MULTIDIMENSIONAL TRADITION – NATIVE YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR CONSTRUCTION OF INDIGENOUSNESS IN BRAZILIAN AMAZONIA

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INTRODUCTION

Over recent years, the cultures of indigenous peoples in the Amazon region have been shaped by discourses on ethnicity, promoting Indianness and the politicization of indigenousness. When some native groups have made claims for their rights, their repertoire has often included talks on "their own indigenous culture." This has been explained as the consequence of classifications of indigenous peoples by non-natives as well as indigenous peoples' recent development towards self-governance and sovereignty that has caused them to become self-conscious of their cultures. The claim has been that new indigenous cultural awareness and the preservation of cultural identity is a form of identity politics, self-representation, autonomy, resistance and part of political demands. (E.g. Turner 1991; Sahlins 1997; Jackson 1994; 1995; Oakdale 2004; Ramos 2003.)

While much has been said about politicised indigenous cultures, cultural traditions as such have been little discussed, though the concept of tradition has been related to ethnic revivals (e.g. Anttonen P. 2005; Siikala 1998; Hobsbawm 1983). Lauri Honko (1988, 9–10) has noticed that tradition is a 'broader' concept than culture, and usually refers only to some aspects of culture. Tradition has been taken as something that becomes active in the present, and, thus, is not opposed to the modern or modernity (Anttonen P. 2005; Handler & Linnekin 1984). However, there is evidently no real consensus on the exact meaning of the keyword of this article: *tradition*. Eric Hobsbawm (1983) has even proposed that traditions are invented for a certain purpose, either for inventing new practices and values, enabling the cohesion of a group, or for legitimating institutions and statuses. Tradition in indigenous peoples' real experiences has been overlooked. This article looks at the way young

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natives 'operate' with what they call their cultural traditions and what is the role of tradition in their everyday lives. In what follows, I argue that for young, contemporary Amazonian Indians cultural traditions are a corporeal and spatial distinction that offer them cultural, social, and ethnic resources in a dynamic way. Taking the approach that tradition differs depending on the viewpoint and the situation of the person and the group, I will place 'tradition' in quotation marks.

Looking at the conceptualizations of local cultures and 'traditions' in Latin America is meaningful, since there are constant tensions between change and identity preservation and preferences for local development and economic expansion (García Canclini 1995; Ortiz 1998). These tensions especially influence younger generations as they are in the process of developing their own value systems. Previous studies have largely overlooked both Amazonian and Brazilian young indigenous people. In general, young natives' trajectory into adulthood has included many new influences, some of the most significant changes being increased urbanization, access to state education, consumer culture, and the impacts of exploitation of natural resources in their environments. Moreover, the rapid increase in indigenous populations in the urban centres of Lowland South America means that studies on indigenous peoples can no longer be limited to remote areas. In this article I will shed light on young people living in both rural and urban settings.

This article focuses on the conceptions and ideas of young *Manchineris, Apurinãs* and *Cashinahuas* of their cultural traditions in Brazilian Amazonia. My interpretations come from applying the theory of 'sacred' proposed by Veikko Anttonen (1996; 2000; 2005). The principal fieldwork was carried out with the Arawakan-speaking Manchineri, since at the time of determining the research group in my doctoral study there was little academic information on them, and they were the third largest indigenous population residing in Rio Branco, the capital of Acre state. I also interviewed Apurinã and Cashinahua youngsters during my stay in Acre, who represent two of the largest native groups to have migrated to Rio Branco. The interviews with the young people from the latter two groups took place in the city, but I also briefly visited their indigenous territories. In Rio Branco, the Manchineri number 128, the Apurinã 599, and the Cashinahua 365. The Manchineri population constitutes 937 in the Mamoadate reserve, where they live divided into nine villages. Cashinahuas number some 4,500 in various indigenous lands in Acre and Apurinãs circa 2,000 in the reserves in Amazonas state. (FUNASA 2005; GMI-UNI 2002.)

In many of the earliest ethnographies on Amazonian indigenous peoples, adolescence was already mentioned in the age-set systems as a liminal period preparing the person for adulthood or the focus was placed on the rites of passage held at puberty (for females, almost without exception, this was in reference to their first menses). However, 'native' adolescence is a more complex and longer period which differs in rural and urban areas (Virtanen 2007). Due to the longer period that young native people spend at school (both in reserves and cities) and learning new skills, there is a good case for the study of the sociological category of native youth that refers to one who is physically and psychologically nearly adult and independent of parents, as well as on the verge of acquiring an independent position within their

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family (Valentine & Skelton & Chambers 1998, 5–6). I have set the age limit from 14 to 24 years of age, since young Indians in that category have already undergone the traditional puberty ritual, and thus were able to explain their thoughts about it, and were still students, or had only recently become parents.

Methods, theories and research ethics

The data for my research was collected over a period of nearly fourteen months between March 2003 and September 2005 in Acre state, in the extreme west of Brazil, which was already known by a few Finnish geologists and archaeologists. I spent ten months in the state capital Rio Branco and four months in the Manchineri territory of Mamoadate. I made my first contact with young Indians through my new Brazilian colleagues working at non-governmental organizations in Rio Branco. The native youngsters introduced me to their friends and cousins, they to theirs and so forth. In the city I also did a kind of random mapping of young Indians in more distant neighbourhoods by looking for their houses with the help of a Manchineri girl and an Apurinã boy in order to interview those who did not have an established network in the city. Finally, my interview material in the city includes 115 interviews with 66 interviewees (18 Manchineris, 24 Apurinãs, and 24 Cashinahuas). In the Manchineri reserve, I interviewed 72 young Manchineris and conducted a total of 103 interviews. Thus, many of these young people were interviewed several times. Overall, my results are based on interviews with 70 females and 68 males (37 females and 35 males in the reserve and 33 females and 33 males in the city) conducted in 169 separate interviews.

My fieldwork methods also involved participant observation, video recordings, and photographs and drawings made by the young people. All interviews were carried out in Portuguese, which is the only language spoken by the majority of young Indians in Rio Branco. In the Manchineris reserve, nearly all the youngsters are bilingual (Manchineri and Portuguese). However, the first language in the reserve is Manchineri, and my communication with adult Manchineris was unfortunately limited by my rudimentary knowledge of the Manchineri language. I learnt to speak a few words and phrases in Manchineri, which helped me in observational situations in the reserve and in 'breaking the ice' when initiating conversations. Moreover, those participant observation situations where spoken language was not used enabled me to study the choices and the attitudes of young Indians in practice. This is what Anne Christine Taylor (1996, 211) calls culture that "goes without saying". However, Portuguese was always used in interactions with non-natives and other native groups, as well as among natives in the city. The meanings and notions that the young Indians gave to their plans and visions in practice were observed in their behaviour, as were the desires that guide their acts. I tried to place these within the social situation, historical context and life histories of the young people involved.

The source material has been analyzed within a theoretical framework that maintains a dialogue between the social and the subjective: a system of representations operating at both macro and micro levels. In this article, I start by dealing with cultural traditions as a different kind of resource, which has been defined by sociologists, but the analysis concentrates on the sacred as a special cultural category with a rich symbolic meaning, bringing a deeper perspective to the analysis of cultural traditions today. The sacred is not looked at in a phenomenological or theological sense. For Veikko Anttonen (1996; 2005), the 'sacred' as a cultural category makes visible those cognitive borders that create a certain order and stability for ordinary individuals and for the community to work as a whole. In my study the category of the *sacred* is employed to help us understand why certain things are highly valued and separated from everyday life, and why they guide human thinking and behaviour. Marking differences is the universal basis of all cognitive processes. In general, cultural categories refer to the human tendency to classify objects, phenomena, or persons as similar due to their possession of similar attributes (see for instance Douglas [1966] 1989).

According to Anttonen (1996; 2000), there are cognitive structures that guide our thought and behaviour, and that have influenced the semantic contents of the term 'sacred' in different cultures; these structures include *corporality, territoriality, community*, and their conceptual division into the *internal* and the *external*, and the *invisible* and the *visible*. The term sacred understood by Anttonen as a cultural category, is useful for my study, since the young people themselves in their narrations both on immaterial and material practices, knowledge and objects that can be assigned to 'traditions', emphasized certain territories as well as embodied traditional practices and objects that are linked with the human body. In Anttonen's theoretical model, the human body and territory are the two most fundamental conceptual structures used by people to express the conceptual schema of 'internal' and 'external.' The interior of the territory, meaning the place occupied for day-to-day interactions, is continuous with the outside of the human body in that are both visible and displayed to others. The visible provides the stage for value representation and the production of everyday social life based on conventional cultural categories. Meanwhile, the inside of the body, referring to those aspects that people do not share socially, is parallel to the exterior of the territory, as the imperceptible and invisible aspects of social life. The exterior of the territory and the interior of the human body are stages for value and growth-orientated symbolic representations. The sacred is part of this logic since it forms a gateway to either the inside or the outside. (Anttonen V. 1996; 2000.)

In discussions on research ethics, it has been noticed that research methods applied by non-natives to studies on indigenous peoples have suffered from unbalanced research relationships, since the so-called natives have been viewed only as objects (Tuhiwai Smith 1999, 118). In my interviews, the starting point was to let the young people speak, but I directed the first discussions with certain themes: self, society, conceptions of the world, and their idea of a good life. Soon I started to ask more detailed questions about issues that the young Indians brought up. For Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 173), who is Maori by origin, decolonizing research principles have to include reflection on the relevance of the research for those being studied.

My study increases understanding of the young natives, gives them a voice (see Ramos 2003) and presents new knowledge in a way that combines the perspectives of the natives and models of the researcher in cultural studies (see Strathern 1995 on local and global perspectives). However, it is not only that now 'outsiders' may have more knowledge about the Amazonian young Indians, since my work also has an impact in the young Indians, as they communicated their ideas to a non-Indian for the first time. I try to keep in mind that my work is part of those processes that influence young Indians' conceptions and attitudes.

'TRADITIONS' AS A RESOURCE

My first discussions with Amazonian young natives took place in an indigenous handicraft shop in Rio Branco. This was my first fieldwork in the Amazon region, and my aim was to find out what elements are involved in constructing the lived worlds of contemporary Amazonian young indigenous people. I talked to a group of those young Cashinahuas and Manchineris who hung around in the tiny square where the shop was situated. They seemed to be proud of telling non-natives about life in the indigenous territories. Certainly, these interesting stories also helped them to sell the handicrafts. The shop was also frequently visited by students who came to ask question for their studies or who were just interested in indigenous 'traditions.'

The young natives did not tire of describing the types of food, accommodation, and festivities native to their rainforest communities, which were a week's journey from the state capital. Until the end of the 1970s, indigenous peoples of Acre had been enslaved in the rubber production industry, and had rarely benefited from social equality in their interaction with non-natives. Recently, indigenous identity has become more visible in the city, as indigenous population has more accepted by at least some members of the dominant society.

Today, many Amazonian indigenous young people, especially in the city, have realized that Indianness and knowledge of 'tradition' as such can be an asset, even beyond the imagined frontiers of their own and other indigenous groups. Knowledge of one's own cultural beliefs and customs, may, in certain situations, display valuable cultural expertise. The stereotypes of Indians as 'lazy,' 'treacherous' or 'vagrants' are transforming into a respect for native populations in response to their cultural knowledge and ecological conservationism (see also Ramos 2003, 413). Therefore, in some inter-ethnic contexts, an indigenous background can promote new social networks, assuming interaction occurs between indigenous peoples and those sectors of the non-Indian population that value native knowledge. This is social capital in Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) sense as it exists in social networks, group memberships, friendships, honour and respectability, all of which are essential to social life. This was important for the young Indians, who usually suffered from a lack of financial resources, difficulty entering the job market or financing their studies. New social networks can also reduce strong social cohesion within only one social group, since

new interaction can occur between Indians in the city and the reserve, between various indigenous groups and non-Indians, and not only between one indigenous group in the reserve or the city.

The new valorization of 'Indianness' can offer a mark of distinction that facilitates opportunities in the job market and at school. This encounter with various cultural traditions has afforded an experience of different forms of knowledge which other Brazilian young people do not possess. The cultural traditions and indigenous backgrounds of young natives have produced cultural and ethnic resources that this particular group of people have managed to maintain, and now, at least some aspects of this native knowledge have become valorised. Cultural capital (resource) refers to knowledge, skills and qualifications, and may be accumulated through a person's social background or through education (Bourdieu 1986). Interestingly, the attitudes of some interviewees actually changed during the course of my fieldwork. Especially in the city, ethnic preservation gained new importance for the young people involved as they saw that I was interested in them precisely because of their status as young natives.

When indigenousness is displayed on the human body, it is to show the difference maintained by a certain social group. It is about the difference of indigenous practices and beliefs as an essential basis of a world view and value system. For young Indians, this also produces ethnic capital referring to the attitudes and values of one's ethnic group concerning what is worth aspiring to, as well as certain skills transmitted by the one's ethnic environment (Borjas 1992). As has been argued in terms of the ethnic identity of indigenous groups, ethnicity is about self-definition and the distinction imposed by mainstream society (Carneiro de Cunha 1987). Anna-Leena Siikala (1998, 210) suggests that the element that categorizes some things as traditions is the *meaningfulness* of those things. She claims that the continuance of the past in the present is conceived as tradition when the relationship between the present and the past becomes a topical interest either ethnically or nationally. Siikala makes the link between tradition and ethnic questions. 'Tradition' is thus here linked with ethnicity, a special way of doing and being. For many Amazonian native young people today, wherever they live, 'tradition' offers answers to their existential questions and helps in planning for the future. As one young Manchineri says about his future plans:

> *I would like to be as wise as my grandparents who know various things, like how to sing, make a sieve, an arrow.* (Male 24, age 17.)

Similarly in the city, according to one young Cashinahua young man, his stay in Rio Branco has not changed him:

> *I've been here since 2002. I speak the same language, I sing. I haven't changed in any way! I'm still an Indian. I have the material to paint, my shamanic things, and food. The question is presenting it* [to the others]*, isn't it?* […] (Male 61, age 23.)

In the city of Rio Branco, those young native urban migrants with the least knowledge of their past and cultural traditions usually had the biggest problems in terms of marginalization. Their parents had not told them how life used to be in the village, nor had they learnt any traditional craftwork skills or oral histories. In fact, they had not managed to produce strong links with any place, and consequently suffered from identity problems. Meanwhile, in the city, those young people who seemed to have a large number of friends told me how they had been introduced to their indigenous past. They had learnt a little bit of their indigenous language, songs, and body paintings from their parents and grandparents. These young people actively looked for new knowledge of their traditions and their families had contacts with the people living in the reserve. They could represent their indigenous identity on their bodies, and its representations could be 'located' on "the outside of the human body": it could be shown and accompany them in the inside of their territories, whether urban or rural. The visible human body as the carrier of values (Anttonen V. 1996; 2000), was now also allowed to show the indigenous values that were carried in many objects, such as indigenous handmade bags, necklaces, and bracelets. In urban areas this was especially significant, since the inside of the territory is the city also inhabited by non-natives. This at least temporal acceptance of diversity was contrasted to the time when the native communities had to work in the rubber industry and when their cultural differences had to remain invisible.

'TRADITIONS' DISCUSSED AND OBJECTIFIED

The young Indians in Rio Branco stated that their knowledge of their 'traditions' and the original language of their ethnic group was poor and that they would like to learn more about their traditional crafts, rituals, natural medicine, singing and so forth. They were conscious that their ethnic groups have their own cultural distinctions and that in the reserve, where their relatives live, these are still strong. As the reserves are situated far from Rio Branco, and reaching them involves an expensive boat trip of several days, the young Indians have visited them only a few times in their life. Three of the 18 young Manchineris in the city had never been to the reserve and the majority of them possessed only a few memories of life in the indigenous territory. In the Manchineri reserve, the same emphasis on learning one's own cultural traditions as well as recovering them was heard. However, in my opinion 'tradition' was transmitted in action and the young people in the reserve were capable of undertaking various kinds of traditional activities, including men's work such as house building, clearing a plantation, and women's activities such as weaving baskets (which are tied to their foreheads to carry vegetables, fruits and food) and making brooms, as well as speaking Manchineri and eating traditional food. However, the young Manchineris emphasized that they were about to learn traditional festivities and how to make and use traditional adornments, and that they currently had little knowledge of them. These visible and material 'traditions' were taken as indigenous representations by the dominant society, and therefore, had changed Manchineris conceptions of them.

So far [w]*e have only half of our culture. One day we will recover it all.* (Male 1, age 24.)

We are going to have to fortify our culture, handicrafts and dances. (Male 20, age 24.)

If you visit us here in ten years time, I'm sure you'll see our work here. (Male 18, age 23.)

In addition, natural medicine and the cultural performances and objects produced in the reserve can all be seen to form a contemporary concretization of Manchineri traditional knowledge. This was what young people actually mean when they refer to 'tradition.' The young Manchineri teacher explained that the interest in 'traditions' is related to increased relations with the nation state and governmental organizations:

[Before] *I didn't know my relatives. I was like a white man. Today we have a lot of respect. In the past, you could not even to talk to your mother-in-law.* [Or] *a young person talk to an old one. Now it has changed.*
Why? Since the whites have changed it […] *I know my rights, I have read the FUNAI* [National Indian Foundation] *legislation and this made me respect old people more since they have more knowledge than an entire library.* (Male 15, age 23.)

Recently changed power relations between the indigenous people and the Brazilian state have transformed indigenous peoples' cultural self-awareness. Terence Turner (1991) described how *Kayapó* Indians in Central Amazonia became conscious of the objectification of their culture, due to their new relations with the Brazilian nation state at the end of 1980s. The process of indigenous cultures' becoming discussed by natives has been called *culturalism* (Turner 1991; Sahlins 1997; see also Appadurai 1996). Marshall Sahlins (1997) has noted that indigenous culturalism is a new discursive formulation of modern indigenous identities within global cultural imperialism. In Acre it can be said that young Indians have become aware of their culture in a way similar to many indigenous groups in other parts of Lowland South America (Turner 1991; Jackson 1994; 1995), only this awareness has come much later. But, according to Arjun Appadurai (1996, 52–53, 147), differentiating myths, songs and so forth have always been part of human societies, but the imagery expressed through them has gained more strength since there are now many more possible lifestyles and identities discovered through the media, and an increase in interaction and communication has made the stories of particular groups more powerful.

We also have to pay more attention to young natives' personal experiences than to the relations between native and non-native populations as collectives. For the native young people cultural traditions are linked to certain practices that constitute their own liminal spaces and phases, allowing them to reorganize the current social situation. Young Indians strive to add order to their individual worlds by identifying some social situations as areas of indigenous 'traditions' and representations. For

instance, for both the young Indians in the reserve and the city, becoming familiar with shamanism is also a cultural, social, and ethnic distinction available when a young person is looking for answers about their own identity and personal development. (Virtanen 2006; 2007.) In certain social contexts, especially in the city, certain indigenous traditional symbols on the human body, such as headdresses, are used to mark 'native' spaces, such as indigenous ceremonial, political or cultural temporal and spatial spaces. When young Indians leave these locales, they remove these markers; for example, when one Cashinahua boy left the shop where he had been selling indigenous handicrafts, he took off his traditional woollen headdress. In general, indigenous young people rarely wanted to be identified as Indians in public urban social spaces due to the discrimination still present. Moreover, since Brazilians can have many surnames, the ethnic name is frequently left out in situations when not mentioning it may afford more positive treatment. Thus, ethnic minorities may attempt to integrate into the dominant culture in some social situations and groups, but not in those social spaces that are of no value to them (see Modood 2004, 100–102). However, mobility and changing perspectives are characteristic of Amazonian peoples, as alterability is their typical state of being, so to speak (Viveiros de Castro 2002; Vilaça 2005, 458). This also means a change in habituses whose dispositions guide the relationship between practices and specific situations. The human body is one of the forums of representations that young Indians describe as tradition, and of the so-called indigenous habitus, that benefits indigenous cultural traditions as its resource in chosen situations. (Virtanen 2007.) But sometimes Indians are restricted in displaying their indigenous identity, and many Indian young people also spoke about prejudice against Indians. Whereas sometimes they are discriminated against for not being Indian enough, or they cannot be personified without being characterized as Indians.

LEARNING AND REINTERPRETING CULTURAL TRADITIONS

The young Indians in the city of Rio Branco said that they are not regarded as Indians at offices dealing with indigenous matters if they live in the city and do not speak the language of their ethnic group. Indigenous peoples once had to downplay these differences, now they are expected to display them in order to be regarded as full citizens. This is what Sara Ahmed calls *strange fetishism*, since discourses in the postcolonial time on multiculturalism emphasize the encounter of the other and the self, and it is taken for granted that there were or still are historically determined differences. This increases the 'strangeness' of some people. (Ahmed 2000.) Hence, indigenous youngsters are still expected to appear as something like the classic prototype of Indians. This means that to become recognized as persons, they have to come close enough to being a stranger, contrary to the colonial period when Indians were compelled to become similar to non-natives (see Ahmed 2000, 119). In Brazilian society, as in many others, indigenousness is still taken as an essential quality that has to be displayed in the manner of speaking as well as embodied in relations with

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others. Indianness in the eyes of non-native observers is accepted when it is visible and can be recognized on the outside of the human body. Then the dominant society knows how to relate with the other subject.

Jean Jackson (1994) pointed out that Tukano Indians in Columbia learnt how to be Tukanoan and Indian from non-natives, referring to the Indian rights promoters who criticized Tukanoans for not preserving Tukanoan culture. But I would like to assert that the phenomenon of learning is not a simple one. For the Indian young people in Rio Branco learning their 'traditions' was considered very complicated. The parents of the Indian youngsters have been living in the city for a long time now, and they rarely speak the original language and are unable to recite mythical stories or sing to their children. Neither are they close to the older relatives – who remain the source of such knowledge – since they may live in distant neighbourhoods or not in the city at all. Whereas in the reserve, young people lack qualified indigenous teachers at their state-funded schools to facilitate multicultural education. One Manchineri girl in the city expressed her interest in learning Manchineri language and craftwork. We had following conversation:

> *Is it* [learning Manchineri] *going to be difficult? I think I shall have difficulties because there are people who don't want to teach. It doesn't just depend on my interest. In the case of my father* […] *since sometimes he works even on Sundays. And my grandmother doesn't speak Portuguese. And I almost understand nothing* [of Manchineri]. *And this is the biggest difficulty for us. Besides she* [grandmother] *doesn't speak Portuguese, she speaks very fast and doesn't like to repeat herself.*
>
> *Who could teach craftworks? I should like to learn! I should like someone to teach me! My grandmother knows, she knows how to weave a hammock. But now she is really old and she also has a problem with her kidneys.* (Female 38, age 20.)

Even in the reserve, learning 'ethnic skills' can be complicated due to the discontinuance of 'tradition' during the years when negative pressure from the surrounding society was at its worst. It must be taken into account that many indigenous groups of Acre were enslaved in the rubber industry until the 1970s, when the indigenous lands were demarcated. Today, ignorance of the cultural differences of one's ethnic group, or an inability to speak the indigenous language, may cause a loss of self-esteem in the eyes of non-natives, as well as among other native peoples and in one's own ethnic group. The dominant society seldom if ever recognizes the fact that not all native populations have had the opportunity to socialize within their own indigenous cultures. The result may be called 'ethno-stress,' when a person cannot live up to what society expects him or her to be (Lindgren 2000, 54). For whatever reason, there are various deep-rooted prototypes and stereotypes related to being an Indian, and being able to speak an indigenous language or not appropriating non-indigenous habits are some of them. The disappearance of the original native language and a visible material culture is more common among villages and reserves located close to urban centres, and among those natives living in urban areas. But, meanwhile, there are many other aspects of cultural tradition that the young people have revitalized

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both in the reserves and urban areas, such as shamanic practices including chants and medicine and the preparation of jewellery with traditional designs.

Learning traditional knowledge of one's own ethnic group can be considered both an old and modern rite of passage, since native young people have to consciously acquire knowledge that is not necessarily passed on through everyday actions, as was previously the case. In the words of Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin: "To do something because it is traditional is already to reinterpret, and hence to change it." (Handler & Linnekin 1984, 281.) For many indigenous groups today, learning native traditions can be understood better through the example of learning to play an instrument. If someone has not been used to playing a certain instrument from an early age, it can only be played easily and naturally after much practice and effort. After achieving this level, playing it can even accompany other activities. Cultural traditions have to be comprehended in a new way since they contribute to the youngster's integration in society and quality of life. The increasing relations between urban and rural areas have helped bring about this change, as natives have to think about and articulate more precisely who they are or are not.

Dɪᴠᴇʀsᴇ 'ᴛʀᴀᴅɪᴛɪᴏɴs'

While a native cultural and ethnic background has united various ethnic groups, it has also caused the hybridization of indigenous cultures and traditions. Indigenous groups borrow terminology for some aspects of their indigenous traditions from other ethnic groups. This occurs between ethnic groups at indigenous cultural and political events, such as meetings of indigenous associations and movements, and at events organized by the government to promote cultural diversity. I realized just how much cultures influenced each other when Indians asked those of other ethnicities to body paint them and when they exchanged different cultural objects. Native young people even borrow cultural objects for cultural presentations from different ethnic groups, and especially in the city young natives also learn from the other indigenous groups in the area. This is in contrast with Lauri Honko's idea that tradition is a storehouse of one particular social group. According to Honko, tradition is a resource and a storehouse that can be used as needed: "'Tradition' refers primarily to materials only, to an unsystematic array of cultural elements and features that have been made available to a particular social group during a longer period of time and in different contexts." (Honko 1988, 9–10.) On the other hand, social group can here refer to different native peoples as one social group. For the urban native young people in particular, it seemed to be more important to represent something generically indigenous rather than their own ethnic origin in particular. The young Indians also mixed traditional designs with totally new ones, for instance hearts or even the flags of football teams. The nature of the object involved is secondary; what matters is the desire and the traditional way of representation – decorating one's body through body painting. Thus, cultural traditions are not only about hybridization, but representation as such:

to represent something that relates to indigenous value systems. Meanwhile, they are also about belonging to one social group of indigenous peoples that offers a sort of pan-Indian identity, which is, however, different from multiethnic identity. This common Indian identity is also about a way of individualization in contrast with the non-native dominant society in certain social spaces.

Interestingly, even if one expresses belonging to a specific indigenous group, the symbolic manifestations are not exclusively from the one particular native group in question, as has been seen when indigenous groups have demanded their rights. As João Pacheco de Oliveira (1999; 2004) has pointed out about the indigenous peoples of northeastern Brazil, the area first colonialized in Brazil, indigenous cultural elements do not have to be 'ancient' or 'ancestral,' since they have always been adapted to the current time and space. Some people have criticized those who no longer have preserved symbolic manifestations from their own traditions as not being real Indians. The same objection was heard in Acre, for instance, when an Indian not representing the 'right' ethnic group used the Apurinã word *xingané* or Pano word *mariri* to refer his people's own traditional dance. Meanwhile, there is a desire to persuade people to accept that indigenous peoples have specific rights and that they should be respected as they are or have been. Indians usually claim that they have lost their indigenous material culture. The power clashes between Indians and the dominant society today are about recognition. Pacheco de Oliveira (1999, 117) has pointed out that new rituals or beliefs do not mean that the people involved are no longer indigenous, and do not lessen their authenticity. Therefore, there was no logical contradiction, for instance, when very recently indigenous peoples from the Northeastern Brazil used the headdresses of the central Brazilian Kayapó in their public demonstrations against paper pulp factories. Recent theories on diaspora cultures favour a cyclical analysis, in which 'tradition' takes new forms, is reformulated continuously, and there are no authentic 'traditions' (Hall 1995). Moreover, we have to recognize that instead of 'inventing cultures,' many cultural practices follow a traditional form. For instance, for contemporary Indians *forró* (popular dance) parties can include all the elements of traditional festivities and traditional social roles are established in them (see Calavia Sáez 2004).

But some young natives, especially in the city, are ashamed of their indigenous roots and neglect them. These young people rarely even have knowledge of their indigenous pasts, and have had to live separately from their communities. In the city, even where they have memories of the places where they had lived only with their ethnic community, it may often become strategic to ignore representations of those communities in order to avoid prejudice by non-natives in the cities. These are the situations when the young person did not want, in the words of Ahmed (2000, 71), to "learn to be strange". She has described narratives in which Australian aboriginal women speak of learning to become aboriginal. Meanwhile, young natives' family histories, language and professional competencies, and physical features restrain them from being considered as non-natives.

It must be taken into account that for many young natives in the city and the reserve, cultural traditions still remain to some extent no more than a learning

process, or at least something that is difficult to grasp and maintain for themselves. However, the lack or weakness of cultural traditions is discussed and, thus, cultural traditions are objectified. Even so a lack of cultural traditions provides the younger generation with the possibility of constructing their selfhood and, consequently, with a feeling of belonging to a community that maintains certain differences. Usually strong feelings are tied to things categorized as 'tradition,' and I will attempt to explain this in the next section.

CORPOREAL AND SPATIAL DISTINCTIONS

For native young people in the Amazon, corporeal and spatial distinctions of their own culture provide the principal means for categorizing behaviour, and in the very same process, for creating and maintaining a traditional system of value as a viable resource for adjusting themselves to the demands of the changing social circumstances. In order to understand those cognitive structures that guide behaviour, we have to pay attention, as Anttonen (1996) suggests in his theory of the sacred, to the relationship between the boundaries of the human body and territory as a source symbolic value to them and to their sense of integrity. For my source material on young native people, applying the theory of the sacred as a cultural category allows a clearer insight into the meanings young natives produce and that are held within certain sociocultural processes, highlighting the boundaries that set them apart as distinct ethno-social groups. This follows the idea of Mary Douglas ([1966] 1989) that certain behaviours are accepted since by controlling the human body, societies attempt to ensure its order. However, as will be shown, the meaning of spatiality is also important for understanding the construction of 'tradition'.

Making the corporeal distinction through indigenous traditions by Indian young people is intimately related to the significance that the boundaries of the territory where they come from play in the construction of identity in the day-to-day interactions of the native young people. The territory has a fundamental meaning, not only for those living in Indian lands, but also for those outside. The Manchineri people in the reserve very often talked about the reserve as a contrast to the city, just as those in the city did by contrasting the city to the 'village,' meaning the reserve. Pacheco de Oliveira has noted that in the case of indigenous peoples, ethnicity supposes an origin, and ethnicity has a special relationship to territory. But this is not simply a question of political mandates and cultural expressivity; it is also about feelings, values, and an obedience to religious and political authority that is always present in the person's memory. (Pacheco de Oliveira 2004, 32–34.) Certain things and practices become symbols that mark identity, producing a sense of group cohesion and togetherness. This helps them to differentiate young Indians of a certain ethnic group, insofar as they define what they are or are not. Indian lands, and their natural environment with all their spirits, are the point of reference for the construction of group identity. During one of our many conversations concerning the differences

between the village and the city, one young Manchineri woman who had moved to Rio Branco to study three years ago said the following about the village:

> *For me it* [the village] *is the same. Because* […] *But it is different. There we have silence, and there is our culture.* (Female 40, age 22.)

Even though the young Indians who I interviewed in Amazonian urban areas had little or no contact with the reserves belonging to their ethnic group, whether because of internal conflicts or the fact they had migrated to the city from rural locations close to farms, they also identified with certain regions and areas where their grandparents had lived.

Furthermore, for young Indians both in the reserve and the city, the reserve – or the village as the young people referred to it – has an ambivalent character. On one hand, it is a place of continuity and abundance. On the other hand, reserves are areas that lack something, especially education and health services. The young Manchineris, both in the city and the reserve, mark out the village as a distinct natural place, the home of the Other: the cultural category that maintains other categories. The Indian land is the 'other' since there money is not needed, there are no unknown faces or noise and it is contrary to everything associated with urban areas. The indigenous territory is the place where traditional knowledge of the past, including practices and stories, still exists, in dimensions with which the young people can identify.

When the Indian villages are viewed from the urban space, they are the invisible and external dimension of the territory since it is located far from the city space. From the urban perspective, the interior of the territory is the city which is invisible to those in the reserve. Meanwhile there are strong ties with the reserve, and it is equivalent to the inside of the human body linked to the indigenous identity not necessarily evident in the urban space. However, for the young Indians in the reserve, in the village where one lives, one can show indigenous identity without conflict. Moreover, some of the abilities learnt in the reserve or in the city cannot be applied to the other context. These structures establish the contradictions between the native populations in the city and those in the reserve, even when they represent the same ethnic group. But for both of them the exterior of the territory is the natural environment and urban dominant society as such. Cities are contrasted to all that represents tradition and, thus, sometimes they form 'the other'. For those in the reserve the task is to create a balanced relationship with this unknown and invisible urban space, because the cities and their practices and knowledge are needed in order to assure well-being (in terms of health, education and so forth). For the Indians in the city, respectively, the difficulty lies in producing relatedness to the members of one's own ethnic group, but also in defining their presence in the city. In both the cases of the urban and the rural native young people, cultural traditions have to be comprehended.

For young natives both in the city and the reserve, the accepted exterior of the territory is the external natural environment that is the nonhuman spirit world. Today, just as it has been made separate from the sphere of everyday activity (see

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Anttonen V. 2005, 192) and affinity (see Vilaça 2005), the urban dominant society is also separated as a different value system. The young Indians often speak about "our way" and "your/their way of doing things", referring to certain social practices and ways of living. The distinctions of 'our way' usually meant sharing and conviviality in one's community. This relatedness is formed between those that are defined as persons through living together (see Bird-David 1999), and it makes young Indians not only different from the spirit world (see Vilaça 2005), but also from other indigenous groups and, increasingly, from non-Indians. 'Our way' is most different from non-natives' but less different from the other indigenous groups. For Amazonian peoples, the ideas of aesthetics and sociality determine the ideas of wholeness and integration between the centre where every human acts and the margins which form the periphery of social life (see Turner 1980, 134–135). Often Indians in the reserve do not consider Indians in the city as relatives, since there is no interaction with them (Virtanen 2007). But 'our way' is also maintained in urban areas, at least in some of the urban social spaces. In fact, many native populations today share common 'traditions' and history beyond the cities and reserves, since they may be resident in both areas. The non-humans that inhabit the external territory are not persons, since there is no interaction with them: there is rarely giving or sharing with them.

'Tradition' has been taken as something that connects us to certain times, places, and persons. In Amazonia, the focus in rituals is on the ancestors and the jungle, and ritualistic objects convey not only memories but also images of the common past of 'the inside of the territory'. Among the Amazonian young people living in the reserve and the city alike, 'traditional' objects represented on the human body, such as headdresses, dresses, and jewellery, connect them to their indigenous communities and the value systems of these communities. These 'traditional' objects of Amazonian Indians both unite native ethnic groups and establish differences from non-natives carrying out notions of the sacred. As Honko (1995, 134) argues about the selection of tradition and its meaning for group identity, for Amazonian young Indians 'tradition' is usually fed by notions of the sacred, since traditional practices and objects carry special meanings and emotions. Contemporary ritualistic practices both in the city and the reserve, such as shamanism, various healing ceremonies, the use of natural medicines, and indigenous cultural and political events are purifying actions, since they often make the young people feel that "now it is all right", "we are all here", "this is like it was before" (or "this is what they do in the reserve"), "this is my community", and "now we can be at peace". In addition to rituals, practices and objects, 'tradition' is also transmitted in value-laden discourses and practices. In the context of the ethno-political movement, ethnic discourses reflect the struggle of the native groups to establish their position in society as indigenous peoples (Ramos 2003; Jackson 1995; Niezen 2003). Interestingly, for indigenous young people the use of 'traditional' symbols, such as headdresses and body paintings, is common especially when the young people participate in the so-called ethno-political movement: when they act as representatives of their ethnic organizations or the association of indigenous students.

In fact, 'tradition' falls "at the intersection of the boundary lines separating and connecting the internal and external of the 'human body' and 'territory'" (Anttonen V. 2005, 192). In his theoretical model, Anttonen (2005, 192) also suggests that the marking of the boundaries of sacred things is giving religious criteria "through which the sense of community was protected and strengthened". The sacred is the border category constructed to fulfil society's need to manifest its values and their symbolic limits. It can be regarded as a meta-category in relation to which other categories are established, including moral and social categories. Since it occupies a liminal space, it is associated with power. (Anttonen V. 1996; 2000.) Today, sharing defined cultural traditions is one of the ways to create relatedness and define ethnic groups. Increased interaction with new territories and spaces that have previously been invisible has changed people's ideas concerning what is important, what they wish to maintain, change and forget, and what they consider sacred. Interestingly, 'tradition' becomes a vague concept when it cannot be shown to others, for instance when one does not speak the indigenous language or does not have any symbolic native manifestations.

DYNAMISM OF 'TRADITION' IN AMAZONIA

In this article I have shown that for the young natives in rural and urban settings 'tradition' has both similar and different meanings. 'Tradition' is used as a tool to create personal codes and cognitive models when the space of anonymity is 'too much', or when young Indians feel they are losing their identities in the individualistic urban or valueless space. 'Tradition' is appropriated as something that one has, aims to have or may not even have when with non-natives and other ethnic groups. More attention should be paid to the notion of 'tradition' as a corporeal and spatial distinction, not just to an element of the past activated in the present. Indigenous traditions are represented in practices of the human body and visual symbols on the visible outside of the human body. Spatial distinction has to be understood in terms of relations of power by demarking some situations for areas of one's own activity, not only as the separation of geographical areas or identification with them. By power relations I do not refer only to dominant society, but also to other native groups and even to one's own native community, as many native groups have to reorganize themselves as ethnic communities due to legal, political, educational, health and religious matters.

'Tradition' has different meanings in different situations, from religious orientations to political strategies, as it serves as a personal or contingent distinction. It is multidimensional because it is constantly reinterpreted and reorganized by younger generations. This multidimensional relationship was already learnt in interaction with nature, and this multidimensionality presently continues in the relationship with the state and non-indigenous populations. For Amazonian native peoples, cultural flexibility was already a part of their everyday lives, as well as the mixture of invisible and visible social relations. As Elsje Lagrou (2001, 112) says of the Cashinahua, for

instance, everything is relational, not essential and substantial. "Alterability is not a lack of humanity or social agency; it is intelligibility and different ways of perceiving and seeing things […]." However, the conflict arises not because of the encounter with new things and situations, but because the young person has no control over the situation or because access to the required new information is denied. This also occurs in the area of 'tradition.' If young Indians lack knowledge of their cultural traditions or cannot represent these traditions through their bodies, then they cannot protect themselves – just as Ahmed (2000, 45) speaks of the skins of bodies as borders that feel and mark differences.

Although 'tradition' exists within a continual process of transformation and the organization of diversity, the ideas of hybrids or creolizations (Hall 1995) are not states of being in the lived worlds of young natives. Social, cultural, and political spaces when 'tradition' is represented or acts as a basis of traditional values are more about temporal transformations in which different cultural models are applied. In certain social situations, some aspects of the young Indians' lived worlds are identified as more 'traditional' and others as more 'modern,' even if 'tradition' as such may act as a dynamic element. 'Tradition' is multidimensional since in some situations it can create unity for the group and serve as a basis for identity, or it can be left out. Sometimes there is a continuity of 'tradition', at other times there is an integration with the new rules of the game, and occasionally something totally original is created between them. Cultural traditions is not necessarily the resource of one ethnic group alone, because traditional elements are also activated and borrowed from the other groups. For a young native person, 'tradition' offers a social and cultural space amid a dominant society that sometimes appears to represent confusion. It is important to note its usefulness for indigenous youngsters. It offers a feeling of continuity, but also something totally fresh and new. Learning 'tradition' is one of contemporary rites of passage. The young people may be proud of their ethnic origin, whilst celebrating 'modernity.' In a specific way, 'tradition' stimulates a desire to create something and a sense that they should and can control the period of change.

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Interview material:

Transcripted interview material includes 138 interviewees. Interviews were carried out in 2003-2005 in Rio Branco and Mamoadate reserve. Interviewer: Pirjo Kristiina Virtanen. The quotes in the article are from the following interviewees:
— Female 38, age 20. Rio Branco.
— Female 40, age 22. Rio Branco.
— Male 1, age 24. Extrema village, Mamoadate reserve.
— Male 15, age 23. Extrema village, Mamoadate reserve.
— Male 18, age 23. Lago Novo village, Mamoadate reserve.

— Male 20, age 24. Lago Novo village, Mamoadate reserve.
— Male 24, age 17. Santa Cruz village, Mamoadate reserve.
— Male 61, age 23. Rio Branco.

The number refers to the interviewee number in the Pirjo Kristiina Virtanen's personal archive. The age refers to the age at the time of the interview.

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