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THE KAYAPO REVOLT AGAINST EXTRACTIVISM:
AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALLY EQUITABLE AND
ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION¹

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ABSTRACT: Over the past decade some leaders of the Kayapo, an indigenous people of Central Brazil, enriched themselves by granting concessions to Brazilian miners and loggers to operate on Kayapo land. In late 1994, however, the Gorotire Kayapo revolted against the mining concessions their leaders had granted, and almost all of the other Kayapo communities, with the support of the Federal Police, followed their example by expelling miners and loggers from their areas in January 1995. The Kayapo are now developing alternative, environmentally sustainable sources of income. This historic development is the outcome of internal Kayapo social and political dynamics as well as non-indigenous political and economic forces.

KEYWORDS: KAYAPO, AMAZON, DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, RESISTANCE

The last two decades have seen an explosion of political resistance and ethnic self-assertiveness by indigenous peoples from all parts of Amazonia, to use that term to cover the tropical lowland regions of Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana and Surinam that form part of the Amazon drainage. This new political and cultural assertiveness of tribal peoples is a world-wide phenomenon, and clearly constitutes, to that extent, a response to developments in the world political and economic system that transcend the Amazon region itself, which are therefore beyond the scope of this paper. Within the greater Amazon area, there are many parallels among the different indigenous movements, but also significant differences. In the northern and western Amazon, large confederations, sometimes bringing together communities or regions of one ethnicity but often including distinct ethnic groups, have been organized. (Salazar 1981; Smith 1985; Chaumiel 1990) These confederations, like the Confederación Shuar, or the Brazilian COIAB (Confederação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazonia Brasileira), FOIRN (Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro) or UNI (União das Nações Indígenas), are typically run by a cadre of educated and relatively acculturated activists, often with links to missionary- or other non-governmental organizations.

In many cases, these organizations have been highly effective in their struggles for land, human rights, and development for the peoples they represent, and in the case of the multi-ethnic coalitions of Bolivia and Ecuador, have

mobilized mass movements of impressive proportions. As a generalization, however, it may be said that most of these organizations have achieved their organizational and political effectiveness by adopting essentially non-indigenous political, legal and administrative forms. At the level of their cadres and organizational procedures, they resemble organizations of non-indigenous peasants, ethnic minorities, or workers more than the political institutions and processes of the indigenous communities from which their members come. (Smith 1985)

The Kayapo of Central Brazil, by any standard one of the most politically successful Amazonian peoples, are an exception from this point of view. Their indigenous social organization possesses more differentiated political institutions and more developed forms of collective organization than most Amazonian peoples. They have drawn upon this indigenous heritage to forge their own forms of resistance and accommodation to the national society in terms of their own political institutions and dynamics. Unlike other politically active Amazonian groups, they have neither joined nor cooperated with any inter-ethnic confederation or national indigenous organization such as UNI, nor formed any western-style political association uniting the different Kayapo communities. All joint actions involving leaders and members of different communities have been on a voluntary, ad hoc basis.

Recent indigenous political assertiveness in all parts of the Amazon has been marked by several common features:

reassertion and redefinition of ethnic identity (Brown 1993; Rosengren 1987), accompanied by the revaluation and more or less creative reinvention of indigenous culture (Conklin and Graham n.d.; Jackson 1995); a somewhat ambivalent alliance with the environmentalist movement; and the prominent supportive role of local and foreign non-governmental organizations. All three of these factors have played important roles in the Kayapo events I relate in this paper. I mention them here primarily to emphasize the parallels between the Kayapo case and the wider Amazonian context. I have described the first two of these aspects of the Kayapo struggle extensively elsewhere (Turner 1989, 1991^a, 1992b, 1993b, n.d.2) and will not attempt to treat them in detail in the present paper. Nor will it be possible in the space available to discuss in detail the policies, projects and activities of the non-governmental organizations and individuals that have played significant parts in the Kayapo story; they will be mentioned only as they bear directly on Kayapo projects and activities. The more important organizations are named in note 1 of this article, or mentioned at appropriate points in the text. The same applies to the policies, projects and activities of the Brazilian government and its National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), which changed frequently during the period covered in this paper. The focus of this paper, rather, is on the Kayapo themselves. I begin with an account of the more relevant aspects of Kayapo political and social organization, and then go on to examine how they shaped, and were in turn shaped by, Kayapo relations with logging and mining, which have been the major economic modes through which regional and national Brazilian society has interacted with

the Kayapo over the past twenty years.

Kayapo social and political organization

The Kayapo are a relatively numerous Amazonian people (their population is about 4,000, with communities averaging between 200 and 400 people). Villages are autonomous political units, and tend to be separated by distances of around 100--150 kilometers. The land used by these communities has been almost completely demarcated as reserves within the past decade. The Kayapo reserves are located in the drainage of the middle reaches of the Xingu, a southern tributary of the Amazon, extending from the headwaters of the Rio Fresco in the East to the Curua in the West, and stretching from the northern frontier of the Xingu National Park northwards to just south of the town of Altamira, located near the mouth of the Xingu. The combined area of the reserves is roughly equivalent to that of Belgium.

Certain regional and political divisions are politically significant. The two northern communities of Catete and Bakaja (the former now comprising two separate villages) belong to the Tchikrin sub-group of Kayapo, which is historically, linguistically and politically distinct from the other 12 communities. The remaining Kayapo groups are more or less evenly divided between the five villages of the Kayapo Indigenous Area (Gorotire, Kikretum-Djudjetuktire, Kubenkranken, A'ukre,² and Kokraymoro), located to the east of the Xingu in the state of Para, and the six western villages of Cachoeira-Mentuktire,³ Kapot-Roykore, ^{Kubenkakre-}Menkranoti, Pukanu, Bau, and Ngokonkaket, all

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except for the last located on the West bank of the Xingu. The four former communities are located in the reserves of Kapot and Menkranoti. Bau is in the process of having its own land demarcated as a reserve. Ngokonkaket is situated directly on the east bank of the Xingu, in a strip of land that the Brazilian government promised to demarcate as Kayapo territory as this was being written (September 17, 1995). (Ropni, Megaron, Bepkum and Karapere, Western Kayapo leaders, personal communication, following their meeting with Ministry of Justice officials on that date) A fourteenth village, Karara'o, with a mixed population of only about 40 Kayapo and a number of non-Kayapo Indians, is situated to the west of the Xingu in a separate reserve of that name.

The Kayapo of the west bank of the Xingu, along with Ngokonkaket, are collectively known among the Kayapo themselves as "the people of the Xingu", while those of the east bank are called "the people of Para" (notwithstanding the fact that half of the villages of the western group are also actually located in the state of Para). The Tchikrin communities of Catete and Bakaja are not included in either of these informal groupings, and Karara'o is not normally included in the "Xingu" group. There is some political tension and rivalry between the "Xingu" and "Para" groups, primarily deriving from the relatively closer historical connections of the communities of each group to one another than to those of the opposite group, but also rooted in their different histories of contact with the national society. Most of the western ("Xingu") groups have historically had support

from the National Park of the Xingu and/or the Rain Forest Foundation, founded by the rock singer, Sting, in partnership with the "Xingu" Mentuktire leader Ropni,⁴ in 1990. In contrast, the communities of the eastern "Para" group have had little effective aid or support from the Brazilian state or private agencies.⁵

That the "Xingu" villages of Cachoeira-Mentuktire and Kapot-Roykore have spurned all concessions to Brazilian loggers and miners in their areas, while those of Para, as well as the northern "Xingu" vilages, have all allowed one or both forms of extractivism in their territories, is in large part accountable as the result of the historical support of the former by the National Park of the Xingu, and more recently by the Rain Forest Foundation. This difference in policy has been a source of considerable friction between the two groups. Their rivalry has sometimes, though not always, interfered with political cooperation on inter-communal actions and projects. It is partly responsible for the fact that the two groups have recently formed separate and independent development associations.

Kayapo social and political organization is well suited to collective mobilization for political action and economic production. Villages tend to be large: Gorotire, the largest, has a total population of 1,000. Communities consist of segmentary extended family household units, overlain by a system of communal age sets, political and ceremonial associations, the latter being

also stratified by age. There are separate but broadly parallel sets of associations for men and women. The leaders of these associations are the political leaders of the community. Each association or set "works for", i.e., under the direction of, its leader or leaders, and customarily acts as a collective unit in both secular (political and economic) and ceremonial contexts.

The tension between the consecutive social generations comprised of batchelors and young married men, on the one hand, and older married men of an age to stand in the relationship of fathers-in-law to the younger men, on the other, is the fundamental structural opposition that the Kayapo age-set system, and consequently, the Kayapo political organization that is based upon it, at once embodies and attempts to control. Kayapo myth and oral history attest that the attempt has not always been successful: communities have occasionally broken up as a result of disputes between the junior and senior age groups. This opposition between adjacent generations is symbolically, and to some extent practically, counterbalanced and neutralized by the identification of alternate generations (grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and nephews, aunts and nieces), which is the main theme of the Kayapo ceremonial system. (Turner 19⁷/~~9~~, 1984)

Communal ritual is associated with the office of chief (ben-iadjuòrò, which literally means "ceremonial chanter"). It is from the ritual function of chanting that the authority of the office is derived. In each community, one or more of the more senior age

association leaders is recognized as a ben-iadjuòrò. There is no indigenous institution of political authority above the level of the individual village. Historically, leadership has been validated by demonstrating effectiveness in going beyond the boundaries of the village community and bringing back resources or valued items from alien sources, e.g., leading long hunting-and-foraging treks through the forest or raiding the villages of other Kayapo, non-Kayapo peoples or Brazilians. After the establishment of peaceful relations, which for most extant Kayapo groups came in the 1950's, ability to extract goods and political concessions from the Brazilians became a substitute means of demonstrating leadership.

There is an inherent tension between leadership and authority in Kayapo politics. The authority of the ben-iadjuòrò is grounded in their formal office as ritual leaders of the community as a whole. Leadership is pragmatically defined by success in mobilizing and directing collective action, or action on behalf of the collectivity or some part of it; it ideally accompanies authority, but nothing guarantees that it will do so in any given case. As such, it may be exercised by individuals who lack chiefly office, while holders of chiefly authority may fail to exercise it.

With peaceful contact and intensifying interaction with regional and national Brazilian society, the nature and qualities required for leadership became more complicated, as skills essential to dealing with Brazilians (ability to speak

Portuguese, literacy, elementary arithmetic, familiarity with Brazilian administrative and economic institutions) became essential assets for leadership in the new inter-ethnic social milieu. These skills were typically acquired by younger men (often sons or nephews of senior ben-iadjuorò) sent out for schooling in Brazilian towns. They were thus relatively dissociated from both the ritual sanctions of formal chiefly office and the intra-communal processes of mobilization and support that were the normal contexts of the exercise of traditional leadership.

Kayapo complicity in environmentally destructive extractive enterprise: gold-mining and mahogany logging

Militant Kayapo pressure and vigorous political and financial support from foreign and Brazilian NGO's obliged the Brazilian government to demarcate a series of Kayapo reserves in the late 1980's and early 1990's. (Turner 1993b)

Environmentalists hailed the proclamation of these reserves in the expectation that the formidable Kayapo would defend their territory against invasion by agents of deforestation such as ranchers, settlers, miners and loggers. The latter had made major inroads in Kayapo territory before the government's official recognition of Kayapo control of their reserve areas. (Fisher 1994: 226-229) Beginning in 1990, however, a steady trickle of reports in the Brazilian and international media disclosed that Kayapo leaders were entering into contracts with logging and mining companies to operate on Kayapo lands, in return for a

percentage of the proceeds, in effect acting as collaborators and profiteers in the destruction of their own forests and rivers. Some of these stories revealed that some Kayapo leaders were using the income from these contracts to maintain lavish personal life styles in Brazilian cities far from their home villages, complete with town houses, cars, airplanes, drinking binges, Brazilian mistresses and prostitutes.

All of this aroused widespread dismay among supporters of the Kayapo and other rain forest peoples, many of whom had naively imagined the Kayapo as primitive ecologists, living in pristine harmony with their environment in principled conformity with their ancient culture. The revelation that some Kayapo were indeed aiding and abetting the logging of their own forest and the pollution of their own rivers with mercury and mud by gold miners was for many the end of the heady conjuncture of indigenous resistance and green activism that inspired the coming together of so many environmentalist and indigenist NGOs to support the Kayapo rally against the proposed Xingu hydroelectric dams at Altamira in 1989. (Turner 1989, 1991b) The defense of the Indians' right to control, and exploit, their own lands and resources, it now appeared to many, had to be seen, at least in the Kayapo case, as in contradiction rather than support of the defense of the tropical forest ecosystem. From heroes of the environmentalist movement, the Kayapo thus became villains for many environmentalists.

To understand this complex set of developments, it is

necessary to review the history of Kayapo resistance to invasions of their lands and attempts to appropriate their resources, starting from well before the time that they attained formal title to their reserves between the mid-1980's and early 1990's. Penetration of Kayapo territory by representatives of the Brazilian and world economy began before the establishment of peaceful relations with the western Kayapo groups in the 1950's (indeed, these pacifications were primarily motivated by pressures from ranchers and speculators eager to get their hands on the rich pasture lands to the west of the Xingu). Fisher (1994: 223-226) gives a useful review of this early period of contact and penetration. In the 1960's and 1970's there were scattered attempts by settlers and ranchers to move onto Kayapo land, and in 1970 the Brazilian government, in a shameful violation of its own covenants, secretly diverted the course of one of the roads of the TransAmazonica highway system, BR 080, so as to amputate the Kayapo portion of the National Park of the Xingu, which was promptly sold off to private buyers. All attempts by would-be ranchers and settlers to occupy these lands, however, were repelled by the Kayapo with considerable violence; perhaps thirty settlers, ranchers and more transient invaders (animal skin hunters, prospectors, etc.) were killed by Kayapo between 1970 and 1990, and many others were driven off by armed attacks.

The advent of logging companies eager to tap the rich stands of mahogany and other tropical hardwoods in the forests that covered much of Kayapo territory, and soon afterward also of gold

miners, however, represented a more insidious form of invasion, since although destructive of the environment, they entailed no threat of permanent settlement or occupation of land. The loggers first appeared in force in eastern Kayapo territory in the late 1970's and early 1980's; they offered small fees to the Kayapo communities that controlled the areas in which they wished to cut trees. Several logging concessions were accordingly granted by Kayapo communities, the first by chief Pombo of Kikretum in 1979, the second by Gorotire in 1981. The loggers were quickly followed by gold miners, gold having been discovered in large quantities in many areas of Southern Para. The huge open-pit gold mines of Serra Pelada and Cumaru, located near the eastern borders of Kayapo territory, were in full production, and thousands of miners were converging on the area, many looking for new sites where they could operate independently from the capital-owners who dominated the relations of production at the larger established mines. This gold rush was deliberately encouraged by the Brazilian government as a social safety valve, to divert and diffuse the acute social tensions in the region that had exploded in the guerilla movement of landless peasants in the adjacent region of the Tocantins in the 1970's.

Pombo, the first Kayapo chief to grant mining and logging concessions for a fee, was, until his death in 1993, the most fully and fluently inter-cultural Kayapo. The sole survivor of a massacre of his natal group by Brazilians when he was still a small boy, he was raised by a Brazilian family, and became a fluent speaker of Portuguese. He only returned to live with his

own people, in the village of Gorotire, as a young man. His command of Portuguese earned him an appointment as "chief" of the village by the Brazilian Indian Service (SPI). This launched him on a spectacular if erratic career as official mediator between Kayapo and Brazilians. He became in effect the prototype that was emulated by several Kayapo leaders of the next generation, who used their command of Portuguese and familiarity with Brazilian ways as a base of political influence. After leading his followers in a secession from Gorotire to found the village of Kikretum in 1976, he became the first Kayapo leader to offer concessions to gold miners to operate on his community's land. With the combined proceeds of his logging and gold revenues, Pombo acquired an airplane, town houses and a hotel in the nearby Brazilian town of Tucuman, and had the village of Kikretum rebuilt with Brazilian-style brick-and-cement-walled houses with corrugated iron or fibreglass roofs. He affected the clothes and manner of a rich regional Brazilian businessman, and liked to be addressed as "Colonel" (the local slang for "boss").

The young Kayapo leaders: mediators, pirates and/or role models?

In the 1970's, a small number of sons or sister's sons of chiefs were sent out to Brazilian schools. By the mid 1980's, they had grown into young men, most of whom were expected to succeed to the chiefly office. These young men held a virtual monopoly on the expertise in Brazilian ways necessary to deal with Brazilian businessmen, bankers and local politicians, and so to negotiate concessions for extractive activities on Kayapo land on behalf of their home communities. A rough count of the more

prominent of these young men would include perhaps six from Gorotire: Tapiet, Kuben'i, Tonkran, Pedro Aybi, and Moyko; two from Kikretum, Nikaiti and Domingos; one, Payakan, from A'ukre; one, Pangra, from Kubenkranken; and so on. Their importance as middlemen grew with the increasing volume of such activities, which of course gave them a direct interest in promoting them.

Emulating the example of "Coronel" Pombo, these young leaders established themselves in town houses in the boom town of Redencao, near the eastern frontier of the new Kayapo reserve, where they began to spend increasing amounts of time away from their villages. They acquired cars, trucks, airplanes, Brazilian servants and retainers, in sum establishments rivalling that of Pombo in Tucuman, with life-styles to match. When questioned (by me, for one) about the propriety of their life-styles, they coolly insisted that taking care of business with the Brazilians, as representatives of their communities' interests, required them to maintain appropriate establishments in a Brazilian town.

While their level of personal spending and lavish style appeared to go beyond any reasonable requirements of communal business, it should not be overlooked that these young leaders, in their guise as successful and wealthy Brazilian men about town, came to fulfill an important and unprecedented symbolic function in the evolving pattern of inter-ethnic relations comprising the social environment of the Kayapo communities of Southern Para. Probably for the first time in the history of Amazonian native peoples, individual members of indigenous

communities succeeded in establishing themselves on an equal footing with the Brazilian regional elite. Not only were they the equals of Brazilians in wealth and possessions, but in some cases they gained acceptance as politically and socially prominent members of local Brazilian society. In three cases (Puyu of Cachoeira-Mentuktire, and Tapiet and Tonkran of Gorotire), Kayapo ran successfully for the local office of vereador (town councillor), and as of this writing, one of these elected Kayapo officials (Tapiet) is serving as chair of his local town council. This social and political achievement has been important both to Kayapo and to local Brazilians in redefining the possibilities of inter-ethnic coexistence by bringing about the participation of Kayapo on equal terms at the highest levels of local society and politics.

The success of the young leaders in this respect, of course, further strengthened their prestige as leaders by traditional Kayapo standards, as persons able to bring back from non-Kayapo society not only wealth and impressive commodities like town houses and airplanes, but prestigious social honors and political offices as well. In effect, these leaders thus constituted themselves as the functional counterparts, in the modern context of regional inter-ethnic relations, of the leaders of the Kayapo raiding bands that terrorized the region fifty years ago: piratical figures who derived their cultural prestige from their prowess in capturing the valued possessions and resources of alien societies. The problem was that the analogy no longer quite fit; the society they were raiding now included their own, and they ended by plundering themselves, or at least their fellow

villagers. Their inevitable confrontation with the latter thus implied a deeper conflict over the changed meaning of "society" itself; the villagers who opposed the young leaders were doing so not because they still regarded Brazilian society in the old Kayapo way as an alien entity to be plundered with impunity, but rather because they felt the piratical policies of the leaders were damaging an economic and ecological system of which they too formed part, and were keeping them from enjoying their rightful share of the benefits of their de facto participation in that system. The conflict between young leaders and villagers may thus be understood as a pivotal moment in the Kayapos' coming to terms with the reality that they are no longer a separate and independent society, but have rather become an interdependent part of a more inclusive inter-ethnic social system.

The young leaders clearly used their control of the communal bank accounts and their delegated responsibility for negotiating contracts and concessions with Brazilian miners and loggers to enrich themselves at communal expense. They brought the young men who comprised their followings (i.e., the age-set-based groups formally identified as "working for" them) to the towns for bouts of shopping, drinking and whoring, thus securing their loyalty and complicity in their expenditures of communal funds. By such means, they built the wealth, property and expensive items of communal value such as cars, trucks and airplanes they were able to acquire into a power-base that seemed to place them effectively beyond the control of their home villages, including the senior ritual chiefs. The young leaders, meanwhile, were

careful to allocate substantial funds to personal accounts for the senior chiefs, and as the latter's close relatives, continued to act with their apparent consent as their legitimate representatives. By the late 1980's it thus appeared that the young leaders of Gorotire, and their counterparts in half-a-dozen other Kayapo villages, had definitively upstaged their aging fathers and maternal uncles, the senior ritual chiefs (ben-iadjuorò) of their communities, and come to exercise the predominant political as well as economic power in them, while the older chiefs, who still held titular authority, functioned in a primarily ceremonial capacity as figureheads.

In 1985, the Kayapo of Gorotire and Kikretum captured two large gold mines that had been illegally opened on their territory. The Brazilian government thereupon made a deal with them: it would carry out its long overdue demarcation of the territory of all five Kayapo villages of the "Para" group to the east of the Xingu as a huge Kayapo reserve ("The Kayapo Indigenous Area") which would thus include the mines themselves, and guarantee the Kayapo a low but still significant rate of return on the value of all gold produced, if they would agree to keep the mines open for another two years. The Kayapo reluctantly accepted, vowing that they would shut down the mines at the earliest opportunity. In 1987, however, the two-year period the Brazilian government had insisted the Kayapo must keep the captured gold mines open expired with no attempt to close the mines. Instead, the Gorotire and some other Kayapo communities opened new gold mines, most of them under the direct control of

the young leaders in Redencao, and gave concessions for many small groups of miners to operate within the reserve. Several of the communities also gave concessions for the logging of mahogany in their areas, which they renewed year after year, and which brought in even more money than the gold.

The new Brazilian Federal Constitution adopted in 1988 prohibits extractive activities, such as mining or the cutting of timber, by non-Indians on indigenous reserves, and requires approval of any mining activity on indigenous land by a full vote of the national Congress. There have been no such votes for any mining activity in the Kayapo area. Neither this nor the constitutional prohibition of logging in Indian areas had any noticeable effect on the volume of mining and logging in the Kayapo area for several years. Then, in early 1994, the Federal Prosecutor of Brazil (the equivalent of the U.S. Attorney General), attempting to enforce the constitutional provisions against mining and logging on Indian land, announced that he would order the expulsion of all loggers and miners from Kayapo land, annulling all contracts between them and Kayapo communities. The Prosecutor's initiative, however, remained stillborn in the face of Kayapo threats to resist with armed force any attempt by police to enforce his order inside their territory. Kayapo leaders demanded that they be allowed to keep on with the mining and logging concessions to pay for the medical and other services the Federal government, in default of its own legal responsibilities, had ceased to provide. Some made the stronger claim that their right to their own land should mean

that they had the right to do with its resources what they pleased, including cutting down and selling off their forests if they so chose. Kayapo intransigence--some said, Kayapo greed--seemed to have brought both environmentalist values and the Brazilian Constitution to a standstill.

A factor favoring the letting of concessions was the cancellation by the Brazilian government of all forms of aid to indigenous communities, including medical care and education, from the beginning of the Collor regime in 1990. Kayapo leaders argued that they therefore had no choice but to deal with the miners and loggers in order to satisfy their communities' basic needs for medicine and other essential services, such as education. This argument, however, was at least partly hypocritical. The medical needs of Kayapo communities could be met with far less money than was brought in by the gold and timber contracts, and it is unfortunately true that these needs actually often went unmet as the money from the contracts was spent on more personal and less essential items.

Meanwhile, the booming economy of Southern Para state flourished, based in large part on the illegal mining and logging in Kayapo areas (for general background on the Para gold rush and logging boom, and the related development of the Carajas mining project, see Cleary 1990, Schmink and Wood 1992, and Fisher 1994:226-228). The common villagers continued to live in poverty, suffering the effects of increasing environmental degradation: the destruction of forest hunting and gathering resources by

logging activities and the pollution of rivers by gold miners, whose Placer techniques cause the flooding of large areas which rapidly become incubators for malarial mosquitoes. Even more seriously, Placer mining makes heavy use of mercury, which is discharged into the rivers and poisons both their water and fish. Several of the principal rivers and streams of Kayapo country have become dangerously polluted, their fish inedible, and many Kayapo now show dangerously high levels of mercury contamination. Most disturbing, pregnant women at Gorotire and Kikretum show high levels of contamination, and difficulties of pregnancy and birth defects have begun to appear. (Gonçalves 1994; Ferrari et al. 1993a, 1993b; Gonçalves et al. 1992, 1993) FUNAI agents, NGO representatives, anthropologists, public health workers, and some of their own senior chiefs repeatedly explained to the people of Gorotire and the other villages involved in the gold concessions the nature of the danger and warned against the cumulative effects of continued gold mining using the mercury-based Placer technique, all to no apparent avail.

There remained important differences both between and within the various Kayapo communities with respect to their policies towards extractivism. Kapot-Roykore and Cachoeira-Mentuktire never allowed either logging or mining in their areas. Some villages, like Catete, Kubenkranken, A'ukre, Kokraymoro, and Menkranoti, allowed logging but either refused to permit gold mining or simply failed to find enough gold on their land to make it worth while. Within at least some of the communities which allowed both types of extraction, (Gorotire, Kikretum, Bakaja,

Pukanu and Bau) opinion was divided as to whether the often fluctuating and uncertain income from the mines was worth the cost in pollution, malaria and ecological damage. Pukanu, for example, broke off its contract with its gold miners in 1993. Support for the mining and logging came unevenly from different groups of the population. Many senior men remained indifferent or opposed. Women seemed divided along the same age lines of age and marital status as men. The strongest support seemed generally to come from bachelor youths and young married men, eager to advance themselves by emulating Brazilian life-styles as a short-cut to the prestige otherwise attainable only through the slow process of rising to senior status in the traditional system of age-grades. Young women, the fiancées or wives of these men, generally seemed to support their views. Such men, attracted by Western commodities and life-styles, demanded that their leaders do whatever possible to make them available, and only gold and mahogany could provide income on a scale capable of satisfying their demands. Surprisingly, however, it was in this same age group that the most determined opposition to both forms of extractivism developed.

The Gorotire revolt and the expulsion of miners and loggers from Kayapo territory, September-December 1994

Even as the young leaders continued to perform vital functions as inter-ethnic and inter-cultural mediators, they, and their policy of continuing the mining and logging concessions, became the objects of steadily mounting resistance by a wholly unprecedented conjuncture of social and political forces in the

villages. This opposition finally exploded in the Autumn of 1994 in the key village of Gorotire, the largest of the Kayapo communities and the one, together with its offshoot, Kikretum-Djudjetuktire, with the longest and most intensive experience of both logging and mining.

Resentment had steadily built up in villages like Gorotire, Kikretum, A'ukre and Catete against the way the young leaders appeared to be using their role as inter-cultural mediators to constitute themselves as a new class, able to control and divert to themselves most of the benefits and power accruing from the new economic dealings with the Brazilians, while leaving relatively little for their fellow villagers. The discontented included mature adults, who felt it difficult to protest because of their lack of inter-cultural skills commensurate with those of the young leaders, on the one hand, and the senior chiefs' apparent continued support of them, on the other. Growing numbers of younger men and women, however, who had acquired the same basic skills and experience of Brazilian ways as the young leaders of the previous generation, saw no reason to defer to them on this account, and were becoming increasingly critical of their conduct of affairs. Most of those in this group were ordinary villagers with no special kinship to the chiefs. Many of them had managed to get one or two years of schooling in the classes sporadically taught by FUNAI or missionary teachers at Gorotire or one of the other Kayapo villages. Perhaps a dozen of the younger Gorotire men in this group had had direct experience of work in the gold mines. They had seen at first hand how the

Brazilian miners were robbing the Kayapo by concealing a large proportion of the gold they extracted, thus paying the ten per cent. nominally owed to the Kayapo on only a fraction of their total production. These young ex-miners formed the nucleus of the ensuing protest. It was not only the young commoners, however, who had become alienated from the extractive concessions; the old Gorotire chiefs, Kanhonk and Toto'i, too, had become terminally disillusioned by the failure of both mining and logging to deliver the promised benefits to themselves and their community. Alternate generations were drawing closer to each other in common opposition to the policies of the middle generation of young leaders.

At Gorotire, these currents of unrest gathered force until they crystallized into a political movement with the strength to force a reversal of communal policy toward the mining and logging concessions. In August 1994, the men of Gorotire embarked on a collective hunting trek, as a normal part of a communal naming ceremony. As is customary on such occasions, the bachelor youths and recently married fathers acted as collective units, functioning separately from the older men. While the senior men were off hunting, the younger men met together to discuss the logging and mining contracts. Many of them had become opposed to both forms of extractive activity, partly because of their effects on the environment and communal health, but above all because they, and the community as a whole, were seeing too little of the benefits the contracts had been supposed to bring. Those who had actually worked in the gold mines alongside

Brazilian miners and had seen with their own eyes how much wealth the Brazilians were taking out of their land, and how little they were giving back, were the most strongly opposed to the concessions.

Two of these young ex-miners, Mekango and Beti, took the lead in urging the immediate abrogation of all mining and logging concessions. They carried the day in the young men's meeting. The young men in a body then confronted the senior men when they returned to the camp. One of the senior chiefs, Kanhonk, was present, and he and the rest of the older men resolved to support the younger men. All the men left the hunting camp and marched directly to the main Gorotire gold mine of Santidio, where almost 3,000 Brazilian miners were then working. The Kayapo assaulted the mine, burned down the miners' shelters, broke their machines and threw them in the flooded pits they had dug into the landscape. They drove out the terrified and unresisting miners, who were obliged to walk 75 kilometers to the nearest roadhead. The two young Kayapo ex-miners who led the protest, however, dreading the miners' vengeance, went into hiding in the forest, and are still there as of this writing .

Most of the angry and bewildered miners made their way back to Redencao, where 2,000 of them camped on the central boulevard of the town and commenced intimidating the citizens, threatening to burn down the offices of FUNAI and calling on the mayor to help them get back into the reserve if he valued the peace of his city. Meanwhile, the Gorotire returned to their village, where

they immediately obtained the support of the other senior chief, Toto'i, for their demands that the mining of gold should cease forthwith, and all miners be expelled from their territory. The two senior chiefs, with the united backing of the villagers, ordered the younger leaders, their own sons and nephews, to cancel the contracts they had negotiated. The young leaders, who might have resisted either the authority of the senior chiefs if unsupported by an aroused populace, or the demands of a mob of villagers unsanctioned by chiefly authority, bowed to the combination of authority and power they jointly constituted, and reluctantly carried out the senior chiefs' orders.

The political and environmental implications of the Gorotire action were swiftly realized by the Kayapo themselves in the dramatic events that immediately followed the expulsion of the gold miners. As the miners camped in the middle of Redencao, threatening civil disorder if they were not swiftly returned to their mines on Kayapo land, the Prefect (mayor) of the city, who himself owned an illegal gold-mining concession in Kayapo land, helped the main gold-buying company of the city to buy up the debts of the young Gorotire leaders who lived in the town. These debts, in the name of the community of Gorotire but in fact almost entirely the personal debts of the four leaders in question, came to the staggering sum of over \$220,000.00. The Prefect and the company confronted the young leaders who had carried out the order to abrogate the contracts and offered a deal. The company would pay off the debt (at an undisclosed rate estimated by knowledgeable Brazilian informants as a few cents on

the dollar) if the community would permit the miners to return for six more months. If the community did not agree, the company threatened to foreclose on the debt, which the community would not be able to pay off without the revenues from the mining concessions. The credit of the village as a whole was thus held hostage to the profligate life styles of its "representatives," the young leaders, who now once again switched roles and became the emissaries of the gold miners and buyers to persuade the chiefs and people of their community to reverse their decision. With great reluctance, the chiefs and the community accepted the deal. It seemed the miners and their backers had won.

At this juncture, however, the Prefect was defeated for reelection, removing the major local political support for the miners' efforts to resume their operations in the Kayapo reserve, and the Federal Prosecutor announced that he would resume his campaign to enforce the expulsion of both miners and loggers from all of Kayapo territory, beginning on December 15. With the example of the Gorotire revolt against the miners before them, and considerable support in many of their own communities for the Gorotire movement, even communities and leaders who still had profitable dealings with loggers and/or miners now supported terminating the contracts. With air transportation provided by the Indian Agency (FUNAI), leaders from all the Kayapo villages met on December 10 in Redencao with representatives of the Federal Prosecutor, the Federal Police, and the Federal government's Insitute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA). Ironically, the meeting was held at the town

house of one of the young Gorotire leaders, Tapiet, whose telephone had been cut off to forestall his running up any more bills. The result of the meeting was a unanimous decision by the Kayapo chiefs to expel all miners and loggers, and terminate all mining and logging concessions on Kayapo land.

Alternative relations of alternative production: the new associations

This decision was implemented in January-February 1995 by the Federal Police in all areas save Bau and Bakaja. As some of the big saw mills of Redencao declared bankruptcy, gold-buying companies closed their doors, and Redencao plunged into economic depression, the judge of a Federal Court ruled that all of the illegally cut mahogany seized during the expulsion of the loggers would be sold at auction, and the proceeds (which should amount to several million dollars) turned over to the Kayapo. The judge specified that only duly constituted Kayapo communal associations and their projects would qualify to receive this money (i.e., voluntary associations with properly drawn-up "statutes" or by-laws legally registered with the municipality in which their offices are located). It would not, in other words, simply be handed out directly to community leaders, thus risking the creation of a new generation of "Coronel Pombos". The actual distribution of the funds would be administered by FUNAI, under the inspection of qualified non-governmental organizations such as the Instituto Socio-Ambiental.

As it happened, the Kayapo had already begun organizing such

associations, both at the single-community and inter-communal levels. The first of the new inter-communal associations was the Associação Ipreñre, founded in 1993 under the leadership of Megaron Txukarramae, a Mentuktire Kayapo who was then the director of the National Park of the Xingu. The new association, named for a mythical Kayapo culture hero, established a Center for Indigenous Video and Imagery to house a Japanese gift of video equipment, and also committed itself to undertake various projects for generating income through ecologically sustainable production of wild and domesticated agricultural products. After this promising start, however, it failed to attract further funding for these projects, and appeared to languish for the next two years. In March 1995, however, it reorganized itself and launched a major project for the construction of a center for ecotourism at a site on the east bank of the Xingu. The reorganization meeting took place at the village of Mentuktire, and was attended by members of the five Kayapo villages from the west bank of the Xingu: Mentuktire, Kapot, Pukanu, Menkranoti, and Bau. Officers were duly elected, one from each village. (Turner 1995a) A revised statute of by-laws was adopted and subsequently registered, and construction on the ecotourism site was begun immediately afterward, funded by income from fares at the Xingu ferry crossing (which the Mentuktire run), and the rents from ranches established on their land before it became a reserve, which they have taken over and now rent out. When I visited this site in September 1995, construction had been virtually completed, and it appeared that it could soon be ready to receive paying guests.

The cutoff of income from mining and logging greatly intensified interest in alternative sources of income among other Kayapo communities, especially in sustainable production of forest products. (Espirito Santo 1995a) They soon learned that legally constituted associations are necessary to receive many kinds of grants of financial and other types of support. The example of the Iprene Association with its Japanese support was one source of this knowledge, but there were others. The G7 have allocated a large sum for indigenous land demarcation and development in the Amazon, but G7 representatives in Brasilia informed Kayapo leaders that they can only have access to this money through associations, rather than simply as community leaders. There was also the previously reported decision of the Brazilian court supervising the auction of illegally cut mahogany seized by the Federal Police that the proceeds could be paid only to duly constituted Kayapo development associations, rather than individual communities or leaders as such.

These developments gave a powerful incentive to other Kayapo communities to emulate the example of the Iprene Association. In August 1995, the five eastern communities of the Area Indidgena Kayapo in Para met and established the "Pukatoti Associação Kamokore", a near clone of the western Iprene Association. Like the latter, the new association announced that it will undertake sustainable production of wild forest products, the marketing of processed garden crops such as tapioca starch and dried bananas, and ecotourism. Although committed in principle to implementing such projects at the inter-communal level, the Association is

beginning by initiating projects at the individual village level: at Gorotire, production of cumaru and copaiba, both wild forest products, is scheduled to begin in the coming rainy season.

It is significant that all five of the newly elected officers of the Pukatoti-Kamokore Association, and all but one of the officers of the Iprene Association, are under thirty. (Espirito Santo 1995b) Equally significantly, none of the previous generation of "young leaders" at Gorotire or the other villages from which the membership of the Pukatoti-Kamokore Association is drawn have had anything to do with the new association. They did not attend its organization meetings, took no part in the selection of its board of directors, and have shown ostentatious disinterest in its projects. (Destro Junior, personal communication) Taking account of this inter-generational rivalry, the two senior chiefs of Gorotire have appointed two new chiefs (one son of each senior chief), of the same age as the young activists of the Association, to lead the work parties that will execute its projects, thus bringing them within the traditional structure of authority of the community and sheltering them from obstruction or interference from the older "young leaders". Among the Xingu Kayapo of the Associação Iprene, no such overt institutional arrangements have been necessary, doubtless in large part because the key communities of Cachoeira-Mentuktire and Kapot-Roykore, who provided the principal impetus for the formation of the new association, never permitted logging or mining and thus avoided the economically intensified inter-generational conflict that developed in the eastern villages like

Gorotire. Even at Cachoeira-Mentuktire, however, I found that some leading middle-aged men like Bedjai, who runs the Xingu ferry, was scornful of the Association and its younger enthusiasts, pointing out that he had not seen any of them volunteering to help with the real work of running the ferry.

Some individual Kayapo communities had already organized development companies or associations before, or contemporary with and independently of, the two inter-communal associations just described. A'ukre and Pukanu had formed "trading companies" to carry on the production of Brazil nut oil under contract with The Body Shop, a British cosmetics manufacturer (the A'ukre project, legally incorporated as the A'ukre Trading Company, began in 1990; the Pukanu project started in 1992, but Pukanu had still not legally incorporated its production project as a trading company as of this writing). (Turner n.d.1) The village of Catete formed its own association for sustainable development projects, the Associação Bep-Noi, in late 1994, as will be described below. (Giannini n.d.) The final, ironic result of the Kayapo collaboration with illegal, environmentally destructive Brazilian business was thus the stimulation of new political associations that may become a force for environmentally sustainable, self-directed Kayapo revenue producing enterprises.

The case of Catete is especially significant because it shows close parallels with what happened at Gorotire. Like Gorotire, Catete had been deeply involved in logging contracts. Heavy logging began in 1989, and rapidly devastated large areas

of the Catete forest. In 1990, a team from the Brazilian non-governmental organization CEDI arrived to propose to the villagers an alternative scheme of forest management, with technical advice from forestry engineers of the University of Sao Paulo School of Forestry. The alternative project was supported by the senior chiefs, who resented the logging, which had been negotiated as at Gorotire by younger leaders. (Gianninni n.d.) The half-dozen villagers who identified themselves most enthusiastically with the project and worked most closely with the CEDI team, however, were younger men in their twenties. The anthropologist and forestry experts who comprised the project team continually engaged the villagers in collective discussions of the need for a rational forest management plan, and the financial losses and environmental damage being done by the commercial logging then under way. In 1990, the community decided to expel the loggers, but a few months later, younger leaders succeeded in renewing the contract with the logging company. Finally, in 1992, the villagers, with the support of the older chiefs, called for an abrogation of the logging contracts, which had been negotiated by one of the younger chiefs and were due for renewal. (Gianninni n.d.) When this individual attempted to leave the village to return to the Brazilian town of Tucuman, where he was to meet with the logging company to renew the contract, the villagers physically restrained him, holding his plane on the landing strip. They not only obliged him to remain in the village, thus preventing the renewal of the logging contracts, but they later made him the president of the new community development association (Associação Bep-Noi) which they organized

to implement alternative projects for generating income through sustainable production of forest products. (Gianninni, personal communication) This is a traditional Kayapo solution to the political clash of contradictory factions: avoid overt polarization by obliging the "leader" of the opposing faction to identify with the ascendant consensual position.

Wider implications

The political situation at Gorotire that I have described contains in microcosm all the elements present, in differing combinations, in the other Kayapo communities. While not all Kayapo communities have participated equally in the processes and events I have described, it is significant that key communities in each of the three main Kayapo areas (Gorotire among the eastern "Para" group of villages, Mentuktire in the western, "Xingu" group, and Catete in the Tchikrin group) have gone through broadly parallel or at least convergent processes. It is also significant that the other communities, at least in the two main "Xingu" and "Para" regions, have followed their lead on the key points of ending extractive concessions and joining in the new associations.

As at Gorotire, Kayapo elsewhere are divided over the desirability of returning to the easy and bountiful, if short-lived and ecologically destructive, source of income represented by the mining and logging concessions. It is likely that if the new alternative projects and associations now being tried fail to bring in a satisfactory level of income, pressure to return to

the old ways will mount and in some places become irresistible. At the time of writing, however, nine months after the expulsion of miners and loggers from Kayapo territory by Federal Police, mining activity has been resumed to my knowledge at only three places: the Gorotire mine of Santidio (albeit on a vastly reduced scale: 35 miners in contrast to the previous number of 3,000, on the pretext of instructing a small group of Kayapo how to mine); the Gorotire frontier post of Nhakinh (personally controlled by Tapiet, the young Gorotire leader most deeply involved with the previous mining concessions); and the small Tchikrin community of Bakaja. Some mining also continues in Bau, the one Kayapo area not yet demarcated at the time of writing because of the violent opposition of miners and ranchers operating in the area. I expect that this will be suppressed now that the Federal government has renewed its promise to the Kayapo to complete the demarcation (personal communication from Kayapo leaders cited above). Logging has also effectively ceased everywhere except at the one Gorotire frontier post of Purure, which is under the personal control of the most powerful of the Gorotire "young leaders", Kuben'i. In sum, a politically, economically, and ecologically significant cessation of socially and environmentally destructive extractive activities has been brought about in Kayapo country. Giving due credit to the Federal Police, the Federal Prosecutor's Office, assorted non-governmental organizations, and FUNAI, it must be recognized that this pause is primarily the result of political decisions and actions by the Kayapo themselves.

The successful assertion of communal control over the young

leaders who had parlayed their skills as inter-cultural mediators into political and economic dominance in the community was the prerequisite of beginning to reverse the ecological and social damage caused by the mining and logging contracts they had made the basis of their life styles and leadership. The alliance between senior traditional chiefs and the new movement of "class" protest led by young men in their twenties through which the Kayapo of Gorotire succeeded in curbing the power of these younger leaders and reversing their policies took shape along the lines of opposition between consecutive generations, and compensatory alliance between alternate generations, that continue to constitute the fundamental dynamic of indigenous Kayapo politics. That the younger men chose the traditional organizational framework of a collective ceremonial hunt organized by age-sets as the setting for their political coup is indicative of the continuing vitality of the indigenous social and ritual structure which gives meaning to this political dynamic. The Kayapo case thus suggests that traditional institutional structures of political and ritual authority may continue to play a vital and constructive role in the struggle of indigenous peoples to forge innovative social and political solutions to the problems of inter-ethnic coexistence and capitalist environmental exploitation.

Notes

1. This paper is based on field work carried out on numerous visits to the Kayapo between 1989 and 1995. These trips included extensive cooperation with Brazilian non-governmental indigenous

support organizations: the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista, the Centro Ecumenico de Documentação e Informação, the Núcleo de Direitos Indigenas, the Instituto Socio-Ambiental, which was formed through a union of the latter two in 1994; and the Fundação Mata Virgem and its successor, the Associação pela Vida e Ambiente. On my most recent trip, in August and September 1995, I also worked closely with the Departamento do Patrimonio Indigena of the National Foundation for the Indian (FUNAI). My field trips have been funded by the Center for Latin American Studies of the University of Chicago, the Lichtstern Fund of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Chicago, The Spencer Foundation, Granada Television International, the Instituto Socio-Ambiental of Brasilia and São Paulo, and the Brazil Project of Conservation International, under the direction of Dr. Barbara Zimmerman.

I am extremely indebted to the four reviewers of the draft of this article for their careful critical reading and many valuable comments and suggestions, which not only led to a thorough revision of the manuscript but suggested useful points for investigation on my most recent field trip.

2. The village of A'ukre split as the result of a dispute between leaders in July 1995. The majority of its people left to found a new village not far away called Moykarako, where they were joined by a smaller group from the village of Kubenkranken. At this writing it remains uncertain if this new village will continue its separate existence, or if so, if the parent community of A'ukre, now reduced to a small remnant, will survive.

3. Hyphenated village names indicate a transition currently under way from a name previously in use, by which the village is still generally known and marked on maps, and a new name the community has recently adopted.
4. The Rainforest Foundation was represented in Brazil until 1994 by the Fundação Mata Virgem, which was replaced in that year by the Associação pela Vida e Ambiente.
5. A partial exception since 1990 is the village of A'ukre, which has been the site of community development projects funded by The Body Shop and Conservation International, under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Zimmerman.

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