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Migration and spatial mobility in a multi-sited network: the case of the Pataxó in the Belo Horizonte metropolitan region

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Abstract

Indigenous migrations have received increasing attention from scholars from different countries, both because of their intensification and because of the interpretive challenges brought by the phenomenon. This article investigates the migration and spatial mobility of a group of Pataxó indigenous people who live between the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte and the south of the State of Bahia. The analyzes were carried out based on a qualitative research methodology, based on interviews with the migrants. The theoretical framework used in the text highlights the transformations that the migratory phenomenon has been going through, with the creation of hybrid spaces and multi-local territorial networks of survival. These aspects are observed among different types of migrants, including indigenous people from several Latin American countries. The results of the present analysis are in line with these studies, as they describe the process by which the Pataxó articulate different points of the territory in a multilocal network, created through a process of migration and spatial mobility that has strong connections between these places. The study also highlights the dynamic elements of spatial displacements, which guarantee their perpetuation over time.

Keywords: Migration. Indigenous. Pataxó. Qualitative research. Multi-site networks

Migração e mobilidade espacial em uma rede multilocal: o caso dos Pataxó na RMBH

Resumo

As migrações dos indígenas têm recebido atenção crescente de estudiosos de diversos países, tanto por sua intensificação quanto pelos desafios interpretativos trazidos pelo fenômeno. O presente artigo investiga a migração e a mobilidade espacial de um grupo de indígenas Pataxó que vive entre a Região Metropolitana de Belo Horizonte e o sul do Estado da Bahia. As análises foram realizadas com base em uma metodologia qualitativa de pesquisa, a partir de entrevistas feitas com os migrantes. O referencial teórico utilizado no texto destaca as transformações por que vem passando o fenômeno migratório, com criação de espaços híbridos e redes territoriais multilocais de sobrevivência. Esses aspectos são observados entre diversos tipos de migrantes, incluindo indígenas de vários países

latinoamericanos. Os resultados da presente análise alinham-se com esses estudos, ao descreverem o processo pelo qual os Pataxó articulam pontos do território em uma rede multilocal, criada através de um processo de migração e mobilidade espacial que cria conexões entre esses locais. O estudo também especifica os elementos dinamizadores dos deslocamentos espaciais que garantem sua perpetuação ao longo do tempo.

Palavras-chave: Migrações. Indígenas. Pataxó. Pesquisa qualitativa. Redes multilocais.

Migración y movilidad espacial en una red multisitio: el caso de los Pataxó en la RMBH

Resumen

Las migraciones indígenas han recibido una atención creciente por parte de académicos de diferentes países, tanto por su intensificación como por los desafíos interpretativos que trae consigo el fenómeno. Este artículo investiga la migración y la movilidad espacial de un grupo de indígenas Pataxó que viven entre la Región Metropolitana de Belo Horizonte y el sur del Estado de Bahía. Los análisis se realizaron con base en una metodología de investigación cualitativa, a partir de entrevistas con los migrantes. El marco teórico utilizado en el texto destaca las transformaciones que ha venido atravesando el fenómeno migratorio, con la creación de espacios híbridos y redes territoriales multilocales de sobrevivencia. Estos aspectos se observan entre diferentes tipos de migrantes, incluidos los indígenas de varios países de América Latina. Los resultados del presente análisis están en línea con estos estudios, ya que describen el proceso por el cual los Pataxó articulan diferentes puntos del territorio en una red multilocal, creada a través de un proceso de migración y movilidad espacial que tiene fuertes conexiones entre estos lugares. El estudio también destaca los elementos dinámicos de los desplazamientos espaciales, que garantizan su perpetuación en el tiempo.

Palabras clave: Migraciones. Indígena. Investigación cualitativa. Pataxó. Redes multisitio

1 Introduction

Indigenous migrations have received increasing attention from scholars of different countries, both because of the intensification of this phenomenon and the interpretive challenges it entails. These migrations have been attributed to the growing exchange between these indigenous people's traditional, rural regions of origin and the urban areas of their countries. This is due to advances in means of transport and communication and to the growing influence of market logic and state institutions on indigenous populations.

The related academic production in Brazil is traditionally linked to the North and the Center-West of the country, where most of the indigenous inhabitants are concentrated. There is, however, emerging literature focusing on the migration of indigenous peoples to other regions of the country, such as the metropolises of the South and Southeast.

The present study aims to investigate the migration and spatial mobility of a group of Pataxó indigenous migrants living between the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte and the south of the state of Bahia. This was done based on field research carried out with these migrants. The results were submitted to a qualitative methodology of analysis, validation, and presentation.

The results of the analyses have shown that indigenous migrations pose challenges for the territories where they happen. These challenges are connected to the socioeconomic insertion of migrants in their regions of destination and to the cultural survival of these populations. This conclusion also raises the need to rethink academic approaches traditionally used to study migration, both in terms of analytical instruments and of devising new conceptual frameworks that foster the understanding of such a complex type of migration.

2 Theoretical movements in migration studies

The multidimensionality of the migration phenomenon and its strong connection with the reality of each spatial-historical context has spurred the rise of multiple theoretical and empirical approaches to the subject. This, coupled with the growing fragmentation of the disciplinary fields of social sciences, has engendered complaining assertions regarding the lack of a theoretical unification for understanding the theme (Massey et. al. 1998) or a clamour for the construction of holistic approaches to the phenomenon (Brettrel 2016).

Meanwhile, different phenomena are regarded as the main determinants of the occurrence of migration. Some examples are spatial differences in wages and employment conditions, family decision-making processes aiming to minimize risks, differential structures in labor markets, and the demands of industrial economies and of globalization, among others.

In addition to academic-disciplinary divides and the chasm between the theoretical and methodological frameworks observed in the study of migrations, fads and historical trends are also notable in the types of approaches that have been used. The most eminent approaches in the study of migrations, which date from the second half of the 20th century and were heavily influenced by the theory of modernization, treated migration as a process happening within a bipolar structure, which separated and opposed migrant-sending and -receiving areas (Lewis 1954; Ranis and Fei 1961; Harris and Todaro 1970; Sjaastad 1962). This duality took place between urban and rural areas in the case of internal migrations, and between poor and rich countries for international migrations. Emphasis was put on rational economic decisions by agents in response to differences, generally economic, between the migrants' places of origin and destination. This perspective also includes approaches with less emphasis on the financial but highlighting the attraction of urban life for migrants, mainly young men—the so-called “bright lights” theories, which have been quite influential in the study of indigenous migrations (Brettrel 2016).

In response to these dualist approaches, theories have arisen to complicate the study of the migration phenomenon, such as the dual labor market theory (Piore 1979) and the new economics of labor migration, or NELM, although these are still based on spatial differentials (Stark 1984; Lauby and Stark 1988; Taylor 1986). In the NELM, for instance, the analysis level was shifted from the individual to the family, while the reasons pointed out for migration were turned towards risk minimization and diversification of activities within the family economy.

The conceptual limitations of the equilibrium model associated with the theory of modernization prompted the development of studies that drew on completely different perspectives, inserting population dislocations into aggregate processes that would, in turn, shape population movements as historical-structural processes (Brettrel 2016). Interest then shifts to understanding global capitalist systems (Portes and Walton 1981; Castells 1989; Sassen 1988, 1991) and the existence of world systems (Fawcett 1989; Zlotnik 1992). Subsequently, a good many migration scholars have altered their conceptions about the phenomenon, moving beyond economic or macrosocial approaches to emphasize the importance of markers such as culture, identity, and race in the understanding of migration (Wright and Ellis 2016). These approaches draw attention to the history and the sociocultural dimensions of the migrants' community of origin, describing how migration becomes deeply rooted in people's behavioural repertoire. In this process, values associated with migration become part of the community behaviour (Brettrel 2016).

One of the greatest theoretical-methodological shifts in migration studies since the early 1990s was influenced by what became known as "the transnational turn". Studies on transnationalism and migration originated in the pioneering work of Glick Shiller, Basch, and Blanc-Santon (1992) and Vertovec (1999). The concept emerges from the observation that migrants maintain strong ties to their regions of origin and continue to move between their homeland and their destination site after migrating. These thinkers underline migration as a process in which multifaceted relationships take shape—family, economic, social, religious, and political relations that cross borders and bind their societies of origin and destination together. The focus is thus shifted from studying fixed characteristics of isolated places to emphasizing the ideas of transit and fluidity (Brettrel, 2016).

Catering to broader theoretical interests emerging from postmodernist and feminist theories, this new perspective thinks about space in new ways but relies on pre-existing aspects from the leading studies on the role of social networks in migration (Hugo 1981; Taylor 1986; Massey 1990). Within this new trend, scholars have been working with a new conceptualization that includes categories such as "diasporas", "in-between spaces" and "hybrid forms of identity and culture" (Brettrel 2016).

In theoretical terms, this perspective is proposed as a decolonial alternative to traditional migration studies. Meanwhile, the movement receives counter-criticism, as shown by Mitchell (1997), who is concerned with the exaggerations of the "hype of hybridity". She states:

Perhaps transnationalism has been such a sexy topic in recent years because it embodies an inherently transgressive quality. Transnationalism necessitates a crossing of borders, both literal and epistemological. As borders are normally associated with power relations—the power to keep in or out—the movement across borders, whether they be national borders, disciplinary borders or theoretical borders, carries with it the febrile fascination and flavor of the illicit.

Her central critique is on the risks of working with absolutely abstract concepts, which can lead to interpretations that disconnect migrants from the realities in which they live and which they experience physically and psychologically through the territories they circulate and inhabit. Mitchell speaks for the need to retrieve the notions of context and the territorial embeddedness of migratory practices to better position the coherence and the literal and epistemological understanding of transnationalism.

3 Studies on the migration of Latin-American indigenous peoples.

Indigenous migrations have been attributed to the growing exchange between their traditional housing regions and the urban areas of their countries. The intensification of this process is due to advances in means of transport and communication, as well as to the growing influence of market logic and state institutions on indigenous populations (Peluso 2015).

In line with contemporary analytical perspectives that focus on the themes of diasporas and the formation of hybrid spaces, studies on indigenous migration carried out in Latin-American contexts have stressed the adoption by these migrants of a “multi-sited” pattern of spatial occupation, structured around rural-urban linkages (Padoch et. al. 2008), forming “hybrid spaces” of survival and identity construction (Alexiades and Peluso 2015). Studies have been centering on the dislocation between traditional lands and the peripheries of cities in several countries on the continent, with an emphasis on those concerning the Andean region (Trujano, 2008; Cielo and Duran 2012).

The related academic production in Brazil is traditionally linked to the North and the Center-West of the country, where most indigenous dwellers are concentrated (Fígoli and Fazito 2009; Brasil, Teixeira and Mainbourg 2009). There is, however, emerging literature focusing on the migration of indigenous peoples to other regions of the country, such as the Southern and Southeastern metropolises, driven by the inclusion of the identification of the indigenous population in the demographic census questionnaires since 1991 (Campos and Estanislau, 2016; Campos and Damasceno 2019; Campos et. al. 2019; Estanislau 2014). It is worth mentioning the original and often innovative nature of the treatment of the issue in Brazil, which reveals, if only partially, the sophistication of the national anthropological reflection on indigenous populations. Much as they follow the theoretical waves that advance in foreign migration studies, pinpointed in the previous section, there are remarkable particularities to the national academic production on the topic.

Cardoso de Oliveira’s (1968) pioneering work exemplifies the richness of Brazilian academic approaches to indigenous migration. In analysing the migration of the Terena people to the cities, the author’s approach holds strong parallels with that of Redfield (1953), which was elaborated under the influence of the theory of modernization. Redfield proposes the use of a “folk-urban continuum” to understand the processes of contact between traditional populations and the surrounding societies. This analytical framework is rooted in a bipolar structure of analysis, which opposes sending and receiving areas and distinctly contrasts rural and urban, traditional and modern, ways of life. Cardoso de Oliveira, however,

moves forward by inaugurating new understanding possibilities for the process. He proposes an interpretative framework that articulates the processes of adaptation and assimilation without any of them completely overlapping, through the creation of the concept of “interethnic friction”.

Another noteworthy approach to the treatment of indigenous dislocations in Brazil is the work of Pacheco de Oliveira (1996), who breaks with culturalist or essentialist approaches in examining the relationship between indigenous people and their territory. The author contends that the idea that the indigenous subject and their territory maintain a visceral relationship is “a half-truth”. He postulates that indigenous migration should be analyzed from a perspective that places the phenomenon in an intermediate condition between movements produced by both economic and non-economic reasons, many of which operate according to the “entirely grammatical canons” of some indigenous cultures.

Another original contribution is Horta’s (2017), which departs from simplistic perspectives that reduce indigenous migrants to an image of poor people, marginalized by the state logic prevalent in urban areas. When examining the transit between the Xingu Indigenous Park and the municipality of Canarana, in the state of Mato Grosso, the author highlights migration as a “creative moment” in the lives of indigenous people, a moment that propels their own practices and, in her view, encourages the consolidation of an indigenous, or autochthonous, theory of the transformations they undergo in the urban context.

Recent approaches also draw attention to a kind of “re-reading” of the city by the indigenous individuals themselves, starting from their migration to the cities. This process involves a certain “indigenization” of urban spaces and an emphasis on the complexity and contradiction in the collective narrative about migration or the indigenous diaspora (Arruti 2019).

In line with recent changes in migration studies, these productions emphasize the transposition and transformation of tradition between radically different socio-spatial contexts (Arruti 2019). The work of Sertã (2001) is one exemplar of studies that highlight the circularity of indigenous populations within a multilocal territorial network, as well as the processes of identity construction in-between contexts.

4 The Pataxó in the Belo Horizonte metropolitan region

The Pataxó lands are located in the extreme south of the state of Bahia, in 6 indigenous lands spread over 36 villages. They are located in the municipalities of Santa Cruz Cabrália, Porto Seguro, Itamaraju and Prado. In the state of Minas Gerais, the Pataxó live in the municipalities of Carmésia, Itapeçerica, Araçuaí, and Açucena, besides being distributed in some municipalities in the Belo Horizonte metropolitan area (BHMA). Although there are no precise data on when their arrival at the BHMA began, it is possible that some of them arrived there in the 1980s.

The group of indigenous people studied in this paper is involved in a process that they call *retomada*, or reclamation¹, of the land, manifested in the foundation of indigenous villages in different parts of the territory, including the interior of some metropolitan regions of the country. In the BHMA there are currently three “*retomadas*” processes led by the Pataxó people: Naô Xohã and Katurama villages, in the municipality of São Joaquim de Bicas, and Kamakã Mongoió village, in the municipality of Brumadinho.

This paper deals with the indigenous people present at the foundation of Naô Xohã village. The village foundation was led by different indigenous ethnicities and the village now houses Pataxó and Pataxó Hã-Hã-Hãe groups, with kinship relations between them. According to the study performed among them by De Campos (2019), the site was chosen after one Pataxó Hã-Hã-Hãe became aware of the existence of an area with preserved vegetation, adjacent to a Landless Workers’ Movement (MST) camp in São Joaquim de Bicas. The area, a fragment of the Atlantic Forest, is 53 kilometers or 32 miles away from downtown Belo Horizonte and sits on the left bank of the Paraopeba River. The *retomada* began in October 2017, when some of them camped on the ground. From then on, they took turns at the camp to maintain their constant presence there, moving between the city and the village while they worked to structure the area and create the conditions for staying there. In the first months, few families managed to stay regularly in the village, mainly due to the precarious conditions of the first shelters, the difficulty in enduring the rainy season, and the lack of water and food. To build their huts, they used both resources that were available in the forest and materials that they received as donations. This study will analyze the migrations and other modalities of spatial mobility carried out by this indigenous group, based on field research that was realized there, to be described as follows.

5 Methodology

This study used qualitative research methodology for both data collection and analysis. The information that empirically supports our analyses was composed according to four research stages: interviews, transcription, coding, and validation of the results.

The first stage, the interviews with the indigenous people, was carried out in Naô Xohã village, in São Joaquim de Bicas, BHMA, in March 2019. Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 indigenous residents of the place. Some of these interviews had two respondents simultaneously. We interviewed both indigenous leaders and other villagers, and most of the interviews took place near the respondents’ homes. Their free consent was given through the signing of an informed consent term, acknowledging and authorizing the scientific use of the information provided. All interviews were recorded in digital files that ultimately amounted to 6 hours and 42 minutes of recording. Subsequently, we made a textual transcription of the material focusing on the content of the respondents’ answers, generating a database in text format. The transcripts were made based on the

¹ These people understand their ancestral lands to have been stolen from them by their colonizers, so they believe in the process of reclaiming the land: taking back the territory that has always been theirs.

literal content of the responses, not incorporating data on non-verbal reactions or manifestations of the interviewees that may have been captured by the recordings. The content of the interviews contained the themes of migration trajectory, living conditions in Naô Xohã, and questions on plans for future housing.

The transcribed material underwent analytical treatment in the present analysis, seeking to produce information on migration and spatial mobility. This was done through the selection of empirical indicators from the text of the transcripts, according to the methodology proposed by Adu (2019). These indicators are the text segments, or sentences, whose meaning is associated with the topic of interest.

Then, the empirical indicators were coded in two subsequent cycles.

The first one used open coding, a technique that assigns textual labels to empirical indicators using a word or a short phrase that describes the meaning of the subject addressed (Saldaña 2009). The set of these primary codes provided the first inventory of topics related to the migration and spatial mobility of this indigenous group. The codes created were always related to or grounded on one or more empirical indicators extracted from the responses of at least one respondent. This ensures greater security to the coding work, favoring the interpretation of the material and its fidelity to the empirical situation experienced by the indigenous people. This method also enables the retrieval of the literal citations to which the codes refer, which helps both in the progressive refinement of the codes and with the possibility of retaking textual fragments to exemplify the processes described.

At the end of the first coding cycle, 67 codes were generated.

The second coding cycle condensed the initial codes into a compact set of categories, based on the thematic affinity between the 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 relatively more abstract conceptual arrangements than the initial codes. Because these categories are directly derived from these codes, they do not lose reference to the material collected, enabling the retrieval of the empirical indicators on which they are based (Saldaña 2009; Miles and Huberman 1994). At the end of the process, the codes were grouped into 10 categories, as shown in Table 1.

The record of the existing relationships between the categories and the codes that compose them, as well as their relationship with the other categories and subcategories created, favoured both the systematization of the analyses and the presentation of the results. During the entire coding process, the data were repeatedly represented in diagrams, which consisted of relationship networks between codes and categories. In addition, the diagrams provided an organized presentation of the results, in a compact and accessible format for interpreting the phenomenon under study, in accordance with the methodology proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014).

The validation of results was carried out through result verification, in a process called members checking (Adu 2019). This required sending the analysis results to some of the respondents and capturing their reactions to the findings. We were thus able to enhance the accuracy of the findings and discard misinterpretations. This approach is especially suitable for analyses that involve data coding, due to the interpretive nature of this process, which may eventually cause the codes to drift apart from the evidence produced in the study.

6 Results

Table 1 presents the categories created in the coding process, divided into two dimensions. The first one contains the territorial references indicated by the indigenous respondents in the interviews, referring to the places where they were born, where they moved, where they lived at the time of the interview, and where they went regularly for their everyday activities. These locations include the group of villages located in the Pataxó indigenous lands in Southern Bahia, where almost all the interviewees were born and where they came from before migrating to a municipality in the BHMA. The second spatial reference recurrently mentioned is the city of Belo Horizonte, their initial migration destination. This is where they found housing and work activities upon arriving at the BHMA, as well as services to meet their needs. At last, Naô Xohã village, where the interviews were conducted, was the main territorial reference described in the interviews, where they migrated after residing in Belo Horizonte for some time.

Although most of the time the respondents' answers made a fixed reference to one of these three places, such as "I was born there" or "I live here", the reports call attention to the intense and persistent movement of these indigenous subjects across these places. This suggests that, even if they have moved "definitely", or migrated, to one point, they actually arise as nodes in a spatial network through which they continuously move. In this sense, migration would represent a repositioning at some point in a multi-sited network of spatial mobility.

The reasons and conditions they presented for the occurrence of migration and the perpetuation of dislocations in the network, described in great detail during the interviews, were separated into seven categories, grouped in the dimension "dynamizing elements of spatial dislocations", as seen in Table 1.

Table 1 – Description of the analytical categories related to the migration of the Pataxó to the BHMR, according to their dimensions.

Dimensions	Categories	Description
Territorial references	Villages in Bahia	All types of references to the villages in the Pataxó indigenous lands of Southern Bahia, the respondents' places of origin or birth.
	Belo Horizonte	All descriptions of events or processes lived by the indigenous people in the city of Belo Horizonte.
	Naô Xohã village	References to the implementation of Nao Xoha village, in the municipality of São Joaquim de Bicas, Minas Gerais, as well as aspects related to daily life in the place.
Dynamizing elements of spatial dislocations	Population pressure	Interviewees' descriptions of different types of "population pressures" to which they were subjected and which they attributed as a reason for spatial dislocation or migration.
	Family networks	References to the role of family ties as a facilitator or a stimulus for spatial dislocation, such as assistance with finding housing, entering the job market, and family reunions.
	Work	References to occupations or paid economic activities performed by indigenous people, with the exception of activities related to selling handicrafts.
	Cost of living	Descriptions of high costs for establishing a home in a given location, with emphasis on rental rates and home maintenance expenses.
	Tranquility	References to positive aspects they associate with life in the woods, close to natural attributes that contrast with their experience of daily life in urban areas.
	Urban structure	Interviewees' mentions of health services, education, service structure, access to electricity, internet connection, and basic sanitation in urban environments.
	Handicrafts	Activities related to the purchase, sale, and making of indigenous handicrafts, as well as references made to the contribution of these activities to the cultural strengthening of the group.

Source: elaborated by us based on field research.

The first category, **population pressure**, refers to the interviewees' descriptions of different types of pressure that motivated them to migrate from the villages of Bahia to Minas Gerais. High population density and the difficulties of ensuring their economic survival were the two main reasons they appointed for leaving the villages in search of other places to live. The main element that they reported on this subject was the intense competition among those selling handicrafts to tourists in the region of the Bahia villages. As one respondent recounts, upon coming across groups of tourists in Bahia, "they would all go there to sell the same thing", which ultimately pressed down the prices. He adds that he "did not profit enough to support his family". This was his justification for trying to sell the handicrafts elsewhere. As he reports: "many families in our village decide to go around Brazil selling handicrafts".

The factors mentioned by them for coming to the BHMA were related to the previous presence of relatives residing in the region. These references make up the second category of dynamizing elements of migration, **family networks**. These relationships acted as a directing element of the migration flow of both the interviewees who arrived first and their families and relatives, who arrived afterward. This network acted in offering initial housing in Belo Horizonte and in helping them find work in the BHMA. The possibility of selling indigenous handicrafts at sales points pre-established in the city by previous migrants, according to reports, was also an attractive factor for some of them to migrate.

This happened, according to them, after one of them "acquired a place in the city, a place to work". Another respondent describes his arrival at BHMA and the subsequent arrival of his family thus:

[I said] "I'm gonna leave them here for a while and see what I can arrange to bring them". Then I got rid of some things from inside the house, paid two months' rent and came here. I started working here with construction, civil construction, stuff like that, then the situation improved and I said "I'm staying here, are you coming with the children?". She said "I am". I said "I'm going to rent the shed and give you the money for the ticket, then you come". Then she came with the children.

Settling in the BHMA depended, according to them, on the possibility of carrying out some sort of paid economic activity after migration. These references were incorporated into the category **work**. These indigenous people reported performing different types of occupations in the city. The main references for men were working in civil construction, commerce, and services. In commerce, they reported having worked at restaurants as servers and, in some cases, pizza chefs. Bricklaying was mentioned a few times, although most mention working as bricklayers' assistants and carpenters' assistants. Gardening in hotels in the region was also primarily mentioned as assistant positions. When reporting women's occupations, there were references to cleaning services. As one respondent said when asked about his work and that of his partner in the first days at the BHMR: "I started to do odd jobs, I left home early, got home late. She started doing cleaning jobs to help with the household income".

Along with the opportunities that the big city offers in terms of employment and income, the hardships and the high cost of living in urban areas were recurring points in their responses. These aspects made up codes that are included in the category **cost of living**. The main aspects related to the difficulty of settling and surviving in Belo Horizonte were high rents, lack of space, and inadequate housing conditions, together with mentions of discrimination and violence suffered by the indigenous people.

When money is tight you can't miss any opportunity, you have to seize it. Pay rent. Any money that comes, if you see you're gonna make money, you have to keep it, otherwise, the landlord won't wait. They knock on your door, they call you. If you fall behind, they scold you.

The difficulty in paying rent, a fixed expense that is incompatible with the volatility of incomes of indigenous people in the labor market, is one of the important conditions they report for migrating to Naô Xohã village, in search of something more befitting with their aspirations and survival possibilities.

In addition, life by the river, in the middle of the woods, in a quiet place, with access to natural resources and collective ownership of the land, are factors linked to **tranquillity** and refer to life in Naô Xohã village, leading some of them to move there. The responses pinpoint positive aspects such as “the good that nature brings to us”, and statements such as: “here I can step on the ground, feel the earth, breathe air with no pollution, no car noises”, which endorse these indigenous people's appreciation of rural life.

However, the absence of an urban service structure in the newly inaugurated village—the lack of electricity, health care services, and education equipment, among other items—kept them continuously moving between the village and Belo Horizonte, with some of them even migrating back to the city. These factors make up the following category, **urban structure**. One interviewee reports: “my son is in the city studying because if I kept him here ... he would miss the school year and it would be bad for him”. Others mention the difficulty in accessing health care services from the village: “the greatest difficulty today is transport, because if you have transport, you can take your relative to a health center. The biggest difficulty is transport and our health”.

Life in the village is at a crossroads. The benefits are the lower cost of living, greater tranquillity and security, and a lifestyle that is more aligned with the indigenous people's aspirations. At the same time, there is a lack of service structure that is necessary for their survival. The account below, made in the village, emblematically describes the process:

“What bothers me here is just the boys' school. We haven't got the chance to study, right? You cannot be irresponsible and leave your children without school. You don't worry if a boy is on the street, going out on the street. They are out there, playing all day.”

Within the dualities of this existence, processes of attraction and repulsion act together, keeping them in constant movement within the network of locations that structure their living space in the BHMA.

Finally, with **handicrafts**, we can comprehend aspects that keep these indigenous people in constant movement between the three spatial references that emerge from the interviews. The commercialization of handicrafts to non-indigenous people, most of them tourists, is the main economic activity among the Pataxó in the villages of Bahia, and also among many living in other Brazilian cities (Sampaio, 2000; Cunha, 2013). The dislocation to cities—mainly big metropolises like Brasília, São Paulo, and Belo Horizonte—to sell handicrafts was recurrently mentioned as a survival strategy among the interviewees. According to them, this is due to there being a large number of tourists in these places throughout the year, and not just in the summer season, as in Bahia. An emblematic example was given by a respondent who said that, before coming to the BHMR, he had been “traveling around selling handicrafts, promoting culture, giving lectures at schools” for a while. However, the hardships they face in order to settle in these places are numerous. Their responses suggest that they are sometimes kept by municipal inspectors from selling; they may even suffer physical violence or have their products damaged. One interviewee sums up the issue when he paraphrases an inspector who once approached him: “hey, Indian, get this out of here, this is not a village. Get your handicraft out of here or I’ll take it”.

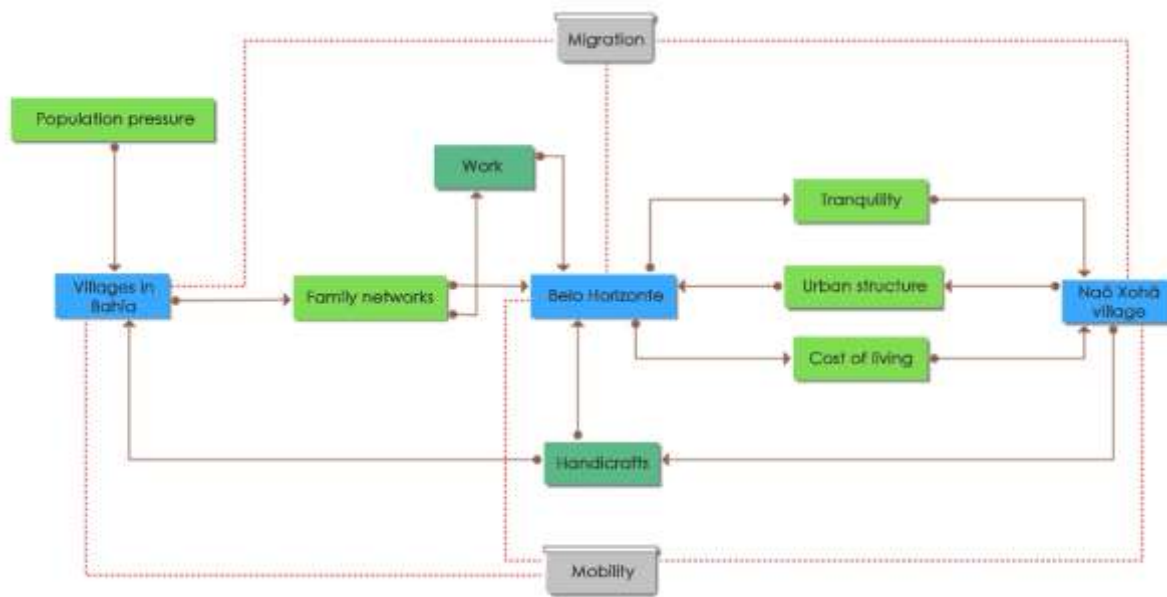
In this context, the foundation of Naô Xohã village emerges as a new possibility to strengthen the insertion of these indigenous groups in the process of making and selling handicrafts. They lamented that in Belo Horizonte they were unable to make handicrafts, so that living in the village would allow them to extract material and craft their products on their own, such as troughs, spoons, and other wooden utensils. This leads them to continually visit the villages of Bahia, where these artifacts are made.

The discomfort with the intense traffic between villages and cities makes him aspire to a sedentary life in the village: “I don’t even want to leave here to go to the hippie market², I want to sell my stuff right here. As it will be, there will be people, so there’s no reason for me to go out. I want to produce and sell right here”.

Having described each of the elements that dynamize the processes of migration and spatial mobility of the Pataxó, we must advance in the understanding of how these elements were presented by the interviewees in terms of relationships among them and with the network of locations described in the field research. This will be carried out from the analysis of the explanatory diagram presented in Figure 1, which presents the relations between the analysis categories of the present study.

² A major weekly street market where handicrafts are sold, among other types of goods.

Figure 1 – Dynamizing elements that stimulated the spatial dislocation of the Pataxó between the villages of BA, Belo Horizonte, and Naô Xohã village



According to the reports we collected, population pressure in the villages of Bahia motivated the group of indigenous people to migrate to other regions of the country. The network of family contacts established with indigenous people already living in the BHMA acted attracted the group to Belo Horizonte, providing some of them with housing and work. After settling in the place of destination, the migrants brought their relatives (usually their wives and children) and established their home in the city.

The insertion of indigenous people into the labor market took place through the performance of informal or low-skilled occupations, as well as activities related to the sale of handicrafts. The latter kept them in a continuous movement between Belo Horizonte and the villages of Bahia in order to buy the materials to be commercialized.

Over time, they reported difficulties in staying in Belo Horizonte: the high cost of living, the need to pay rent, and inadequate living conditions. They also denounced difficulties to work, suffering discrimination, and being exposed to situations of violence in the city.

In 2017, they found an area in a municipality close to Belo Horizonte, where they founded Naô Xohã village and were able to begin living in a place they considered more peaceful and in keeping with their way of life. Nevertheless, the region lacks the urban structure they need to survive, such as education and health services, and does not provide them with the means to earn income. They remain, therefore, strongly tied to Belo Horizonte in order to access these services and sell handicrafts. Selling handicrafts also keeps them in constant transit between the BHMR and their villages of origin in Bahia.

All these elements explain the process by which the indigenous people had to build a multi-sited spatial network to secure their survival, as none of the territories that make up their network offered all the resources and features that

they needed to get by. The accounts highlight the intense and persistent movement of indigenous people across these places. This suggests that even if they have moved “definitely”, or migrated, to one point, migration would represent a repositioning at some point in a multi-sited network of spatial mobility, rather than a rupture of relations with the migrants’ places of origin.

A multiplicity of factors acted together as dynamizing elements of these dislocations, ascribing meaning to the connections established between the places through which they transited. These indigenous people lived in a spatially dual reality: in the villages of Bahia they were close to their family but lacked survival opportunities; in Belo Horizonte, they had the opportunity to make a living and use urban services but were uncomfortable with the hassle and high cost of urban life; in Naô Xohã village they lived in a quiet place and close to nature but were deprived of the perks of the city.

7 Final remarks

Along with the accelerated urbanization process that several indigenous populations around the world have been going through (McSweeney & Jokish 2015; Peluso 2015), indigenous people are under pressure from several different orders, which leads them to create new forms of dislocations and settlement (Cielo and Duran 2012). In this context, a high socio-spatial vulnerability arises, both in their original territories, as has been highlighted by the indigenous authors themselves (Santos 2018; Souza 2018), and due to the immense difficulties of insertion in the cities where they live or circulate (Trujano 2008). In keeping with contemporary analytical perspectives focused on the theme of diasporas and the formation of hybrid spaces, studies on indigenous migration carried out in Latin-American contexts have emphasized the adoption by these migrants of a “multi-sited” spatial occupation pattern, structured around rural-urban circuits (Padoch et. al. 2008), forming “hybrid spaces” of survival and identity construction (Alexiades and Peluso 2015).

Articulated with the current theoretical moment, in this paper we present an analysis of the migration and spatial mobility of a group of Pataxó indigenous people in the BHMA, which takes place over a multi-sited spatial network. We presented dynamizing elements of this process, characterized as determinants of indigenous migrations and of the perpetuation of spatial dislocations performed by the group.

This was done through field research, whose collected data underwent rigorous methodological treatment through the processes of transcription, coding, diagramming, and validation of results.

We believe that the information produced in our analysis contributes to the understanding of the complexity of the contemporary migration phenomenon and allows for the identification of the challenges faced by certain population groups in order to survive amidst the hardships that different types of territories thrusts upon them.

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