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Thinking with *Bem Viver* across rural and urban Amazonia: Indigenous and Black spaces of resistance

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Abstract

In Brazil, Bem Viver recently arrived as a compelling counter-narrative to development's vision of land and labor as resources to be exploited. Bem Viver challenges the reductionism of land-as-resource, reinforces community autonomy, and entails reciprocity in relations with the nonhuman world. The purpose of this article is to extend conversations surrounding Bem Viver to the Brazilian Amazon state of Pará, primarily through asking whether the relational ethics of Bem Viver are active within current resistance movements focused on opposing neoliberal capitalism and racially-motivated dispossession. These resistance movements struggle for the maintenance of traditional relations while safeguarding socioecologies through territory. The cases we discuss draw upon our ethnographic work conducted within an Indigenous community in the Tapajós Basin and the Afro-Brazilian market Porto da Palha in urban Belém. We also consider whether Bem Viver opens the possibility of a post-political ecology framing of contestation over natural resources and place. Bem Viver is fundamentally relational and creates territorialities conflicting with market logics centered on financialization, individual accumulation, and private property. On the ground, Bem Viver as praxis shapes everyday practices sustaining place-based lifeways and determining material realities for the Indigenous and Black communities of the Tapajós and Belém regions of Pará.

Keywords: Bem Viver, Buen Vivir, Amazon, Indigenous, Afro-Brazilian, Brazil, territory, conservation, development, socioecologies, gentrification, Carbon Credits, race, knowledge

Résumé

Au Brésil, Bem Viver s'est imposé comme un contre-récit convaincant à une vision du développement qui considère la terre et le travail comme des ressources à exploiter. Bem Viver remet en question ce réductionnisme, renforce l'autonomie des communautés et implique la réciprocité dans les relations avec le monde non humain. Cet article étend les conversations autour de Bem Viver à l'État du Pará, en Amazonie brésilienne. Il se demande si l'éthique relationnelle de Bem Viver est active au sein des mouvements de résistance actuels qui s'opposent au capitalisme néolibéral et à la dépossession à motivation raciale. Ces mouvements luttent pour le maintien des relations traditionnelles tout en sauvegardant les socio-écologies territoriales. Nous nous appuyons sur notre travail ethnographique mené au sein d'une communauté indigène du bassin du Tapajós et du marché afro-brésilien Porto da Palha dans la ville de Belém. Nous nous demandons également si le Bem Viver ouvre la possibilité d'une écologie post-politique, encadrant la contestation des ressources naturelles et du lieu. Bem Viver est fondamentalement relationnel. Ses territorialités sont en conflit avec les logiques de marché centrées sur la financiarisation, l'accumulation individuelle et la propriété privée. Sur le terrain, Bem Viver façonne les pratiques quotidiennes qui soutiennent les modes de vie basés sur le lieu.

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Il détermine les réalités matérielles des communautés indigènes et noires des régions de Tapajós et de Belém, dans l'État du Pará.

Mots-clés: Bem Viver, Buen Vivir, Amazonie, indigène, afro-brésilien, Brésil, territoire, conservation, développement, socio-écologies, gentrification, crédits carbone, race, connaissance.

Resumo

Bem Viver é uma noção que recentemente vem sendo adotada no Brasil para confrontar a visão de terra e trabalho como recursos a serem economicamente explorados. A noção desafia o reducionismo da terra como recurso produtivo, enfatiza a autonomia das comunidades e propõe reciprocidade nas relações com o mundo não humano. O objetivo deste artigo é ampliar a vigente discussão sobre Bem Viver no Pará, estado brasileiro situado na Amazônia, principalmente indagando sobre a assertividade da ética relacional do Bem Viver no seio de movimentos de resistência que se opõem ao neoliberalismo e à despossessão territorial movida por racismos. Estes movimentos de resistência lutam pela manutenção de suas relações tradicionais ao mesmo tempo em que preservam o ambiente ecológico e social nos seus territórios. Os casos que o artigo discute se relacionam a trabalhos etnográficos conduzidos em uma aldeia indígena do baixo rio Tapajós, na região de Santarém, e também no porto -feira da Palha, um lugar urbano de presença afro-brasileira em Belém. O artigo argumenta ainda se a noção de Bem Viver, que abrange valores não materiais, como identidade e reciprocidade, abre possibilidades para uma abordagem pós-ecologia política, no que tange a recursos naturais e lugar. Bem Viver é fundamentalmente relacional e expressa territorialidades que conflitam com a lógica mercadológica, centrada no capital, na acumulação individual e na propriedade privada. De fato, na realidade dos lugares e territórios, Bem Viver é uma práxis que sustenta modos de vida e determina realidades materiais e não materiais para comunidades indígenas e negras, no baixo Tapajós e em Belém.

Palavras-chave: Bem Viver, Buen Vivir, Amazônia, indígena, afro-brasileiro, Brasil, território, conservação, desenvolvimento, socioecologias, gentrificação, créditos de carbono, raça, conhecimento

1. Introduction

The Brazilian Amazon state of Pará frequently appears in international headlines as the site of struggle over resources (timber, land, minerals, hydropower) and invasion of Indigenous territories (including those of the Tembé, Parakanã, and Arara). Images of degraded pastures with cows grazing among the ghosts of rainforest trees and the construction of the Belo Monte dam adorn articles attesting to the advance of the "Arc of Destruction", the rainforest balancing upon the precipice of "no return."[2] Meanwhile, most international news overlooks the region's urbanization, which accounts for the vast majority of the population.[3] Amazonia's second largest city Belém, the capital of Pará, is an Afro-Brazilian majority city with about 70% of its residents identifying as Black/*negro* (*preto* and *pardo*), according to the IBGE. There, city development campaigns isolate Black populations in flood-prone lowlands or increasingly in the metropolitan area's outskirts. Popular discourse equates Indigeneity or Blackness to a lack of knowledge or development, creating the impression that for Amazonia to modernize it must embrace destructive capital, violently harvest natural resources, and implement a culture of Euro-American whiteness.

In opposition to this worldview, the Indigenous concept now known as Bem Viver offers a "counter-hegemonic discourse that subverts the dominant discourse and its corresponding domination practices" (Acosta, 2016, p. 34). Within the context of Pará, Bem Viver provides an intervention in the politics of development, as a praxis that places communal identity and territory at the center of human-environment relations. In this article, we begin by explaining our genealogy of Bem Viver, acknowledging that there are many definitions and histories just as there are many "*Amazônias*" (Porto-Gonçalves, 2001). Next we present our conceptual frameworks for race, territory, and Bem Viver as methodological praxis before considering two cases: Indigenous, rural Maró territory and Afro-Brazilian, urban Porto da Palha. Because 21st century Amazonia is multiple, contradictory, and intersectional, juxtaposing Bem Viver through presenting two paradigmatic yet mutually-constitutive realities reflects ongoing political and epistemological commitments. Our article concludes by placing race, territory, and Bem Viver in dialogue between the two cases. We demonstrate that the construction of Bem Viver and territory occurs as a joint process through the political affirmation of identity and lifeways (*modo de vida*). Finally, we offer concluding remarks on the potential contribution of Bem Viver to political ecology. As a relational ethic that travels across contexts including between local communities and the academy, Bem Viver valorizes Black and Indigenous place-based lifeways while disputing the individual-centered logic of the market, the Brazilian nation-state, and Euro-American resource geographies.

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[2] Recent geopolitics involving Amazonian nation-states and the North Atlantic focus on the large-scale transition of rainforest to savannah due deforestation and climate change (Vargas, 2023).

[3] IBGE's Censo Demográfico 2010 estimated 75% of the population of the administrative jurisdiction Amazônia Legal lives in urban areas.

2. Bem Viver(es)

Bem Viver (Portuguese) or *Buen Vivir* (Spanish) as well as Indigenous names such as *Suma Qamaña* (Aymara), *Sumak Kawsay* (Quechua) and *Tekoporá* (Guarani) found footing in universities and other non-Indigenous intellectual circles as a compelling decolonial counter-narrative to Eurocentric philosophies including capitalism and socialism which see land and labor primarily as resources. However, Bem Viver long existed within the Indigenous communities of the Andes and Amazon as a response to the imposition of Spanish coloniality. Bem Viver as an alternative cosmology appears as early as the writings of 1615 by the Quechua Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala (also known as Huamán Poma or Wamán Poma), entitled "Nueva corónica y buen gobierno" (Quijano, 2013). Guamán Poma, observing the Indigenous Incan social order oppressed by the conquerors and listening to the complaints of the conquered, "historically rescued and valued the knowledge and practices of the conquered social order and, at the same time, projected them as a horizon of meaning in the search for the replacement of the new unjust order imposed by the colonial system" (Lacerda & Feitosa, 2015, p. 13). Continuing, "An Andean utopia would be founded on two basic elements: the reference of *Pachamama*, 'mother earth,' and the concept of *Sumak Kawsay* or *Suma Qamaña* (Aymara) that designate the Andean *Bem Viver*."

The drawings of Poma de Ayala (Figure 1) contextualize the principles behind the Aymara concept of *Suma Qamaña* which through contrasting Indigenous and colonial relations center the value of labor as community-based reciprocity and happiness rather than simply physical exhaustion (Cusicanqui, 2011).

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui suggests Guamán Poma preferred theorization through drawings because "written language is a space of colonization … the drawings express another type of discourse" (p. 175). According to Cusicanqui, work may be experienced as either a source of happiness and creativity or otherwise tears and pain. "The possibility of a present and future wellbeing, of Suma Qamaña (vivir bien) is a key Indigenous notion which is expressed in rituals, drawings, and other imaginaries" (p. 178). Guamán Poma similarly points out that the colonial relations of work exemplify an "upside-down world" or a hierarchy of priorities in conflict.

On the other hand, the authors Cubillo-Guevara and Hidalgo-Capitán (2015) refer to *Sumak Kawsay* as a social phenomenon which took place in the Ecuadorian Amazon beginning in the late twentieth century. While *Sumak Kawsay* already existed as an Andean-Amazonian Indigenous practice, the deliberate naming as such within Kichiwa communities of the Ecuadorian Amazon generated political momentum through this very naming. The resulting translation into *Buen Vivir* (as an expanded politic) became equally well-received amongst Indigenous peoples precisely because the practice already existed. The concept *Buen Vivir*, while ceasing to be exclusively Indigenous, reflects its inspiration in "the ancestral culture of the Andean-Amazonian Indigenous peoples" (Cubillo-Guevara & Hidalgo-Capitán, 2015, p. 304). This contextualization from Indigenous practice to a philosophical concept within Ecuadorian politics created yet another of multiple Bem Viveres. Both the governments of Bolivia and Ecuador appropriated these concepts, increasingly understood as *Buen Vivir*, as part of larger decolonial schemes to create something related but new and often contrary to the social movements who originally called for its inclusion (Cusicanqui, 2020).

There are multiple Bem Viveres because when the concept travels from the Andes to the Brazilian Amazon, for example, Bem Viver encounters a new contextualization. Therefore, we suggest treating Bem Viver not as the exhumation of something ancestrally frozen in the past, but rather as an ongoing process of struggle (*processo de luta*). In this sense, Bem Viver is always a horizon, an attainable utopia. Our conceptualization follows four important principles: (1) above all, organic relations with all beings (human and nonhuman); (2) complementarity within these relations rather than exclusion; (3) reciprocity; and (4) integrality which suggests each individual (human and nonhuman) interacts and forms connections with the rest of nature through the principles of complementarity and reciprocity (Fleuri, 2022). In Brazil, Indigenous and other traditional populations including Afro-descendent peoples such as Quilombolas (similar to maroons, descendants of communities escaping slavery) face considerable racism, often emerging from their resistance to predatory development projects. Therefore, to understand Bem Viver in the context of the Brazilian Amazon, we must begin by addressing race.

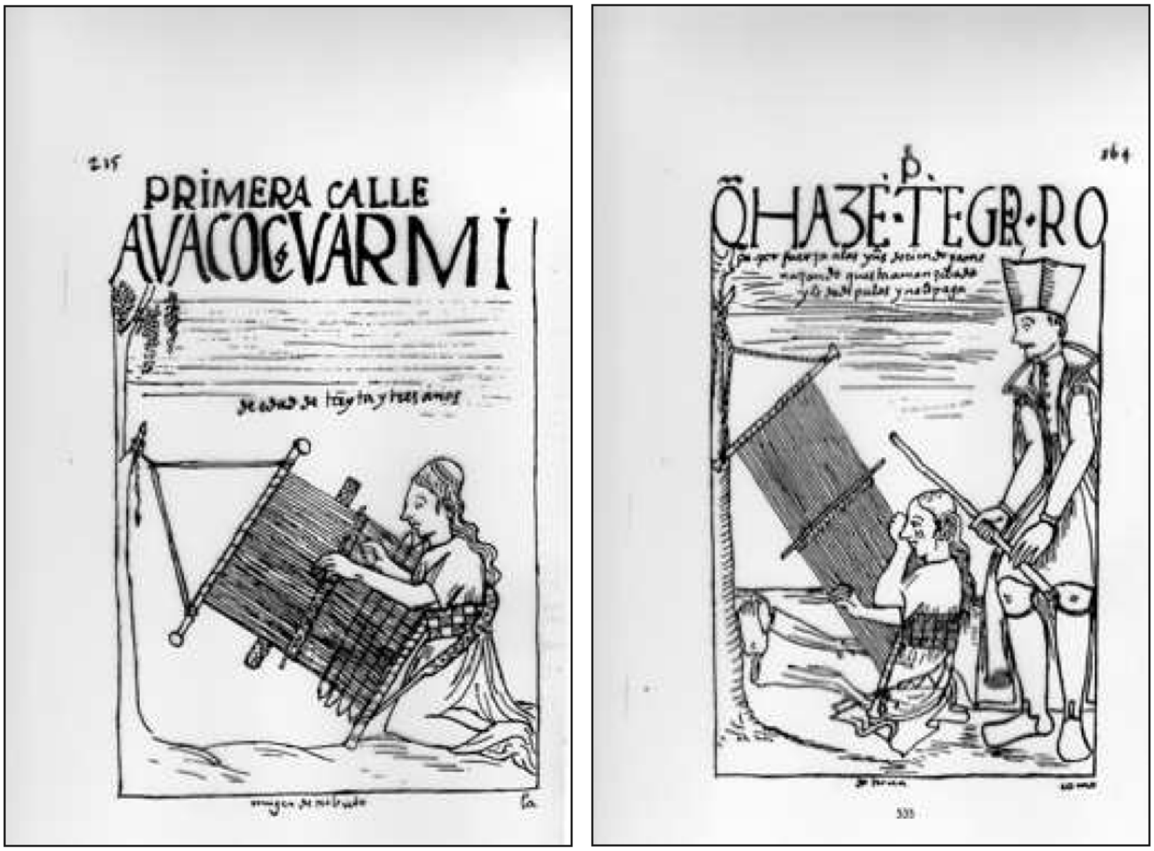

Figure 1: These two images taken from the "Nueva corónica y buen gobierno" by Poma de Ayala show the same activity, weaving, performed in two different contexts. The second image shows a woman working under the supervision of a colonial priest. The first image shows the same labor activity, within a context of Bem Viver (*Sumak Kawsay*). Images found in Cusicanqui (2020)

3. Bem Viver and race

Race is a social and ideological construct and not a natural or biological fact. Thus, racism, according to Franz Fanon (2008), occurs as a global hierarchy of superiority and inferiority above and below the line of humanity. The people who are placed above the line of humanity receive recognition as subjects with human rights while those below the line are rejected as subhuman or non-human. Their humanity is questioned and therefore denied. Racism is the dehumanization of the other (Fanon, 2008). In Abya Yala (otherwise known as the Americas), the initial form of racism hinged on religion, exemplified by the Valladolid debate (1550-1551) between Sepulvada and De Las Casas. The Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala were declared human, yet in a state of barbarism due to their lack of Christianity. This cultural racism continues to this day when Brazilian evangelical leaders demonize Indigenous or Afro-descendent practices (Guimarães, 2022). However, today, much racism in Brazil centers upon developmentalist discourses, a form of biological racism. The Bolsonaro presidency (2019-2022) emboldened this discourse through disparaging portrayals of Indigenous populations, as existing in a "prehistoric state" or as "animals in zoos" ("Índios em reservas são como animais…", 2018). Beyond religious or phenotypic markers, racism also discriminates based on ethnicity, language, clothing, place, and perceptions of cleanliness (Warren, 2001). Therefore, at its core, racism distributes populations into zones of being and non-being (Fanon, 2008; Grosfoguel, 2012).

Spatially speaking, racialized zones of being and non-being appear both in urban and rural settings, which may be termed racial geographies (Wynter, 1995). For example, migrants facing racial discrimination in rural settings often become dislocated to urban peripheries when in search of urban services. In Amazonia, these geographies correspond to the banks of polluted rivers and *igarapés* (streams) such as the Rio Guama and Igarapé Tucunduba in Belém. In *Indian Given* (2016), social and cultural scholar Saldaña-Portillo identifies the historical roots of racial geographies in the Americas as well as contemporary outcomes: Non-white subjects remain imagined as the occupants of dangerous, unlawful, and disputed territories. This holds true for Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous communities in Amazonia where police presence becomes amplified in urban neighborhoods based on race (Couto, 2021) or is entirely lacking for the security of Indigenous territories.[4]

Whether in rural areas or cities, non-white Brazilians face stereotypes ranging from threatened to threatening, resulting in public apathy towards violence and elite dismissal of their rights to place, security, and self-determination. In the Brazilian Amazon and across the Americas, Black and Indigenous peoples face historical and ongoing structural racism (including the denial of territorial rights) as territorial "conquest" remains the priority for settler states (King, 2019). When understood as a political praxis valorizing relations situated in place, Bem Viver resists the "conquest" of settler developmentalism. The humanity of people relates to their identity, rooted in their culture, lifeways (*modo de vida*), and community. The sustenance of this specific humanity depends upon environmental relations and material conditions, affirmed as a territory.

4. Bem Viver and territory

In the Brazilian Amazon, the territories occupied by Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples present an obstacle to the capture of natural resources by capitalism. For example, ILO Convention 169 requires infrastructure projects impacting Indigenous or Quilombola territories to attain Free, Prior & Informed Consent (FPIC) from impacted communities. These territories historically acted as refuges, outside the reach of colonial, imperial, and state authorities seeking to enslave, convert, and assimilate Indigenous, Afro-descendent, and mixed-race traditional (e.g. *caboclo*) peoples (Porto-Gonçalves, 2005). As a result, exceptionally high biodiversity values also attract so-called "conservation initiatives" (such as carbon credit schemes). Extraction of financial value follows the racial hierarchy of coloniality (Quijano, 2007).

For traditional populations in South America, territory arises from familiarity and connection with a location, but also through specific power relations with the state (Kantner & Tavares, 2023). Like Bem Viver, territory is both relational and processual (Zibechi, 2012). Bem Viver is closely related to territory due to the intimate links between identity and place, which become politicized through the potential of territory (Clare *et al*., 2018). In contrast to the exclusive territorialities of nation-states such as Brazil, Bem Viver affirms the intimacy and reciprocity of multi-territories (Escobar, 2008; Haesbaert, 2008). Both territory and Bem Viver become situated by emphasizing locality and immediacy with the surrounding ecology (Sandoval *et al*., 2017; Zaragocin & Caretta, 2021). In this sense, locality asserts that patterns of affinity and *modo de vida* nested in place legitimate autonomy and authority over resources (Dahbour, 2019).

Without territory, Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples lose their humanity through the negation of their lifeways. Those who are able to construct a territory out of a place are typically able to remain and to stay in those locations, maintaining the integrality of relations (social, economic, ecological) – this signifies Bem Viver. Whether initiated by the state or capital (or with strong ties between both), the removal of Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples from their traditional territories dislocates the relations through which Bem Viver emerges – between people, and between humans and nonhumans. As an Indigenous person of the Lower Tapajós explained in relation to sovereignty over territory, "An Indian without land is no one" ("*Índio sem terra é ninguém*") (Peixoto *et al*., 2012). Even Indigenous urbanites retain links with their territories (Forte, 2010). According to the writings of Guamán Poma, the Indigenous concept behind Bem Viver, *Sumak Kawsay*, became contextualized as a proposal for good governance (*buen gobierno*). Bem Viver requires public policies and it is through territory that people call upon the state to enact policies which affirm rather than deny self-determination. Together, territory and Bem Viver make political claims, indicating a praxis towards particular ways of institutional, social, and ecological organization. However before arriving at our discussion of cases, we must further contextualize our use of Bem Viver through our positionality within Pará.

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[4] Under Lula, the Brazilian federal government returned to providing security for Indigenous territories in dramatic fashion with a massive operation to remove illegal gold miners (*garimpeiros*) from Yanomami territory in 2023 (Phillips, 2023).

5. Methodology

Bem Viver may be considered an Quechua/Aymara ancestrality named (*nomeado*) and updated for various contexts. As we will demonstrate, this occurs in both urban and rural settings. According to these different contexts, instead of an "authentic" and homogenous Bem Viver, there are many Bem Viveres. The core value of good relations between humans and nonhumans must be accomplished in a variety of situations. We include both a rural case (TI Maró) and an urban case (Porto da Palha) in order to demonstrate that Bem Viver may be applied within both environments due to principles held in common.

In Brazil, Bem Viver expanded to include a diversity of contexts from the south to the north of the country and especially in university settings. Across South America, Indigenous movements, intellectuals, and even national governments have used Bem Viver in their projects, provoking an epistemological debate involving all these actors and agents (Quintero, 2018). Likewise, contextualization occurs at both TI Maró and Porto da Palha. The two examples studied side-by-side illustrate the process of Bem Viver as an epistemological conversation between locals and academics due to the close proximity of public universities and social movements (Peixoto & Saraiva, 2022; Reis *et al*., 2019). Mutual influence exists between locals and students/professors at the universities, where Bem Viver enters discourses as a way to face and contest the greed of private interests circling Indigenous and Black territories. In Brazil, the inclusion of Indigenous and Afro-descendent students in university programs through the quota system led to this intervention.[5] As non-Indigenous authors and members of local intellectual communities, we view our role as one of contributing to this important process of naming the pervasive existence of similar, community-based practices across Brazil. This naming reveals a world not yet theoretically declared. By naming concrete practices, these practices become theoretically informed, and the resulting exchange between practice and theory generates praxis. In Brazil, Bem Viver is above all a praxis existing in the encounter between academics and local people.

The cases we discuss in the next section draw on ethnographic work by the respective authors between 2017 and 2019. The authors conducted interviews at TI Maró (Maró Indigenous Territory), an Indigenous youth leadership conference at TI Cobra Grande (Cobra Grande Indigenous Territory), Santarém, Alter do Chão, and Belém (Porto da Palha) (Figure 2).

Data gathering relied on semi-structured interviewing approaches as well as participant observation and discourse analysis of popular media. Interviews included members of Maró territory and participants at the Porto da Palha market as well as associated NGOs and activist networks. The article results from a long-term commitment by the authors to education projects at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) in Belém and the Federal University of Western Pará (UFOPA) in Santarém as well as within neighborhoods and territories which produce knowledge outside the academy.

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[5] In 2023 the Afro-Brazilian Federal Congresswoman Dandara Tonantzin led the renewal of the Quota Law which reserves public university admissions specifically for low income, Black, Indigenous, and disabled students among others.

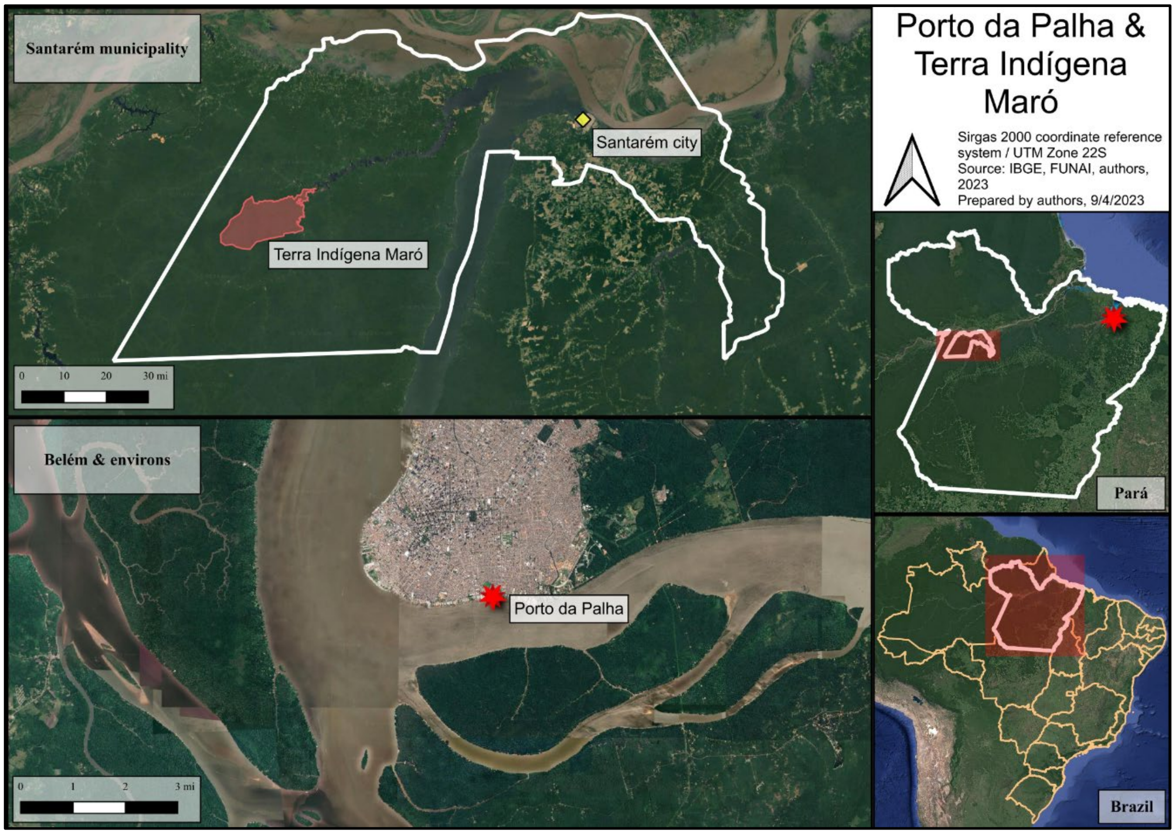
Santarém municipality
Santarém city
Terra Indígena Maró
0 10 20 30 mi
Porto da Palha & Terra Indígena Maró
Sirgas 2000 coordinate reference system / UTM Zone 22S
Source: IBGE, FUNAI, authors, 2023
Prepared by authors, 9/4/2023
Belém & environs
Porto da Palha
0 1 2 3 mi
Pará
Brazil

Figure 2: The locations of our two cases at local, regional, and national geographic scales. Map by authors

6. Race, resources & relations: TI Maró

Shortly before the clear waters of the Tapajós River pour into the turbid Amazon, the Arapiuns River merges with the Tapajós. Further upriver on the Arapiuns, on one side of the Maró River is the conservation unit RESEX Tapajós-Arapiuns (*Reserva Extrativista* or RESEX) and on the other side, the Borari and Arapium peoples fight for their right to an Indigenous Territory called TI Maró (*Terra Indígena* or TI). Indigenous communities living within the RESEX do not have the autonomy provided through a formal TI (Bolanos, 2011). Families on either shore of the river share common histories, knowledge, and lifeways (*modo de vida*) yet remain divided by the creation of the RESEX conservation area, where occupants became labeled as riverine small scale extractivists.[6] Beyond the borders of both the RESEX and Maró territory, development projects increasingly dominate the landscape. The construction of the Cargill soy terminal in Santarém (Figure 3), expansion of soy monoculture on the plateau above Santarém, and paving of the BR-163 highway connecting with Cuiabá in Mato Grosso combine to envision the Tapajós River reduced to a piece of infrastructure. Frequent proposals for massive dams on the Tapajós as well as a new railway ("*Ferrogrão*") alongside the river encourage speculation based on the possibility of even more development in future. Speculation becomes incarnate through land invasions encouraged by local politicians. In Brazil these forms of development are often seen as integral to the nation (Ioris *et al*., 2019).

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[6] Chico Mendes brought together Indigenous movements and rubber tappers to create the Brazilian Amazon Alliance of the Peoples of the Forest which included small scale extractivists. The creation of the RESEX system was one of the results (Gomes *et al*., 2018).

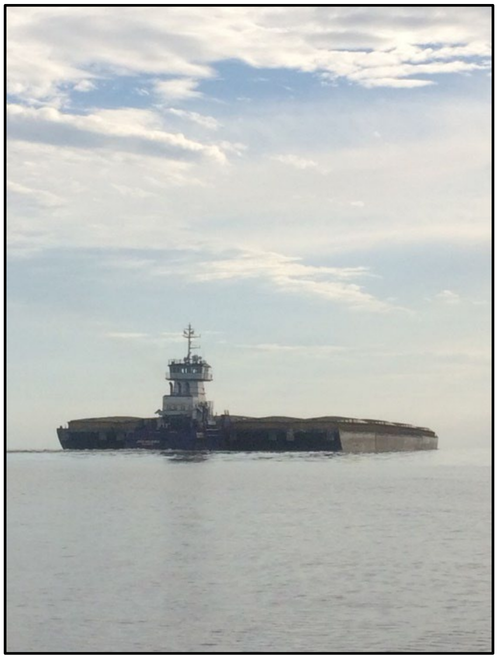

Figure 3: In this photo taken on December 31, 2018 a soybean transport barge moves along the Tapajos River for export at the Cargill Terminal mega-project. Photo by authors

Unlike export-oriented development, the possibility of Bem Viver, living well through relations (Radcliffe, 2012), depends upon reciprocity with place, meaning that the Maró continue to work their ancestral land, fish the waters, and travel through the forest in search of sustenance. This section considers Bem Viver through the case of TI Maró, beginning with resistance to the racial hierarchy implicit in development pressures and ongoing defense of Indigenous territory.

Race and Development

The decision of government officials, IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Resources) and conservation NGOs to exclude the Maró side of the river from the RESEX Tapajós-Arapiuns created in 1998 was devastating to relations between communities and families. Additionally, the creation of the RESEX invited extractive industries to focus on unprotected Maró lands which remained the property of the Pará state government, at that time an entity regarded as intimately linked to the timber industry. Thus, the Arapium and Borari of the Maró communities along with other Lower Tapajós Indigenous groups began their advocacy for Indigenous territory following paragraph 2 of Article 231 of the Brazilian Constitution. Recognition of TI Maró would assert local and Indigenous control over traditional resources. Without official recognition, a Maró *pajé*[7] explained the ongoing struggle:

> And we are all the time treated like animals. We are treated like animals because we live in the forest like a snake or wild animal. Only those who are in power are beautiful. The government enters, the government leaves, and it is the same disgrace. It is the same disgrace. For the

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[7] In the Indigenous communities of the Lower Tapajós (and many others) the *pajé* is a spiritual figure specializing in traditional cures and wisdom.

> Indigenous people it is the same disgrace because they [the government] never wanted to help us. The rafts with wood, our wealth, pass there [the river] every day. Where is that wood from? Is it from the president's land? From the councilman? From the mayor? No! It's from the land here [Indigenous]. Interview by author, 2017

The *pajé* grounds Fanon's concept of racism by denouncing the treatment of his people as animals. Furthermore, the *pajé* recognizes two important variables influencing the Arapiuns and Borari relationship with Brazilian society and conflict over TI Maró: race and resources. Both are implicated in contestation over development. A Maró leader expands on the connection between race and resources in the political ecology of the Lower Tapajós:

> Growth! Brazil says that growth is soy planting, management projects, hydroelectric construction, railway construction, and mining. So, for them this is development. Indigenous land is not development for Brazil because it does not generate profit for Brazil. Interview by author, 2017

The logic behind dispossession of Maró territory remains rooted in coloniality, a power structure guiding resource management. It determines some uses of land as modern and others as backwards (Quijano, 2007; Radcliffe, 2017). Walter Mignolo (2013) identifies the injustices within coloniality as related to knowledge and world-sensing, meaning different ways to perceive the world. Both knowledge and world-sensing are embodied and relational; the denial of territory is a form of epistemic and ontological racism.

As the Arapium and Borari in Maró territory fought for demarcation of an Indigenous territory (Figure 4), they also faced newly racialized attacks. Where previously development interests called for increased access to timber, now extractive industries pointedly attack Indigenous culture and identity, calling the Arapiuns and Borari "*falsos índios*" ("fake Indians") (Aranha, 2015).[8] Recently, the Maró territory's leadership faced death threats. A visit with one of the Maró leaders and his family meant travel by small canoe, winding through dense aquatic forest to arrive at a hidden site separated from the rest of the community. This isolation was described as necessary due to safety concerns. Violence against Indigenous communities occurs at all levels of society including racist rhetoric promoted by former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, likening Indigenous groups to prehistoric humans in desperate need of improvement (Survival International, 2022). The Bolsonaro government promoted the assimilation of Indigenous groups into modern Brazilian society claiming: "The Indian has changed, he is evolving and becoming more and more, a human being like us. What we want is to integrate him into society so he can own his land" ("Brazil's indigenous to sue Bolsonaro," 2020).

While the Arapium and Borari on Maró territory do circulate and participate in market activity in Santarém, development agendas involving privatization of land and stripping of resources reflect an ontology dismissive of their relationships to place. The relational imperative of Bem Viver echoes the sentiment "land does not belong to us; rather, we belong to it" (Walia, 2013, p. 234). For the Arapiuns and Borari, the denial of an Indigenous territory is a form of racism.

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[8] Because of the resurgence of Indigenous ethnicities that were denied over time, local actors linked to economic interests say that these Indigenous heritage claims (previously classified *caboclos*) are false. However, the return of traditional ethnic identities in the Santarém region is the core of the local Indigenous movement. Furthermore, the Arapium and Borari received official support from the federal Indigenous agency FUNAI with the formal recognition of TI Maró by publication in the *Diário Oficial da União* of the *Relatório Circunstanciado de Identificação e Delimitação da Terra Indígena Maró* on October 10, 2011. However, due to contestation by local elites, in 2016 the process exited the Department of Justice (which has demarcation authority) and returned to FUNAI for further studies.

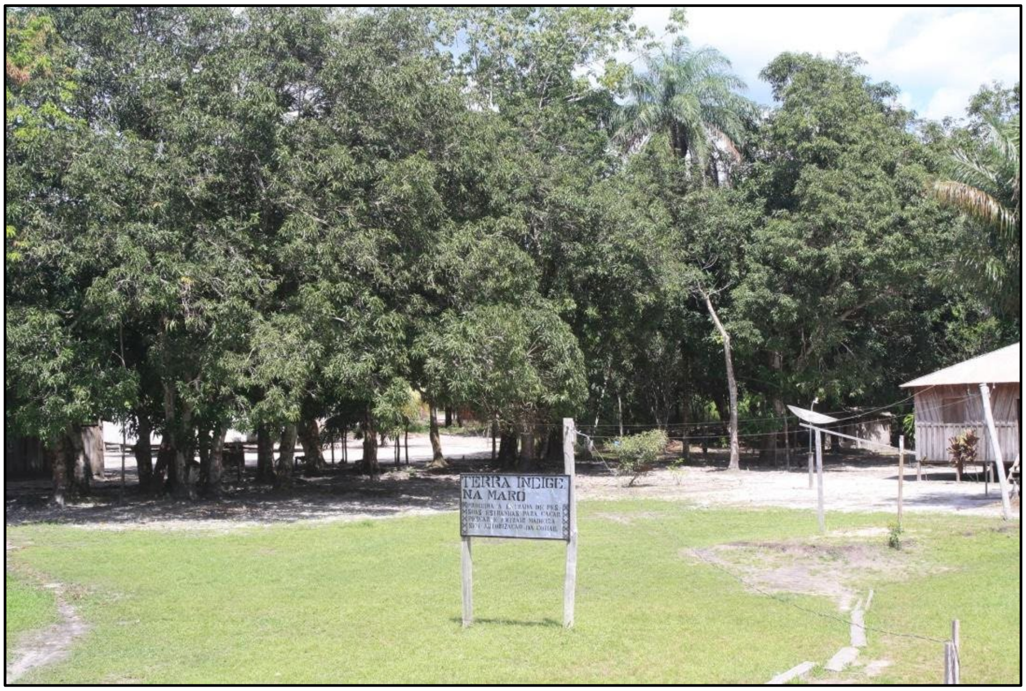

Figure 4: In this photo, taken on July 5, 2017, a sign declares "Terra Indígena Maró" in order to warn that this land belongs to the Arapiuns and Borai people. The sign is necessary because the logging industry covets Indigenous land, leading to frequent conflicts. Photo by authors

The desires of international NGOs to protect biodiversity or preserve forests for carbon credits likewise threaten Indigenous lifeways (*modo de vida*) in Maró territory. Maró leadership were particularly resistant to the flattening of their reciprocities with the environment into the singular, universal value of carbon for export in exchange for monetary payments.

> When it comes to money, there is no need [for money] for us here in the region. There is no need for us to make a project and sell it. There is no need for that. We consume and produce what is necessary for us. We are not concerned with who is out there [the rich countries of the Global North]. Look, it has been over 500 years since Brazil was colonized and even today Brazil remains a colony. Brazil is one of the countries that exports the most raw material, primary matter. Interview by author, 2017

This interviewee, a leader of Maró territory, had been asked about whether a carbon credit program would be useful. He focused on the financialization of natural resources and pushed back on the need to turn their forested territory into income. The denial of the way of living of Indigenous peoples imposed by carbon credit systems is a form of racism because it restricts the Arapium and Borari from practicing traditional uses of nature, to carry on living as their ancestors did, with an Indigenous ontology. Once again, their specific humanity is denied as a result of racism based on a hierarchy of rights to resources common to development thinking. The forest use regulations required for carbon market standardization and certification displace intergenerational exchanges of knowledge and resources between humans and nonhumans living in the forest (Widenhorn, 2013).

Autonomy and territory

In July of 2017, a conference (Figure 5) organized by CITA (Indigenous Council Tapajós-Arapiuns) on the shore of the Arapiuns River focused on developing young leaders from the Indigenous peoples of the Lower Tapajós Basin. Although the speakers, workshops, and songs of the conference frequently referenced the importance of the waters, plants, and animals of the region, there was no talk of the conservation value of the landscape. Participants described relations existing within territory rather than trade-off values calculated through ecosystem services or carbon.

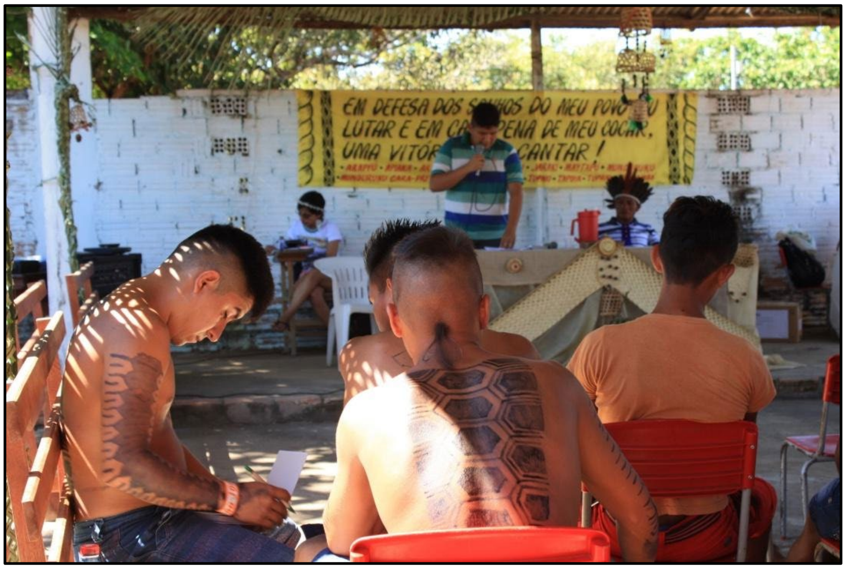

Figure 5: This photo, taken on July 7, 2017, shows a workshop at an Indigenous youth conference at TI Cobra Grande. Photo by authors

While concerns of the Arapium and Borari on Maró territory enter into international media discourse and are termed "Indigenous rights", interviewees suspected these rights only acquire importance due to the value of Indigenous territories in protecting ecosystems or because they attract financial donors. Indigenous bodies appear in photo-ops, but not in fundamental planning sessions. In the donor-oriented materials of international conservation, the Amazon forest's carbon storage capabilities supersede the importance of Indigenous territories and rights to healthcare or education. Maró territory interviewees highlighted the importance of hunting traditions, self-determination through access to forest resources, development of situated leadership and education amongst Lower Tapajós Indigenous groups, and the presence of nonhuman beings.[9] Additionally, interviewees felt neither the Brazilian government nor international conservation NGOs engage Indigenous groups in conversations regarding desires for Indigenous territories, replicating the authority structure of development coloniality within conservation practices. 'Integrality' summarizes the connections formed by interactions with the rest of nature through the principles of complementarity and reciprocity (Fleuri, 2022). However, for a territory to facilitate these relations, autonomy over lifeways must be maintained.

During interviews with Maró leaders regarding their views on partnering with international conservation NGOs, interviewees maintained ambivalence towards the work of foreign conservationists. After all, these same conservation NGOs frequently negotiate with Brazilian agribusiness including the soy and beef industries

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[9] The *curupira* forest guardian emphasizes both the disorientation and protection offered by the forest to its peoples including the Arapium and Borari on Maró territory.

(Barbosa, 2017). International conservation NGOs likewise replicate a coloniality of knowledge through refusing Indigenous lifeways and territorialities. An Indigenous student at the local federal university said:

> At the time we didn't know what a carbon credit was about. And then we went to study. We went to exchange experiences with other relatives where they had accepted carbon credits in their territory. The reports that relatives passed on to us were not the best. They said they were limited when they sold carbon credits. They negotiated, they didn't even know what they were doing, and then they only saw the consequences afterwards. They couldn't farm: "Oh no, you sold your carbon? You can't make a garden!" Or if you could, it's very little, it's limited. So that plot where he would make a garden would not be enough for him to sell the flour from the cultivation. To make a swidden, we have to deforest an area, a section. That's what they [carbon credit agreements] include: "Anything you want to do in the forest, you're going to have to communicate to us." That was the condition. Then we say, "Wait a minute, it's [territory] ours! We cannot do this? We would be selling our land [as carbon credits]?" Interview by author, 2017

Rather than strengthening Indigenous rights, conservation interventions such as carbon credits can lead to confusion and a loss of autonomy, jeopardizing territoriality. The interview offers important perspectives into Indigenous Brazilians' fight with a carbon credit proposal. The student explained that Indigenous resistance to carbon credits led to a protest occupying a government office because Indigenous voices felt excluded from the process.[10] Indigenous activists came to the decision to oppose the program after consulting with other Indigenous Brazilians who had experience with carbon credits. Resistance centered around the changes to traditional lifeways, *modo de vida*, that would occur because of the program regulations, guidance dictated by outsiders.

When Maró territory's leadership repeatedly answered that an international conservation intervention such as carbon credits would present a distraction from their goal of achieving an Indigenous Territory (TI), they used an analogy from an activity often prohibited by conservation programs: hunting. According to an interviewee, when hunting one must always remember which animal one is tracking because it is easy to get distracted by another species, a lesser prey in terms of sustenance, and lose sight of the intention of the hunt. Carbon credits represent this distraction. Meanwhile, the rhetoric of international conservation NGOs, UNFCCC's COP, and countless academics is that carbon credits are the main game (Soares-Filho *et al.*, 2006; Chernela 2014).

Fears of restrictions on activities associated with international conservation norms echoed those of other Indigenous groups engaged in negotiations around the world (Fairhead *et al.*, 2012). Ecuadorian *Buen Vivir* scholar Alberto Acosta (2017) reminds us that harmony in relations forms the basis of Bem Viver. Concerns regarding carbon credits included the harmony of relations not only between humans and forest, but also in terms of the resulting cash payments for carbon sequestration. An interviewee explained that he had noticed problems in communities when cash payments were received during conservation programs. Disputes occurred and led to community-level division over who had received money, exacerbated by the small quantity of money received. Payments to individuals and families encourages personal self-determination rather than community-based autonomy, setting the stage for conflicts over individual appropriation of other forest resources such as timber (Chassagne, 2020).

Assimilation into Brazilian society has long been a priority of state Indigenous policy (Garfield, 2001) and dependence on currency through land use restrictions and carbon credit payments hastens this outcome. More than a sum of severable resources, Maró territory establishes a space of potentiality through rehabilitation of Indigenous agroecological systems, collective landholding, and respect for nonhuman interdependencies. Sometimes referred to as prefiguration, daily practices situated in place begin the transformative work of empowering a new organization of relations that will play a role in dismantling current systems while protecting the seeds of the future (Lewis, 2017; Ince, 2012).

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[10] The protest and occupation occurred at the office of the federal environmental agency ICMBio on August 13, 2015.

Bem Viver & Indigenous lifeways

The reciprocal flows connecting people, nonhumans, and history through places along the Maró River constitute a relational territory (Sandoval *et al*., 2017). As a territory, these relations articulate political resistance to non-Indigenous society and the Brazilian state. Bem Viver constitutes an alternative form of territorialization to that of the nation-state. Maró territory prioritizes the commons and existing relations in place, as opposed to speculation over quantifiable resources identified for extraction by extra-territorial entities such as the timber industry and international carbon investors. Bem Viver's emphasis on integrality between traditional resources and social organization reinforce the logic behind Indigenous territoriality at Maró territory. The Arapium and Borari view the lands and waters of the Lower Tapajós Basin through environmental reciprocities connecting past to present, and securing Indigenous futures. The maintenance of cultural lineages through kinship including place resonates throughout Indigenous perspectives on knowledge and territory across the so-called "Americas" (Yazzie, 2019). Communities sustain traditional lifeways not only through the availability of natural resources, but also by reenacting ancestral commitments with specific places (Figure 6). Bem Viver's emphasis on socio-environmental reciprocities contrasts sharply with Euro-American conservation approaches seeking to separate nonhuman communities (also known as "resources") from humans (Nepomuceno *et al*., 2019).

Scholarship on the Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and Plantationocene concepts connect contemporary climate chaos to Indigenous genocide, Indigenous and Black slavery, colonialism, and neocolonial development policies (Davis *et al*., 2019). In response to the coloniality of climate demands, the leadership at Maró territory chooses to focus primarily on deforestation related to their defense of territory, stating that climate change is a problem stemming from the Global North and should be dealt with accordingly. By this, they insist that their territory will not be reduced to an offset for foreign carbon appetites. From a climate justice point-of-view, this perspective is especially salient (Zhouri, 2010).

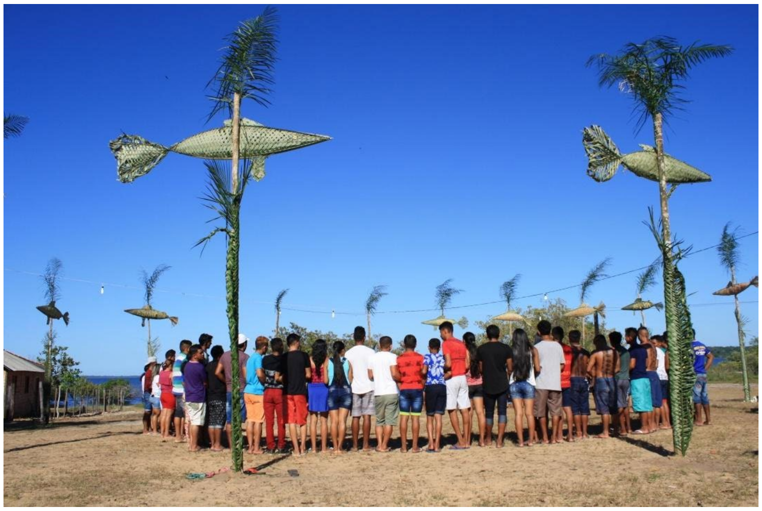

Figure 6: At the same Indigenous youth conference, participants gather beneath fish sculptures constructed from palm fronds upon which are written the names of the Indigenous ethnicities of the Lower Tapajós Basin. Photo by authors

Bem Viver is not possible as long as deforestation enacts biological and cultural genocide upon Indigenous groups in the Amazon. Biologically speaking, Indigenous individuals and nonhuman relations are killed off by timber interests and other extractive industries. Or, they are forced into semi-human conditions within frontier-like extractive zones (Gómez-Barris, 2017). Culturally, the loss of clean waters, healthy fish, and sylvan sources of life-sustaining resources threatens to displace forest reciprocities with dependence on nearby urban retailers. In this context, Bem Viver depends on the defense and demarcation of Maró territory, a specific place constituted by the fabric of relations constructing a *modo de vida* between humans and nonhumans. As a result, Arapium and Borari goals reflect environmental justice priorities much more than either development or conservation perspectives. Indigenous scholar Dina Gilio-Whitaker (2020) defines environmental justice as including reciprocity with traditional lands, resources, and spirituality. Likewise, Indigenous philosopher V. F. Cordova (2007) contrasts the place-oriented worldview of Indigenous groups with Western "progress"-oriented narratives focused on the economic development of individuals. Both these authors' perspectives affirm Bem Viver's emphasis on maintaining local networks of reciprocity between humans and nonhumans, whether for agriculture, conviviality, or ritual.

As understood by social movements, territory represents both a focus and reward of intergenerational struggle. Territory is also considered essential for autonomy in the face of out-of-control capitalism (Escobar, 2020). Community-led territorialization and autonomy offer a head-on challenge to both neoliberalism and state-led neoextractivism. These seek to pull decision-making power and control of land from Earth-oriented networks supporting agroecology, biodiversity, and traditional knowledges. Arapium and Borari autonomy achieved through territorial politics protects both environment and culture from analogous threats. This vision is consistent with the philosophy of Bem Viver. As a relational ethic, Bem Viver both affirms an Indigenous identity otherwise rejected by modernist development philosophy, while insisting on self-determination and autonomy within territory (Gonzales & Husain, 2016). Always on the move, Bem Viver recently entered the discourse of youth-led social movements in the Tapajós Basin (Almeida in Fachin, 2019). These young activists highlight the communal basis of Bem Viver with an emphasis on imagining collective futures. This growing movement also extends Bem Viver's application to urban spaces, arguing that the philosophy is equally important the urban periphery of major cities such as Belém.

7. Bem Viver in urban Amazonia: Windows or doors?

In cities, Bem Viver takes on meaning in places of popular life including fairs, markets, ports, and warehouses. Despite the imposition of neoliberalism and racist development logics, Afro-descendent Brazilians maintain historical social relationships predicated on intersubjective proximity including forms of solidarity and particular types of exchanges.

Belém is a riverine (*ribeirinha*) city and in this section we present an urban Bem Viver at Porto da Palha, a riverside warehouse and small port *(trapiche*) frequently targeted for transformation or revitalization into a "pier".[11] On the banks of Guamá River in Belém, daily reenactments of relations require up to twenty-four hours spent on boats coming and going between the islands and the "continent" (an expression for Belém). Each day thousands of mostly Black (*preto e pardo*) people exchange local resources such as açaí (Euterpe oleracea), manioc flour, fish, fruits, lumber, and palm fronds as a network of reciprocity at the Porto da Palha *trapiche*. This *trapiche* connects the city of Belém to *Quilombola* territories (descendants of communities escaping slavery) across the waters (Guamá River and Guajará Bay) as well as to thousands of *ribeirinhos* (mixed ancestry, riverine communities) who arrive daily to sell their products. *Trapiche* versus "Pier"; "doors versus windows": Metaphorically this is the conflict facing local people as they fight to keep their Bem Viver against the forces of gentrification within a marginalized space of the city. Porto da Palha is always – especially during the most recent municipal administrations – under threat of being redeveloped as a leisurely waterfront, a space for contemplating the forest located on the other side of the waters. Redevelopment proposals idealize the waterfront as a privileged space for customers with purchasing power to view a beautiful natural landscape while consuming high-priced drinks and gourmet food. The logic of the market means this space would operate as a concession to the private sector by the municipal government. It follows that such a requalification of place also requalifies its users, given that the prices and spectacular architecture of the proposed new space of consumption/profits entails removing Afro-descendant livelihoods. The process of gentrification proposes a closed space, and a place once popular with marginalized residents of Belém becomes elitist. In this way the modern, capitalist city continues colonial enactments of racial segregation.

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[11] In Belém, gentrification processes frequently involve naming projects with luxurious-sounding English words. This requalification of place creates an elite imaginary as well as a new intended public.

Race & urban development in Belém

The foundation of the first Brazilian cities as colonies of exploitation took place through the dispossession and removal of local populations and the accumulation of wealth based on natural resource extraction (Lagares *et al*., 2017). Removals occurred systematically and established colonial white power, displacing Indigenous populations from ancestral lands. Belém was born through separating the Tupinambá and Pacajá Indians from their villages and later enslaving them. At the same time, the shores of the city were valued for proximity to the waters, making tenuous the permanence of popular society at these places of aquatic connection.

Belém is located on a peninsula, formed by a river (Guamá) and a bay (Guajará), close to the Amazon River delta, with a population of almost 1.5 million inhabitants within a metropolitan region with 2.2 million. The city boasts one motor vehicle for every three people, almost a dozen shopping malls and, among other indicators of development, about fifty buildings with more than thirty floors, with names such as "Aquarius Tower," "Mirage Bay," "Village Exclusive," "Infinity," and "Real Class," featuring views of the water and forested islands. Real estate boasting "windows to the river" ("*janelas para o rio*") is desired by the city's elite. This imaginary of "prestige" represents the "modern city" alongside the prevailing ideology of the private sector with little regard for public space, income distribution, or racial equality. The focus of Belém's elite on individualized, conspicuous consumption is paired with the systematic segregation of the poor through urbanization processes made manifest by extremely precarious sanitation and nonexistent public works investment in peripheral neighborhoods. These marginalized areas along the city's outskirts have high rates of Black youth mortality, the result of a neocolonial urban morphology with structural racism ingrained in urban planning (or lack thereof) alongside environmental neglect.[12] This is the inhuman side of the modern city. At times modern in grandiose displays such as the luxury towers and shopping malls, Belém is colonial in its insensitivity to the suffering of its peripheral populations (Peixoto & Silva, 2016).

At the public port of Porto da Palha and its shoreline, "windows to the river" are sought by developers, threatening a loss of public space. "Windows to the river" involve financial valuation and commercialization of the environment and landscape, an appeal that has become prevalent throughout the city and implicated in consumer culture. Otília Arantes (2002) treats this collective desire for the landscape as an appeal to cosmopolitan culture, which favors market-oriented consensus and gentrification, and creates the need for upgrading urban infrastructure. In Belém, in order to resist the commodified imaginary of "windows to the river" the port users push back against privatization and assert the alternative metaphor of "doors to the river", a spatial condition that allows them to come and go between the urban space of Belém ("the continent") and the islands/interior where Quilombola territories and numerous *ribeirinho* populations are located (Peixoto & Silva, 2016).

To describe Belém and its places of popular life and the desires of developers, it is important to point out the racial segregation practiced by the dominant elites since colonial times (Peixoto & Silva, 2016). The maintenance of this colonial trait systematically removes Black (*preto e pardo*) communities from their places through the process of urbanization. This urban development logic expresses a coloniality of power (Quijano, 2005) that distinguishes race as an element central to the establishment of social hierarchies. Local communities exercise resistance, including at Porto da Palha (Figure 7), in opposition to racial segregation or are otherwise pushed to the peripheries of the city. Their resistance is part of the struggle for the "right to the city", as theorized by Henri Lefebvre in his reading of urban capitalism (Lefebvre, 1969). Seen in this light, we can associate an urban *Bem Viver* with the right to the city – the concepts are mutually reinforcing – since the loss of historically Black places and socioecologies removes the right to belong in the city and deterritorializes neighborhoods which previously welcomed Afro-Brazilian spaces.

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[12] Impacts from climate change will further add to health risks of marginalized environments in urban Amazonia (Mansur *et al*., 2016; Brondizio, 2016).

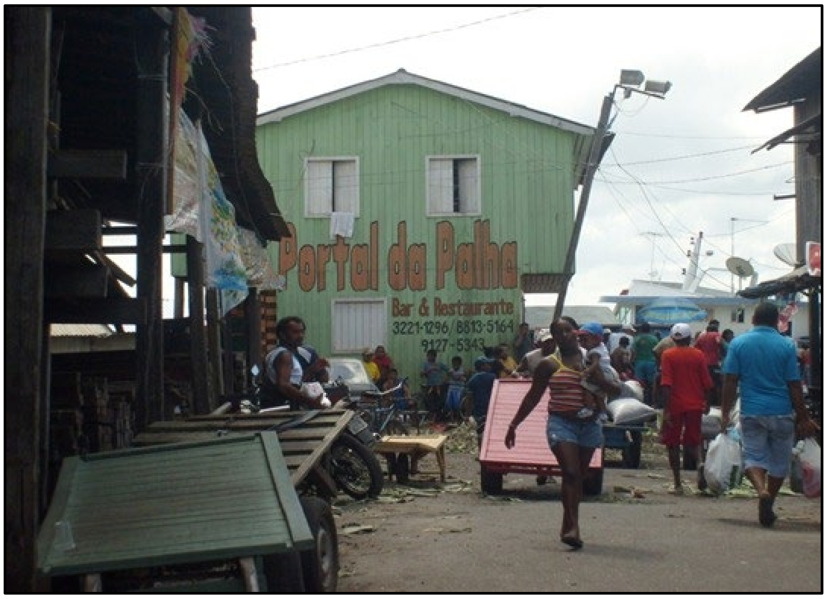

Figure 7: This image taken on May 27, 2019 depicts the busy entrance to the port, with a constant flow of market participants arriving and departing. Photo by authors

Arturo Escobar (2005) interprets this situation of local realities submitted to the coloniality of power as the domain of 'space over place.' The uprooting of the local occurs due to the process of accumulation of capital, which obscures subaltern ways of configuring the world. Needless to say, rendering the local invisible is a case of institutional racism, driven by the municipal government in the context of Porto da Palha. We must name this systematic injustice in order to denaturalize the violence that leads to the removal of poor people of color from their places. Racism, for decolonial authors, such as Ramón Grosfoguel (2012) and Anibal Quijano (2005), is a hierarchy of superiority and inferiority, based on cultural, political, and racial assumptions. This hierarchy persists in urban logic when serving capital. Disempowered Black communities must leave to make room for profitable destruction disguised as urban renewal, and this guides a conception of urbanism that systematically substitutes the public space of everyday life for the space of the logic of capital. Escobar (2005) adds that the obliteration of place means the denial of knowledge(s) based in place. At Porto da Palha it is the marginalized, the subaltern, who through their daily routines enact a "place-specific" view of the world. With its inseparability from the river, Porto da Palha emphasizes a non-dichotomous relationship between nature and culture forming the foundation of the philosophy of Bem Viver. Escobar calls for the construction of place as a project, based on a radical critique of power, towards the conception of Bem Viver.

Porto da Palha as territory

Reframing Porto da Palha as a place of Blackness affirms its situated cultures and ways of existence, conceptualizing these communal lifeways as practices of *Bem Viver*. This reframing is an important step towards decoloniality. In this place of vibrant public life, poor people of color pursue their longing for permanence and prosperity in place. This incorporation of the condition of place within a territory, a locus of the exercise of community power, involves political struggle. The agency and influence of the poor communities at Porto da Palha (alongside their political alliances) hold potential to achieve the practice of Bem Viver through day-to-day events. Bem Viver is a relational notion. It involves sociability, and the coexistence between human beings and *Pachamama* (the Earth as one being) (Lacera & Feitosa, 2017). Though elusive in a capitalist city, harmonious relationships are fundamental to the principle of achieving a fullness of life, which is the vision of Bem Viver. Bem Viver is a movement towards this horizon and its relational network further constitutes its territory.

We are, therefore, speaking of the city of Belém as belonging to people in a specific place, which by virtue of ties of coexistence allows the construction of a collective identity and the qualification of that location as a place, even a territory. We recognize the possibility of social and racial activism in this place based on the affirmation of identities and presence of a politics of practice, generating territory through praxis (Limonad & Randolph, 2002). Porto da Palha constitutes a "territory of difference" (Escobar, 2008). This territory of differences opposes the hegemonic economic logic that shapes urban spaces according to profit. Our scholarly consideration of Porto da Palha aims at building a proposal for Bem Viver in that place. The semantic meanings of space, place, and territory hold particular value for Porto da Palha. In considering a politics rooted in place, affirmed as a territory of Blackness in new forms of sociability and relationships, it is important to consider this place/territory as understood by *Quilombolas*, who have historically used the space as a gateway to the interior of Pará.

The *Quilombola* exchanges (between the city and rural territories called *Quilombos*) (Figure 8) occurring at Porto da Palha reflect the potential for a harmonious intercultural coexistence with other users. This multiplicity of functions of Porto da Palha is a fertile field for the Bem Viver utopia. The multiplicity of uses and relations found at Porto da Palha depends on the location's active function as a place of exchange. Absent its role as a working market and politicization as a territory of *négritude*[13], Porto da Palha risks gentrification as yet another space for profit by Belém's elites.

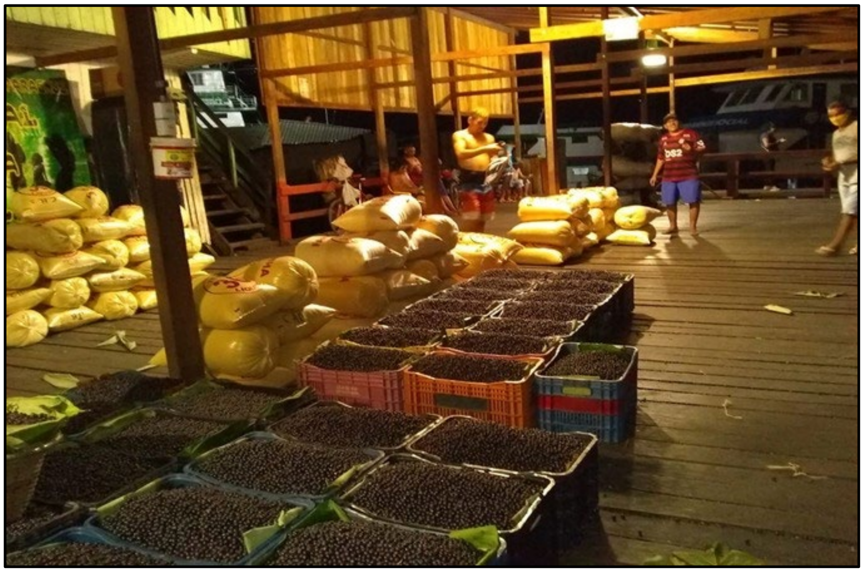

Figure 8: Crates of açaí and bags of manioc flour await buyers at Porto da Palha in an image taken on May 27, 2019. Photo by authors

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[13] *Négritude* refers to "Blackness" as articulated by primarily francophone writers and intellectuals during the 1930s in order to emphasize Black consciousness across the African Diaspora. Aimé Césaire, who created the term in his 1939 poem *Return To My Native Land*, defines the concept, "The simple recognition of the fact that one is black, the acceptance of this fact and of our destiny as blacks, of our history and culture" (2013, translation by Arnold & Eshleman).

Bem Viver & Porto da Palha

"Doors versus windows" allows us to understand the conflict between users of Porto da Palha and urban planning, through which the state and entrepreneurs of lifestyle amenities are associated. Through this conceptualization of spatial politics, doors mean access to water and the traffic between the city and rural environments that constitute greater Belém. Doors imply movement, emphasizing an active, immediate, and participatory reciprocity. Conversely, "windows to the river" idealizes a space for contemplation, individual consumption and exclusive profit generation. The decolonial action that actualizes the vision of Bem Viver occurs through resistance to the capitalist valuation of space, instead envisioning the permanence of a place in the city where sociability and diversity of lifeways remain valued (Peixoto & Silva, 2016). The permanence of this place, where people meet, regard each other, and talk, is a necessary condition for the right to the city. In Porto da Palha, the "face-to-face encounter" (Lévinas, 1997) and personal relationships prevail, an attribute of urban Bem Viver which includes the possibility of meeting, collective life, and sharing of symbolic and cultural affinities. This reality, which includes affections and solidarities, prevails in Porto da Palha.

Much more than simply a warehouse abandoned by the government, Porto da Palha is a lively place of public life, where a busy market has existed with dozens of stalls selling typical natural resources of common consumption including açaí, filets of pirarucu, palm fronds, fruit, and a variety of household items. Carpenters repair boats at public workshops, facilitating transportation (Figure 9) to and from the other side of the river to the islands contained within greater Belém and to Quilombola communities.

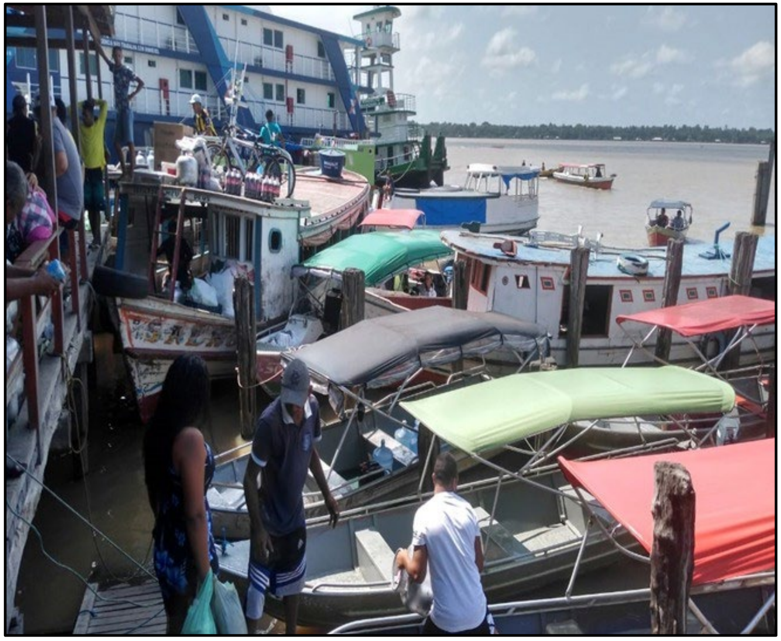

Figure 9: Here, in a photo from May 27, 2019, boats connecting the urban "continent" (Belém) to the rural, forested islands characterize the network between *ribeirinhos*, Quilombolas, and the city. Photo by authors

Together, the warehouse and port are a place for meetings, community parties and the resilience of riverine traditions: artists paint names on boats stylizing the perpetual flows of Amazonian riverboat culture. This riverine art is part of a popular aesthetic that draws visitors seeking an authentic experience of place in

Belém. As a gateway between "the continent" and nearby islands, Porto da Palha is deeply representative of Belém as a river city.

Following Jane Jacobs (2000), Porto da Palha is a genuine culture, buzzing about at the border between the city and the rural environment, connecting both. As a place of intense movement of people passing through warehouses full of açaí baskets, Porto da Palha casts an animated scene with the capacity to enchant travelers. The contrast is obvious with artificial developments of piers and waterfronts conventionally used to attract tourists and "generate jobs and income" within neoliberal discourses of power. We must question who that income would benefit. On the contrary, as a thriving popular economy as well as one of the points of reception and distribution of açaí in Belém, Porto da Palha enhances the livelihoods in the surrounding neighborhood. These local benefits are experienced according to the needs of local users who buy food, clothes, cooking gas and beer, among other products. There is a little bit of everything available at the market of Porto da Palha, including in terms of popular services. The space remains open 24 hours, a welcoming door to the city for those who have been sailing from the islands or the interior, disembarking in the capital to buy and sell goods, attend nearby public schools, meet family members, or share conversations. Riverine populations do not just come to "the continent" of Belém to buy and sell. They come to Porto da Palha because in the warehouse, tents, and immediate surroundings a world of possibilities unfolds – of social life and work reflecting a life of fullness, an essential attribute of Bem Viver.

Reciprocity is an important value of Bem Viver. At Porto da Palha, "total social facts" occur: the reciprocating cycle of giving, receiving, and giving back that characterizes the reciprocities of multiple exchanges, which structure the social world (Mauss, 2008). Port users, in their various trades, occupy this public space that exists not only for buyer/seller transactions. Although commercial exchange is an important motivation, other types of exchange occur at these fairs. Trade takes place within its own relational universe: buying and selling, people establishing relationships, bonds, and partnerships (Figure 10). Exchange participants are tied to each other by means of personal connections, group forums, and other social institutions. Trade occurs within these relational spaces along implicit rules that are part of the identity of this place (Peixoto & Silva, 2016).

Figure 10: In the photo, taken on May 27, 2019, the *burburinho* (clamor, lively energy) of Porto da Palha is evidenced by crowds during the early morning rush. Photo by authors

Alongside Bem Viver's fundamental principle of reciprocal relations in place, we contend that Bem Viver should be recognized as a dynamic notion, geographically and temporally fluid. Bem Viver exists in motion and at times its expression remains hidden, repressed or incipient in different contexts, including in cities. In addition to forming relations between people and nature, Porto da Palha is a place where, besides the port, there is a public market. People arrive to practice a variety of exchanges including non-commercial reciprocities and solidarity. In urban areas such as Belém, popular life pulsates with spontaneity and we observe that the collective values of everyday life oppose Western hegemonic thinking that regards human beings only in their individualities and as mere *homo economicus*. As a counterpoint to the social austerity of neoliberalism, relational realities and potentialities become set in motion in the here and now, creating spaces for alterity (Ince, 2012).

Both a daily form of border thinking and a future project anchored in ancestral values, Bem Viver exists in a form of a constant becoming. Bem Viver is not considered an end since it is always a process. Latin American critic of modernity/coloniality Walter Mignolo (2012) recognizes that, from the point of view of the dominated, resistance to the established Eurocentric order coupled with a diverse, autonomous project functions as epistemic disobedience. Thus, Bem Viver expands a horizon of change in relation to the established social order revealed by the coloniality of power, the dark side of modernity. This change is based on decolonial knowledge and practices rooted in local environments. The latent existence of Bem Viver that resides in everyday life becomes recognized and affirmed as a product of a transformative political and cultural action. This particular decolonial action involves more than resisting the commercialization of space – the place that is Porto da Palha emerges as a territory of ethnic-racial belonging and holistic well-being based on personal and social ties. The 'right to the city', to places of belonging, and Bem Viver are associated here, together, in common struggle.

8. Conclusion

The Indigenous Borari and Arapium of TI Maró and Afro-descendant participants at the Porto da Palha market in Belém defend territories tied to collective identity, relations, and place. Both cases may be understood as praxis aligned with Bem Viver's vision of alternatives to business-focused and private property-oriented practices of development. Frequently, Bem Viver is associated with Indigenous philosophies. In comparing the Afro-Brazilian case of Porto da Palha with the Indigenous case of TI Maro, we contribute to the contextualization of Bem Viver to Afro-descendant communities. Bem Viver insists on the importance of communities remaining in place, where socio-ecological networks were built over time. The Afro-Brazilian movement in Belém represented by Cedenpa (Center for Studies and Defense of the Black of Pará), Malungu (Coordination of the Associations of the Remaining Communities of Quilombos of Pará) and other organizations, seeks this horizon of permanence, which includes political-racial affirmation of the city's population. Through considering race, territory, and Bem Viver in both locations we offer four important observations for understanding Bem Viver in the Brazilian Amazon.

Bem Viver is not viable without territory. TI Maro and Porto da Palha are examples of ethno-territories threatened by private developers associated with state institutions. When corporations and governments deny territory to Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples, in doing so they deny their specific identity and humanity. In both our cases, the possibility of Bem Viver depends on the interlinkage of territory and identity. With territory as a basis, racialized peoples struggling for recognition gain political visibility to demand both public policies and improve material life. Plentitude exists in material and intersubjective relations (Mamani, 2015) that demand territory and public policies to ensure permanence–both in urban and rural settings. Living in plenitude can only happen through coexistence among equals who possess an identity linked to territory (life in community) rather than capitalist consumption practices. In other words, the construction of Bem Viver and territory is a joint process. The concept of Bem Viver becomes real through territorialization.

Bem Viver includes a process of struggle (*processo de luta*). Our cases demonstrate that in both urban and rural settings this resistance relates to conflicts. Bem Viver is not simply about harmony, but implies conflict and confrontation in order to maintain territory and achieve necessary public policies. Bem Viver is not viable without political struggle and is always under construction (leading to multiple Bem Viveres). However, saying that Bem Viver is always under construction does not mean that Bem Viver does not exist with vigor in the present or with roots in past practices. Bem Viver exists in a continuum that negotiates with the social changes and practices of modern society and capitalism. Thus, Bem Viver must be continuously updated amidst the pressures and changes caused by capitalism. If Bem Viver is a conception of life that opposes capitalism and individualism, practices of resistance and re-existence and therefore of struggle, are inherent to its construction.

Bem Viver travels between contexts, including both urban and rural settings. The naming of the judge's racism by the Indigenous Borari and Arapium was shouted in an urban space (in a plaza in Santarem). Political manifestations often occur in the urban environment due to the location of institutions and a strong linking with politics. Additionally, urban places such as Porto da Palha retain strong connections to rural territories in the Brazilian Amazon. The daily arrival of *Quilombolas* and their products at Porto da Palha entails the construction of Bem Viver as an affirmation of Blackness (*négritude*) both for urban Afro-Brazilians and rural *Quilombolas*. Bem Viver emphasizes locality, but does not rule out coalitions and collaborations across scales (administrative, geographic, etc) and intersections of identity. Political coalitions must respect place-based identity but are not place-restricted and may occur horizontally across society (Leitner *et al*., 2008; Johnson & Larsen, 2017). Bem Viver occurs through anti-colonial struggle and as an alternative to neoliberalism (Inuca Lechón, 2017), intersecting with other alternatives to development emerging from the Global South, including South African Ubuntu (Zondi, 2016; Fleuri, 2022). Indeed, Bem Viver already demonstrates an affinity for coalitions and networks through its travels across South America and provocation of international interest (Baquero Torres & Rendón Acevedo, 2011).

Finally, Bem Viver exists in lifeways (*modo de vida*) implicitly, and with the naming becomes explicit. Because Bem Viver is the naming of concrete practices, it is also a reconstruction and contemporary use of the original idea *Sumak Kawsay*/*Suma Qamaña*. Stemming from an Indigenous paradigm of community, Bem Viver already exists in a variety of settings even when not named (Huanacuni, 2010). Bem Viver names the everyday and community dimensions of TI Maró and Porta da Palha. In Pará and through the public university system, Bem Viver situates place-based experiences into an expanded community of conversation and practice via transdisciplinary approaches. Bem Viver as a concept works to gather place-based experiences into an expanded community of conversation and practice through naming local and empirical practices.

In Amazonia, political ecology remains a favored framework for diagnosing conflicts over development and natural resources. However, viewing territories primarily as containers of contested resources distracts from the world-making stakes found in struggles to maintain place-based lifeways (Rubis & Theriault, 2020; Berkes, 1999). Indigenous geographers Brad Coombes and Jay T. Johnson (2012) acknowledge political ecology's important role in Indigenous geographies while posing the question of whether fights for territory amount to mere resource conflicts. Land is composed of three interconnected meanings: "land-as-resource central to our material survival; land-as-identity, as constitutive of who we are as a people; and land-as-relationship" (Coulthard, 2010, p. 81). Political ecology primarily focuses on the land-as-resource component. Bem Viver offers a more holistic approach, beginning with notions of ecological community and human identity through communal practices. In this article we have engaged Bem Viver through conversations with communities and lifeways encompassing land-as-identity and land-as-relationship. We believe this opening of political ecology both expands its practice and deepens reflexivity (Osborne, 2017; Schulz 2017). Likewise, Mignolo's (2013) call for "border thinking", theorizing from the borders of the academy, affirms the importance of enlivening academic discourse–including within political ecology–through opposition to Euro-American hierarchies of race and normative authority. The inclusion of Bem Viver in political ecology discourse emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of political ecology while also contributing to the development of Bem Viver as a praxis for naming post-development worlds.[14]

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[14] Arturo Escobar's *Encountering Development* (1995) concludes with the possibility of a "post-development" world, suggesting that while development programs and projects will continue to exist, the drive to modernize the "Third World" will cease to be the central organizing principle of life for communities.

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