying there was a workshop for the project. And so that's how I started. And then Délcio started to think about the "Points of Culture"[12] project, but Luciana couldn't go to that either as it was on the weekend, and we had to leave on a Friday and all. So then I went with Délcio, and in this process – but Luciana had already worked with the jongo, and I was just starting. So then, with time, I found out that my family was jongueira,[13] but then they stopped, or whatever, but still, through my grandmother, not through my mother or father. So I started to go, and I met Elaine and Monica, other

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[9] The Association of Descendants of Quilombolos of Santa Rita do Bracuí (Associação de Remanescentes Quilombolas de Santa Rita do Bracuí).

[10] A project entitled "By the path of the Jongo" which highlights the history of the quilombolo communities.

[11] Jongo, also known as *caxambu* or *tabu*, is a dance and musical genre of black communities from southeast Brazil. It originated from the dances performed by slaves who worked at coffee plantations in the Paraíba Valley, between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and also at farms in some areas of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo. Jongo is a member of a larger group of Afro-Brazilian dances, such as *batuque*, *tambor de crioula*, and *zambê*, which feature many elements in common, including the use of fire-tuned drums, the call-and-response form of group singing, and the poetical language used in the songs. Jongos usually take place during a nightlong party in which several people dance in pairs or in a circle, to the sound of two or more drums, while a soloist sings short phrases answered by the group.

[12] Pontão de Cultura refers to a national project that recognizes important sites of history and culture.

[13] A person who participates in the jongo.

jongueira people, and we started these meetings to build a "Point of Culture." Then Délcio couldn't go, because of work he couldn't go anymore. So Luciana started to go, and so then it was Luciana and me, and now it's been seven years. That's why we still call it the "Point of Jongo," because seven years is not seven days, you know? This is how the project goes… And I would go a lot. The project took us to a different place. Luciana kept working, and I continued to do more at home. I went to some meetings outside of the sate of Rio de Janeiro, and on the weekends Luciana would go to Rio de Janiero, so this is how we started this movement.

SC: There were meetings of the movement of the jongo or the quilombo?

LAS and ASP: Of the jongo.

ASP: And I kept participating in the Association. And then the board changed and it was changing and changing and changing, until one year there was a board, and I don't remember what was happening, but a new coordinator came. And this coordinator was retired so he had a lot more free time to work. And I, even though I wasn't a coordinator, or even assistant coordinator, I always used to do some work. I wasn't part of the board, but I always did things, I went to meetings. I was always helping this coordinator, within the board itself. So this is the environment we were working in, and that's how I ended up going to the Rural[14] to study, and I left the religious movement.

SC: The Rural is a university?

ASP: Yes, the university. And it really wasn't possible to do everything, the quilombola movement, and the Association, which came first because it gave strength to the quilombola movement. And it started to take more and more of our time, even more of mine than Luciana's. Because I live alone, it's just me and my brothers, so I have a little more time than Luciana, because she lives with her dad and her son. So I chose to be with the quilombola movement and the jongueira movement. But you know, today we do more with the quilombola movement than with the jongueiro movement.

SC: The jonguerias, they have to rehearse, right? They have to rehearse and they have to meet, and there's always the political part. So the jonguerio movement takes more time. Would you say that?

LAS and ASP: No….

LAS: Actually, nowadays, when the group was made up of children and teenagers, then we used to rehearse more. But today, everything's…

SC: Oh, so you were already doing this when you were teenagers?

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[14] The Federal Rural University Rio de Janeiro (UFRRJ) was established in 1910, and was the first university in Brazil to have agriculture related courses. It's located in Seropédica, approximately forty-five miles west of the city of Rio de Janiero.

ASP: Luciana was, not me.

LAS: Yes, we don't rehearse anymore. That was more me, I am the one who became involved that way. Angélica, as she said, wasn't part of this back then. She started later, she was invited to join. But I used to do workshops with them, to teach them how to play, how to dance, to tell them the story of the jongo.

SC: So you'd been participating in this group of the jongo since you were little, or since you were a teenager?

LAS: Yes, since I was a teenager.

SC: And for you [toward Angélica], it grew out of your role in the church?

ASP: Yes, I think from when I was in my early 20s, 21.

LAS: Well, really I was born into a jonguiero family, but when my parents were part of it, when they were young, children weren't allowed to participate in the jongo. So it was a process, because I didn't even enjoy the jongo that much. It's not that I didn't enjoy it. I was a little embarrassed to participate in the jongo and all of that, so…

SC: Why?

LAS: Because I thought it wasn't for me. I don't know. I felt a little embarrassed…

ASP: Actually, the jongo, sorry to interrupt, Luciana, but it didn't have the same, when Luciana was a teenager, when I was 20 or 21, it didn't have the same visibility it has nowadays.

LAS: Right, it didn't.

ASP: And also it didn't get the respect that people give the jongo today. It got other names and everything. I think that's why people didn't want to dance the jongo.

SC: It was seen as something….

ASP: It was an evil thing. There were people who thought it was ugly, people who didn't like it, you know.

SC: So it was with the politicization and the creation of a community culture that it became more appreciated?

ASP: That's right, and also from the persistence of the elders, you know. There was my grandma, who passed away when she was 100, and my mom and my dad, my sister, Celina, my uncle Gerald. It was more because of their persistence that it's still around today,

because they didn't let it die, even when people were being discriminating. They kept doing it, and even in times of celebrations, like the day of Santa Rita, they would do it, they would always do it, the jongo was there. So they had a very important role, which is that they resisted even when other people didn't want to, even though other people saw them with different eyes.

SC: So the jongo became part of the political fight when they started to identify with the quilombola community. Is this what created this connection?

LAS: Yes, the jongo is actually behind everything that's happening now. The jongo is what had gotten us to everything that we're living today. Even what pushed us to go to the university, it was the jongo.

SC: And how is that?

LAS: (Laughing.) No, I say this because we always did this jongo work, participating in these meetings, in this movement, in other communities, right. So then we started dreaming about the university, which for us was a distant dream, and there's even an interview where Angélica said that she wanted to go, but for us, because of where we were living and the lack of knowledge –

ASP: And resources.

LAS: The lack of resources, the lack of information. For us, it was a very distant dream, going to the university.

SC: But you went to high school here with no problem, right? There's access?

LAS: Yes, we had no problem going to high school.

SC: Is that common here? Are most young people able to finish high school?

LAS: Yes, they are.

ASP: If they want to, they can.

LAS: There are many who give up and choose to go to work. But if you want to, you can finish. So we finished, but the dream of going to college was still a very distant dream – so much so that I finished high school in 2003 and the possibility of going to a university only came in 2010. So for me, I thought I would never be able to attend a university, to get a higher education. So this jongo movement, this work that we do, this coming and going, meeting other people through the meetings that we participate in, that's what made going to the university possible, because you meet a lot of different people, and people say, "So, it's there, there's this course, and this and this, there's a lot of things." So that's what got us to the university. That's why I say that the jongo is what took us to the university, because

before, I won't say before jongo, but before we started participating in the movement, for us going to college was just an impossible dream, right.

SC: So that became a reality because of the people you met? Professors at the university who were interested by the movement and wanted to participate? And they encouraged you, both of you?

ASP: I think the movement, I was remembering some of the things we heard when we went to these jongo gatherings, the jonguerio movement of Bracuí, the jongo of Bracuí, it's not a performance jongo. We hear that a lot from the young people. It's more of a political jongo, of struggle, of resistance. Speaking about things here now, the jongo today, we're in a phase where we don't have a lot of jongo presentations inside the community. And I say this, like Luciana was saying, we used to have rehearsals and things like that but now the young people already know how to do it. But today, today as I am saying this, and it's been for four years, or three years, what's happened is, our jongo is a jongo like that: "Look, you're black, you are jongueiros, and you have to go to the university. You don't have to do a certificate, or field education. You could go to architectural school, you are able to go to medical school. Is it going to be hard? Yes, it is going to be hard, but you are able do it. You could do history, education, but only because you want to, not because society told you that it's education, it's history. If you want to get a degree in history, you're going to be a historian, if you want to be an engineer, you're going to be an engineer." It's not going to be something like "Oh, it's easy." So, today, there's me, Fabiano, Luciana, and Marcus Vinicius, we finished last year. Emerson is still there. Amanda has already taken the test, she is just waiting for the results to get in the next class in August. So it's just a few people. We started with four, and now we are –

SC: I'm counting, you mentioned six people, of which, now I am thinking about women, men, gender. Four are women and two men, right?

ASP: That's right. And they, we play this role, well, not us. Now, Emerson and Amanda, they have this role of inviting other young people to do this.

LAS: Yes, to participate.

ASP: At the university. Because Amanda, she took the entrance exam,[15] in June I think. And there's going to be another one in December, so Amanda is saying, "Come on, let's go." And she hasn't been, she didn't study at the Rural. But she's encouraging them.

LAS: Yes, she's trying to get other people to participate.

ASP: Yes, and I go even further: "You are in the position to do whatever course you want, but it's not going to be easy." And then I have to explain that it's not a piece of cake, but that you have the capacity to do any course you want. Because before we thought it didn't exist, that it was impossible, even though there was a group of people saying, "I'm going to see

[15] A college entrance exam similar to the SATs.

you at the university," like Délcio, like Monica Sacramento, like Elaine. Those are people who would always say, "I'm going to see you attending university."

SC: So it's people you met because of the movement? People outside of Rio, like teachers?

ASP and LAS: Through the jonguerio movement.

SC: Who came here to learn about the jonguerio movement, to participate?

ASP: Who became partners with our community. Because there are partners, and there are partners. They came and became our real partners. Now the project is finished, but they are still our partners. I don't even know how many times we call them and ask, "Oh, for the love of God, come!" And then Délcio will come all the way from Angra, on his own money, his own gas. Today it's a little bit harder because of his work, which is a bit complicated, but Elaine, I don't know how many times we call her, and she's like, "I can't this week, but how about next week, or the next day, I'll be there." Then she comes.

LAS: Yes, she's always helping us. So they're really our partners. We really trust them. And as Angélica said, there are partners, and there are partners. And they are the kind of partners where you see a spark in their eyes from helping other people. There are people who come and only take your life force. But not them. They came here to stay, like siblings even. We don't even have the words to describe it, the respect for them, to this day.

ASP: And we started listening to Marilda,[16] telling the history of the quilombo, the history of when the Rio-Santos[17] arrived here, in Bracuí, and split the quilombo in half, and that our elders, who weren't elders back then, what they did to maintain the community. Because back then, what did they have? They had axes, knives, stones to fight for our rights. And we were thinking, we said, "No, we have to… I don't know, we have to have a mechanism to defend this land. Our elders fought so much. Tomorrow, if we don't take this as our fight, which is not easy, we'll lose what they fought for, we'll lose what they…" Because things don't happen in 24 hours like that, it's not good.

LAS: The fight they led would have been in vain.

ASP: Yes, it would be only history.

SC: This was in the 70s?

LAS: Yes.

[16] Marilda de Souza, born in 1962 in Angra dos Reis, grew up in the Quilombo community of Santa Rita de Bracuí. She has been active in community organizing all of her life and she has worked in the schools of Angra for many years, promoting education and community development in this rural community of black Brazilians who are descendants of slaves. She was interviewed for the Global Feminisms Project.
[17] Angélica is referring to the highway that was being built between the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

ASP: It would just be history. So we took up this fight. And it was very confusing, very complicated, but we thought, we have these partners, and other partners we haven't mentioned here, we can call them or email them, I don't know about what, but they can help us, and we studied in a course about having no land, no roof, a sort of solidarity economy.[18]

SC: These were the subjects at the university?

ASP: No, the people, the movements that were part of our program.

LAS: Yes, from the group. It was a group of social movements.

ASP: And when they called and said "the asphalt will keep being poured," we were at the Rural and a guy from the Landless Worker's Movement[19] said, "We'll get a bus from Rural and we'll get there, and the asphalt won't be poured. We're in the same fight as you." So we saw that people from other places, other states, other cities were suffering from the same problems as we were, the fight for the land.

LAS: Yes, we understood each other's problems, because the problem is not just that of a single group.

SC: So you learned to situate your movement in the context of other social movements in Brazil.

LAS: Yes, yes. And my dad, he always says that if, when he was young, he had had the weapons we have today to fight, he would be very happy, because the weapons he's talking about are knowing how to read – because he's illiterate – knowing how to read and write. That's power. Then you can count on professors in the universities as partners, as help, right? And you can count on lawyers and the media. And he says this, that if in his time they had had what we have today, he would be a lot happier. And our community wouldn't be the way it is now, in terms of people leaving. So it was a very big fight.

SC: I see. So, coming back to you two, are you the first ones from the community who studied, who graduated from the university?

ASP: There are others. We say it like this, we explain: there are other people in the community who went to the university, but from the quilombo, it's just us.

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[18] The concept of solidarity economy has varied meanings, but they all revolve around a different basis of economic approach that prioritizes principles of solidarity, participation, cooperation, and reciprocity.
[19] The Landless Workers Movement (*Movimento Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*) is a social movement formed by rural workers to fight for land reform and against injustice in rural areas. It is considered one of Latin America's largest social movements with a presence in 23 of Brazil's 26 states and an estimated membership of 1.5 million people. See http://www.mstbrazil.org/ (accessed 2/15/16).

SC: So you two are the first, and now there's this group that you talk about, and they are following in your steps.

LAS: That's right. They are following. Because behind this whole fight of ours, when you say it like that, even as women, because the women stay, we have a goal behind all of this – the goal of not letting our youth get lost in the world, and here I will say in the world of drugs. Our other main goal is the title of the land. We have this dream, and one day we will get there, we will reach this goal.

SC: The title for all this land, right?

LAS: Yes. Because our ancestors fought, they fought so much for this land in order for us to be here. I think we're moving forward now. If we give up, if we just leave it all, I think we'll be forgetting about their dreams, their fight.

ASP: I think it was because of this struggle that we saw, well we didn't see it, we heard about it in the stories, we saw it this way, and some people still continue for their own *jeitinho*,[20] fighting for their land, for their families, for the way it used to be, and the way it is… We went to school, to the Pedro de Gama school, where I studied, where Luciana studied after me. When I was 17, I became a teacher. When I was 20, I came back to work in that school and there was nothing, it had nothing to do with the quilombola community. We weren't even dreaming of it, until… it was from UFF,[21] but it was Carrano[22] right, from the *Observatório Jovem*.[23] He made a movie, a documentary in 2007, of the people here in Bracuí, with the youth. He wanted to talk with the youth, young people. And we said, "No, you can only talk with young people if you also have some of the elderly speaking." We know how to talk about the history, but…

LAS: We didn't have enough ownership to be able to talk about it.

ASP: Yes, and they are the ones who need to be talking about the history.

SC: And it's also a matter of respect.

ASP: In that interview,[24] I said that my dream, back then, I always dreamed that one day I would go to a university. I didn't even know where to begin. But I always dreamed that one

[20] "jeitinho," their own Brazilian way.
[21] The Federal Fluminense University (Universidade Federal Fluminense or UFF) is one of four federally funded universities in the state of Rio de Janeiro.
[22] Paulo Carrano is a professor of education at the UFF and the coordinator of the "Youth Observatory" research group.
[23] In their logo, the letters "rio" are a different color so the name Rio stands out, in Observatório. This is a group of researchers at UFF who came together in 2001 to organize research projects related to youth and education. The group is housed in the School of Education at UFF.
[24] The video, "Old Battles, Young Historians" is available to view in Portuguese at http://www.uff.br/observatoriojovem/materia/bracu%C3%AD-velhas-lutas-jovens-hist%C3%B3rias (accessed 2/15/16).

day I was going to be at the university and I was going to study tourism, or psychology, but tourism was...

SC: And what did you end up studying?

ASP: Rural education, and social sciences and humanities, history and sociology.

SC: And you also became a teacher [to Luciana]?

LAS: Yes, the same field.

ASP: So I said that one day I would enter the university and I would come back to the school, because there's no point in going to the university and studying, and then where would I put my knowledge? In my pocket? I always had this dream of studying tourism, but everything has its time. And especially since I was 28 when I went to college, I chose the right program, a program on social movements. So the courses were about social movements and we could see, it was about land reform in Brazil, and we could see ourselves in the course materials. I don't know how they managed to do that, that in one subject, the professor would come, like Leandro was teaching one subject, and then Marília,[25] and one subject would link to another one, it was like a web. I don't know how they managed to do that, if it was on purpose, or if that's life. I don't know. Even these days I talk to our students from Rural, in history and philosophy, and I say I was one Angélica before the jongo, a "clueless" Angélica of ideas, not very normal in my little fairy tale world. When I came to the jongo, I mainly watched, I didn't talk much. I was a different Angélica. It was only when I went to the university that I learned how to talk about what I knew. I knew how to talk, it's just that I thought everyone else… I don't know if Elaine will remember this, but the first workshop that I attended, in Valença I think, about a community organization, we had to write a letter about what we wanted in the community. So I wrote it and then I said, "We have to take it to Délcio, so Délcio can see if it's right." And she said, "No, I'm not showing anything to Délcio. You're the one writing the letter..." "No, I have to show Délcio, so Délcio can see if it's right…" So now I know that Délcio doesn't have to say if it's right or wrong. He'll look at it and say, take this out, or put this in. He'll give opinions, like "you can do that," but you have an opinion if you want to do it or not. Before that, no. We thought we had to ask someone, before, we thought that an anthropologist had to come and tell our history. And today we don't feel that way anymore.

LAS: Yes, we can tell our own story.

ASP: Yes, we have a lot of respect for the anthropologist, we have a lot of respect for the historian, respect for the anthropologist. But now, we can tell our own history. We are speaking the truth, without stammering. We can tell our story, and we have a lot of stories to tell.

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[25] She is referring to two professors: Leandro Dias de Oliveira and Marília Lopes de Campos.

LAS: Yes, a lot. (Laughing.) And Angélica, when she talks like that, that she was one person before the jongo and one after the jongo, it's no different with me. Because our life is made up of phases. And we pass into a different phase, and every time it gets better. And you know, as a woman, as a mom, as a single woman, and then, after I was in the jongo and getting to know other people, it makes you wonder about who you were before and what you grew into. And now we say, "Wow, give up this fight, when so many people believed in us," and this keeps moving us forward, always further. You think about it and you see that giving up is not worth it.

ASP: Well me, I just remembered, and it even makes me a little emotional, but for example, for me, when the teacher said that we don't defend, we show them, in my thesis, mine and Fabiana's, it was a week before Luciana and Vinicius, and when I went to talk about my thesis, I had my whole subject in my head, because many of those things were things that --

SC: This was the final thesis for the program?

ASP: Yes, many things happened for me not to finish university. But I had my whole thesis in my head. But I couldn't quite manage… in my first chapter, I talked about the history of Bracuí. And the second one was about tourism. And I couldn't do the tourism. I knew the subject, but I wasn't able to explain what tourism was. So then Délcio said, "You don't write about tourism, you talk about tourism." And I knew what tourism was, but I couldn't say it. But then when I looked – my sister, she's kind of crazy, and we used to fight a lot, but once I had stayed for a while at Rural, and I think she felt so lonely that we got to be better friends than before, just an example for you to see how things get better.

LAS: Distance was good for them.

ASP: And so when I told my sister, "My thesis defense is this day, September 3rd, on this hour, 8 or 9 in the morning," I don't remember. My sister was like, "I'm going to be there." She had no money, so she got money from a friend on the day, and that night she arrived to be with me for my thesis.

LAS: At the defense.

ASP: When she got there, she said my dad was coming. And then we had to delay the defense because my dad didn't know how to get there. But then it was my dad and Amanda and my aunt Amélia, and Fabiana's mom, who I say is my second mother. She was also there. So Délcio was at the table, and Monica Sacramento. Monica had gotten my thesis three days earlier, because she wanted to be able to be there for me, even though there was a lot going on at the university. So they are really my partners in the same fight. Monica finishing her doctorate, Délcio finishing his masters. So we were all in the same fight.

LAS: In the same race.

ASP: The same race. Délcio, he was there, he went there, he went to all of the thesis presentations, all of them, even Luciana's which was at night, he was there to see Luciana,

and it was very important to us. We saw how united we were, the four of us, or five, because there was Fagner, Fabiana's brother, who is now in Espírito Santo.[26] We climbed onto the auditorium stage, and held hands. My father, Aunt Amélia, everyone there, Fabiana's brothers, we prayed. I don't even know if pray is the right word. It's just, "hold on to my hand," it's what the jongo people of Campinas[27] say a lot, and we started with the jongo, and we changed the whole structure of the presentation there. My group, it changed everything inside the Rural. We grabbed a colleague who was there, and said, "We have to be up front, we have to tell all those people who we are." So we got there and spoke, one came and said something, and we rotated…

LAS: Yes, one would go after the other. Even the president of the university was impressed. She said she had never seen anything like that.

SC: And how many were you?

LAS and ASP: 54.

SC: In the program?

ASP: Yes, in general. We got there and said, "This is Luciana Adriano da Silva, mother of Patrick" – before she started – "daughter of someone, and girlfriend of someone." We each told our own story, we sang to each other, we read poetry, Fabiana recited a poem she had written for Vinicius, things like that.

SC: So your colleagues also come from communities?

LAS: They are all from social movements, all of them. The Homeless Workers Movement,[28] the Landless Workers' Movement, RECID,[29] everyone from the group.

ASP: So we learned a lot. And I think that… Professor Marília – she says we had a popular education to finish our program, we had a class of popular education; and I think that's how she concluded it, our class of popular education. I don't remember what day, but it was earlier this year, on the day Marilda arrived with a sick Raíssa to Vinicius's defense, my professor who is from the social movement…

LAS: We broke the university's taboo.

ASP: … who is from the movement of popular education --, she called Marilda, who was Vinicius's mom and brought her to the table to evaluate Vinicius.

[26] Espírito Santo is a state in southeastern Brazil, north of Rio de Janeiro.
[27] Campinas is a city in the state of São Paulo and they have an active jongo community. In 2014 they opened a Reference Center for Jongueiras and Jongueiros.
[28] *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto* is the Homeless Workers Movement in Brazil that began to organize in the late 1990s around issues of housing and slums.
[29] *Rede de Educação Cidadã* is the Network of Citizen Education which brings individuals and organization together to fight for humanitarian goals.

LAS: At the table of the defense. Yes, because only people with doctorates and masters can do that.

ASP: To evaluate Vinicius on…

LAS: … His presentation of his work.

ASP: And she wasn't Vinicius's mom there. She was there with a mom's emotion, but she came and said, "Vinicius, he had to do this, this, and this. He had to research this, this, and this, and he didn't research this, this, and this." Some of the professors didn't even know that.

LAS: They don't know, they don't know.

ASP: So, that's how it was for us.

SC: And he graduated during the same period as you?

ASP and LAS: The same period.

LAS: The same program, but different graduations. He did agro-ecology and food safety.

ASP: So for us, and I still say that with a lot of emotion, that's how I ended that chapter, after that I never went back to Rural, that's how I ended that chapter at the university, our first step. It was when we… Luciana took Patrick, it was his birthday.

SC: Who's Patrick?

LAS: My son. He's 14.

ASP: On the day Luciana was going to present her thesis, it was Patrick's birthday. So everything was going as it should. So that's how we managed to bring…, we didn't get everyone to the graduation, but each person brought someone important from their family and they did all they could to get there. And at 2:00, they were there for the graduation. And it was a very different graduation, I had never been to anyone's graduation before, but our graduation was not a conventional graduation.

LAS: It wasn't. One more taboo broken at the university, right, because we didn't wear a gown, we wore African clothes, colorful clothes. I know it was a powerful thing.

SC: Oh, do you have pictures?

ASP: Yes, we do.

LAS: It was so powerful that's how we ended it, at the entrance of the graduation, we created a dynamic thing, playing drums as we entered, and such.

SC: How wonderful.

ASP: We built them ourselves.

LAS: Yes, we built them ourselves. We built drums in this program, we learned to build, to build drums. It was good.

SC: Good, very nice. So now, let's change the subject from the project to what is feminism. So you are in leadership positions and a lot of people, including me, say that most of the people active here in the movement are women. Is that true? And why do you think that might be so? Because women in particular are more involved and more interested in moving this forward?

LAS: I don't even know where to begin to explain that.

ASP: I think women here, they don't call themselves feminists. If they call themselves that, it's been only a short time and I don't know about it. (Laughing.) But I think it's because, the history here is that men worked outside the house. Not that women don't work outside of their homes, they also do. But men do more often. They work in heavy jobs and such, so this movement was really the charge of women, not to let the battle flag fall.

LAS: And the women, as much as they work outside, they always have a little more time than men to be part of these movements.

SC: And that's different in this generation, different from the generation of your parents, your grandparents, who worked in the 70s, in the peasant movement?

ASP: I think it is, but I --

LAS: I think so, today there may be a bit more women, not that the women back then weren't participating. They did. But I think it was a little more balanced, the numbers of men and women. I think nowadays, there maybe are more women.

ASP: I don't know. I think women really just followed their husbands. I don't know, maybe I'm being ignorant and unfair, but I think that --

LAS: The husband ended up having more of a voice than the women.

ASP: Yes, I think that used to happen.

LAS: The husband had more voice than the women.

ASP: Yes, they would come along, but not participate. They didn't have the power of the decision, I think.

SC: So that was back then, and now they do?

LAS: Yes, now we do. Now we decide, we scream, we stomp our feet, we go to fight. (Laughing.) Because we believe in the power of women. Because women have always been discriminated against, and still are. But it used to be a lot worse, with more discrimination. And now, now we can go fight and we can talk more. There used to be more women who were withdrawn and submissive to their husbands, they spoke only if their husbands let them. But not today, now we have a lot more voice.

ASP: And these days, as far as we can see in our community, women are in the labor market, so…. We need men, on the one hand, but on the other hand, it's not a necessity of life. We need them because everyone needs each other. But for all I know, what I've seen, women used to be totally supported by their husbands, and I think that made things impossible. Today we have women who call and say, "Next week there's a meeting in Rio," for example. So then you have to figure out transportation, a place to stay, or they don't have money and they have to figure out the money. The woman goes to work and talks to the manager, talks to her boss, asks for time off, and he lets her. So she first goes to talk to her boss and ask permission, and then she says to her husband, "Look, I'm going on such and such a day to Rio or São Paulo" or I don't know where. And he might not like it, but he's not going to stop her, because there's been a change in that kind of behavior in society I think.

LAS: Yes, and for me, I'm a single mom today. I've always been, I never got married. Not because I didn't want to, but it was more of a choice because when I got pregnant I was already participating in the movement. So then you observe your partner, you see that, I realized that if I got married and moved in with him, then maybe I wouldn't be in this movement today because he was someone who didn't like the movement and didn't participate. So when I left the hospital, it was his family, his mom and his brother, who picked me up at the hospital. And at the same time, my mom, my sister and I don't know who. So I was like, so do I sink, or do I rise? Do I go home, or with him? In both places there is a room set up for me, with a cradle. I don't know.

SC: You didn't decide before?

LAS: (Laughing.) I said, "Oh, I'm going to go back to my parent's home because we fight and because we believe in a different future." And I also said, "I can't leave this fight. Even after my dad asked me to, because he's a little older, I can't leave that fight." To the point that I'm a single mom still today. I have a boyfriend and everything, and he even asked me to marry him next year...

SC: You're getting married?

ASP: This is kind of a problem.

LAS: (Laughing.) I told him that marriage is a distant case. It's better for me to build my house and for him to build his and we'll just be together, but each one in his own home, the same respect, but each one with their freedom, because I think that if the woman is not determined, the man ends up imposing things on the woman, no?

SC: Still today?

LAS: Still today.

SC: But the difference is that before women used to be more submissive. You think that if you get married now you would still have this conflict around wanting to continue the political life and so on.

LAS: Yes, there would be more constraints, right?

ASP: Yes, some people in the community are still like that. It doesn't happen to us, but in some cases they keep them from the jongo, or they go to the jongo but can only dance with so-and-so, and not some other one.

SC: Because they get jealous.

ASP: I don't know if it's jealousy, or craziness, or some other complicated thing that happens in the daily life of a couple. We are putting it in the most simple terms. But I think it's the fight, I never call myself a feminist, no.

LAS: Me neither.

SC: Okay, so I'm going to ask first, just to keep talking about what you are talking about – then I'm going to ask what feminism is to you – but to continue with what you were saying…. The fact of you being here, I don't know if that's your case too, but being involved in this movement, in the leadership and moving forward with your life, did that give you strength to see the marriage relationship in any specific way.

LAS: It's not only strength, but it also showed me that I'm capable of moving forward without needing or depending. Because some women are dependent on their husbands. Even though they work, they depend on them. It showed me that I don't have to depend on a man to survive.

ASP: And we have so many examples of women who were able to evolve. I don't know what the exact word would be.

LAS: Yes, reach their goals.

ASP: Without depending on a man.

LAS: Yes, of the strength of a man.

ASP: And I don't know if they consider themselves feminists, but they have doctorates, they have master's degrees.

LAS: Yes, we have many examples.

ASP: Yes, even a master builder. But we say that if we get married, we might still get married, but we will evaluate them thoroughly and see if they have the right profile.

SC: And these examples are from here in the community, or from your personal life, these examples you have?

LAS and ASP: Personal life.

ASP: With friends, you know?

LAS: Friends, yes. In short, I can get there without having to depend on a man. Otherwise I wouldn't have chosen to have my son without a father, you know? But this is how I think, I believe that as long as God gives us strength to work and keep moving forward, I think that's it. You can't depend on anyone else.

ASP: And to get married, he needs to know that we are in this movement.

LAS: Yes, to get married, it has to be with a person who is very open-minded, very flexible.

ASP: Yes, and that he already knows us in this movement.

LAS: Yes, and that he accepts it. Because if he doesn't, it's not going to roll.

ASP: Yes, he is taking the risk of getting married and then divorcing.

LAS: Yes, if he doesn't know, it won't happen, it won't roll.

SC: And do you see problems inside the families, gender-related problems, and the problems that feminists often focus on, like violence again women, discrimination, favoring boys in education. Do you see these problems in your community, or in society in general?

LAS: We have them, we have them in both cases, in the community and in society. There's plenty of it, and it's very annoying. There are even those who do exactly what I was saying about the woman being submissive to the man, or depending on the man. I met someone who worked, and she got a job offer where she would make 5,000 Rs a month. And her husband, he used to make, I don't know, 1,000 Rs a month, or 1,200. And he simply didn't let her go. He was like, "So my wife is going to be making more money than I do"? I think this is just nonsense because they are husband and wife. The wife to me, in this case, we're

supposed to be side by side with our husbands, and not one in front of the other. I think that's the way he should be thinking of it, as a strength to the other one, to the couple, to the family, this job that she would take, but anyway.

SC: And the jongo movement, the quilombo movement, they talk about these problems, or it's not what they are focused on?

LAS: We've talked about it a few times, because in the jongo workshops, after everyone already knew how to dance and sing and everything, then I started to do these workshops divided by themes, right, the workshops were by theme. Every meeting was a different theme that we would discuss, about black people and soccer, black people and the media, and also about women. But it was discussed only a little.

SC: But it was.

LAS: Yes, we managed to talk a little about the topic of respect.

ASP: I was even thinking these days at home – I think a lot, and I do very little. (Laughing.) I'm kidding. But I was thinking about doing a workshop. I don't even know how to begin. About the invisibility of black women. I wasn't even thinking about Brazil, I was thinking more about Angra dos Reis.

SC: Where?

ASP: Here in Angra. In our city, here in Angra dos Reis.

SC: Oh yes, Angra.

ASP: The invisibility of the black woman.

LAS: Yes, I think this would be a very good topic.

ASP: I don't even know how to begin.

SC: And do you think that your work inside the movement helps to change the situation? To make women more visible.

ASP: It helps, because we see a lot of cases of domestic violence inside our own quilombo. So whenever we can, we talk about it, we chat, not pointing fingers at anyone, but always saying that domestic violence is bad. As little as we know, we are always talking about it, to the young people, saying, "Don't let him do that. The first time that your boyfriend squeezes or pulls your arm, that's already violence."

LAS: Right, not to take that.

ASP: The first time he talks loudly, that he yells at you, it's violence. So stop this. Because if he pulls your arm today, the next time it might be your hair, it might be violent. Violence doesn't start with him beating you up. It starts with small things, and then it changes the deal, and then you see how many times, you see how many women die from this. You talk like a pro, I'm a bride, I have a ring. (Laughing.) But I even said to my brother, "I don't think I'll ever get married, because all men are psychopaths." Because you end up very scared, every day I don't know how many women die. Men die too. I'm not saying we don't have women who kill their husbands. We also have crazy women. But I would not lose my freedom to kill anyone. I don't know what happens inside people's heads. But anyway, we have to be talking about that always and we don't have to schedule a meeting to talk about this. If a young person shows up, we start to talk about it.

LAS: Yes, it always comes up, whatever we are talking about.

ASP: Yes, we are always talking about something, I'm saying that because I've had the example inside my own home. My sister started to date someone and then she didn't leave the house. And she loved going to parties, her last name was party. But she started dating and then she wouldn't leave the house. You've never seen my sister, she does "black power."[30] And when she was in a relationship, she would always straighten her hair, so not brushed out, straight, pulled tight, tied up. Because her boyfriend wouldn't let her wear it the way she wanted. And I was the one supporting my sister, because he didn't ever give her a single reais. So I arranged a fight. I set it up. Then she broke up with him, and I told her, "This is not a life for you. This is not a life. You're a young thing. You're just over 20 years old." Now she's 24, but she was 22, 21, I don't know. "You spent 24 hours a day inside, even grandma never saw you on the street." So now when she's dating, she does it all differently. She says, so if you are going to be in a relationship with me, I'm going to go out, I have my own friends. My sister had stopped talking to our cousins and we have more than 50. Everyone here is cousins. How can you stop talking to your cousins because your boyfriend wants you to? So, that's violence. And we are always talking, each one in her own family, but we are always talking about this subject, domestic violence and such things, and drugs, because we don't want it. We sadly have relatives who are in jail because of drugs. I don't know. The ones we can keep by our sides, we act as mothers, you know. We're going to step on their wings a little, they're not going to fly away, if we can help it, they are not going to fly away.

SC: So, the last question. I can see everyone is already having lunch. The last question is what we were talking about. If you consider yourselves feminists and why, or why not.

LAS: I wouldn't say I consider myself a feminist. I don't know. I will just speak my mind. I actually don't know what feminists fight for, so I don't consider myself a feminist. Maybe

[30] Angélica is referring to the movement to take pride in one's blackness, which in Brazil was most often expressed through an Afro hairstyle. See http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2014/06/black_power_in_brazil_means_natural_hair.html (accessed 2/15/16).

sometimes I am one, but not because I have some deep knowledge of what it truly means to be a feminist. So I don't consider myself a feminist, you know?

SC: And you?

ASP: (Laughing.) Me too, I'm in the same boat as Luciana.

SC: So what do you think feminism is, or have you not really thought about it?

ASP: To tell the truth, I haven't thought a lot about it. At the university, we heard a few things on the subject, but it wasn't much, so I really don't have any background in it. If you asked me to explain a few things to you about what feminism is, like you did now, I can't even begin to explain what it is. I'd be here thinking for hours to be able to tell you something.

SC: Okay, thank you very much, this was wonderful, I've loved talking with you.

LAS: You're welcome.

SC: I think the video will be very cool. I'll show it to you before posting them on the internet, ok?