From the Amazon to the guidelines: the dilemmas between *quilombola* foods and the recommendations of the dietary guidelines for the Brazilian population

Da Amazônia ao guia: os dilemas entre a alimentação quilombola e as recomendações do guia alimentar para a população brasileira

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to analyze the food habit of *quilombola* families in Pará, following the guidelines of the Food Guide for the Brazilian Population published by the Brazilian Health Ministry in 2014. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the communities of Santo Antônio (Concórdia do Pará, in the Northeast) and São João (Salvaterra, on Marajó Island) under protocol CEP 060/07. Analysis of consumption and preferences were made according to the guide. The results show a high consumption of sweetened coffee, beans, rice and flour, and a low participation of vegetables and fruits in the interviewees' diet. Foods such as bread, cow's milk, pasta, margarine, and salt crackers are common means to diversify the foods consumed by the group. As protein sources, the most notable were red meat - wild or not -, fish, beef jerky, chicken and chicken eggs. Some contradictions of the Guide are discussed in relation to such communities. Despite the advancements promoted by the guide, we conclude that following the guidelines for an adequate and healthy food habit in *quilombola* groups in the Amazon region presents many challenges. Food guides are important for the health and nutrition of the population; however, they need to be combined with other types of interventions that respect the country's cultural diversity.

Keywords: Group with Ancestors from the African Continent; Health of the Black Population; Food Culture; Diet; Food Guides.

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Resumo

O objetivo deste trabalho é analisar se o hábito alimentar das famílias quilombolas paraenses segue as orientações do Guia Alimentar para a População Brasileira, publicado pelo Ministério da Saúde, em 2014. Foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas nas comunidades de Santo Antônio (Concórdia do Pará, nordeste paraense) e São João (Salvaterra, ilha do Marajó) sob o protocolo CEP 060/07. Foram feitas análises do consumo e das preferências alimentares de acordo com o guia. Os resultados evidenciam: alto consumo de café adoçado, feijão, arroz e farinha; baixa participação de verduras, legumes e frutas na dieta dos entrevistados. Alimentos como pão, leite de vaca, macarrão, margarina e bolacha salgada são as formas comuns de diversificar os alimentos consumidos pelo grupo. Como fontes proteicas, destacam-se a carne vermelha – silvestre ou não –, o pescado, o charque, o frango e o ovo de galinha. São apresentadas algumas contradições do guia quando aplicado às comunidades. Apesar dos avanços do guia, conclui-se que o cumprimento das orientações para uma alimentação adequada e saudável nos grupos quilombolas da região amazônica enfrenta desafios. Guias alimentares são importantes para a saúde e a nutrição da população, porém precisam ser combinados com outros tipos de intervenções que respeitem a diversidade cultural do país.

Palavras-chave: Grupo com Ancestrais do Continente Africano; Saúde da População Negra; Cultura Alimentar; Dieta; Guias Alimentares.

Introduction

Educating people for choosing healthy foods and, thus, eradicate all forms of malnutrition is the common axis for global actions by the state members ever since the Second International Conference on Nutrition (WHO; FAO, 2014). Encouraged by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and by the World Health Organization, all countries must establish nutritional policies that provide the population with information promoting a diversified and balanced diet throughout life (WHO; FAO, 2014).

The Global Plan of Action for Nutrition (WHO, 2017) included the promotion of healthy diets by the development of dietary guidelines for different age groups within each countries' population; these guidelines have the goal of providing nutritional advice for improving the population quality of life, in addition to guiding national food policies and the food industry.

In Brazil, the guidelines were revised and the Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population (DGBP) changed its focus. The incentives for the Brazilians focused on an adequate and healthy diet based on the consumption of varied, regionalized, socially and environmentally sustainable food, emphasizing the autonomy of choice rather than the concern about the nutrients rates (Andrade; Bocca, 2016; Brasil, 2014).

The DGBP implementation, however, found many obstacles, given that the food behavior is multiple and diversified, varying according to the different population groups, seasonality of natural resources, and socioeconomic conditions of consumers (Silva; Begossi, 2009). This context comprehends concerns about the *quilombolas* rights, as these are ethnically differentiated groups.

The traditional communities, which include the *quilombolas*, are social organizations living from productive means anchored in self-subsistence, with either little or no capital accumulation (Brandão; Jorge, 2013). Thus, they are vulnerable to economic development models presenting high rates of environmental degradation and unbalanced population growth – branded by conflicts, as it is often the case in the Amazonian environment.

Despite thousands of kilometers of forest – housing over 1.5 million of catalogued vegetable species, a great offer of natural food, water, and a rich faunal diversity –, the descendants from the enslaved population are among those suffering the most from food and nutritional insecurity (Guimarães; Silva, 2015; Silva et al., 2008).

When we talk about *quilombola* communities, it is worthy emphasizing that those are survival and resistance strongholds, officially recognized as groups presenting an assumption of black ancestry, with their own historical trajectories and specific social and territorial relations (Brasil, 2003). The *quilombos* are, however, invisible and placed in a vulnerable situation due to the structural racism and socio and territorial conflicts against the agribusiness, mining, water business, lumbermen, and farmers interests.

A survey from the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger about food and nutritional security in children under five years of age, conducted from 1995 to 2009, in 9,191 *quilombola* households in recognized territories, found that, in the Lower Amazon region, four out of every five households had children that did not eat because of lack of food at home. This corresponds to 79.1% of the total. In the Northeast of Pará state, the rate was of 43.0% (Pinto et al., 2014). By contrast, the occurrences of overweight and obesity presented a strong connection to the households in which the *quilombola* eating habits, associated to low-income, consisted of foods high in calories and low in nutritional value, known as ultra-processed foods (Pinto et al., 2014).

The effects of this new dietary standard – both in health and in wellbeing – characterize the nutrition transition process and raise several debates about the bioanthropologic, social and economic situation that affects the health and nutrition in Brazilian rural groups (Borges, 2011; Silva, 2009, 2011; Silva; Filgueiras, 2019). The recognition of this emergent standard explains why world leaders decided to work together to eradicate all forms of malnutrition by 2030, adopting targets for the Sustainable Development Goals and proclaiming the timeframe between 2016 and 2025 as the Decade of Action on Nutrition (WHO, 2017).

One of the greatest challenges for public health in contemporary times is malnutrition, a result of poor diet, in either quality or quantity, manifesting as undernutrition, nutritional deficiencies and non-communicable diseases (Boatemaa; Drimie; Pereira, 2018). The *quilombolas* ethnical-cultural specificities make increasingly challenging to analyze the "what," "when," "how," and "with who" as categories of the eating act, as proposed by the DGBP. This is because they are in a circumstance of extreme poverty, poor access to public policies and lack of space for food growing, caused by the structural racism (Corrêa; Cardoso; Silva, 2020; Cavalcante; Silva, 2019).

This set of perspectives, especially those concerning the food consumption of *quilombola* communities in Amazonia, is the center of this work. The objective was to investigate how the food consumption in families from two different *quilombola* communities in the Pará state, North of Brazil, dialogues with the DGBP guidelines. We observe that the country still lacks a greater comprehension of the food universe of *quilombola* groups, as well as official tools to set the guidelines for food choices and healthy habits towards specific groups.

Study Area

Among *quilombos*

Pará state stands among the four federative states with the highest number of *quilombola* self-declared groups: nearly 523 acknowledged and certified communities (Gomes, 2015). In general, they are located in environments presenting poor sanitation, lacking access to education and healthcare services, poor offer of drinking water, and at food and nutritional risk (Araújo et al., 2019; Melo; Silva, 2015).

The Concórdia do Pará/PA municipality houses the Santo Antônio *quilombo*, in the immediate geographic area of Belém, in the road PA-140, accessed through the entrance in the Km 39. The municipality has 28,216 inhabitants, of which 45.99% live in poverty. The Human Development Index (HDI) is low (0.566), reflected in the high

rates of child mortality and low rates of literacy – 16th and 64th stands in the state ranks, respectively (IBGE, 2010).

The construction of the ethnic territory in the municipality has the *Associação das Comunidades Remanescentes de Quilombo Nova Esperança de Concórdia do Pará* as the protagonist, established in 2001. Along with other five communities, the *quilombolas* from Santo Antônio claim the deed of the land in the collective category, given the expansion of the palm oil business expansion in the region.

The food comes from artisanal fishing, hunting, and breeding of small animals. Another common practice among families in Santo Antônio is farming. To supplement household income and access basic food items, the community residents are working in the extractivism of vines for the manufacturing of sieves and fans for both domestic use and to sale, in addition to extracting seeds for the manufacturing of necklaces and ornaments. As a way of boosting the family economy, the families also supply local goods for the school lunch program.

The São João *quilombo* has a distinct location. Located in the immediate geographic region of Soure-Salvaterra, it is part of the Mangueiras *quilombola* community, in the Salvaterra municipality, on Marajó Island/PA. The municipality has 20,183 inhabitants, and a human development index of 0.608, being 12th in the child mortality state rank and 125th in literacy. More than half of its population (50.16%) lives in poverty (IBGE, 2010). The Salvaterra *quilombola* territory consists of 17 communities that, since 2007, claim for the deed of their lands, in face of the expansion of the tourism and the cosmetic products industry (Gomes; Schmitz; Bringel, 2018).

In the community, the livelihood means are fishing and financial resources from welfare programs, such as the *Bolsa Família* program. The farming area is smaller due to the agribusiness expansion. The increase in overweight or obesity characterizes the health situation. A study with adults and elderly people in the region showed that 58.14% (n=108) of participants presented these conditions (Almeida et al., 2016).

Method

To suit the objectives, the study had the participation of 60 heads of households serviced by the outpatient clinics in the two communities, Santo Antônio and São João, throughout 2009 and 2010. In each location, we promoted meetings with the groups during the development of the *Corpo presente: representações de saúde entre quilombolas e políticas públicas* (Present in the body: health representations among *quilombolas* and public policies) project, approved by the CEP-ICS-UFPA under the no. 060/07.

A 24-hour dietary recall adapted to a semi-structured interview guided the food intake interviews. The heads of households reported the foods eaten in the meals throughout the previous day and their justification for the consumption. We used the following questions to understand food preferences: which food do you like the most? When do you get to eat them? Data collected were entered in a database in Microsoft Excel, later exported for analysis in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 15.0 program.

Eight groups of food listed in the DGBP were the basis for the analysis. These groups correspond to the set of foods that have a culinary application and similar nutritional profile: meats and eggs, grains, beans, fruits, vegetables, milks and cheeses, roots and tubers, oils and fats. We also analyzed the collected data according to the principles of the Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population, in the following categories: raw or minimally processed foods, oil, fat, salt and sugar, processed food, and ultra-processed foods.

The fact that we were unable to measure the food intake of each family, the consumption of food from the party or ritual menu of communities, in addition to the frequency of food items throughout the day, week or month, only being able to measure the food type, constitutes the limitations of the method.

Results and discussion

The food diversity in the families from Santo Antônio and São João

A high consumption of tubers and grains – rather than fruits and vegetables – characterizes

the diet in the Santo Antônio and São João *quilombola* communities. Of the 63 items listed by the participants, the sweetened coffee, rice-beans-cassava flour triad, and red meat received the majority of mentions.

Considering the rural context, these items define the main meals - breakfast, lunch, and dinner - as the sources for human energy. Murrieta (2001), when analyzing the dietary choices of the Ituqui island, in Pará state, emphasized that the morning habit of drinking coffee and a concentrated portion of sugar is fundamental as an energy source during the traditional farm work. For the author, the combination of sugar and caffeine could be enough for sustaining people for hours with little or no solid food in the mornings, given that their first significant meal in the day would be around noon.

The rice-beans-cassava flour triad, called by the terms "real food," "*rancho*," and "*boia*," characterizes strong meals capable of satisfying hunger. Cascudo (2001), when describing the history of eating habits in Brazil, mentioned the beans-cassava flour duo as a fundamental combination to sustain the body - both items prevail in the Brazilian menu ever since the first half of the 17th century.

Besides, the habit of eating rice and beans is popular, but not indispensable. In Amazon, we can see that, in the traditional communities, cassava flour is present in the everyday menu to complement the meal along with the product of the hunting or fishing, or even as a replacement for rice-and-beans in scarcity times. As can be seen in Table 1, sweetened coffee appeared in 98.3% of morning meals. In addition, beans (73.3%), rice (71.7%), and cassava flour (68.3%) strongly appeared in the analyzed *quilombola* eating habits. Other items, such as bread (63.3%) either with or without margarine (31.7%), cow's milk (58.3%), pasta (36.7%), and crackers (26.7%) emerged as the most evidenced ways of diversifying the food consumed by the community.

Table 1 – Frequency and percentage of food consumption in the São João and Santo Antônio *quilombos*, Pará state, Brazil, 2009 (n=60)

Food	No.	%	Food	No.	%
Raw / Minimally processed / Processed					
Meats and eggs			Vegetables		
Tripes	2	3.3	Lettuce	4	6.7
Shrimp	1	1.7	Garlic	6	10.0
Red meat	32	53.3	Cinnamon, tea	1	1.7
Chicken	14	23.3	Talinum	5	8.3
Bone Marrow	1	1.7	Onion	12	20.0
Chicken egg	11	18.3	Chicory	2	3.3
Fish	28	46.7	Coriander	3	5.0
Grains			Paprika	3	5.0
Rice	43	71.7	Cumin	1	1.7
Cake	1	1.7	Cabbage	5	8.3
Cornmeal	7	11.7	Maroon cucumber	8	13.3

continues...

Table 1 – Continuation

Food	No.	%	Food	No.	%
Raw / Minimally processed / Processed					
Pasta	22	36.7	Cucumber	4	6.7
Bread	38	63.3	Chilli pepper	1	1.7
Bagel	4	6.7	Tomato	6	10.0
Toast	2	3.3	Milks and cheeses		
Beans			Buffalo milk	5	8.3
Pinto beans	44	73.3	Coconut milk	1	1.7
Fruits			Cow's milk	35	58.3
Pineapple	1	1.7	Roots and tubers		
Acai berry	7	11.7	Potato	13	21.7
Banana	3	5.0	Carrot	10	16.7
Coffee	59	98.3	Flour, cassava	41	68.3
Cupuaçu	1	1.7	Flour, tapioca	3	5.0
Orange	4	6.7	Oils and fats		
Mango	3	5.0	Sugar	60	100.0
Passion fruit	1	17	Soybean oil	60	100.0
Watermelon	1	1.7	Salt	60	100.0
Ultra-processed food					
Chocolate powder	6	10.0	Pasta, soup	4	6.7
Cookies/crackers	16	26.7	Pasta, porridge	7	11.7
Jerked beef	19	31.7	Bologna	4	6.7
Canned food	2	3.3	Soft drink	2	3.3
Guava paste	1	1.7	Sardine	1	1.7
Noodles	1	1.7	Juice powder mix	6	10.0
Margarine	19	31.7	Seasoning mix	2	3.3

Based on these data, it is noteworthy that breaking the dietary monotony depends on the economic status of the families. Some studies considered that the individual choices of the traditional populations depend on factors such as the extra income brought by the *Bolsa Família* program and others (Ivanova, 2010; Murrieta, 1998; Silva; Garavello, 2012).

When analyzing the eating habits in the Baixo Acari *quilombola* community in Abaetetuba/PA, Nascimento and Guerra (2016) observed that low income appeared in the statements of 80% of interviewees. For them, the difficulty for making a living largely affected the quality of the food consumed. In the perception of the individuals,

in the absence of money, "they have to make do" - what meant resource to flour or açai porridge, fish, shrimp or raw açai.

We observed similar findings about other nutritional elements in the two communities of this work. The protein sources revolved around red meat (53.3%), and fish (46.7%); while other options were jerked beef (31.7%), chicken (23.6%), and chicken egg (18.3%). The meat came partially from wild animals.

Armadillo, deer, and paca are among the main hunted species. As for local fishing, despite the great difficulties in accessing river waters due to the conflicts with farmers, we could record the consumption of eight fish species from the region (Chart 1).

Chart 1 – Traditional food consumed by the São João and Santo Antônio *quilombos* families, Pará state, Brazil, 2009

Traditional foods	Binomial name
Games	
Paca	*Cuniculus paca*
Armadillo	*Priodontes sp*
Brocket deer	*Mazama sp*
Fishes	
Freshwater angelfish	*Pterophyllum scalare*
Driftwood catfish	*Trachycorystes galeatus*
Boga fish	*Leporinus obtusidens*
Catfish	*Hexanematichthys grandoculis*
Spotted pike-characin	*Boulengerella maculata*
Weakfish	*Cynoscion leiarchus*
Tarpon	*Megalops atlanticus*
Blackfin pacu	*Colossoma macropomum*

In previous years, the food menu of the Amazon traditional population (protein-wise) consisted primarily of fish and flour, a pattern found in several studies (Adams; Murrieta; Sanches, 2005; Murrieta; Dufour, 2004; Murrieta et al., 2008). However, Silva et al. (2008), when analyzing the causes of food and nutritional insecurity in six *quilombola* communities in Santarém/PA, found that fish availability has often been low due to environmental threats.

Begossi et al. (2019) associate the decline in fishing resources to the following causes: pollution, habitat destruction, overfishing and, mostly, river dams for hydroelectric projects. Such factors may threaten the food security of Amazon traditional peoples, given that the mostly consumed fish species suffer the impacts caused by the dams (Arregui, 2015; Begossi et al., 2019).

Another relevant food connected to the *quilombolas* eating habits currently threatened are wild games. According to Torres et al. (2018), the fragmentation of Amazon and the reduction in the forest cover are negative factors for the availability of species for hunting. For the authors, people in the most remote areas, living in forest areas, are prone to the consumption of wild games, therefore, relying more on them for livelihood - making them more vulnerable to the persecutory policies concerning hunting.

Figueiredo and Barros (2016), however, point to other limiting factors to the consumption of wild games: for them, the games have a connection to the symbolic representations animals bear for the *quilombola* communities. The authors, analyzing hunting as a factor for the physical and symbolic reproduction of *quilombola* families in Joana Peres/PA, evidenced that people believed that the *T. terrestris* (tapir), *T. tajacu* (collared peccary), *C. paca* (paca), *E. sexcinctus* (six-banded armadillo) e *M. americana* (red brocket) species to be "reimosas", that is, bad for the sick, turning them unfit for human consumption. This debate over the "reima" model in Amazon, started in 1978, reinforces a classificatory system of health-illness also extended to the consumption of fish and fruits, which contributes for reducing in the array of possibilities of dietary choices concomitantly to the search for the maintenance of environmental resources.

The presence of fruits and vegetables in the interviewees diet was low. The average consumption was of 5.8% for vegetables and of 4.4% for fruits. During the meals, the fruit offer was reported in

the form of juices, or else they would eat raw fruits in the morning. Vegetables appeared as seasonings or in soups, in the night.

In the Amazon, these results evidenced the secondary role played by these foods in the local diet. Murrieta (2001), when analyzing the riverside population in the Santarém, found that seasoning, vegetables, and fruits had occasional consumption, being in the peripheral category of "non-food" (a category that refers to light foods, targeted to children and occasionally consumed). Studies with Amazonian populations show two factors affecting the offer of such items: local ecology – floodplains and lowlands –, and food taboos and dietary restrictions – acid and non-acid fruits, teas, and others (Adams; Piperata, 2014; Ivanova, 2010; Murrieta, 1998).

Lastly, we also observed a 20% occurrence of easy-to-prepare processed food, which stands out due to its low frequency among families. However, despite low consumption, studies such as those by Frozi (2014), covering *quilombola* people throughout the country, showed that 62% of interviewees classified as extremely poor had access to such goods. This shows a strong tendency towards the increase in consumption of ultra-processed food by traditional peoples and communities.

In the São João and Santo Antônio communities, the dietary diversity was also present in the cooking methods used for foods in the meat group, in addition to the replacement of the dinner menu – sometimes referred to as "same as lunch." The techniques for cooking the meat were restricted to pot roast or meat stew either with or without vegetables. Often, chicken or fish appeared either deep-fried or roasted with lime and salt, while canned foods, jerked beef, and eggs were always oil-fried.

The Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population and the *quilombola* communities

The DGBP, reissued on November 2014, brings innovative approaches for diet and nutrition in the promotion of the Brazilian population health. Aiming to reduce non-communicable diseases in the country, the guide allows the understanding of food processing and its effects, in addition to seeking a dialogue among cultural differences and food systems social and environmentally sustainable.

The nutrition transition process motivated a new classification of food. Due to the obesity epidemic and other diseases, and their association to processed food, the relevance of nutrients is no longer associated to the role they have in the organism such as energy sources – carbohydrate sources and fats –, body-building – protein – and regulating foods – sources of vitamins and minerals, but rater emphasizes the way in which the food is processed in the following groups: raw or minimally processed foods, oils, fats, salt and sugar (classified as culinary ingredients), processed foods and ultra-processed foods (Brasil, 2014).

This perspective led to four recommendations and a "rule of thumb" in the DGBP: make raw or minimally processed food the basis of your diet; use culinary ingredients in small amounts; limit the use of processed foods; avoid ultra-processed foods, and always prefer raw or minimally processed foods to ultra-processed foods. Research projects such as the one by Franco et al. (2015) found relevant progresses in the nutritional profile of Brazilians who base their diet in raw or minimally processed foods, including a high intake of fruits, vegetables, and a low intake of processed foods.

As for sociocultural and symbolic aspects, the document emphasizes the culinary and commensality; the pleasure of having company for eating, in proper environments and in an attentive manner, in a way of building connections to the consumption habit. Andrade and Bocca (2016), in a comparative analysis of dietary guidelines from several countries, emphasized the benefits brought by the DGBP for achieving healthy dietary practices, having the idea of valuating the symbolic, emotional and environmental aspects that permeate the eating act as a differential – a reflection of the food and nutritional security concept in place in Brazil.

Such examples reinforce the reasons for the choice of healthy foods and encourage the application of the DGBP to all Brazilians.

That is the reason for the guide to be used in the households, institutional spaces (schools, healthcare services, social assistance centers, among others), in addition to spaces that house social representations (community centers, unions, workers training centers, and social movements facilities). Likewise, its communication with the several traditional peoples need to be established.

Although the new guide considers the social and cultural dimensions within the dietary practices, no proper or specific representations targeted at the traditional peoples and communities exist. (Corrêa; Cardoso; Silva, 2020). The decisions on what and how to eat of the socially identified groups have as its base the concern with collective memories and, in Amazonian circumstances, with the process of adapting to the seasonal conditions of nature (Murrieta; Dufour, 2004).

Because it addresses general guidelines, the guide highlighted dilemmas concerning food access in rural areas. Beyond social injustices that affect the dietary autonomy, such as the unavailability of natural resources, their lands lacking official recognition, the low purchasing power and racism, the wide amplitude of the document also promoted tensions in the Amazonian traditional communities.

Based on the realities in the Santo Antônio and São João communities to adopt the DGBP recommendations, the extent of measures exposed though questions concerning healthy eating habits. As for the daily life of *quilombola* families, the following stood out:

1. Encouraging the increase of raw fruits intake in the local diet. In the North of Brazil, because the fruits are often acidic, it stimulates the addition of sugar in the recipes. According to the *Alimentos Regionais Brasileiros* (Brazilian Regional Foods) publication, issued by the Ministry of Health, of the 30 mentioned fruits, 76.7% suggested a culinary use in liqueurs, jams, jellies, juices, ice creams and desserts (Brasil, 2015).
2. Promoting consumption of fish. The adoption of the recommendation, in general, contrasts the culinary identities build around the "fried fish." When artisanal fishing exists (previously present more often in the traditional communities), the freshwater angelfish, driftwood catfish, boga fish, catfish, spotted pike-characin, weakfish, tarpon, blackfin pacu fish species are preferred fried, rather than in broths and stews. Barbosa et al. (2007) analyzed the behavioral characteristics of fish eaters in Belém/PA and found that the preferred method of cooking has a direct relation to the fish species.
3. Limiting the consumption of processed and ultra-processed foods. One of the main challenges in implementing the guide in the *quilombos* lies in reducing, simultaneously, the amount of such items in the households, and in the collective and educational spaces. Nascimento and Guerra (2016) showed how the food consumption changed, through a large inclusion of easy-to-prepare processed foods. In the groceries, street markets or even in schools and meetings, items such as noodles, canned and processed food, processed juices, and soft drinks had a higher presence.

The *quilombola* communities have their identities connected to the sense of belonging. It is a collective identity, whose bonds are based in common values, customs and struggles, in addition to the structural elements that differentiate each group from the others; thus, guidelines related to eating habits must consider such questions.

Therefore, in addition to acknowledging the DGBP as an important reference among the dietary guidelines currently used in the world – United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Chile, New Zealand, and Sweden –, it is important to analyze complex contexts as a way of encouraging directives that value autonomy in the dietary choices of the population.

Although the new guide rescues the symbolic food values, we observed a lack of adequate and specific representations for the traditional peoples and communities. The strategy of the *quilombola* populations based on food combinations shows a scenery of limited adherence to the official guidelines on healthy eating habits in Brazil.

Final remarks

The Amazon region is characterized by great biodiversity. The access to the forest foods, though, depends on the seasonal, socioeconomic and cultural conditions – this context encompasses the Santo Antônio and São João *quilombola* communities.

In these communities, the participants mentioned mostly the sweetened coffee, the rice-beans-cassava flour triad, and the meat – including wild animals – composing meals with a high presence of tubers and grains, and a low ingestion of fruits and vegetables. In this sense, applying the DGBP recommendations to *quilombola* communities faces sociocultural, economic and environmental challenges for the building of adequate and healthy eating habits, given that these factors did not count in the guide formulation.

We recognize that the DGBP adapted the communication concerning the nutritional conditions, enabling everyone to understand the message, by renouncing to the amount numeric values of the nutrients. The representations of healthy habits, however, still need adjustment to the realities of the traditional peoples and communities. Dietary guidelines are important for the health and nutrition of a population, but they need to be combined with other interventions that respect the cultural diversity in the country.

In this work, we did not intent to cover all possibilities within the guide, due to the limitation of data gathered in the field. We sought, however, to reflect about its usefulness as an analytical tool in relation to the issues experienced by the *quilombola* communities, and to contribute with consistent advice concerning "eating patterns" that promote the wellbeing of ethnic-racial Brazilian groups.

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Authors' contribution

Corrêa analyzed and interpreted data and wrote the manuscript. Silva conducted the critical review. Both authors conceived and outlined the research and approved the final version of the document.

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