

# Ethnoterritoriality confronting multinationals: Indigenous peoples' perceptions of eucalyptus plantation industries in Atlantic coastal Brazil

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## **Abstract**

The rapidly growing pulp sector in Atlantic coastal Brazil has sparked off land disputes between the Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and the indigenous peoples. This article, based on primary, fieldwork data from Brazil, examines how the corporate actions and eucalyptus plantations affect the livelihoods of three indigenous communities: the Tupinikim, the Guarani and the Pataxó. The concerned companies are Aracruz Celulose S. A., Veracel Celulose and Stora Enso. The MNCs have exerted diverse tactics from social programs to violent confrontations and the devaluation of indigenous identities. These land struggles are inherently related to the primary livelihood for these communities, the critically endangered Atlantic Forest. In conclusion, the confrontations with the MNCs have profoundly affected the indigenous communities in terms of their identities, social cohesion and their worldviews as they have been forced to form a new collective resistance movement; this change can be referred to as 'ethnoterritoriality'.

**Keywords:** Pulp, MNC, Finnish forest sector, business ethics, indigenous peoples, Aracruz Celulose, Veracel Celulose, Stora Enso, Fibria, Atlantic Forest, Brazil.

## 1. Introduction

The areas of the indigenous peoples of Latin America have constantly diminished as multinational companies (MNCs) have entered to exploit their natural resources. Global companies often fail to take into account the prevailing poor socioeconomic conditions on the one hand, and the indigenous territories on the other, in countries where they set up branch operations. In Brazil, pulp production by multinational corporations is also linked to regional development and broader societal problems: the unequal division of land and natural resources, particularly where wealthy landowners and firms have taken over indigenous territories, and more recently, prepared them for sale to multinationals. Confronting these new powerful agents in their backyards, indigenous communities have had to create collective strategies to maintain their traditional territories and livelihoods. This also contributes to the creation of new identities and practices of re-territorialisation within their collective action.

In Brazil, what are now known as intensively managed planted forests (IMPFs)<sup>1</sup> occupy six million hectares and are primarily eucalyptus for pulp. IMPFs occupy less than 0.65 per cent of the country's land base; however, the sector is predicted to expand in the near future. Brazil's pulp and paper sectors have grown rapidly: while in 2007 exports totalled 6.1 billion US dollars, the growth was then 18 percent, and another 12 percent increase was predicted by the end of 2008. The expansion of the IMPF sector has primarily been concentrated in the Atlantic Forest region. (The Forests Dialogue 2008.) Agribusiness continues to occupy ever-greater land areas in Latin America, and particularly in the central and coastal regions of Brazil, which also fundamentally affects the region's economic, political, social and ecological

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<sup>1</sup>The critics argue that eucalyptus plantations are not forests, but large-scale plantations that have contributed to the destruction of Brazilian native forests.

development<sup>2</sup>.

Profound environmental change caused by intensive industrialisation has led to conflicting interpretations about the environment in Atlantic coastal Brazil. The fundamental problem is particularly within those indigenous territories that are not officially recognised and demarcated<sup>3</sup>, and this ambiguous status makes them especially vulnerable to the influence of MNCs. The Swedish-Finnish Stora Enso and Jaakko Pöyry Consulting, and to a lesser extent, some Finnish companies operating in the pulp sector have been entangled – through their Brazilian business partners, namely Aracruz Celulose S.A. – to the land conflicts in Atlantic coastal Brazil. The companies have exacerbated socio-economic injustice situations in the country's poorest rural eastern regions, which already have a very lopsided land ownership system, as well as severe human rights violations concerning the indigenous peoples (see United Nations 2005; Warren 2001).

This article is based on a qualitative, ethnographic research methodology using case study approach. Concerning the corporations, the data consists of written sources, business rhetoric and practical actions, such as public statements, corporate reports, public campaigns and personal communication. The main corporate tactics in gaining societal legitimacy, both in Brazil and in Finland, were identified and further categorised into thematic groups. Finally the tactics used in practice were compared to the companies' CSR principles, exhibited a great discrepancy between the two. (See also Myllylä and Takala 2010; Myllylä 2007.) In

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<sup>2</sup>Welch (2006) has studied Brazilian rural labour and agricultural history. He has analysed recent agrarian transformations associated with globalisation, including the organised response of workers and farmers to the loss of millions farm livelihoods. This development explains the rise of an autonomous peasant movement in the late twentieth century and the agricultural capitalist (or neoliberalist) model promoted by powerful agribusiness interests (see also Kröger 2008; CAPOMA 2009; Holden and Jacobson 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Out of Brazil's 988 indigenous lands, so far only 366 have been registered, also 665 are in various stages of official action and the rest, 323 are without any process (CIMI 2009).

addition, the tactics from the other side were also analysed – the indigenous groups’ various social or resistance movement strategies and their counter-arguments as they searched for legitimacy for their land claims. In other words, how they speak and act for themselves?

The empirical, primary data is based on two fieldwork periods in Brazil, during 2004 and 2006. I also include material from my previous research project (2004) when I studied the Atlantic Forest, its conservation systems<sup>4</sup> and conflicts. Land dispute issues will be followed up with a new fieldwork phase in the near future. The field research material consists of interviews and personal observations among numerous parties or actors: the indigenous communities, various levels and sectors of authorities, civil society organisations and local researchers. Ethnographic research material was collected among the indigenous communities. Here I look at three indigenous groups: in the state of Espírito Santo (ES), the *Tupinikim*, who have become allied with the *Guarani*, and in the state of Bahia (BA), the *Pataxó* – all whom share a rather common background concerning their territorial claims, and experiences of pulp production by two multinationals, Aracruz Celulose S.A. and Stora Enso/Veracel Celulose. Instead of examining the internal power relations among and between the indigenous groups, my viewpoint focuses on the complex relationships between the indigenous communities and the multinationals, especially scrutinising: i) those changes the companies have caused in their livelihoods and cultures, and ii) the land dispute power struggles.

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<sup>4</sup> It is declared a global biodiversity hotspot by UNESCO: The Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve (*Mata Atlântica* BR). My research in Brazil has focused on the four eastern states: Bahia, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The Atlantic Forest stretches from the northern state of Rio Grande do Norte, to Rio Grande do Sul in the south.

## 2. The tactics of knowledge politics, new social movements and ethnoterritoriality

In spite of some internal problems among and between the Tupinikim and the Guarani in Espírito Santo state, both tribes have shown the capacity to operate as an alliance in the land dispute issue. Their resistance represents a New Social Movement (NSM), which commonly arises from a certain incident created by a social injustice situation. The structure of the NSM comprises actors from local, national and international levels, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in particular<sup>5</sup>. Thus, indigenous peoples can also be transnational when they network with international actors. NSMs are “new” in the sense that they a) challenge dominant power structures; b) imply some radicalism; c) include an awareness of the past; d) involve new dimensions of identity, including personal aspects of human life; and e) represent alternative values (Doyle and McEachern 1998: 56-61). According to the Tupinikim leaders, “we have to keep up voice, also internationally, since if our issue is ceased, we are gone”. In Bahia, the Pataxó Indians have used similar collective actions, although the land dispute issue there has not been as intensive as in the case of Espírito Santo.

Pramod Parajuli (1991) states that one of the major tasks of the NSM is to develop knowledge systems, which represent the experiences of the marginalised groups, such as indigenous peoples. These systems use alternative ways to produce and justify knowledge, aiming at challenging the prevailing power structures and knowledge traditions, as in the case of Western scientific knowledge. It is not only a question of political and economic autonomy, but power to define the group and its needs, including

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<sup>5</sup> In this case various levels of networks are, for example: *Rede Alerta Contra o Deserto Verde*, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST), *Fórum em Defesa dos Direitos Indígenas* (FDDI), *Comissão Pastoral da Terra*, *Brigada Indígena*, World Rainforest Movement (WRM) and NGOs from Europe, Robin Wood, among others.

the entire development process, such as survival, progress, identity, health, nutrition, time/space and the human-nature relationship (ibid.). In the long-term, the process of the land struggle, the revival of traditional cultural features and the resulting new ethos among the Tupinikim in particular has been illuminated in the campaign discussions and rhetoric. The Indians have claimed transparent public administration and equal treatment as citizens. Their tactics and alternative expertise are well representative of those typically used within the NSMs: protests, land/space occupations, “self-demarcations”, use of civil society networks and improving the movement’s discursive capacity (*articulação*, as they often refer to).

When comparing the rhetoric and actions of the different parties in the land conflict situations, there is a great discrepancy between the global company and the indigenous community in terms of how the reality and “justice” are perceived. The Indians’ rhetoric based on their life-world experiences and cosmologies has been left without any attention. According to campaign statements by the Tupinikim, their collective trauma since 1967 (due to Aracruz’s initial violent invasion in the area) has obviously been replicated in later violent incidents by the company. This phenomenon of traumatised communities – the feeling of losing control over one’s life in the face of “collective disaster” – has been observed among various indigenous communities that have lost their livelihoods, often due to an external factor (see Erikson 1994: 230–231). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) addresses corporations using technological advances and their failure to recognise indigenous belief systems and knowledges, especially in regard to ecologically related issues. James Carrier (2004) points out that situations, where local communities encounter powerful discourses arising from outside, they have to interpret the debates correctly and participate in them actively in order to be credible and protect their interests. Hence, with the help of supporting institutions and civil society organisations, the Indians could also

have fine-tuned their argumentation or articulation to the “same level” as the global company, in order to acquire more credibility and acceptability in the society; for instance, technical reports proving harmful environmental impacts of pulp production.

In the land conflicts with the MNCs, it could be argued that the indigenous peoples’ territories, livelihoods and identities have been mutually recreated via the processes of *ethnogenesis* and *ethnoterritoriality*. By the latter, central theoretical concept, I refer to the indigenous communities’ struggles for maintaining their traditional cultures and practices, which are profoundly attached to a certain locality: the identity and entire subsistence of a community is based on the land and its resources, all which can be threatened by an external actor, such as a MNC. Thus, it could be said that the claims and mobilisations of these communities have a geographical underpinning or spatial reference, which manifests especially in conflict situations, where land is contested (cf. Moreno, 2000: 63). The land disputes with the MNCs have fundamentally affected the identities, social cohesion, and even worldviews of the indigenous communities as shown here. The Brazilian anthropologist, Sandro da Silva, whose research has focused on the Tupinikim community, argues that the Tupinikim are in the middle of an *ethnogenesis*, in which new identities are created in time and space, critically affected by the land dispute with Aracruz Celulose (Silva 2006, pers.comm.; see also Castro Ossami de Moura 2008). The ethnogenesis can be seen as a process of both a social and symbolic struggle (Barreto 1992, in Silva 2001). In a way, while the Tupinikim and the Guarani have fought to regain their territory and plan to even rejuvenate its natural resources, their ethnic identity is also being revived through the combination of traditional practices in response to contemporary elements.

### 3. The changes in the Atlantic Forest as livelihood for indigenous peoples

The indigenous peoples in the eastern coast of Brazil have derived their subsistence from the Atlantic Forest (*Mata Atlântica*), its land and water ecosystems long before the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The principal indigenous groups along the coastline were then Tupí-Guaraní. The Atlantic Forest includes various types of interconnected ecosystems including tropical and subtropical rainforests, evergreen trees, *araucarias*, mangroves, and those known as *restingas*, which are low forests growing on stabilised coastal dunes.

The Atlantic Forest once covered 1.3 million km<sup>2</sup> (15 per cent of Brazil), but due to intensive urbanisation and industrialisation in the coastal region, it has been reduced to a mere 7 percent of its original size, and now comprises tens of thousands of fragmented forest islands. Currently, this “biodiversity mosaic” is the second most endangered tropical forest in the world (after the Tropical Andes). It is characterised as one of the “global hotspots” since it has an exceptionally high diversity of endemic species that are found nowhere else on Earth. The Southern Bahia’s rainforest fragments are regarded as the globe’s richest in terms of the number of tree species per hectare: even 476 different tree species can be found on just a single hectare plot of forest. In addition, even today new primate species can be found in the heavily deforested, northern states such as Pernambuco. (Lino 2004, pers.comm.; Galindo and Gusmão 2003; Thomaz and Monteiro 1997). The northeastern forests have been drastically diminished to some 2–4 per cent, due to historical development comprising intensive logging, plantation and cattle economies (see Dean 1995).

Yet large continuums of forests still exist especially in the southern coastal states, where at the same time, the pulp companies seek to build new factories. In the conservation of the



Atlantic Forest, a central idea is to protect the forest islands and connect them by using ecological corridors. Any type of monoculture plantation poses a threat for the recovery and conservation of the already fragmented forest. (Oberlaender 2006, pers.comm.) In addition, pulp industries cause complex socio-ecological chain reactions, in which the poor, landless farmers have to move to the fringes of the forest, leading to further deforestation of the Atlantic Forest. Strict conservationists are for a “zero logging” policy and run campaigns to reduce numerous illegal activities that constantly decrease the extremely vulnerable forest. It appears that civil society is somewhat divided into environmentally (e.g. *Fundação SOS Mata Atlântica*) and socially (e.g. FASE, ISA) oriented NGOs, in which the former often see that not even the indigenous communities should be allowed to live within the protected areas<sup>6</sup>: not all indigenous communities use sustainable livelihood practices and the Atlantic Forest is critically endangered (Camargo 2004, pers.comm.). For the environmental authorities the situation is very tricky because the rights of the indigenous peoples have higher status compared to even strictest protected areas (Azevedo 2004, pers.comm.; Campolim 2004, pers.comm.). As the indigenous communities cannot be evicted from the parks, the state governments have attempted to direct and restrict the continuous regional movement of the Guarani. There are numerous Guarani communities living in the fringes of the cities like São Paulo.

Hence, pulp production – heavily supported by the Brazilian government with various incentives – is both directly and indirectly causing deforestation in the Atlantic Forest, and this is

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<sup>6</sup> The NGO representatives interviewed in 2004 and 2006: E. Camargo and M. Mantovani (*Fundação SOS Mata Atlântica*, São Paulo); W. Overbeek and M. Cavalcantes Soares (*Federação de Órgãos para Assistência Social e Educacional / FASE*, Vitória, ES); F. Zanirato (*Instituto Socioambiental / ISA*, São Paulo); H. Maltez and Luciana L. Simões (World Wide Fund For Nature, Brasília & São Paulo); P. Reed from *Flora Brasil* (Itamarajú, BA), and B. Neal (Rede de ONGs da Mata Atlântica, Brasília).

critically affecting the livelihoods and cultures of the indigenous peoples. They have been forced into unproductive lands and poor living conditions. The communities depend on subsistence agriculture, fishing, crafts and other minor commercial activities. Unemployment and the lack of subsistence, especially among the Tupinikim, is high. Some of the Pataxó use endangered Atlantic Forest species of trees from the surrounding protected forests (national parks of Monte Pascoal, Descobrimento and Pau Brasil) for tourist crafts, while others prefer more sustainable forest use practices. Hence this is one example showing that the indigenous communities are not a single homogenous group, which merely uses sustainable livelihood methods.

My field research from 2004 to 2006 indicated that the eucalyptus plantations of Aracruz Celulose have had a multitude of negative impacts on Espírito Santo indigenous communities, such as a) cultural (language skills, traditional customs), b) economic (unemployment, loss of subsistence agriculture), c) social/health issues (weakening of community cohesion, drug abuse, new diseases) and d) environmental (loss of forest and animal species, drying of land, water pollution), particularly for the Tupinikim, but also for the more isolated Guarani. In Bahia, the Pataxó pointed out a number negative social and environmental impacts following Stora Enso/Veracel Celulose's arrival (see also *Instituto Observatório Social*, 2005), which are quite similar to those experienced by the Tupinikim and the Guarani. (Myllylä 2007.)

In various critical studies, both Brazilian and international, on the societal effects of pulp production it is argued that industrial tree plantations increase rural poverty and skew land ownership as pulp corporations become powerful landowners and thus also political forces. Pulp production units require gigantic land areas and also well-educated professionals who are often brought from outside the region. The pulp production sector creates poverty pockets out of rural communities, which cannot (or do not want to) become involved in this modern and highly

mechanised production, particularly in the case of women in traditional communities, who have organised numerous resistance movements (see Barcellos and Ferreira, 2007; Santana 2004, pers.comm.). Community forests, farmlands and parts of the villagers' rotational agricultural systems are easily described as "degraded" by forestry experts and plantation proponents. When land is converted to tree plantations, local livelihoods are destroyed. (See e.g. Lang 2008; De'Nadai, Overbeek and Soares 2005; Carrere and Lohmann 1996.) Epitomising numerous social resistance movements against pulp industries in this coastal region, hundreds of rural women from the southern coastal area invaded a plantation belonging to Aracruz Celulose in 2006. The movement was organised to denounce these multinational companies, which in various parts of the country have displaced indigenous peoples and other traditional people, namely Afro-Brazilian Quilombos (communities descended from escaped-slave settlements) and other landless peasants. Pulp corporations have also caused severe environmental contamination with the intensive use of agro-toxins as well as the depletion of forest resources (Ribeiro 2008). In the following chapters I will examine more closely the various impacts of pulp production on indigenous peoples' lives.

The multinational companies concerned here are the Brazilian Aracruz Celulose S.A. (previously of Brazilian-Norwegian ownership) and Veracel Celulose. The latter is a joint venture formed by Aracruz Celulose and the Swedish-Finnish Stora Enso, in which both own a 50 per cent stake. In September 2009, the ownership of both companies was changed: it was announced that Aracruz had merged with its Brazilian rival, Votorantim Celulose e Papel (VCP). Fibria, the new company, was a result of the acquisition of Aracruz Celulose by VCP, through its holding company, Votorantim Industrial. It holds a 29.3 per cent stake, while the Brazilian National Economic and Social Development Bank has 34.9 per cent, and 35.8 per cent is a free float. The new, larger company has a production capacity exceeding 6 million

tonnes of pulp and paper annually, and about 90 per cent of the pulp is produced for export. (Fibria 2009.) In this paper, I will discuss the situation before this recent merging of the two companies.

Aracruz has been the world's leading producer of bleached eucalyptus kraft pulp, which is used by paper manufacturers to produce a wide range of products, such as tissue, printing and writing papers and specialty papers. Sales to customers outside Brazil, especially in North America, Western Europe and Asia, has accounted for 98 per cent of total sales volume. Aracruz's nominal bleached hardwood eucalyptus pulp production capacity, totalling 3.2 million tons a year, is distributed between three pulp making units: Barra do Riacho in Espírito Santo (2.3 million tons), Guábara in Rio Grande do Sul (450,000 tons) and Veracel Celulose in Bahia (450,000 tons, or 50 per cent of the unit's total capacity). This corresponds to over 30 per cent or a third of the entire global supply (Aracruz Celulose 2009; International Finance Corporation 2009; Aracruz Celulose 2005.) In addition, the company has run a Forestry Partners Program that involves approximately 96,000 hectares contracted in partnership with more than 3,900 farmers in the states of Espírito Santo, Bahia, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul (Aracruz Celulose 2009).

In Bahia state, the Veracel (Aracruz-Stora Enso) project led to a series of contracts for European and Nordic companies. Jaakko Pöyry Consulting produced a range of feasibility studies and an environmental impact assessment. Metso Automation (a subsidiary of Finnish company Metso Corporation) won a US\$7 million order to supply valves and online analysers; Partek Forest (Finland) won a US\$25 million contract, its largest ever, to deliver harvesting equipment to Aracruz and Veracel. Pöyry's Brazilian subsidiary Jaakko Pöyry Tecnologia Ltd subsequently won US\$16 million in engineering contracts on the construction of the Veracel pulp mill. (Lang 2008, 31-32.)

In 2005, Veracel's pulp mill started operations in the municipality of Eunápolis, south of Bahia. Veracel Celulose has an annual capacity of 900,000 tons of bleached eucalyptus pulp. (Aracruz 2008.) The company's total land area of 164,600 ha is distributed in ten municipalities in the south of the state of Bahia. Plantations occupy 90,870 ha (Soikkeli 2009, pers.comm.). The rest is destined for environmental recovery and preservation, and a minor percent for infrastructure. Veracel's Forestry Partners Program has contracts with farmers to grow eucalyptus on an area covering a total of 10,000 hectares. (Veracel Celulose 2009a; 2009b.)

#### **4. The land struggle and attempts to make Indians better citizens**

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Tupinikim already occupied a large coastal territory, reaching from the southern part of Bahia and Paraná, including Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. The area between Espírito Santo and the south of Bahia supported 55,000 Tupinikim. In Espírito Santo State (Barra do Riacho area), the Tupinikim had settled their forefather's lands and lived in 44 indigenous areas – *aldeias* or villages – comprising 30,000 ha of the original Atlantic rainforest. (Executive Commission of the Tupinikim and Guarani 1996: 11, 39; see also Langfur 2006; Whitehead 2000.)

Land is usually the most central issue determining indigenous peoples' lives, and this is also true for the indigenous peoples in Atlantic coastal Brazil. They consider that the land belongs to them since their forefathers have lived there for centuries. They still refer to the land document, which was given by the Portuguese crown in 1610. When the Portuguese colonialists first arrived, the Tupinikim had to accept the official program of mission villages organised by the Jesuits. They brought about a restriction of freedom for the Tupinikim: they were not able to express their culture, rites and traditions, and had limited access to

the land they had traditionally occupied. In 1610 Father João Martins received a 'sesmaria' on behalf of the Tupinikim. It was a piece of 'abandoned' land, which the Portuguese crown granted to the colonists to be cultivated. The sesmaria was granted to the Indians and covered a much wider area than has been contested between Aracruz and the Indians today. In 1760, the Portuguese crown demarcated the area inhabited by the Tupinikim, which was also confirmed by travellers such as Wied-Neuwied (1817) and Auguste de Saint-Hilaire (1818). (Executive Commission of the Tupinikim and Guarani 1996: 12-14.)

Prior to Aracruz Celulose in the 1940s, the local government in Espírito Santo State allowed an iron company, COFAVI (*Cia Ferro e Aço de Vitória*), to use an area of natural forest of 10,000 ha to produce coal. Aracruz Celulose arrived in the area in 1967 when it purchased this forest area from COFAVI and a larger area of 30,000 ha from the federal government. Aracruz's land purchase in an area that was already inhabited by two indigenous Indian groups – the Tupinikim and the Guarani – was assisted by the military regime and some opportunist land speculators and politicians. Originally the company's name was Aracruz Florestal. (Executive Commission of the Tupinikim and Guarani 1996.) Just before the arrival of Aracruz in 1967, a group of Mb'ya Guarani Indians from the south had settled close to the Tupinikim *aldeia* of Caieira Velha. They accepted the Guarani group as new neighbours due to a mutual solidarity among the Indians, and also because the Guarani considered that their ancestors had lived in the region.

In 1967, 60 per cent of the natural forests were still left in the Aracruz Municipality. The company immediately started massive operations to establish new eucalyptus plantations on what were considered indigenous lands by the Indians. First, the company's tactics, with the permission of the authorities, involved the use of violence and burning down the majority of the Tupinikim *aldeias* and evicting the population from the area. The remaining few decided to stay and survive in the remaining villages. The incident, still well remembered by the elders of both

tribes, caused a critical dispersal of the Tupinikim community and ended their traditional hunter-gatherer and fishing activities.

One older Tupinikim woman remembered the moment when bulldozers came and they were connected by heavy iron chains, by which the rainforest was dragged down. Aracruz contracted the Finnish company Jaakko Pöyry Consulting to plan the pulp mill and its plantations. The next step in founding a plantation was also straightforward when the remaining flora and soil were erased by agrottoxins, which helped to make a flat and stable growing ground for eucalyptus seedlings. As the original thin layer of rich soil was left, more agrochemicals such as fertilizers were needed.

The Indian leaders travelled to the capital Brasília to denounce the invasion of their lands by the company to the former Indian Protection Service that is currently the [Brazilian Indian](#) Foundation, FUNAI (*Fundação Nacional do Índio*), a protection agency for Indian interests and their cultures. Yet the reaction to the incident was quite the opposite of what the Indians expected: at the beginning of the 1970s, FUNAI started to transfer all the Guarani and some of the Tupinikim to the Indian Reserve in the Minas Gerais State, famous of slave work and prisons. Since the Tupinikim and the Guarani had always lived in the vicinity of the sea, they felt very uncomfortable in central Brazil. The Guarani chief (*cacique*) stated that they perceived a strange mixture of different Indian tribes and also, a punishment: “We were taken to *fazenda guarani* as if it was a jail”. According to a Brazilian anthropologist Celeste Ciccarone, who has studied the Guarani community, it was a question of civilising the Indians, to make them “good citizens” (Ciccarone 2006, pers.comm.; see also “domestication” [integration] of indigenous peoples, Saugestad 2001:103.). A few years later the Indians managed to leave the reserve and return to Aracruz Municipality, which had now been mostly deforested by Aracruz Celulose.

In addition, the Tupinikim said that FUNAI had also previously negotiated with Aracruz to move them to the Indian Reserve located as far away as Amazonia, including “a deal

concerning some kind of land exchange". As the elders heard about it, they fled and hid in the remaining forests in order to avoid the possible forced migration. The Guarani *cavique* has criticised FUNAI's role and the overall land rights problems of the Brazilian indigenous peoples:

I have tried to ask as to why FUNAI let the company arrive here in the first place, but I have never received any answer. This is always the case wherever the Indian villages exist: they are given farewell from the area and nobody knows what happens next.

In 1978, Aracruz began to operate its first plant that was situated next to the one of neighbouring Tupinikim *aldeias*. A small group of the Tupinikim and Guarani resisted in an area of a mere 40 ha. Despite the fact that in 1979 FUNAI basically designated three areas totalling 6,500 ha for them, in 1980 the Indians started to demarcate the lands themselves due to delays on the part of FUNAI. The incident led to violence by the police. Aracruz demanded a new proposal by pressuring the state government, and this ended in an agreement with FUNAI. It implied that the designated areas were reduced to 4 492 ha, demarcated in 1983, and officially registered in 1988. Thus, the Indians and Aracruz made an initial contract to settle the land dispute.

The process of land demarcation, including ambiguous legal procedures and decisions, has continued to be complex up today. Despite FUNAI's responsibility to organise administrative procedures for the demarcation of indigenous lands, we can notice that its role both in Espírito Santo and also Bahia has been rather contradictory. The registration of indigenous territories has been very slow, and also hindered by the pulp companies. Article 231 in the Federal Constitution recognises the native rights of the Indians to their traditionally occupied territories. (Executive Commission of the Tupinikim and Guarani 1996: 27). In the identification phase, the Working Group appointed by FUNAI collects the proof of traditional indigenous occupation through various multidisciplinary studies in the region. In the contestation phase, interested parties may present their contestation with proofs to FUNAI on the possession of the land. Declaration implies that the



Minister of Justice will declare the boundaries of the indigenous area and establish its demarcation (also the identification may be rejected on the basis of noncompliance with the Federal Constitution). In the administrative phase, FUNAI demarcates the land boundaries by placing official landmarks on the boundaries, which have been indicated in the edict of the Minister of Justice. (Executive Commission of the Tupinikim and Guarani 1996: 27-28.)

During the 1990s, the Indians continued their land claims, supported by national and international campaigns, run by NGOs. FUNAI formed a new Working Group to re-examine the boundaries of the indigenous areas of the Tupinikim and Guarani, and as a result of the first study in 1994, their indigenous area was identified as 13 579 ha. However, according to the Indians, FUNAI pressured the *caciques* to travel to Brasília, to the Ministry of Justice, in order to sign a new contract with Aracruz. The agreement included 10 million USD, implying that they would accept a considerable smaller area, only 2 571 ha. The company was to pay the sum within 20 years, as well as to rejuvenate the polluted local river and carry out reforestation. As the *caciques* were still reluctant to value their land, they were pressured and misled by the authorities, as they claimed. Afterwards the *caciques* have regretted that they agreed to sign the paper and its contents, which they did not fully understand. In order to make a stronger alliance in the “land fight” (*luta pela terra*), they established an organization, *Associação Indígena Tupiniquim e Guarani* (AITG) and a Commission, which ever since have articulated their own interests when campaigning against the company.

FUNAI continued to carry out two more official studies up till 1998, and the indigenous area was identified as 18 070 ha. It was recommended that it should be registered in order to guarantee the physical and cultural existence of the Indians. As the area was confirmed by FUNAI, but the land demarcation was delayed, the Indians decided to start a second self-demarcation in 1998, and this was ended once again by the Federal Police who suffocated the uprising with violence and temporarily isolated the *aldeias*. The Minister of Justice (at the time) acknowledged

FUNAI's studies, but still confirmed only an area of 7,061 ha to be registered and the remaining 11,009 ha were left without recognition – this area was to become a major cause of future disputes with the company. (Photo 1)



**Photo 1:** *Eucalyptus* plantation meets Atlantic Forest.  
*Photo: Susanna Myllylä.*

## **5. The Tupinikim: a turn from subsistence farming to plantation economy<sup>7</sup>**

According to FUNAI's census, the Indian population was 2,765 in 2004: 2,552 Tupinikims and 213 Guaranis live in their *aldeias* in the Aracruz Municipality (Barcellos and Ferreira, 2007, 14). The current Tupinikim *aldeias* are Caieira Velha, Comboios, Irajá and Pau-Brasil, which are not tightly bordering each other, but rather left in “pockets” between plantations. (Photo 2)

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<sup>7</sup> This chapter is mainly based on the group discussions with the Tupinikim.



**Photo 2:** *Tupinikim aldeia Caieira Velha, affected by Catholicism. The Catholic Church, according to the Tupinikim, was the only actor who supported them in the early years of the land dispute. Photo: Susanna Myllylä.*

The Aracruz's impact on the livelihoods of the Tupinikim has been fundamental and manifold. Most of the marshes and mangroves have gone because eucalyptus plantations have drained the land. Due to deforestation, as well as soil and water pollution, wildlife resources have also become depleted in the area. The Ibama environmental authority<sup>8</sup> has prohibited the Tupinikim from collecting materials for their traditional activities or killing animals for food. Previously they used to live in abundance:

We did not have difficulties hunting wildlife, such as armadillos, antelopes, pigeons, and also sloths, which we would love to eat. Jaguar, which was also common here, we did not hunt for food, but because we were afraid of it. Our *caciques* used parrot

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<sup>8</sup> Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis.

and *jacu* feathers for headdresses, now they have to mainly use coloured chicken feathers instead.

Lianas and bark from trees (such as *imbira*) were used for women's wear, handcrafts and domestic utensils (like *samburá* baskets for fishing). Whenever Ibama has found the Tupinikim snaring fish, crabs and oysters in the nearby rivers during the breeding season, it has confiscated their catch and devices. The Tupinikim have observed that before hunting and fishing were not a problem, but after the arrival of Aracruz, the wildlife population has collapsed, and suddenly their traditional lifestyle has come under the scrutiny of Ibama. (Photo 3)



**Photo 3:** *The livelihood of the Tupinikim in the past.*  
*Photo: Susanna Myllylä.*

The Tupinikim cultivate coffee, beans, coconut and cassava, but not every family possess their own fields. Coffee has been their main source of income: “if we do not have *pire pire* (money) we

cannot purchase things”. They would also like to plant corn, but the soil is too exhausted and polluted, so they should first purchase fertilizers – “for a place that was previously soil-rich rainforest”.

From the 1990s, Aracruz Celulose started to approach the Tupinikim and the Guarani with social projects, offering some medical services and education, for instance. In this “socio-environmental game between the actors” (Andrade 2007; see also Aracruz Celulose 2006), modern commodities were given, such as mobile phones. The critics have argued that the company just aims to use social control tactics over the indigenous groups, which, in the long term, will not suffice as long as the land dispute remains unsolved. (Myllylä 2007.) In addition, the critics also claim that in order to apply for the FSC certification label, the company’s strategy has been to generate social projects.

The main income for the Tupinikim has come from selling coffee outside – but they also started to grow eucalyptus for Aracruz in 1999. How did they end up at this point in the first place? Due to ever decreasing options for daily subsistence, they decided to join the Aracruz’s Social Forestry Program. Aracruz donated the seedlings and fertilizers to the community and they started to plant eucalyptus in their territory, to be later sold to the company. (Photo 4)



**Photo 4:** *Aracruz’s Social Forestry Program on Tupinikim land.*  
*Photo: Susanna Myllylä.*

However, due to the seasonal nature of this new livelihood, the majority of the young adults were unemployed. Despite the fact that just few of them worked in the Aracruz's factory, the company was accused of saying they employed more Indians than they actually did. Also the company "banned them from speaking Tupí, as the early colonialists did their ancestors". The language gradually vanished among the tribe in the region. It was also said that in the beginning of this century, in the Espírito Santo community, there was only one person, a young man (currently one of the activists in their association with the Guarani), who "learned back the language, taught by a helpful university professor". The Tupinikim use both Portuguese and Tupí personal names. The company's social program serves an illuminating case of governance and guided inclusion in regard to indigenous communities.

By the end of 2004, the Indians had not given up their land claim and hence the "Aracruz management did not want to communicate with them anymore". The Tupinikim also stopped participating in the company's Social Forestry Program. Instead, they kept clinging to the hope of reforesting the *Mata Atlântica*, but said that they lacked a suitable partner to do it. It seemed that sustaining this positive, if not romantic, vision and already planning future operations – as much as it seemed to be an impossible endeavour, not only due to land dispute but also ecological constraints – was the whole basis behind the land struggle. The Tupinikim appeared to be very sure of getting back their territory as a whole and rebuilding their livelihood as well as identity.

## 6. The Guarani and the quest for a Land Without Evil

The Guarani (Mbyá<sup>9</sup>) *aldeias* are Boa Esperança, Três Palmeiras and Piraquê-açu. The Guarani prefer to keep their own basic cultural traditions – religion (or worldview), subsistence farming, education, and language (Mbyá Guarani) including names – isolated from the impact of Brazilian society. (Photo 5)



**Photo 5:** *Guarani aldeia Boa Esperança in November 2004. In December 2006, only one of these houses remained. Photo: Susanna Myllylä.*

The surroundings of the three *aldeias* include some natural forest. The Guarani consider themselves forest protectors and they did not want to become part of the Aracruz's Social Forestry Program like the Tupinikim. For the Guarani, the eucalyptus species are without any nutritional importance for the people, nor

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<sup>9</sup> The Guarani in Brazil are divided into three groups: Kaiowá, Nandeva and Mbyá.

do they produce seeds for animals. The livelihood of the Guarani is based on forest gardens. Between the trees are grown among others; cassava, coffee and banana, as well as medicinal plants, of which their healer knows over 70 different species. In order to get milk and other food products they do not have, they sell coffee and crafts for the tourist trade. The Guarani rarely consume meat as the animals they catch from the forest are strictly regulated by their religious practices.

Also, the elder Guarani remember the time before the company, as the area was covered by rainforests, mangroves and swamps, and it was common to see alligators in the nearby river. They claim that Aracruz plantations have dried up the soil and because of the lack of buffer zones, agrochemicals spill into rivers when it rains. However, the Indians take drinking water from these rivers. Like the Tupinikim, they have also found unusually high numbers of dead animals, such as birds, small antelopes and armadillos. According to the healer, after the “non-Indians” (Aracruz) arrived, and simultaneously contributed to the “rush of other Whites” onto indigenous land, air pollution has made respiratory illnesses and severe headaches common among the Indians, as well as “new diseases” like cancer. In addition, alcohol has become a new problem for the community. Previously, Aracruz’s doctors visited the villages within the social program, but this was not enough to cure the people’s diseases. (Photo 6) The Guarani also criticise the State administration, which has given its full support to Aracruz.





**Photo 6:** *Guaraní healer, vice cacique Tupã-Kvaraj knows how to use the feijão-guandu bean for food and tea, but also as a medicine to cure some respiratory illnesses. However, the tribe has problems coping with the new respiratory diseases caused by Aracruz, as the community members perceive the issue.*  
*Photo: Susanna Myllylä.*

Compared to the official political and geographical definitions of regions<sup>10</sup>, the territorial perception of the Guarani is different or a much wider concept, as one *cacique* explained:

In Brazil, our territory reaches to Pará (in the North coast). Paraguay is our centre of the world.

The Guarani dominion over a large territory takes place through social, economic and political dynamics (see Ladeira 2001). It explains why numerous Guarani groups move between Brazil and Paraguay, from where they originated, and constantly construct and deconstruct their *aldeias* in various places. However, the Guarani are not nomads, as they are often called (Ciccarone 2006, pers.comm.; cf. Clastres 1995: xi). In this Atlantic coastal region, which has become the most industrialised and urbanised domain in the country since colonialism, the Guarani still ‘navigate’ according to their cosmology, searching for suitable living places, and the ultimate *aldeia*; “The Land without Evil” (*terra sem mal*). This refers to a place that is located outside of the dominant society and its rules. According to Maria Inês Ladeira (2003; see also 2001, 2007; Ribeiro 1992): “...their mythical precepts that are at the foundation especially of their relation with the Atlantic Forest, on which, symbolically or practically, they condition their survival. Establishing villages in these ‘chosen’ places, including flora and fauna typical of the Atlantic Forest, means being closer to the celestial world, since it is from these places that access to *yvy marãey*, ‘Land without Evil’, is made easier.”

According to H el ene Clastres (1995: 54), it is a question of the active denial of society and the search for the ‘Other’ which forces the Guarani to remain isolated from the influences of Brazilian society. Their migration could also be interpreted as manifesting community empowerment (Ciccarone 2006,

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<sup>10</sup>The “obsession of modernity” can be discussed here concerning the concept of territory: it can be seen as a narrative or imagination, physically and materially constituted. The Guarani define their world according to both material and symbolical meanings (see Ladeira 2001: 13-14).

pers.comm.). The most powerful Guarani leaders are found among women, passing this position via the blood-line (see more in Ciccarone 2004). According to Kretsu Miri (deceased in 2005), a shaman's prophecy gives the wider Guarani community information about where to move to next. This movement usually happens every 6-8 years. She had already received a divine vision of a "holy mountain" situated in the north, to where part of the community should move to establish a new *aldeia*. As when the Guarani first arrived in the Aracruz Municipality, this place would also be covered with Atlantic rainforest, which seems an embedded feature in the visions. Furthermore, the Guarani healer defines the metaphor *terra sem mal* as follows:

It is a place without sorrow and bad things. There one can live in peace and outsiders do not disturb us. It is a place, where there is no violence, and no Aracruz.

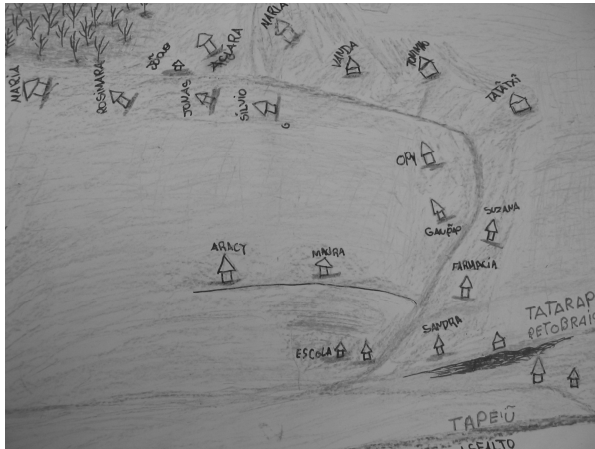
Interestingly, Aracruz's presence and the land dispute had encroached here in an old cosmological definition. This may reflect a cultural change in their religious discourse as a response to the modernisation of society. As 'traditional' or local knowledge constantly changes as an ever-evolving syncretistic process (see Pottier 2003: 1-2), due to competing definitions and external influences, also the arrival of modern industries in the neighbouring areas has affected the terminology of the Guarani. For instance, eucalyptus has been named as the "tree without a soul" (*árvore sem alma*) or a "poison tree" (*árvore tóxico*). Petrobras, the biggest Brazilian energy company, planned to build a gas pipeline across the indigenous territory in the 1980s – which also would have had a positive result for Aracruz – when the land dispute would have ceased concurrently. The researchers at UFES<sup>11</sup> made a study according to which the pipeline was relocated to the border of the indigenous territory. The Guarani started to call the pipeline a "fire road" (*caminho de fogo*), and fire is an apocalyptic metaphor for the Guarani. (Ciccarone 2006, pers.comm.; see also Ribeiro 1992). (Photos 7 and 8)

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<sup>11</sup> Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo.



**Photo 7:** Environment of Tekoa porã (aldeia Boa Esperança) and the neighbouring two Guarani indigenous areas drawn by the healer Tupã-Kwarajj. Aracruç plantations are located to the left corner.  
 Photo: Susanna Myllylä.



**Photo 8:** The village map of Tekoa porã (aldeia Boa Esperança) indicating the location of families and a few services (school, pharmacy) by Joana Tatãtxi Ywa Rete. Coffee plants begin the way to the gardens in the upper left. Local road (Tape'ü) and Petrobras pipe (Tatarape) are also shown. Photo: Susanna Myllylä.

Moreover, the Guarani knowledge system is heavily based on non-verbal expressions, like singing, which is a central element in sacred shamanic traditions (“the beautiful language” *Ayvu porã*, “common to gods and human beings”, see Clastres 1995: 73-75). It has been questioned that language is a sufficient tool for accessing knowledge. The knowledge production of indigenous peoples often includes improvisation and creativity (Pottier, 2003: 7). In all, it would be interesting to study more, how modern industrial production affects the Guarani worldview and practices. The Guarani *cacique* described Aracruz’s impact on their mobility:

Before Aracruz, all Indians were free to move along the coast. When the company arrived and started to destroy the Indian cultures, they left. Now if Indians try to return, the company calls it an “invasion”. These pulp companies conduct development towards the progression of death. There are many ways to kill a culture, like the company destroys our livelihood.

## **7. The myth-oriented and malevolent corporate tactics**

Being not fully supported by the Ministry of Justice on several occasions, and receiving contradictory actions at the hands of FUNAI, it was not until in 2005 that the Indians’ claims were taken into account. The Minister of the Interior proclaimed the contract between Aracruz and the Indians illegal, and recommended the new Minister of Justice announce the entire 18,070 ha as indigenous land, including the remaining 11,009, which had been left out of the deal in 1998 and was still in the hands of the multinational company.

Yet in 2005, frustrated at waiting for the court decisions to be implemented, and disappointed at the inefficiency of FUNAI, the Indians decided to carry out a new demarcation of their own by cutting down eucalyptus to define the boundaries of their area. They also rebuilt two old Tupinikim villages, which was “also ‘reconstructing’ their way of life with traditional housing and traditional subsistence crops” (CIMI 2006). In early 2006, the situation escalated into outright conflict when Aracruz’s interests

were supported by the arrival of the Federal Police, who destroyed the two rebuilt villages and injured several Indians by shooting them with rubber bullets from helicopters. The company made a statement about this incident on its internet homepage, but with no mention of its own unethical actions. Furthermore, according to its corporate Code of Conduct, the company is committed to various good governance principles, including respecting human rights of the indigenous peoples.

The Indians reported that more than the physical damage, the emotional and spiritual injuries remained after the incident, evoking collective memories of the violence in 1967. In their campaign material the wounded leaders were photographed and under the photos were written: “Today we have been humiliated ... in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are hunted like animals”. Despite the fact that these clashes resembled a kind of a “David and Goliath” situation – from an outsider’s viewpoint – the Indians continued their resistance movement and soon organised another demonstration, indicating their resilience in the land struggle (Photo 9)



**Photo 9:** *The young Tupinikim cacique Wilson Jaguareté is going to be one of the leaders in the forthcoming resistance movement in December 2006, for which he is preparing at home some traditional wooden weaponry to confront again Aracruz security forces or Federal Police. Photo: Susanna Myllylä.*

In September 2006, a wide-scale campaign started in Aracruz town, targeting the Indians in the land dispute issue. The campaign included wide media coverage, demonstrations, street signs, school materials, booklets, Aracruz web pages, PowerPoint presentations (meant for the company's business partners) and other measures. However, the campaign was not in the company's own name, but it was considered obvious that Aracruz had financed this level of campaign. Large billboards, with the logos of Aracruz company partners, were situated along the roadsides. (Myllylä 2007.) The campaign presented the company as an important actor that has brought economic wealth to the inhabitants, whilst the Indians were insinuated as being less meaningful, if not even an obstacle to the region's development:

Aracruz brought the progress, FUNAI the Indians (*Aracruz trouxe o progresso, a Funai, os índios.*)

Also, the campaign presented the idea that the company was the victim, and the Indians were blamed for harassing Aracruz workers:

Enough, Indians, bullying the workers (*Basta de índios, ameaçando trabalhadores.*)

This referred to situations where the Indians arranged various types of protests; occupying corporate spaces, street demonstrations, etc., and these included hundreds of participants. They also represented members from other Indian tribes and NGO activists. Other NSMs that resisted monocultures expressed solidarity with, for instance, was the Movement of Small Farmers. In the campaign rhetoric, the Indians addressed their peaceful aims despite the company campaign attempting to present the opposite message. The situation escalated to physical conflict as the company's security forces, workers and the Federal Police turned to violence to remove the protestors who had occupied sites owned by the company. To cite an example, the workers at Plantar, a partner firm of Aracruz, started to remove the Indians

using heavy force, because they had occupied the Aracruz harbour.

According to the indigenous social movement rhetoric, particularly expressed by the supporting NGOs, as well as by some researchers, the company's campaign was based on a *racist*<sup>12</sup> approach: the company used all possible means to win the land dispute and attempted to interfere with the cultural identities of the Tupinikim and the Guarani. The main campaign argument was that neither of the indigenous groups had title to the land as though they were only "alleged Indians", culturally degraded (the Tupinikim), or, originating from elsewhere (the Guarani). (Movimento 2006a, 2006b; UFES 2006<sup>13</sup>; Myllylä, 2007.) Thus, according to the Indians, the company decided to rely on another type of rough tactic by spreading disinformation about the indigenous groups, and targeting Brazilian society to achieve acceptance of its actions in the land dispute. The *caciques* from both tribes were astonished to know the company's new argument because Aracruz had previously made various agreements with their Indigenous Commission *per se*. In the campaign material some maps and aerial photos were also used to indicate that indigenous villages did not originally exist in the area that was contested.

It is obvious that "quasi-scientific" research was used in the campaign, namely a report written by a number of anonymous anthropologists hired by Aracruz for the company's appeal in response to the Federal Court decision to widen the area of indigenous land. According to the local NGOs the report was also distributed to Aracruz's partners in order to gain support for the company's interests. The purpose of the report was to devalue the contemporary Tupinikim community and culture as unauthentic by invoking the colonial impact, their *caboclo* (mixed Indian-white) background, and also referring to modern lifestyles, as many Tupinikim live in brick *houses* and some possess satellite dishes,

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<sup>12</sup> Concerning "ethno-racism" towards indigenous peoples in Aracruz Municipality and discrimination at the State level, see Lopes 2008; Cota 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Research group discussion, *Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo*, Vitória.



which are typical of Brazilians in general. The *cacique* Wilson Jaguaretê, whose entire Tupinikim identity – from his name to his headdress and skin painting – was deconstructed: it was claimed that all his cultural features were false or copied from other tribes, in order to illustrate the assertion of “alleged Indians”. The *cacique* challenged the report written by anonymous experts, and referred to the collective memories held by the elders as more valid knowledge:

Who were these 16 anthropologists and where have these studies been published since we have not seen them? The memories of our elders, what happened in the past, are more important.

Thus, the company’s campaign arguments as to how the ‘real’ Indians should *not* live and express themselves, represent an imaginary and myth-driven viewpoint that is discussed particularly in the postcolonial indigenous peoples’ studies (cf. Tuhiwai Smith 1999<sup>14</sup>). Sidsel Saugestad (2001: 64-65) points out that when contrasting various cultures, indigenous peoples have been defined through *dominant negations* and *generalised characteristics*; for example, in the case of the Bushmen, presenting them as the people of the past, or defining them by the *absence* of valued qualities from the dominant culture (lack of resources, living outside towns etc.). However, he also argues that indigenous peoples want to participate in development, but on their own terms, and not to reject development. A living culture’s chance to survive and develop itself depends on its ability to control the introduction of modern elements, such as new technologies, and not to turn them down (p. 64). As Veli-Pekka Lehtola (1999) also analyses certain stereotypical images about the Saami people, he concludes that remaining in a static cultural state as “authentic Saami” would have led to cultural atrophy for the Saami people. On the contrary, an

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<sup>14</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith rejects “post-colonialism” as she considers that colonialism continues to have comprehensive impact on indigenous peoples.

awareness of their own culture's vitality has enabled the open-minded assimilation of new influences, and thus a cultural upheaval. So according to Aracruz campaign rhetoric, representing a kind of museum approach, the Indian cultures should remain unchanged and without connections to Brazilian society. This is also related to the "ethnic purity" approach (Silva 2006, pers.comm).

The Guarani *cacique* described their view of the campaign, comparing it to the ostracised position of the indigenous peoples of Brazil:

We have already suffered that our reputation is spoiled in general. Now we are referred to as something that we are not: attempts are being made to take our identity away and simultaneously, the land struggle is twisted. The Aracruz president himself has claimed that the State area has never been inhabited by Indians, even though already at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Tupi-Guaranis lived here. By denying the existence of the Indians the company tries to close its eyes on our presence.

Aracruz's workers and over 300 partner companies – including the Finnish Metso Corporation, which supplies Aracruz and Veracel with pulping technology – became involved in the campaign because these company logos were included on the roadside signs. According to the Metso management, they did not know about the campaign and hence their logo was used illegally (Seppälä 2008, pers.comm.). Local researchers claimed that Aracruz employees were pressured into participating in the street campaigns in order to keep their jobs. Furthermore, according to several Brazilian civil society organizations, their staff and activists, who supported the Indians in various protests, were intimidated by the company in various ways. (Myllylä 2007.)

The campaign led to a lawsuit against Aracruz, filed by Brazil's Federal Attorney's Office. In December 2006, the publication of the report, together with allegations that particularly the Tupinikim are no Indians, led to a condemnation of Aracruz

by the Federal Court, for discriminatory behaviour. (MST 2007.) Furthermore, in August 2007, Brazil's Minister of Justice signed an administrative ruling declaring the contested area claimed by the Indians as indigenous land (18 070 ha). This resolution changed the direction of the long-term land dispute. It remains to be seen how the situation between the Indians and the company will develop in the near future.

## **8. The Pataxó: divided due to social programs?**

In the state of Bahia, the Pataxó Indigenous Reservation was officially registered in 1861 as an Indian settlement, although the Pataxó have been living in the area long before the colonial period. The principal settlement of the reservation is *aldeia* Barra Velha, located on the coast of Porto Seguro. It is divided into several smaller recognised regional sub-units or sub-villages. According to the 2005 official census, Barra Velha's population was 1082 people (*Sociedade Nordestina de Ecologia* 2001: 58). As it is legally registered, some others, such as Guaxuma, still claim demarcation and legalisation. The relations between the Pataxó and Veracel Celulose are diverse since the company has only recognised three of the 16 Indian villages. Veracel has a rather good relationship with Barra Velha while there is no dialogue with the Guaxuma community.

According to the *Instituto Observatório Social* report (2005: 39-42) Barra Velha villagers have mentioned several positive initiatives and social programs by the company, namely the preservation of the environment, the prevention and control of forest fires, preservation and recuperation of rivers and some donations to the community. Among the negative aspects identified, a reduction in the number of jobs and the toxic contamination of environmental resources were mentioned. In my research in Guaxuma, water pollution and the death of fish were observed by the villagers.

*Aldeia* Guaxuma keeps claiming the right to demarcate the land, for which they have been waiting for around 15 years, living on insufficient land of 240 ha for 28 families (150 people). This area of land was degraded by the former occupant, the wealthier landowner (*fazendeiro*), and there is no natural forest left. The community's livelihood is precarious, coming from subsistence farming and crafts for tourism. (Photo 10)



**Photo 10:** *Guaxuma in a poverty pocket. It is a rather striking view that a eucalyptus field surrounds the village on every horizon – one member described it as an “approaching tsunami”. Photo: Susanna Myllylä.*

In 2004, in an attempt to grab the attention of the authorities regarding the Guaxuma community's land claim, they decided to organise a demonstration obstructing federal highway BR-101. They set fire to a lorry holding Veracel eucalyptus and kept some public officials captive. According to the Pataxó, Veracel was the

demonstration's target because it had planted eucalyptus on a property it was aware within the boundaries of the area being claimed. The Indians stated they have no interest in a dialog with the company, and that all they want is recognition, legalisation and respect for their land. Veracel, in turn, argued it had only bought the properties after verifying there was no conflict or litigation between the 41 proprietors and Indians, and that until that moment the authorities had not concluded studies to define if such a tract is traditional Indian land. (*Instituto Observatório Social* 2005: 40-41.)

It seems that Veracel has not been explicitly involved in such violent confrontations as in the case of Aracruz in Espírito Santo<sup>15</sup>; rather the *fazendeiros* have forcefully evicted Indians from their villages to prepare land sales to Veracel. This is indicative of how complex the phenomenon of agribusiness is and that it entails numerous actors, whose role is not sufficiently acknowledged when discussing the impacts of pulp production. Some Pataxó leaders argue that when the company tries to persuade them to support its production by offering money, it is just a corporate strategy to expand the area used for eucalyptus. The different relationships with the villages raise the question of possible negative impacts for internal cohesion among the Pataxó, i.e. the divisive tactics aimed at driving a wedge between the groups<sup>16</sup>. The *cacique* of the Guaxuma states:

When (the President) Lula came to inaugurate Veracel, the company attempted, as always, to present themselves as a friend of the Indians – as if it would have some kind of informal partnership with *all* the Pataxó. In Barra Velha the company has helped with tree nurseries and given cattle. We in Guaxuma try to keep voice

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<sup>15</sup>In 2010 the armed security team of Aracruz/Fibria opened fire on two small farmers who collected firewood in northeastern Bahia. One farmer died and another one was injured.

<sup>16</sup>The study by Haller et al. (2007) shows that in many instances, the MNCs' strategy is to attempt to divide the indigenous groups: this applied to the majority of the oil company cases they examined (14 out of 18).

that things are not quite what the media presents. So we took back the area where we started to cut down eucalyptus.

According to Veracel – already two years prior to the completion of the pulp mill in 2005 – the company trained a group of Barra Velha villagers on how to grow native Atlantic Forest tree species:

For three days, members of the tribe learned the techniques that will allow them to establish a nursery in their village for the production of native species. The idea is to produce trees destined for recovering degraded areas on their land, also ensuring the reproduction of species used in their production of handcrafts, the main economic activity of the Indians in the extreme south of Bahia ... Although they live in the Atlantic Forest, the participants in the training program revealed that one of the most important things they were taught was how to recognise the trees when they were still very little. “We only see big trees and never knew how to identify the seedlings”. According to Cosme Brás dos Santos (Tixuí Pataxó), the knowledge of the production processes of these types of seedlings will help the Pataxó remain true to their cultural roots. (Veracel News 2003.)

This social project would serve as a useful practice for the Pataxó in search of sustainable use of forests, considering that some families use illegally felled hardwood for making crafts to be sold for tourists. On the other hand, it bears some kind of irony when a global monoculture firm, which just started to plant gigantic areas of clone species in the area, teaches indigenous peoples how to sustain biodiversity of natural forests that have been mainly logged by numerous monoculture activities throughout Bahia’s history. (Photo 11)



**Photo 11.** *From the road to Monte Pascoal National Park. Colonisation and exploitation of the Atlantic Forest for more than 500 years have taken a heavy toll, and as everywhere along the Atlantic coast, the original forest can be mainly found in isolated patches and steep slopes, conserved due to the difficulty accessing them.*

*Photo: Susanna Myllylä.*

## **9. Corporate tactics to deny historical facts**

The Pataxó have a minor relationship with Veracel in regard to employment opportunities. Their suggestion to collect plantation waste wood was rejected by the company, as it does not want outsiders to enter its area. Land use diversity in general has diminished in the region, as observed by one Pataxó:

The arrival of eucalyptus has created more poverty. It has not created jobs – nothing. Before, coffee, papaya, and also cattle used to be grown here, all of which created employment. Instead of improving the socioeconomic situation in the region, Veracel, on the contrary, has increased poverty.

Some Pataxós claim that Veracel has illegally planted their traditional lands, and not even the discovery of human bones in an area that appeared to be their old cemetery has stopped the company from planting eucalyptus there. Speculations arise as this disrespect or even denial of the historical existence of the Indians in the area represents purposeful strategy by the company:

It has happened at least in one case, but after the company had already bought the land. In front of Meio da Mata village, close to Monte Pascoal Park, was all our ancestral land, and there human bones were found according to my knowledge. Nevertheless, the company started to plant eucalyptus in the area. Then there was another case – a French journalist arrived in our village and saw the negative social impacts caused by Veracel. He travelled to a conference organised by the pulp producers in the United States and exposed what he had seen. Veracel tried to prevent the publishing of the news by announcing that this area did not have Indians when it arrived here.

In addition, the plantations have erased their ancient trails. The above examples resemble the claims by the Tupinikim in Espírito Santo where they accused Aracruz of intentionally purchasing land where their traditional cemetery is located. The Indians considered it part of corporate tactics to destroy existing historical evidence of their presence in the region prior to the arrival of the company.

Veracel aims to achieve national and international acceptance by emphasising that it is not a rainforest logger, but rather a protector of the region's last natural forests. However, this typical corporate "rainforest protector argument" has been challenged due to several incidents connected to environmental violations, and problems concerning the reception of FSC certification, which also addresses respecting indigenous peoples' rights. (See Myllylä and Takala 2010.)

In the 1980s, the government granted the Pataxó villages access to 21,000 acres of the national park and kept the remaining



36,000 acres under government control. Since then the federal officials have been talking with tribal leaders about giving the tribe more land, but only if the Pataxó move to another area and relinquish their claims to the park. (Rohter 1999.) More recently, co-management (*a gestão compartilhada*) of the park has been discussed and suggested by the environmental authorities and FUNAI, however, its contents have remained ambiguous for the Pataxó. Besides, co-management of protected areas is generally an uncommon phenomenon in Brazil. Hence, due to numerous interest parties – the Pataxó, Ibama, Veracel, *fazendeiros* – the land ownership question in Bahia is very complicated in terms of what may be expected to take place in the near future. According to FUNAI and its research (i.e. identification process) carried out by anthropologists, the entire Monte Pascoal National Park and adjacent areas – including large portions of Veracel’s plantations – are to be demarcated as Pataxó territory, which is based on archaeological excavations in the study. This news will not be warmly welcomed by other actors, namely the protected areas administration of Ibama and conservationists, nor Veracel Celulose. (Myllylä 2007)

## 10. Conclusions

It is obvious that in Brazil the government’s various policies – that of economic growth, protecting biodiversity and demarcating indigenous peoples’ lands – collide in many instances. The ever-expanding agribusiness of multinational pulp corporations occupy greater land areas, which are often inhabited by indigenous peoples and other poor rural communities. Their unresolved and ambiguous land ownership question due the bureaucratic, and even sometimes corrupted practices by official institutions lays the basis for land disputes.

In this analysis, I have attempted to discern those multifaceted local situations in which the three communities of

indigenous peoples encounter global corporations in the form of land conflicts. The ultimate goal of the companies seems to be a strategy indicating that their adversary does not represent an indigenous group originating from the place in question. The pulp corporations have exerted diverse tactics, from social programs to violent confrontations and the devaluation of indigenous identities in ways that seem imperialistic. Much of these tactics have been aimed at obtaining societal acceptance for corporate interests. Social programs by MNCs often serve as cases of governance and guided inclusion targeted at indigenous communities. The three Indian groups, in turn, have defended their territories by collective action, as a New Social Movement and via their own tactics, such as protests and land occupations in order to achieve publicity and societal acceptance. The land struggles are inherently related to the communities' primary livelihood, the Atlantic Forest. The processes of ethnoterritoriality, due to confrontations with multinational companies, have profoundly affected the identities, social cohesion and even the worldviews of the indigenous communities.

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