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The multi-local dynamics of the Pataxó Indigenous people in metropolitan Belo Horizonte (Brazil): Relations between State, economic activities, and family ties

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Introduction

This paper examines how territorial practices of the Pataxó Indigenous people in metropolitan Belo Horizonte disrupt hegemonic socio-territorial representations in Latin America. Building on decolonial scholarship, we understand contemporary socio-territorial realities in the region in relation to colonial practices that introduced asymmetric relationships between “knowing subjects” of “white” European descent and racialized¹ others – the indigenous and afro-descendant – whose identity and territorial belonging was redefined and spatially fixed from the outside (Rivera Cusicanqui, 1987; Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007). Such asymmetries were established through rigid ethno-spatial hierarchies between the delineated territories of cities conceived of as “planned” spaces for Iberians and their “white” descendants, urban peripheries associated with people of “mixed blood”, and the countryside considered to be home of the “Indian”, “non-white” population (Abercrombie, 1994; Hardoy, 1989). Present-day politico-legal discourse reproduces such colonial imaginaries, for example, by associating Indigenous peoples and specific Indigenous rights, such as the right to territorial self-determination, autonomy, and prior consultation, with specific, invariably rural territories (Horn, 2019; Oliveira Filho, 1996).

While affirming and recognising certain indigenous subjects, such bounded territorial configurations generate “an almost theatrical display of alterity” while at the same denying the identity and rights of those Indigenous populations who live outside rural territories, for example in cities (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2020: 53-54). Throughout the last decades much attention has been paid towards urban indigeneity, a phenomenon that existed throughout pre-colonial times – native populations always inhabited urban spaces (Hardoy, 1973), prevailed throughout colonial occupation – indigenous peoples constructed and provided labour in colonial settlements (Besa Freire & Malheiros, 1997; Hardoy, 1989), and represents a growing present and future reality – more than half of Latin America’s indigenous population is expected to migrate to cities by 2030 (UN-Habitat 2010). Confirming wider Latin American trends, research on indigenous peoples in Brazil increasingly shifts attention towards cities and rural-to-urban migration (Arruti, 2019; Horta, 2017; Campos & Damasceno, 2019; Campos, 2021).

While offering important insights around contemporary understandings of indigeneity, much of this urban and migration-focused scholarship also reproduces bounded, spatially fixed, and linear perspectives, focusing on the city as central unit of analysis, or portraying migration as unidirectional rural-to-urban process. We argue in this paper that there is a need to depart from, both, ruralist, and city-centric perspectives as well as uni-directional migration accounts. Instead, we pay attention to rural-urban territorial interconnections. Building on the multi-sited turn in migration studies, we conceptualise the concomitant residence of Indigenous peoples in rural and urban locations through the notion of multi-locality (see also Antequera Duran, 2011). Drawing on empirical research undertaken throughout the last seven years, we

analyse a series of interrelated multi-local practices by the Pataxó Indigenous group in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte. We demonstrate how territorial movements by members of this group are shaped by relationships with Brazilian society as well as aspirations to preserve community and make a decent living. Our analysis reveals that the continuous mobility of the Pataxó group can be understood in relation to three separate yet interrelated processes: (1) relationships of Indigenous peoples with State bureaucracy, (2) Indigenous economic relations, and (3) family networks. We argue that looking at these processes in relation, and through the perspective of Indigenous peoples themselves, allows for a more holistic view of indigenous mobility and territoriality from a multi-locality perspective. While previous research on and by the Pataxó highlighted that their socio-spatial dynamics in other geo-political settings are also shaped by additional dimensions such as evangelization, expulsion, relationships with the environment and spiritual ties (Kohler, 2007; Oliveira Filho, 1996), our empirical findings suggest that State and economic relations as well as family networks are particularly important to make sense of multi-locality patterns in metropolitan Belo Horizonte.

Our empirical findings contribute to debates that challenge “fixed” and “delimited” conceptualizations of Indigenous territories as predominantly “rural.” Instead, we emphasize how Indigenous groups are constantly moving between rural and urban areas, and, in this process, they (re)claim territories outside officially demarcated ancestral lands. While such trends have to some degree been reported in previous research on and by the Pataxó (Cancela, 2020; Parra et al., 2017; Sampaio, 2000; Souza, 2018), our findings add to this body of scholarship by outlining the increasingly key role of metropolitan spaces in these multi-local processes. Such a perspective leads us to embrace a sort of (neo)-nomadism as characteristic feature of indigenous lives and to consider the need for an extended conceptualisation of indigenous territoriality without externally defined boundaries, in constant flux, and spanning multiple physical, political, socio-cultural, and environmental live-worlds, including that of cities and their metropolitan surrounds.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: The next section situates our argument in literature on Indigenous migration and mobility. We then introduce the Pataxó Indigenous people and review existing literature on their mobility patterns, pointing out the need to pay greater attention towards the central role of urban metropolitan spaces such as Belo Horizonte to make sense of multi-local lives. After providing some background on research methods, we present our empirical findings, focusing on Pataxó multi-local in relation to State bureaucracy, economic, and particularly artisanal practices, as well as family relations. We conclude by offering the basis for a relational framework on multi-local lives and indigenous territoriality that transcends rural-urban divides.

Indigenous mobility: From uni-directional migration towards multi-locality

Traditional approaches within migration studies argue that migration occurs within a bipolar structure separated by migrant-sending and -receiving areas (Lewis, 1954; Ranis & Fei, 1961; Harris & Todaro, 1970; Sjaastad, 1962). This duality may take place between rural and urban areas in the case of internal migration, or between countries for international migration. Such perspectives often put emphasis on material incentives for migration while also highlighting other pull factors such as education and work. These factors have also been considered important within the emerging field of Indigenous migration studies (Brettrell, 2016).

Other approaches understand migration in relation to shifts in the global capitalist system (Portes & Walton, 1981; Castells, 1989; Sassen, 1988), with more recent research moving beyond economic and macrosocial approaches to emphasize the importance of markers such as culture, identity, and race (Wright & Ellis, 2016). These approaches draw attention to the historical and the sociocultural dimensions of migrants' communities of origin, describing how migration becomes deeply rooted in people's behavioural repertoire. Accounts on Indigenous migration in Latin America are inspired by such more culturally oriented debates (UN-Habitat, 2010).

Indigenous migration research has put particular emphasis on rural-to-urban migration patterns and implications for identity changes, processes of collective organisation, and efforts to integrate indigenous rights into urban governance (for a review, see Horn, 2019; Campos et al., 2021). In the Brazilian context, Horta (2017) emphasises that indigenous migration from the Xingu indigenous park to the municipality of Canarana is not just an outcome of poverty – considered to be a prime causal factor elsewhere (Del Popolo et al., 2009) – but also a deliberate and creative choice by people interested in advancing their priorities and in achieving autochthonous transformations. Recent studies also highlight a kind of “re-reading” of the city by focusing on “indigenization” of urban spaces through processes of rural-to-urban migration and the establishment of an urban indigenous diaspora (Arruti, 2019). Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (1968) highlights that urbanization does not lead to the disappearance of indigenous identity and culture, but to a reproduction and adaptation of a new “tribalism” in this territorial context. From such a perspective, Indigenous people experience urban integration but not necessarily assimilation. Emphasis is instead put on the co-existence between rural indigenous customs and traditions and those associated with everyday practices typical to urban environments. Such trends on combining traditions and practices from “elsewhere” with a modern urban life have, in other Latin American contexts, been referred to as choloification and ch'ixi (Albo et al., 1981; De la Cadena, 2000; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2018; Weismantel, 2001).

Many accounts on Indigenous migration maintain a uni-directional focus, shifting attention to urban destinations. We consider this problematic and argue that a more nuanced account on Indigenous migration can be generated by integrating insights from the “transnational” and multi-sited turn in migration studies (see for

example, Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Vertotec, 1999). Advocates of such approaches emphasise how migrants maintain strong ties to places of origin and continue to move between homeland and destination site. From this perspective migration is a process in which multifaceted relationships occur, including family, economic, social, religious, and political relations that transcend borders and bind together different people and places. The focus is thus shifted from studying uni-directional movements and processes in specific places, to emphasizing constant mobility, transition, and fluidity.

We build on the multi-sited migration perspectives and offer a multi-locality approach to indigenous mobility. Only few studies on Indigenous migration in Latin America have so far stressed the “multi-sited” nature of mobility, structured around rural-urban linkages (Padoch et al., 2008). The few studies that do exist on this topic have been focusing on indigenous mobility between traditional rural territories and the peripheries of cities, with an emphasis on Andean countries such as Bolivia (Trujano, 2008; Cielo & Duran, 2013). Here, multi-local lives are nothing new but represent a continuation of pre-colonial trends. For example, prior to colonization, Andean economies relied on the exchange and continuous movement of people between different altitudes and ecological environments. This is evident for example in the *ayllu* system whereby members of Indigenous communities engaged in seasonal labour, accessing different socio-ecological and commercial floors to engage in subsistence and trade relations (Platt, 1982).

Rural-urban interconnections are by no means restricted to the pre-colonial past. As we demonstrate in this paper, the contemporary lived reality of many Indigenous peoples can be defined as concomitant residence in rural and urban locations within and beyond a specific national territory - something which Bolivian anthropologist Nelson Antequera Duran (2011) refers to as multi-locality. Multi-locality research to date has focused on specific characteristics. For example, Alderman (2022) explores how residents belonging to the rural municipality of Charazani (Bolivia) engage in constant movement between rural home territories and the city of El Alto, arguing that this mobility has knock-on effects for communal identity and rituals around house building. While Alderman’s work focuses on how multi-local lives lead to shifts in cultural practices, others pay more attention to economic dynamics. For example, focusing on economic practices of Brazil’s Amazonian Indigenous group Sateré-Mawé, Sertã (2022) explores multi-local lives by tracing how the production of seed necklaces connects circuits of people, plants, skills, and knowledge across the rural-urban divide.

What is evident from such studies is that multi-locality is likely shaped and conditioned by a variety of cultural, economic, and socio-political forces. Less is known, however, how such multiple forces interrelate and shape complex multi-local territorial realities. In the remaining parts of this paper, we seek to address this knowledge gap by pointing out how multi-local lives of members of the Pataxó in metropolitan Belo Horizonte are shaped in relation to a variety of factors, including

State bureaucracy, economic relations, and family networks, emerging aspects in a mobility context centring around urban metropolitan areas.

Context

The Pataxó live in several villages in the extreme south of the state of Bahia and north of Minas Gerais. The first indigenous villages (“*aldeias*”) originated as “*aldeamentos*.” These places were created by the colonisers and administered by priests or government agencies, for the compulsory concentration of indigenous people. The aim of villages was to domesticate indigenous populations and to liberate hinterlands for colonisation. In the case of the Pataxó, the main reference of their historical presence in the southern region of Bahia was the “*aldeamento*” created in 1861, which would later become the village called Aldeia Barra Velha (Cancela, 2020; Sampaio, 2000; Parra et al., 2017).

Since 1951, this settlement experienced territorial conflicts that resulted in the expulsion and territorial dispersion of residents. Since then, the Indigenous people have been fighting autonomously to re-establish their territories by recreating villages, and by establishing new villages in other locations (Parra et al., 2017; Sampaio, 2000). Villages remain important residential spaces until the present. Following a series of intense negotiations with the State, some villages have been officially recognised and situated in demarcated indigenous reserves while others – both in Bahia and in metropolitan Belo Horizonte (the focus of our article) – are outside officially demarcated lands.

Villages in southern Bahia have been impacted by several processes, including the rise and decline of the tourism market, illegal logging, the establishment of environmental preservation areas imposed by the State (Sampaio, 2000), and drug trafficking (Souza, 2018). External pressures, combined with a lack of government support, mean that many villages are in a situation of vulnerability, forcing some residents to migrate (Parra et al., 2017; Sampaio, 2000). The Indigenous people who migrated to the metropolis of Belo Horizonte came from some of these places, which we refer to as “villages of origin.”

Data from SIASI (Indigenous Health Care Information System) highlights that in 2010 11,436 people identified as belonging to the Pataxó Indigenous group. In contact with non-Indigenous groups since the 16th century and often forced to abandon their traditions, the Pataxó today strive to revive their Patxohã language (linked to the Macro-Jê trunk and of the Maxakalí linguistic family) and ancient rituals such as Awê, an indigenous ritual involving singing and dancing.

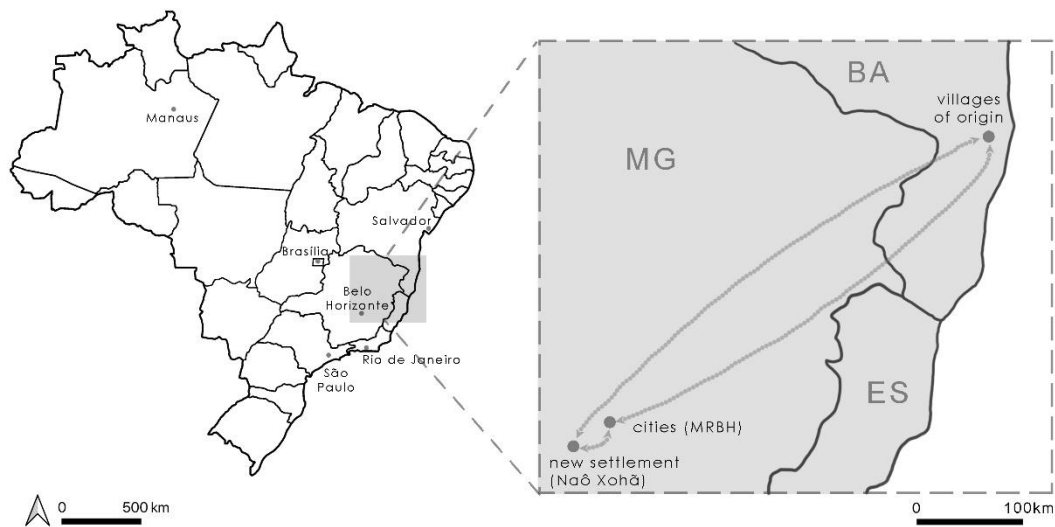


FIGURE 1: Movement of the studied Pataxó groups between Bahia and metropolis of Belo Horizonte. (Elaborated by the authors).

In the state of Minas Gerais, the Pataxó predominantly live in small towns, some located in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte (MRBH), the state's capital and the third most populous urban centre in Brazil. Belo Horizonte exerts a strong economic influence on the southern region of the state of Bahia, where the Pataxó Indigenous reserves are located (IBGE, 2017). There is no precise data on the Pataxó arrival in MRBH, but it is likely that some arrived already in the 1980s.

The group we studied in this research engages in a process they refer to as “*retomada*” (in English: reclaiming) of the land, which is manifested in the foundation of new indigenous villages in the MRBH region situated in the municipality of São Joaquim de Bicas. This area is a fragment of Atlantic Forest, situated fifty-three kilometres from downtown Belo Horizonte on the left bank of the Paraopeba River. The “*retomada*” began in October 2017 when some Pataxó decided to camp there. From then on, they took turns at the camp to maintain a constant presence, moving between the city and the village while working to develop the land and improve living conditions (Campos, 2019; Campos & Canuto, 2019).

Let us position the contemporary territorial practice of “*retomadas*” into the longer territorial and mobility context of the Pataxó. Previous anthropological studies carried out about and by the Pataxó have highlighted the dynamics of confrontation and expulsion of these populations from their territories, due to conflicts with the State, farmers, loggers and property developers (Carvalho, 2009; Sampaio 2000; Parra et al., 2017). This process has triggered successive Pataxó diasporas in recent decades, in successive movements of dispersion and concentration of Indigenous people. In this forced diaspora, some Pataxó groups took refuge in places far from the village, seeking to obtain minimum conditions for physical and cultural survival. Sometimes

organised through family networks, sometimes mixed with regional society, these refuges ended up becoming a point of resistance and resurgence of the Pataxó territorial domain. Dozens of small communities began to emerge, reconfiguring traditional occupation patterns with Pataxó groups reaching and reclaiming new locations in the south of Bahia (Sampaio, 2000; Carvalho, 2009; Parra et al., 2017) and the state of Minas Gerais (Pádua, 2015).

According to Sampaio (2000), some Pataxó live outside villages and regions like Bahia, but maintain regular contact and various links with their villages of origin, thereby generating a "Pataxó Social Unity" that goes beyond their officially demarcated territories. In this sense, previous research already begins to allude to a multilocal spatial dynamics among the Pataxó. For example, Kohler (2007) discusses the Pataxó custom of gradually abandoning their place of occupation to transition to a new family space, thereby creating different housing circuits. According to Kohler, this is not just a recent diasporic experience but something that can be traced back to colonization of this population and related spatial dynamics in the second half of the nineteenth century. Kohler considers this to be a paradoxical situation of strong appropriation of places on the one hand that are accompanied by great family and social mobility on the other hand.

Other studies highlight the importance of territory and mobility as the basic medium of production on which the existence of the Pataxó as a cohesive and socially functioning entity depends (Agostinho, 1980; Grünewald, 1999). At the same time, the struggle for territory is attributed to their genesis as a political community (Carvalho, 2009), when the inhabited space emerges as a support for collective identification (Kohler, 2007).

In recent decades emphasis has been put on the role of production and handicrafts trade as a form of integration of the Pataxó with national society (Agostinho, 1980; Sampaio, 2000; Kohler, 2007). The engagement with tourism is hereby considered to be of particular importance in the process in which the Pataxó shape themselves as Indians today, as well as in the conscious reconstruction of their identity (Grünewald, 1999; Neves, 2015). The production of their handicrafts and traditions has become a central process also in the recent dynamics of occupation of space (Neves, 2015; Sampaio, 2010) – something which we explore in further detail in this article.

The current distribution of the Pataxó villages combines the occupation of contemporary and ancestral territories with territorializing processes, especially post-colonial ones. Recently, and as already mentioned above for MRBH, territorialities are established through processes of “retomadas” (reclaiming) (Carvalho, 2009; Parra et al., 2017). Although they continue based on the idea of ethnic territories, “retomadas” are a new form of territorialization – studied so far mainly in rural settings - that constitute a post-tutelary form of indigenous politics (Oliveira Filho, 2022; Pedreira, 2013; Sampaio, 2010).

In sum, existing literature on the Pataxó provides important insights on mobility patterns and multi-local lives, highlighting their political relevance and connection to socio-economic and family ties – factors that also shape our analysis. However, to date, this research has focused predominantly on territorial processes in rural settings, with less attention paid towards urban metropolitan areas. We address this gap by pointing out the significant role of metropolitan Belo Horizonte in the multi-local lives of the Pataxó.

Methodology

The findings presented in this article draw on insights from collaborative research conducted with residents of the Pataxó Indigenous group. Initial engagements with the Pataxó occurred through participating in activities and meetings of the group in Belo Horizonte before the creation of the Naô Xohã village. At this stage, we collaborated with members of this community to enhance their visibility and to support them in obtaining better services from the municipal government. We also assisted, at the request of the Pataxó, in fundraising campaigns to improve their precarious living conditions. When the “retomada” began in 2017 we made frequent visits to the new village and assisted in the documentation of the community consolidation process. The audio-visual material developed during these visits was organized in a document, which was returned to the community.

Engagements with the Pataxó also led to the elaboration of a conventional Master’s Dissertation project (Campos, 2019), which later sowed the seeds for further and more horizontal collaborations on the group’s multi-local lives that involved our team of professional academics and Pataxó residents in all stages of the research process, from data collection to data analysis and verification of final products. In this article, we draw on some of the material from this research and this section provides a summary of four crucial stages of the research process (data collection, systematization, analysis, and validation of the results).

The data collection stage mainly refers to fourteen interviews with Indigenous leaders and residents from the Pataxó group in Naô Xohã. Questions focused on different migration trajectories of residents, their mobility between different territories, motivations that led them to create the Naô Xohã village, current living conditions, and future priorities for this territory.

Interviews were conducted with representatives of as many families as possible but, as is the case with any research process, not every community member could be approached because of, both, time constraints and varying priorities. While this could be conceived of as possible limitation, we concur with Patton (2015) who emphasises that for qualitative research the sampling design does not need to be large and representative but, instead, focus on in-depth accounts of key individuals who possess relevant information that is illustrative for a wider phenomenon. To ensure that we engaged with key individuals, selection was mainly informed by discussions with community members, leading to the collaborative identification of interviewees. To

ensure validity, we decided to return initial transcripts to interviewees for feedback to improve authenticity and accuracy of testimonies (Caretta, 2015; Cho & Trent, 2006; Adu, 2019).

Transcribed material underwent an analytical treatment through the selection of empirical indicators present in the texts of the transcripts, according to the step-by-step coding approach proposed by Adu (2019). Subsequently, empirical indicators were coded in two cycles. The first cycle adopted open coding by assigning textual labels to empirical indicators using a word or short phrase that describes the meaning of the subject addressed (Saldaña, 2013). The set of these primary codes provided a first inventory of topics related to spatial mobility and territorial dynamics. The codes created were always related to one or more empirical indicators that emerged from the responses of at least one of the interviewees, favouring the interpretation of the material and its fidelity to realities experienced by the Pataxó. This method also allowed retrieving literal citations to which the codes refer, which helps in both the progressive “refinement” as well as the possibility of rescuing text fragments to exemplify processes.

The second coding cycle condensed initial codes into a compact set of categories, based on the thematic affinity between codes. This was done through an axial coding process (Charmaz, 2014). This technique consists of attributing relationships that denote the existence of patterns between reduced sets of codes. Analytical categories are then formed, which are conceptual arrangements that are relatively more abstract than initial codes. These categories, as they are directly derived from these codes, do not lose reference to the material collected, making it possible to rescue empirical indicators on which they are based (Saldaña, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994). At the end of the process, the codes were grouped into twelve categories (see Table 1).

Table 1 Code categories and description

Dimensions	Category	Description
State	insufficient public services	Insufficiency of services provided by the State within villages of origin in Bahia. Those linked to health treatment stand out.
	without rights / informality	References to the absence of Indigenous rights in cities and to the fact that Indigenous peoples often lack secure tenure arrangements and operate informally.
	lack of public services	Absence of public services in Naô Xohã. The reports about services related to education and health stand out.
	non-legalized land ownership	Illegal situation of reclaiming land. It includes reports that relate demarcation processes to the provision of public services.

Handicraft	learning	Learning handicraft techniques; handicraft as a cultural practice of the Pataxó.
	production	Production of handicrafts such as forms of access to raw materials or modes of manufacture.
	insufficient sale opportunities	Difficulties in selling handicrafts in communities of origin in Bahia, with emphasis on the seasonality of sales and competition.
	search for income	Need (and possibility) to obtain income from the commercialization of handicraft (including through urban mobility).
	transport costs	Transportation costs linked to moving handicrafts from Bahia to metropolis of Belo Horizonte.
Family ties	family support to access territories	Support among Pataxó relatives that make it possible to access or remain in the different territories.
	violence with family members	Violence against family members as well as reports of insecurity in the city as motivation to start “retomada” in Naô Xohã.
	sharing resources	Sharing resources (food, money, and housing) with family members living in various places.

(Elaborated by the authors).

The record of existing relationships between categories and codes that compose them, as well as their relationship with other categories and subcategories created, favoured both the systematization of the analysis and the presentation of the results. During the coding process, the data were repeatedly represented in diagrams, which were made up of networks of relationships between codes and categories. In addition, diagrams provided an organized presentation of results, in a compact and accessible format for interpreting the phenomenon under study, according to the methodology proposed by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) (see also figure 2 in the next section).

As a third step, we conducted a result verification through “members checking” (Adu, 2019). This involved presenting analysis results to interviewees and members of the Pataxó community, enabling us to improve the accuracy of findings, as well as to rule out misinterpretations. This approach is suitable to qualitative data analysis as it ensures that the priorities and different points of views of interviewees and community representatives are taken into consideration.

Results

Interviews with the Pataxó in MRBH highlighted several motivations that explain the mobility and multi-local lives of group members. These can be classified into three overarching categories (see figure 2 for a summary) – (1) interactions between the Pataxó and the **State**, (2) indigenous economic practices connected to **Handicraft**, (3) and **Family Ties** – that are discussed in detail below. These aspects were emphasized, in line with other studies conducted with the Pataxó (Carvalho, 2009; Sampaio, 2010; Neves, 2015; Pedreira, 2013), because they are considered by the research participants as critical aspects defining the relationship of the Pataxó with local society in MRBH. We have not neglected, however, that there are other motives of a social, cultural, religious or spiritual order, among others, involved in the process but that, in the present text, have not been considered.

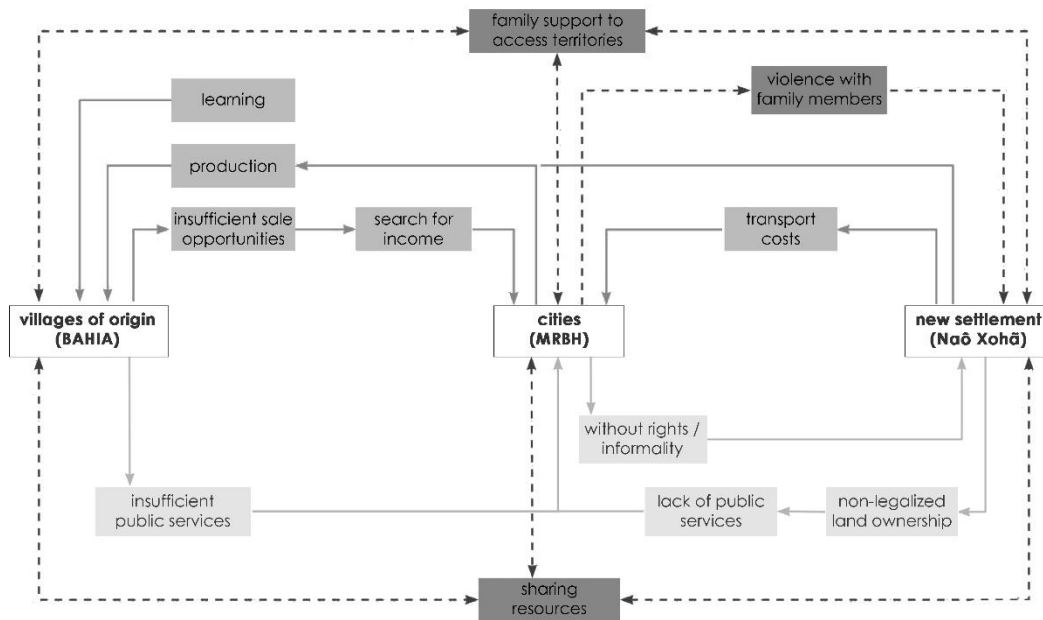


FIGURE 2: Flowchart relating the categories *State* (light grey), *Handicraft* (medium grey), and *Family Ties* (dark grey). (Elaborated by the authors).

State

The different territories in which the Pataxó live are characterised by different territorialisation processes that are closely related to particular governance arrangements, leading to distinct kinds of conflict and opportunities and challenges to access crucial public services and rights. As a result, the Pataxó engage in constant movements to satisfy their needs and access services available in disparate territories.

A multi-territorial living space is thereby configured. Different to previous literature on the Pataxó in other contexts, which highlights the conflictive relationship with the State in relation to efforts to access or preserve territories, here we associate the category "State"² with a series of practices and competencies related to the provision of services and rights, which affect the mobility of indigenous peoples throughout different life stages. Our findings suggest that, for the Pataxó we engaged with in this research, the relationship with the State relates mainly to public services to which they have access (or aspire to have access) and their understanding of rights and duties, that is, what public entities should guarantee and how they need to comply with existing regulations.

Regarding their territory of origin (villages of Bahia), testimonies from interviews suggest that Pataxó Indigenous community members consider public services to be poor or insufficient. Evaluating health care services, one interviewee states: "We had our health from SESAI³, our health has weakened." This affirms that, in the past, the agency promoted health care within villages, but quality and frequency of care is low, or even non-existent. Regarding education, interviewees were also complaining about the lack of schools in communities of origin, forcing them to register children elsewhere.

The above-mentioned situation makes it difficult to stay in communities of origin, pushing Pataxó members to move to cities where they can access healthcare facilities, public schools, and other public services. However, public services provided in these settings are often also inadequately responding to Indigenous people's needs for culturally appropriate healthcare and education, given that indigenous assistance initiatives are mainly focusing on rural but not urban settings (Garnelo & Pontes, 2012). For this reason, Pataxó members often voiced concern about services, as is evident in this testimony: "We get very worried because out there [in the cities] there is no way for our children to learn our customs, our language."

Another rural-to-urban mobility challenge relates to issues around tenure security and rights⁴, with indigenous peoples leaving land officially recognised by the State and often moving into urban informal settlements characterised by insecure tenure arrangements. Furthermore, in the urban context of Belo Horizonte Indigenous peoples are more likely to be exposed to discriminatory spot checks by municipal authorities. Tenure insecurity and exposure to discrimination were issues often mentioned as a core reason for leaving the city to establish a new Indigenous territory - Naô Xohã - at the outskirts of the metropolis.

Yet, living conditions in their new territories situated at the urban fringes are often precarious and characterised once again by the absence of public services. In Naô Xohã Pataxó members struggle to access health care services, except for sporadic occasions when SESAI officials visited. Parents were also concerned about the education of their children: "What is most difficult is the issue of schooling for my boys, because nobody has defined anything, the municipality doesn't take a position." Therefore, to access healthcare or education, residents must travel again to nearby

cities, something that comes with its own complications as public transport options from Naô Xohã are limited. Consequently, and as outlined in this testimony, some have decided to again move away from this territory: "Here we had no doctor to be able to treat us, we had no car and so we moved away because of the health issue."

In Naô Xohã indigenous people are also facing tenure insecurity since they do not own the land and are only guaranteed tenure after land regularization, a difficult and lengthy processes that can take years or decades and that has been made more difficult since the rise of far-right president Jair Bolsonaro who is hostile towards granting indigenous peoples with their legally recognised territorial rights (Andrade et al., 2021).

The Pataxó seek to fulfil their demands for better services and tenure security by approaching State agencies and, specifically, by putting pressure on authorities and making a connection to specific rights and legal support given to them in the 1988 Federal Constitution acting as a "political community", in a process that has already occurred for decades in their struggles for territory in traditional areas of occupation (Carvalho, 2009). As for the reclaimed land, one interviewee claimed: "we know that where there is a collective of Indigenous people, whether they want it or not, the Union⁵ is obliged to demarcate it."

Obtaining titles is seen as a precondition to access other public services within Indigenous territories, with housing, the installation of a cultural centre, healthcare facilities, and the establishment of a school highlighted as most important by our interlocutors. To access such services, Indigenous peoples again make connections to specific constitutional rights and laws such as the 1973 "Law 6001" that highlights the State's duty to demarcate and guarantee exclusive possession and use of territories occupied by Indigenous peoples. Despite the importance of these laws, such legislation fails to recognise the multi-local realities of Indigenous peoples and instead reproduces colonial ethno-spatial imaginaries by only granting Indigenous rights to those residing within officially demarcated ancestral lands predominantly situated in rural areas (Oliveira Filho, 1996). Therefore, the approximately 42 percent of Brazil's current Indigenous population living outside their ancestral territories is denied from specific Indigenous rights (De Paula, 2017). This includes those Pataxó who lead multi-local lives and live in metropolitan Belo Horizonte and in new Indigenous territories such as Naô Xohã.

Handicraft

Indigenous people's multi-local and multi-active lives also unfold in relation to economic and cultural activities linked to the production and sale of arts and crafts. As highlighted in previous literature, the production of artisan goods is associated with how the Pataxó define themselves as Indigenous and is used as economic and cultural survival strategy for decades (Neves, 2015; Grünewald, 1999; Sampaio, 2010). Here we particularly explore the crucial role of urban settings and metropolitan surrounds in handicraft production and Pataxó trade cycles.

Interviews suggest that cultural learning takes place between family members, and primarily men, who are mainly involved in the production and marketing of final goods, and sharing of artisan techniques, as is evident in this testimony:

'This [handicraft practice] is transmitted from generation to generation, from father to son. I learned it from my father, I saw my father doing it, my brothers doing it, so I was curious, looking, looking...

In addition to an important cultural practice associated with Pataxó identity, there is also a strong economic incentive associated with handicrafts, as evident in this testimony: "We started to make handicrafts to survive, because we saw that (...) we couldn't be without money because of the white man." Access to food via traditional means such as hunting, fishing, and small-scale agriculture have become scarce in Pataxó communities of origin in Bahia, contributing further to Indigenous people's dependence on money. In this context, trade of arts and crafts serves as the main source of income for many members of the group.

People tend to learn about crafting techniques in their communities of origin in Bahia where they can access raw materials and engage in production activities. Finalized pieces are then sold in the wider Bahia region or elsewhere. In Bahia, sales tend to be seasonal, happening primarily during the main tourist season. One participant, however, reported that elevated levels of competition exist in Bahia due to the large concentration of indigenous people in the region: "There used to come a tour group, and everyone would go to sell the same thing, so there was no profit to support the family members."

To explore alternative income generation routes, indigenous people are often moving to and trading their crafts on the markets of larger cities such as São Paulo, Brasília, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte, with the latter being a particularly important node for the Pataxó mainly because of already existing kinship links that provides them with a safety and support network to overcome initial difficulties.

Those Pataxó who move to cities like Belo Horizonte nevertheless maintain strong connections with communities of origin in Bahia. They move to cities to "go and sell", as described by one interviewee, while their community of origin remains the central location for other livelihood activities. One interviewee, for example, highlighted that he goes to the city to "earn and bring back money to the village." This aligns with observations on multi-sited migration patterns of Indigenous peoples (Bretrell, 2016), reinforcing that the Pataxó engage in a multi-territorial circuit through the production, sale, and subsequent use of income from handicraft trade in distinct yet interconnected settings.

Interviewees also highlighted difficulties associated with selling arts and crafts in urban contexts, re-emphasising issues already discussed in the previous section. For example, many trading activities occur in the informal sector where economic transactions are not officially recognised and often subject to penalisation by municipal

authorities. There are reports of sales being hindered and goods being seized or destroyed by city inspectors as is evident in this testimony: "Then one day the street inspector told me: 'Ê Indians, you can take them out because this is not a village, take off your handicrafts, otherwise I will take them away'."

Others reported difficulties to cover costs for packaging of goods and transportation from Bahia to the city and complained about high rental costs required for (temporary) housing and storage of produce Belo Horizonte. The search of new territories on the outskirts of the metropolitan region (retomadas) was considered a viable alternative to renting expensively in the city, as one interviewee points out:

Being in Naô Xohã is better than being in the city because there the thing is the cost of rent, which is very expensive. For people who have four children it is difficult to be able to afford 500, 600 Reals of rent.

While benefitting from lower or no rental costs, the Pataxó also face difficulties in Naô Xohã. Interview findings suggest that, just like in the city, it is not possible to produce most of the handicrafts in this setting due to the lack of raw material. Hence, there is a need to return to communities of origin in Bahia, or as one interviewee explains: "We have to get seeds, we have no way to do it here [in Naô Xohã], (...) there is no way to deforest." A resident of Naô Xohã says that for this reason they need to be constantly "(...) in movement, two, four, five families have to go back and get crafts and come back." Another area of concern is the lack of electricity in Naô Xohã, making it impossible to use machinery required to produce the handicrafts, as well as high transport costs to move goods to markets in Belo Horizonte. For this reason, some Pataxó keep hold of rental places to store goods and stay in the city during days of trading.

What is clear, then, is that activities related to arts and crafts form a circuit related to learning, producing, transporting, and selling. Like the relationship with the State, here we can see push and pull factors specific to each territory in which the Pataxó live, enabling us to further develop the notion of "territorial circuits." Our discussion on arts and crafts further reinforces why the Pataxó maintain a multi-territorial network as distinct stages of the "handicraft circuit" make spatial connections with multiple localities. Engagement in one locality is insufficient to meet all needs of the "handicraft circuit" and therefore movement across territories is needed. This resonates well with previous work by Sertã (2022) who shows that Sateré-Mawé women living in the city of Manaus have recreated connections between village and city through the production and commercialization of handicrafts.

In the specific context of the Pataxó, to complete the "handicraft circuit" families have residences available in different areas (villages and city) and adopt practices that interconnect these territories, based on the exchange not only of materials, but also of people, knowledge, and various resources. The city of Belo Horizonte and its metropolitan surrounds (i.e., Naô Xohã) appear strategic places for

family networks. Multilocal circuits are formed that challenge rigid boundaries between urban and rural. Moreover, the sale of handicrafts contributes to the legitimization of Pataxó families as “authentic” Indigenous people in the city context, which is used to strengthen the demand for support from the State.

However, territorial movement is not always what Indigenous people desire. Instead, some Pataxó aspire to fulfil all their cultural and economic needs in one setting. These aspects refer to the paradox reported by Kohler (2007), which posits permanence and movement as constant and non-conflicting conditions of existence among the Pataxó. Indigenous people we interviewed explained this in relation to the dream to transform their territory near MRBH as a place linked to “ecotourism”. For example, one interviewee stated: “So, my handicrafts I’m going to sell right here, I make them here and sell them here.” The intention, hence, is to attract tourists to the village, following the example of Indigenous tourist villages in southern Bahia (Sampaio, 2010; Cunha, 2013; Grünwald, 1999; Neves, 2015). Such a strategy would make it possible to generate a decent income, overcome the difficulties of the city context such as excessive costs, discrimination, and penalisation by State authority, and to adopt a traditional way of life similar to those in their villages of origin⁶. At the same time, settling in Naô Xohã would make it possible to maintain proximity to the city, facilitating access to the services available there. In short, then, Indigenous Pataxó articulate dreams to mix rural and urban lifestyles in one territory situated in metropolitan Belo Horizonte but, in practice, this is currently impossible due to the absence of services and a failure to recognise their indigenous rights in settings such as Naô Xohã (see previous section).

Family ties

Family relationships are another factor shaping the Pataxó’s multi-local lives as different family members inhabit, often simultaneously, different spaces in urban and/or rural settings. Kinship networks are, hence, fundamental for mobility between villages of origin, towns, and settlements in metropolitan Belo Horizonte. Here we have an aspect that refers to the idea of a ‘Pataxó social unity,’ as stated by Sampaio (2000), resulting from the diaspora experienced by this Indigenous people, where members of the group dispersed in different regions of the country maintain a certain social cohesion.

With Pataxó people moving increasingly towards cities like Belo Horizonte and their metropolitan surrounds, familiar networks also increasingly concentrate in these settings. One interviewee, for example, notices how mobility towards cities initially began with a few members of the group, generally men, who moved to “open the doors for others.” The intention was to create the minimum conditions so that other family members can follow later, as is evident in the following testimony that illustrates patterns of multi-generational movements:

I was fighting there [in the village of Bahia], I was trying to win, but I couldn't do it there. Then my father said: 'I will see if I can find a place for you here [in the city], will you come?' I said: 'I will come.' 'And what about your family?' 'Then I will leave them here for a while and see what I can do to take them.'

A similar strategy to the one mentioned above occurred in the creation of Naô Xohã where a few Indigenous people initially created the conditions for family members to move there at a later stage. It is noteworthy that relocation was encouraged by leaders in the villages of Bahia who advised younger community members to find a new village near the city, ideally near an abandoned forest.

Once the initial conditions were created, a larger number of Indigenous peoples moved there, helping to strengthen the permanence of the group in the new territory, providing each other with support, and enabling people to pool resources such as housing, expenses, and food. Interviews further highlight that mobility also occurs in the opposite direction (from the metropolis back to Bahia), and it is common to return to the villages of origin for various motivations, such as supporting sick family members, the intention to marry, or to engage in handicrafts production (see previous section). Our findings also suggest that resources obtained in one setting such as money, food, and clothes circulate among the multilocal family networks.

In short, our analysis of family networks reinforces the understanding that the mobility of the Pataxó is constant and multidirectional, taking place according to the circumstances and needs of each family member. Crucially, in the current context family networks centre around consolidating and reclaiming territories in cities and metropolitan settings, though this does not mean that rural territories of origin are abandoned.

Analysis and Conclusions

Building on and further advancing debates around indigenous multi-locality (Antequera Duran, 2011; Oliveira Filho, 1998, 2022), this paper demonstrates through an in-depth case study of the Pataxó that residing in one territory, whether that is an ancestral village in Bahia state, a city like Belo Horizonte or newly occupied lands at the outskirts of metropolitan areas such as Naô Xohã, is insufficient (although necessary) for indigenous people to meet their diverse needs. Our findings therefore suggest that Indigenous territory should be understood as evolving continuously through multiple flows and displacements, where Indigenous people circulate and engage in constant mobility. In this process, they build their strategies for economic and cultural survival. We demonstrate that ancestral territories are indispensable spaces for Indigenous peoples' cultural reproduction but are not sufficient to meet all their desires and needs in contemporary times. For purposes of subsistence and survival, Indigenous peoples create multi-local networks through which they weave together urban and metropolitan spaces with their ancestral territories.

While multi-locality is nothing new for the Pataxó and has been studied through rural-to-rural mobility patterns, our article offers a novel angle by emphasising the vital role of cities and their metropolitan surrounds in the Pataxó's multi-local lives. We demonstrate, on the one hand, how spatial mobility and multilocal dynamics observed initially in rural Bahia now extend to metropolitan Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais. In the latter settings, we also demonstrate the importance of territory as an element of cultural and political reaffirmation, as well as the importance of handicraft as a form of economic and identity survival. This all indicates an expansion of how the Pataxó reclaim territory beyond the confines of their officially recognised ancestral lands in Bahia, encompassing rural and urban spaces in multiple Brazilian states.

Moving continuously between different territories also functions as a tool for the Pataxó to cope with particular challenges such as the absence of (1) healthcare and education infrastructure and culturally appropriate provision, (2) access to land, housing, and public services like transport, water, and electricity, (3) economic conditions to produce and sell goods, (4) patterns of ethno-racial discrimination and insecurity, and (5) opportunities to maintain cultural practices to preserve and revitalise indigenous identity. Unlike previous research which “zoomed” into some of these issues by focusing on selected explanatory factors for multi-locality, including economic relations (Sertã, 2022) or issues around identity reconfiguration through house-building practices (Alderman, 2022), our paper develops a more holistic framework that captures multi-locality through multiple interrelated dynamics linked to practices by the State, economic relations, and family ties. We call for future research to apply and further expand this framework to the study of contemporary Indigenous territorial practices in other geo-political settings in Brazil and beyond.

Our findings also challenge accounts on indigenous mobility and migration as essentially a one-way process occurring from rural to urban settings (Del Popolo et al., 2009; UN-Habitat, 2010). Instead, what becomes clear in our case study is that the opposite occurs: even after moving toward urban areas, ties to ancestral territories are maintained to, among other issues, preserve family relationships and engage in cultural and socio-economic (re)production. The spaces created by Indigenous people in the urban and metropolitan context build on characteristics and organizational patterns of their villages of origin, as exemplified by the intention of the Pataxó to organize Naô Xohã as a tourist village identical to the Reserva da Jaqueira, a village located within the indigenous land from which they came, in southern Bahia.

The case presented here further contributes to policy debates on indigeneity in Brazil as well as in the wider Latin American region. Our findings further challenge conventional policy understandings, grounded in colonial representations (De Paula, 2017; Horn, 2019; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2020), that associate Indigenous peoples and related Indigenous rights with fixed and delimited rural territories. Instead, our findings highlight that in the contemporary context indigenous territorial networks are expanding. Rural Indigenous territories are increasingly connected to urban ways of life, whether this is through rural-to-urban mobility or the urbanization of the

countryside (Monte-Mór, 2005). As we evidenced through the case of the Pataxó and their relationship with different State authorities, public institutions are somewhat unprepared to deal with the challenges posed by the mobility and multi-locality of indigenous people in Brazil, especially regarding the loss of specific and differentiated rights of these peoples when living in an urban context or in new villages (result of “retomadas”) not officially recognized by the State. The socio-spatial practices of multi-local occupation of the national space are only becoming clearer recently, based on studies such as this, and require more policy support and assistance.

To achieve this, we call for a reconceptualization of indigenous territoriality and mobility. There is a need to depart from delimited and hierarchized notions of territory, which fix Indigenous peoples to certain spaces and exclude them from others, especially cities. Instead, there is a need to pay greater attention towards the multi-local lives these people live. Instead of fixing Indigenous peoples on a map, we call for approaches that recognise that they are continuously on the move and, in particular, we encourage policy makers to recognise urban and metropolitan spaces as support points and central nodes in the wider territorial network of these populations. For this reason, urban policies need to consider and address the fact that Indigenous people living in cities today engage in distinct social, cultural, and territorial practices than other population groups who are conventionally associated to inhabit these spaces. We therefore call for expanding Indigenous rights, as outlined in Brazil's constitution, to all territories. This is a fundamental step toward building more inclusive, equitable, and intercultural societies where no one is left behind.

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¹ The denomination of racial categories for the Brazilian population is extremely complex because it is a highly miscegenated population. In simplified terms, it is customary to follow the pattern of official statistics which divide the population into five groups: whites, blacks, yellows (oriental Asian), "pardos" (mixed) and indigenous (Santos et. al., 2023).

² The Pataxó engage with several State entities, depending on their specific demands and the territory in which they are located. For example, in Belo Horizonte, they turn to representatives of the municipal government of that city, linked to the mayor's office or the city council. In the Naô Xohã village, they turn to the municipality of São Joaquim de Bicas for assistance related to health and education. For issues related to land demarcation and even for demands for services, they turn to FUNAI representatives or directly to the executive, legislative or judicial spheres of national government. The National Indian Foundation - Fundação Nacional dos Povos Indígenas (FUNAI) - is the official

Indigenous body of the Brazilian State. Created in 1967, it is the executor of the federal government's indigenous policy. Its institutional mission is to protect and promote the rights of Indigenous peoples in Brazil. Decree 564 of 1992 defines that FUNAI will promote studies of identification and delimitation, demarcation, land tenure regularization and registration of the lands traditionally occupied by Indigenous peoples. Regarding the governance of the group itself, internal decision-making processes of the Pataxó are decentralized. Each community defines a leader called "Cacique," to be its representative and to engage in negotiations with the State authorities. When creating a new village, a new Cacique is defined by its inhabitants autonomously (Campos, 2019).

³ Secretaria Especial de Saúde Indígena (The Special Secretary for Indigenous Health) is a federal public institution linked to the Ministry of Health.

⁴ For a more detailed history of land conflicts of the Pataxó in rural Bahia see: (Carvalho, 2009; Agostinho, 1980; Sampaio, 2000; Cancela, 2020).

⁵ The term "Union" is used to refer to agencies linked to the federal government.

⁶ Although contact with the surrounding society had a significant impact on the villages in southern Bahia, the Indigenous people who came to Belo Horizonte take certain villages of origin as a reference for the organization of their territories in the metropolis. For example, they refer to the case of the Reserva da Jaqueira village, which is located in the Coroa Vermelha Indigenous Land and is a pioneer for indigenous ecotourism activities in the region (Parra et al., 2017). They also refer to the lifestyle of their ancestors, who lived in the middle of the forest and produced their own food while preserving natural resources. Their long-term goal is to replicate such a way of life in the context of their retomada.

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