

UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:
DIALOGIC KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION THROUGH PARTICIPATORY
RESEARCH IN BAIXO JAGUARIBE, BRAZIL

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This paper focuses on the work of O Núcleo Tramas, an extension department of the Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC) in Brazil, to develop and carry out methods of participatory scientific investigation in Baixo Jaguaribe. By looking at this Brazilian case of a community-university partnership, and situating the model in a larger conversation about community involvement by universities, I will attempt to demonstrate where university-community partnerships might fit into Western and Latin American theories of knowledge production. I also aim to articulate some of the benefits as well as challenges and risks of participatory research, for both academics and community members.

First, through the case study, I will investigate whether or not the research or the local social movements in Baixo Jaguaribe were strengthened through the process of collaboration. Then, expanding the case review to include theories of knowledge production, I will explore the concepts of *Educação Popular* and *conscientização*, introduced to the world by Paulo Freire, and how they have influenced ideas of citizenship in Brazil, as well as the relationship between the academic world and the community. Then using those two points of reference, university-community collaboration and theories of knowledge production, I will examine where this case fits within larger arguments about the shifting role of the university in a postmodern world and increasingly globalized national economies. Ultimately, by highlighting any methods of participatory research and joint knowledge production that embrace the overt political implications of intentional community inclusion in problem-focused

scientific investigation, I aim to better understand how such collaboration fits within the paradigm of the (post)modern university.

The Case of O Núcleo Tramas UFC

O Núcleo Tramas is an acronym for “Work, Environment and Health for Sustainability Core”, an extension (or outreach) office of the Department of Community Health in the Faculty of Medicine at UFC. It works in conjunction with several other academic departments at UFC and other Universities, with different public institutions, organizations and social movements to offer teaching, research and outreach activities to the local community (O Núcleo Tramas, 2010). Because in the Brazilian context, an extension office of a university operates to perform such explicit activities, I will use the terms extension and community-university partnership interchangeably within this paper. Core members of Tramas UFC are professors, undergraduate graduate students, and professionals from various fields.

According to Dr. Raquel Rigotto, the principle investigator of the project reviewed for this paper and a member of Tramas UFC, a team initiated this research project after the number of admissions for pesticide poisoning in the state of Ceará doubled between 2004 and 2005, as reported by the State Reference Center for Occupational Health of Ceará (CEREST). All of the communities in which the rising cases were detected were involved in the development of large-scale agribusiness projects directed by companies producing fruit for export. The rise in cases caused concern both among social movements and the scientific community, and in response a

demonstration of about 500 women from Via Campesina, aiming to "denounce the use of pesticides and their impact on health, water and biodiversity" (Rigotto, 2011, pg. 2) blocked the road to one of the large farms in March 2007. This ignited the research project led by Dr. Rigotto for which members of academia, health services and social movements agreed to cooperate, with a focus on the Lower Jaguaribe where rates were some of the highest.

The research was organized into four methodological tracks:

a) socio-historical context

b) evaluation of environmental contamination

c) measures of human exposure and health problems relatable to pesticides

d) resistance and alternatives to development, including policy formation for the health of the population and the environment.

My particular interests lie with items a and d. First, the research team made a particular commitment to examine how the socio-economic context of exposure to pesticides was different in different social segments, effecting both the acquisition of disease and also health treatment strategies. The team also looked at how different groups were effected according to their relationship *to* the big businesses, i.e. small farmers versus market-driven national producers, or communities producing for subsistence versus producing for a regional market (2011, p.9). Regarding resistance, Rigotto states that "soon we realized that in the current rural world, approaches to the problems of environmental health and the worker cannot be reduced to the issue of pesticides, not only because there are other risk factors, but because there is a risk

context, produced in the process of de-territorialization induced by agricultural modernization” (2011, p. 19). The team of investigators learned that the workers directly involved in production were not the only ones affected, but that their families and the surrounding communities were also vulnerable to both pesticide exposure *and* retaliation against resistance.

The interdisciplinary research team was united by their shared views and their “outrage at injustice, inequality and the destruction of nature” (2011, p. 3) and shared a conviction that the state of the world was historically produced by human society through a balance of power that, through recognition and challenging, could be changed. “How we live our intervention in academic space - well beyond the discourse of neutrality - is the relationship between universities and social movements, a dialogue that does not fit into the notion classical ‘extension’” (2011, p. 4). Rigotto and colleagues were making both an academic and overtly *political* choice to structure their research inquiries *and* methods in counter-hegemonic fashion by making the well being of vulnerable communities the ultimate goal of the project.

Beyond the scientific research team, social actors in the region included professors from the Faculty of Philosophy at Don Aureliano Matos University (FAFIDAM), labor unions, local NGOs such as the Institute of Education and Policy in Defense of Citizenship (IEPDC), and professionals of the national healthcare system SUS. All of these participants contributed through meetings, workshops, seminars, consultations, and evaluations. Another fundamental piece of support came from the federal, state and local governments to ensure citizen rights, though Rigotto highlights

that the distance between public policies and the needs of populations can also create huge barriers. The inclusion of other actors outside of the academic sphere highlights the intentions of the research team to define the investigation in the most realistic and accurate socio-historic terms, and represents the truly interdisciplinary nature of this project.

Due to the involvement of so many participants and perspectives, however, ethical issues “cropped up and multiplied” (2011, p.6). Rigotto describes the increasing difficulty of limiting the study with epidemiological boundaries. “How can an ‘n’ be determined, sampled and investigated? ‘N’ what?” While many people *were* being exposed to pesticides, there were many other political, economic and social factors at play. A rising understanding of these complex issues, confounded by the involvement of so many interests and actors, shaped the process of research beyond the measure of pesticides in the environment. The study itself became a “process of unveiling the characteristics of the mode of production and consumption, emphasizing inequality of the development model in the distribution of benefits and damages, leading towards an overarching concept of Environmental Injustice” (Rigotto, 2011, p.7).

What was learned throughout the scientific investigation went far beyond the measure of pesticides initially targeted as “the problem”. Through trial and error, Tramas UFC experienced a project of participatory science. Through the use of critical theories to contextualize real life problems, by opening up the construction of methodology in a dialogue with the empirical field and its actors, using substantial cross- and inter-disciplinary analysis, and producing summaries of findings that were

accessible to many, Tramas UFC demonstrated a model of academic commitment to the community to secure a voice for the most vulnerable and “to systematize the knowledge produced in order to foster ownership by the very individuals involved in the problem” (2011, p. 29).

Dialogic Knowledge Production as Explained by Tramas UFC

O Núcleo Tramas UFC framed this extension project as an opportunity to develop and carry out methods of participatory scientific investigation in order to “promote an ecology of knowledge” (Rigotto, 2011, p. 5). The book, *Agrotóxicos, trabalho e saúde: vulnerabilidade e resistência no contexto da modernização agrícola no Baixo Jaguaribe/CE*, produced to chronicle the project, contains reflections on the ethical-political commitment made by UFC to design and conduct research *with* local populations who were threatened by the expansion of international agribusiness. Local political-social organizations in Baixo Jaguaribe were initially approached by actors of Tramas UFC about participating in the research in order to secure a voice for the populations most vulnerable to the agrochemical degradation of the local environment. Looking at the use of the literary term dialogicity by Tramas UFC to explain the co-research conducted by the university and the community, we see how this self-proclaimed project of “emancipatory science” could fall under a larger umbrella of popular education movements.

The text describes the project in academic terms as a project of *dialogic knowledge production*, defined further using educational theories of *conscientização*, or education for

critical consciousness. Dialogic knowledge production is an application of Mikhail Bakhtin's (1975) linguistic theory, which asserts that all language is a part of one continuous dialogue and cannot be viewed separate from context, to the realm of information creation. *Dialogicity* is a linguistic philosophy insisting that the *self* and the *other* can only exist in relation to one another. The same way literature is dialogic in nature, Bakhtin extends the metaphor to consciousness: "...important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship towards another consciousness" (p.287). Rigotto also explains the project in terms of Bakhtin's *heteroglossia*, or a double-voiced discourse that carries a dialogue between two perspectives. "The oppositions between individuals" or groups that surface through heteroglossia, *the contradictions*, are actually "what saturate their consciousness and discourses" (Bakhtin, 1975, p.324).

Conscientização was introduced by Paulo Freire (1973) as a necessary precursor to action in efforts to overcome oppressive conditions. In response to the unequal distribution of land, resources, media power, and even sustainability practices, Brazilians have applied Freire's concept of *conscientização* to fight poverty and oppression through self- and community-education. Freire presented education as a necessary component to the process of *conscientization*, or of critically reflecting on one's own experience in order to move from being an *object* of a situation to a *subject* and active agent. The legacy of Paulo Freire has helped to shape a culture in Brazil where *educação popular* or popular education, a strategy of participation for social redirection, uses **community knowledge** as the starting point for intellectual dialogue and is often synonymous with community organizing and community-led social justice movements.

The particular university-community partnership fostered in Baixo Jaguaribe by Tramas UFC embraces the tenets of popular education through a participatory research model and intentional dialogic knowledge production, thus seeking solutions “with the people and never for them or imposed upon them” (Freire, 1975, p.13). *Critical consciousness* is one avenue for people to confront oppression and unify in a new, more participatory manner.

In the case of Tramas, the text mentioned above was not the only version of the story, though it may have been the “official” version of the story in contexts of academia or funding. The text includes findings of the research conducted jointly with the community, a dissertation, several masters theses, and many artistic expressions from the community. This project of UFC also represents itself in the text examined using terms such as *Conhecimento Participativo* (participatory and collective knowledge-building) and *Ciência Emancipatória* (scientific investigation for social and political justice.) These terms are based in critical theory, and while they describe intellectual and academic methods that aim to promote truth with and for the people, they are also described in high-register language that may not resonate with the community members themselves.

In addition, the mode of information sharing, often through e-mail (how the texts were shared with me by the author) or through electronic presentations that require electricity, a computer, and possibly internet access, not to mention skills in the use of such tools, may represent a one-sided version of the story or limited access by the community members who participated in the research. So how, exactly, did the project

of Tramas UFC contribute to a dialogic process of knowledge production? First it is important to clarify the meanings of participatory research and emancipatory science, and then see how those concepts were applied by UFC with the goal of creating dialogic knowledge.

Kevin Gormley (2001) articulates participatory research (PR) as a method that involves the community through a dialectic process improving both popular and academic knowledge (p.41). According to Gormley, PR mobilizes human resources to solve social problems, liberating human creative potential. He does point out that words like “liberate” and “mobilize” have overt ideological implications and that PR is a politically charged methodology, even encouraging the research team to identify “allies and opponents”. That said, with a goal of “equalizing the uneven distribution of social and financial capital, [and] empowering oppressed groups with skills and abilities to exercise greater self-determination” it is clear why researchers who have an interest in social justice might prefer such a method.

While Michael Gibbons (2011) argues that context-driven, problem-focused scientific research is changing the production of knowledge within traditional disciplines, his critics contend that such methods are increasingly guided by political agendas rather than the collection of empirical data. There is some evidence of this in the case of Tramas UFC’s work – the research team’s stated motivation is to confront injustice and inequality. At the same time, however, Tramas emphasizes that the collection of empirical data is also important, and just because the scientific data collecting is done using participatory methods does not make the data collected less

valuable. In fact, proponents of PR might argue that it makes the data collection more sound.

While there are inherent political implications for all scientific investigations, in terms of funding, data collection and the *application* of knowledge, what is not being acknowledged in the debate outlined by Gibbons is that there are political agendas guiding all research design as well, whether they are individual or institutional, motivated by theories of liberation or theories of capitalism. Funding for *all* universities plays a huge role in formulating research agendas, which in turn effects both knowledge production and policy formation. And what are not being examined in the (U.S.) academic debate that Gibbons is taking part in are cases of intentional inclusion of non-scientists and non-scholars through participatory scientific methods. Is it possible that research teams with explicit political agendas for social justice can still collect sound empirical data? Are the two motivations mutually exclusive? Much more research would need to be done to answer such questions, but they provide an interesting framework within which we can examine the particular case of UFC Tramas.

This brings us back to the point about actual knowledge production – for what means and what ends? The materials produced by UFC represent one perspective on the relationship between the academic world and the community, and also mark an interesting point in the dialogue between academia and community when the jointly produced knowledge diverged into various forms of expression. Any process of true dialogic knowledge production can be expected to contain divergence of expression. Tramas UFC *does* attempt to promote and represent community forms of expression that

did not necessarily have to be included in the academic dialogue or realm, making a strong attempt to avoid the appropriation of the jointly produced knowledge.

The community members, however, who have taken it upon themselves to educate other communities where the agribusinesses attempt to expand, are now utilizing the music, poetry and educational games they produced through the community sessions as education and organizing tools. While these materials are represented in the book, the actual performance of materials cannot be captured in printed or electronic format the same way they would be experienced within the community trainings. Through collaborative workshops, meetings and public hearings, both the research and the social movements surrounding these environmental issues were jointly strengthened.

So while in some expressions the presentation of new knowledge might have become less accessible to the community members due to language and technology, Tramas succeeded in continuing the dialogic process of knowledge production by including materials in the larger text that encapsulated wider perspectives and forms of expression. Likewise, the community members continue to produce and perpetuate their own interpretations of the research, fueling their social movements and political actions. Through the joint production of accessible materials, the research results were presented in accessible language to perpetuate dialogue and therefore allow for an innovative approach for *community*-initiated action and resistance. In this way, both the production of knowledge and the continued representations of the knowledge remain varied and dialogic, whether or not they may be described in such academic terms by all

participating members of the project.

In the context of extension agents and offices, Paulo Freire makes a particular warning against the “anti-dialogical theory of action” (1975, p.103), **cultural invasion**, in which the acting agents think *about* the invaded and never *with* them. Through maintaining true and constant dialogue, the aim is that extension agents will actually have their own specialized knowledge and methods transformed by the people with whom they are working. In the terms of Paulo Freire, I would argue that Tramas UFC was not only conducting a project of dialogic knowledge production, but also a project of popular education. To situate the use of such language within a larger academic context of university-community partnerships, I will look at the history of the university in Brazil and also draw from the U.S. perspective on the dialogues surrounding different university-community models.

University-Community Partnership Models

In my personal experience working in the university context, as well as the mostly U.S.-centered research I have conducted on university-community partnerships, I have found that there are generally three main goals to university collaboration with the community: student experience for professional gain, the encouragement of social justice and citizenship, and the production of knowledge. Each of these three factors is usually apparent, though to different extents depending on the particular partnership or project. And each of these goals is given different weight depending on a) the individual leadership for the projects and/or the objectives of the individuals initiating the work b)

the mission of the university or outreach program, ie the frame within which the project is operating, and c) the limits or supports to such projects as determined by economic and political systems, related to societal goals of higher education and citizenship. In order to give my ideas some context, I will situate this argument in some background on higher education in Brazil.

According to Mendes & Carvalho (2010) the Brazilian university has not always been a site of dialogic knowledge production. In fact, in the early 20th century, as the national Brazilian agenda embraced both urbanization and industrialization, universities were formed as centers to prepare certain members of society to lead these processes of modernization. For example, in official university documents, the University of São Paulo (USP) presented itself as “dedicated to training the [liberal Paulista] elite and to the selection of the most capable” and the current historical consensus is that the USP was “an idealized, discussed and politically constructed project” (p. 84) designed with such intentions. In addition, any considerations for extension programs in the first half of the century focused on an imperative to bring knowledge and culture to the poor, who were otherwise assumed to be lacking in both.

Not until 1961, when the first National Seminar on University Reform took place in Salvador, Bahia, were expressions made beyond concern about the "liberation of the people" to wider concepts of non-academics contributing to academic thought by providing some tangible knowledge of the national reality. The student movement during this period called for the democratization of the University, pushing for a political-ideological focus of the reforms beyond concepts of welfare for the poor and

uneducated. Embora Melo Neto (2001) notes that the official *Carta de Bahia* produced during the seminar marked a formal recognition of “the authority of university knowledge and its paternalism in relation to communities of both the city and the countryside... intending to impose a university *sapientia* to be absorbed by the people” Melo Neto points out that the involvement of the students in this movement is what actually led to a novel series of outreach programs and truly dialogical, knowledge-generating activities (p. 85).

The 1988 Constitution, established under the “New Republic” of President Jose Sarney, included higher education as a right guaranteed by the state, and also defined higher education as the combination of teaching, research and extension (or outreach). In Article 43, higher education is further described as fostering the knowledge of world problems through a reciprocal relationship with the community, and the promotions of participation by the population (through extension) serves “to disseminate the achievements and benefits of cultural creation, and scientific and technological research generated in the institution” (Mendes & Carvalho, 2010, p.88-89). Given all of this background information, it becomes clearer why politically overt community involvement might be more acceptable in the realm of the Brazilian university than in other nation-states.

Coming in closer from the societal perspective of higher education, we can also focus on institutional goals for university-community partnerships. Models for community involvement are almost as varied as the projects themselves. We see extension offices, often arms of agricultural research institutions, schools of continuing

education for adults or non-traditional learners, and models of participatory research, which are very common in the medical field. More particular to the U.S. are service-learning opportunities and experiential law clinics in which students practice by servicing community members. To gain some perspective on the wide range of operations and motivations for such university-community partnerships, one quick approach is to examine the mission statements of the programs themselves, and to detect any possible implications for the intended results of the endeavors. For example, is the most important goal of any given partnership the practical experience that a student will gain? Is the goal to protect, educate or defend community members? Are there larger political goals, for example, to effect policy change? Is the exercise merely to create a partnership, hence allowing that connection between the university and the community to be the most important part of the program? As stated previously, the goals of the collaboration depend heavily on institutional and programmatic missions, and vary wildly.

Looking at broader literature in the university-community partnership debate, we encounter support for the argument that civic engagement by institutions of higher education, especially knowledge generating research universities, can contribute to more open and democratic production of culture. Boyte describes how universities have “enormous influence over communications, technologies, and the creation and dissemination of knowledge” (2004, p. 154). He explains how knowledge is often closely guarded and knowledge production often semi-secretive, and yet points out that “the more it is shared...the more effective and power-generating it becomes.” Essentially,

Boyte makes a call to universities, as the holders and creators of knowledge, to take responsibility for the democratic well being of our societies. He asks: if higher education is not grounded in civic change, how can universities effect any change in overall society?

Often the role of particular individuals within universities, who may have a strong personal interest in social justice, can change and influence not only the academic and research agenda of a particular university-community program, and also infuse these programs with a strong political element as well, as in the case of Dr. Rigotto's project. The resistance by universities to taking on a particular political stance might have much to do with the economic system that individual universities are encased in. But what is also becoming clear through this research is that regardless of the original intentions of the projects, investigators and leaders within universities that choose to foster programs of community involvement or community-based research must be poised to support students and the community when the unpredictable results of research challenge other hegemonic interests, particularly those of big business.

This was true in the case of Tramas UFC, where the research butted heads directly with international business. As a point of comparison, I will share the story of the students of Tulane Law school and the community members of St. James Parish in their battle against Shintech Inc., the largest producer of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) in the United States (Shintech, 2006). While this is not a case of scientific investigation, I find it pertinent because it can be contextualized on a very local level, and similar to the case of Tramas UFC, involves a joining of academic and community forces to fight big business

in the realm of environmental justice. In 1996, when Shintech proposed the construction of a PVC plant in Convent, Louisiana, the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic (the Clinic) represented St. James Citizens for Jobs and the Environment, a local community group who sought to challenge the development. While the Law Clinic succeeded in this particular case, the business community fought back with a vengeance eventually leading to the passage of Louisiana Supreme Court Rule XX, which put new restrictions on law students.

Rule XX states that “Law school clinical program staff and student practitioners who appear in a representative capacity pursuant to this rule may represent any individual or family unit whose annual income does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services,” and that they may represent only “any indigent community organization provided at least 51% of the organization's members are eligible for legal assistance “ according to the same rule. Any community organization that seeks representation from a student law clinic must certify in writing their inability to pay for legal services and the claim is subject to interpretation by the Supreme Court. While Tulane Law School’s mission states that the clinic “strives to create opportunities that enhance our students’ practical skillsets in order to better prepare them for their jobs following law school” (Tulane, 2013), these opportunities are now severely limited by the local government and big business interests. The intentions of the Law Clinic are now stated with limitations: “The Louisiana Supreme Court and federal courts in Louisiana authorize third-year law students to conduct *a limited law practice for indigent clients.*” While the social justice

motivation and university support were similar in both cases, ultimately in the U.S.-based case big business won over the community, while in Brazil the big businesses were pushed out all together after the community made its demands.

What can be seen in these two cases of university-community partnerships in the two countries is that while individual universities or academic programs may take it upon themselves to educate students for full participation in civic society, government ties to big business in the U.S. can ultimately stifle the process. I argue that this fundamental difference in the perception and role of education, and its importance over the capitalistic interests of big business in Brazil can be traced back to the influence of Critical Pedagogy on Brazilian society. I reason that the effect of Paulo Freire's thinking on higher education blurs the lines between education and organizing so that concepts of *conscientização* or participatory research are more widely accepted and supported at both the institutional and state levels.

Maybe it is an obvious statement that big business and capitalism can often take the front seat in the U.S. in terms of politics and boundaries around the university, but what does that mean for the production of knowledge? Do Brazilian academics have more freedom in what they can research and publish? Are more voices incorporated into academic dialogues in Brazil because "subaltern" perspectives and forms of expression are allowed to permeate intellectual discourse? And most importantly, does this kind of dialogic knowledge production lead to a more democratic society if more people are ultimately involved in both the definition of "problems" as well as the solutions enacted through research and policy implementation?

There *is* a huge private higher education sector in Brazil that is growing exponentially to meet demands by the populace for more educational opportunities. This is in some ways creating a system that is positioned opposite to the U.S. system – in the U.S. state-funded schools are more closely tied to state governments and therefore more influenced by local political agendas, and private institutions have more academic freedom. In Brazil the private universities are more business-oriented and expensive, catering to an upper class that can pay for education to enter fields like business and economics. While these topics could be explored further, the most important point here is that the university's place in the community and in the formation of democratic societies is viewed differently in both countries, and directly shaped by the perspective of each government on what education and democracy mean.

We see these underlying differences about the place of universities and ideas of citizenship in Brazil versus the U.S. as stated directly by the Departments and Ministries of Education. O Ministério da Educação en Brazil has the motto of “Para a educação melhorar, todos devem participar” or “To improve education, everyone must participate” (MEC Brasil, 2013). In the Unites States, the Department of Education's mission is to “promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” (U.S. ED, 2013). What can these differences illustrate in our understanding about the goals of education in the two countries? How is full participation different from equal access (for global competitiveness)?

We could also return to the understanding of education as a universal right, as outlined in both constitutions. While all U.S. citizens are guaranteed a quality education through grade 12, the Brazilian constitution of 1988 guarantees an education “with the objective of fully developing the person, preparing the individual for the exercise of citizenship” (Mendes & Carvalho, 2010, p.44). What we see here is a fundamental difference in the meaning of education in the two countries. In the U.S., education is defined by the national government as a means to the end of *productive* citizens in terms of their economic contributions to society. In Brazil, citizenship is defined rather in terms of fulfillment of a personal potential and full participation in civil society.

This all leaves us asking important questions about the role of the university in modern society: Even if a particular university makes it a part of their mission to foster a democratic society through civic participation, will the constraints of big business interests or national educational agendas ultimately make the kind of participatory research and dialogic knowledge production happening in the case of UFC Tramas the exception rather than the rule? And is the understanding of education for full participation as a guaranteed right, as we see it in Brazil, an important step towards a more open and democratic society?

(Un)Intentional Action as a Product of Dialogic Knowledge Production

A community member wrote the following poem after the assassination of José Maria Child, a community leader in the city of Tomé who was an active agent in the fight against environmental contamination by pesticides:

Projetos de Pesquisa...	Research Projects ...
Pesquisa para quem?	Research for whom?
Pesquisa para vida.	Research for life.
Pesquisa de quem vem?	Who does research come from?
Pesquisa de quem fica.	Research stays with them.
Que vida gera?	That life creates?
Que gera vida?	That creates life?
Que morte era?	That was death?
Que morte fica?	That remains dead?
Mensagem de quem luta...	Message to those who fight ...
Que a luta é a mensagem!	The struggle is the message!
Que a dor é a passagem.	That pain is the passage.
Legado	The legacy
Roubado	Stolen
Assassinado	Murdered
Calado	Silenced
Pesquisado...	Researched ...
...é a cova que te cabe nesse latifúndio envenenado!	... is the grave on this poisoned land that holds you!
...é luta que nos deixa,	... is the fight that you leave us
com seu sangue derramado!	with your shed blood!
É o "Deus" desenvolvimento...	Is the "God" development ...
Universal ?!	Universal?!
Inquestionável ?! Onipresente ?!	Unquestionable?! Omnipresent?!
É o Capital Inabalável Onisciente	Omniscient Capital is Unshakeable
É o Animal Indisfarçável	The Animal is Unmistakable

Coming back to the particular case examined in this paper, the emancipatory science conducted by Tramas UFC, there are several points left to be examined. First, what is the role of the researcher or academic when working closely with the community? In this case, agents of the large agricultural corporations directly targeted community members. Though the target was the community rather than the university in this case, we see that Brazilians are not necessarily free from the wrath of big business either. While the retaliation may have taken a different form than it might have in the U.S., there was still a reaction by hegemonic powers. And because the community instead of the university was targeted, this actually complicates the questions of ethics for participatory research.

What is the role of the researcher in further political dialogue that takes place outside of the academic world? In this case, once new knowledge was produced about the way that pesticides and big business interests were affecting the health and economy of the local community, community-members took said knowledge to educate other community members and to encourage increased political activism. That divergent point, highlighted before, in the process of dialogic knowledge production where the voice of the “subaltern” is elevated or even “freed”, and can no longer be contained within the academic context, also marks a point when responsibility for ensuing political action becomes blurred. While the Tramas UFC research team did state an outrage for social injustice and inequality as a motivation for their work, they may not have been able to predict the extent of resulting actions. This of course raises an important question about the ethics of participatory research and dialogic knowledge production, and the role of the university in defending or protecting community choices and actions that result from the new knowledge gained by all.

What has become clearer through the investigation, however, is that whether political commitments are made by universities to the local community, to businesses or to governments, research methods and approaches are shaped accordingly and aim to contribute to the production of some new knowledge. While participatory research methods may sometimes be utilized to further personal political agendas, it must be acknowledged that all research furthers some political agenda. The difference in participatory research is that the university takes a particular stance to include as many perspectives and voices as possible. Such research can be personally rewarding for those

involved, and may improve social results or political access for a particular “subaltern” group, but does not come without risks to both the community and the university.

Conclusion

The model of “emancipatory science” that Tramas UFC presents addresses a problem of political disenfranchisement of a vulnerable population in the face of big business. Lacking political agency, access to knowledge production or dissemination, and even a full understanding of the problem itself (which one could argue all of the actors lacked until they worked together to unearth the root causes of the problem), the case of Tramas UFC illustrates not only the risks and advantages to focusing research on current and local issues, but also shows the elements of a context in which an academic community might be *allowed* to undertake such work. Through a broader comparison of the realities in which U.S. and Brazilian universities exist and operate, it becomes clearer that there may be much more limited opportunity for the application of participatory research through university-community partnerships in the U.S. While the production of knowledge in the U.S. context is often directly guided by the interests of big business, through government policies effecting the role of the university, Brazilian universities may have more opportunity to incorporate a plurality of voices in the research process due to the incorporation of universal education goals in the Brazilian constitution. We do see, however, that Brazilian universities and communities are not free from the influence of business interests. Ultimately this case should lead us to question the role of education in the formation of a democratic society. As Boyt would ask, if universities are

not allowed to directly promote change through civil society, even if such work is politically charged and risky, who will?

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