

Ethnic and environmental struggle in Amazon Basin - The Ticuna lands and the ecological preserve<sup>(1)</sup>.

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Our purpose is to present a situation of conflict and coexistence among different and interrelated residential groups of river dwellers: Ticuna Indians and colonists who live inside an environmental preserve station - "Estacao Ecologica Mamiraua" (EEM), localized in the confluence of river Solimoes and river Japura, in western Amazon basin. After some situations of conflict, the Indian lands have been recognized by river dwellers and other local actors (government agents, missionaries, merchants). Despite the different ideologies of indigenist and environmental policies, the creation of the preserve area and the definition of Indian lands could lead to unified goals. The social practices - which form a subject of anthropological inquiry - are thought in the context of debate between Ticuna Indians, river dwellers and other agents of different local interests.

We present the local representations of categories as fight, struggle, conflict and movement, and make some distinctions, with the aim of understanding the Indian claims and their active role in the social situation, in relationship with other actors in national and international frameworks.

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<sup>1</sup> )First draft version.

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That social situation is previously constituted by the paternalist relationships between merchants and their “clients” . The Indians have been historically subordinated by the bosses (“ patrons”) inside the framework of paternalist domination. The official indigenist agency<sup>3</sup>) appeared in the beginning of twentieth century. Amongst other Indian lands of the Solimoes river, a little bit of them - Part of the Miranha and Ticuna territory have been recognized from 1920. The creation of Indian organization is a more recent event, dated from 1980. The Indian movements could be characterized as a new kind of social organization, but with roles referents to the former relationships amidst bosses, bureaucrats and missionaries.

The official indigenist agency acts in the identification of indigenous populations and in the definition of boundaries between Indian lands and the other public lands. This intervention has effects in terms of identity conflicts which are the product of the reinvention, by the social actors, of their ethnic identities. The indigenous actors are organized politically, informed by historical memory of conflicts and written documentation. Through the Indian organization, they build their own tools of action, and through them they participate in the social scene.

Presently, the reinvention of Ticuna identity is a way to affirm their ethnic specificity, against social homogenization to the categories of river dwellers and “caboclos”(mestizos). This, despite political persuasions by dominant groups and by the bosses (“ patrons” )who interact with the Indians and consider them as inferior beings, lying yet in the stage between savagery and civilization.

### **The Identification of Ticuna lands and the relationships with non Indians**

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<sup>3</sup> first SPI, and after the sixties, FUNAI

My professional collaboration with the governmental indigenist agency begun with the expedition of a technical group of identification and delimitation - under my coordination and by the official indigenist agency - of the Ticuna Land of Porto Praia, an Indian Land localized inside the area of ecological preserve proposed by The Mamiraua Project . The duration of that first travel was forty days, with fieldwork in the following Indian lands: Cuiu-Cuiu (Miranha), Porto Praia and Tupa Supe (Ticuna), Igarape Grande(Cambeba). In the preliminary report (december 94), it was considered that it could be opportune to realize another expedition to evaluate the evolution of the situation. We came back for twenty days in December 95, and the final report had been presented February 96.

Traditionally, in that region, the Indian is seen as somebody who doesn't know the values of "progress" and "civilization". Local speeches state that the Indian does not know the money and this is a reason to not give money to an Indian, even when he is working the same work other non Indians are doing. That discourse appears as a justification of slavery and bondage ties. When the Ticuna present themselves as Indians, claiming for the identification of their lands, they reverse the stigma presenting themselves as a people that have territorial rights recognized by the Brazilian national state. The stigma is doubly reversed when they are seen as impostors by their neighbors.

When the technical group of FUNAI entered in contact with the Ticuna, September 94, they had talked about some fights between a man named Joao Pinto and some members of the group Tikuna. The first reason was the destruction of the plantation of some of them because the cows created by him had eaten the their plants. They promoted a reunion, and after their agreement, they invited us to integrate the meeting. They exposed, then, that Joao Pinto decided to live inside the Indian land. He was between them and hadn't presented opposition. He said that he would like to leave together with them.

After the first expedition by the technical group of FUNAI, Joao Pinto participated in other meetings, with the members of the community Mirafior, whose present themselves as no Indians, and had been elected their representative. He denied the Ticuna identity, and went to

Tefe to talk with representants of the Mamiraua Project that he would not like to "sign as he have being Indian", because he thought himself as a civilized person.

In the report of a meeting of the sector Liberdade, at the community of Sao Benedito do Cauacu, 25 to 27 november 94, it is registered that "Joao Pinto said that five years ago he had signed that he was Indian but he didn't want to fight against their fellows non Indians, and he would like to collaborate with their friends, leaders of community".

At the occasion of the second expedition of FUNAI, they promoted another reunion, and Joao Pinto presented his ambiguous position: He does not want to be called a Ticuna Indian. However, he wants to live inside the Ticuna land. The Ticuna had accepted his contradictory situation. A non Indian woman observed that with the time he should define his identity. She said that he should decide to "sign as a Ticuna again" . Or, the contrary, he should leave the Ticuna land. The problem of that decision is that when somebody decide to leave an Indian land, after the official identification by the FUNAI, it is supposed that he must leave without nothing, because everything have to rest in Indian land for communal use.

Other source of fight was the relation with the residential group of Cauacu do Meio. That " community" is localized upstream the river, in the direction to the spring, where are localized the upper lands, more appropriated to agricultural practices. All the area is inside the EEM. In a preparatory meeting for the assembly promoted by the Mamiraua Project in the context of the Development of the management program of the EEM, the inhabitants of the " community" of Cauacu do Meio decided that the lake of Uricuri should be destined to procreation and the lakes Jaburu and Baixo (Low) for maintenance. The Ticuna claimed that they were impeded to enter the lakes Jaburu and Baixo, and that they need to fish there for the maintenance of their families. The decision of the preservation of the Jaburu as a procreation lake had been decided in a meeting of Liberdade sector of the EEM. That sector is considered representative of thirteen communities. The Ticuna were not present in that meeting, and their point of view were not considered.

At the occasion of the first visit of FUNAI( 18 September 94), It was observed that the Ticuna and the inhabitants of Cauacu do Meio had been attached by alliance ties. The leader of Cauacu do Meio and his brother were married with two nieces of the leader of the Ticuna. The leader of the "community" of Cauacu do Meio affirmed that he would like to be integrated with their relatives. Their father told us he was a Cocama speaker. They decided to live together with the Ticuna in an Indian territory, trying to surpass the fights. With the physical boundaries plotted by the FUNAI, it would be easier to avoid the entrance of invaders and of great boats of fishers. They appointed the problem of the mediators living inside the communities and serving as intermediaries of the framework of commercial interests.

Nevertheless, after the first expedition of FUNAI (1994) the community of Cauacu do Meio denied the agreement. Denying that they were an Indian group, their representatives went to Tefe and said to the FUNAI and to the representatives of Mamiraua project that they would not like to be known as Indians, and they would not want to live inside an Indian land. They said they had admitted that they could be Indians frightened with the presence of the FUNAI, an institution of central government. In a meeting of the Liberdade Sector, it has been registered that a non Indian inhabitant of another community upstream the river, Jose dos Santos Medeiros, had been considering the Indians as invaders. But the majority were interested in the cooperation between Indians and non Indians in the defense of the area against the great fisher boats. It had been registered also that Jose dos Santos Medeiros would like to exploit alone the fishing of one lake Bau. It is registered that they waited a meeting between them, the representatives of FUNAI and the representatives of EEM to look for agreement.

In the second expedition of FUNAI, that meeting might been realized, with the participation of 46 persons, including representatives of Project Mamiraua. FUNAI, the Porto Praia Ticuna land and others eight communities of river dwellers non Indians. The leaders of Cauacu do Meio have reaffirmed their decision to deny their Indian descent. The ancient Cocama were not present, because he were traveling. However, they were interested on the maintenance of good relations between the Indians and non Indians.

The existence of several speakers Cocama have been registered in Middle Sollimoes. They had arrived coming from upstream river Solimoes, searching better conditions of life. Some of them have been living in other Indian areas- with the Cambeba, Ticuna, Miranha. Others have been integrated together with residential groups of non Indians. It was observed that these families of Cocama have a disposition to develop conflictive relations with other ethnic groups. They would not like to be identified as Indians, despite their ancestors have been known as Cocama speakers. This is a demonstration that some traits of a language could be preserved, without a true will of being Indians. In these situation, the Cocama "tradition" is manifested, without the ethnic identification with their descent group. This is a curious ethnological fact if we compare with the other ethnic groups which present their identity as a defining ascription of their specificity, challenging towards an autonomous situation.

The inhabitants of Cauacu do Meio, or Curimata, have affirmed that they were persuaded by the presence of FUNAI to identify themselves as Indians, because they would not lose their lands and their plantations. Without the presence of FUNAI, they considered the agreement had not been favorable to their interests and had choose to live together other river dwellers, whose had been themselves the Indian ancestrally without wanting to be considered either as Indians, either as caboclos.

These individual or group attitudes seen contrary to the identification of the Ticuna land of Porto Praia, and were presented in the context of their interaction with the representatives of Mamiraua Project , which act towards the continuity of the practices of the EEM.

In a document presented by the Mamiraua Project as an answer to the report of the group of FUNAI (REIS, 1995:1), this is stated that 10% of the area of the Ecological Preserve could be " subtracted with the creation of the Indian Land". The document presented questions against the " pertinence " of the Ticuna area Porto Praia. It was argued that it is an area of flooded forest "protected" by the EEM - and by the environmental preserve - and accompanied by the Mamiraua Project. It is written that it is verified in these area the " intent of division of the territorial use, with the support and mediation by different agents" , and presented the

“repercussion of the possibility of the creation of the Indian land among the inhabitants and entities of the region”. The document poses that the first proposal of the FUNAI was an area of 20.000 ha- even with the extension were not geographically plotted yet - for a too small population of 120 Ticuna.

Citing the document (Reis, 1995:5): “The communities of Mirafior, Aiuca, Cauacu do Meio and Cauacu de Cima, directly touched by the proposal of the Indian area, reach 209 inhabitants. If we include all the customers of the lakes Urucuri, Baixo and Bua-Bua, we will have a total of 417 inhabitants directly affected. If we consider the communities of upper lands of Solimoes river, traditionally customers of these resources, we reach 1100 inhabitants affected, whose could not use that area for the complementation of their survival”.

Each point of view creates a different proportion between the population and the occupied area, because rival groups are disputing social and economic resources of this territory. The ethnic identity appears as a defining criterion: The claims of the Ticuna of Porto Praia were considered illegitimate by other river dwellers whose practices were informed by the environmentalist ethos, and by the dominant regional discourse which trends to homogenate the ethnic and social categories of the social formation. The accusations that the Ticuna were intermediaries of great interests have been posed against other non Indians. This fact is a product of social contradictions because all of them have dispositions to be in relation to the framework of commercialization. The observation that they don't form a closed community and all of them frequent the cities is applied to the other residential groups, which are constantly moving - or inter and infra communities, or between the country and the cities.

The document presented by the Mamiraua Project as an answer to the Report of Identification and Delimitation of the technical group of FUNAI of 94 considered, at last, that the boundaries were not necessaries because the communities were assisted yet by the Mamiraua Project and by other regional agencies. The assistance of these Project is presented as sufficient, “guaranteeing the rights of use of the area by these communities, without distinction by ethnic or religious characteristics, or by the problems that they should



present, considering the peculiarities imposed by the historical and cultural context in which they are inserted" (Reis, 1995:7). It is argued that the traditional costumes are not depreciated by the PM, which recognizes the vigor of the Indian heritage, their traditions and their forms of interaction.

In the proposal for preparation of a management plan for the Estacao Ecologica Mamiraua, AM (april 1992), it was written: "residents of Porto Praia were cold and suspicious at first. They showed no immediate interest, but gradually became more receptive and in the end showed enthusiasm equaling that of other communities... Among certain Indian groups it is prescriptive behavior to act coldly towards visitors and strangers" If it is posed that they had been assuming a cold and suspicious attitude, it is not a way of considering that they could not have territorial claims, pursuing the example of other Indian people with their territorial claims recognized by the governmental agency?

The arguments presented in the documents of the Mamiraua Project are formulated toward the justification of the EEM, which had been created with the intervention of the Amazon State (local government). The boundaries of the Indian land inside the territory of the project were considered in contradiction with the project goals, which are supposed to be universalistic. The creation of new Indian lands were viewed as representing the fortification of particular interests. The indigenist agency of central government should be seen as an organization of increment of the particular interests, against the claims of representatives of social categories in a most general point of view.

In an anthropological perspective, this is important to consider the perverse effects of the macro politics in a micro level. The presence of FUNAI effectively had accentuated the conflicts between the local actors. The Ticuna had told us that they had transit and rights of occupation in a great area, but I had registered in my report that they were sensitive to the interests of their neighbors, and they had not presented the challenge for the appropriation of the total area as a Ticuna land. Nevertheless, the draft presented by the topographer included inside the Indian lands the holly area used by all the communities cited by the report of



Mamiraua Project, even with these areas were known an intersection with the lands occupied by the other non-Indians. That was the reason for the proposal of the second expedition by the technical group of FUNAI, added to the ambiguities of the figures of Joao Pinto and the Cocamas of Cauacu do Meio.

The knowledge of the topographer puts him in a different position in comparison to the position of the ethnographer. The posture of anthropological relativism poses that all of angles have to be considered. In the first visit of FUNAI, the topographer acted informed by an exacerbated indigenist discourse. In these example, in instead of legitimating the Ticuna aspirations, the indigenist practices had generated conflict with other interest groups. The river dweller neighbors of the Ticuna which are assisted in their challenges by the Mamiraua Project were directly touched by the perverse effects of the presence of FUNAI.

At the occasion of the second expedition the representatives of the interested actors went to the locus of the dispute between Ticuna and non-Indians (Cocama). The leader of the Ticuna talked in the name of 114 Ticuna, and the leader of Cauacu do Meio talked in the name of their group. According him his group were in a process of expansion from thirty to fifty inhabitants. Despite the alliance ties amidst the two groups, the discussion between the two leaders was conflictive, and none of both would like to give up. The greater problem is that with the seasonally of the flood, the geographical accidents despair when the forest is flooded. The area challenged by the non-Indians (Cocama) were localized in the upper lands where their ancestral had done their first plantations.

The discussion between me and the representative of Mamiraua Project was in term of the difference between Ticuna and river dwellers. We had not taken for granted the misconceptions about the caboclo identity, but our discussion was informed by the subjectivism of our positions. During these second visit the topographer had considered objectively the criterion of delimitation, trying to found the places for the boundaries. He has observed that the descent Cocama could be claimed in posterior challenges by the inhabitants of this settlement.

The river dwellers non Indians had recognized the Indian leadership and had observed that the boundaries between the Indian lands and other settlements, representing the presence of the central government, should signify that the lakes might be respected by the invaders. A demonstration of this fact is that the meeting had been double coordination

### **The political field**

In that region, the ethnic identity is the historical product of the interethnic contact transformations, and great part of the Indian groups had lost their original languages. Despite the fact that they have adopted the Portuguese idiom, it have not been always signified the refusal of the ethnic identity. The last years it has been observed the emergence of the ethnic movements, in which some ethnic groups were not renown by the governmental indigenist agency, and even by the anthropology. Currently, that "problematic identities" have become subject for anthropological inquiry. The governmental agency have also been persuaded, by political pressures, that the Indian territorial claims might have a solution. The appearance of Indian organizations have been representing an important role in that process.

In this text, we deal with different categories, which have to be referred to distinct practices of territorial intervention. The categories "caboclo" and "river dwellers" must be related to the creation of an area of environmental preserve. Ethnic categories as "Indian", Ticuna, Miranha, etc, are thought in the political field of indigenism and have to be referred to practices like the identification and delimitation of Indian lands by the official indigenist agency. The emergence of the organization of the proper Ticuna, Miranha and others ethnies of local level is relevant to the redefinition of roles in the political field.

The revival of the "Indian movement" appeared since the "First meeting of leaders of the Middle Solimoes, in 1979, promoted under the support of the indigenist missionaries seated in Tefe. In 1989 was formally constituted the local Indian organization - UNI-Tefe (Union of Indian Nations of Tefe), with the election of its first directory. After that, these

organization have been centralizing the dispositions of ethnic sociability, and have been promoting meetings and assemblies with representatives of the Indian people of the region. This organization appears as an emergent actor in the social scene, and have to be considered in relation to the others different actors of the political field.

The socio-ecological movement has appeared since the eighties. First, with spontaneous episodes of fight between small river dwellers against the invaders fishing for commercialization in the great towns. Some catholic missionaries from the parish of the city of Tefe have founded a pastoral organization to encourage the spontaneous fights to preserve "communal" use of the lakes by small river dwellers. Despite the existence of a fishing legislation, the police have been acting in the defense of the interest of the bigger fishers, and in the support of the local dominant elite. After, during the eighties, appeared a non official layman environmental movement. Then, The Mamiraua ecological area (Estacao Ecologica Mamiraua - EEM) has been created, defined as an "unity of Environmental Preserve by the State Government, in the decree 12.836 (march,3,1990). One of the typical species of this region, the red face white monkey (uacari), has become the post card image of ecological preserve in flooded forest. The innovation of the Project Mamiraua is that is explicitly proposed the necessity of the permanence of the human population inside this territory of ecological preserve. In others projects, it is considered that the people have to leave the area because it is thought that they could act perniciously against the nature.

The EEM have been proposed by natural scientists. Their development is relational to increasing scientific research in the fields of zoology, botany and anthropology. Initially, the Mamiraua Project was a Project of The Goeldi Museum and the National Research Council/Brazil, and after have been receiving financial support by international agencies (WWF) and have been integrating researchers of Brazilian and foreign Universities, and the collaboration of non governmental agencies. Some missionaries and laymen engaged in the social movements and the formation of base communities in the rural area around the city of Tefe have been employed in the Program of communal development of the Mamiraua Project.

The geographical area of the EEM was previously populated. In these region, the human statements have not a stable situation in terms of their social and geographical position. They transfer themselves moved by economic, educational, ethnic or religious reasons. The death of the boss, the fall in the river of part of the land where a "community" had been installed, or conflicts between rival groups, could be cited by them as causes of dislocation. We can not characterize these dislocations as a movement of politically directed migration. It is rather understandable as a dynamic social situation of interregional mobility amidst the settlements of river dwellers whose members live in a symmetrical position in the social formation.

The residential groups of rivers dwellers are not closed communities. The local speeches have been registering fights on account of resources of the lakes, forest and agricultural areas. Those fights can not be seen in general as fights against invaders, because we can identify fights between small river dwellers, even with among relatives, in a context of a local political culture of violence. They define those fights as "land questions" ("questoes de terra"). Even with the great fishing boats present a concrete and constant menace, these "questions" are not necessarily characteristic to struggle of poor river dwellers against invaders and exploiters. Nevertheless they have been living in a symmetrical situation in the socio-economic formation, the river dwellers have been polarized in rival groups. However the conflict is not currently manifest, it has an ethnic dimension, and could appear in crisis situation.

### **The Ticuna**

The Ticuna are presently the most populous Indian group of Brazilian Amazon. The total population of the Ticuna in Peru, Colombia and Brazil is 27.000 people. 20.000 Ticuna live in Brazil. The most part of villages Ticuna are localized in the municipalities of Tabatinga, Benjamin Constant and Sao Paulo de Olivenca, in the Amazon State (Oliveira Filho, Faulhaber, Erthal, Almeida, 1995).

This region had been originally occupied by the autochthonous peoples. We adopt here the concept of ethnic group to think about people differentiated by contrastive identities. The definition of ethnic and ethnic group supposes the contrastive relations between them, because every people appears in relation to other peoples. In the ethno-history of Solimoes river, The Ticuna are related to the Cambeba, the Cocama and the Mayoruna. The colonial occupation of these region is dated from XVII century, when were been founded the religious missions, which were superposed over the autochthonous people. The Portuguese had not accepted the Spanish dominance over the region and them were produced armed conflicts involving the Indians. At last, the Portuguese have firmed their dominance. The missions were organized by the Catholic Order of Carmo. The city of Tef'e were founded in 1718 by Frei Andre da Costa. He transported Indians of different ethnies to the place where currently is these city. Until the treaty of Madrid (1750), the Mission of Sao Paulo dos Cambebas(Carmelite) and the Mission of Pebas ( Jesuit ) - geographically distant which one of the other - constituted the limits between the occupation of Portugal and Spain (Sweet, 1975:454). The lake of Copaca, near by the area we are dealing, were militarily occupied by the Spanish, where Requena founded a Spanish fortification in the XVIII century.

Under the history of colonial conflicts lyes - perhaps implicitly - the problem of the Indians as the original inhabitants. From the Upper until the Middle Solimoes river had been considered the "Province of Omaguas (Cambebas)", even with it is known that others ethnies existed there. The Priest Acuna, who accompanied the explorer Pedro Teixeira speaks among other ethnies, the "Aguas" (1941:229).

In the frame of these dynamic of populations, the Ticuna appeared in the Upper Solimoes at first as a people that inhabited the "interior" of the forest. The Omagua had not permitted their access through the jungle until the margins of the river. They had been their enemies and because they had the dominance, they had impeached them to achieve the contact of the borders from where they could conquer better conditions of life<sup>(4)</sup> Nevertheless, in the XVIII century their presence downstream the Solimoes had been episodically registered (Sampaio, 1825). However, only with the rubber boom they were forced by the exploiters of rubber extraction to dislocate themselves until the borders of the river. With the rubber boom, the national ethnics went until the interior of the jungle (Hassel, 1905:71-72). These changing social situation had produced transformations in the social organization Ticuna.

The Ticuna were sociologically classified by Cardoso de Oliveira (1972:50) as "Indians of "river spring" (indios do Igarape) - because the interior of the jungle is plenty of these "river springs" which are a source of water and fishing and through them they could dislocate themselves across the forest - and "Indians of River" ("indios do rio"). This second category was classified as : a) Indians assisted by the official Indigenist Agency (5); b) familiar groups clustered to "Brazilian communities" (Cardoso de Oliveira, 1972:51). This last category correspond to an ancient migration downstream the river until the Middle Solimoes. With the migration, they had loose their traditional language and other habits, and they became similar to other ethnically differentiated groups of river dwellers. Inside this dynamic of population, one group of Ticuna arrived in the region of Copaca lake, nearby where presently exists the Porto Praia Indian land.

The sociological typologies, constructed with analytical purposes, have not perfect correspondence with the social categories directly observed. Nevertheless, comparing the "Indians of river spring" and the "Indians of the river", it could be verified that the first are completely subjected in a situation of exploitation historically constituted. This situation represented the submission inside a system of domination exercised by the bosses ("

<sup>4</sup> Priest Jose de Morais (1860:539-540), in ~~Cardoso de Oliveira~~ (1972:49).

<sup>5</sup> Until the sixties, Servico de Protecao aos Indios (SPI) and after Fundacao Nacional do Inio (FUNAI)

patrons”) through a frame of power relations transmitted from generation to generation. The “Indians of the river” are relatively more autonomous, because they can sell and buy with different merchants, nevertheless called by them as “patrons”. Among the “Indians of the river” this is usual the common use of the resources of the forest for hunting, the agricultural areas and the lakes for fishing, in a way of life similar to other groups of river dwellers. However, the domination instituted and diffused by the frames of exploitation and commercialization is embedded also inside the communal groups of river dwellers. The relations among them are permeated by struggles, and the “communities” are crossed by conflicts - produced by social and historic contradictions.

### **Ticuna identity, fights for communal resources and mediation in the context of socio-environmental movements**

The group of Ticuna which are the protagonist of this paper had arrived in the region in the sixties, and since this period they have been contracting economical, social, and even familiar ties with other non Indians which had arrived in the same period and have been living in a similar situation as river dwellers. However, the river dwellers - Ticuna and non Indians - which live in neighbor residential groups are in a conflict field previously constituted. Despite these conflict situation, they in fact share the same social conditions inside the area of actuation of Mamiraua Project.

Between the sources of conflict among “communal” settlements, it could be cited the fights for fishing in the lakes which are formed by the river springs. The water springs are “natural” boundaries between the “communal” lands. The Mamiraua Project promotes assemblies and sector meetings, in which the inhabitants of the settlements have occasion to search agreement about the common use of lakes, in an area populated by 4500 inhabitants.



The flooded areas are considered by the Brazilian legislation as property of the Brazilian naval force. However, these lands are occupied by river dwellers (fishers, cultivators, extractors). They are exploited by merchants who live in the cities. The agricultural and extractive occupation of land is based in residential groups. The forest areas and the lakes are appropriated by common use. The resources of these areas are subject of struggle between the "commoners" and the great merchants (fishers, wood exploiters and "landowners" ) which does not live in the field of the struggle and manipulate the power and the tools of commercialization to control the exploitation. The ecological movement emerges in association of the social movements that support the survival struggle, and the common strategies by familiar groups of river dwellers.

In 1995 the Project Mamiraua was elaborating a " plan of management" in the region. The lakes were classified in different categories: maintenance, preserve and procreation. They have defined also the category of "lakes of the seat", which is reserved to the supplying of the urban population by professional fishing boats. Lima-Ayres, 1993:407). This category is a tentative to avoid polarization between the river dwellers and the city population, even with there is a social and economical complementarity between both. Nevertheless, we can find kinship ties between the poor population of the city of Tefe and the river dwellers of the which live nearest by the river and the forest.

The lake of procreation is thought as untouchable, because inside this kind of lake, the fishing activities menace the reproduction of species. The survival of the families of human inhabitants depend of the fishing in these category of lake in periods of scarcity, which could coincide with the fishes procreation period, than creating a contradiction. Nevertheless several conflicts have no easy solution, they usually have disposition to find satisfactory agreement, and to avoid struggle.

The social contradictions produce the serious problem of the existence of figure of the "middle men" which is a reflection of a disposition of differentiation in the interior of the communal groups of river dwellers. They serve as a mechanism of mediation of the interests

of the exploiters, and facilitate the entrance of the “invaders”, “renting” the lakes by transactions in which circulate money, service or goods. The river dwellers have been evaluating the sanctions and punishment to avoid this type of transgression against the common interest.

In the sector meetings they subject to discussion their suspicions about anti-social attitudes of any commoners. In a report of the Mamiraua Project, it was cited as anti-ecological attitude the rental of the lakes to exploiter fishers, or the use of predatory tools. The Ticuna and Miranha, who affirm their Indian identity without speaking their traditional language were cited in that report as anti-ecological. They appeared as a potential public enemy, seen as “impostor”. When they presented their identity as a mean to acquire right on common use of land, prescript by Brazilian constitution, the stigma against the “savages” was reversed: they were accused of being separatists, and seen as “public enemies”, as anti-social beings. Nevertheless, after the meeting when their ethnic specificity were renewed by their neighbors, and with the agreement toward the delimitation of their lands, the Ticuna have been participating in the common ecological preserve and considered as “good commoners”. Before the ecological area has been created, there existed yet one Indian land officially recognized in the same territory: The Cambeba area of Jaquiri. The Cambeba have participated together with other river dwellers in the ecological movements since the eighties, and have been seem as “good commoners”.

Nevertheless, the Ticuna of The Porto Praia Indian Land had been seen as a “people who insist in challenging the ecology”(6) . That vision is adequate with the vision of the direction of Mamiraua Projec, mainly informed by the theoretical lines of biology and ecology, even with the Project have been engaging professionals formed in the Human Ecology, Sociology and Social Anthropology.

The anti- Indian vision in that situation is informed by the dominant discourse in the local society, in which the ethnic identity is traditionally expressed as an stigma, created by

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<sup>6</sup> Report of Activities of Maminarua Project. Number 5 (April 94 to october 964). Program of Communal Participation and Socio-Economic Enquiry. Subprogram of Communal participation. Page 163-166 (author: Marise Reis)

the ethnocentrism that associate "Indians" to the wild life and deny their human attributes. In that region, the ethnic movements emerge together with the claim for the appropriation of the "Indian lands".

The social contradictions produce the "expatriation" of those who have been considered as ambiguous beings, have not been considered deserving the civilized life of the city. Those who have access, through the political participation in the Indian movement, to the national and even international meetings, have been seen as impostors. They are looked as the potential authors of anti-social attitudes. The commercial framework and the tools of exploitation produce the social differentiation. The "civilized Indian", stigmatized and considered as a social anomaly, is faded to be identified with the role of manipulator.

It appears as it could be natural that some theoretical formulations might be constructed from misconceptions of the common sense. The "caboclo" conception has been conceptualized by the anthropology as a social category. Figoli(1985:120) noted that the regional identity is ideologically constructed. The "caboclo" appears in the frame of a social theory of interethnic contact which informs the ethnic regional discourse with an evolutionary dimension. The ethnic identity appears as a historic product of the politics of social and territorial homogenization imposed to the Indian groups. Strategically appropriated by the Indians, the indianness is scored in the struggle for the exercise of the difference.

The construction of the region evolves political processes of the constitution the representation of a generic identity, which shows the ethnic and regional differentiation(Bourdieu, 1991). The ideological discourse masks the domination imposed to the Indian societies, homogenizing the regional discursive formation, in which the conflictive ethnic categories are hierarchic organized.

This discourse is informed by an evolutionary philosophy which follows the principle of linear continuity, in which the deliverance of "becoming whiteness" is interpreted as the result of racial fusion (mestizaje). In this ideology, the Indian societies are associated to the state of

savagery/ barbarity, and it has been considered that they had not accomplish the stages of the development defined as natural and justified by state and blood reasons.

In the XIX century, the social Darwinism represented the application of the principles of the biology to the social sciences. With the concepts of struggle, natural selection, survival of the more apt, had been created the ideology of domination. The idea of natural selection justified that some people were considered more developed than others, and had sanctioned the rights of the "more developed" over the "less developed". The principles of the social science based in biological axioms were easily appropriated by politicians, merchants and explorers (Iglesias, 1981:100). With those misconceptions, had been constituted the naturalist field of knowledge, which informed the view of colonialist society (Iglesias, 1981:98).

The conception of "caboclo", presently, is the substratum of regional common sense, and it is utilized by the regional actors as a type of social classification. This classification, nevertheless, have not been accepted, not being taken for granted by whom are supposed to be subject by the stigmatization. The caboclo notion might not be seem as an ideal type, in Weber sense, because it is rather a common sense formulation. As a category of thought, has a dubious conceptual status, and have to be differentiated in classificatory categories referred to the hierarchies crystallized by relation of subjection-domination. It could be thought as a description of the way the amazon elite classify the native population of the region. Nevertheless, in the place of a social homogenization, is observable the differentiation in the social formation.

The cultural ecology uses the notion of caboclo without criticizing the conceptual status of the categories, producing the idealization of the "caboclo culture" (Moran, 1974, Lima- Ayres, 1992:41). The ecological trends naturalize the social uses of caboclo category. The application of the principles of biological evolution to the social categories may become dogmatic.

The notion of "caboclo" is imposed by the governmental actors and public opinion makers in the sense of justifying the dominant discourse, with their misunderstandings. This

discourse, previously constituted, informs the public opinion about who are not deserving citizenship, extending this stigma to the Indian people, the river dwellers and the poor population of the cities. The discursive formations are produced in the theater of misunderstandings of ethnic ideologies, and the ambiguous categories that mask the ethnic and social conflicts. They are the arena, the inter-discourse which inform the governmental plans, the indigenist politics, the ethnic movements and the territorial challenges by Indians and non Indians.

The human ecology applies the gradient of the biological evolution, like the "caboclo" adaptation in the environment could be thought as an improvement - in the becoming of the human history - from the savage to the human being, wondering that these processes could be thought as a natural history of the instinct of survival. With the evolutionary ideology, it is reified the colonizing project as a civilizing task. Then, the reasons of stigmatization are hidden and that who identify themselves as autochthonous people are discriminated. With this type of modern social Darwinism, the interethnic conflicts are misunderstood. The effects of those misunderstandings are refracted when a sustainable developing project is being implanted, and in which the "civilized Indians" have been seen as obstacles in the associative assistance programs. This have been posed as if the effects of the domination frame should be resolved identifying these beings classified as ambiguous and anti-social.

They have not been considered as "wild Indians", but as impostors - pretending to be "civilized Indians". The first characterization is formulated by those which have the opinion that the presentation of indianness is anti-social. The second is related to the misconception that consider the ethnic and territorial claim as based in a contra-sense: the idea that they became civilized because they left the wild life and then they might not be Indians. This dominant vision produces the idea of "caboclo" as ambiguous beings who live in a civilized world but have no citizen rights, because they do not have the knowledge and educational preparation to participate in civilized life. They are seen as "marginal", "minors", whose place is the interior of the country, the rustic life of a river dweller. It is considered that they have the

human rights associated to the whiteness only by half descent. In the other half they descent from their wild ancestral. Then, the “caboclo” identity is naturalized by the common sense that classify the unions between white and “savages” (seeing as like-animals) as illegitimate, produced by natural ties, non religiously consecrated.

### **Conclusion**

The Mamiraua Project proposes the mediation of the associative movement among the inhabitants of “his territory” of preserve, without ethnic or religious distinctions. This universalistic posture, without an indigenist perspective, however, has awakened ethnic identities and movements of territorial challenge. This claim have been received by the governmental indigenist agency, and the problem have to be analyzed in his anthropological and political dimension.

The Ticuna and others non Indians present themselves as river dwellers, category that emerge in contrast with other social categories as great fishers, of managers of wood extraction, and other exploiters. The initial accusation that some Ticuna had been acting as the intermediaries of the exploitation have disappeared when they have changed their representatives and their territorial claim were recognized by their neighbors.

When they don't accept the exploitation, by a boss (patron), and they refuse the intermediaries that don't represent their interests, they represent themselves as an organized group who present a political identity in a conflict situation. They wonder for themselves an imagined community. Their projection search support in different external projects whose objectives have not necessarily been integrated between them. These projects, informed by different discursive formations, are proposed in a social situation embedded in the system of the paternalist domination. The UNI-Tefe is an Indian organization in dialogue with other actors in the political field of indigenism. The organization or river dwellers appears in the scene or environmental politics.

In the political field, have been appearing different positions, relational to other positions in a frame of sociability. The observation of inter-discourse reinterpreted shows that these positions are subject of inversions of perspective and of meaning. The social groups are not to be seen as closed communities, but changing frames in a dynamic process of interactions.