Those who live like us: Autodemarcations and the co-becoming of Indigenous and beiradeiros on the Upper Tapajós River, Brazilian Amazonia

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Abstract:

This paper explores autodemarcations on the Tapajós River, Brazilian Amazonia, wherein a traditional community --- the beiradeiros (riverbank inhabitants) --- and the Indigenous Munduruku together mark the boundaries of their lands and remove invaders in their struggles for the recognition of territorial rights from the state. We approach autodemarcations on the Tapajós as a form of co-becoming: unseating colonial identities and generating mutual recognition within and between the two peoples (turning inwards) while also claiming rights from the state (turning outwards) in the face of expanding extractive frontiers. While legal recognition is well represented in the literature on Indigenous peoples’ and traditional communities’ struggles over land and countermapping, intersubjective recognition is an omission. Our contribution is to show the importance of the turn inward and contend that it is within this ‘turn’ that autodemarcations hold radical potential. Such possibility lies in challenging colonial categorizations through novel forms of relationality, namely “wuyuɣuybuɣun,” a Munduruku neologism meaning “those who live like us, plant like us, fish like us, but cannot hear like us” which began to be used by the Munduruku to refer to the beiradeiros during autodemarcations. We argue that what matters more than the physical boundary (autodemarcation), or the map (countermapping), is the emergent set of social relations: the co-becoming of two distinct peoples. Autodemarcation and other struggles for recognition of territorial and civil rights form part of larger acts of community resistance and popular political participation. They are grassroots democratic state-building processes that should be supported by state institutions.

Keywords:

recognition; countermapping; land rights; territory; indigeneity
1. Introduction

The work is almost always done in silence. The dense vegetation opens up to the beat of slow, steady steps. Including beiradeiros, Munduruku and other Indigenous people, chiefs, shamans and warriors, thirty people trek the Amazonian rainforest. ‘Beiradeiros,’ meaning ‘riverine people,’ synonymous with ‘riberinhos,’ is a term forest peoples from Xingu, Tapajós, and other Amazonian Rivers use to self-identify (Almeida 1991). What visually distinguishes them from their Munduruku neighbours is the jenipapo (Genipa americana, a fruit whose juice is used as black ink) painted on their bodies. They are marked from the face down with geometric patterns that mimic a tortoise’s shell – a hero within Munduruku stories that cleverly overcomes the strength of his enemies, the jaguar and the anaconda.

First in line is Chico Caítiti, of the beiradinho community of Montanha-Mangabal (MM), who at sixty-eight years old is known as one of the best mateiros (woodsmen) in the region. He is followed by Johnny, a young Munduruku operating a handheld GPS. Behind them walk thirteen other beiradeiros and seventeen Munduruku. For six days this group marches through the forest, marking the borders of the beiradeiros’ territory (Figure 1). On the Upper Tapajós River, as well as in other parts of the Amazon and Brazil, these processes by which community members mark the boundaries of their territories by opening up a trail through dense vegetation and along the way, identify and possibly remove invaders such as loggers and land-grabbers, along with patrolling these lines and keeping them open, form a set of actions regionally known as autodemarcations (Molina 2017; Garcia 2018). In the Upper Tapajós region, the first autodemarcation was of MM territory in 2007.

As is common among Amazonian ribeirinhos, the beiradinho inhabitation of MM dates to the rubber boom of the second half of the 19th century. As a people, the beiradeiros were formed through the violent occupation of Indigenous territories and their brutal incorporation into the rubber economy. They adopted Indigenous knowledge(s) that allowed them to live in the forest when the latex trade ceased (Torres 2008). The Munduruku, who call themselves Wuy Jugu (“we are people”), have long inhabited the Tapajós Basin and speak a language of the Tupi linguistic family. They number around 14,000 in approximately 140 villages, mainly along the upper banks of the Tapajós River and its tributaries. The Munduruku characterize themselves as a warrior people due to their history of war expeditions across the region; their contemporary political discourses are often articulated in terms of their warrior identity (Loures 2017).

Beginning in 2013, with mutual involvement in the occupation of the Belo Monte dam, the alliance of these two groups marks an important transformation. From historic antagonists to allies, an Indigenous people and a traditional community have come together in confronting mutual enemies; these include the state and its hydroelectric projects, along with grileiros (land-grabbers), loggers, and garimpos (informal mining camps) (Torres and Branford 2018). The context for this beiradinho and Munduruku co-resistance is a set of regional development projects – 43 planned hydroelectric power plants and the accompanying infrastructure in the Tapajós region to facilitate the export of agricultural commodities, especially soybeans, to the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso including a railroad, several bulk port terminals, and waterway (Figure 2). A major flashpoint for a wide range of territorial conflicts in the Brazilian Amazon, the Tapajós Basin also features an immense quantity of unallocated public lands vulnerable to land grabbing and the deforestation associated with it (Torres 2012; Torres et al 2017). The region is also currently the epicentre of a gold mining boom --- the Tapajós holds one of the largest gold-reserves on planet --- characterized by escalating conflicts between garimpos, large mining corporations, and Indigenous and beiradeiro communities (Molina and Wanderley 2021).
In recent years, autodemarcations have become an important and effective part of greater actions positioned against this network of extractive and government-led infrastructure projects, solidifying alliances vital for confronting them. As a strategy of resistance, autodemarcations work through the realization of collective territorial and civil rights that in turn reshape relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities (IPTC) in the Tapajós Basin. For instance, the autodemarcation of the Munduruku Sawre Muybu (SM) territory, on the opposite bank of the Tapajós to MM (Figures 1 and 2), contributed to the suspension of environmental licensing of the São Luiz do Tapajós dam in 2016 (Loures 2017). In their fight against the planned construction of the Jatobá hydroelectric power plant in the middle of their territory and ongoing illegal mining and logging activities on their lands, the beiradeiro community of MM restarted their autodemarcation in 2017 together with the Munduruku. Other forms of joint resistance by the two groups include physically preventing meetings to auction logging concessions in the two Itaituba National Forests; blocking the TransAmazonica highway in protest at the changing of a National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) official; and pressing the government to fulfil its legal obligation for prior consultation (CIMI 2017; Torres and Branford 2017).

If we define autodemarcation as opening lines to mark territorial boundaries, it appears different to countermapping, a term popularly used to refer to the production of maps by IPTC since the 1990s. However, recent work by critical geographers has taken a process-oriented approach to countermapping, opening up what is understood as ‘the map’ to include practices such as cutting lines in the forest and autodemarcations (Wainwright and Bryan 2009; Bryan 2011). There are hundreds of ‘social cartography’ projects in Latin America, those that draw on both or either of countermapping and autodemarcation strategies (Kollektiv Orangotango+ 2018), including the famous New Social Cartographies project in Brazilian Amazonia.

What distinguishes our paper from much of the important critical work on countermapping is our focus on the set of social relations between an Indigenous people and traditional community that are made and transformed through the processes of autodemarcation; these are the relations that both work within and against the constraints of the map and property regimes imbricated within (Wainwright and Bryan 2009). Our focus on such processes in the Tapajós presents a case through which to rethink critiques of the emancipatory potential of countermapping, such as those raised by Mollett (2013:1237). With regard to Indigenous and Afro-descendant cartographic projects in Honduras, Mollett asks, “how do countermaps, drawn for the purpose of satisfying state spatial imaginaries, actually counter dominant property regimes endorsed by the state?” Our paper takes up Mollett’s provocation to ask: how might autodemarcations jointly undertaken by both the beiradeiros and Munduruku provide a fruitful case study for rethinking the potential of what is commonly understood as countermapping practices?

In answering this question, we draw our theoretical framework from Bawaka et al. (2013, 2016) and Di Giminiani (2015) to understand autodemarcations among Indigenous and traditional peoples as a form of co-becoming, or emergent ways of relating between both groups that rise from embodied land-based practices (section 3). On the Upper Tapajós, we contend that it is precisely as a form of co-becoming that autodemarcations hold radical potential, that is, the possibility of challenging colonial

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1 This is a translation of the Brazilian legal term 'povos indígenas e comunidades tradicionais,' adopted in 2007 by federal legislation in Brazil through Decree 6040, the use of this term parallels the changes brought forth by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention169, which institutionalized rights for these groups upon its adoption in 1989, substituted the problematic term ‘tribal’ for ‘traditional communities.’

2 http://novacartografiasocial.com.br/
categorizations. Such evolving forms of relationality are most clearly expressed in the Munduruku changing their identification of beiradeiros from pariwat --- meaning “those that are part of an outside group” as well as “enemy”, the term is usually used to define non-Indigenous or white peoples (Torres 2015; Loures 2017) --- to wuyḡuybuḡun. Wuyḡuybuḡun, a neologism that means “those who live like us, plant like us, fish like us, but cannot hear like us” began to be used by the Munduruku to refer to the beiradeiros during the autodemarcations from 2014 forward (Loures 2017: 236; also see Torres 2015).

As explored by the ‘tropicality’ literature (e.g. Hecht 2013, see also Fraser et al. 2018:1387) the West has tended to frame Amazonian cultures as an Indigenous ‘other.’ However, while both the Munduruku and beiradeiros share a subaltern position in relation to colonial expansion in the Amazon, especially as those both dispossessed of their land and labour, their identities have been historically constructed differently: Indigenous groups (such as the Munduruku) are seen as an “authentic other” and riberinho communities (such as the beiradeiros) as a “counterfeit other” (cf. Nugent 1997). Unable to neatly fit into the category of the ‘pure other’, riberinhos and beiradeiros have subsequently been seen as uninteresting by scholars, leading to a policy and research ‘invisibility’ (ibid). It is through the everyday practices found within autodemarcations --- walking, going hungry, and confronting invaders together --- that the colonial categorization of Munduruku and beiradeiro identities gets reconfigured. Such resistance to colonial spatial imaginaries that have both essentialized and subordinated IPTC are not smooth, quick, or simple as we describe in section two and five. Rather, they form part of complex histories including earlier Munduruku and beiradeiro antagonism.

For analytical purposes, we approach autodemarcations as a form of co-becoming in the Tapajós through two ‘turns’: as a process that generates mutual recognition and collectivity within and between the two peoples (turning inwards) while also a struggle of claiming rights (turning outwards) in the face of expanding extractive frontiers. Although both turns are embedded within our conceptualizations of autodemarcations and co-becoming, we emphasize that the turn inward is crucial to autodemarcations since it produces and maintains the set of relations that guide struggles for territorial recognition from the state. To clarify, this paper does not claim that co-becoming is “what is happening” in the Tapajós. As non-Indigenous and non-beiradeiro scholars from both the Anglophone and Latin American institutions, we are attentive to the colonial origins of such authoritative claims to “expertise” (Correia 2019; Hunt 2013) based on notions of accurate translations between subaltern and dominant worlds (Viveiros de Castro 2004). Rather, co-becoming is a concept we borrow from other authors to help us productively approach the practices we encountered during our fieldwork. Our paper’s conceptual framework stems from our own presence in such processes as well as our collective understanding of ethnography as more than a mere method, research technique or piece of writing\(^3\). Following Alarcon (2020) as well as Blaser and de la Cadena (2018), we situate ethnography as a historically specific mode of inquiry that rises from careful movement between empirics and theory and whose potential as a ‘concept-making genre’ lies in the very onto-epistemic differences between researchers and interlocutors that make academic work possible.

Section two presents an ethnographic reading of the everyday dynamics of autodemarcations through which co-becoming is made manifest. Section three theorizes co-becoming as, most crucially, a ‘turn inward’ through intersubjective recognition but also, importantly, a ‘turn outward’ toward legal

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\(^3\) We are engaged Brazilian, British, and Argentine-US scholars working alongside Munduruku and beiradeiros of the Tapajós Region. We joined autodemarcations at MM and SM on multiple occasions between 2015 and 2019. ANON also joined an autodemarcation at MM in 2004. We used the following ethnographic methods in the field: open interviews, genealogical surveys, joint elaboration and study of maps, collection of oral histories, and reading of public letters published by the Munduruku and beiradeiros.
recognition through the actualization of ‘new rights.’ Section four analyses the co-becoming of the *beiradeiros* and *Munduruku*, through the lens of the Munduruku neologism *wuy้งьуbugun* (‘those who are like us’) while section five examines the how autodemarcations at MM and SM push up against liberal property regimes. Section six presents our concluding discussion.

2. Walking together and the everyday dynamics of co-becoming

This section examines processes of co-becoming in the Tapajós empirically, prior to the presentation of our theoretical framework in section three. It traces moments in which Munduruku and *beiradeiros* enact their own lifeworlds through autodemarcations --- from practices such trekking together during the day to storytelling at night --- in which their survival is articulated alongside state technologies and demands for recognition. We draw on material from our own participation during MM autodemarcations, weaving together narratives taken from different moments in the field. Because MM and SM territories are large (Figure 1), autodemarcation is done by walking through specific sections of the perimeter of the territory in different stages --- taking from several days to a week --- occurring at different moments in time. We start from the scene that opened the paper: a group of Munduruku and *beiradeiros* moving through the forest led by Caititu.

Caititu was followed by 21-year-old Johnny Saw Munduruku, operating a GPS carrying official boundaries of MM territory. As they walk, Caititu and Johnny identify areas of invasion, marking places where wood was illegally harvested, where a bulldozer had cleared grounds, gold extraction sites, and paths recently established by *grileiros*. Johnny directs Caititu to follow the straight lines of the GPS by calling his name and extending his arm to point one way or another. The two rarely exchange words. “Our system is as follows,” explains Caititu “… there is an official point which is where we put the plaques. We clear the area and go towards the official spot, and he [Johnny] knows exactly where we are.” Caititu continues:

“I also have an internal GPS, which is as follows. Well, like us this morning, when we left that place, we always had the sun [in front of us], a quarter of the sun [in front of us]. This is what we use, until we get to the path. There is also the river. I even orient using vines. The vine always coils only from east to west, it does not coil from south to north at all. If there is a storm, it is best to stop. If not, we continue walking in circles without direction. These are our references.”

Caititu combines GPS technologies --- key to liberal forms of statecraft and domination --- with *beiradeiro* and the Munduruku technologies of navigation, marking the hybridity of knowledges deployed during autodemarcations. Rather than using GPS technologies as a way to outright subvert the universal forms of Western cartography, Caititu demonstrates how the carving out of IPTC geographies in the Tapajós does not abide to negative definitions of resistance (i.e. that resistance can only be effective through ‘proper’ or ‘complete’ rejection of liberal state apparatus). At the same time that *beiradeiros* and Munduruku modes of being exceed GPS technologies, these tools become mediums through which both groups articulate their lifeworlds in relation to the state and capital (de la Cadena 2014). Caititu’s theorization of navigation extends co-becoming in the Tapajós to include relations and attachments between modern and *beiradeiro* sciences.
Caititu and Johnny marched on, followed by young Munduruku warriors and beiradeiros opening a four-meter-wide path in the forest with machetes. Behind them a group of older Munduruku and beiradeiros carrying foodstuffs, pots and pans on their backs. Two carry handmade signs reading “Montanha-Mangabal Agro-extractive Settlement Project. Entry without permission, buying or selling land is forbidden.” The signs are placed along territorial limits.

As he walked, Solimar Ferreira, a beiradeiro leader, reminds the group that they are in a place where their parents had once stood. He states, “I will participate [in the autodemarcation] because I love this land that my father gave me... when I pass by the river, I remember working with my father cutting rubber” while claiming that “securing the land is key to solving our mining problems today.” Solimar, guided by his father’s memory, reassembles autodemarcation as practices where the past, present, and future co-exist; in the Tapajós, like in Bawaka Country, “temporality, like spatiality, is contextual, knowing/knowable and affecting/able to be affected” (Bawaka et al. 2016: 466). Memories that rise from practices of “walking back” through time are those that propel the beiradeiros to “walk forward,” to articulate and imagine alternative futures, even as they appeal for the actualization of constitutional rights.

After a long day, the group sets up camp in the late afternoon. Hammocks are tied to nearby trees and a fire is started, while Magdalena and Variela, two Munduruku women, begin making coffee and rice. A group forms around the fire, and the beiradeiro leader Ageu tells stories from a previous autodemarcation in which leaders, shamans and warriors of the Sateré-Mawé, Katxuyana and WaiWai Indigenous peoples travelled for three to four days by boat, canoe, bus and motorcycle to MM. Nights are the time to exchange stories, such as the birth of Guarana by the Sateré Mawe and of alliances with quilombola communities during territorial monitoring by the Katxuyana Indians on the Trombetas River. It was also during the nights that beiradeiros and Munduruku discussed shared histories and their imaginings of alternate futures.

During one evening, as the Munduruku swept leaves into piles on the forest floor and burnt them to keep scorpions at bay, Ageu recounted the history of MM’s struggle to keep their lands:

“After the government's threats to the territory [Jatobá Dam] we knew that with the strength of the Munduruku, we would get stronger. It would be impossible to face these projects with only us in Montanha-Mangabal. This changed the prejudice that some people had about Indians—that they didn’t work, that they were lazy. There are people in Montanha-Mangabal [with Indigenous heritage] but they do not want to assume Indigenous identity. My father always said that we are Indians, of the Apiaca people.”

Ageu’s words signal the shifting relations between MM and Munduruku made possible in the interactions and shared experiences of lengthy days during the autodemarcations. They also demonstrate the messiness of co-becoming, in which neither the Munduruku become beiradeiro, nor vice versa. Yet, “they do not remain only what they were either” (la Cadena and Blaser 2018:11 invoking Verran): the Munduruku are no longer ‘lazy’ or ‘distant others’ but rather, through their presence within autodemarcations, are what make the beiradeiros ‘stronger.’ Identifying as both beiradeiro and Indigenous (Apiaca), Ageu’s own identity is also re-made and re-articulated alongside Munduruku worlds. Following his words, we can begin to position autodemarcations as practices that foster radical openings in which intersubjective forms of recognition do not follow strict modern binaries around Indigenous/non-Indigenous modes of being but rather invoke multiplicity of co-becomings.
Co-becoming is defined by Bawaka et al. (2013, 2016) as “our conceptualization of a Bawaka Yolgu ontology within which everything exists in a state of emergence” (2016:40). Based on the authority of Bawaka Country (North East Arnhem Land in Australia), the main author of the paper, co-becoming signals the relations between humans and other-than-humans made and re-made from ongoing practices, such as digging ganguir (yam) or gathering miyapunu mapu (turtle eggs). These practices both rise from and transform specific obligations to kin. Key for Bawaka et al. is that co-becomings are “never static, fixed, complete, but are continually merging in an entangled togetherness” (Bawaka et al. 2013). The concept of co-becoming has strong resonances with the turn to ontology in the social sciences over the last decade or so (see Holbraad and Pedersen, 2017). Ontology refers to being and becoming, and as we understand it, to the making or enacting of existence or rather ‘what is’. What co-becoming brings to the ontological turn is a focus on how, throughout the practices of autodemarcation, beiradeiro and Munduruku worlds are temporarily brought together.

We take up Bawaka et al.’s prompt to think of co-becoming “for the insight it offers about living in a relational world” (2016: 469). Although for Bawaka et al. (2016), the term refers to emergent relations between human and other-than-humans, we draw on co-becoming to think through the “never static” transformations that occur within both Indigenous and beiradeiro lifeworlds while walking, eating, and confronting invaders together in the forest during autodemarcations. Embodied practices, specifically walking, have been posited by scholars like feminist geographer Sundberg (2014) as key ways to “foster recognition of the multiplicity of knowledge systems” as well as “enact historically contingent and radically distinct worlds/ontologies” (Sundberg 2014:7). Drawing from the Zapatista “principle of ‘perguntando caminos’ (sometimes, ‘caminar preguntando’) or ‘asking, we walk,’” Sundberg details how “walking and talking, doing and reflecting” --- vital aspects to autodemarcations on the Tapajós --- are key towards theorizing of radical futures as something done and enacted rather than claimed (ibid.: 39). This is similar to other concepts inspired by the movement and grounded within the age of neo-extractivism in Latin America, such as the pluriverse, defined by Escobar (2020) on the basis of the Zapatista saying “a world in which many worlds fit” (p.50; see also de la Cadena and Blaser 2018). While Sundberg and Escobar’s theorization of multiplicity is grounded within neo-extractivism in Latin America, co-becoming in the Tapajós are situated within a long history of Amazonian peoples’ interrelating through difference. In Brazil, an example par excellence is the Cabanagem (1835-1840), an insurrection built on collaboration among diverse Amazonian peoples (Harris 2010). Its importance lies in showing that large-scale alliances between different IPTC in defence of their rights have a long historical precedent in the Brazilian Amazon.

Yet, co-becomings, as a set of practices that reconstitute relations between Munduruku and beiradeiro lifeworlds, are not separate from state geographies. To address the asymmetric tension between ITPC articulations (i.e. autodemarcations) and state translations (i.e. legal recognition) of traditionally occupied territory, we draw on Di Giminiani’s (2015) theorization of becomings within the Chilean Wallmapu, ancestral lands of the Mapuche. For Di Giminiani, becoming of Mapuche ancestral lands are “processes characterised by both opportunities for and constraints on the translation of ancestral land as property” (498, own italics). It is through the constraints of property regimes that state power aims to pin down the fluid spatial ways of being of IPTC, antagonistic to state geographies. While traditionally occupied territories are the result of ITPC struggles demarcations, state power materializes in the translation of this geographic construct into territorial units commensurate with the law.

However, for Di Giminiani, what is key to Mapuche becoming is not the “oppositional representation of Indigenous and state geographies”, usually understood through the division between IPTC understandings of territory as collectively held socio-natural spaces inextricable from cultural
reproduction (Almeida 2008) on the one hand, and liberal land regimes, which work in and through the
drawing of boundaries around areas of land, turning them into discrete units and separating them from
the inextricable social relations in which they are embedded, on the other. The latter renders ownership
exclusive and individual via a legally recognized tenurial document, clearing the way for market
exchange (Blomley 2010). Rather than the incommensurability between both geographies, what is
-crucial for Di Giminiani is “the set of administrative procedures through which subversive uses and
interpretations of the property regimes are constrained” (499). While for the Mapuche, these constraints
take the form of having to prove their ties to ancestral land through the very documents that were
designed to legitimize their dispossession”, in the Tapajós, laid out later in this section, they include the
transformation of all rights into individual rights and state assimilationist policies (491). We find Di
Giminiani’s approach of Mapuche struggles as within and yet, in his words, beyond the state as key to
understanding beiradeiro and Munduruku co-becomings in their struggle to actualize ‘new rights’ to
collective territories in the context of the broader liberal state apparatus.

We therefore extend Di Giminiani’s notion of Mapuche becoming within the constraints of
property as well as Bawaka and Sunberg’s theorizations of possibility, futurity, and heterogeneity to
think through co-becomings in the Tapajós Basin. Positioning autodemarcations as a form of co-
becoming signals an opening to think beyond the Tapajós defined only as pasture for cattle, soy
plantations, or mining pits and the racialized logics inscribed in the formation of these spaces wherein
wealthy pariwat settlers usually head these enterprises. It is also important to note that while co-
becoming can be used to refer to a larger set of actions taken on by both the Munduruku and beiradeiros
(joint occupations, mobilizations, fishing together), we focus on autodemarcations as both an example
of and essential to co-becoming in the Tapajós for the purpose of this paper. For the remainder of the
section, we elaborate how co-becoming entails both a turn inward (toward one another), and the turn
outward (toward the state) among beiradeiros and Munduruku.

Turning inward: The “co-” in co-becoming emphasizes the joining of Munduruku and the
beiradeiros and their lifeworlds. Within Munduruku and beiradeiro ways of being, land and water not
only constitute a material means of subsistence. They are co-constitutive of ancestral histories, stories,
and memories and are enactments of relations that make-up both human and other-than-humans worlds
(Torres 2014; Loures 2017). Such relationships to forest and river are grounded within linked
cultivation and fishing activities as well as the presence of ‘encantados’ or beings such as the mothers
of game, fish, manioc, and rivers within both groups’ land-based practices (Almeida 2013). Similarities
between the Munduruku and beiradeiros do not, however, constitute an equivalence between
lifeworlds. Nor does it signal the ‘blurring’ of settler/Indigenous divides echoing the applause of
mestizaje in much of Latin America or racial democracy in Brazil (Poets 2020; Speed 2017). There are
significant ontological and epistemological distinctions between both groups --- for instance, the
particularity of Munduruku cosmology based on the world upheld by Karosasakaybu, the creator, and
language --- as well as divergent histories of migration, conflict, and essentialization by the Brazilian
state. Rather, ‘becoming’ (become as in transform, -ing as in ongoing) helps us approach
autodemarcations foremost as embedded practices of transformation, in which relations between the
Munduruku, beiradeiros, and territory, are made and re-made within each specific dialogue, encounter,
or action between the two groups.

This form of relationality, of co-becoming, following Fraser (2018), Coulthard (2014), and
Almeida (2013: 23-35) can be seen as an example of intersubjective recognition, which unlike legal
recognition, cannot be granted by a government entity; it involves mutual recognition within and among
(forest) peoples and beings that surface from the struggles and dialogues through which it is made
manifest. Thus, beiradeiro and Munduruku lifeworlds link-up insofar they push up against
dispossession-logics of resource extraction – logging, mining, soy and cattle. It is important to note that these convergences between the Munduruku and beiradeiros are self-recognized by these two peoples.

Jairo Saw, Munduruku intellectual, draws attention to this form of relationality – similarity without equivalence – in describing wuyguybuğun: “So wuyguybuğun they are like us, but they are not an Indigenous group. Like us, they speak like us, they farm, make farinha, fish, but they are not like us, they are not Indigenous.” (Loures 2017: 237-238, own translation). Differences, evoked by Saw’s words “they are not the same as us,” are strategically deployed during autodemarcations. For instance, the presence of the Munduruku during MM autodemarcations is crucial for the beiradeiros; their reputation as a historically warrior people and head-hunters (Murphy 1958, 1960; Loures 2017) offers protection for the traditional community, who do not share similar traits. In the Brazilian Amazon, other Indigenous and beiradeiro communities as well potential aggressors, such as illegal miners and loggers, are aware of Munduruku history as a warlike people. These actors know that any act of aggression against the Munduruku garners bigger political attention, both national and international, than against the beiradeiros.

Turning outward: the beiradeiro and Munduruku struggle to actualize ‘new rights’ is also evident within autodemarcations. These are rights that did not originate in liberal philosophy and law, but from popular struggles for recognition in Latin America during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s (Marès 1999; Dussel 2008:124-125). As mentioned above, for Indigenous peoples in Brazil, these new rights are enshrined in Article 231 of the 1988 Constitution; for beiradeiros, such rights are expressed in several acts promulgated since the Constitution: the ratification of ILO Convention 169 and Decree 6040/2007. In Latin America, territorial policies emerging in the wake of these new rights have, however, been critiqued as ‘neoliberal multiculturalism.’ Hale (2005:18) proposed that the potential for liberation of ethnic territories and countermapping, specifically in Central America, is foreclosed by neoliberal multiculturalism, questioning whether IPTC movements can truly create their own alternatives, rather than being incorporated into liberal property regimes and further subsumed into capitalist ‘development.’ For Hale, Latin American governments have diminished the radical potential of ethnoterritorial rights so that they not only fail to challenge the neoliberal project, they actually advance it.

The situation of IPTC rights in Brazil is distinct to that discussed by Hale and other critical geographers such as Mollett, Bryan, and Wainwright in relation to the limitations of countermapping in Central America. In Brazil, Indigenous rights were some of the first to be strongly guaranteed within new Latin American Constitutions (although state apparatus guaranteeing these rights is being dismantled by Bolsonaro), followed by those of Ecuador and Bolivia, notable for their advancement of Indigenous rights under the Quechua and Aymara notion of Buen Vivir and rights to nature. In Brazil, as in Ecuador for example (see e.g. Riofrancos 2020), although such rights exist in law, scholars point to the need to press governments to actualize those rights and to abide by the principles set down in the constitution. The battle over land turns on the fact that once recognized, Indigenous and other traditionally occupied lands, in being inalienable, cannot be commodified. On the Upper Tapajós, legal recognition of different kinds of traditionally occupied lands is an effective way of accessing constitutional rights (in theory) and provides a degree of protection against land invasions and formal

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4 IPTC rights to free, prior and informed consent over any development project or legislation affecting their territories (e.g. dam building) is guaranteed in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, which has been integrated into Brazilian law since 2004 under Presidential Decree No. 5051.

5 E.g. Decree 6040, entitled “National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Traditional Peoples and Communities”, provided the legislative framework for the recognition of traditional peoples, such as the beiradeiros, in Brazil.
mining by corporations (not garimos) (Torres et al. 2017). We say this in relation to current laws, which are under serious attack by Bolsonaro.

It is with regard to these legislative possibilities and constraints that we can approach the relationship between rights and co-becoming within autodemarcations. Drawing from a different (Foucauldian) theoretical tradition, actualizing rights in this case can be seen as a form of co-becoming insofar as the two peoples’ subjectivities are mutually reshaped in the very struggle to realize these rights ‘on the ground’ (Golder 2015; Nepomuceno et al. 2019). Borrowing this insight, we can say that the mutual transformation of beiradeiro and Munduruku worlds, their co-becoming, is therefore not external to the legislative realm. While sharp legal differences between the two groups remain, both beiradeiro and Munduruku practices of appealing to relevant rights is not so dissimilar: they are using the legal tools available to them to maintain their territories and ensure their intergenerational survival.

We further position these rights as effective insofar as they keep land out of the market and create a legal framework to exclude invaders. Even under Bolsonaro, these rights create the legislative structures necessary to remove invaders and also give IPTC access to constitutional rights (i.e. health/education especially for the beiradeiros). If the state refuses to action such rights to remove invaders, we can see that what is failing is the actualization of the right, not the right itself. This “deep conflict between the abstract form of the proprietary right and the conditions for its realization” is well established in the literature on property in the Americas (Nichols 2020:32; Escobar 2008).

While within Indigenous legal systems, land is collectively held by a people, the Brazilian state is marked by legal individualism in relation to property. The collective rights of peoples are formalized, contradictorily, as individual rights. The 1988 Constitution assured Indigenous peoples’ collective right to land while rights to the subsoil remain protected by the Federal Union. While Indigenous peoples have the right to perpetual and exclusive use of land, its ownership is both individual and public (Marés 2003a; 2003b). This is the key contradiction: legally, Indigenous Territories are individual property and their holder and owner is the state. TIs therefore have individual titles like any other private property, in terms of legal form, but have collective tenure.

This legislative apparatus similarly applies to the territories of traditional non-Indigenous communities, such as MM. In their PAE (Agroextractivist Project), a modality by which the state grants land to the beiradeiros, the right to resource use is exclusively held by the beiradeiros although the state owns the land. PAE constitutes a public good and not private property. Being public property provides such territories with tenure security, since they are inalienable. In such territories where the right to use and occupy is owned by the communities, but the property is in the name of the state, lands are fixed assets and cannot be sold on the market.

4. Wuygı̇ybugun (those who live like us)

When the Munduruku heard of death threats to Caititu and other leaders in early 2018 after a wave of autodemarcations at MM, they published a letter articulating their co-becoming:

We, the Munduruku and the beiradeiros, are of the same river, we are of the same blood, we are of the same forest. We were created together ... if you mess with the beiradeiros, who are together with us in the struggle, you are also messing with the Munduruku.
Similarly, the Munduruku leader Kabaiwun, when addressing the beiradeiros, positioned the two peoples as relatives – of the same blood, same river:

> Autodemarcation is where we show our resistance, in the defence of our territory… We understand that this struggle is not only yours, it is all of ours: we are all the people of the Tapajós. We have the same blood, we are from the same river… the path we are building for our children, is also for the beiradeiros. It doesn’t matter if this [autodemarcation] is for the beiradeiros because we are relatives.

In both the letter and Kabaiwun’s words, relational modes of being between beiradeiros and Munduruku are positioned as emerging through shared struggle and interlinked ways of relating to river and forest. The terms *wuyḡuybuḡun* and ‘relative’ point to how formation of a collective subject during processes of autodemarcation works to unsettle colonial imaginaries. These imaginaries naturalize and rationalize the division between Indigenous subjects as romanticized and authentic others *vis-a-vis* the beiradeiros as a ‘counterfeit other’ (cf. Nugent 1997).

Yet, as stated above, autodemarcations do not do away with these binaries. We return to Jairo Saw’s formulation of *wuyḡuybuḡun*, which evidences a repositioning rather than dissolution of difference:

> There are *pariwat* who are, who live like an índio, but are not Indigenous. Caititu is not a *pariwat*, he is considered *wuyḡuybuḡun*, he lives like an índio, he lives on the forest, he lives from fishing, he lives from hunting, he lives from the fields and knows the importance of nature, the river, animals. But he doesn’t have a culture that is the same as a Munduruku, he doesn’t paint himself … So *wuyḡuybuḡun* they are like us, but they are not an Indigenous group. Like us, they speak like us, they farm, make *farinha* [flour made from manioc], fish, but they are not like us, they are not Indigenous … if we speak to them in Munduruku, they will not understand. They will speak only the language of the *pariwat*. They don’t understand what I’m saying in Munduruku, and if they speak Portuguese, we also don’t understand. So, they have ears like ours but they don’t understand like us. This is the name *wuyḡuybuḡun*. That is why they are not all the same, they are different… If I eat a baked fish, if he starts to see that this food that the Munduruku eats, if he participates, then he is not *pariwat*, he is *wuyḡuybuḡun*. He knows how to value our food, our way of feeding ourselves, so he knows our food is enjoyable (Loures 2017: 236-237).

In Jairo’s statement, like Kabaiwun’s, the beiradeiros are not positioned as the Munduruku. Rather, they are “like” the Munduruku, “of the same river”, and “those that live like us”, the ‘like’ here noting comparison rather than equivalence. The grounds for such comparisons and for *wuyḡuybuḡun* to rise are precisely the shared practices of living in the forest– knowing how to fish, hunt, cultivate, make *farinha*. These are the kind of embedded practices that Bawaka et al. deem imperative to co-becoming.

We can therefore think of *wuyḡuybuḡun* as a re-situating of beiradeiro lifeworlds and settlement in relation to Indigenous ones. Having until a few generations ago warred over territory, the beiradeiros and Munduruku came together politically in May 2013. They faced a common antagonist: the state’s plans for 43 dams on the Tapajós, that if built, would both flood and dispossess each group of their territories. It was through this early alliance-building that each group began to rearticulate their understandings of territory in relation to the other’s. The following quote from Kabaiwun, a Munduruku leader, illustrates this novel form of relationality:
“Since we made our alliance in common struggle, we have shown that we the Munduruku and the beiradeiros are here to show our resistance, that we would never let them [the government] build any project without recognising that we are the owners of this territory, [which is] as much territory [of] Mundurukânia [the ancestral territory of all Munduruku] as territory [of] Montanha-Mangabal”.

The increased use of wuyṅuy büṅ during the autodemarcations and the coming together did not happen from one moment to the next: it is built on innumerable meetings, actions, and dialogue over eight years. The alliance began just after the Munduruku had occupied the construction site of the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam on the Xingu River, which neighbours the Tapajós, in 2013. This direct action guaranteed the full attention of the national and international media on the question of dams and their effects on Amazonian peoples (Loures 2017). Some of the beiradeiros, then much less politically mobilized than the Munduruku, heard of the occupation and decided to support the Munduruku. In a historic move, the beiradeiros published their first letter in support of the occupation, noting, “We were never very close to our neighbours, the Munduruku” in 2013.

As the first beiradeiro participant in the occupation and subsequent protests in Brasília, Caititu’s presence was paramount for grounding ties between each group. On his return in July 2013, Caititu gave an interview on local radio in the city of Santarém. No longer talking about “distant neighbours”, with his whole body painted with jenipapo in Munduruku designs, Caititu referred to “our Munduruku brothers”. Caititu travelled throughout MM recounting the Munduruku people’s dedicated resistance to the dam projects. From then on, Caititu was always invited to represent MM at Munduruku assemblies, meetings lasting days or weeks and involving lengthy political deliberations where everyone has the right to speak and decisions are made by consensus (Loures 2017).

The alliance was cemented in 2014, when after numerous meetings, the Munduruku decided to autodemarcate SM, their territory on the opposite bank of the river to the beiradeiros’ territory of MM, in their struggles against the construction of the São Luiz do Tapajós dam on their lands (Figure 1). Caititu’s help in the autodemarcation of SM was so important for the Munduruku that they began calling him the “chief of Mangabal.” At the time, Caititu explained the significance of the alliance:

“If we do not fight as hard as the Munduruku fight for the demarcation of their area [SM], we will suffer aggression from loggers, gold miners and other people. We asked for the support of the government, which says it will help but this takes a very long time. So, we decided to do it [ourselves], today we have a very big alliance. We are working with the Munduruku because much of our rights as traditional people have been violated as much as those of the indigenous people. I spent two months and eighteen days struggling in the Munduruku autodemarcations”.

In 2017, when the beiradeiros decided to autodemarcate MM, the Munduruku reciprocated. The Munduruku were present during all stages of the MM autodemarcation – even those from TI Munduruku about 400 km upriver from MM. In each five-day stage, representatives from other Amazonian Indigenous groups also joined. A group of Sateré-Mawé travelled for four days to participate in the activity, as well as Katxuyana, Tiriyó, Tunayana and Xerew leaders who travelled from the upper Trombetas River. The Borari from the lower Tapajós also supported the beiradeiros in attending preliminary meetings to discuss the action and exchange methods of collaboratively fighting to secure their territories. All peoples involved shared the experience of difficulties in the formal recognition of their territories and threats of land-grabbing. A Katxuyana leader, Juventino, explained in 2017:
“We have come to help the beiradeiro people of MM and it is a pleasure to be together with them because it is an extra force that we have to fight against the big companies that want to destroy our territories. This partnership strengthens us more and more. It's no use fighting separately. The union of the Indigenous people with beiradeiros and quilombolas [descendants of maroon communities] must prevail. We are here to add our strength and continue in this great endeavour, which is to defend our territories”.

Juventino’s words demonstrate how autodemarcations function not only in resisting the incorporation of territory into national and international markets. In the lived experience of such shared activities recognition and the potential of co-becomings beyond the Tapajós is generated: both intersubjective recognition within the community and from other peoples who may have once been enemies as well legal territorial recognition from the state and the policies that this gives access to (i.e., rights to health and differentiated education).

In line with Kabaiwun’s ‘one river-one people’ claim above, we suggest that the Munduruku and beiradeiros lifeworlds, reassembled through autodemarcations, unsettle the encroachment of colonial and modern imaginaries which isolate and divide the forest, the river, and its inhabitants (both human and other-than-human) into discrete categories. For the Munduruku and beiradeiros, territory is inseparable from origin stories, memories of shared pasts and each group’s ways of being in the world through which relations between people and non-human beings, the river in this case, are made manifest. Such understandings of land as a network of reciprocity and care, between the beiradeiros, Munduruku, and other entities, are sustained against the encroachment of modern logics that privilege self-referential entities over relations (Blaser 2010:144). As ways in which Munduruku and beiradeiro worlds are re-articulated in relation to each other, together “one-river-one-people” and Wuyḡuybuḡun demonstrate how co-becomings on the Tapajós resist logics that try to dispossess both groups of their lands—both as means of material survival and essential to continuation of IPTC lifeworlds in the region.

5. The autodemarcations at Montanha-Mangabal and Sawre Muybu

In early 2018, three community leaders prominent in this paper – Caititu, Ageu Lobo and Kabaiwun – received numerous death threats linked to their relentless political actions to secure their ancestral territories, including their leadership during autodemarcations. Forcing them into hiding for several months, these threats come from loggers and land grabbers acting in parallel with gold mining mafias. Autodemarcations, in documenting land invasions and expelling invaders, bring insecurity to garimpos and grileiros, increasing the risk of their being expelled from the Tapajós by the federal government agency IBAMA (the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Resources). More profoundly, they unsettle the liberal-colonial structures that constitute state and capital. Whilst formally, the state creates regulations to prohibit open collusion with such forms of capitalist accumulation, in practice the absence of state institutions – the police, INCRA, (the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform), ICMBio (The Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation) and FUNAI, dealing with issues of land, the environment and Indigenous peoples, respectively—means that the law goes unrealized on the ground.

Recent literature on countermapping (e.g. Offen 2003; Bryan 2011; Mollett 2013; Anthias 2019) documents the making of a variety of new modalities of collective property rights that, whilst being distinct to individual landownership, also subtext the expansion and deepening of private property regime and its logics. The case studies presented demonstrate how mapping and demarcation often do not lead to the outcomes envisaged by their protagonists. In the case of SM and MM, however,
the recognition of the legal rights of Indigenous peoples and traditional communities to their territories are tools which help resist the expansion of liberal property regimes. Autodemarcations on the Tapajós therefore nuance the notion presented by Anthias (2020:268-9) that “property and territory, viewed as conjoined modern technologies of rule, work together to efface alternative indigenous ontologies of land and reinscribe state sovereignty over indigenous socio-natures.” Territory, even as a modern technology of rule, is critical for the persistence of contiguous IPTC spaces in the Brazilian Amazon.

On the Tapajós, the Munduruku and the beiradeiros explain that their decision to physically demarcate their territories was because the state had not fulfilled its legal obligations to do so and due to invasions by illegal loggers, grileiros, and the owners of garimpos (for more on these invasions on the Tapajós see Torres 2008; Campbell 2015; Torres et al. 2017). The particular impacts of such invasions are felt in the decrease of hunting species, owing to the noise of machinery, the clearing and distribution of their living grounds and the felling of fruit-producing species on which they feed. Landgrabbing is characterized as a severe form of dispossession in that it expels the original occupants and facilitates private appropriation (Torres 2008; 2018).

The power of autodemarcation can be discerned from the fierce responses of loggers and land-grabbers to it. During the first stage of the MM autodemarcation in 2007, tensions between grileiros and beiradeiros resulted in an exchange of gunshots. Similarly, in 2017, grileiros who wanted to take over the beiradeiros’ territory threatened community members as they crossed the grileiros’ illegal logging road during their autodemarcation. The clandestine road cut through the MM territory to connect the BR-230 (TransAmazonia highway) with the banks of the Tapajós River. In 2019, during one of the SM autodemarcations, the group found a clandestine loggers’ road in Munduruku territory. In a few minutes, about thirty men surrounded the small group of ten Munduruku, beiradeiros and journalists. The incident was caused by the Munduruku putting a hand-made sign on the side of the road, signalling that this location was in their territory. In both 2017 and 2019, merely the act of clearing overgrown paths from an earlier autodemarcations resulted in death threats to Munduruku leaders.

In both SM and MM, countermapping preceded autodemarcation, guided precisely by the boundaries mapped by the groups themselves. Both groups sought to resist the incorporation of land into markets and the return of lands stolen by grileiros to their previous status as non-alienable territory of common use. At MM this meant non-tradable usufruct rights given to the beiradeiros through the modality of an Agroextractivist Settlement Project (PAE) in 2013. In the case of SM, Munduruku land was marked as being inside the National Forests Itaituba I and II, both conservation units allowing the auctioning of forests in concessions of up to 40 years for logging by large companies.

In 2014, the Munduruku used countermapping practices as a means of meeting state-stipulated criteria for demarcation, with an anthropologist (normal for Indigenous demarcations) in concert with FUNAI, fulfilling one of the requirements of the official process of recognition of their territory. If officially approved, the delimitation would make it difficult for the government to grant logging concessions in the National Forest overlapping SM, and in licensing the planned São Luiz of Tapajós dam. From 2004 to 2006, MM also undertook similar countermapping efforts. An action termed “varação” (instead of autodemarcation) was undertaken over five days in 2007. A company, Indusolo, was trying to appropriate the territory of MM (Torres 2008), which is to the beiradeiros a commons impossible to integrate into the land market.

Whilst the beiradeiros focused on demarcating limits already guaranteed by the Brazilian state as of 2013, in 2014, the Munduruku sought to materialize limits that did not officially exist ‘on paper’.
In Brazilian legislation, an Indigenous territory (TI) is not acknowledged by environmental impact studies if its delimitation is not published through a Circumstantial Report on Identification and Delimitation (RCID). SM's autodemarcation as a political action focused on the publication of the RCID in the context of the threat of São Luís do Tapajós hydroelectric project. Only after successive autodemarcation stages was the RCID for SM published by the government in April 2016. As is common with Indigenous peoples in Brazil, the Munduruku of SM were recognized as a group and were able to access Indigenous rights to services (health and education) even before their territorial rights were formalized via demarcation.

MM was different. Even with territorial rights recognized, they were still “abandoned” (as they put it) in terms of the non-actualization of civil rights such as access to education, health and transportation within the community. Beiradeiros do not have specialized health and education like Indigenous people and often have to go to the nearby city of Itaituba to receive these rights. As a MM leader, Ageu Lobo, explained:

“We hope that with the demarcation done, we can make the state feel responsible and that they come to the community to implement public policies. There is no middle school here, so our children go to Itaituba [nearest city to the community]. Often girls get pregnant and stop studying, boys sometimes end up falling in with bad people and take drugs and leave school. We need a school so our children stay here and to create unity”.

However, legal recognition of their territory pressured local government to comply with the law and grant them access to their most basic constitutional rights, for example education within the community, pensions and credit. Hence, access to constitutional rights and public policies is an integral part of territorial control for MM.

There was an additional difficulty in the beiradeiros’ struggle for legal recognition from the state. If the Munduruku could count on the juridical modality of indigenous land (TI), this did not apply to the beiradeiros since there is no modality for “beiradeiro territory”. Their first strategy was to try for the creation of an Extractive Reserve (RESEX) in 2006, a conservation unit modality for traditional communities granted by INCRA. The government’s intended dams on the Tapajós River would have been complicated by a RESEX, so the Rousseff government dismissed its creation. The alternative which emerged was the formation of an Agroextractivist Settlement program (PAE) in 2013, a kind of agrarian reform suited to the communal resource use of traditional communities. This is however arguably inappropriate to do justice to the relations to land occupied for centuries by the beiradeiros (Guerrero and Torres 2013).

6. Concluding discussion

In this paper we have approached autodemarcations as a form of co-becoming on the Tapajós in terms of a ‘turn inwards’ (intersubjective recognition, wuyğaybuğun) and a ‘turn outwards’ (legal recognition, or the struggle to actualize constitutional rights). Yet as we have seen, this inward/outward turn is not symmetrical: although autodemarcations in the Tapajós require the creation of boundaries (turn outward), our paper emphasizes how crucial relational practices (turn inward) are to both groups’ struggles against the dispossession of their lands. We argue for a capacious understanding of co-becoming in which turning outwards does not mean a complete submission to the liberal state apparatus. Rather than rejecting the state, the Munduruku and beiradeiros carefully engage with liberal forms of
legal recognition in order to demarcate their territories and access rights. They do not expect the state to carry out demarcation processes, exerting agency in seeking the freedom to continue living according to their own ways of being in the world.

For example, in MM, the beiradeiros pressured INCRA to accompany parts of the autodemarcation, who also placed official markers alongside the beiradeiros’ handmade signs. However, according to the beiradeiros, the autodemarcation did not cease to be ‘theirs’ nor was it ‘taken over’ by state control. Rather, INCRAS’s presence during one autodemarcation was articulated by the beiradeiros not only as their own achievement but also from confidence born out of their alliance with the Munduruku. It was only after the completion of the first stage of the MM autodemarcation that the community received the necessary recognition to persuade INCRA to accompany them in subsequent autodemarcations – a demand grounded in hearing and seeing how the Munduruku interacted with the state in strategic ways during their actions. Thus, autodemarcations on the Tapajós are both about IPTC executing the work that would normally be done by the state, getting the state to work for them, and the very intersubjective transformations that occur within processes to actualize rights. In a larger sense, autodemarcations and other forms of struggle for recognition of territorial and civil rights can also be categorized as examples of popular participation in state politics --- a deepening of democracy in Brazil as subaltern actors such as the Munduruku and the beiradeiros engage in what can be seen as state-building processes even as their practices exceed state logics (Lund 2017). There is an important lesson here for public policy in Brazil, which we contend needs to have greater formal recognition of such ‘forest citizenship’ practices (Schmink 2011). This could be achieved by requiring institutions such as FUNAI and INCRA to formally support autodemarcation processes as legitimate methods of recognizing and actualizing territorial and civil rights.

Guided by such demands of legal recognition, but more crucially, modes of intersubjective recognition made and remade through the shared act of walking through the forest, we position autodemarcations in the Tapajós foremost as forms of co-becoming between the Munduruku and beiradeiros. This is echoed in the following response from Ageu, when asked what autodemarcation meant to him: “autodemarcation is a guarantee of territory and a way to pressure the government and create friendship and unity within the community. And with the Munduruku we get closer still”. Beyond pressuring government, “friendship and unity” arises between two peoples who were once antagonists. Anderson Painhum Munduruku theorizes the latter during the fourth phase of the MM autodemarcation: “the autodemarcation of these lands will give me security to the people of MM and to the Munduruku; it will be like a fence to stop the invasion of the pariwat”. Anderson positions the beiradeiros as distinctly separate from the pariwat – enemy no longer. This recognition and co-becoming is affective, evident in shared corporeal and emotional experiences that make-up autodemarcations: going hungry and thirsty, hunting for food, stepping through shoulder-height water, hearing the chainsaws of madeireiros at a distance, and confronting armed grileiros.

For the Munduruku and beiradeiros, autodemarcation is never complete: it is, as we have argued, a continual process of co-becoming, of pushing up against and grappling with ongoing forms of colonialism. The forest itself, part of a wider set of other-than-human relations, resists the territorial limits set up during the autodemarcation. After a few months, old paths are buried under new vegetation. Boundaries remain alive and in constant flux. The same is true of invaders – new threats appear days or months after autodemarcation so that, as Caititu explains, “every two years, we have to renew the pico”. Despite exile and frequent death threats, during his participation in the fifth phase of the Munduruku autodemarcation of TI SM in July 2019, Caititu affirmed with confidence, “autodemarcations have no end in sight.”
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Highlights for: Those who live like us: Autodemarcations and the co-becoming of Indigenous and beiradeiros on the Upper Tapajós River, Brazilian Amazonia

- We examine autodemarcations by traditional beiradeiros and Indigenous Munduruku using the concept of ‘co-becoming.’

- Co-becoming unseats colonial identities via mutual recognition between two peoples while claiming rights from the state.

- Co-becomings demonstrate radical potential of auto-demarcations beyond physical marking of boundaries and maps.
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Penelope Anthias, Giovanni Bettini, Daniela Alarcon, Michael Watts and members of the fall 2020 geography writing group at UC Berkeley, as well as three anonymous reviewers for their comments on previous drafts.
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