

The constitution of the Xinguan plural society: comparing 'historical' narratives.

(part of this text is an altered version of a part of the article written by Fausto, Franchetto & Heckenberger, 2006, in press)

The Xinguan peoples share a common version of an account of explaining the process of constructing their intertribal system. Today those peoples identified as autochthonous are the Waurá and Mehinaku (Arawak peoples), along with the Kuikuro, Kalapalo, Nahukwá and Matipu (Carib peoples). The remainder are deemed to be intruders who entered the region in historical times and adopted Xinguan cultural values and ways of living. Those arriving after the 18th century include Tupian peoples (Kamayurá and Awetí), an Arawak people (Yawalapiti) and the Trumai. The archaeological version of this history only partially coincides with local narratives. The initial nucleus appear to have been a homogenous population of Arawak speakers. The Carib would have arrived later, perhaps between the 16th and 17th centuries. Heckenberger has located small non-fortified sites next to Tafununu lake (extreme east of the Kuikuro territory) with circular structures that can be identified as dwelling places (2005:103-112). The formal similarity of these structures with the collective houses of the Carib peoples of the Guiana (and the fact Tafununu is considered by the Xingu Caribs as their traditional territory) suggests that these small villages, composed of a single circular multifamily house, were settled by ancestors of the Kuikuro, Kalapalo, Matipu and Nahukwá. Thus the incorporation of the Carib probably took place after or during the collapse of the galactic system and launched the formation of the Upper Xingu's pluriethnic and multilingual system.

Even today, this distinction between natives and newcomers is a basic element in defining Xinguan politics and sociality. To be truly Xinguan – that is, since the mythic origin of humanity – defines a particular condition which is never fully attained by those who joined the system in historical time, however great the prestige may be that has been obtained by those peoples who 'transformed' into Xinguanos. In the Upper Xingu Carib language, these

'autochthonous peoples' are called *kuge*, distinguished from *ngikogo* ('non-Xinguanos') and *kagaiha* ('non-Indians') alike. The word *kuge* is a shortened form of the free form pronoun *kukuge*, inclusive 'we.' *Kukuge* is formed by the first person inclusive proclitic *ku(k)-* and the free pronoun *uge*, first person singular, both cognates of the same forms in other Carib languages. In Bakairi, another southern Carib language, spoken by groups today living to the south-west of the Upper Xingu, but who participated in the Upper Xingu system at least during the 19th century, *kurâ* is both the first person inclusive plural free pronoun, and their auto-denomination. In the Upper Xingu Arawak language, the 'autochthonous peoples' are called *putaka*, 'village people,' a term opposed to *muteitsi* (Ireland 2001:257). In Kamayurá and Awetí, both Tupian languages, the original peoples are called *hawa'yp* (as opposed to *kawa'yp*) (Bastos 1978:58) and *mo'at* (as opposed to *waraju*) respectively, while in Trumai they are termed *yaw* (as opposed to *adis*).

This distinction between a mythical register and a historical one is frequently blurred, since mythic narrative incorporates and anticipates 'historical' events, providing a place for non-Xinguan peoples and the Whites alike. Even so, the Xinguanos do differentiate mythic from historical time, a difference which the Kuikuro render as one between a time "when we were all still animal-spirits" (*itsekei gele kukatamini*) and a time "when we were already people" (*kugei leha tisatai*) (see also Ireland 1988, Franchetto in press).

While the autochthonous peoples were created directly from mythic heroes, the other peoples made themselves into Xinguanos. Being Xinguan implies adopting a very well defined cultural package, one that includes: a set of ethical and aesthetic values, a particular village and house architecture, the learning of bodily and behavioural dispositions, the adoption of a diet that excludes most mammals, and intense participation in a mythical-ritual universe that publicly displays the hierarchical relations between chiefs and non-chiefs, while simultaneously exposing the symmetry between the various villages in the form of rule-based wrestling contests. The arrival and incorporation of groups such as the Awetí and the Trumai into the Upper Xingu system is conceived as a process of transforming 'wild Indians' into 'real people' (to employ expressions widely used in the literature) through their adoption of Xinguan pacifism and ceremonialism. The Kuikuro designates this

process as one of 'becoming *kuge*', *ukugetilü*, a verb which designates the process of adopting Xinguan customs, as well the process through which a previous wild animal accepts its condition as a pet and becomes tame.

Is this process described in the same way by the originally non-Xinguan peoples, in particular those that occupy a marginal position in the system, such as the Awetí and the Trumai? The answer seems to be yes. These peoples have adopted the hegemonic point of view of the Xinguan system about their own past. For the contemporary Awetí, their ancestors (the *Enumania* and the *Awytyza*), who probably arrived in the region around the mid 18th century, practiced a bellicose politics. In the account given by the father of their present chief, the pre-existent condition of *waraju* is defined by ceaseless warfare. Their sudden transformation into Xinguanos is described, in turn, as a switch from warfare to peace, a condition dependent on the presence of a great chief: "then the Enumania reunited. Here our grandfather Awajatu was born. Their chief died. 'This one is going to be our new *cacique*. This one is going to be our great *cacique*.' And they persuaded Awajatu to be chief. Now the Enumania will no longer be Indians [*waraju*] [will no longer kill, go around fighting], they will become people [*mo'at*]." (Coelho de Souza 2001:364). An Awetí key verb used when describing the process of integration into the Xinguan system is *tomo'atu*, 'to celebrate (intertribal ritual feasts)'.

In the case of the Trumai, their arrival in the Upper Xingu was in all likelihood no earlier than the first half of the 19th century. Trumai narratives contain detailed references to past customs such as sleeping on mats instead of in hammocks, the use of war clubs instead of bows and arrows, living by wild food instead of manioc, as well as to the use of long hair and distinctive body adornments (such as penis sheath by men and a belt by women). In these narratives, the emphasis is less on the acceptance of pacifism but on the adoption of Xinguan body aesthetics, such as the style of haircut, which made them 'beautiful' and enabled them to 'become people' (Monod Becquelin and Guirardello 2001). For both the Awetí and the Trumai, 'becoming people' means adopting a distinctive Xinguan ethics and aesthetics.

Tabela comparativa das narrativas de origem dos Kuikuro (KK; see session 'KUKOPOGIPUEGUE', 'o nosso começo'), dos Trumai (TRU; see session) e dos

AwetiAwetí (AW; see sessions 'KAL AZOAMUJZA', 'os nossos avós'; TAL ENUM YPY, 'o começo dos Enumania'):

- Similarities:

	KK	TRU	AW
Menção do local de origem	A village in the savana (<i>Oti</i> , 'campo'), upper <i>Angahuku</i> river (rio Buriti), Upper Xingu (Alto Xingu).	A aldeia <i>Kumatani</i> .	Rio (de Janeiro) (é o que diz uma das narrativas).
Motivo que levou o grupo a migrar e vir para o Xingu	Desentendimento durante a construção da <i>tajühe</i> (casa grande) na aldeia de <i>oti</i> - O pessoal de <i>Nutsümü</i> (ou <i>Mütsümü</i>) decide partir.	Maltratos por parte de outro povo (na versão dos Villas Boas: o povo Xavante; na versão que foi obtida em 1991: os Brancos). Os Trumai decidem fugir.	Briga com os Brancos.
Nome do chefe que conduziu o grupo	<i>Nutsümü</i> (ou <i>Mütsümü</i>)	- Primeiramente, <i>Arekaya</i> e <i>Awaturi</i> - Depois de uma briga, somente <i>Awaturi</i> .	- Não cita quem conduziu, mas cita um dos chefes Aweti (quando já estavam instalados no Xingu): <i>Awajatu</i> (parece ter sido importante no contato com os Brancos)
Nomes de outros chefes	- <i>Mingangagü</i> (junta-se ao grupo de <i>Nutsümü</i> (ou <i>Mütsümü</i>), quando este já estava no local chamado <i>Tahukaja</i> . Quando o grupo de <i>Nutsümü</i> (ou <i>Mütsümü</i>) deixa o local, <i>Mingangagü</i> fica lá). - <i>Ihikutaha</i> , que se junta a <i>Nutsümü</i> (ou <i>Mütsümü</i>) quando este já está no local chamado de <i>Kuhikugu</i> .	- <i>Yawaripa</i> , <i>Kanuwaria</i> , <i>Wepola</i> , <i>Kutletle kud</i> (eram talvez chefes secundários ou chefes de casas. São brevemente mencionados).	-Citam-se nomes de outros chefes, mas não estão relacionados com a condução para o Xingu. Os chefes são: <i>Maitsá</i> (mulher), <i>Morepá</i> , <i>Mawalaja</i> , <i>Akato'a</i> , <i>Talakwai</i> .
Descrição do processo de instalação no Xingu	- A narrativa é sobre uma 'fundação' ou origem interna ao Alto Xingu. Menciona os vários locais ocupados. - Em <i>Kuhikugu</i> , vinda de outro chefe	- Organização das aldeias Trumai no Xingu (menciona os vários locais ocupados). - Processo de adoção de costumes alto-xinguanos.	- Em um primeiro momento foi pacífico. Depois, os <i>Tonoly</i> (non-Xinguan) mataram os

	<i>(Ihikutaha)</i> , que se junta ao grupo de <i>Nutsümü</i> .		Aweti, então os <i>Enumania</i> foram vingar a morte dos assassinados, matando um número considerável de <i>Tonoly</i> . (“os <i>Tonoly</i> acabaram com os Awetí (...) os <i>Enumania</i> foram para vingar”). Os atuais Aweti se consideram descendentes dos <i>Enumania</i> .
Visão do narrador sobre o Xingu	Pela fala dos personagens da narrativa, parece positiva: "Aqui está o nosso lugar." "Com nossos filhos finalmente encontramos de verdade o nosso lugar."	Positiva: diz o narrador que depois que os Trumai adotam costumes alto-xinguanos (pintura, corte de cabelo, etc), ficam "bonitos", "viram gente". Isso na verdade pode ser incorporação do discurso que os Kamayurá faziam a respeito dos Trumai antigos (na narrativa, são índios Kamayurá que estimulam os Trumai a mudar, dizendo que eles estão "feios").	- Sentem-se xinguanos, como algo positivo (como guerreiros?). “aqui eles vieram como gente pacífica. aqui agora viveram bem, aqui agora fizeram festa. Eles festejaram, eles eram índios (...)”
Conflitos internos no antigo grupo	Desentendimento durante a construção de uma casa. O poste da família de Mütsümü é jogado fora pelo pessoal de Oti. Mütsümü se sente desrespeitado e decide partir com seu pessoal. Eles vem para o Xingu. O resto do grupo fica no local de origem, Oti.	Desentendimento na distribuição de um animal caçado durante a migração ao Xingu. <i>Arekaya</i> pede uma parte do animal, mas seu pedido é ignorado. Ele se sente desrespeitado e decide voltar à antiga aldeia. O grupo de <i>Awaturi</i> segue para o Xingu.	Depois que mudaram para <i>Ywirytyp</i> (antiga aldeia), passaram por um período de conflitos internos. (“eles mataram pessoas entre eles mesmos”; “paramos de brigar com nós mesmos”).

- Differences:

	KK	TRU	AW
Descrição do processo de migração	Não há muitos detalhes, exceto a procura do local para morar.	Há detalhes sobre as dificuldades enfrentadas durante a jornada, sobre os alimentos que os Trumai consumiram, sobre a caça de um animal, sobre a procura do local para morar.	Antes de chegarem no Xingu passaram por outros lugares como <i>Paruva</i> (onde foram perseguidos pelos brancos), <i>Aj kulula</i> e <i>Wemuluja</i> (nos dois últimos viveram pacificamente). No Xingu, eles moraram no <i>Parua</i> (perto da margem do Culiseu), depois no <i>Tsuepelu</i> .
Menção dos primeiros contatos com povos do Xingu	Nenhuma menção nesta narrativa	Menção dos primeiros contatos (são breves e há trocas de presentes entre os povos). Menção de contatos posteriores, mais intensos, com a influência de outros povos sobre os Trumai (como os Kamayurá, que começam a ensinar os Trumai músicas e festas xinguanas, pinturas corporais, etc).	Conflito com os <i>Tonoly</i>
Referência a costumes do período pré-xinguano	Nenhuma referência especial, exceto a construção da casa feita com a mobilização coletiva dos habitantes da aldeia.	Diversas referências: - nomes de frutas e alimentos que os Trumai antigos consumiam (vários deles não existem no Xingu); - costumes antigos dos Trumai (uso de cabelos compridos pelos homens; uso de estojo peniano; uso de cinta pelas mulheres; uso de esteiras para dormir; uso de <i>b o r d u n a s</i> e desconhecimento do arco e flecha);	- Não há referências do período pré-xinguano. Há referência, em uma narrativa de origem, à coleta de mel (mas é do período em que já estavam instalados no Xingu).

		- o fato de que os Trumai não cultivavam ainda a mandioca, sendo mais coletores que agricultores; - a produção de canoas de jatobá, cuja técnica os Trumai dominavam e que talvez seja um possível vínculo entre eles e os Karajá.	
Referência a discurso de chefe	Há referências em poucas frases pronunciadas por Nutsümü, no momento em que chegam ao local de Kuhikugu ('córrego dos <i>kuhi</i> ', <i>kuhi</i> é um pequeno peixe, <i>Potamorrhaphis belonidae</i>), anunciando que aqui será erguida a nova aldeia.	Não há referências nesta narrativa.	- Há referência ao discurso de <i>Awajatu</i> , no momento em que tiveram um pequeno impasse com um branco no Xingu. <i>Awajatu</i> aparece como orientador do grupo (já que era chefe) e sugere que deveriam ter matado o branco, pois este voltaria com outros brancos para matá-los.
Manifestação do desejo de reencontrar os ancestrais dos quais se separaram antigamente	Não há nenhuma expressão de desejo de se reencontrar com o pessoal de <i>Oti</i> .	Os Trumai manifestam um certo desejo de se reencontrar com os descendentes do grupo de <i>Arekaya</i> (o grupo que voltou ao local de origem, ao invés de vir para o Xingu). Isso é mencionado nesta narrativa.	- Não há referências.

Aweti OBS: Para a visão Aweti, foi consultada também a versão recolhida por Coelho de Souza (2001). A origem dos Aweti está relacionada com a história dos Enumania, os Aweti atuais dizem ser descendentes dos Enumania pois os Aweti foram exterminados pelos Tonoly, segundo uma narrativa, outra sugere que o extermínio está ligado à epidemia de sarampo (nesse caso acredito – não tenho certeza – que se referem à geração da qual descendem os atuais Aweti, já não existiam Aweti “de verdade”).

Despite their asymmetric origins, those Xinguan peoples holding themselves to be autochthonous recognize that the production of their cultural complex was far from being a one-way process. The arrival of the Tupi peoples and the Trumai led to an enrichment of the Xinguan tradition: many of the contemporary ritual manifestations result from the appropriation of rituals or parts of rituals of Xinguan-ized peoples. This is clearly recognized in many cases: the Javari ritual, for example, is taken to be of Trumai and Awetí origin, although many of the songs are in Tupi-Guarani, because their diffusion was mediated by the Kamayurá. The Kamayurá also contributed with a mask festival (called *Aga* in Kuikuro), if not with the famous *Jakuí-Katu*. In the same vein, the flute quintets – a key element of Xinguan rituality – are considered to be Bakairi in origin. Differently from the Awetí and the Trumai, the Kamayurá, a tupi-guarani people, occupy a central position in the Xinguan political system along with their allies, the Yawalapiti. For these cases, see Bastos (1981) and Viveiros de Castro (1977).

Our preliminary analysis of the sets of Kuikuro curing spells and songs shows that the linguistic amalgam is much more far-reaching than previously imagined. Among the Kuikuro, curing spells combine Arawak and Carib, interspersing a part which is said to be in ancien Waurá with a second part in standard kuikuro language. These parts are separated by the characteristic blowing of spells (see KUIKURO SESSIONS “KEHEGE1”, “KEHEGE2”, “KEHEGE3”, “KEHEGE4”). As in the following example of a spell for healing wounds:

[ARAWAK] *pijaha ha ha ha / aitsaminha / amugi nukula / kaminau nukula*

[blowing]

<i>Kaginditsugu</i>	<i>kuginda-gü</i>	<i>ugupotsi-pügü</i>	<i>imbuki-lü-ha</i>	<i>ige-i</i>	<i>u-heke</i>
Kaginditsugu	gourd-REL	pierce-PERF	heal-PNCT-AFF	DPROX-COP	1-ERG

“I healed Kaginditsugu’s pierced gourd”

apü-he *akatsange, apühe*
 disappear-IMP INTSF

“Disappear! Disappear!”

Many ritual songs involve a mixture of distinct languages. The songs of Quarup (kwaryp), a commemoration of dead chiefs and the most important of the intertribal rituals in the Upper Xingu, contain terms in both Carib and Tupian languages, although the songs probably have an Arawak base. Thus even the most central rites of the Xinguan complex, whose origins reach back

to mythic times, display evidence of the historical process of hybridization taking place over the last few centuries.

This hybridization produced both common and distinctive features. Thus, the flow of genes and ideas which lead to a similar phenotype and the same cultural pattern was matched by the preservation of linguistic differences. Language is a basic diacritic in the Upper Xingu, including at the dialectical level, working to maintain differences that dynamize the system as a whole. This situation of diacritical multilingualism has led to a remarkable meta-linguistic reflexivity – a topic analyzed by Franchetto (2001, 2003).

With the exception of the Yawalapiti and the Trumai (groups with a particular internal multilingualism, the end result of specific histories of dispersion and reconstitution through intertribal marriages), the Upper Xingu villages are typified by an internal linguistic conservativeness and homogeneity. There is no multilingualism within the village, even when individuals from other peoples and languages are living there as the result of matrimonial relations. So, for example, a Mehinaku man married to a Kuikuro woman will not use his own language except with his children, within domestic space, and on rare occasions in public when called upon to act as an interpreter of Arawak-language visitors. His children will understand Mehinaku, but will not speak it, and will be considered 'mixed' (*tetsualü*) and sometimes criticized for not mastering 'true Kuikuro.'

Comparisons between the speech of Carib groups and that of Arawak groups are fairly frequent. Thus, the Kuikuro, Kalapalo, Nahukwá and Matipu are said to speak 'in the throat,' 'inwards,' in contrast to the Waurá and Mehinaku, who speak 'outwards,' 'on the tip of the teeth.' These comparisons highlight articulatory qualities: the preponderance of dorsal, velar and uvular consonants among the former and the coronal and palatal sounds among the latter. This diacritical logic not only operates between peoples from distinct linguistic families, but also within the same language among its dialectical variants. Kuikuro oral history tells us of a process internal to the Upper Xingu system which leads to the constitution of new local groups (*otomo*), following the splitting up of a mother-village and the emergence of diacritical linguistic distinctions. A version recorded for the Dobes archive (see KUIKURO SESSION 'ON_VARIANTS') is a concluding comment from the narrator of *Kukopogipügü* ('our beginning') on this process of dialectical differentiation in which, after

the scission had definitively taken place, the words (*aki*) changed: the speech of the Kuikuro became 'straight' (*titage*) while the speech of those who stayed in the mother-village, the ancestors of the latter-day Matipu, 'fell' (*isamakilü*). Meanwhile, the Carib dialect spoken by the Kalapalo and Nahukwá is described as being spoken 'in curves' or (*tühenkgegiho*) or 'backwards' (*inhukilüi*) (see Franchetto 1986). The qualifications *titage*, 'straight', and *tühenkgegiho* ('in curves') or *inhukilüi* (backwards) express well, respectively, Kuikuro and Kalapalo prosodic features. In Kuikuro, tonal pitch and intensity coincide in the same syllable (the penultimate), which is heard as carrying the primary accent. In Kalapalo, intensity and tonal pitch do not coincide: the first falls in the antepenult, and the second in the penultimate syllable.

However, this construction of diacritical differences on the basis of rhythmic-prosodic structures does not prevent these peoples from recognizing each other as speakers of the same language, each being an *otohongo* of the other – literally, an 'equal other' of the other. We can therefore determine three distinct and complementary levels at work in indigenous discourse: being Kuikuro, for example, which is to be unique, within the linguistic singularity of one's own *ótomo*; being an 'equal other' in relation to a village which speaks a dialect of the same language, and, finally, being *te/o*, a 'different other,' in relation to those who speak a genetically distinct language. Another important diacritical feature alongside language are the craft specialities, which perform an important function in structuring the system of exchanges and payments for ritual services. In these aspects, the Waurá and the Carib peoples today occupy a privileged position: the former by being the only potters in the region and the latter by possessing the monopoly over the manufacture of shell necklaces and belts. The Mehinaku and Awetí are the main producers of plant salt, although this no longer functions as a luxury article to the same extent as the large Waurá pots and the Carib necklaces, perhaps due to the presence of industrial salt. The same can be said of the black Kamayurá bow, still utilized as a symbol of chiefhood but not employed in hunting. The first to lose space in the system of exchanges due to the entry of industrial goods were the Trumai, who in earlier times held the monopoly on stone axe blades.

It strikes us as highly significant that, until the incursion of Portuguese, no lingua franca emerged in the Upper Xingu, unlike the spread of Aymara

and Quechua languages in the Andes. This suggests that the arriving peoples were not absorbed in a submissive position. Neither are we faced with an imperial expansion from a centre outwards, but with a local incorporation of peoples who, fleeing from the territorial squeeze caused elsewhere, including by European Conquest, entered the region formed by the Xingu's headwater rivers. Hence rather than involving the creation of a linguistic community, the overall process of incorporating, transforming and creating the Xinguan system involved the creation of a moral community in which an ethics and aesthetics inscribed on the body and in space were shared by people with distinct ethnic origins (see Heckenberger 2005). Language served above all to preserve a background of differences.

Although Xinguan pluralism is clearly a result of this process in which identities were constructed out of a web of differences, it is not so easy to define just how symmetric or asymmetric this process was. For Heckenberger, the system's formation resulted from the absorption of various peoples and traditions into a pre-existing Arawak model, whose structure accounts for the cultural continuity evident over more than a thousand years of local history: "acculturation was clearly asymmetrical; immigrant groups were incorporated within the existing regional culture, apparently of their own volition or from lack of viable alternative" (Heckenberger 2005:156). Although a variety of evidence points to this Arawak pre-eminence and precedence, including at ritual level, it is nonetheless clear that the pluralization of Xinguan society involved a cultural enrichment of the system as a whole. Hence we should not see the end of the galactic period as a simple decline. Although it corresponds to the moment of maximum extension and size of the regional system, it is not necessarily the most complex period from the cultural point of view.

From the linguistic viewpoint, we must also acknowledge a number of difficulties in the proposed model and their wider implications. Our reconstruction presumes two opposed processes in the relation between language and culture. On one hand, it supposes an extremely stable relationship between a particular cultural model and a particular linguistically differentiated population (the Arawak); on the other hand, it supposes a considerable plasticity in this same relation when it comes to the Carib and Tupi peoples. What process can explain this variability? If the hypothesis is correct, why did the Arawak retain a cultural model developed 3000 years ago

in Central Amazonia, while the Carib and Tupi became moulded by this same model, abandoning all their singularizing characteristics apart from their languages?

This question could be easily answered were we faced by processes of imperial expansion. But this is not the case. The Arawak Waurá, for example, were repeatedly attacked by the Tupi Kamayurá in the 18th century and ended up Xinguan-izing them. However, in so doing, they had to cede them an ecologically abundant area inhabited by themselves in the past. Rather than 'familiarizing predation,' an expression coined by Fausto (1999, 2001) in his analyses of Amazonian warfare and shamanism, this strategy involves 'relational interweaving:' that is, the production of ever more cordial relations through visits, presents and marriages that gradually build up a network of identity denser than the array of differences. This Xinguan art of involvement is a political skill involving a mix of diplomacy and manipulation – an ethos which spins webs, casts nets and snares the domestication of the other. It is a power game, but one which is non-centralized, diffuse and reticular.

The process of constructing the Xinguan complex over the last centuries is a clear demonstration of how continuity and transformation are interwoven in the historical process. Despite the violence of colonization, processes of cultural reconstruction and recreation flourished among the indigenous peoples themselves. It is widely supposed that, for the Indians, the history of the Conquest represents merely a linear sequence of losses in lives, lands, languages and cultural distinctivity. Xinguan culture — which for the Brazilian nation in the 1940s symbolized the epitome of a static, original and untouched tradition — is quite the opposite: the outcome of a history of contacts and changes, which began at the end of the first millennium AD and continue today.

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