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**THE CHALLENGES OF INTERCULTURALITY:
Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development
Subprojects in Brazilian Amazonia**

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Introduction

The Pilot Program for the Protection of Brazilian Tropical Forests (hereafter “Pilot Program”) grew out of national and international concern over the accelerated destruction of the world’s tropical rain forests and currently represents the most ambitious ongoing effort in Brazil to protect its Amazon and Atlantic tropical forests. Based upon a proposal originally made by then German Chancellor Helmut Kohl at the 1990 Group of Seven Industrialized Countries¹ (G-7) meeting in Houston, the Pilot Program began operation in 1995, after several years of intense negotiations and program design initiatives, with joint financing by the G-7 countries and the Brazilian government (see Fatheuer 1994).

The PD/A (Demonstrative Projects Type A) Project, which will be analyzed here, promotes innovative development initiatives at the local level through the financing of small-scale sustainable development subprojects.² The Project also seeks to disseminate those experiences that have proven to be successful, thereby providing a positive “demonstrative” effect for the implementation of environmentally sustainable production techniques. The PD/A Project is one of the few spaces within the entire Pilot Program that directly involves local civil society associations, organizations and cooperatives as an integral part of its programming. In its first nine years of operation, the PD/A Project financed a total of 194 sustainable development subprojects, of which 21 involved, directly or indirectly, Indigenous peoples: 16 in the Amazon region and 5 in the Atlantic forest region. The 16 Amazonian Indigenous sustainable development subprojects financed by PD/A between 1996 and 2002 and evaluated by the author using a tailor-made methodology (Little 1998, 2003) provide the empirical base for this analysis of intercultural dynamics.³ Of these sixteen subprojects, eight were executed by local or regional Indigenous organizations, while the other eight were executed by non-Indigenous organizations that work directly with Indigenous peoples. Basic data for each of these subprojects is listed in the appendix.

¹ Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan and the United States.

² I follow the terminology of the Pilot Program which distinguishes between a “subproject” (a specific sustainable development endeavor), a “project” (such as the PD/A Project), a “subprogram” (such as the Demonstrative Projects Subprogram) and a “program” (such as the Pilot Program). While this may seem cumbersome to the reader, I use this jargon purposefully as an exercise geared towards sensitizing the reader to the difficulties that Indigenous peoples face when they must quickly learn the specialized language of sustainable development initiatives in Amazonia.

³ In 2001, after three years of planning and project design, the PDPI (Demonstrative Projects for Indigenous Peoples) Project was initiated and has as its overall goal the promotion of sustainable development activities within Indigenous Territories. Since this Project is still in its initial stages, thus making it difficult to draw substantive conclusions about its operation, it will not directly enter into the analysis here.

The methodology used by PD/A for the evaluation of subprojects, based upon the degree of fulfillment of subproject objectives, proved to be inadequate for Indigenous subprojects because it did not take into account the specific intercultural dynamics that impinged upon them. The methodology developed by the author, therefore, sought to explicitly incorporate the aspects of cultural differentiation in a way that was sensitive to the power asymmetries common to interethnic relations, yet that was also flexible enough to attend to the diversity of situations of contemporary Brazilian Indigenous societies. Using the comparative study of Roper, Frechione and DeWalt (1997) as a foundation, a data collection matrix was constructed around six sets of categories: (1) Culture, rights and security; (2) Participation, agency and self-determination; (3) Economy, technology and environment; (4) Financial and technical assistance; (5) Interethnic relations and socio-cultural and economic change; and (6) Evaluation of subproject operation. The underlying logic of the methodology was to analyze and evaluate the subprojects as parts of larger social, political and cultural processes, thus avoiding the simplifying tendency to determine whether a subproject was a 'success' or 'failure' based solely on an analysis whether or not the subproject's objectives were met.⁴

The fact that the Pilot Program is an environmental program, administered by the Ministry of Environment, yet one that includes direct dealings with Indigenous peoples whose jurisdiction lies within the Ministry of Justice, raises a host of interesting anthropological issues. First, what are the specific intercultural dynamics involved in financing Indigenous sustainable development subprojects? Second, how have these subprojects affected the broader field of interethnic relations between Indigenous peoples and the Brazilian state? Third, is a new Indian-environmental policy of the Brazilian government taking shape? In order to provide some initial answers to these questions, a brief review of the situation of Brazilian Indigenous peoples is necessary.

Brazilian Indigenous peoples

The history of Indigenous peoples in Brazil is fraught with instances of genocide and ethnocide over the past five centuries, as has been the case throughout the Americas. Massive destruction of Indigenous societies, primarily through the mechanisms of slavery, warfare and disease, occurred in the decades after initial contact was made with European invaders (see Denevan 1976; Wolf 1982). Amazonia, however, due to the region's enormous area, the large number of small, autarkic Indigenous societies and the difficulties of physical access to and communication with specific regions, produced a situation whereby contact between differing Indigenous peoples and invading forces did not occur in a single historical moment, as with the Aztec and Inca civilizations, but has extended over the past five centuries and continues today (see Hemming 1978, 1987; Moreira Neto 1988). Today, in Brazilian Amazonia alone, there are believed to be approximately 42 "isolated" Indigenous groups that have not entered into direct contact with the broader Brazilian society (Ricardo 2000).

⁴ The evaluation undertaken by the author included field visits to twelve of the subprojects during which field-notes were taken, interviews with subproject leaders and community members were conducted and economic production activities were observed. In addition, interviews were held with government officials and non-governmental organization members who were responsible for monitoring or assisting the various subprojects. Documents such as the original proposal, annual reports, ad hoc evaluations and the final report for all sixteen subprojects were also analyzed. The PD/A staff in Brasilia provided invaluable assistance in all phases of the evaluation.

The establishment of the Indian Protection Service by the Brazilian government in 1910 and its substitution by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) in 1967, represented attempts by the Brazilian government to assimilate the remaining Indigenous societies into the dominant national society, in a process known as the pacification of the hinterland (Ramos 1998). During this entire period, Indigenous peoples and their lands were under the direct wardship of the federal government. The 1973 Indian Statute, which was promulgated during the military dictatorship, legally classified Indigenous peoples as “minors” who were considered to be “relatively incapable” of exercising full Brazilian citizenship

In spite of these long-term and onerous efforts by the Brazilian state, many Indigenous societies refused to be assimilated and either challenged pacification attempts or fled further in the forest. Numerous forms of passive and active resistance by Indigenous peoples guaranteed the survival of hundreds of Indigenous societies within Brazil, together with the creation of new Indigenous societies via intricate processes of “ethnogenesis” (Hill 1996; Oliveira 1999). By the early 1980s, the first Indigenous organizations began to appear in Brazil as part of a movement that affected all of the Americas. These early organizations had a decidedly political nature, since they sought to promote and protect the specific rights of Indigenous peoples as distinct from, yet part of, the larger national society. This phase of the Indigenous movement culminated in the promulgation of a new Brazilian Constitution in 1988 which, for the first time ever, recognized “the social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions of Indians” and guaranteed their “original rights to the lands that they traditionally occupy” (Article 231). This Constitution also mandated that all Indigenous Territories be identified, demarcated and formally registered by the federal government within a five-year span. Though this mandate was not fulfilled, this process experimented a notable acceleration throughout the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century: by the year 2004, 473 (or 77%) of the total 618 Indigenous Territories – belonging to 220 different Indigenous societies – had been identified and demarcated by the federal government, encompassing 97% of the total area of Indigenous Territories in Brazil (Instituto Socioambiental 2004).

With the coming of the 21st century, a new challenge emerged: guaranteeing that these Indigenous Territories, formally recognized by the federal government, offered viable means for the sustenance of the Indigenous peoples that lived in them. In other words, there was a need to make Indigenous Territories economically viable and environmentally sustainable such that Indigenous peoples would be able to develop a dignified livelihood within their lands for generations to come.

The concept of interculturality

Our understanding of the relations between dominant national societies and Indigenous peoples has experienced a sea change over the past quarter century both within the discipline of anthropology and the wider political sphere. Within anthropology, the concept of “acculturation”, which had sustained two generations of anthropological research (see Redfield *et alii* 1936; Broom *et alii* 1954; Aguirre Beltrán 1957), came under criticism for its focus on the one-way assimilation of Indigenous peoples into national societies. By the late 1960s, new approaches to interethnic relations emerged led by such key concepts as “interethnic friction” (Cardoso de Oliveira 1964, 1967), “internal colonialism” (Casanova 1969) and “ethnic boundaries” (Barth 1969) which directly incorporated the dimensions of asymmetrical political power into the analysis of interethnic dynamics.

This, in turn, led to the consolidation of an anthropological approach based on the concept of “interculturality” whereby Indigenous societies are no longer considered as primitive, inferior or backward nor destined to disappear in the face of Western modernization. Rather, interethnic relations are now understood as the encounter between societies having distinct cultural backgrounds in which the flow of influences is multiple and often unpredictable, thus creating the need to better understand the intricacies of “intercultural relations.” In this vein, Hannerz (1992, 1996) is concerned with describing the ways cultural meanings move across the globe via communications media and interpenetrate with existing meanings, while García Canclini (1990, 2003) analyzes the specific intercultural dynamics occurring in Latin America. Other intercultural theorists (Rama 2001; Moreiras 2001) have revised the concept of “transculturation,” first developed by Cuban ethnologist Fernando Ortiz in 1940 (Ortiz 1963), through the detailed study of the two-way (though often highly unequal and irregular) flow of cultural influences that occurs in any situation of intercultural contact.

Within the political sphere, changes were slower in coming, but by the early 1980s, the previously dominant ideology of “integrating” Indigenous peoples into the national body politic, and hence eliminating their ethnic identity by turning them into “national” citizens, began to give way to new concepts which recognized the rights of ethnic minorities to maintain their cultural institutions and control natural resources located within their territories. The new national Constitutions of Brazil (1988), Colombia (1991), Ecuador (1998) and Venezuela (1999) effectively enshrined these rights into their respective national legal systems.

It is within this anthropological and political framework of interculturality that the Indigenous subprojects of the PD/A Project will be analyzed according to the two separate domains of sociopolitical and interscientific relations. An overview approach, in which a host of different issues will be addressed, is undertaken here rather than a more focused ethnographic one. While each of the issues discussed here would clearly benefit from in-depth analysis, the overview approach has the advantage of posing the issue of the collective impact of the changes that are fostered by the implementation of Indigenous sustainable development subprojects. As such, this analysis can be seen as exploratory and seeks to encourage further research into the issues presented in the article.

Sociopolitical relations: The dilemmas of “projectism”

One of the most salient dimensions of the interculturality of small-scale development subprojects among Brazilian Indigenous peoples is that two different administrative and political systems come into contact and require the establishment of new forms of interaction. One of the central findings of the evaluation of PD/A Indigenous subprojects was that virtually all of the Indigenous associations and organizations encountered difficulties in understanding and operating within the framework of a “project”. What I call here “projectism” refers to a specific modality of development whereby daily activities undertaken by Indigenous peoples, such as the defense of their territory, the production of food and political organization, need to be “translated” into a project format for their subsequent financing by a governmental program, in this case PD/A (see Pareschi 2002). While this may seem normal for persons or groups that are already integrated into the developmentalist paradigm, for certain Indigenous groups, particularly those with limited contact with national Brazilian society, this process can provoke major changes in cultural values, in

leadership patterns, in time conceptions, in organizational structure and in political relations.

With regard to cultural values, the formulation, implementation, management and evaluation of a subproject represents a Western, bureaucratic, modernizing, short-term modality for confronting daily problems faced by an Indigenous group. Upon entering this modality, the Indigenous group must learn how to: (a) formulate general and specific objectives, each with their respective activities; (b) develop specific measurement indicators for each of these activities; (c) establish a detailed timetable for the completion of each activity and for the reception of each financial installment; (d) present tri-monthly expense accounts in which every penny spent is duly accounted for and backed up by receipts; (e) use sophisticated computer software programs; (f) write bi-annual reports of all subproject activities; and (g) regularly host visits from government bureaucrats and ad hoc consultants who will review all of the above mentioned phases of the subproject. Other sources of cultural change reside in the near total emphasis on written language (instead of oral communication), in the need to have written and spoken fluency in Portuguese (often at the expense of native language use), in the use of a chronometric sense of time (in which every single activity must be completed within a specific time frame as outlined in the subproject timetable), in the use of modern accounting techniques (which require specific training) and in the monetarization of productive relations (which can dramatically alter internal economic dynamics).

In the area of internal leadership, projectism runs the risk of creating new divisions within each Indigenous group. In the majority of the subprojects evaluated, the participation of Indigenous peoples in leadership roles within the subproject was overwhelmingly undertaken by young people. This situation can be explained by two basic factors: within contemporary Brazilian Indigenous societies, young people tend to have greater experience in dealing with the dominant national society and higher levels of literacy in Portuguese, both of which are necessary for the successful implementation of a PD/A subproject. This fact, however, carries with it an implicit devaluation of elders and traditional forms of leadership. In many Indigenous societies, leadership has historically been based upon age-deference and the distribution of goods and the realization of services has been controlled by elders according to kinship relations and gender roles. In addition, the financial resources of a subproject need to be spent according to the rigid structure of the established timetable, and not according to the contingent needs of the community as interpreted by the elders.

In the face of these leadership dilemmas, one of the most innovative intercultural responses can be seen in Subproject 757 – “Ethnodevelopment and the Training of Ticuna Managers” – of the Ticuna Indigenous group in the state of Amazonas, which involves the implementation of horticulture, pisciculture and agro-forestry activities along with the development of an ethnically based management training program. The leadership strategy of this subproject gave primary administrative responsibilities to Ticuna young people, while formal control of the subproject remained in the hands of the traditional Elders’ Council. The elders received regular reports of the subproject’s implementation and made suggestions concerning its management, while the day-to-day execution of the subproject was given over to Ticuna young people.

With regard to time conceptions, projectism tends to accelerate the implementation of productive activities due to the short timeframe of each subproject (which ranges from one to three years). When viewed from the timeframe of land invasions, conquests and culture contact that have occurred over the past centuries, the

proposal to overcome these negative impacts in an Indigenous society, even partially, via a three-year subproject is problematic, to say the least. From this perspective, the implementation of changes in intercultural relations with positive impacts for Indigenous groups is better measured in generations rather than in two or three-year timetables. The short-term timeframe of subprojects simply does not allow for a long-term processual vision of sociocultural change.

Subproject 146 – “Sustainability and Territorial Occupation of the Mura People” – in the state of Amazonas, reveals how the rigid time constraints of a subproject can be a negative factor in the achievement of its goals. This subproject had as its main objective the implementation of economically viable and environmentally sustainable production in Mura lands, to be accomplished through plantings of the cupuaçu tree (*Theobroma grandiflorum*), for subsequent sale of the cupuaçu fruit, and the processing and sale of palm oil extracted from existing groves of the babassu palm tree (*Orbygnia martiana*). During the first year, the cupuaçu plantings proceeded on schedule, only to be completely destroyed in the second year of the subproject by forest fires which swept through the entire region. By the third and final year of the subproject, new cupuaçu plantings were undertaken and this activity began from scratch without having the chance to demonstrate if it was economically and environmentally viable.

The babassu activity suffered from even greater constraints. The shed built for processing the palm oil proved to be inadequate as a production site and the machinery to be used in the extraction of the oil did not work properly. This was caused in part by the fact that the machinery was bought second-hand and in haste, since this budgeted line-item had to be spent by the end of the fiscal year, pressure that came from the fact that the subproject started nine months behind schedule because of bureaucratic problems unrelated to the Mura Association. The small amount of palm oil that was eventually produced did not find a stable market in part due to a lack of hygienic certification and formal labeling of the product and in part due to the lack of a clear marketing strategy. Other problems experienced by the subproject included the blockage of payment by PD/A on several occasions due to incomplete accounting reports and the change of subproject directors on two occasions. By the end of the three years of the subproject, none of the major objectives had been achieved in spite of the hard work of all the Mura people involved. One could argue that the subproject was too ambitious in its goals and that it suffered from bad luck, even though the subproject idea may indeed have been good. But in order for its viability to be truly tested and for the necessary training of local people to take place, a three-year timeframe was clearly insufficient.

At the organizational level, there has been an explosion of new Indigenous associations in the past ten years. On one hand, this surge of new organizations seems to demonstrate a certain organizational vitality within Indigenous societies, since they are now beginning to assume control over affairs that were previously handled by non-Indigenous entities, particularly federal government administrative agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide support for Indigenous peoples. On the other hand, as Albert (2000) notes, these new associations are almost completely devoid of the political and ethnic dimensions that characterized the rise of Indigenous organizations in the 1980s. What has occurred is that new organizations are being formed within a Western NGO mold for the express purpose of gaining access to development project funding from either governmental programs or NGO support groups. Of the eight PD/A subprojects managed by local or regional Indigenous

associations, the majority of these organizations had been established less than three years prior to being awarded subproject financing.

These developments have numerous political ramifications. Indigenous peoples live within a broader system of interethnic relations founded in economic dependence and political subordination and one or two subprojects will do little to change this situation. The enormous asymmetry of power between a government agency and an Indigenous society – an asymmetry that is inherent in a situation where one side has large sums of money at its disposal and the other suffers from economic conditions of poverty and marginality – is ripe for the establishment of dependent and manipulative relations, even when ultimate goal of the subproject may be the fostering of self-determination. PD/A Indigenous subprojects join together, in a single network, social actors with highly diverse power quotients: an isolated Indigenous village is linked, however tenuously, with the government funding agencies of the Group of Seven Industrialized Countries, with the World Bank, with Brazilian federal government bureaucrats, with international environmental NGOs and with a host of other social actors. In contexts of unequal power quotients between partners, it is often difficult to avoid the establishment of paternalistic relations.

Nonetheless, given the near total control which FUNAI has exercised over Brazilian Indigenous groups over the past thirty-five years, the reception of subproject funds may indeed serve a liberating function to the degree that this monopoly of political control is broken and new relationships are allowed to develop. Clearly, the trading of the monopoly by FUNAI with a monopoly by another federal government agency is not what is liberating, but rather the way that the Indigenous peoples are now able to choose the partners they want to have, even if their options remain limited. The experiences of economic cooperation between Indigenous groups and other local groups, notably non-Indigenous farmers, can also promote the regional political autonomy of Indigenous peoples.

One example of an effort towards Indigenous political and economic autonomy is Subproject 304 – “Vyty-Cati: Non-predatory Alternatives for Income-generation in Local Villages”- a two-year subproject among the Apinayé, Canela, Gavião, Krahô and Krikati Indigenous groups in the states of Tocantins and Maranhão, together with the continuation of this subproject for another year (Subproject 691 – “Vyty-Cati: Consolidation of Agro-extractive Practices and Fruit Processing in Local Villages”). These two subprojects sought to organize the production and processing of local savanna fruits through the installation of an Indigenous-owned and operated fruit pulp plant that was to be used not only by the ten Indigenous communities associated with the subprojects, but also by a score of non-Indigenous communities in the region that produced fruit. These two subprojects encountered difficulties similar to those of the Mura subproject concerning the proper functioning of the machinery and experienced additional problems with regard to the long distances and poor road conditions over which the fruit had to be transported to the plant, whereby much of the fruit was damaged or spoiled before it was able to be processed into pulp.

One of the promising elements of this subproject was that Indigenous communities were cooperating with non-Indigenous communities (which were involved in ten other PD/A subprojects) within a common economic framework for the first time ever, with the additional aspect that Indigenous communities owned and operated the principal productive machinery (the pulp processing plant) rather than the other way around. This innovation, however, also brought about problems. On the one hand, the non-Indigenous communities complained about the delays and inefficiency of the

Indigenous operation of the plant, thereby creating tensions between these two groups. On the other hand, the Indigenous operators refused to sell any part of their ownership of the plant to the non-Indigenous communities and eventually decided to give preference to fruit produced by the Indigenous communities that were part of their subprojects, in the name of Indigenous self-determination, over the strong objection of the non-Indigenous users of the plant. By the end of the second subproject, relations between these two sets of communities living within the same region had been severed.

In summary, while there is nothing inherently destructive with projectism, as the cases above show, it is important for the agencies responsible for the development and implementation of subprojects to understand that the mere introduction of a subproject, whatever its stated goals may be, can indeed produce very strong, unintended sociopolitical changes in the Indigenous society which receives funding. The fact that, in order to have access to these funds, Indigenous organizations are required to 'play by the rules' of projectism, which in turn serves to make these organizations dependent upon the granting agency, may foster their political cooptation by federal government agencies. Any activity of cultural revitalization or political autonomy needs to be evaluated within the macro-context of Westernization and bureaucratization that subprojects invariably produce.

Interscientific relations: The dilemmas of knowledge production and circulation

The use of existing environmental knowledge, the production of new such knowledge and the circulation and control over both are wrenching issues that cross-cut many of the sustainable development subprojects under review here and pose a new set of problems concerning intercultural relations between Indigenous peoples and the institutions of Western science. The Convention on Biological Diversity signed at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro by over one hundred countries has served as the primary basis for discussing and legislating the access to the world's biological heritage and the related issue of the traditional knowledge associated with that heritage. With regard to biodiversity per se, there is general agreement between Western scientists and Indigenous peoples on two points: floral and faunal diversity in Amazonia is very valuable and this diversity is rapidly being destroyed. From there, a host of divergences emerge concerning the nature of its value and its use. In the case of Indigenous peoples, biodiversity represents a basic source of sustenance (in terms of food, shelter and medicine) and is used according to their respective social structures and cosmologies. In the case of the dominant Western society, biodiversity is valued economically (as a potential commodity) and its use occurs under the logic of the exclusivity of private property (such as patents).

In this context, access to Brazilian biological diversity, particularly through bioprospecting that seeks to find valuable genetic material, has generated several impasses over the past few years. Access to biological material and its collection, export and genetic modification and the patenting of these modifications raise numerous legal and ethical issues (see Dawkins 1997) that are only just beginning to be dealt with within the Brazilian public policy framework (Ministério do Meio Ambiente 2001). The fact that high rates of biological diversity exist within Brazilian Indigenous lands makes these issues all the more pressing.

All of these problems are exacerbated when the issue is access to and use of traditional Indigenous medicinal knowledge and practices. From the perspective of Western science, the study of this knowledge is in the vanguard of ethnoscientific research, as it explores the fertile intercultural space between two (or more) knowledge

systems and health practices. This perspective also argues that further research in this area is urgent due to the advanced age of many Indigenous herbalists and medicine men, thereby raising the possibility that this knowledge will be lost forever upon the death of these leaders. From an economic standpoint, bioprospectors can often encounter valuable ‘shortcuts’ to usable genetic material by gaining access to environmental knowledge of Indigenous peoples, most notably herbalists and shamans. However, from the perspective of local Indigenous communities, this process raises new and unresolved issues of intellectual property rights over this information within a national legal framework that rarely recognizes customary law and community-based knowledge.

Many of these issues have come to the fore in PD/A Indigenous subprojects, though they have played out in very different ways. Subproject 138 – “Installation of Living Pharmacies in Indigenous Territories in the State of Acre” – among the Jaminawa, Kaxinawa and Kulina groups, for example, experienced so many of these problems that it was unable to achieve the majority of its initial objectives. Designed by an NGO that works with Indigenous peoples, its activities included taped interviews with elder Indigenous herbalists from sixteen different communities, the translation of the tapes into Portuguese, the analysis and systematization of this knowledge, the collection of medicinal plants for pharmacological analysis to evaluate their therapeutic efficacy, the installation of “Living Pharmacies” (medicinal horticultural plots) in four Indigenous communities and in the training center operated by the NGO and the development of teaching materials about this knowledge to be disseminated in all of the Indigenous communities covered by the subproject. During the first year of operation, the subproject was halted by a legal injunction from the state of Acre’s attorney general’s office which claimed that the research was being conducted without the proper authorizations, including one for the export of genetic material out of the state. In all, five prior authorizations were needed for the complete operation of the subproject: one from FUNAI (for operating on Indigenous Territories), one from the federal environmental agency (for dealing with federally protected lands), one from the federal research council (for approval for a foreigner [from Argentina] to do research in Brazil) and two from the state environmental agency (one for the use of state biodiversity and the other for exporting it outside of the state).

In the initial stages of the collection and analysis of medicinal plants, members of the NGO were unable to find locally based pharmacological specialists to do the chemical analyses, so they contacted specialists in the Amazonian state of Pará who agreed to do the analyses in conjunction with a research institute in the United States which, for its part, demanded in return that at least one specimen of each studied plant be stored *ex situ* in its botanical garden. Thus, the execution of the subproject rapidly evolved into one that was exporting germ plasm outside of the country. Furthermore, due to the novelty of this type of research and the lack of a formal legal code regulating it, the issue of who the collected germ plasm belonged to was also an open question. This legal morass was just too much for the subproject to handle and this phase of collection was never implemented.

Even in the seemingly simpler matter of access to knowledge, problems arose. In this case, it was never clear to those involved who was the ‘owner’ of the knowledge that was recorded. Was it the herbalist? Or the members of the herbalist’s community? Or the herbalist’s tribe? Or the anthropologists (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who recorded and translated the information? Or the NGO that executed the subproject? Or

the PD/A Program that financed the subproject? Or was this knowledge part of the public domain? These questions placed the subproject within a second legal morass.

Subproject 138 entered into yet another sensitive area when the local communities became impatient with the long-delayed process of installing the medicinal horticultural plots due to the pressing health needs they faced. For Indigenous groups who suffer from a host of newly introduced diseases due to contact with the dominant Brazilian society, their most pressing health need may be gaining access to Western medicine to treat such diseases as malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS. As such, many younger community members, who rarely consulted the traditional herbalists, began demanding that the subproject provide for modern Western health care and drugs and indicated a strong preference for drugs that could be injected (which were considered locally to be the most effective medicine around). This demand placed the subproject in the middle of a cross-fire of accusations that had its source in the near total lack of medical attention which the federal government had the obligation to provide.

In spite of all these problems, this subproject was selected to participate in the EXPO 2000 held in Hanover, Germany, as a model project in Indigenous medicinal knowledge and practice. Independently, a German film crew sought permission (which was not granted) to produce a short video about the subproject. This strong international acclaim for the subproject reveals yet another contradiction, in which the strong interest by Western industrial countries in traditional Indigenous knowledge serves to encourage and give prestige to these types of activities while, at the same time, the myriad local, regional and national issues just outlined get ignored.

Another subproject that worked with traditional medicine, yet that had very different results, is Subproject 570 – “Incentives for the Recovery of Traditional Medicine among Indigenous Groups of the Negro River” – among a host of small Indigenous groups in the state of Amazonas. The general objective of this subproject, which was far more modest than Subproject 138, was to raise local consciousness concerning the value of traditional medicine. The activities designed to achieve this objective included the gathering of shamans and medicine men together with local Indigenous political leaders to share knowledge and the implementation of village horticultural gardens of medicinal plants in local communities. In all, several meetings were held and 20 medicinal horticultural gardens planted (some of which fell into disuse) in the span of one year. The subproject experimented no legal difficulties and was well received by local Indigenous communities, including young people.

What explains the widely divergent outcomes of two Indigenous subprojects dealing with the same theme? Subproject 570, coming three years after the start of Subproject 138, was able to learn from this prior subproject's errors, thereby indicating a type of reverse demonstrative effect. Furthermore, it did not disseminate local knowledge beyond the level of the local community, it did not involve the removal of germ plasm from Indigenous Territories lands – hence it did not require the granting of the many authorizations needed by Subproject 138 –, nor did it pose any novel legal problems over control and ownership of local knowledge. The fact that the original idea for the subproject came from local Indigenous community members, rather than from a non-Indigenous NGO, meant that the degree of support it had was strong from the start. In addition, responsibility for the execution of the subproject lay with the regional Indigenous federation that formally represented the communities, such that political control over the entire process remained within Indigenous hands. When outside expertise was needed, it was subcontracted by this Indigenous federation which maintained direct oversight of all activities conducted by outsiders. Finally, by building

an appreciation of the importance of traditional medicinal knowledge as a first step, a cultural base was established for further activity in this area.

Still other alternatives are being explored in PD/A Indigenous subprojects regarding the direct interface between Western scientific knowledge and Indigenous knowledge and reveal the enormous possibilities for the creation of new hybrid knowledge which involves an “interscientific dialogue” (Little 2002) between Indigenous knowledge systems and modern Western techniques. Subproject 137 – “Implementation of Agroforestry Management Techniques in Three Indigenous Territories” – among the Kaxinawa, Kulina, Jaminawa and Machineri groups in the state of Acre, was executed by a non-Indigenous NGO and had as its main objective the training of local Indigenous agents in agro-forestry management techniques by Western-trained ecologists and botanists who had prior experience in working with Indigenous peoples. These training sessions were based on the existing structure used by the same NGO for training of Indigenous bilingual teachers. The newly trained Indigenous agro-forestry agents then applied these techniques in their local communities, adapting and improving upon them according to local social and environmental conditions, and shared their experiences with the other Indigenous agro-forestry agents (Freschi 2004).

A second subproject (#718 “Agro-forestry Management in Indigenous Territories”) continued this first subproject for an additional three years, by which time much of the training of new agro-forestry agents was done by the initial Indigenous agents and not by outside experts. In this subproject not only was dialogue taking place between Western environmental knowledge and traditional Indigenous environmental knowledge, but also between the environmental knowledge systems of the four ethnic groups that participated in the subproject. One of the results of this multiple dialogue was the creation of many new agro-forestry management techniques that were tailored to the specific environmental needs of the communities involved. The application of this new knowledge in the local communities of the agents also permitted the testing and refinement of this knowledge and provided the community with the direct benefits of its application. Finally, the reunion of these agents to share experiences and the publishing of didactic materials partially written and totally illustrated by them served to further enrich and expand the newly created knowledge base.

In Subprojects 137 and 718 several types of control were implemented concerning the generation and use of environmental knowledge. First, it did not enter into the murky waters of Intellectual Property Rights since the knowledge was generated and applied locally to attend to the local demands of Indigenous communities. Second, the use of the knowledge was controlled by Indigenous peoples. The Indigenous agro-forestry agents were not only involved in the creation of knowledge but were also responsible for applying it. Third, a new sense of identity was established whereby the notion of extension agent, which was historically a term that referred to the one-way transfer of Western knowledge to Indigenous groups, was now occurring as an internal process. In 2002, the job of “Indigenous agroforestry agent” was incorporated into the state administrative structure as a new type of career, just as had happened earlier with the job of “Indigenous bilingual teacher.” Fourth, the exchange of knowledge between different Indigenous societies established new forms of interaction that moved intercultural relations in unprecedented directions.

Conclusions

The main goal of this article has been to understand sustainable development subprojects for Indigenous peoples in Brazilian Amazonia using the concept of

interculturality as the key heuristic device. Through an examination of several Indigenous subprojects of the PD/A Project, the intricacies and dilemmas of interculturality were explored in the two domains of sociopolitical and interscientific relations. In these conclusions, an attempt will be made to situate these dilemmas within the broader literature on development policy and local peoples. Since this volume of this literature is immense, the focus will be on the specific issue of ethnodevelopment of Indigenous peoples as it has emerged within the field of Latin American anthropology.

The initial experiences of participation of anthropologists in development projects in the 1950s and 1960s, generally undertaken within the then-reigning paradigm of modernization (Rostow 1960), were generally seen as providing needed technical assistance to peasants and other “traditional” peoples (Foster 1962). By the 1970s, however, a far more critical attitude toward development and its impacts on Indigenous peoples emerged. Two classic statements of this approach – John Bodley’s *Victims of progress* (1975) and Sheldon Davis’s *Victims of the miracle* (1977) – documented the destructive impacts of development on Indigenous peoples throughout the world and in Brazilian Amazonia, respectively. During the 1980s and 1990s, new critiques of development were launched in which the “failure” of development was announced and authors set about writing its “obituary” (see Sachs 1992). Escobar (1995) conducted a detailed, critical analysis of development as a hegemonic “regime of representation” and concluded with a call for the instauration of a “postdevelopment era.”

Indigenous peoples, however, have shown more nuanced and, at the same time, contradictory responses to development. The avid embrace of industrial goods by Indigenous peoples upon initial contacts with Western societies has been a prominent feature of interethnic relations in the Americas for centuries. And while trade for industrial goods has been a source of innumerable forms of manipulation of Indigenous peoples, one cannot overlook the fact that local demand for these goods continues to be a prime mover in the establishment of interethnic relations. Over the past two decades, anthropologists have regularly confronted the unsettling situation in which, on one hand, they may have serious doubts and strong critiques of the development process as outlined above, while on the other, the Indigenous peoples that they are working with show a strong desire to gain direct access to new technologies and industrialized products, even if this means abandoning some of their existing modes of adaptation. Throughout Brazilian Amazonia, Indigenous groups are interested in obtaining not only watches, sunglasses and radios, but also outboard motors, tractors, television sets, cell phones, camcorders, computers and airplanes. They are also demanding from the State that clinics based in Western medicine be established in their lands, that schools be built and bilingual teachers be trained for the benefit of their children, that investments in transportation infrastructure be made to better market their products and that communication infrastructure be installed to allow for direct access to Internet.

These demands, however, do not simply reflect a passive acceptance of and submission to the dictates of development. During the decade of the 1970s, indigenous peoples also began organizing around the issue of self-determination, as seen in the emergence, growth and strengthening of politicized Indigenous organizations throughout the continent. By the 1970s and early 1980s, Indigenous peoples also entered into dialogue with anthropologists and progressive sectors of the Catholic and Protestant churches in a host of continental-wide meetings (Barbados 1978, San José 1981, Panama City 1984) and began constructing an endogenous notion of “ethnodevelopment”. This concept was succinctly defined by Mexican anthropologist

Bonfil Batalla (1982) as “the autonomous capacity of a culturally differentiated society to guide its own development”. While the question of autonomy is crucial here, it is becoming increasingly difficult to define in today’s highly globalized and interdependent economy.

One recent line of ethnographic research in anthropology has attempted to address this issue by showing that local communities in all parts of the world have their own local notions of ‘development’ which are often used as the basis for the adaptation of external notions (Dahl and Rabo 1992). Sahlins (1999) has documented the intricate processes of what he calls the “indigenization of modernity” by local groups whereby traditions are constantly renewed in response to external pressures and inputs. These and other studies argue that many Indigenous peoples who are immersed in Western development do not reject it outright, in spite of its hegemonic, bureaucratic and modernizing traits, but rather place it within the context of their own agency that provides for their differential incorporation of development, even though this occurs in situations of asymmetrical power.

This brief discussion of the development literature serves as an entry point for drawing a few tentative conclusions concerning the Indigenous sustainable development subprojects under study here. The PD/A subprojects were developed at a federal level and presented as a ‘package deal’ to local Amazonian organizations, thus indicating a type of top-down imposition. Yet this view needs to be counterbalanced by the fact that the very establishment of the PD/A Project, which was not in the original proposal negotiated between the Brazilian government and the G-7 countries, resulted from demands by thirteen civil society organizations which had formed the Amazonian Working Group (GTA) for the specific purpose of pressuring the Pilot Program to be more sensitive to the needs of local Amazonian communities and which were subsequently included in the PD/A Board of Directors as voting members, thus indicating a bottom-up process of incorporation of local demands.

With regard to the technical effectiveness of the subprojects, a comparison between subprojects executed by Indigenous organizations and those administered with the mediation of non-Indigenous groups, offers inconclusive results. Of the eight subprojects operated by Indigenous groups, half functioned relatively smoothly while the remaining half were fraught with difficulties. The same mixed results are found in those eight subprojects operated by non-Indigenous organizations on behalf of Indigenous groups. Yet, as indicated earlier, this methodology sought to move beyond the mere determination of whether a subproject was a success or a failure. A subproject that did not meet its short term objectives, and hence would be classified as a failure, may have initiated processes of the training of local leaders, the establishment of dialogue with regional and national institutions, the growing awareness of local leaders concerning the need for a more active defense of their territories or the strengthening of the local Indigenous organizations and, thus, when evaluated as part of a longer, more encompassing process, could be considered to be a success.

When viewed from the perspective of the participation, empowerment and self-determination of local Indigenous people with regard to the original development of the subproject proposal and its subsequent execution, the Indigenous-run subprojects consistently achieved higher ratings when compared to their non-Indigenous-run counterparts. The fact that the PDPI Project, which began operation in 2001, requires that all subprojects be administered by Indigenous organizations – a requirement that grew out of the demands of regional Indigenous federations – attests to a policy of

giving priority to the strengthening of Indigenous organizations and their administrative capacities.

In this vein, a strong trend seems to be emerging in which new Indigenous organizations, headed by young leaders, are growing rapidly and are setting the pace for future changes in the relations between the Brazilian state and Indigenous peoples. If, on one hand, many of these organizations reveal a Western bureaucratic structure – with elected officers, written by-laws and association bank accounts –, on the other, the specific content of these organizations is moving in an ethnic direction, promoting what many are calling a new phase of ethnodevelopment. And if Indigenous peoples' willingness to apply for subproject grants indicates a desire to participate in the development process and gain direct access to its benefits, this effort also requires that they play by the rules of projectism and adopt a sustainable development discourse, even when this was not part of their lexicon.

The participation of Indigenous organizations and groups in PD/A sustainable development subprojects needs to be understood within this dynamic of give-and-take. Given the diversity of situations in which Indigenous peoples find themselves vis-à-vis the Brazilian state, the highly divergent results of the varied PD/A Indigenous subprojects reveals the complexity of intercultural relations in this new context and does not seem to lead to any necessary outcome. In other words, these subprojects are part of an open-ended process in which new types of intercultural relations are being created, whereby agency is being exercised by all of the social actors involved according to their unique needs and their respective quotas of power. While one can lament the fact that Indigenous peoples invariably find themselves in situations of unequal power relations, their political savvy tells them that such situations need to be taken as a point of departure and that they must make hard choices from the options available to them.

In this broader political framework, the Indigenous PD/A subprojects, and the new PDPI Project, are part of a process that is redirecting intercultural relations in Brazilian Amazonia. The concept of interculturality, then, refers to a continuous re-learning process on the part of both Indigenous peoples and the Brazilian state, though clearly the onus is much greater for the former since they must master an entire new set of rules and behaviors. Yet, to the degree that this is achieved, Indigenous groups, and particularly their young people, increase their possibilities to participate in and influence the very policies directed toward them by the state. Some may call this co-optation; others may call it empowerment. Once again, polarized terms do little to express the subtleties of this new intercultural situation.

Finally, these brief conclusions highlight the flexibility of public policy as opposed to the more rigid structures of law. While the 1988 Constitution heralded the arrival of a new legal moment with regard to the relations between Indigenous peoples and the Brazilian state, the specific course that these relations take are dependent upon specific public policies initiatives and the programs they generate. The Pilot Program, which combines environmental and indigenist policies in a unique way, is having a significant impact on intercultural relations and provides an important new avenue for the environmental movement to incorporate the demands of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples, for their part, are not only 'learning the ropes' of the sustainable development game, but are undertaking the difficult task of inventing new forms of ethnodevelopment. Perhaps the one thing that can be stated with some certainty is that these are heady times for intercultural relations in Brazil.

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APPENDIX:

Amazonian Indigenous Subprojects of the PD/A Project, 1996-2002

PD/A Number	Title	Name and Type of Organization	Indigenous Societies Involved	Brazilian State
031	Fruits of the Savanna	Center for Indigenist Work (non-Indigenous)	Apinayé; Canela-Apanyêkra; Gavião-Pukopyê; Guajajara; Krahô; Krikati; Tabajara	Maranhão; Tocantins
077	Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Reclaiming of Degraded Areas	Socioenvironmental Institute (non-Indigenous)	Kayapó (Xikrin do Catete)	Pará
085	Reuse of Deforested and Degraded areas	Poyanawa Agro-extractivist association (Indigenous)	Poyanawa	Acre
137	Implementation of Agro-forestry Management Techniques in Three Indigenous Territories	Pro-Indian Commission of Acre (non-Indigenous)	Jaminawa, Kaxinawa, Kulina, Machineri	Acre
138	Installation of Living Pharmacies in Indigenous Territories in the State of Acre	Pro-Indian Commission of Acre (non-Indigenous)	Jaminawa, Kaxinawa, Kulina	Acre
146	Sustainability and Territorial Occupation of the Mura People	Mura Indigenous Council (Indigenous)	Mura	Amazonas
161	Apiculture and the Industrialization of Fruits	Urubuí Cultural Group (non-Indigenous)	Various	Amazonas
261	Tykahsamo Handicraft Project	Association of Indigenous Peoples of Tumucumaque (Indigenous)	Apalai; Kaxuyana; Tiriyo; Wayana	Amapá; Pará
262	Reclaiming and Clean-up of the Waiãpi Indigenous Territory	Center for Indigenist Work (non-Indigenous)	Waiãpi	Amapá
304	Vyty-Cati: Non-predatory Alternatives for Income-generation in Local Villages	Association of Gavião Indigenous Communities of Maranhão (Indigenous)	Apinayé; Canela; Gavião; Krahô; Krikati	Maranhão; Tocantins

519	Indigenous Communities of the Middle Solimões River Project	Union of the Nations of the Middle Solimões (Indigenous)	Deni; Kambeba; Kanamary; Katukina; Kokama; Kulina; Miranha; Maku; Kaixana; Mayoruna; Ticuna	Amazonas
568	Yanomami Agro-forestry Project	Pro-Yanomami Commission (non-Indigenous)	Yanomami	Amazonas
570	Incentives for the Recovery of Traditional Medicine among Indigenous Groups of the Negro River	Federation of Indigenous Organizations of the Negro River (Indigenous)	Various	Amazonas
691	Vyty-Cati: Consolidation of Agro-extractive Practices and Fruit Processing in Local Villages (continuation of # 304)	Vyty-Cati Association of Timbira Communities of Maranhão and Tocantins (Indigenous)	Apinayé; Canela; Gavião; Krahô; Krikati	Maranhão Tocantins
718	Agro-forestry Management in Indigenous Territories (continuation of #137)	Pro-Indian Commission of Acre (non-Indigenous)	Jaminawa, Kaxinawa, Kulina, Machineri	Acre
757	Ethnodevelopment and the Training of Ticuna Managers	General Council of the Ticuna Tribe (Indigenous)	Ticuna	Amazonas

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