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Social and cultural anthropology

Higher level

Paper 1

10 May 2024

Zone A afternoon | Zone B afternoon | Zone C afternoon

2 hours

Instructions to candidates

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Section A: read the passage and answer questions 1 and 2. Choose either question 3 or 4. Answer question 5.
- Section B: answer the question.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[40 marks]**.

Section A

Read the passage.

Passage adapted from Lemos, C.B. and Cardoso, M., 2021. Discursive exclusion and disrespect in prisons in Brazil. *Vibrant: Virtual Brazilian Anthropology*, 18.

Over thirty years since Brazil’s re-democratization process began, civil components of citizenship are still systematically violated by institutional practices that conflict with the fundamental principles of the rule of law.

5 In the prison system, rights violations are particularly grave and marked by systematic torture and mistreatment, provoking feelings of humiliation and injustice among the social groups who are the main victims of these acts – black and/or poor communities.

Racist and classist biases of criminal profiling in Brazilian society target groups that suffer most from structural processes of cultural exclusion. 83.5% of people in prison are black or brown; 52% did not reach high school and only 9.1% had finished high school.

10 Field research was conducted between 2014 and 2018, with men and women completing prison sentences. We conducted 29 in-depth, unstructured interviews, encouraging the incarcerated people to narrate their own stories. All interviews were conducted in private. We made observations during field trips and held informal conversations with prison employees and incarcerated people, always maintaining anonymity.

15 In the context of structural violence and rights violation in prisons, we focus on processes of “discursive exclusion”. The prison’s institutional processes prevented incarcerated people from communicating perceptions of social injustice by restricting their access to the material, symbolic and linguistic means necessary to do so. Three processes prevent incarcerated people from being heard: denying access to the material and symbolic means to voice their complaints, dismissing
20 what they say, and retaliating when they do find legitimate means to complain.

Luis felt frustrated with a lack of access to education and information within the prison system. He explained:

25 *“You don’t get letters and letters don’t go out. You don’t have access to newspapers or magazines. When I took my college entrance exam, I asked my mother to bring me a book to study, which she paid a lot for, but they wouldn’t let it in.”*

When sending and receiving letters was permitted in the prisons, they were censored by the institution. Our interlocutors affirmed that this control over the content of letters was used to prevent them from denouncing torture or other rights violations.

30 Interlocutors considered prison visits sacred. As well as the emotional aspect of maintaining social ties, they fulfill other important material functions in their lives, such as providing food, toiletries, and other items. Prisons had a list of things, which were carefully inspected, that incarcerated people could receive. The least-tolerated items were law books, manuals, and reference books. This interfered with their opportunity to articulate their experiences of injustice in a language considered valid in the legal context and to seek legal means to denounce violations. Luis told us:

35 *“From the moment that prisoners begin to understand their rights, this makes it difficult for prisons. I think that for them the less the inmate is informed, the better. The state does not imprison us in order to produce well-informed citizens.”*

Another form of discursive exclusion of inmates is the retaliation against them by prison guards who impose punishments when incarcerated people manage to make their demands public.

- 40 Cleonice said that during a visit of human rights representatives, she shouted that prison food was being served spoiled, but she added:

“As soon as the human rights representatives left, I was sent to isolation. For this reason, I never said anything again.”

- 45 The rigid control of incarcerated people’s discourse is an important mechanism for the perpetuation of oppression and systematic violation of rights. Luis emphasized this, saying:

“Because prisoners have no voice, you understand? Who will they shout out to in there? To four walls? They do not have access to a judge or to a prosecutor; they often don’t even have access to a lawyer. So, they have no one to turn to in order to seek their rights.”

- 50 Experiences of violence are always marked by an arbitrary imposition or a forced suppression of symbolic or material resources, which are associated with the denial of the victim’s dignity. Discursive exclusion illustrates the structural difficulty that the Brazilian state and public institutions have in hearing citizens.

Answer question 1 **and** question 2.

1. Define the term **personhood** and describe how it can be understood and applied in the context of the passage. [4]
2. Analyse the ethnographic data presented in the passage using the concept of **power**. [6]

Answer **either** question 3 **or** question 4.

3. Compare and contrast the ways in which the key concept of **materiality** or **society** is evident in this passage with how it is evident in **one** other ethnographic example you have studied. Make reference to theory in your answer. [10]

OR

4. Compare and contrast the approaches to research adopted by the anthropologist in this passage to the approaches to research used by **one** other anthropologist you have studied. Make reference to concepts, ethnographic material and theory in your answer. [10]

Answer question 5.

5. Why does anthropology matter? Discuss with reference to **at least two** sources of ethnographic material and examples from the passage. [10]

Section B

Answer question 6.

6. With reference to **either** stimulus A **or** stimulus B **and** your own knowledge, discuss the defining features of anthropological ethics.

[10]

Stimulus A

I had been observing Maliseet language instruction at the elementary school in a Tobique First Nation reservation in Canada for a couple of weeks. One day the routine changed. As I walked into the room, I had the feeling that the Maliseet language teacher and her assistant had been talking about me. When I entered, their conversation abruptly ended. As they watched me
5 cross the room, they both had a hint of a malicious smile. I immediately thought, “Uh-oh. I’m in trouble.” The teacher spoke first, pointing to a chair and commanded, “Sit there.” I did. The teacher continued, “We want to know ‘the real reason’ why you’re here.” I started to explain that I was there to learn and help in any capacity I could, but they did not wait for me to finish. Both of them began to sing.

10 *Here come the Anthros*, better hide your dead away.*

Here come the Anthros, on another holiday.

As they finished singing, they laughed loudly. The kind of laugh that makes a person feel small. The teacher, still laughing, turned her attention to the class schedule. Nothing more was said. I went to sit in my usual spot out of the teacher’s way. I had just been told that I was an intruder,
15 and I was not welcome despite being Maliseet from the Tobique First Nation myself.

* Anthros: anthropologists

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Stimulus B

During her fieldwork, an anthropologist marches with armed, anti-government guerrilla groups in India. Photo taken by the anthropologist.



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Photo by Alpa Shah from her book *Nightmarch: Among India's Revolutionary Guerrillas*.]

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References:

- Section A** Lemos, C.B. and Cardoso, M., 2021. Discursive exclusion and disrespect in prisons in Brazil. *Vibrant: Virtual Brazilian Anthropology*, [e-journal] 18. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-43412021v18a500> [Accessed 13 March 2023]. Source adapted.
- Stimulus A** Reproduced from *Defying Maliseet Language Death: Emergent Vitalities of Language, Culture, and Identity in Eastern Canada* by Bernard C. Perley by permission of the University of Nebraska Press. Copyright 2011 by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska.
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