

The Violent Aporia of Postcolonial Public Life: Environmental Politics and Indigenous Self- determination in the Amazon

*A aporia da vida pública pós-colonial e a sua violência: políticas ambientais e
autodeterminação indígena na Amazônia*

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THE VIOLENT APORIA OF POSTCOLONIAL PUBLIC LIFE: ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND INDIGENOUS SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE AMAZON*

Abstract: Indigenous communities' participation in environmental politics of dam projects in the Brazilian Amazon is marked by an ambivalent effect. On one hand, there is the local political economy regulated by traditional systems; on the other hand, there is the global political procedure addressed to 'empower' indigenous institutions in their interactions with corporate and governmental actors. Yet, when this second juridical instance is dominated by suspicion, due not only to the lack of execution of environmental compensating measures, but mainly to the lack of space where indigenous principles could be taken into account, official political systems are frequently undermined by local forms of representation, personified in the image of the 'indigenous warrior'. This article seeks to reveal how the enactment of the warrior in Brazilian public life ends up redefining ethnic agency, not as a remaining cultural trait of a particular symbolic economy, but as crime.

Keywords: indigenous sovereignty, environmental politics, Amerindian warfare, development and violence.

A APORIA DA VIDA PÚBLICA PÓS-COLONIAL E A SUA VIOLÊNCIA: POLÍTICAS AMBIENTAIS E AUTODETERMINAÇÃO INDÍGENA NA AMAZÔNIA

Resumo: A participação de comunidades indígenas nas políticas ambientais de empreendimentos hidrelétricos na Amazônia brasileira é marcada por um efeito ambivalente. De um lado, há uma economia política local regulada por sistemas tradicionais; de outro, a configuração de um procedimento global que visa 'empoderar' as instituições indígenas na sua interlocução com atores corporativos e governamentais. No entanto, quando essa segunda instância é dominada pela desconfiança, devido à não execução de medidas de compensação ambiental, mas, sobretudo, à ausência de espaços onde princípios indígenas poderiam ser considerados, os sistemas políticos oficiais são constantemente minados por formas locais de representação, personificadas

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na imagem do 'guerreiro indígena'. Este artigo busca revelar como a representação do guerreiro na vida pública brasileira acaba por redefinir a agência de grupos étnicos não mais com base na persistência de traços culturais de economias simbólicas particulares, mas como crime.

Palavras-chave: soberania indígena, políticas ambientais, guerra ameríndia, desenvolvimento e violência.

INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic political systems addressed by national and transnational capitalist agencies to mediate socio-environmental conflicts between traditional communities, private institutions, and governmental sectors, have become a reality in postcolonial countries. In this scenario, the Free, Prior, and Informed Consultation (FPIC) methodology, orchestrated by the Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and supported by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, is noticeable.¹ This kind of institutionalized form of what we might call a “mechanism of ethnicity civic participation” gives rise to a “juridical space”² that aims to regulate conflicts over natural resources and territories, a common characteristic of global capitalism at the turn of the century.³

The Free, Prior, and Informed Consultation practice among indigenous peoples is now a key challenge to Brazilian democracy, and, regionally, to South America. Despite its economic, political, social, and environmental importance, its procedures and objectives in promoting exercises of an “ethnic-civic” participation are filled with uncertainties and vague instances. After all, how can the environmental impacts over traditional ways of living be measured and accounted for? How to establish a process of dialog between the different languages and different cosmos (entrepreneurs,

¹ Today, in Brazil, the Convention 169 is being regulated by the Presidential Secretariat. The objective of this regulation is to guideline the process of Free, Prior, and Informed Consultation among traditional communities affected by development projects.

² I use the term “juridical space” as a syntactical pun of Patrícia Branco’s term “space of justice” (2013a). Whereas the author ascribes the term a broader connotation – which includes “both courts and other spaces where dispute resolution takes place (like the public system of mediation, civil registries, etc...)” –, the term “juridical space” is proposed to consider a much narrow framework. Namely, the set of technical knowledge that gives birth to the mechanisms of ethnic civic participation, such as the Free, Prior, and Informed Consultation (FPIC) in the contest of global capitalism. Nevertheless, what is being emphasized in this article is the “monistic view” that configures environmental politics and the recent conflict resolution in the Amazon. In this scenario, while trying to map some other principles and domains which are mobilized by indigenous political subjects, throughout the course of this text, it is expected to help the reader to identify the challenges in recognizing the “space of justice” (Branco, 2013a) as a plural social space, or as a plurality of juridical structures and political interactions.

³ As David Harvey shows in his analysis of contemporary capitalism, the renewed economic importance of export-oriented extractive industries, driven by China’s demand for raw materials, has generated a transnational competition for natural resources and, therefore, has renewed interest in the exploration of frontier territories (Harvey, 2003 *apud* Rodriguez-Garavito, 2010). According to the legal sociologist César Rodriguez-Garavito (2010: 5), these lands are precisely where indigenous peoples, displaced from their ancestral territories, have settled historically and where the most intense conflicts over Free, Prior, and Informed Consultation have taken place.

traditional communities and the state)? Who, institutionally, would be responsible for doing so? When to initiate such proceedings? What about the indigenous legal representation? To which juridical effects, if any, would these procedures of consultancy be subjected to in case of lack of agreement? Which – local and global – instances, would account for such a decision?

Furthermore, the constitution of these “democratic institutions” at a local level is pictured as a problem for social analysis. How does the statement of a global legal procedure of civil participation come to be received by disperse and particular political-social organisms? Or, in other words, how does the definition of a public policy, designed by western neoliberal institutions, come to interact with an indigenous political-economic organization? Where is the indigenous political subject – represented in this ambivalent colonial situation, as an ‘ethnic citizen’ on one hand, and as a local indigenous leader on the other – positioned? From what perspective could one build a political reference to support indigenous’ rights and their traditional ways of life, within and beyond the contradictory and ambivalent processes that take place at certain indigenous communities as to how they live and structure their conditions of existence?

By addressing these questions, this article intends to contribute to the body of literature that deals with the problem of “indigenous people in international law” (cf. Anaya, 1996), and its attempt to evaluate the meaning of indigenous sovereignty in the context of their interactions with national governments (Culler, 2001: 338) and corporate actors (Miranda, 2007). Nevertheless, although the “*prospective*” character of this literature in helping to measure the minimum standards of behavior by state and non-state actors with regard to indigenous peoples (Rodríguez-Piñero, 2005: 10),⁴ the “international regime”⁵ that shapes normative expectations concerning the content and scope of the indigenous peoples’ rights is never put into question.⁶ It is the centrality of this “procedural regime” what needs to be stated and problematized. Since elementary principles and domains of indigenous communities, mobilized through their political positions in the context of development projects, are constantly neglected or misunderstood by environmental politics and by corporate and state actors, one should question the social substratum that underlines the procedures and institutions of ethnic participatory mechanisms.

⁴ Besides the vast literature on the theme (Rodríguez-Piñero, 2005: 10), there is a considerable number of reports and recommendations given by the United Nations and other international agencies (Miranda, 2007).

⁵ I use the term “international regime” following Rodríguez-Piñero’s definition of it as a “more or less defined set of principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures” that “shapes normative expectations concerning the content and scope of the rights of indigenous peoples” (2005: 07).

⁶ With exception to the insightful article of César Rodríguez-Garavito (2010).

According to Rodriguez-Garavito (2010: 12), the consultation practice created for the participation of indigenous peoples in the context of development projects that affect them, such as the Free, Prior and Informed Consultation, is marked by a “displacement effect”. According to the author, this happens when the collective demands of the project-affected-communities, such as the calls for maintaining livelihoods against the threats caused by industrial enterprises or infrastructure projects, turns, at least in part, into a regulatory procedure overdetermined by the law and the capital.

Empirical evidence supports Rodriguez-Garavito’s argument (2010: 30-31). Firstly, when the conversations between entrepreneurs and project-affected-communities in a specific development project – the case of the hydroelectric power plant of Urrá, on the Sinu River, in Colombia, which affects the Embera-Katío indigenous reserve – began to be dominated by formalities regarding deadlines, legal resources, notification and certification of legal representatives. Secondly, when much of the query process (and the agreements that followed them) among project-affected-communities consists in calculating and establishing the appropriate form of compensation (i.e. money and infrastructural reparation) for the environmental and cultural damages caused by the enterprise.

In another occasion (Costa, 2012: 03), for the Belo Monte dam case – a hydroelectric power plant that is being constructed on the Xingu River, in the state of Pará, northern Brazil – I have identified that, despite among indigenous’ claims in the context of the construction of the dam project there was always a concern with the maintenance of indigenous’ livelihood and territories.⁷ On the other side, an inclination to amplifying their economic production by the implementation of new fishery and agricultural productive projects, options that are frequently listed as a compensation policy for the environmental injuries caused by the dam, can be also found among project-affected-communities. However, in spite of the contradictory context of these measures, gradually, these intrusions⁸ began to be authorized by indigenous subjects in detriment of their actual agricultural, fishery and collecting techniques. For example, the ornamental commercial fishery, currently made by artisanal techniques by the

⁷ The Bebý Xikrin Association (the association created to represent the Xikrin-Mebengôkrê indigenous people), through an official letter addressed to the State Public Prosecutor (Ministério Público Federal) register that: “the elders, women and the young people from indigenous villages are worried with the future of our community and our river because of Belo Monte”. For the record, there are twelve indigenous groups considered in the influence area of Belo Monte dam.

⁸ The Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro considers these “intrusions”, known as “compensating measures”, as the very impact of dam projects over indigenous communities and territories. In his words, they are the “classic and deadly impact caused by impact mitigation”. Cf. <http://arte.folha.uol.com.br/especiais/2013/12/16/belo-monte/capitulo-4-povos-indigenas.html>, accessed on 16.12.2013.

Arara indigenous communities from the Belo Monte case, and with its future planning by environmental projects as an activity that will be sustained by external aquaculture methods. Moreover, when this new productive projects are proposed following handicraft indigenous productive patterns, it is easy to notice among them the claim for modern techniques and equipments. The case of their small scale plantation and crops, basically for subsistence or small scale commercial purposes, to which the indigenous declare its cultivation with techniques different “from the time that indigenous used to work with their hands”.⁹

Nonetheless, what happens when such inductions of legal proceedings and commodified projects are contradicted, in advance to such interventions, with the counterpart of the indigenous warrior? The case of Piraçu letter sent by indigenous leaders of the Xingu River to the former President of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, in November 2009 (before the start of Belo Monte construction), is a clear example of the previous position of indigenous-affected-communities:

We demand that the government definitely cancels the implementation of this dam. If the government decides to begin the works of construction of Belo Monte, we warn you that there will be a warrior act by the indigenous peoples of the Xingu. The lives of workers and indigenous people will be at risk and the Brazilian government will be held responsible. (Letter Piraçu, 2009)

The projection of such a scenario was experienced during the installation of Belo Monte dam (still in progress)¹⁰ in a series of conflicting events between indigenous-affected-peoples, public officials and private actors. Which includes a succession of occupations of the construction site by indigenous warriors (see Figure I), the retention of technical employees of the dam in indigenous lands, and the striking work of the Brazilian National Public Security Force (Força Nacional de Segurança Pública – FNSP) in maintaining order and repressing any other manifestations against said project.

A first analysis of the indigenous leaders previous positioning against the building of the dam, as well of the conflicts that followed the dam construction, might point out that what is really at stake in their movements is not the affirmation of the indigenous

⁹ Mukuka Xikrin, one of the leaders of Bebú Xikrin Association, addressing a speech during a meeting between the entrepreneur, the Indigenous National Foundation and other members of indigenous communities to discuss the environmental politics and projects of Belo Monte dam.

¹⁰ The license to operate the Belo Monte dam was already requested by Norte Energia SA (the company responsible for the hydroelectric plant construction) to the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Instituto Brasileiro de Meio Ambiente e Recursos Renováveis – IBAMA), on February, 11th, 2015. The case is pending the approval of the federal agency.

warrior's intensities or capacities, but the engagement of other principles and domains which are accounted for by the indigenous actions, yet not considered by the development planning of the Brazilian state for the Amazon region. As it can be verified in the statement that precedes the above quotation from the Piraçu letter, it is exactly the "irreversible consequences" that the building of Belo Monte would bring to the Xingu river and to the local indigenous populations, a fact that contradicted or disrespected the "*ancestral inhabitants* of this river and the *development model*" advocated by the indigenous communities (my emphasis), which is being accounted for by the indigenous position.

We had never obstructed the sustainable development of the white man, but we do not accept the government taking a decision of such irresponsibility, and that will bring irreversible consequences for the region and our peoples, profoundly disrespecting the ancestral inhabitants of this river and the development model we defend. (Letter Piraçu, 2009)

When evidencing the indigenous position against development projects, there is an unquestionable need to institute a "partial and temporary" status for the agreements established by consultation procedures and the environmental compensation measures based on money and infrastructural reparation (Rodriguez-Garavito, 2010). The law and the capital do not exhaust the multiplicity of agents, principles, and domains that are mobilized by the indigenous political subject during the consultation process, namely: *the ancestral inhabitants of the Xingu river, the indigenous model of development, or even the Amazon region as an indigenous territory*. Therefore, what meaningful position might be given to these unaccountable social forces mobilized by the indigenous warrior? Could these forces be considered in any procedural regime of international law?

Lévi-Strauss, in a well-known essay (1976 [1952]), had already warned that any philosophical and sociological speculation in a vain attempt to achieve a compromise between contradictory poles ends up suppressing whatever is scandalous and shocking to the outsider in different cultures. Taking into consideration the anthropologist gesture, one should ask: what are these partial agreements established by the law and the capital in the context of the implementation of developmental projects in the Amazon but the categorical establishment of vain commitments between conflicting poles? The modern version of democracy, and the institutions that follow, cannot be camouflaged by the market principle which determines freedom as an

occasional exercise of choice between competing and often indistinguishable alternatives (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006).

Moreover, in the neocolonial situation that characterizes the new front of occupation of the Amazon, materialized by the recent infrastructure projects planned for the region,¹¹ the proposition of a legibility for the principles and domains mobilized by the indigenous political position arises specifically from the need to counteract the process of criminalization of their acts against such mega development projects (see below). After the postcolonial critic, from texts like *Can the Subaltern Speak* (Spivak, 1988), contemporary sociology cannot remain impartial when rituals and cultural manifestations of colonized populations, by the misconceptions and misunderstandings of translation, become the signifiers of Western laws, which, in colonial and neocolonial contexts, serve economic and political interests and the establishment of a “good society”, based on the redefinition of what had been tolerated, known, or adulated as ritual into crime (*ibidem*: 94).

Then, as proposed by the Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, if “[w]hat the natives force the anthropologist to do is, precisely, to put into question what a subject can be [...] allow[ing] anthropology to take on the virtual presence of an Other who is also its condition – the condition for passage from one possible world to another” (2013: 479), then one should be able to ask what an indigenous warrior can be, as a condition for passage (to paraphrase Viveiros de Castro) from one possible democracy to another, in which indigenous concepts of politics (and its objects) could carry out an experiment with it, and thus also to our own condition.

Taking as an example the ways in which indigenous societies have been articulating their political position over environmental and developmental politics delivered by the Brazilian state for the construction of dam projects over the Amazon, I will try to problematize the contemporaneous formulas of institutionalized ethnic civic participation. Two hypothesis will guideline the following argumentation: 1) that the concepts of 'politics' uttered by indigenous warrior systems do not interact with bureaucratic mechanisms established by environmental policies, a fact that represents the infeasibility of such a mediation; 2) that environmental policies tend to be an ambivalent mode of knowledge and power, whereas, on the one hand, by (ethnographically) positioning indigenous communities as a mere “environmental component”¹² of developmental projects (ordained as a constant target of welfare policies); on the other hand, it ends up consuming original political structures to the

¹¹ See the map of new hydroelectric dams planned for the Amazon region. Accessed on 18.09.2013, at <http://candidoneto.blogspot.com.br/2013/08/mar-de-hidreletricas-na-amazonia.html>.

¹² The Brazilian Indigenous National Foundation treats indigenous people and their lands affected by development project as “the indigenous component of environmental politics”.

status of non-recognition within the normative language of the democratic modern state, marginalizing the indigenous warrior of what can be empirically proven as 'social participation' or 'accountability'.

WARFARE AND DEMOCRACY: BRINGING BACK THE INDIGENOUS AGENCIES INTO ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

The international legislation of Free, Prior, and Informed Consultation established to guarantee the right to effective participation of indigenous peoples and ethnics groups inside processes of national development is a notorious mark of a recent practice of 'institutionalized democratic and juridical control'. The Article 7 of Convention 169 over indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries reports that:

The [indigenous] peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programs for national and regional development, which may affect them directly (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 – No. 169).¹³

In a similar way, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples establishes that "Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources", and,

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007).¹⁴

However, as Rodríguez-Garavito (2010: 07) has shown, a brief overview on the recent regulatory instruments that inspire this approach is enough to appreciate its

¹³ Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 – No. 169. Accessed on 23.11.2013, at http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169.

¹⁴ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007. Accessed on 23.11.2013, at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf.

diversity, tensions and interests. In 2004, while the World Bank published its Operational Politics 4.10 – which requires all governments the prior consultation of indigenous peoples as a prerequisite for loans to projects that would affect them –, a working group established by the United Nations Human Rights Commission was making the final provisions on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2007. Another revealing coincidence is that, while the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) adopted its principles to govern relations between companies and indigenous people, in which were included the necessity to “ensure a fair and open process of consultation”, the ILO undertook the implementation of Convention 169 and released a new edition of its Manual applicability. In 2010, the international aid organization Oxfam published a multilingual practice guide to direct indigenous people to the exercise of their right to free, prior and informed consent. And, in the same year, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) – the World Bank institution responsible for granting loans – revised its Socio environmental Responsibility Policy maintaining that the borrower should be required to obtain the consent of indigenous peoples affected by entrepreneur projects.

What the recent explosion of these ethnic participatory mechanisms shows us, especially in regions such as the Amazon, is that the sudden presence of the government within these “frontier territories” (Harvey, 2003 *apud* Rodriguez-Garavito, 2010) is not a representation of the application of welfare state politics, but the categorical exemplification of modern state as the engine of neoliberalism. In this context, since we are dealing with a site traditionally and historically occupied by indigenous structures, one should question the non-feasibility of such top-down governmental mechanisms, once the personification of the warrior by indigenous movements against development projects starts to be emblematic.

What John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (2006: 5) have termed “the dialect of law and disorder” is vividly present here: structured by the mechanics of neoliberal deregulation and by the new ways of mediating human transactions which are both political-economic and cultural, it inaugurates the new aporia of jurisdiction (*ibidem*) and, also, the new aporia of modern democracy. On the one hand, the personification of the warrior by indigenous movements opposed to developmental projects or against the non-compliance of environmental constraint measures; on the other hand, the state trying to coerce or criminalize these uprisings using military force or legal procedures.

An initial approach to this subject, from the examination of antagonisms and contradictions present in this relation, could be inserted in a strictly anthropological research proposal. Similar to Gregory (1982), one could resume these conflicts in the

classical contrasts between primitive and modern capitalist societies (i.e. the *gift* versus *commodity*), aiming to differentiate the forms of indigenous political organization against the state (cf. Clastres, 2003) versus the Western democratic structure and its forms of political participation sustained over the spheres of state power and civil society.

However, what would be the result of such an opposition in the context of the supposed “legitimacy” given to state structures (Cohen, 1996) and liberal-democracy (cf. Benhabid, 1996)?¹⁵ Trying not to fall into a reductionist analysis, which states the political legitimacy to the meanings of liberal-democratic institutions, one should be very cautious in the analysis of contrasts between the originality of ethnic or religious actions, and the unquestionable legitimacy of the social order. More precisely, one should be cautious on the analysis of contrasts when one does not want to strengthen the recent austere positions of Brazilian public officials over the *modus operandi* of environmental conflicts resolutions. Such as the adoption of legislations created during the military dictatorship, like *Suspensão de Segurança* (Security Suspension),¹⁶ or, in a more contemporary nonsense, the recent creation of the *Companhia de Operações Ambientais da Força Nacional de Segurança Pública* (Environmental Operations Company of the National Public Security Force) to secure dam enterprises in the Amazon.¹⁷ Both instances end up legitimizing the monopoly of power and violence exercised by the state in a given territory (in Weberian terms, see Webber, 1991).

Beyond the legality of such violence, we find out the political power of the indigenous warrior, that disregards the delay in meeting the environmental constraints of project-affected-communities (see Figure I)¹⁸ or the use of dictatorial legislation to

¹⁵ Joshua Cohen has already argued that “[t]he fundamental idea of democratic legitimacy is that the authorization to exercise state power must arise from the collective decisions of the members of a society who are governed by that power” (1996: 95).

¹⁶ The Suspension Security (SS) “is a request made to the president of the Supreme Court to be revoked injunction or other court decision, sole or last instance, in a security mandate”. In conformity with the Law 1.553/51 of December 31st, revoked by the Law n.º 12.016/09 of august 7th. The instrument allows higher courts to revoke decisions by the lower courts, whatever the merits, if the first considered that such decisions represent a risk of “serious injury occurring to order, health, public security or the economy.” The controversial mechanism has been used several times to overturn decisions in favor of those affected by the Belo Monte dam, as, for example, the overthrow of the injunction of the State Public Ministry requesting the stoppage of Belo Monte construction due to the non-compliance of environmental compensation measures.

¹⁷ In the Tapajós case – another dam planned for the Tapajós River, in the Amazon, state of Pará –, a special military force (the *Companhia de Operações Ambientais da Força Nacional de Segurança Pública*) was created by a presidential decree in march 2013 to ensure the achievement of the dam’s environmental impact studies.

¹⁸ In the Belo Monte case, the delay in meeting the environmental constraints of the indigenous-affected-communities is worth of note. From determinations of the Brazilian Indigenous National Foundation (Fundação Nacional do Índio – FUNAI), and from the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Instituto Brasileiro de Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis – IBAMA), the company Norte Energia S/A, in charge of the construction of Belo Monte dam, was responsible for the compliance of more than thirty environmental conditions addressed to indigenous populations affected.

establish the development order. Moreover, what the indigenous subject mainly neglects is the lack of institutional space where their different cosmological domains could be accounted for. From the standpoint of the Piraçu letter, we find out that the compliance of environmental conditions of dam projects – that involve investment in health and education infrastructures of indigenous villages, the development of productive activities programs, the redefinition and protection of indigenous land territories, etc. – do not fulfill the indigenous request, since these measures are restricted to a limited number of references (i.e. the law and the capital), which pre-establish or signify the indigenous forms of social participation. At the end, to the local political subject the possibility of joining other cosmological domains or, properly, other social domains,¹⁹ is denied.



FIGURE I – A group of Amazon Indians protests on an earth barrier that is part of the construction of the massive Belo Monte hydroelectric

Author: REUTERS/Lunae Parracho. Copyright: Folhapress.

However, as was presented in recent report (ISA, 2015), after four years since the start of the construction of Belo Monte, most of these conditions have not been put into action.

¹⁹ If we consider Latour's assumption (2005) that the social domain is much more extensive than attempting to limit it to the sphere of the human and of the modern societies.

In this context, the agreements between legal procedures and commodified projects are far from uttering a dialogue between, on the one hand, the indigenous warrior, and on the other hand, the apparatus of the national state. Hence, what stands out as a method for solving these conflicts is the objective rationality of a single political and economic order, which sizes the forms of social participation following its principles and intentions.

In the context of environmental politics, when one side of the negotiating table mobilizes different agents and domains from those established by liberal democracy, communication is cut off. Considering Ludwig Wittgenstein's insights that the loyalty and the belief in liberal-democratic institutions belong more to the scope of a "passionate commitment to a system of reference" (Wittgenstein, 1980 *apud* Mouffe, 2006: 172), the difficulty in uttering, electing and implementing democratic procedures for ethnic subjects and communities shows up not as an empirical or methodological obstacle, but as an ontological one. In Wittgenstein's view, "to agree on a definition of a term is not enough and we need agreement on the way we use it" (*ibidem*). That is, if the procedures are not registered on shared life forms, as a set of practices, they cannot be accepted and followed. Here, we must return to the following questions: on whose behalf is the environmental policy established? Based on which principles or agencies? Considering which life forms, practices and cosmologies?

According to Chantal Mouffe, without the postulation or the recognition of these particular forms of life, "public deliberation of all on matters of common concern is a conceptual impossibility since the particular forms of life, which are presented as its 'impediments' are its very condition of possibility" (2006: 173). In this context, Mouffe's proposal resembles the recent ontologically oriented approaches in anthropology and related disciplines (Viveiros de Castro *et al.*, 2014), and their attempt to "render political" the multiplicity forms of thinking and existence (which are enacted in concrete practices) of the indigenous peoples that are been described. In this sense, rather than asking ourselves how to position the political indigenous subject within environmental policy, we would need, on the contrary, to question what the ontological principles that guideline indigenous thought and practices bring into environmental policies and its institutions.

This is certainly a question of constructivism, in the way proposed by Bruno Latour to the structure of a "common world" – writing over the universalist presumption of a unique world – as "something we will have to build, tooth and nail, together" (2004: 455). Where politics would resist their tendency to mean a finite list of references that must be taken into account toward a true democratic assembly. Where indigenous interests, staging from their cultural background or worldviews, would not require the

detachment from the objects (cultural, natural and supernatural) that make them exist. How, then, can we think beyond the positive sense of democracy, not retaining to its governmental and administrative analysis, when we try to inaugurate its possibilities from the standpoint of difference?²⁰ More exactly, how can we think a way of doing politics beyond the occasional exercise of choice between competing and often indistinguishable alternatives (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006), in an attempt to recognize subaltern groups through the difficult task of “constituting persons and subjects from their own movements” (Sztutman, 2005: 26-27)?

To answer such a question, one should elucidate a socio-anthropological problem that could shed some light to the political enactment of original forms of political representation in Brazilian public life. An originality that is actually made public through the enactment of the warrior as a “symbolic form that still impregnates indigenous practices and representations” (Fausto, 2000: 933), alongside its subjection to state administration or even, in some cases, its incorporation into a market economy. This cultural remainder is exactly what pushes us toward the study of the contradictions between war and democracy, exploring in which point the representations of the warrior, sustained as a form of resistance to physical and cultural annihilation, could be discussed into the domain of a true democratic assembly, and not as the signifier of colonial/developmental practices.

This is also a question of avoiding a unilateral idea of “an only one world possible”, which is present in the most absolute anti relativist arguments, as well as in the very absolute idea of relativism. If anthropological critics make sense at all to the construction of a common world, one should consider that there is no sense of Puritanism or nostalgia for a lost origin in their texts. Or, on the other hand, any non-consideration that some tribal societies have passed through certain historical discontinuities since the colonial contact.²¹ What is present in anthropological critics is a much more complex attempt to explain such contacts in opposition to the simple assumption, such as Ernest Gellner’s one, that “world views and cognitive styles appear at a defined point in time” (Gellner, 1990: 92), and seem to disappear at

²⁰ Whereas democracy itself is an issue of multiplicity, difference and relativism, it is its rationalistic participatory and communicative procedures, which stand from a unique set of knowledgeable and recognizable alternatives, which must be problematize.

²¹ Today in Brazil, according to the national census 2010, there are 817 thousands Indians living in the country, 0,4% of the Brazilian population, which are distributed among 688 indigenous territories – historically conquered and constitutionally regularized by the Brazilian government – and some urban areas. Beyond the 82 references of ethnics groups that so far did not have any contact with western society, every indigenous community is today precariously assisted by educational and health care governmental programs. In addition, most of these societies have already established commercial exchanges with non-indigenous communities, be it on fishery, agricultural, or even extractive activities.

another – in an attempt to overcome relativism by the coinage of western cultural and political domination/colonization.

Worldviews do not disappear from one time to another, that is what anthropologists and many other postcolonial theorists are trying to say throughout a considerable number of ethnographic evidences. Dipesh Chakrabarty's resistance in seeing all public life in India as a mimetic process of the European subject could be used here as a guideline for this attempt. Reading the use of the most common uniform for the Indian politician, the white khadi – the home spun coarse cotton that Gandhi popularized in the 1920s –, as “a phenomenon of the historical survival of shared values, beliefs and desires [...] [that] have receded but not disappeared from Indian public life” (Chakrabarty, 2001: 27-36), the author detects the tensions that the postcolonial political subject brings to the actual reality of the modern state.

Trying to acknowledge the political subject of colonial modernity, Chakrabarty reads the khadi not as “a conscious statement of intent” – which would tend to see it as “ritualistic and hypocritical”, favoring a post-Protestant understanding of rituals as empty – but as “a question of (practised) belief involved in the wearing of a khadi”. According to the historian, “[t]his question is both logically and culturally valid”. In this sense, the white khadi is a “site of the desire for an alternative modernity, a desire made possible by the contingencies of British colonial rule”; and, finally, it stands “outside the sphere of formal institutional politics” (*ibidem*: 37). “[I]ts disappearance, were it to happen, would signify the demise of a deeper structure of desire and would signal India's complete integration into the circuits of global capital” (*ibidem*).

What the personification of the “warrior” (as an original or remainder indigenous trait) shows us is a distinct prognostic of the indigenous people's annihilation by the adoption of new cultural patterns due to the intensification of the capitalist expansion in the Amazon. It represents an affirmative way in which indigenous subjects edify their politics in a positive position, which does not “sit easily with the logic of capital accumulation”, to use Chakrabarty's description. A position which, beyond its coexistence with other characters imposed or levied by their new conditions of existence, preserves in it a “(practised) belief” which is not empty, but, taking up an ontologically-inclined anthropological analysis (Viveiros de Castro *et al.*, 2014), it is “internally constituted by and morally imbricated with the political dynamics in which indigenous people are embroiled”. And this is the Chakrabarty's error: to read this “(practised) belief” as a merely contingent logical act upon the British colonial rule (or, in our case, upon environmental politics), since the political promise of postcolonial political subjects should be conceived

not just in relation to the degree to which such approaches are in affinity with (or even actively promote) particular political objectives, or with the abiding need for a critique of the state and the turns of thought that underpin it, but also in relation to their capacity to enact a form of politics that is entailed in their very operation (Viveiros de Castro *et al.*, 2014).

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE CONTEMPORANEOUS INDIGENOUS WARRIOR

The process of masculine personification of the “warrior” among indigenous societies, as shown by the Brazilian sociologist Florestan Fernandes (2006 [1952]) in the Tupinanbá’s case,²² is a distinctive cultural practice that informs us about the “socializing function of war in terms of the social structure” (p. 291). That is, war and the configuration of the indigenous warrior personality are determinant in defining social status and social roles that govern subject relations inside the community and with other tribes and societies. In this sense, the embodiment of the “indigenous warrior” – developed by acquisition of tribal warfare techniques, the requirement of handling war artifacts and the appropriation of the meaning of the sacred obligations – is entrenched in roles and duties inherent to the incorporated social status, objectified in terms of kinship and age hierarchies and also in terms of gender relations.

Furthermore, to understand indigenous acts of war one has to consider that “the justifications of the vendetta [...] do not let the real interests behind the war appear” (Fernandes, 2006: 276). On the contrary, they are tighten up within a complex cultural network that these societies tend to reproduce through their inter- and extra communitarian social relations. The transition from one category of age to another in the Tupinambá society (from the kunumi-guasú to the avá) can be used as an example: the rise of the new status of “men” (avá), and not anymore a “child” (kunumi-guasú), is strictly linked to the learning and living processes of instruction and training to become a warrior, developed since childhood through the acquisition of tribal techniques of adaptation to the physical environment by accompanying adults in hunting, collecting and fishery activities – techniques that are achieved by the imminent risk of a sudden encounter with enemies (from the same species or not). To become an avá one had to be introduced to all this broad and correlative processes.

In the case of Belo Monte, for the Xikrin-Kayapó community – one of the factions of the Northern Kayapó, linguistic group Gê, residents of an Indigenous Territory located on the banks of the Bacajá river, a tributary of the Xingu, circumscribed in the influence area of the dam project – the warrior category (meàkreti/meopari) (Lea, 2012: 30)

²² The Tupinambás were an indigenous group that until the sixteenth century inhabited the Brazilian coast.

remains present (and active) through age classifications and initiation rites (see below). As proposed by the anthropologist Lux Vidal (1977), although the age categories accompany, to some extent, the biological development of men and women, they are really socially established units, which present themselves as clearly differentiated stages of integration of individuals into social life (p. 87). In this context, the category *mẽnõrõnyre*, which represents a stage of men's life when his acquisition of the "Kayapó ideal" is recognized – that a man must be strong, fast and agile – is conquered from the submission to a long apprenticeship which consists on the one hand, in a series of tests, and, on the other hand, in the participation on initiation ritual.

According to Vidal, there are various tests and rituals of initiation through which the Kayapó can reach their ideal, such as: 1) the act of ripping *mẽnõrõnyre*'s legs and feet (with Aruanã fish teeth), so they could be better in pursuing the boar and the tapir in the forest; 2) the intake of inedible food considered hazardous, such as the meat of the jaguar or coati and stingray, so they could become strong and tough; 3) the attack on a wasp's nest, which symbolizes the attack on an enemy village (the wasps and the Kayapós' enemy are classified under the same name: mekurê-djuoy, "enemies") in order that the *mẽnõrõnyre* could become not only strong, but totally insensitive to fatigue and pain (Vidal, 1977: 125-126). In this context, the category of *mẽnõrõnyre* is directly related to the category of the Xikrin warrior (*měàkreti/meopari*) and to the formation of the "warrior personality" (to take Florestan Fernandes' term), since it is throughout these rituals of initiation that the community incites warrior attitudes among the young men, which establish the Kayapó ideal.

If in the past the *mẽnõrõnyre* as warriors consolidated their prestigious reputation over several war expeditions under the command of the older men (Lea, 2012: 165; Vidal, 1977: 132),²³ currently, this ideal is being updated by the reproduction of such tests and rituals, which establish the conditions and forms of social interaction expected for the members of a certain category of age. The attack on a wasp's nest, for example, a ritual of initiation to the category of the *mẽnõrõnyre*, was recently ethnographed by the anthropologist Thais Manthovanelli during her fieldwork among the Xikrin from the Bacajá River (2014).²⁴ Thus, recently, among the Xikrin, the process of becoming a "real men", *memu kumren* (Vidal, 1977), is vividly present, a practice that feeds their personality and ideology. Moreover, it is this condition, which is linked

²³ According to Vidal (1977), war expeditions were for the Xikrin, "a way to become truly strong men, according to their ideal: amak kre ket (insensible)" (p. 157). One of the last war expedition that was noticed among this group, was recorded in 1969, in a crash with the Parakanã indigenous group (Fausto, 2012: 45).

²⁴ Thais Manthovanelli is a doctoral student in anthropology at the Federal University of São Carlos (Universidade Federal de São Carlos – UFScar).

to the political and symbolic agency of the indigenous warrior, that persists and is projected in their relationships within the community and among the Xikrin and other human and non-human agents (other indigenous groups, the national community and the forest beings).

However, what is important to retain out of this scenario are the conditions under which the “rituals of initiation... collectively integrate men into the[ir] different [cosmological] domains” (Giannini, 1991: 74), and how the indigenous political subject currently mobilizes these domains in the context of the socio-environmental conflicts that they experience. Could the new institutions of ethnic civil participation make room for such agencies?

According to Giannini (1991), the different domains that compose the Xikrin cosmology²⁵ are defined by distinct natural spaces: the sky, the earth, the aquatic world and the underworld. The earth would consist, on the one hand, by the space of the forest: the place of the quarries and the plants, but also the place of the enemies and the ‘village of the dead’ (where the relatives are reunited); and, on the other hand, by the open space, the field of the Xikrin society (the village and its cultivated lands). The domain of the aquatic world would be the space of fish and other aquatic animals. The underworld would be the space inside the earth, whose connotation is mythological, once this area consists of “cannibal men who feed on raw meat and divide their habitat with a species of ant that eat/drink blood.” Finally, the sky, despite being the habitat of the birds, it is also the domain of the mythology, since the east is the site of the origin of the Xikrin.

Being the forest (bã) the domain associated with the Xikrin masculinity, once this is the place “where the menõrõnyre boys (initiated young men) become strong and tough, mature and social” (*ibidem*: 78-79), we will retain our attention to it, trying to focus on the way in which this domain might be mobilized by the indigenous warrior. According to Giannini, the domain of the forest is the domain of the prestigious game, the place of residence of the terrestrial animals, but also the plants. The forest is the home of different enemy ethnical categories (from other ethnic groups), and the place where the “village of the dead” is located, where relatives are reunited. From this consideration, when the political indigenous position accounted for the “ancestral inhabitants of the Xingu”, and its particular form of development in their acts against the Belo Monte dam, it is the forest, as the place of dwelling of the dead, and the locus of the indigenous main subsistence activities – hunting, gathering and cultivation –, which is been mobilized by indigenous agency.

²⁵ Cosmology understood as something which “orders and puts into relation the natural and the cultural features of the group that produced it” (Lallemand, 1974 *apud* Giannini, 1991: 73).

Such ethnographic evidence should be considered when one is trying to incorporate the indigenous political subject in recent democratic processes. Trying to understand the domains and agencies that are mobilized by the political position of contemporary indigenous warriors is certainly a way of expanding the references and principles that guide the current institutions of modern democracy established to regulate environmental conflicts. In order to associate such institutions to other contexts, where the mechanisms of such regulation would no longer be overdetermined by the law and capital, one might be able to criticize the self-referential contexts of such regulative institutions (i.e. the social substratum that guidelines capitalist economy and environmental politics). As proposed by Marilyn Strathern in her critic to anthropology, to go beyond these self-contained, self-referential worlds “is to proceed in the only way possible, to open up ‘our’ own self-referencing strategies” (1988: 9).

If, at last, an act of war by indigenous subjects is embedded within cultural values²⁶ which are made effective through social rituals, myths and practices, this agency must be considered in the attempt to understand indigenous political participation alongside democratic and juridical processes. Thus, what is remarkably noted today in the Brazilian case is the way in which the political power of the “warrior” (inside and outside indigenous communities) is rising among indigenous societies affected by national development projects, which grows on the opposite direction to the national and international attempt to govern the relations established between state interests and those of ethnical groups. This scenario is an evidence of the failure of legal standards of ethnic civil participation, for elementary actors, principles and domains of the social formation of these societies are commonly disregarded in the process of dialogue, often asserted by a blind trust on civic forms of participation.

CONCLUSION

THE VIOLENT APORIA OF POSTCOLONIAL PUBLIC LIFE: STEREOTYPING KNOWLEDGE VERSUS THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ETHNIC POLITICAL POSITION

The failure of legal standards of ethnic civil participation is, firstly, a proper indication of why this kind of Western ‘multiculturalist’ policy could not be address towards a people or community where power (and politics) function from other corporeal, spatial and temporal perspectives (cf. Clastres, 2003 [1974]; Viveiros de Castro, 1998; Latour,

²⁶ Following Latour’s insight (2013), the definition of value considered here might be less a question of domain, and more a question of networks, when we are trying to open up our notion of institution to the “whole variety of heterogeneous practices” that is present in the context of environmental conflicts.

1993). An opposition that is evidently depicted in the indigenous primary demonstration against the Belo Monte dam.

This monistic view of politics, which do not account for other political and cultural perspectives, certainly passes by the discussion over the poverty of the concept of 'politics' in western theory, suggested by Pierre Clastres (2003), for bringing the 'ontological turn' into the debate again, and Viveiros de Castro critics to anthropological field work,²⁷ one is not bringing indigenous positions as valid. Since the political immanence of such a position, the ideal of person and society that they deploy, and the material realities that they create, is commonly disregarded and does not ever come into the shared democratic atmosphere. Bruno Latour (2004) takes this confrontation as a cosmopolitic problem, regarding the mononaturalistic view among sociologists and political scientists that tends to see "war rage" as a simple contradiction of different "human cultures [that] have (and defend) differing views of the same world" – a world that exists throughout only "one cosmos, already unified, [in only] one nature that is used as the arbiter for all our disputes" (*ibidem*: 454-455). According to the anthropologist, current strategies of peace building operate upon secondary, rather than primary, qualities, excluding the vast numbers of nonhuman entities that make humans act and exist. Latour assumes that this kind of conflict resolution, which is waged under a common arbiter, is not a war, but, using Carl Schmitt's definition, a 'police operation'. Using Schmitt again, Latour postulates that '[w]esterners have not understood themselves as facing on the battlefield an enemy whose victory is possible, just irrational people who have to be corrected' (*ibidem*: 455).

And this 'mode of correction' is exactly the way in which politics is brought by the colonial encounter, which is very present in the way environmental policies are addressed by private and governmental sector to indigenous communities whose territories became known targets of direct or indirect developmental interventions. This mode of correction, on an overdetermined ideological field, allows the establishment of an "ethnic border"²⁸ (Scott, 2009: 110), which, through a stigmatizing operation, ends up legitimating violent state interventions in the name of development, order and peace. The infusion of law regimes followed by an environmental scientific singularity (of an only one world susceptible to be controlled), which is based on a "knowledge

²⁷ "[Anthropological fiction] consists in taking indigenous ideas as concepts, and following through on the consequences of such a decision: to determine the preconceptual ground or plane of immanence that such concepts presuppose, the conceptual personae that they deploy, and the material realities that they create" (Viveiros de Castro, 2013: 484).

²⁸ Anthropologist James C. Scott defines an "ethnic border", in his historical analysis of Southeast Asia, as a "demographic, ecological, and political frontier" established between "the civilized", that is, "a unique culture, a civilization... incorporated, registered, [the] taxpaying subject of the state", and "the uncivilized", those who "live outside the ambit of the state", "who were not incorporated, or refused to be incorporated", those who usually carries "stigmatizing connotations", as "barbarians" (Scott, 2009: 99-110).

economy”, to use Isabelle Stengers’ term, serves only to shield “indirect private rule” (Mbembe, 2001)²⁹ and neoliberal deregulation interests.

The point to which I am drawing attention now, searching to conclude this article, is that environmental politics, produced by the “reliability of fast science’s results” (Stengers, 2011), end up positioning indigenous subjects and their territories as a mere “component” of a controlled Amazon environment, which is now object of development. From this strict perspective, there is no other cosmology to be consider, no other ecology to be assimilated. Nevertheless, the problem here is the way in which this positioning is accomplished, which is the result of a “productive ambivalence of the object of colonial discourse”, once that possible otherness becomes, formally and primarily, through a stereotypical operation, “an object of desire and derision” (Bhabha, 1994: 67).

[Colonial discourse] connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repletion. Likewise the stereotype, which is its major discursive strategy, is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place’, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated. (*ibidem*: 66)

Bhabha is writing about “[f]ixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, [which] is a paradoxical mode of representation” (p. 66). According to the author, “stereotypical discourse operates as an ambivalent mode of knowledge and power” once its product – as “the repertoire of positions of power and resistance, domination and dependence that constructs [the] colonial identification subject (both colonizer and colonized)” – is, at the end, the very effect of colonial politics which legitimate, on an overdetermined ideological field, every kind of mechanisms and apparatus of surveillance given by the colonial rule to achieve its targets. If we take Bhabha’s argument to the critical analysis of environmental politics, we are able to see that project-affected-communities’ positions (in the form of the indigenous warrior) opposed to the legible representative structure of private and governmental development politics tends to reinforce “domination and dependence”, whether in the economic or political field.

In this sense, environmental politics turns out to be an ambivalent mode of knowledge and power. Firstly, indigenous-projects-affected-people have to be

²⁹ In the Belo Monte case, it is the national military force who actually secures the dam's construction site (even from any protest activity), which is a contradiction in terms, once it is the displacement of governmental state security politics (and resources) that guarantees private interests, an actual example of how “indirect private rule” operates.

positioned, scientifically (that is to say, ethnographically), as an “environmental component” of an environmental politic: a position which, inside an overdetermined knowledge structure – generally founded as having an archaic negative political and economical social structure (“societies without states/societies of subsistence economies”, etc.) – tends to configure indigenous communities as a constant target of welfare politics and development. Secondly, through an operative power/knowledge articulation, original forms of political structure are constantly subjected to a non-recognition status inside the logical and approved language of the democratic modern state: for the indigenous warrior is marginalized from what can be empirically proved as “social participation” or “accountability” in the logically political economy construed as “citizenship”.

In the context of implementing infra-structural projects such as Belo Monte dam, state politics or “anti-politics” (Ferguson, 2009) work through ways that would make the project viable. Project-affected-people must be compensated by the social, cultural and environmental injuries caused by impositions of river flow regimes, changes in fishery habitats and species, compromising fluvial accesses, anthropic pressure over protected territories, etc. Therefore, money and infrastructure investments over land properties, boats, automobiles, fish and agricultural equipments – legally imposed and induced by government organisms and private institutions – become a reality and, sometimes, a local demand among these communities. At the end, this is the very moment in which “[t]he body is [...] simultaneously (if conflictually) inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power” (Bhabha, 2004: 67) in a very violent way.

Nevertheless, the reading of indigenous warriors’ claims for the compliance of environmental compensation measures cannot be interpreted by a vision of war as reciprocity (that is to say, war as opposed to exchange relation, which favors a balanced mutuality between both sides of the conflict once peace is achieved by a trade economy). That will be a reduction of social analysis to a stereotypical vision of indigenous communities: either as acculturated people, not Indian anymore, all subjectless to capitalism economy of power; or as an un-political structure, that, at the very end, would favor the establishment of a very limited democracy, which lacks legal instruments that legitimize indigenous denial of such dam/developmental projects once its implementation is not pre-determined upon a (truly) free, prior and informed consultation. Once again, the modern version of democracy cannot be camouflaged by the market principle which determines freedom as an occasional exercise of choice between competing and often indistinguishable alternatives (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006). Other worlds must be considered.

The reduction of war (and environmental conflicts) to the synthetic formula of the gift puts a difficulty to anthropological analysis, since it “empties the political dimension of war as it ignores revenge’s phenomenal reality” (Fausto, 2001: 325). It is exactly within the space of this rejection – materialized, in the case of Belo Monte, through the forms of ritualized interaction and symbolic violence (expressed within the inter-tribal alliances and the ritualistic performances that constitute indigenous acts of protest against the irresponsibility of the developmental state)³⁰ – “where the political power of an [indigenous] leader is expressed and affirmed” (*ibidem*: 326). In this sense, according to Carlos Fausto, “the temporality of the non-reciprocity of perspectives produces political phenomena of a different order from those that are initiated by the peaceful flow of goods and people” (*ibidem*). And this temporality would be exactly the point to which an ethnography of indigenous societies – whose structures are primarily opposed to a political economy that aims to control and subjugate their lives, identities and territories –, should turn its attention to. In this sense, which evidences could be followed to identify the real political power of the indigenous warrior?

The increasing edification of the indigenous warrior as a political sign of indigenous struggles over their rights troubles the version of Law and desire in the postcolony. Even if its anxiety is (conflictually) sustained by claims for the implementation of environmental compensation measures, the warrior’s original form of political representation ends up as the signifier of a much more complex imperative mode of production (whether social, economic, or cultural). As it has been noticed, historically, when Belo Monte dam project started to be planned, indigenous positions were always contrary to the construction of the hydroelectric project, a position sustained by the possibility to guarantee their ways of life. From this point of view, we encounter the political power of originality and essentialism in contradiction to the violence of ambivalence which has always had its reference in the (powerful) institutions of western society, but never in other powerful entities such as the nature or the spirits presented in the triad indigenous cosmology (society, nature, supernatural).

Although we have seen that there is a violent ambivalence which conflictually marks the indigenous political position in Brazil, the personification of the warrior – along with its performative acts of wielding traditional weapons, the use of original language, the body paintings and other adornments used for war, war songs, the ritual performed, and any other recurrence of cosmologies, symbols, mythologies and a whole network of local knowledge –, in attitudes of protest, shows that their social structures are not inclined towards the capitalist mode of accumulation at all, and

³⁰ Regardless of the indigenous retention of dam technicians over their territories as an event where physical violence is not absent.

modern state institutions do not fulfill the totality of indigenous modes and principles of political representation.

Lastly, the mediations made by the Federal Public Ministry of Brazil are worth a comment. In January 2012, the federal government established a working group with 22 ministries to regulate Convention 169. In this occasion, the Public Prosecutor Felício Pontes recalled that free, prior and informed consultation is guaranteed by the Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO). However, the prosecutor mentioned that some indigenous communities do not have the same system of political representation. And, according to him, as soon as we consider that the forms of representation and hierarchy of these groups are diverse, a common rule of consultation applied to all would be a mistake that would compromise the fundamental principle of the Convention 169. For this public prosecutor, the rules to be established should be “broad, flexible and responsive”, so that different cultures have guaranteed their forms of expression. Nevertheless, beyond expression and the law, the warrior fights for a different world, which could only be accountable in the “spaces of justice”, to use Patricia Branco’s term (2013b), that would turn legible an indigenous ontology sustained by their cosmos position.

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