

THE NET-PULLING: COOPERATION, COLLECTIVITY AND MUTUAL HELP IN IMAGES

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ABSTRACT


Artisanal fishing is a practice developed throughout the Brazilian coast, within territories and cultural meanings. It is one of the main productive activities carried out by some traditional communities, among them, the jangadeiros on the coast of Northeast Brazil. Among the modalities of fishing practiced by them is the “pull fishing net”, a community practice that combines mutual help and cooperation in which fishermen gather to cast and pull the net, sharing the catch. Here, we demonstrate the configuration and cultural meanings involved in the “pull fishing net”. We also discuss the importance of photographic production in fieldwork with traditional communities for capturing the symbolic elements present in the traditional way of life. Thus, the use of photographs made it possible to make records that demonstrate elements of cooperation and collectivity present in this activity.

KEYWORDS
Fishing; Raftsmen;
Pulling net;
Photography;
Cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

Fishing has been present in human societies since its origins, in the most diverse landscapes and environments. This led to the establishment of close links between societies and their respective environments,

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culminating in different adaptations to carry out the fishing activity through numerous different management techniques adapted to each place (Diegues 1983; 1995).

Indigenous peoples already had fishing as an essential practice, producing canoes and other instruments such as arrows and hooks, as shown by chroniclers from the colonial period (Staden 2013, Ribeiro 2015). During this period, the activity becomes hybrid and mixed, carried out from the encounter of indigenous, European and African customs, resulting in the development of different management techniques adapted to the different socio-environmental characteristics. This led to the formation of a diversity of peoples and traditional communities of artisanal fishermen along the Brazilian coast (Diegues 1995, Mussolini 1953).

Traditional populations have at the base of their culture a more recent miscegenation, being characterized, above all, by living in territories where dependence on the natural world, its cycles and its products are fundamental for the production and reproduction of their way of life, as well as the maintenance and transmission of traditional knowledge (Diegues and Arruda 2001, Suzuki 2013).

Among the diversity of traditional peoples are the *jangadeiros* (Diegues and Arruda 2001), a generic name for artisanal fishermen located between Bahia and the north of Ceará. They use the raft as a vessel and artisanal techniques, such as the hook line, the net bottom, trammel, harpoon, net and traps (Casudo 2002, Mussolini 1953).

Using participant observation, a case study and an ethnographic report (Restrepo 2018), with photodocumentation and semi-structured interviews, it was possible to follow the dynamics of a community of *jangadeiros* in the municipality of Maxaranguape, Rio Grande do Norte (RN), Brazil. The municipality is located 54 kilometers from the capital Natal, with an estimated population of 12,544 inhabitants and an average HDI of 0.608 (IBGE 2020).



FIGURE 1
Location of
Maxaranguape -
RN. Map: João P.
Benvenuto and
Dorival B. Neto.

Among the activities carried out by fishermen in this region, there is the “pulling-net”, a type of beach trawl fishing with the use of the trammel net that has its origins in the period of slavery, including a capoeira performance. This type of fishing, present in numerous fishing communities along the Brazilian coast, evokes elements of collectivity, cooperation, solidarity, reciprocity and mutual help (Candido 2010, Saquet 2019) in which several members of the community participate, from the organization of the activity until the sharing of fish. For this debate, we consider cooperation as being “[...] mutual collaboration, freedom of expression and overcoming individuality, with the (i)materialization of synergy, spontaneity, trust and solidarity.” (Saquet 2019, 50, our translation).

In this way, following a tradition that was established in Brazil, in which the photographic practice of an ethnographic character was used as a resource for several anthropological studies (Gama 2020), we used photography as a fundamental resource to mark the life stories and trajectories of the subjects (Caiuby Novaes 2014; 2020), being a living archive in time, a *locus* of memory (Samain 2012) and a core of the undeniable veracity of facts (Felizardo and Samain 2007).

We consider photography, used as a research technique, capable of capturing some symbolic elements of cooperation and mutual help present in

the pulling of the net and of expressing the “here and now”, of sheltering the future in “unique minutes” (Benjamin 1987b), recording the memory of this fishing technique, unveiling and setting a scenario where something happens, at the moment it happens (Brandão 2004).

It should be noted, as Rouillé (2009) puts it, that photography does not reproduce reality, but brings us closer to its verisimilitude, a very important element of this paper. For Martins (2008), photography is one of the most faithful forms of visual expression of social reality.

In addition, as Brandão (2004) and Foucault (1969) put it, photography, like other works, depends on authorship, as it establishes several possibilities, being located in a defined historical moment and being the meeting point of several occurrences. Benjamin (1987b) follows this perspective when he argues that the decisive factor in photographic production lies in the relationship between the photographer and his technique, his posture towards the photographed.

We believe that in fieldwork in general, and in those with traditional communities in particular, ethnographic photographic production is a stimulus for the researcher to approach the object, in an act that implies empathy and intersubjectivity, attentive observation and a sensitive and denaturalized look (Caiuby Novaes 2021). Soares and Suzuki (2009) emphasize the need to use photographs in fieldwork with traditional communities, as a means of capturing material and symbolic elements.

This article was elaborated through a reflection on the photographic production made during fieldwork (in January 2021), in which we tried to capture symbolic elements present in the traditional way of life, particularly in the hammock pull, as the photographs facilitate the description, comparison and support the interviews (Attané and Langewiesche 2005). Here we have the following objectives: to briefly characterize the jangadeiros in the municipality of Maxaranguape; discuss the importance of photodocumentation in fieldwork, especially those with traditional communities; and demonstrate, through the photos, the configuration and cultural meanings of cooperation, mutual help, solidarity and collectivity imbued in the “net pulling”.

JANGADEIROS AND FISHERMEN IN RIO GRANDE DO NORTE (RN)



The fishing communities of the Brazilian coast were formed from the specificities of each environment, conforming to distinct spatial meanings and with different ways of life, emerging as supply satellites for

larger populations, providing fish, cassava flour, and other agricultural products to vary according to the region (Diegues 1983, Mussolini 1953).


This led to the formation of “maritime societies” (Diegues 1995), based on the construction of a way of life based on fishing and agricultural activities, with hunting and gathering as complementary. These societies established a more intimate relationship with nature, as their ways of life were completely related to natural cycles, such as seasons, moon phases, tides and weather conditions (Silva 2010), thus having, nature as an element of immediacy of the way of life (Suzuki 2013), in addition, rigid relationships of kinship, neighborhood, solidarity and cooperation (Candido 2010).

The jangadeiros were constituted from indigenous, african and european traditions (Cascardo 2002, Diegues and Arruda 2001, Mussolini 1953). Until 1888 many enslaved worked on rafts rented from their owners. Many of the Africans who came to Brazil as slaves brought a technical framework on maritime and coastal fishing, and this knowledge was used by their owners, who also owned plantations (Diegues 1983).

[...] well before the arrival of Europeans on the coast of Guinea, local fishermen were already familiar with sailing and fiber nets. Among them are the Etsi, former inhabitants of the Gold Coast (Ghana, Liberia), the Fanti, considered, even today, excellent fishermen. [...] The main instruments traditionally used by these fishing tribes were: line fishing, with one or several hooks (close to the current long-line) fixed net, a type of waiting net, for large fish. The net made of fibers [...]; night fishing, with the help of a torch to attract fish that were harpooned; the jereré fishing [...]; fishing with cast nets and small nets dragged by two people (shore net), also inside the lagoons. (Diegues 1983, 59, our translation).

The film *Barravento*² (Rocha 1962) portrays a community of jangadeiros (ex-slaves) fishermen from Bahia who perform net pulling (in this case, the net is rented from a foreman), and also fishing with cast nets and line in rafts, the first being the most important (because it “gives” more fish). The community lives in miserable conditions, with a diet restricted to the “vital minimums” (Candido 2010), but with diverse cultural practices such as capoeira, samba and candomblé, all of them related to productive activities (fishing and small agriculture), which demonstrates the cultural importance of fishing among the jangadeiros (Rocha 1962).

2. Released in 1962, the film was part of the Cinema Novo Brasileiro movement, which emerged in the 1960s, with the motto “a hand camera and an idea in the head”, having characteristics of a simple production with few resources, often using the local characters themselves to interpret. The themes were related to hunger, misery and social conflicts, politicizing Brazilian cinema. Available in: <https://www.aicinema.com.br/cinema-novo/> (accessed in June 14th, 2021).



Among the area currently occupied by jangadeiros, the state of Rio Grande do Norte (RN) is the most relevant due to the abundance of fish on its coast, which contains 25 municipalities in 410 kilometers and where artisanal fishing appears as an extremely important practice cultural and economic, in order to define traditional ways of life and cultural practices, in addition to guaranteeing food security and being a source of employment and income for thousands of families (Silva 2010).

Until the mid-twentieth century, fishing communities lived in relative isolation from the capital Natal, relating to it through the exchange and commercialization of products, cultural manifestations and the flow of information (Silva 2010).

From the 1950s onwards, the number of rafts began to decrease due to the difficulty of finding balsa wood, the main raw material for the raft. In the 1970s, board rafts began to become popular, although the first rafts were made in the 1940s in RN, which replaced those made of wood (currently, most are made of boards) (Diegues and Arruda 2001). At that moment, the communities of jangadeiros began to undergo transformations influenced by the arrival of tourism, industrial fishing and other service activities, causing a reduction in the number of fishermen.

Even with this expressive reduction of rafts and jangadeiros, in coastal municipalities of RN artisanal fishing in rafts continues to be a relevant activity, as is the case of the municipality of Maxaranguape. The city became popularly known as a fishing village and currently, fishing remains the predominant traditional and artisanal activity, since agriculture, extractivism and hunting are already little practiced.

The settlement of the municipality maintains as a basis and territorial unit the characteristics of what Antonio Candido (2010) called the *neighborhood*, which is the fundamental structure of sociability, constituted by the grouping of some or several families that are little or very much linked by the feeling of belonging to the community, placed, through daily coexistence, in recreational-religious activities and through practices of solidarity, collaboration and mutual assistance. Among these practices is “net pulling”, an artisanal and traditional fishing technique that we will characterize and discuss later.

For the geographer Marcos Saquet (2019) reciprocity is related to solidarity, cooperation, spontaneity, trust and decision-making autonomy. He states that historically, “[...] reciprocity was effected with content related to family, kinship, as symmetrical relationships, mutual help and trust [...]” (Saquet 2019, 45, our translation). In this sense, collaboration is contained in reciprocity, being considered as:

[...] *a precious social practice*, of subjects acting *together*, that is, as *exchange* through which participants have *advantages* for being *together*. [...] Collaboration means mutual help, content present in *the genes of animals social* groups that come together based on different interests, with empathy with each other [...]. People come together to collaborate and live better, politically, economically, culturally and environmentally. (Saquet 2019, 46, our translation).

In this way, these elements are the result of collective practices present at a higher level in traditional communities, but which are in constant threat of being reduced due to the abandonment of traditional practices to the detriment of other productive activities. Therefore, we will highlight, through a photographic series, the presence, in the pull of the net, of elements of cooperation, mutual help and collectivity.

PHOTOGRAPHY AS A RESEARCH TOOL IN TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES



The image has been gaining importance, especially since the mid-19th century when they reached the possibility of technical reproducibility (Benjamin 1987a). From 1850 onwards, photography began to replace paintings in scientific activities, marking an intensification of this process of technical reproducibility (Benjamin 1987a). At that moment, images are more used for scientific purposes, especially in the Natural Sciences. In this way, the photos are used as archives, through orders and expeditions to portray places and peoples in the world (Rouillé 2009).

In its emergence, photography brings the essence of the undeniable veracity of the recorded facts, with its impartial and unequivocal vision. Hence a high status attributed to it, of “[...] recording selected parts of the ‘real’ world, as it ‘really’ presents itself.” (Felizardo and Samain 2007, 210, our translation). Therefore, photography and memory (con)merge.

With the invention of photographic devices and cinema at the end of the 19th century, a correlation began between the gaze and knowledge, as images allow us to see between the lines, which is implied in the written text (Caiuby Novaes 2020). In the Human Sciences, Anthropology was one of the first to stick to the use of images, especially photographs.

Images have been incorporated by Anthropology since the beginning of cinema history. The Lumière's great invention of 1895 was an important piece of equipment in the luggage of scientists who participated in the Cambridge University Expedition to Torres Strait, in 1898. Images become increasingly frequent as records of distant societies, as visual signs of an Other, seen as very close to a natural world. Like collections of artifacts, eagerly sought after by museums, photographs provided the possibility of organizing societ-

ies into types, human models. [...] Anthropology's interest in the use of images for illustrations also came from the scientific model followed by this discipline at the end of the last century: the one provided by the natural sciences. [...] anthropologists, in turn, sought photos and illustrations to capture visual aspects of culture, which would allow classifying bases for the different stages of social evolution. (Caiuby Novaes 2020, 22, our translation).

In Brazil, even though photographic production was institutionalized as a theme of Cultural Anthropology only in the 1980s, ethnographic photographic production has taken place since the 19th century, linking anthropology and photography ever since. To get to know the country, its environment and its people, several expeditions were organized that used photographic records. Between 1867 and 1868, the German Christoph Albert Frisch produced the first 100 photos of the Amazon³. In 1875, Marc Ferrez went on an expedition to the Northeast and North of Brazil, photographing and documenting, mainly the Botocudo Indians⁴. Between 1898 and 1900, the Germans Hermann Meyer and Theodor Koch-Grünberg⁵, on an expedition to the Xingu, exhaustively document everyday objects, artifacts and cultural practices (Gama 2020).

In this perspective of the use of photography, Carlos Rodrigues Brandão (2004) states that it is an instrument to “show” the “invisible” of history, the people, the simple man, who were excluded from the plastic arts, which portrayed, above all, the elite, the nobility, the military and “important” people. “[...] unlike painting, in which only those who paid for it are portrayed, or very special people in the eyes of the artist, photography is, increasingly, an art for everyone, among everyone, about everyone.” (Brandão 2004, 46, our translation).

This is in line with the proposition of Walter Benjamin (1987c, 225, our translation) to “[...] brush history against the grain.”, and also, with the uses of ethnographic photography in Brazil, which sought, since the 19th century, to portray aspects of the Brazilian people and their cultures, although often placing the other as “exotic”, but which over time served as a source of anthropological studies that sought to understand different cultures, as well as create institutions for the appreciation of these cultures. .

From 1890 onwards, expeditions led by Marechal Cândido Rondon produced a large amount of ethnographic and iconographic material, resulting in

3. Available in: <https://ims.com.br/titular-colecao/albert-frisch/> (accessed in June 29th, 2021).

4. Available in: <https://ims.com.br/titular-colecao/marc-ferrez/> (accessed in June 29th, 2021).

5. Koch-Grünberg published his images in a typological atlas, *Indianertypen aus dem Amazonasgebiet* (*Types of Indians of the Amazon region*, 1906), and in the fifth volume of *Vom Roraima Zum Orinoco* (1923). Some of his narratives about indigenous myths were eventually mentioned by Mário de Andrade in *Macunaíma* (1928).

the first Brazilian indigenous policies, such as the creation of the Indian Protection Service (SPI) in 1910 (Gama 2020).

Dina Dreyfus and her husband at the time, Lévi-Strauss, on expeditions through the Brazilian Midwest and the Amazon, also made a series of photographic records. Lévi-Strauss treated photographic production with a certain disdain, which is why we know of few photographs of him, most of them in *Saudades do Brasil*⁶, published only in 1994 (Caiuby Novaes 1999).

For him, photographs are only indications of “beings, landscapes and events”, which he knows he has seen and known. Photography is, on the ethnographic level, like a kind of document reserve, it allows us to preserve things that we will never see again. (Caiuby Novaes 1999, 68, our translation).

Dina, on the other hand, was a specialist in ethnography and advocated the use of photographic documentation as an ethnographic research tool. She committed to teaching courses and publishing newsletters to prepare researchers to go out into the field and record images about folklore, cultural practices, and material culture (Bastos 2018).

Another couple, Berta Gleizer and Darcy Ribeiro also make use of photodocumentation in their expeditions. Berta was an advocate of the uses of the photographic image, producing more than Darcy himself, but her images are not known to the public (Gama 2020).

In this way, there is a lack of recognition of the photographic images produced by women anthropologists who traveled with their husbands, such as Dina and Berta, which “[...] seems to be related to the lack of references to the work of women anthropologists more generally.” (Gama 2020, 95, our translation).

Mário de Andrade was another enthusiast of the use of photographs for the study of culture, he had been in the North and Northeast during the “ethnographic trips” (1927 to 1929), when he made many imagery records. His interests were contiguous with those of Dina and Lévi. In 1936 they began to work together, making ethnographic photographic records and training new researchers. In the same year Dina and Mário created the Society of Ethnography and Folklore (1936-1939). Dina was a pioneer in the didactics of ethnographic studies and one of the biggest drivers of Brazilian folkloric research, being decisive for the result of the famous missions of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Service (SPHAN) that traveled through the North and Northeast in 1938 (Bastos 2018) .

6. In these photos, taken in the Amazon, in the Midwest and in São Paulo, there is no mention of Lévi to Dina.

At SPHAN, Mário installs a “photographic documentation policy” of the cultural, historical and artistic manifestations that constituted Brazil. Two French photographers will also work for SPHAN in the 1940s and 1950s, Marcel Gautherot and Pierre Verger, who will portray “regional types”, popular festivals and the relationships between subjects and landscapes throughout Brazil. Both publish several photos in the magazine *O Cruzeiro*, an icon of photo reporting and a new photographic language in Brazil, which mixes visual and textual narratives (Gama 2020).

In the 1950s, Cláudia Andujar and Maureen Bisilliat, both photographers, settled in Brazil and produced extensive documentation on indigenous populations, under the encouragement of Darcy Ribeiro. From the 1970s onwards, anthropologist Sylvia Caiuby Novaes used photographic resources to portray the Bororo and anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, the indigenous people of the Xingu. After that moment, reflections on the use of images intensified in the Social Sciences in Brazil, with an increase in the visibility of women. In the 1980s, the profile of ethnographic productions changes and diversifies, also due to a cheapening of photographic production, intensifying its use, inside and outside of research (Gama 2020), marking the beginning of the “image era” (Brandão 2004), in which this, in addition to being repeated, can be trivialized.

According to Etienne Samain (2012), we are currently experiencing a cognitive and communicational turn in which images have a great role, a use value, and which are above all a phenomenon that participates in a thought process. Every image, in general, and photography, in particular, are phenomena that combine various inputs, such as the complex camera, time, space, light, shadow, the environment (Samain 2012), as well as the vision of the author (Foucault 1969), because in the creation process, each photograph has a personal choice (Brandão 2004).

Felizardo and Samain (2007) warn that this current “boom” of digital photographic production, which is often used without criteria, commitments or carelessness, can bring about the trivialization and commodification of photographic use, as a result of the intensification of technical reproducibility (Benjamin 1987a). But the authors also highlight positive aspects of digital photography, highlighting its greater ease and democratization.

[...] digital photography, today, has also brought revolutions: the immediate visualization of the photographed object - perhaps its most noble characteristic - the lower costs in the production of images, and a great ease in handling, editing and transmitting these images. In a few words, photography gains new support to become even more popular, more accessible and present in people’s lives. (Felizardo and Samain 2007, 208, our translation).

José de Souza Martins (2008) sees photography as an imaginary construction, a moment and act of knowledge of society and its most diverse aspects. According to the sociologist, the image demonstrates what is insufficient for the word as a matter for knowledge. This is in line with Sylvia Caiuby Novaes (2021), when she states that the images allow us to perceive the “between the lines”, the implied.

The anthropologist points to the need to use photographic images in ethnographic research, not only in interviews, so that the experience can be better expressed, but also as the capture of intersubjective elements that sometimes cannot be understood or demonstrated in written texts (Caiuby Novaes 2014).

In this sense, Brandão (2004) argues that the images must, together with the text, ethnography, because they always have something to say, to describe, to interpret, therefore, they must dialogue with the written text, and be seen as a moment of discoveries and exchanges around the image. “Photography is possibly the most iconic talk about what can be ethnographed and interpreted. [...] with photography it is intended to make visible something as, in some way and on some plane of reality, it is.” (Brandão 2004, 29, our translation).

Here, we use photographic production as a recording technique, taken during fieldwork, having above all a documentary character. For our photos, we always try to have the look of an attentive researcher, seeking to sensitize the look, following the guidelines of Caiuby Novaes (2021, 4):
You have to walk, as Tim Ingold loves so much, and watch. [...] we have to look at the whole and in detail, discover angles that we did not suspect, observe gestures and facial expressions, architectural details, pay attention to the minutiae that are part of specific ways of inhabiting and living the world. (Caiuby Novaes 2021, 4, our translation).

Attané and Langewiesche (2005, 136, our translation) demonstrate how, in their research on traditional ways of life, photography recorded data that would hardly be representable by writing, these data, “[...] go beyond the description of dwellings and their surroundings, beyond the description of the interlocutors’ attitudes or way of dressing.”. Fernando Soares and Júlio Suzuki (2009) also point out how photography can bring to light the details that say a lot about a community, its customs and practices. This is in line with Andréa Barbosa (2014), who states that images, in anthropology, have been used to understand different realities and social practices.

At first, as a new methodological possibility for recording fieldwork, the image gradually begins to insinuate itself as a language capable of contributing to better intercultural communication and provoking new questions that unfold in varied anthropological practices such as those of Ma-

linowski, Margaret Mead and Jean Rouch. (Barbosa 2014, 4, our translation).

Therefore, we will treat photographic production as a resource to complement writing in the production of data, in the restitution of the results and in the interpretation of these, allowing to record elements that are not clear in conversations or interviews and enabling the transformation of impressions into data, as demonstrated Attané and Langewiesche, (2005) and Brandão (2004).

[...] photography can be a research tool. It facilitates description and comparison. The images also allow the recording of a discourse on issues that are rarely stated during an interview. [...] the photograph can be transformed into an interpretive illustration to present the research results. (Attané and Langewiesche 2005, 135, our translation).

Other images, other photos, can be distributed in line with the descriptions of the text to, together with the words, ethnography. It is when photographs are not a pause in the text, but another speech that, like words, have something of their own to say, to describe, or even to interpret. (Brandão 2004, 28, our translation).


For good photos, as well as for good ethnography, it is necessary to denaturalize the look and at the same time to approach, because photographing implies a sensitivity in the look caused mainly by the strangeness, by the denaturalization of the look (Caiuby Novaes 2021).

As in all good research, in order to photograph it is necessary to be strange – or to denaturalize the look – and at the same time to get closer. Distance and proximity are, as we said, fundamental ingredients of good ethnography and equally of photography. Photography also implies a type of knowledge that does not go through words, but much more through the sensitivity of the look, through intuition, through the ability to be in the right place at the right time, through the sensitivity of placing the body (and the camera attached to it) in the correct distance. (Caiuby Novaes 2021, 6, our translation).

This follows the perspective of Roberto DaMatta (1985) in suggesting that ethnographic work should be a double exercise of transforming the exotic into the familiar and transforming the familiar into the exotic, through an estrangement and detachment, for a later approximation, because confronting the experiences personal and other, it becomes possible to present social enigmas in a unique way.

In this sense, the photodocumentation work was carried out during the entire time of the fieldwork, as we had the “lenses and eyes always attentive”. The photos were taken with simple and not very modern lenses⁷,

7. The cameras used were a 2020 LG k12+ phone, with 16 Megapixels, and a simple Nikon digital machine from 2017, with 16 Megapixels.



but we tried to capture relevant aspects of the landscape, but also small details, so we focused on an attentive observation and a sensitive look, often allowed through a strangeness, a relationship between proximity and distance.

The photographic series seeks to reproduce the practice of a people who are part of the material and immaterial reproduction of the traditional way of life. In this sense, we seek to make the visual record part of the production of research data, designed to address the research problem, as proposed by the anthropologist Eduardo Restrepo (2018)

Through photos, we are recording a memory, a practice, a living phenomenon, which is constantly changing. Samain (2012, 160, our translation) agrees with this perspective, stating that: “Photographs are memories, stories written in them, about them, from within them, with them. [...] are confidences, memories, archives.” In this way, photography can activate memory, tell about a past and allow it to be revived, it can be a document, a monument, an object that carries a living memory of its own.

We seek, through images, with the help of subtitles, to intimately associate uniqueness and durability, as Benjamin (1987b) put it. For the German philosopher, the caption has great importance regarding the use of photographic production, “[...] without which any photographic construction runs the risk of appearing vague and approximate.” (Benjamin 1987b, 107, our translation).

Therefore, the caption can help the viewer, because in relation to the viewer, the photograph “[...] fixes him in a frozen time of the world and invites him to enter the thickness of a memory. [...] in front of photography, we become analysts and archaeologists.” (Samain 2012, 159, our translation). This comparison, between the spectator and the archaeologist, takes us back to Benjamin (1987d), when he states that to understand the past it is necessary to excavate it, and remember it, to go under its layers, as archeology does, also to understand the present.

Whoever intends to approach his own buried past must act like a man who digs. First of all, he must not fear returning to the same fact several times, scattering it as the earth is scattered, turning it over as the soil is turned over. For ‘facts’ are nothing but layers that only the most careful exploration yields what rewards excavation. (Benjamin 1987d, 239, our translation).

We then tried, through the captions, to place the photos in time, shifting the gaze and connecting it to the knowledge and memory that we intend to evoke through the photos of a traditional practice, the net-pulling, which, due to the advances of capitalist productive activities and not

non-solidarity communities can reduce this type of practice in the not too distant future, which is already happening in the present.

As José de Souza Martins (2008, 45, our translation) attests, photography, as a narrative set of stories, “[...] is proposed as a memory of lacerations, ruptures, abysses and distances, [...]. Lost memory. [...]. Memory of what opposes modern society to traditional, memory of the community that does not last, that does not last.”

In this sense, the photos will serve us as archives and vestiges of a memory that portrays a traditional practice of a way of life, of the jangadeiros fishermen, which is constantly changing, reducing the volume of traditional activities to the detriment of modern activities, with trade and services.

NETWORK PULL: COOPERATION, COLLECTIVITY AND MUTUAL HELP IN IMAGES




The “net pull” was one of the fishing methods practiced by the recently freed slaves, whose found in the “xaréu” fishing a way to guarantee their food and survival (NUFOLK UFPEL 2014).

In the 18th and 19th centuries, a striking aspect in fishing societies refers to the slavery of Africans and Afro-descendants something very constant, for example, in whaling. These enslaved people could belong to masters who lived and worked in fishing societies, or to subjects who rented them out for maritime work (Silva 2020).

Historically, the pulling of a hammock, when practiced by Africans, Afro-Brazilians and recently freedmen, was accompanied by chants (mostly sad) that represented the difficulty of life for those who made their living from the sea. Along with the chants, they played atabaques and stamped their feet, so that they would not get discouraged and continue to pull the net (traband). At the end of the fishery, thanksgiving songs were sung, the fish was shared and a celebration was held (NUFOLK UFPEL 2014).

Emblematic images of the activity and the cultural meanings involved in it are portrayed in the classic film *Barravento* (Rocha 1962), in which the pulling of a net is the main source of fish in the community, performed under the sounds of drumming and by women, men and children. However, as the net (trams) is rented, most of the fish go to the foreman, outside the community. This gives rise to a revolt among the residents, who abandon the practice to go fishing on a raft, which “fishes less, it is more risky, but the fish is ours”, according to a character in the film (Rocha 1962). This cinematographic production demonstrates the cultural



meanings, ancestry and the importance of pulling the net, which is still present in much of the Brazilian coast.

Two great photographers who were in Brazil from the 1940s onwards also made rare photographic records of the pulling of the net⁸. They are Pierre Verger and Marcel Gautherot. This one even made rich records of the pulling of the net in Natal, an area close to the one analyzed in this study. Both carried out photographic documentation work for SPHAN, photographing traditional practices and peoples, paying attention to the social and cultural life of the Brazilian people (Gama 2020).

As demonstrated in *Barravento* (1962) and in the photographic productions of Verger and Gautherot, the pulling of a hammock is configured as a community activity, of cooperation and mutual help, which only occurs due to collective efforts, a fact that persists today.

In this way, we will present images and the characterization of the activity in the municipality of Maxaranguape through a photographic series, which proposes to demonstrate evidence of beings, landscapes, events and practices, that is, they keep a memory (Samain 2012) and attest to what is changing (Caiuby Novaes 1999). Pulling the net is a traditional knowledge (Diegues and Arruda 2001), a national cultural heritage (UNESCO 1989), which is at risk of disappearing due to modernization that leads to the abandonment of traditional practices.

The images here will refer us to a space and a time, which, even though it is present, is also past, because pulling a hammock is an ancestral practice, as we have already stated. The practice begins with the preparation of the material, made by the fishermen themselves who buy the nylon, the buoy and the lead and make the net manually, usually in a moment of rest and conversation with other fishermen, in front of the beach.

8. Some of these photographs are displayed further on, alongside ours, aiming to highlight the similarities in the way in which the net pulling was performed in the past and is in the present, almost a century later.



FIGURE 2
Fisherman
mending the net.
Photo: Dorival
B. Neto, Praia de
Caraúbas - RN, 5
of January of 2021,
09h43min.



FIGURE 3
The ranch: place
for weaving the
net. Photo: Dorival
B. Neto, Praia de
Caraúbas - RN, 5
of January of 2021,
09h36min.

The net pulling occurs in periods that have some favorable conditions, moon, weather and tides, allowing the activity to be carried out for a few consecutive days (approximately from 3 to 7). The casting of the net starts in the morning, around 5 am, when a group of fishermen (from 6 to 12) starts to gather in front of the beach to cast the trammel net, which contains 100 to 300 meters of length and is owned by one of the group's fishermen.



FIGURE 4
Dawn waiting for partners. Photo: Dorival B. Neto, Praia de Caraúbas - RN, 9 of January of 2021, 5h21min.

At this time, there is also the arrival of raft fishermen, who went out at dawn to fish. This occasion is a meeting, when the fishermen talk about the weather conditions to pull the net, talk about the fishing of the other days, and about varied subjects, still all a little quiet because they are waking up. There are days when fishermen combine and do not show up, making it impossible for others to cast the net and with the fishery giving up.

For the departure, there is a need to “lower” the raft to the sea, a hard process, which demands strength, being carried out through the sliding of the raft on wooden trunks, which occurs with the help of other fishermen. After that moment, the raft (called a packet), made of boards, without a motor and without a sail, sets out to sea, with two or three fishermen. Usually the packet belongs to one of the fishermen in the activity.



FIGURE 5
Fishermen
"lowering" the
raft. Photo: Dorival
B. Neto, Barra de
Maxaranguape
- RN, 13 of
January of 2021,
10h22min.



FIGURE 6
Fishermen. Photo: Marcel Gautherot, Natal, Brazil, 1955. Source: Collection of Instituto Moreira Sales.



FIGURE 7
The challenge of entering the tide.
Photo: Dorival
B. Neto, Praia de
Caraúbas - RN, 9
of January of 2021,
5h33min.

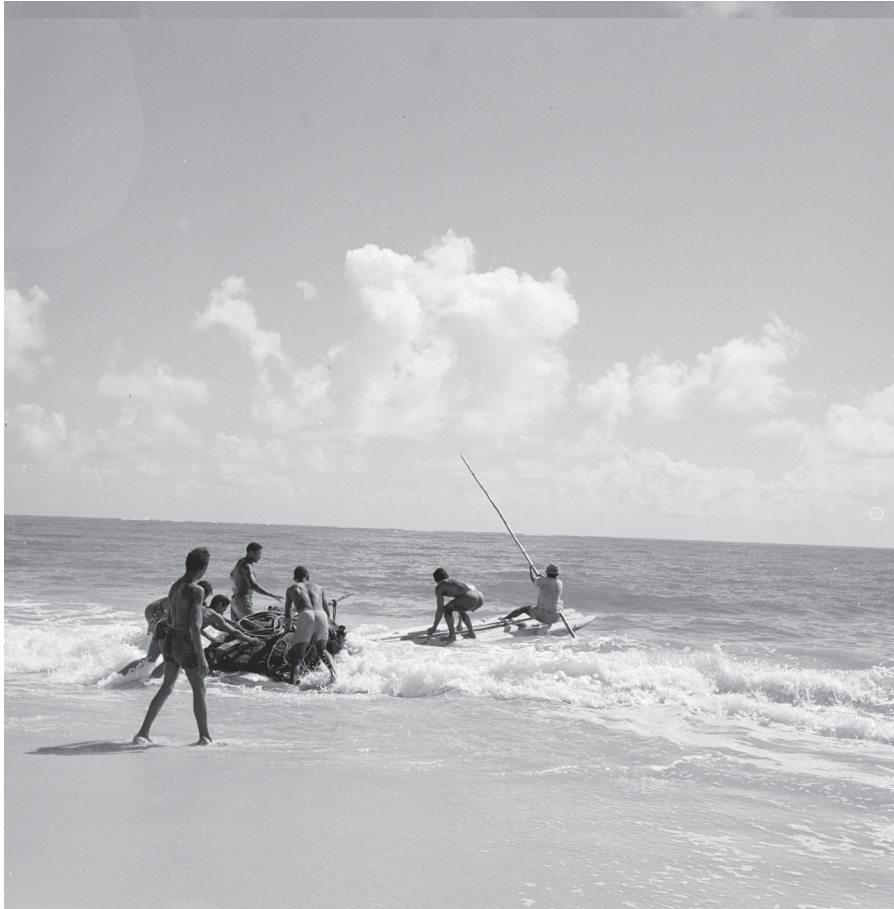


FIGURE 8
Fishermen pulling
a net. Photo:
Marcel Gautherot,
Natal, Brazil, 1955.
Source: Collection
of Instituto Moreira
Sales.



FIGURE 9
Jangadeiros casting
the net. Photo:
Dorival B. Neto,
Praia de Caraúbas -
RN, 9 of January of
2021, 5h34min.



FIGURE 10
Fisherman who stayed on the beach holds one end of the net.
Photo: Dorival B. Neto, Praia de Caraúbas - RN, 9 of January of 2021, 5h45min.

One end of the net is on the beach, held by the sharecropper (one of the fishermen who participates in the process). Then the vessel moves, with the aid of an oar, and the net is cast. This process depends on traditional fishing knowledge about the depth of the sea, the moment to cast the net and the location of the shoals. With this, the packet is maneuvered until the net makes a half circumference to envelop the shoal, with the net closed in a U-shape, trapping the fish. On the beach, a fisherman holds one end of the net, the other returns ashore minutes later, along with the raft, in order to ensure the U-shape, then, the siege is done and the net pull begins.



FIGURE 11
United pulling the net. Photo: Dorival B. Neto, Praia de Caráúbas - RN, 10 of January of 2021, 11h04min.



FIGURE 12
Fishermen. Photo:
Pierre Verger,
Itapuã, Salvador,
Brazil, 1947.
Source: Collection
of the Pierre
Verger Foundation.



FIGURE 13
Pulling the net in
Caraúbas, with the
"U" already closing.
Author: Dorival
B. Neto, Praia de
Caraúbas - RN, 9
of January of 2021,
6h14min.



FIGURE 14
Cooperation to pull the net. Photo: Dorival B. Neto, Praia de Peracabu - RN, 12 January de 2021, 6h29min.



FIGURE 15
Contemplative looks waiting for the start of collection. Photo: Dorival B. Neto, Praia de Caraúbas - RN, 10 of January of 2021, 11h08min.



FIGURE 16
Fish collection:
the most awaited
moment. Photo:
Dorival B. Neto,
Praia de Caraúbas
- RN, 11 of
January of 2021,
09h56min.



FIGURE 17
Distribution of
fish. Photo: Dorival
B. Neto, Praia de
Caraúbas - RN,
11 de January de
2021, 9h59min.



FIGURE 18
Fishermen. Photo:
Marcel Gautherot,
Natal, Brazil, 1955.
Source: Collection
of Instituto
Moreira Sales.

At the moment of the pull, several people are waiting on the beach, including women, children and tourists. Many people are approaching. A curious fact is that many local women arrive carrying buckets, where they will put the fish they will receive, even without having participated in the activity. Some people who approach even help to pull the net, an act that requires a lot of strength. As the pull comes to an end, there are already a much larger number of people than the initial one.

After pulling the entire net, it is “turned over” so that the fish fall to the ground. Once everything is removed from the mesh, the algae (previously used for food) and smaller fish are separated and removed. During this process, smaller fish, such as shrimp, can be caught by anyone who is there, in general, it is the children and women who are looking for these fish. In ancient times, according to oral reports, algae were also collected for food.

The types of fish caught depend on the time of year, but in general they are: swordfish, hake, catfish, mackerel, flying fish, coró, serra, tibirol, black needle. They are separated into boxes, according to size and value,

by those who organized the fishery. These give the fish to their acquaintances, friends, family, women and children. A curious fact is that the fish given as a gift are always thrown on the ground by the fisherman, so that the gifted person catches it on the ground. The women who carried the empty buckets filled them with the fish they won. After turning the net and collecting the fish, the practice is repeated two or even three times, depending on the amount of fish acquired.



FIGURE 19
Finishing the fishing. Photo: Dorival B. Neto, Praia de Caraúbas - RN, 11 of January of 2021, 07h54min.



FIGURE 20
Fishermen. Photo:
Marcel Gautherot,
Natal, Brazil, 1955.
Source: Collection
of Instituto Moreira
Sales.

After the turn, it is common for women to sit by the beach, talking and cleaning the fish that were won by those who organized and carried out the fishing. These moments are also configured as an exchange of experiences and knowledge.



FIGURA 21
Women treating
fish. Photo: Dorival
B. Neto, Praia de
Peracabu - RN, 21
of January of 2021,
09h14min.

I heard that in some places and times, after the pull, the fishermen go to a ranch and roast the fish around a fire, eating, drinking and telling stories about the sea, football and other stories. This moment is similar to the end of the task force, which takes place with a good celebration, reinforcing the bonds of belonging, solidarity and partnership, as shown by Antonio Candido (2010).

The photographs shown here have a meaning that manifests itself in any time and space. We believe that we are registering a time that is ending, because traditional productive practices, such as pulling the net, have decreased, due to their abandonment, not that we believe that the practice will end, but that photos can, and are serving as a record of this traditional and ancestral activity.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the photographs, used as an instrument in ethnographic research with traditional communities, we were able to identify that the way in which the pulling of the net is carried out is still similar to that of the ancient times, with collective work, cooperation for the realization of activity, solidarity and collectivity, of people who did not plan to go fishing but end up helping, with the division of fish, which includes women, children and friends, even those who did not participate in the activity.

Currently, what has changed in relation to the ancestral practice are some contents: the net belongs to the fishermen of the community, and there is no foreman as in the ancient times; the materials for the net and rafts are no longer produced in the community, but bought in the commerce; the activity is no longer done in corners, a fact that was possibly unique to the “Xaréu fishing”, as the net pulling in the region of Salvador (Bahia) was called.

We hope that the photos and the characterization of the pulling of the net in Maxaraguape - RN can, in the future, bring us closer to the past, through the record of memory. The idea with the photos was to try to capture the way of life of subjects who do not have visibility, that is, are not popularly recognized as important or famous, such as politicians, businessmen, etc., which is part of our perspective of writing history from below or brushing against the grain (Benjamin 1987c), conceiving it from the point of view of the vanquished as opposed to the history of progress, which concealed the trajectory of the oppressed and made invisible.

In this sense, photographic production is part of a perspective of telling the story from popular and traditional traditions and cultures, which for many years were made invisible by the hegemonic way of making and telling the history of places. They are photos of subjects with names, aspirations, struggles and a way of life. Portraits of a people and a historical practice.

We believe that the practice presented here is part of the Brazilian traditional and popular culture, in general, and of the potiguar jangadeiros, in particular, or according to Unesco (1989, 2, our translation) to a “[...] cultural community, founded on tradition, expressed by a group or individuals. ”. Therefore, the practice needs to be identified and registered as a National Heritage (UNESCO 1989).


An effort was made to establish a dialogue between the word and the image, to bring moments, memories and visual reports to the light of the reader-observer. When choosing the text and image correlation to present this traditional activity, we seek to disseminate aspects of this

ritual (currently a little absent in the academy), and public investments in safeguarding this cultural manifestation and artisanal fishermen. In this way, photography, when used as a research technique to obtain data, combined with the researcher's critical sense and subsequent analysis, result in broader and more complete understandings of traditional communities, their dilemmas and problems.

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