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Legalizing Indigenous Identities: The Tapeba Struggle for Land and Schools in Caucaia, Brazil

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Resumen

Em cerca de duas décadas os Tapeba passaram de um grupo sem atenção estatal, pobres, sem escolas e aculturados para a de indígenas sujeitos de direitos e protegidos pelo estado brasileiro. Esta possibilidade não chegou de uma só vez: em meados da decada de 1980 a Teologia da Libertação, na decada de 1990 a escola diferenciada e, em seguida, a implementação da política educacional. Num primeiro momento a transformação da identificação e do lugar político ocupado tornou-se possível com o apoio de missionários adeptos da Teologia da Libertação, que incentivaram a identificação da população como indígena como uma possibilidade para alcançar direitos, em especial terra, saúde e educação. No entanto, as desconfianças em relação a identidade persistiram e marcaram todo o processo de luta pela terra. Os índios, mais uma vez, entraram na batalha para produção de evidências para o reconhecimento. Um grupo pequeno de lideranças formulou a linguagem de reivindicação das escolas diferenciadas que insistiu na necessidade de exibição pública da cultura e no ensino da identificação para crianças. Esta estratégia articulou as identidades a campos de poder mais amplos que o da luta fundiária na medida em que as lideranças formularam um discurso conectando o problema da auto-identificação com a disposição do estado em atender demandas estabelecidas com base na diferença cultural num momento em que cresceu a importância mundial da escolarização de crianças como agentes centrais para o crescimento econômico e a internacionalização dos direitos indígenas. [Identidades étnico-raciales, Escuelas indígenas, Ley]

Abstract

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In about two decades, the Tapeba went from being a poor, acculturated, schoolless, state-forsaken group to rights-bearing, federally protected indigenous subjects. This transformation unfolded gradually: in the mid-1980s, through the support of liberation theology; in the 1990s, with the establishment of differentiate schools, and then the implementation of education policy. Early recognition by missionaries and followers of liberation theology stimulated indigenous identification of the Tapeba population as a possibility for attaining rights, especially land, health, and education. Suspicion toward their identity persisted, however, and marked the whole process of land struggle. The indians, in response, stepped into battle to produce evidence-supporting recognition of their identity. A small leadership group devised the language for claiming need of differentiated schools, insisting also on public exhibition of indigenous culture and teaching indigenous identification for children. This strategy articulated identities to fields of power broader than that of land struggle. Leaders formulated a discourse linking self-identification to state responses to demands based on cultural difference, and increased global recognition of the importance of children as educated subjects and central agents in economic growth and the internationalization of indigenous rights. [Ethnoracial Identity, Indigenous Schools, Law]

This article analyzes how a certain people endowed with multiple identities (Tapeba, black, indian, poor, slum-dwellers, among others) became, over two distinct moments, recognized as an indigenous population. During the first, indigenous identity was articulated to land rights in the context of liberation theology. Next, it intensified through links to struggles for indigenous schools, knowledge of national legislation by teachers and leaders, and implementing educational policy. With both, indigenous identity emerged as eminently processual, as well as embedded in specific historical, legal, and political contexts. In contrast to authors focusing the debate on land issues, I explore the dynamics of ethnic recognition as emerging from the struggle for both land and schools.

The Tapeba comprise a group of 6,542 individuals (FUNAI [Barreto Filho 2006]) distributed across several sites[1] in Caucaia, a municipality located 20 kilometers west of Fortaleza, capital of the northeast Brazilian state of Ceará. Caucaia has 325,441 inhabitants and, together with 13 more cities, constitutes a major demographic cluster of 3,610,379 inhabitants (IBGE 2010) in the Metropolitan Area of Fortaleza. In Ceará, historical records of indigenous presence were abundant until the mid–19th century (Barreto Filho 1992). After this time, the absence of indians, as well as the undervisibility of black people, came to be taken for granted by historiographers and public agencies. It also strongly marks accounts of journalists, artists, and intellectuals representing the *Cearense*, the name given to the individual born in this state, and is attributed to

miscegenation between Portuguese colonizers and indians. Although the northeast became commonly recognized as a Brazilian region of few indians, there began a clear process of indigenous mobilization in the mid–20th century (Pacheco de Oliveira 1999).

No known record of the Tapeba exists in the ethnological literature or historical documents (Barreto Filho 1992; Nobre 2000). According to Nobre (2000), information about this group first emerged in the 1950s when individuals from their community attended a market at a public square in Fortaleza. At the end of the 1960s, two national newspapers published articles about indians in Ceará. One entitled "Indian in Ceará is not even a Citizen" described them as "without schools" and lacking "religious education" (*Jornal do Brasil* 1968). Another revealed they "have no land and no one inside the government that cares about them" (*Estado de São Paulo* 1969). Then, almost two decades later, in the mid-1980s, the Tapeba returned to the headlines when a member of the Catholic Church became acquainted with what were commonly known as "miserable" and "remaining indians" of Caucaia. Since then, they have been included in the political agendas of missionaries, government officials, representatives of nonprofit organizations, and have been the subject of numerous journalistic and research articles.

To analyze the process of indigenous identification, I employ the notion of *articulation* (Clifford 2001; Hall 1996; Li 2000) as emerging from two processes: "making a collective identity, position, or set of interests explicit and comprehensible to an audience" and "linking that position towards achieving definite political ends" (Kjosavik 2006:2). These theoretical positions lend insight into the circumstances under which this population's identity became articulated and understood in coherent terms, that is, as the meeting of distinct ideological elements and connected at a certain conjuncture of social forces (Hall 1986). Beyond construing identities as inhering fixed meanings or as instrumentalized for achieving material benefits, I argue that the self-identification of the Tapeba as an indigenous group is not natural, unavoidable nor simply invented, adopted, or imposed, but as Li says, a "positioning which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes and repertoires of meaning and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle" in which the conjuncture "at which (some) people come to identify themselves as indigenous people (. . .) are the contingent products of agency and the cultural and political work of *articulation*" (2000:151; Aires 2008).

Within the framework of articulation, I seek to explore French's (2009) concept of legalizing identities, or, "the process by which national legal and political institutions interact with local identity transformation" (5). French maintains that for a population to self-identify as indigenous, there must first exist a corpus of

particular laws protecting and regulating rights. Two dimensions of this process interest me: how an oppressed group "invoke[s] rights based on newly codified legal identities" (13) and reconfigures cultural practices "considered at first to be nothing more than evidence for legal recognition, operated to consolidate new self-conceptions" (133). Laws have indeed been vital to the identification, verification, and recategorization of the Tapeba as an indigenous group by the Catholic laity, anthropologists, lawyers, and journalists and the dissemination of legal knowledge to indigenous communities. My analysis of such practices of propagation emerges from the perspective of governmentality; that is, a form of power in which distinct "institutions, procedures, analysis and reflections, calculations and tactics" (Foucault 1979:292–293; see also French 2009:6–10) encourages rights claims based upon a legally codified identity.

The first part of the article connects the identification of the Tapeba as an indigenous group to the work of Catholic missionaries and laity who promoted the cause of land struggle in Ceará. This effort invoked the expanded definition of the indian under Brazilian law, opening possibilities for so-called acculturated groups to reconfigure their cultural practices so that they could gain recognition as indians. As compared to other forms of political mobilization, it presented an alternative and opportunity (French 2009) by which leaders used the school as a central element for recognition in the context of land struggle. The second part analyzes the intensification of indigenous identification as an outcome of its links to the struggle for schools, legislation, and educational policy. This made possible a specific lexicon for identity claims arising from legal texts and official documents, which, in turn, brought the development of Tapeba cultural denominators, exhibited in public and practiced in private, responsible for producing uniformity in meanings around the struggle for social rights and the broadening of recognition (Fraser 2007).

The ethnographic situation described here emerged from field research conducted among the Tapeba in late 1998 and early 1999. Later, until 2009, I observed teacher education courses, and meetings and events on indigenous education in Ceará and Brasília. In this, my interview subjects ranged from representatives of government agencies, collaborators (educators, anthropologists, lawyers), representatives of the Tremembé Mission and Indigenous Missionary Council, lawyers from the Archdiocese of Fortaleza, and former members of the Advisory Staff for Rural Communities of the Catholic Church. Additionally, in recent years I have followed the public mobilization of teachers, maintained dialogues with Tapeba and other indigenous educators and indigenous leaders in Ceará, and consulted documents from the State Secretariat of Basic Education (SEDUC), State Education Council (CEC), Public Ministry, and National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), as well as personal files of activists, and Catholic Church, Ministry of Education (MEC), Tremembé Mission (AMIT), and newspaper archives.

Indigenous Identity Formation: The Struggle for Land and Schools

Church and Indigenous Rights: The Arrival of Liberation Theology in Ceará

Under inspiration of liberation theology, Dom Aloísio Lorscheider and José Cordeiro de Oliveira—an important cardinal and a Catholic layman, respectively—informed the Tapeba that the struggle for land could be formulated as indigenous mobilization. This was possible because national legislation, especially the Indian Statute (1973),[2] expanded the definition of indian in Brazil to include a combination of subjective criteria and differentiating cultural features (French 2009).

In Ceará, liberation theology was established as a model for action by the Catholic Church under Dom Aloísio Lorscheider. Dom Aloísio, as he was known, was named Archbishop of Fortaleza by Pope Paul VI and arrived at Ceará's capital in the early of the 1970s following a remarkable career of high-ranking positions occupied in the Catholic Church.[3] In 1962, he was named bishop of a country town of German immigrants in South Brazil, his native region. He soon occupied prominent positions in the Vatican Council II (1962–1965) and the Medellin Conference (1968). These convocations changed Church relations with the contemporary world (Montero 1995) and instituted, as a symbol of ecclesiastic insertion in Latin America, the "preferential option for the poor" and a larger participation of laity in the institution.

By interacting with the poor of Ceará, Dom Aloísio experienced a "conversion" to the "people." This, in association with transformations undergone by the Church, led him to organize upon his arrival at the capital the Basic Education Movement (MEB), which later became the Advisory Staff for Rural Communities. He consulted Fortaleza-born Dom Helder Câmara, Archbishop of Recife (capital of the northeast state of Pernambuco), who referred him to two militants of the Agrarian Catholic Youth, Cordeiro de Oliveira and his wife, Maria do Carmo Oliveira. They came to Ceará to coordinate the MEB and, subsequently, technical and political support for rural workers.

Cordeiro and his wife became Dom Aloísio's confidantes and respected by both the clergy and the laity of the Archdiocese. They coordinated important social projects for rural workers using financial resources obtained abroad under the cardinal's international prestige. In the mid-1980s, Cordeiro started a line of action with a population living on the banks of the Ceará River forming a boundary between Fortaleza and Caucaia. Referring to these people as "miserables" and "remaining indians," he focused on a group of Tapeba families and rural workers from Pontes, a locality struck by a three-year drought. Cordeiro provided material assistance here and expanded work opportunities in other localities, generating income for the purchase and donation of food, construction of houses, health care, and payment assistance for funerals. An instance of the latter occurred with

the death of Vítor Alves Teixeira on October 3, 1984, when the Church helped buy the coffin and made his burial a public event with a mass celebrated by Dom Aloísio. The day of Teixeira's death was established as Tapeba Indian Day, and the deceased as "the last *cacique*" (a native indian chief in Latin America), a political title unknown to the population thus far.

This strategy combining distribution of benefits with producing evidence of the population's indigeneity was essential for the Church because in Brazil "[l]and is intrinsic to indigenous identity, and recognition is a package deal: no land, no indigenous status" (French 2009:64). In 1985, Cordeiro assembled Tapeba and rural workers at the Association of Communities of the Ceará River, which gathered indians and nonindians together in its administrative structure to resolve the land situation. Then, the Church involved public organizations such as the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), Ministry of Agrarian Reform (MIRAD), as well as FUNAI, the federal institution responsible for indians in Brazil. This same year, the Church sent a letter, signed by leaders, to Brazilian President José Sarney and to FUNAI in which they introduced the Tapeba as mixed-race indians wanting land, a health center, and schools. The letter described the Tapeba as an indigenous group who lost land and political organization with the death of another "indian chief," Perna-de-Pau (Wooden Leg), an important ancestor for some families. This document triggered administrative action for land regularization and recognition of the indigenous identity of the Tapeba.

Cordeiro also started researching evidence of the historical presence of indians in Caucaia. He found this in historical articles, streets and geographical features with Tupi names, and photographs of archeological items. Homemade medicines, artifacts made of *carnaúba* (*Copernicia cerífera*) fiber and cultural practices earlier described as Cearense folkloric manifestations (Campos 1960 Seraine 1977) were renamed indigenous cultural practices. The Church also ordered drawings, films, and photo sessions of indigenous children. Shocked by the absence of indigenous cultural features and the poverty of this group, the photographer decided to "isolate the children from their problematic context" and framed their faces and childlike eyes in close-up to capture their "indigenous genetic heritage."

Journalists used this research material during the period in which the Tapeba case gained publicity in the press as an indigenous struggle for land. Catholic Church support and the prominence of Dom Aloísio were important for enlisting state authorities, including Governor Tasso Jereissati, in defense of Ceará's indians, hastening the process of recognition. Between 1985 and 1986, the Tapeba hosted sociologists and anthropologists from MIRAD and the Indian Museum to develop studies verifying their indigeneity. Although pointing out the group's acculturation, the studies recognized pre-Columbian cultural features and small differences from the general population of the region consistent with the legal definition of

indian in the Indian Statute. These indicators were sufficient to undertake a first report in which FUNAI officially identified Tapeba Indigenous Land.

The Church used these studies to teach Tapeba leaders about indigenous history, culture, and rights. Church documents utilized the definition of indian, based on self-ascription, from anthropologist Júlio Cezar Mellati's 1969 book, *Indians of Brazil.* The Tapeba were encouraged to tell the story of their land expropriation by whites (Barreto Filho 1992:116–120) and instructed to self-identify as indians and bearers of distinct culture consisting of carnaúba handicrafts and knowledge of medicinal plants for curing diseases.

Responding to the opening of legal action for land reform, nearby ranchers and politicians stated to the press that Caucaia's indian presence was the product of Cardinal Lorscheider's "imagination." For them, the Tapeba were acculturated Portuguese speakers and were not indians, but *caboclos* (people of mixed Brazilian indian and European or African ancestry and a social category not defined in national legislation) or "slum-dwellers" who had settled in poor neighborhoods in Caucaia's urban perimeter a decade earlier. In newspapers and in court, the local elite and the Church argued the legitimacy of Tapeba indigenous identity. Begun in 1985 with the land regularization issue, this dispute had its first outcome in July 1988, when the FUNAI team charged with assessing the land claim dropped its lawsuit, casting doubt on Tapeba identity.

A local newspaper wrote about FUNAI's decision: "the indians are not indians." Dom Aloísio, who enjoyed good relations with the press, stated in an interview that the anthropological and photographic studies of the Tapeba "reveal the authentic kind of indian and confirm that they have maintained all the features of their ancestors" (*Jornal O Povo*, July 26, 1988). The Church's lawyer and Cordeiro claimed that local politicians and landowners exerted sway over the FUNAI assessment and that it did not account for anthropological and sociological studies (Cordeiro 1989:155). The following year, in 1989, the matter was reopened under articles of the new Federal Constitution (1988), which recognized the social organization, culture, and language of indians and defined the concept of traditionally occupied land.

Reconfiguration of Cultural Practices

At the end of the 1980s, Cordeiro left the Advisory Staff for Rural Communities and created the Indigenous Pastoral. The new organization continued working, producing evidence useful in asserting indigenous recognition and creating positions like cacique and *pajé* (shaman) within the Association of Communities of the Ceará River—later, this became the exclusively indigenous Association of Communities of the Tapeba Indians—to replace its organizational structure consisting of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. The Church also offered travel

opportunities for Tapeba leaders to become acquainted with the struggles of other northeast peoples, promoting intergroup knowledge of cultural practices and mobilization activities, and the notion that indigenous rights would be attributed to demands based on cultural difference (Hooker 2005). Subsequently, Tapeba leaders started reconfiguring cultural practices and transforming their people's symbolic universe.

Also during this period, schools were established in various localities (Pontes, Vila São Raimundo Nonato, Vila Nova, and Trilho) but did not last due to lack of resources. The schools project was part of the Church effort to intensify indigenous identification and advance the cause of land struggle, which was expected to result in the creation of Ceará's first indian reservation in light of the Federal Constitution's October 1993 deadline for demarcating all indigenous lands. In April 1993, the Church led the Campaign for the Demarcation of Indigenous Lands in Ceará at a moment when the United Nations (UN) proclaimed the International Year for the World's Indigenous People. The Church campaign constituted an act of mobilization in support of the Tapeba and three other groups (Tremembé, Pitaguary, and Jenipapo-Kanindé) and centered on José de Alencar square, an important public site in Fortaleza. Here, the Tapeba camped and exhibited carnaúba handicrafts, homemade medicines, and other items publicly attesting to their cultural difference. At this time, indigenous support groups drafted the project for the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB; Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional), which created the legal possibility of culture recovery. The project's advertising material distributed in the square asserted that the Tapeba wanted schools for "the recuperation of cultural memory and ethnic identity," "[t]raining of education agents," and education "according to their tradition and culture."[4]

The Church also brought Tapeba leaders in contact with national indigenous assemblies and meetings. The cacique Francisco Alves Teixeira, also known as Alberto, became acquainted with other groups' struggles for schools and the *Toré* dance, which he told me he learned from Amazonian Indians—the most authentic indians according to the Brazilian national imaginary. The Toré brought the possibility of a distinguishing cultural feature, historically requisite to FUNAI's recognition of northeast Brazilian Indians (Grünewald 2005). Alberto taught the Toré to leaders of various localities to compensate for the Tapeba's lack of differentiating symbols and cultural practices and the Tapeba performed it for press, students, and teachers from Fortaleza and Caucaia who sought them out, especially on National Indian Day.[5] Performances happened under the supervision of an adult who gathered children in circles to teach them songs and choreography to the sound of a percussion instrument. Afterwards, leaders of three other localities formed groups to practice the Toré.

Some Tapeba interpreted the Toré as having originated from *umbanda* (an Afro-Brazilian practice blending African religions with Catholicism, Spiritism, Kardecism, and considerable indigenous lore). Diverse religions—Catholicism, Pentecostalism, Protestantism—are practiced in Tapeba localities; additionally, some individuals are familiar with umbanda. Other dances in the local repertoire (*burrinha*, *reisado, bumba-meu-boi*) were taught to children by Tapeba leader José Augusto Batista, better known as Zé Tatu, but met with no success among other leaders because these practices were isolated from and without entanglements in fields of power connected to the indigenous struggle. Nevertheless, Zé Tatu said he had no difficulties learning the Toré because he was an umbanda initiate. The Tapeba ultimately chose him as their pajé for his connection with religious practices and knowledge of medicinal plants.

Thus, artisanal crafts, popular medicine, the Toré dance, and indigenous political titles (cacique, pajé) became metaphors establishing a primeval bond between the Tapeba and the land. Indeed, all were reconfigured cultural practices submitted to an informed reading by Tapeba leaders and articulated to strategies of information production justifying indigenous identity. Church efforts had a temporary effect, and two months after the Campaign for Demarcation, FUNAI recognized the study on Tapeba indigenous land delimitation. Later, between 1993 and 1997, came a period of legal contestation and political disputes when the Ministry of Justice published an ordinance setting Tapeba territorial limits (*Portaria Declaratória* no. 967/97). Once more, Caucaia landowners obtained a court annulment of the ordinance early the following year, alleging the anthropological study lacked proof of traditional land occupation. The Federal Constitution defines a traditionally occupied land as presenting "historical evidence about the antiquity of the territory [on which] the indians exert in a consistent and stable way a 'traditional occupation,' that is, they use such territory according to 'their usage and customs" (Pacheco de Oliveira 2000:20–22).

"Differentiated" Schools and Recognition

This relationship established by legislation between land rights and culture, as well as self-identification as basis for legal indigenous recognition in Brazil, became the central theme for Tapeba leaders. Although the emergence of differentiated schools resulted from the convergence of a multiplicity of local, national, and international factors, most important were the indigenous leaders whose actions evidenced that "the constituted character of the subject is the very precondition of its agency" (Butler 1992:12; Hall 2000). Between 1993 and 1997, leaders inserted schools in disputes to politicize children's subjectivities and produce legal facts for purposes of identity recognition. In Pontes, cacique Alberto created a school with the intention of teaching the "values of the tribe" and, later, leaders from the

Trilho and Lagoa dos Tapeba created two other schools with the "differentiated" moniker.

A case of prejudice against the son of a leader from Trilho, Ivonilde dos Reis, garnered constant public mention and illustrated how leaders place self-identification and culture as signs of indigenous agency in articulating identities to fields of power. In a public school in the district of Capuan, near Trilho and Lagoa dos Tapeba, the principal Letícia Cavalcante did not admit longhaired students. When she discovered the presence of one, she asked other students to help by cutting the boy's hair. The students replied, "Dona Letícia, he is a Tapeba Indian and can't have his hair cut." The principal insisted there were no indians in Caucaia but only the Pernas-de-Pau and *bacorinhos* (literally, "piglets") or, in other versions of this story, only caboclos and blacks.

In response, indigenous leaders asked the Church to draft a statement, to be sent to the school principal, containing information about the history of indigenous presence in the region. The Church's involvement resulted in the principal's recognition of the indians, as Ivonilde affirms: "We know we were discriminated against all our lives, that nobody was ever known as indian, and, from that day on, she [the principal] began to 'respect' when she extended an invitation for a Toré presentation at the school on the National Indian Day."

As "language is constitutive of identities and action" (Schwittay 2003:129), this episode helped create the narrative legitimizing the creation of differentiated schools as a way by which "language constructs individuals as particular sorts of person endowed with particular needs, rights, and capacities" (Fraser [Rosen 2003:169]). Leaders justified indigenous schools with the argument that children suffered prejudice at municipal schools and for that reason "did not want to accept themselves as indians." They also emphasized that families could not afford uniforms and sandals for their children, who were discriminated against at municipal schools for this reason. To right this situation, differentiated schools had to teach what it meant "to be an indian" and children had to say they were indians, learn artisanal crafts, "rescue" indigenous culture and history, and dance the Toré on Fridays for "culture class."

During the formulation of this discourse,[6] the three schools, three teachers, and a few students organized around a precarious financial support network. In some cases, they did not have a place to work or regular pedagogical procedures. Teachers had little education and it was difficult to integrate teaching of culture in the curriculum because these were skills mastered only by a few leaders. Leaders and educators had to convince parents to enroll their children, as they were not interested in the teaching of the Toré and indigenous culture. For most families, these practices were distant from or conflicting with their cultural universes, especially for *crentes* (literally, "believers," as Protestant church members are called), who were instructed by their pastors not to dance. Parents wanted their children

to read and write, but were suspicious of schools with no infrastructure, scarcity of free meals, and based on the notion of cultural difference. However, in struggling for recognition, teachers strategically positioned students wearing feather hats and *tucum* (*Astrocary umvulgare*) skirts, crafting artisanal products, sporting painted faces during Toré dances, and orally recounting the "long-hair" discrimination case or explicating the need to "rescue" indigenous culture. As a practical strategy, this resonates with the position that "for certain acts to have political effects publicly known they should be exerted as performances" (Ramos 1998:7).

This performance of identity was articulated to transformations within Ceará's state machinery as it underwent profound modernization in the administrative, fiscal and health fields (1986–1990), infrastructure construction, privatization of public companies (1991–1999), and educational reform (1995–2000). A series of structuring policies were implemented with the aim of achieving state economic growth and universalizing basic education, the latter of which was immeasurably significant to a state with alarming numbers of illiterate adults and children lacking access to schools. In the same time, Ceará's state education plan included policies aimed specifically at three groups: disabled people, children, and indians. This language of state was partially influenced by state authorities' access to multilateral agencies guiding reforms in Ceará, which focused on its triple-objective school, children's well-being, and economic growth as main objects of international financial aid. It also elaborated strategies for reducing global misery in the context of World Bank studies linking indigenous poverty to lack of access to schools. Aligned with the Conference of Jontien, Ceará's state government (and Brazil) assumed part in the world commitment to overcome educational inequalities, recognizing that "indigenous peoples, ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities must not suffer any kind of discrimination in the access to education opportunities" (Jontien Declaration, 1990, Article 3).

Imagining a Tribal Community and Recognition

Articulating Teacher Training to the Struggle for Land and Education

If the formulation of indigenous identity was initially linked to land issues in the context of liberation theology, then it intensified through still another link to struggles for indigenous schools and the implementation of educational policy. During the 1990s, the SEDUC took its first impactful actions: school census (1998), teacher workshops, development of didactic materials, seminars (1998–1999), invitations to training advisors, and teacher hires (1999). In 2001, Tapeba, Tremembé, and other indigenous Cearense leaders and teachers, with the support of FUNAI and other advisors, organized the larger intergroup teacher-training program. For the Tapeba especially, this coalition represented a concrete show of federal agency

support for the struggle to attain differentiated schools, jobs for indians within them, and another possible anthropological study on land.

Further consequence was the circulation of out-of-state specialists who disseminated knowledge about indigenous rights to Tapeba teachers. They gave classes about official documents related to intercultural education, indigenous rights, and the development of differentiated curricula. Teachers studied the Federal Constitution that recognized indigenous social organization, culture, and languages, and its use in the national education system, and the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) that created the legal possibility for cultural recovery (LDB, Article 78). Another document studied, the National Referential Curriculum for Indigenous Schools, defined methodological principles of identification, recovery, and transposition for scholarly knowledge of culture as being fundamental mechanisms constructing differentiated curricula.

In class, teachers were consistently prompted to identify examples of indigenous culture in Tapeba localities. For example, an FUNAI specialist presented drawings of children with face paint and hairstyles from indigenous groups in the Amazon and the Xingu National Park, represented as authentic models of indigeneity in the national consciousness. Later, the specialist asked indigenous teachers to provide drawings depicting specific haircuts of the culture of their own groups. The teachers were at a loss because their haircuts were similar to the general regional population. Nevertheless, they imagined differentiated hair and face paint styles that some teachers later adopted as their own.

Collaborators also emphasized the culturally informed symbolic connection between indians and territory as a fundamental legal requirement for the guarantee of land rights. In a class given by the Catholic Church's lawyer, a text handed out to students explained that for the law to enter into effect:

> one must show clearly that the logic permeating the relationship between the indian and the land is not the same as that of the nonindian. For indigenous populations, land must be important in its usefulness. In this, indians must cede part of their land to whomever needs a piece of land to survive or make a living. Nothing is asked in return because the land cannot be sold . . . [*sic*] The direct consequence of this vision about land has been the differentiation of indigenous populations from settled farming communities.

The collaborators further taught that to be indian, self-identification is enough. Teachers learned of the National Congress's 2002 approval of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169, elaborated through the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Geneva (1989), which defined the "awareness of one's indigenous or tribal identity . . . as the fundamental criterion to determine" whether or not a group is indigenous. Although some teachers did not know until recently they were indians, they now started to consider the possibility. During classroom leisure

time, they played with the idea of self-identification and asked one other: are you black or indian? When the answer was black, they joked that the person should leave and quit the course, which was exclusively for indians.

These meanings were strategically used to advance the political agenda for education and recognition of the Tapeba as an indigenous group. With FUNAI support, teachers requested the intervention of the Federal Public Ministry (MPF; Ministério Público Federal)[7]—defined in the Federal Constitution as an entity for the defense of indians' legal interests (Article 232)—and demanded that SEDUC attempt to implement an indigenous educational policy. During this period, administrative grievances over education proliferated at the MPF and teachers took advantage of the resulting political opportunity and created more schools. This ensured teacher hires and the growth in student numbers. In 2001, seven Tapeba localities were home to eight schools with an enrollment of 769 students. Eight government-paid indigenous teachers oversaw them, while another 28 teachers were in training, hoping to secure similar opportunities.

Also with FUNAI cooperation, teachers asked for the support of Professor Marcondes Rosa, president of the State Education Council (CEC), an institution responsible for creating educational guidelines, strategies for recognizing the teacher training course, and laws for installing indigenous schools in the education system. At a meeting between indians and Marcondes, teachers danced the Toré and spoke about mobilization for schools. The CEC President's personal involvement facilitated mounting indigenous education events involving state secretaries. To this end, Marcondes informed Tasso Jereissati's state cabinet and secretary of education of CEC's support for indigenous struggles.

Marcondes also narrated moments marking his personal commitment to differentiated schools. Charged with acquiring a trophy for a national film exhibition to be held in Fortaleza, he commissioned a cast in the form of Iracema, the eponymous character of Cearense writer José de Alencar's novel telling of the love between a Tabajara Indian maiden and a Portuguese settler, the product of which was the birth of a mestizo boy. A Cearense artist sculpted the statuette and Marcondes submitted it for review to the organizing commission. Disappointed, it remarked on the protoypean Iracema's "hexagonal butt,"[8] referring to its absence of round shapes. Marcondes was likewise disenchanted, remarking on a resemblance to "our unattractive housemaids." He advised that a new trophy should represent an Iracema with "thick, long legs to fill the hands of awardees," paying fitting homage to the sensual bodied indian referred to in the novel as "the virgin of the honeyed lips."

This story helped Marcondes construct his interpretation of the differentiated schools and provided a way to welcome indigenous teachers (specifically women) at CEC. In meetings with indians, Marcondes noticed that while some female teachers looked like the Iracema trophy, he was "shocked" by the "faces, voices

and dress" of many claiming to be indians who looked like "our common people" and domestics. He also related the story of a skeptical colleague—a teacher and sociologist—who, in earshot of the Tapeba, claimed indians in Ceará did not exist because they were extinct or totally mixed race.

Marcondes found in the "right of citizens" the legitimacy for teachers to plead for state recognition. By his reasoning, the Tapeba deserved these rights because they and their allies were rescuing "their native language, culture, and way of life." In 2003, CEC created guidelines for the creation and regularization of indigenous schools (Resolution 382/2003). FUNAI simultaneously scheduled the visit of another anthropologist to undertake a new study to support the process of identification and demarcation of indigenous land.

Intensification, Broadening, and Negotiation of the Identification

From the Church's first involvement with the indigenous struggle in Caucaia to the inauguration of teacher training courses, the Tapeba cultural repertoire was limited to Toré performance, artisanal crafts, and the use of homemade medicines. However, upon disseminating to teachers of the possibility of cultural recovery, the situation changed and indians increasingly turned to a policy and body of laws allowing a continual process of reviewing cultural practices. For teachers and leaders, it was arduous work constructing an indigenous community in Caucaia that articulated identities to legislative precepts, education, and land politics.

Between 2001 and 2005, Tapeba teachers devised an amalgamated quartet of cultural practices that included a Carnaúba Festival, Cultural Fair, Indigenous Games, and Tapeba March. During the occupation of the *Pau Branco* (White Wood) area in 2002, the leaders created the Carnaúba Festival. The following year, with the support of FUNAI's local office, the Cultural Fair was created and became a single event named the Carnaúba Festival and Cultural Fair. In 2002, the teachers also created the Indigenous Games and incorporated them as the Carnáuba Festival, Cultural Fair, and Tapeba Indigenous Games; together, they are commonly called the Cultural Fair. These events were articulated to the model of indigenous education defined by the Brazilian state as specific, differentiated, bilingual, and intercultural. During the event, the presentation of cultural practices was intensified with samples of "Tapeba culture" (food and beverages, clay pans and pots, and religious celebrations, among other things) and Toré and "indigenous baptism" rituals. The teachers elaborated a differentiated school calendar and "rescued" the indigenous Tupi language, thereby turning the school bilingual.

In 2005, the Tapeba March, or, Tapeba Parade, was created to celebrate Tapeba Indian Day, which Dom Aloísio had established years before. In the parade, children organized into squads, outfitted in tucum skirts, feather headgear, and body paint to express their indigenousness. Commenting on the parade's potential as an

identity performative, a school caretaker told me it could stimulate the children to become indigenous. Each parade squad represented a theme related to recent acknowledgments of indigenousness by the state (schools, sports, health care, land), the recognition of indigenous identity (indigenous organizations, culture, rituals), and school subjects (animals, peace, respect for the planet). The composition of the march was similar to parades performed by Brazilian schools during festivals to celebrate the September 7th Independence Day Parade. In the front squad, a group of young people in "traditional dress" carried the flags of Brazil, Ceará, Caucaia, FUNAI, and the Tapeba Indians, as a claim for status to Brazilian federal, state, and municipal political bodies.

The parade was explicitly articulated to the struggle for land. Teachers and students held banners in front of each squad referring to the land as "our mother" while they marched from the parish church plaza in Capuan to *Pau Branco*'s wooded shore at Lagoa dos Tapeba (Tapeba Lake), which is now considered "sacred land." Teachers also articulated their identities to the international environmentalist speech of indians as protectors of nature, and thus to indian rights to the land. Themes of self-identification and indigenous self-determination were also objects of concern. Children carried banners claiming the application of Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

All this cultural apparatus was employed to facilitate communication among the Tapeba themselves. Teachers imagined the Cultural Fair as a gathering of students and parents around an ideal of differentiated schools. On the advertising material, the Fair was presented as an "exchange" among different localities. The Indigenous Games likewise provided for such exchange because they divided groups by age (children, adolescents, adults) and gathered a great number of competitors and audience at the competitions. During the Cultural Fair, teachers requested support from a nurses association in Fortaleza in the form of free medical examinations and health care guidance. Meanwhile, parents became familiar with the culture and political agenda of indigenous mobilization and came to appreciate "how an ideology empowers people, enabling them to begin to make some sense or intelligibility of their historical situation" (Hall 1996:53).

However, this process of articulation to legislation, public policies, and other social forces was incomplete. The identifications articulated as indigenous were positions the Tapeba were invested in as a sign of agency and, at the same time, forced to assume. For this reason, the legal definition of indian was constantly negotiated within the group. A facet of this negotiation happened among the teachers themselves. Although they had a moral obligation to introduce culture according to the codification of Tapeba identity, some did not know how to create Tapeba artisanal crafts or even where to procure raw materials for them. In some cases, they bought objects from Fortaleza and Caucaia public markets, then exhibited and sold them as indigenous creations during the Cultural Fair.

Some women teachers—wearing jeans, high heels, and sunglasses—presented crochet-work as examples of indigenous crafts and were reprimanded for inappropriately representing indigenous culture.

In some situations, the notion of indian became a point of confrontation. Children were not immune to this and in their conversations, they established the distinction between "Protestant" and "indian." In a discussion circle with children from Lagoa dos Tapebas, I was asking a boy, Roger, about indians when another boy, Paulo, interrupted and said. "No, he is not an indian, he is, he is going to be . . . " and found himself unable to complete the sentence. Roger retorted, "I am indian, but I am Protestant." I asked Roger to explain and Paulo once more interjected, "He is indian, but he is going to be Protestant. It's not possible, is it?" I returned the question to Paulo: "Why is it not possible?" He replied, "Because his father is Protestant and his mother is Protestant." In the home environment, indigenous and Tapeba identifications were constantly debated.

Cultural Recognition, Redistribution, and Participation

Discourses, like other social practices, produced not only strong effects on geographical spaces, bodies, and culture, but also on important aspects of Tapeba material existence (Kjosavik 2006; Schwittay 2003). In this case, the identification was articulated to the Tapeba's position in Brazilian society and the possibility of changing it. During the parade, for instance, the Tapeba organized in formation along Capuan's only thoroughfare and presented themselves as a state-recognized indigenous population. Once looked upon by the regional population with suspicion, the indigenous struggle was now appreciated in the context of a public manifestation and the micropolitics of everyday relations with nonindians was changed.

Teachers, with little training and almost no formal preparation, were educated in courses administered by researchers from different fields, states, and Brazilian institutions. They gained prestige through occupying positions in the Association of Tapeba Indians Communities, and founded the Association of Tapeba Indigenous Teachers (APROINT). Presidents of these organizations assumed posts in the National Commission of Indigenous Teachers in Brasília and the workgroup in charge of elaborating the project of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, organized by the Organization of American States (OAS). These posts made possible the participation of teachers in assemblies at the federal capital and at numerous national and international meetings.

Perceived as individuals on the rise in the local landscape, indigenous teachers gained socioeconomic prestige through hard-won possessions like cars, motorcycles, cell phones, and new clothes. Their salaries and those of other school employees (cooks, watchmen, janitors) increased household incomes and

increased the living standard of many Tapeba families. Additionally, a network of connections and interests formed around educational policy resources, which facilitated functioning schools, jobs creation and salary disbursements, school meals for some families, project approvals, government rental of houses of teachers' and leaders' relatives, and the establishment of client relations between teachers and leaders, on the one hand, and City Hall, on the other, for hiring differentiated school staff on the City of Caucaia's payroll. As Pinheiro said (2009:210), leaders, and in this case teachers, "might contribute to the maintenance of a scenario where change comes for some but not for all."

Even so, an important segment of the larger indigenous population beyond teachers and leaders benefitted from the school network. Localities not actively participating in mobilizations still created their own schools to demonstrate state government presence in their midst and symbolize this recognition. One teacher, in devising schoolwork for the Fair, set up a model timeline representing Trilho "before the achievements" and after. For the teacher, the achievements consisted of electricity grids, a health center, public phones, and the building of brick houses and schools. Echoing Fraser (2007), recognition cannot be simply reduced to the specific identity of a group but must be associated with struggles for redistribution of resources and full participation in social life.

Such struggles were articulated to the land, progress toward which had stagnated since FUNAI withdrew its land claim lawsuit. However, through efforts by the local FUNAI office and indigenous leaders in 2003, the judiciary ordered another anthropological study and forensic research. This new study attempted to respond to landowners accusing the Tapeba of merely being peasants dressed as indians and contesting the claim of traditional occupation. Additionally, it provided information about legal changes favoring self-identification as a criterion for defining an indigenous population based on Barth's (1969) theory of ethnicity. In this, the anthropologist refuted the definition of acculturation and considered the Carnaúba Festival and other "rituals and cultural manifestations" as important to "ethnic affirmation" (Valle 2004).

In another study on identification of territorial limits (Barreto Filho 2006), the anthropologist registered the Toré as a dance by which the Tapeba "honored and worshipped their traditions, ancestors, and land." Insofar indigenous identification with land always been considered an evidence of indigenous identity in Brazil (French 2009:65), the report described the Cultural Fair as a site for both ritual expression and the "anchoring" of Tapeba identity that justified the right to land.

Closing Remarks

Within two decades the Tapeba went from being a poor, acculturated, school-deprived group forsaken by the state government, as attested by journalistic

reports, to indigenous rights-bearing subjects protected by the Brazilian state. This transformation owed to state agents, religious people, anthropologists, and educators, among others, but did not occur immediately: in the mid-1980s, liberation theology made the first strides; in the 1990s, the differentiated school, and later the implementation of educational policy, followed. The early support of Catholic laity and missionaries motivated by liberation theology stimulated indigenous identification as a pathway to attaining rights, especially to land, health care, and education. Although the Church offered material aid, its greater contribution was the production of knowledge about the indigenous presence in Caucaia, the facts of which incited state recognition of indigenous identity and territory.

These Church efforts succeeded in allowing a group of people with multiple identities to assume their place as social subjects based on a legally codified identity. Their identity formation, however, was not a purely instrumentalist posture meant solely to attain material benefits. It emerged from efforts and imagination of leaders through the work of articulation—a process of simplification, boundary production, and interface—that allowed the Tapeba "to renegotiate the ways in which they connect to the nation state, the government, and their own place" (Li 2000).

Suspicions toward indigenous identity persisted, however, and marked the larger process of land struggle. Once more, indians stepped into battle and set about producing evidence of their recognition. A small group of leaders devised the claim language for the differentiated schools, which insisted on public exhibition of Tapeba culture and teaching children to self-identify as indians. This strategy articulated the identities to fields of power broader than those involved in land struggle. Leaders linked the self-identification problem to the availability of the state to meet demands based on cultural difference at a moment in which the world increasingly prioritized children—and their education—as central agents of economic growth and the internationalization of indigenous rights.

Although the public face of the Tapeba was presented as uniform and intimately related to Brazil's elastic legal definition of the indian, which emphasized self-identification and subjective perception of cultural similarities and differences (French 2009), inside the group were constant points of tension by which identities were frequently negotiated. These revealed that leaders' and teachers' efforts to articulate identities to hegemonic projects failed in some cases, while succeeding in many others. In fact, differentiated school discourse and indigenous identity were objects of constant articulation and re-articulation to social forces.

The differentiated schools wielded impact on Tapeba life with the implementation of education policy, and, above all, the organization of indigenous teacher training and broadening of the support network. This convergence circulated the legal possibility of cultural recovery as defined by LDB and by other official documents. Teachers demonstrated how they connected themselves to characteristics

recognized as indigenous by anthropologists, media, state, the regional population, NGOs, and legislation. Later, these meanings came to Tapeba localities as cultural practices—the Cultural Fair and others—that fundamentally intensified indigenous identification, as well as established new bases for relations among the Tapeba, the regional population, and state institutions. This claim language, devised on the battle ground and related to a multiplicity of contemporary state languages, produced powerful effects upon identification and material impacts on Tapeba lives because when "recognition and resources come together, the opportunity for people to fully participate in the life of the nation is enhanced" (French 2009:2).

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Notes

[1]The Tapebas live in several localities in the outskirts of Caucaia's urban area. In this article, I mention those where the schools are located and that comprise an important part of the population and territorial contingent of the Tapebas, such as Tapeba Lake (Lagoa dos Tapeba) (in the 1990s, it was subdivided into Lake 1 and Lake 2), which has four schools. Other localities have only one school, namely: Trilho, Lameirão, Capuan, Jardim do Amor, Jandaiguaba, and Vila dos Cacos. Still another locality, known as Pontes, has no school but recent news reports one will soon be created.

[2]The Indian Statute (1973) defined indian as "I—indian or Woodsman—Is every individual of pre-Columbian ancestry who identifies oneself and is intensified as belonging to an ethnic group whose cultural features distinguish them from the national society; II—Indigenous Community or Tribal Group—It is a set of families or indigenous communities, either living in a state of a complete isolation in relation to other sectors of the national communion, or in an intermittent or permanent contact, but without being integrated with it."

[3]Lorscheider was ordained as a cardinal in 1976 and named secretary general and two-time president of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) in two consecutive mandates between 1971 and 1978. He was also a member of the College of Cardinals in Rome, which almost led him to the papacy. In 1975, he presided over the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM).

[4]In 1989, these claims were included in the LDB bill and promulgated in December 1996 as follows: "to provide the indians, their communities, and peoples the recovery of their historical memories; reaffirmation of their ethnic identities; appreciation of their languages and sciences" (LDB, Article 78, item I). It also defined didactic materials as "specific" and "differentiated."

[5]In Brazil, National Indian Day is celebrated on April 19. It was established in 1943 by president Getúlio Vargas in response to the suggestion by the Inter-American Indian Institute.

[6]For more on the concept of discourse used in this text, see Hall (1992).

[7]In accordance with the 1988 Federal Constitution, one of the institutional duties of the Public Ministry (Article 129) is "to legally defend the rights and interests of indigenous populations." Indians are also "legitimate parties to initiate legal proceedings for the defense of their rights and interests, with the intervention of the Public Ministry in all acts of the process" (Article 232).

[8]The original term used to describe the statuette's posterior (*bunda*) was *sextavada*, which, according to the *Aurélio Portuguese Dictionary* means "having six sides; hexagonal."

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