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Cinta Larga

In the area between the left bank of the Roosevelt River and the right bank of the Aripuana River, from latitude 10 to 12, live the Ma, Kaki, and Kaba Indian groups, collectively designated as the Cinta Larga Indians. The Cinta Larga have had increased contact with outsiders in recent years, as a result of their visits to neighboring hamlets, centers of colonization projects, and the AR-1 highway.

In addition to bringing the Cinta Larga to the attention of the press, this contact has altered the social structure of the groups, and has had far-reaching effects on the physical health of the Indians. Deaths stemming from influenza, measles, and other diseases have been observed since 1971. In the following paper I will outline a few important aspects of Cinta Larga social structure, and some of the recent changes that have occurred since the Indians have been in sustained contact with outside groups. The observations presented in this paper were made on the FUNAI attraction post Serra Morena. The findings are tentative and incomplete, the product of preliminary investigations.¹

Although it is difficult to establish the exact size of the Cinta Larga population, in 1975 it was estimated to be about 1750.² This population is dispersed throughout the 30,00 km² Aripuana Park, the Serra Morena Reserve, and areas to the north and east. The groups that make up the Cinta Larga speak mutually-intelligible languages, and, as the data below indicate, often form alliances. But these groups do not peacefully co-exist; their relationship is often one of conflict.

The population at the Serra Morena post fluctuates widely. In May of 1979 there were 60 Indians at Serra Morena, while in August of that year there were 99. From June to August of 1980, the population varied between 112 and 69. Indians left Serra Morena for several reasons: some moved near the AR-1 highway, some returned to their villages, and some left because of conflicts with their hosts. Still, it is possible to identify a core local community made up of Kabanei brothers, including classificatory brothers.

Serra Morena is on the right bank of the Aripuana River at a latitude of 11°

The facilities are few: three houses for employees, one storage shed, and the Indians' houses. In addition there is a grass-covered landing strip about 500 meters long. There are also agricultural plots of the Indians and the FUNAI representatives.

The Serra Morena is the Koba territory, but people from other villages that were previously located below Serra Morena on the Aripuana River or on the Vermelho River now live there as well. Indians from surrounding villages are attracted to the post by the material goods that can be obtained there; some come to visit the post's inhabitants. The Mawei, Kakinei, and Ubiei (a subgroup of the Ma), who are related to the Kabanei through marriage alliances, come to visit relatives but do not stay long- They do not establish permanent residences. When a marriage terminates, if the woman involved is Kaba, it is uncertain whether the husband can remain at Serra Morena.

Indians began to inhabit the FUNAI post in 1973, when some Kabanei spontaneously approached the recently created post and built houses. Some members of this original group died, while others made marriage alliances which incorporated new members into the community. Alliances apparently can be made and broken with ease. Aside from the individuals who visit the post on a regular basis, there are many who seem to circulate between the post and the various commercial ventures surrounding the park.

Integration into the Indian community at the post depends on alliances, often formed through marriage. Marriage has brought representatives of the various Cinta Larga subgroups into the post community.

Marriages are arranged by the men. Three basic rules appear to be followed: marriage with a sister's daughter, marriage of the eldest son with one of the father's wives, and marriage of a man and a woman of the second descending generation by the masculine line.⁴ [THERE IS NO FOOTNOTE #3] Alliances with groups unrelated to the Kaba precipitated the exchange of wives or daughters in an apparently free manner. Although the distribution of women is a male prerogative, female submission is not

necessarily assured. [IT NEVER IS, FOLKS!] Reports indicate that alliance is not complete without some assent by the women. Some exchanges are thus undone, despite the will of the father or the husband.

Considering only the most stable residents, there are currently 17 men married to 27 women. These alliances establish the following net of intergroup relations:

#	HUSBANDS Group*	WIVES				total
		kabanei	kaki	ma	ubiei	
10	kabanei	3	8	7	1	19
4	kaki	3	-	1	1	5
1	ma	-	-	1	-	1
2	others+	2	-	-	-	2
17	TOTAL	8	8	9	2	27

* Affiliation to the group is patrilineal.

+ Two FUNAI employees, Mundurucu and Gaviao of the Igarape Lourdes, married two Kabanei women.

The fact that more than two-thirds of the wives are not Kabanei suggests a preference for exogamous marriages and verilocal residence. The following is the distribution of those who periodically visit Serra Morena.

	Groups					TOTAL
	Kabanei	Kaki	Ma	Ubiei	Others	
Husbands	-	-	1	4	-	5
Wives	2	-	-	2	1	5
Children	-	-	-	10	1	11
Other	1	3	-	2	1	7
TOTAL	3	3	1	18	3	28

The Ubiede are the largest group regularly visiting the post. There are indications that they are seeking to establish matrimonial alliances with the Kabanei of the Serra Morena. These alliances must be viewed as strategic, since the relations between the various Cinta Larga groups are far from peaceful. For example, the groups that live near the headwaters of the Eugenia and Tenente Marques Rivers are hostile toward the residents of Serra Morena and vice versa. These hostilities erupt in intermittent conflicts.

The Cinta Larga utilize highly developed skills in hunting, fishing, agriculture, and foraging to meet their subsistence needs. The intensity of these activities varies according to the season and environmental conditions. Fishing and foraging are undertaken throughout the year. Hunting reaches its high point from May through October, during the dry season. Fields are prepared starting in June and July and planting is undertaken in August and September.

There are various cooperative arrangements for labor exchange. A man and woman will often plant their fields alone, after three or four men have cleared them. Fishing at the edge of the rivers is done by men, women, and children, usually in groups. Fishing from canoes generally involves two men. Hunting near settlements can be done singularly or in groups but distant hunting expeditions may last many days. The more prolonged the hunting or fishing expedition, the more it approximates recreation. These treks are viewed as similar to walks along the roads in the area. There are also trips with specific destinations to favorite fishing spots, to gather Brazil nuts, and to bamboo groves for the collection of arrow materials.

Aside from the work in the fields, there is not much reason for continuous residence at Serra Morena. Only the celebration of the "bebe-aka" festival (Caititu--pig killing) seizes the attention of the community and causes almost everyone to remain at Serra Morena.

The contact with outsiders described above has resulted in significant changes for the Indian population. One important effect, already mentioned, has been a marked decline in the health and physical well-being of the Indians. This is true for a variety of reasons. First, Indians have been subjected to violence by groups who are interested in land, minerals, and rubber. Since the 1960s, newspapers have reported widespread invasions of Cinta Larga territory. One such expedition was the well-known "Massacre of Parallel 11" of 1963, which resulted in the assassination of innumerable Indians. It is important to note that this massacre only received public notice because one of its participants, angry because he walked 58 days through the forest and was not paid what he had been promised, denounced his companions and those who ordered the crime. Other similar expeditions may have occurred without any public knowledge of them.

Contact with outsiders has also exposed the Cinta Larga to diseases against which the Indians have little resistance. There is a pressing need for improved medical care, including medicine for such diseases as influenza, pneumonia, and

tuberculosis. This situation is made worse by the fact that financial resources and personnel are limited.

In addition to the immediate health problems posed by the new diseases, reproduction has been noticeably disturbed. There are indications that women are choosing to practice birth control, and that the infant mortality rate has risen. A review of the reproduction history of the women at Serra Morena gives an indication of the problem. Twenty-one women between the ages of 15 and 41 had given birth to 52 children through August 1979. Twenty-seven of these infants died. Thus, for each woman an average of one child survived and one died. The same calculation for women 42 years or older shows a different story. The seven women in this category had given birth to 40 children, of which 16 died. The mortality rate for this group was 40%; with approximately 3 of 5 children living for each woman.

It is clear that contact with outside groups has disrupted the health and reproductive patterns of the Cinta Larga. Disruption of the Indians' lifestyle and productive activities is less easily documented but no less important. As noted above, Cinta Larga groups are attracted to the Serra Morena post in part because of the material objects that can be obtained there. Contact with outside groups has also been facilitated by the opening of secondary roads to the south of the park, which have linked settlements and camps to the "Juina" Colonization Project. Again, this contact has had the effect of drawing Indians into markets for consumer goods such as clothing, firearms, sugar, flashlights, and so on. The desire to obtain these goods has stimulated the Indians to go on "trips" in search of items such as monkey teeth, jaguar skins, and necklaces of cacun nuts which are used for barter.

Their involvement in markets for consumer goods has also caused the Cinta Larga to alter their economic activities. In order to raise the cash necessary for these goods, the Indians often work as wage laborers. It is not clear to what

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extent wage labor has disrupted the subsistence productive activities of fishing, hunting, agriculture, and foraging described above; nor is it clear whether wage labor has disrupted earlier cooperative arrangements for labor exchange. These questions can only be resolved with further study. Still, it seems fair to say that the impact of market involvement and wage labor on the Cinta Larga's economic activities is at least potentially very great.

The picture of the Cinta Larga, briefly described above, is a part of the more general picture of the Brazilian Amazon area where the pressure for land is enormous.

The Aripuana Park has not escaped the process which has affected Indian lands for centuries. Currently, the area most affected by invasions is that of the Surui. The Cinta Larga territory was also violated, however, as at least four ranches has been established near the Roosevelt Post. Another particularly vulnerable point is the area south of the park, near the AR-1 highway. There are no resources available with which to monitor the incursions of outsiders onto Indian land in this area.

Mining companies are also interested in the Indians' land in this area. Both the river beds and the subsoil rights are equally coveted. To date, FUNAI has received numerous requests to prospect for minerals in the park, but no authorizations have been granted. However, a recent inter-ministerial agreement, #006, of 15 January 1981 between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Mines and Energy, would permit prospecting and mining on Indian lands. Although restricted to state-owned enterprises, the consequences for the Cinta Larga could be catastrophic. In the past, the situation of Brazil's Indians has always deteriorated as a result of rapid occupation and economic development--the very activities that might result from the mining now possible on Indian lands.