

ARTIGO

THE YANOMAMI SOCIOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE HUTUKARA CREATION: THE PATA
THËPË AND THE EMERGENCY OF YOUNG POLITICAL
LEADERSHIPS

Abstract

The current study is an effort to understand the Yanomami sociopolitical dynamic in the context of mobilization and articulation that preceded the establishment of Hutukara Yanomami Association; in that context, new patterns of dialogs and knowledge were established, fact that has delineated new forms of relationship between youth and elder leaders. From reads in ethnology, history and I my own ethnography work, I try to understand the place of the new organization in the sociopolitical dynamic of Yanomami and its implication for the local groups and also in the relationship between traditional and youth leaders. I try to show that speech and knowledge are the two major principles that connect the youth and traditional leaders; the choice of youth leaders as major political speaker does not mean the elder's loss of power; the Yanomami see the presence of the youth in the meetings as necessary, due to the necessity of decoding their relationship with non-Indians.

Keywords: Yanomami; Etnologia Indígena; Política Indígena.

Resumo

O presente estudo é um esforço de aproximação da dinâmica sociopolítica Yanomami a partir do contexto de mobilizações e articulações que antecederam a criação da Hutukara Associação Yanomami, em que novos padrões de diálogos e construção de conhecimentos foram sendo fertilizados, delineando novas relações entre lideranças tradicionais e as jovens lideranças. Por meio da pesquisa de fontes etnológicas, historiográficas e de minba própria etnografia, buscam-se compreender o lugar desta forma de organização na dinâmica sociopolítica Yanomami, e as implicações nas relações entre os grupos locais, as lideranças tradicionais e os jovens líderes, e a adoção da representação política. Procura-se mostrar que a fala e o conhecimento são dois princípios que conectam lideranças tradicionais e os jovens representantes, e que a escolha dos jovens como representantes não significa perda de poder dos velhos frente aos mais novos, e que a presença dos jovens em assembleias, reuniões e eventos é vista pelos Yanomami como necessária, por decodificar com mais habilidade, a construção do mundo dos não-índios.

Palavras-Chave: Yanomami; Ethnology; Indigenous Politics.

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Introduction

The challenge of going down by the thematic of Yanomami political dynamics, taking the traditional leaderships and the young representatives, in the field of the experience of institutionalized representation, was born from the insertion and active participation in the mobilization processes and construction of the Hutukara Yanomami Association. Especially so, in the Toototopi region, in function of the work of accompaniment to the Yarapiari Project teachers - Yanomami Teachers Training at the level of Indigenous Magisterium - developed by the Program of Intercultural Education created by the Pro-Yanomami Commission¹ in the period of April 2002 to August 2006, as a field pedagogical counselor.

The entire population is fluent in the native languages, and in other dialects that come from the diverse Yanomami sub-groups, therefore, the attainment of information, meetings registers, assemblies, courses and leadership speeches had been made by means of translations from the several Yanomami languages.

Inside the picture of the support network built to the Yanomami people has been reinforced after their territory homologation in 1992, there are the national and international Governmental Organizations, the Non-Governmental Organizations, the local, regional and national Organizations, Indigenous and religious Organizations. The Education Projects implanted by the CCPY, Diocese of Roraima and Secoya - Service and Cooperation with the Yanomami People, in the several regions which constitutes the Yanomami land, had created literate conditions for a significant contingent of children and young people, creating the grounds to leverage the formation of microscope technicians and teachers. Due to the increasing popularity in speaking of the Portuguese language by teachers, some indigenous agents of health, agro-forest agents, plus two good-carriers², the sayings and speeches of these young people have been obtained in Portuguese.

It does not constitute a study goal to make historical analysis either upon the speech of traditional leaderships or that of the youth, out of the context of the political organization experience, but to deal with the pata thëpë³ and young Yano-

¹ "The Pro-Yanomami commission, a Non-Governmental Organization created in 1978, developed a work to support the schools and Teachers formation by means of the Intercultural Education Program IEP. The indigenous school education support initially began in the regions of the Demini, Toototopi and Parawau, being later extended to the Papiu, Kaynau, Catrimani I, Auaris and Homoxi regions".

² Goods carriers are young people responsible for loading all belongings, equipment and medicines of the Health and Education professionals as well as services providers in general, in the passages of displacement from the support rank until the villages.

³ Pata is the local leader, thë is a generic additive used when the citizen is not identified (the leader's name, for example), pë is the plural participle.

mami speeches. Their acts and choices will be the main object of analysis for understanding the appropriation and sustention processes of this political organization format.

The place of the Association in the Yanomami political dynamics, and the implications between this form of non-Indian political organization – which consists in acting by means of chosen representatives, and the grounds under the traditional leaderships (*pata thëpë*) and the young people (*hiya thëpë*) – move inside this socio-political dynamics. It takes as conducting wire the local groups, their *pata thëpë* and their links with a form of political organization, and the adoption of the choice of young leaderships to act in new forums of representation, constitutes aims of this article.

The pata thëpë and the adoption of political representation

The majority of the characteristics that define the position of Yanomami command are similar to the ones that define commands in other indigenous groups (CLASTRES, 1982; RIVIÉRE, 2000) and brings on discussions the issues related to the origins and legitimacy of the political power, the relation between leader and social body, issues related to the qualities that define an indigenous command.

The construction of local command qualifications has the privileged location for its agreement in the sociability processes in the social relations that exist inside the group.

The Yanomami does not possess class of defined age, in this sense, the native categories *oxewi*, *hiya*, *mãro* and *pata*, will be treated as relationary category directed to the knowledge about the proeminence of *pata thë*.

The *oxewi* category does not exclusively restrict the children identification, but the wisdom of a person, that is built in a linear or non-gradual form, so the *pata thëpë* are the synthetizers of the amplitude of a person permeated by wisdom.

At the plan of the social interaction the *oxewi* are completely dependents of their mothers, who represents the main source of comfort, foods and security for the newborns. Wherever they go or dislocate, they are loaded in a sling, and have the complete freedom to nurse whenever they want, and they receive as only food, the maternal milk, and eventually, of other mothers, the mother's sisters.

In the first months of life, the children receive a lace of beadings, placed in the height of the hip, so that their buttocks can develop without anatomical problems but it is also used as a shield to frighten away evil spirits. As much as the kids find

themselves in conditions to follow their parents in the incursions to the forest, they play and carry through small tasks when they want, being free to try and discover.

The construction of autonomy can be observed in the act of falling, for example. When falling, or if they hurt themselves, they must arise on their own; no interference coming from the adults is allowed but for that in a second moment, which it is only assented to the mother, the act of helping and consolation.

In the process of identification as a *hyia*, the same ones starts *to be* requested for determined learnings of the tasks demanded by their sex. The boys receive from their fathers arcs and arrows, which they use to practice in birds, butterflies, trunks of banana trees, and carry through small fishing activities at the water's edge.

The girls pass through the nose perforation process (only women who know how to handle sharp objects made of animal bones are allowed to be in charge of this procedure), as well as punctures in the next laterals to the mouths, under the inferior lip, in which small rods made of a slim bamboo specie with tips decorated with mutum feathers will be introduced. Still in this stage, they start to wear the beading ornaments used in the frontal part and others circulating the hip, right above the *pesimakü* (a small thong made of cotton, dyed in red), and in the superior part of the arms, place where flowers and perfumed leaves are inserted. It is in this phase that the girls are promised to their future husbands.

Boys and girls are grouped separately, so they form infantile groups to bathe in the rivers; it is common for the boys to make girls cry, and as a consequence to the aggressive tricks that they repeatedly do.

The fights involve exclusively the boys, and nobody can intervene, they fight until they are exhausted. However, while the parents and other adults stimulate them to show their bravery, in the male infantile disputes, few times there is a winner, the corporal fight end when they reach the limit of physical tiredness; none of the fighters tries to escape, because it is considered a dishonor. In almost all cases, they leave crying, the mothers receive them, deal with their wounds and consoles them as well; it is the learning of the practical attributes of the strong and fearless warlike man.

The girls' rite of passage or initiation for the adult life occurs during the *menarche*. In this period, the girls are inmates, inside of a small house made of straw, the *maloca*. They cannot eat salt, tapir meat, jaw, *caititu*, *guariba* monkey, drink water without pepper (it prevents allergy), they cannot eat papaya (it prevents the sprouting of *bubo*), cannot walk in the forest (otherwise snakes and jaguars might appear), neither can walk in the slash (because the plants become dry), cannot see the sky

(because the rain will fall without stopping), cannot see other people (only the mother) or to stay closer to men (otherwise the man becomes fearful, and he does not participate of war, because his soul weakens), they don't eat excessively; they do not use tobacco, they cannot take bath, they only keep staring to the ground. It is only after the sanguine flow interruption, that the mother will be able to excuse the cares with corporal hygiene and her beauty treatment. It is the mother who bathes the girl, and paints with urucum ink (in order to not frighten the jaguar), she decorates the arms with flowers, and along with other women go to the forest and start the crab hunting.

In the case of boys, when they enter the phase of voice transformation, they remain lying in their hammocks during approximately six days. In this time, the parents are the ones who advise them and also offer food. The feeding is limited to small bananas baked and boiled with pepper, some types of fish as *piaba*, which must be consumed with pepper, but without salt.

In this period they cannot walk regularly, as well as eat any type of bush meat, drink *açai*, *bacaba* or *pataná* juice, to eat cassava, *beiju*, *taioba*, to use tobacco (in order not to lose their teeth), to drink water without pepper, and they cannot eat big bananas (because they believe it will cause column aches in the future). When the "reclusion" period ends, the boy is allowed to hunt in distant places.

Such processes as it certifies Alcida Ramos (1999) symbolize the attribution of a conditional status that the group grants to the young members, and may result in the first serious opportunity to enter in the adult group.

The admission of young people from this category in the group of men has in the *benimou* (moment where groups of men carry through huntings to funeral ceremonies) a symbolic practice of acceptance for the requirements of the adult life.

The definitive ingression to the new processes and requirements for the adult life starts from the marriage, which marks in a symbolic way the beginning of new experiences, the duties include to protect the wife's parents and obligatorily serve them in diverse types of services. Further on, the attribute of *nãro pata* "adult man" is given in the moment that he becomes a grandfather. The reference *pata thë* is the assignment of identification of the mature person, and it constitutes itself as the most important phase in a man's life, because it is when he gets status and recognition from the group, regarding his maturity.

The *pata thë* is the group representative in the relation with other groups, with relatives, acquaintances, other local groups, with other indigenous peoples and with the non-indians; he is the figure that establishes and performs the formal relation

with the groups or visitors. His projection as a leader is endorsed in the knowledge that he demonstrates throughout his socialization process, path that evinces his wisdom and qualities recognized by the group.

The man who does not hunt or obtain meat to distribute is not only considered lazy, but also stingy, since he receives meat from hunting of the other people, but he does not repay in the same proportion. The ones that are stingy, selfish, excessively brave, quarrelsome, who steal, lie, are lazy, angry and brave, incapable of helping the others, or to share with relatives and friends what they have, or to please the friends with gifts, are not seen in a very good light to assume any type of leadership position.

In many groups, the figure of shaman coincides with the figure of the head, and the linking between the shamanism and the leadership enhances the interlacing between these two forms of mastering knowledge. The shaman interacts with the cosmological elaborations in order to maintain or to reconstitute the group balance. The head chief is the representative of his local group in the relation with other human beings: close or distant relatives from different regions or from other ethnical groups as well as the non-Indians.

The shaman formation occurs in two ways: by transference, i.e. the shamans transfer the auxiliary spirits that compose their lives to their children. These auxiliary spirits follow and protect the shaman children since early infancy. Another type of shaman initiation are the personal motivations, based on spiritual criteria. Both motivations are not abstained, however, in both of them, the spirits' seduction is the central motivational elements, conforming to a narrative registered by Smiljanic (1999, p. 104).

Quando eu era criança, os espíritos me assustavam. Minha rede ficava coberta de penugens brancas, depois eu tinha sono, mas não dormia assustado, eu chorava e pensava: o que está acontecendo comigo? Quando cresci, continuei a ver os espíritos auxiliares. A floresta se transformava e eu via os cupins cobertos de penugem correndo, eu os seguia e eles então voltavam pelo caminho correndo. Eu sentia medo e por isso continuava pelo caminho, o "espírito do caminho" também me assustava. Um sapo também me assustou, ele mordeu meu pé e por isso eu bati nele, então ele me disse: "não, não me bata, sou eu" e desta forma me assustou. Os espíritos das folhas e dos cipós também me assustavam cobrindo-se de penugens brancas.⁴

⁴ "When I was a child, the spirits used to scare me. My hammock remained covered with white fuzzes, later I felt sleepy, but I did not sleep scared, I used to cry and think: what is happening to me? As I grew older, I kept seeing the auxiliary spirits. The forest was transformed and I saw running termites covered by fuzz, I followed them and then they returned running on the way. I was afraid and because of this he continued on the way, the "spirit of the way" also scared me. A frog also scared me, it bit my foot, therefore I beat in it, then it said to me:

When they reach adult phase, the auxiliary spirits emit new signals by means of dreams, attainment of bigger success in hunting, which demonstrates their shamanic potential condition, until a given moment in which they will be initiated by the spirits and managed by the oldest shamans.

Still, according to Smiljanic (1999) it is not enough that a man has submitted himself to the initiation rite or has been seduced by the forest spirits to become a socially recognized shaman. A shaman must look for knowledge expansion, respect the taboos concerning sex, and follow the alimentary prescriptions.

The shaman abilities, expressed by means of the spirituals reading related to all the processes of social life, may be perceived in the cares towards people from the group; in the provision of information regarding the danger that surround the village; in the treatment of diseases; or yet, in the guiding on fishing and hunting situations in order to successfully accomplish the survival activities;

The emergency and legitimacy of a leadership endorses itself in the knowledge that is put to service in favor of the community: a good hunter, agriculturist or fisherman, a good orator, a good shaman, or a good administrator are important because they have developed techniques, knowledge and wisdom above average. Upon these socio-physical differences, it is possible to build sociopolitical differences (RAMOS, 1995, p. 67).

In the daily speeches, the Yanomami mention the knowledge of a person - either it is a child, adult or aged -, diagnosed in four levels: *thai waisipi mahiowi* (one knows very little), *thai waisipini* (one knows a little), *thai bathobo* (one knows more or less) and *thai mabi* (one knows a lot), a kind of diagnosis that applies to some situations, not limiting itself to the age-group or to the idea of rigid and fixed stages, the knowledge *thai mahiowi*, is an employed qualifier to the *pata thëpë*.

Referring to the *pata thëpë*, in contexts of political definitions, asking to a young Yanomami about decisive topics, it is common to hear: "*taimi, pata thëpë xiro thai*", "I do not know, the old men are those who know". On the other hand, it is common to hear warnings from the old ones, related to the little experience and knowledge of the young ones regarding to the wise men issues. The wisdom is tied to the idea of mature man, not young people.

The leader, possessor of an unquestionable oratory talent, is the responsible for carrying through the *bereamou* - one of the main mechanisms of education of the youth and perpetuation of indigenous tradition, because it articulates the past, since immemorial times, reframing the present -. Thus, in the first hours of the dawn,

"no, don't hit me, it's me" and in this way he scared me. The leaves and liana spirits also scared me covering themselves with white fuzzes."

before the sunrise or in the transition afternoon-night, he goes to the center of the village, and by means of many gestures, he makes long and strong speeches.

The daily *hereamou* occurs inside a routine where co-residents keep doing their habitual tasks without alterations. Lying in their hammocks, feeding themselves – in their main meals schedule –, nobody stops the tasks to give attention to the pata speeches. When there is some type of manifestation, it usually comes from the women, who show up with low voice, grumbling and mumbling to be heard only by the husband. The husband, fed with the wife's information, manifests himself in a jesting tone and his comments are received by the others with laughs and jokes.

To be a respected pata inter and among the villages, it is necessary to know how to speak well, clearly, and speak a lot. His knowledge about the *Yanomami* history is an essential quality and definer of his command position.

It is through long speeches, that the pata convinces the people to act in an adequate way, and to change attitude, opinion, according to the situation. In the morning speeches or in the evening, through histories of ancestors, they legitimate their points of view, calling attention for the change of thought or emphasizing aspects that are necessary to the answers for the questions placed. The old ones hope that the young people listen to their speeches, learn their way and content. The oratory of *pata pë* must be heard and learned, neither a debate or any process of quarrel on what he is being taught is expected, in such a way, to generate agreement and to manage the disagreement are constituent elements of the traditional leaderships.

Broader issues related to health, education, the Association and others, are carried through in partnership with other villages, the *hereamou* Inter-villagers, with a more politician characteristic, occurs in public spaces. They do not have an exclusive place, are communal spaces, destined exclusively to hold of great meetings.

The rhetorical capacity of the leaderships, both in content and way of doing, contained in the assignment pata *thë kohipëvi* the strong speech of the leader, similar to the *Wäiapi*, in accordance with Gallois

remete à construção de uma retórica como estratégia cultural de produção de uma imagem de si, por outro lado, tematizam vários aspectos da reprodução econômica, social e simbólica desta sociedade, destacando e definindo, para fora, os elementos do seu modo de ser⁵ (GALLOIS, 2000, p. 222).

⁵ “it refers to the construction of a rhetoric as cultural strategy of production of an image of himself, on the other hand, thematize some aspects of the economic, social and symbolic reproduction of this society, detaching and defining the elements in its way of being”.

The oratory, the speech, is a quality sufficiently cited in the ethnographic studies that analyze issues associated to the position of command in the indigenous populations. The issues raised by Marcos Pellegrini (2008: 14) about the speech, in which he examines the use of language among the Yanomami in their relations with the non-indigenous people, starting from their proper concerns regarding communication, and the strategies used in the political action in a context that surpasses their own society, point out the importance of this qualification to the exercise of the power to command the *Yanomami* groups.

Among the *Yanomami* there is a generalized expectation that all people must be married, because marriage, beyond the procreation functions, the sexual nature, among others factors becomes necessary, for economic reasons, from a gender division of work. Previously matched, they are definitely effectively together as soon as the young women lock up their reclusion period, right after their first menstruation.

The residence rule indicates a strong tendency to *uxorilocalidade*, in which, after the marriage, the husband starts to live in the young woman family's village; however, it is not applied to the polygynous heads. When, in the act to take in marriage a second woman, she is the one who starts to live in the husband's house. As it is so, the leader-father-in-law accumulates more prestige in the measure that he becomes leader of many relatives for congregating in his residence, brothers, children and son-in-laws.

Usually, the *pata thëpë* are married with two or more women. In conversations with the young professor Enio Mayanawa *Yanomami* of the *Piau* village about the polygyny of the head-chiefs, he emphasized to be a common practice to the *pata thëpë* of his region.

Na minha região do Toototopi os pata pë têm duas mulheres. O pata do *Apiabiki* tem sua primeira mulher, com quem tem cinco filhos, e tem a segunda, com quem teve um filho que já morreu. O outro pata do Rasasi, também tem duas mulheres; o pata do *Xiroxiropi*, também tinha duas mulheres, só que uma já morreu, só ficou a mais nova. Quando o pata pega outra mulher, a primeira fica muito triste, tem ciúme, com o tempo, depois que a outra esposa vem morar junto, ela se acostuma. (CARVALHO, fevereiro de 2004).⁶

⁶ "In my region of the Toototopi the pata pë have two women. The pata of *Apiabiki* has his first woman, with who he procreates and have five children, and the second woman must be a person who has a dead son, so he also procreates with her. The other pata of *Rasasi*, also has two women; the pata of the *Xiroxiropi*, also had two women, but one of them had already died, now there is only the youngest one. When the pata chooses another woman to make out with, the first one becomes very sad, she feels jealousy, but with the time, after the other wife starts to live together, she get used to it. (CARVALHO, February of 2004)."

As we can observe the polygyny, as among other Amazonian indigenous peoples, it constitutes common social practice among the *Yanomami*.

Taking the working time as a comparative base between two polygynic heads, one from the *Apiabiki* village and another one from the Rasasi village, both located in the Toototopi region, it is perceived distinct working journeys between one and another. Certain day, I asked to the Rasasi pata the reason why he worked so hard, he told me that he had two women, seven kids - five men and two women - therefore, they had that to work hard in the field in order to not let the women starve. Without food, the women become angry and the small children cry.

The *pata* of *Apiabiki*, that already had a wife, told me that he was hooking up with another young wife, from the Koyopi village, therefore, he had to work in his field and also in the new father-in-law's field, give him food, gifts (machetes, hammocks, etc.). Reflecting on such information, I wondered: what are the advantages of having two wives and a great number of children? The answer lies in the comprehension, in the direction where the polygyny is established.

Pierre Clastres (1990, p. 27) establishes a relation between political institutions and polygyny (practice that guarantees the leader to have rights over a larger number of women) it refers, in the political life of the group, to a mechanism in which it keeps the balance between the social structure and the political institution, between leader and social body. It is circumscribed to the exchange relationship, that is to say that the group allows the head-chief to take more than one woman, however, in exchange, the group, has the right to demand from their chief generosity concerning goods, and oratory talent, tasks that their wives, in great measure, help them support.

The permanent construction of a local leader cannot be seen as a simple exchange of perpetuation of the leader's power, but of pure and simple donation from the group to the leader, donation without counterpart, apparently destined to sanction the social statute of the detainer of a position instituted not to be changed (CLASTRES, 1982:107).

The *pata thëpë* are the responsible for planning the economic activities and ceremonies of the group; they host the visitors, either they are Yanomami or non-indigenous. Although the co-residents' relatives are not necessarily hosted by the *pata thëpë*, they are commonly received by their relatives, but always talk to the *pata pë* from the village, whom they look for in determined moments.

The leader does not possess any decision-making power; he is never safe from the fact that his orientations may not be executed. There is no symmetry between the orientation and the execution, fact that marks the constant fragility of a contested power, the power of the head-chief depends on the group's willingness.

The amount of *pata thëpë* per village does not find any symmetry with the population contingent, which is not characterized by the agglomeration of great population clusters, as we could infer.

To the figure of *pata* it is aggregated the responsibility of choosing the place to open a new field and to construct a new collective house, and also to congregate around himself son-in-laws, brothers-in-law, besides children and brothers. However, nor always they are processes that proceed without the absence of long and lasting dialogues between local groups.

The adoption of the representation

It is in the historical context of interethnic contact that the notion of representation gained political action statute. The use of the “representative” category, here is used, taking as representation notion, the idea of “somebody speaking on behalf of”, “taking decisions and acting on behalf of”.

The formation courses had given to the young professors, health agents, a differentiated qualification that had enabled them to the exercise of positions as secretaries, treasurer, Association coordinators, interpreters. In the context of intensification of the relations with state agencies, concomitant to the intensification of the trips promoted by people associated with the indigenous movements, it was expanded the reach of the social experience of several young people, and, indirectly, this process ended up in resounding in the villager context.

The requests, demands and expectations that the *napë pë* have on the representatives, has generated many times, overlappings between the figure of *pata* and the representative for previously selection of the privileged mediators for the communication establishment. *The napë pë* in diverse situations frequently requests to the Yanomami people to represent them, they want to know who is the head of the village. These continuous requests have contributed for the construction of focal leaders references in default of the *pata* ordinance according to the Yanomami criteria.

In the Yanomami context, new standards of dialogues and knowledge construction are being fertilized, delineating new relations between *pata thëpë* and the juveniles. The domain of the Portuguese language by the young, associated to the need of translating the *napë pë* speeches for the young *pata thëpë*, impose new rhythm and agreement of this modality of communication.

Meeting involving leaderships of the Apiahiki, Koyopi, Xiroxiropi to discuss the creation of the Hutukara, September 6th of 2005.

Reunião envolvendo lideranças do Apiahiki, Koyopi, Xiroxiropi para discutirem a criação da Hutukara, 06 de setembro de 2005.

O pata da aldeia Apiahiki (aproximadamente 52 anos, cinco filhos e duas mulheres) iniciou falando do pedido do Davi Kopenawa para que discutissem sobre a formação da Associação. Fez uma retomada da história dos antigos, desde quando moravam no Marakanã e encontraram os garimpeiros. Naquele tempo ele não conhecia os brancos, não sabia qual era o seu pensamento, agora já sabe. Os espíritos hekura pẽ lhes deram sabedoria para enxergar além do que é visível, pois lêem o pensamento dos “brancos” e vêem o quanto são maléficos. Então essa Associação que estão falando, vai, assim como os bons espíritos, clarear suas idéias [sic], seus pensamentos, para defender a floresta, também vai ajudar com rádios para poderem falar com os parentes quando estiverem doentes na Casa do Índio em Boa Vista; e assim encerrou seu discurso naquela noite.

Seu filho G. Yanomami, agente indígena de saúde e também o mais jovem representante da comunidade, possui um discurso forte, linguagem articulada, fala português, lê e escreve em sua língua. Em seu discurso, recheado de palavras em português, colocou os problemas de saúde em sua comunidade, enumerando as crianças que se encontram com diarreia [sic], gripe; explicou a partir das dificuldades vividas, a importância da Associação para fazer documentos para as autoridades. Defendeu a idéia de que a proximidade com os não-índios ser necessário para que fiquem mais esclarecidos e não cometerem os erros do passado. Chamou atenção para a falta de conhecimento dos velhos pata pẽ com relação aos não-índios, enfatizando sua habilidade com o português, que o qualifica para entender o pensamento dos “brancos”, requisito necessário para fazer uma Associação forte. Retomando a fala, o pata T. Yanomami, após discurso de Gerson foi até a frente e rebateu suas críticas, afirmou sua sabedoria, embora não saiba português, conhece o pensamento dos não-índios, e que somente os homens sábios possuem essa habilidade, as crianças, os jovens, inexperientes e em fase de aprendizado, devem aprender com eles. Ao término da reunião, por volta do meio-dia, todos foram chamados para o almoço em que foram distribuídos peixes e muito *caxiri*. Os convidados das outras aldeias retornaram às suas respectivas casas. (CARVALHO, relatório de campo, setembro de 2005)⁷.

⁷ “The pata of the Apiahik village (approximately 52 years, five children and two women) initiated talking about the Davi Kopenawa’s request so that they could debate about the Association formation. It made a retaken of the ancient people history, since the time when they lived in Marakanã and had found the gold prospectors. At that time he did not know about the existence of the white men, neither their thoughts, but he knows now. The hekura pẽ spirits had given them wisdom so they can see beyond what is visible, because they read the white men thoughts and see how much they are maleficent. Then this mentioned Association as well as the good spirits will clear his ideas, his thoughts to protect the forest, and they will also help with radios to be able to speak with the relatives when they are sick in the Indigenous House in Boa Vista; and thus locked up his speech in that night.

His son G. Yanomami, indigenous health agent and also the youngest community representative, possesses a strong speech, articulated language, speaks Portuguese, reads and writes in his language. In his speech, full of words in Portuguese, he placed the health problems in his community, enumerating the children who suffers with diarrhea, flu; he explained from the lived difficulties, the importance of the Association to write documents for the authorities. He defended the idea that the proximity with the non-indians is necessary so they can be

The *pata thëpë* and representative young people anchor their speeches in the diverse sources of knowledge in this dynamic. The young speech anchors in knowledge about the world *napë*, and seeks in this type of knowledge endorsement for its representation.

However, for the *pata thëpë*, in accordance with the Yanomami criteria, they are still in formation process. Both old and young knowledge sources have a hybrid character, that is to say that the young ones empowered by the specific knowledge of *napë* insert this knowledge as tool and reading in defense of Yanomami rights.

The knowledge of the old ones are anchored in the totality of Yanomami social life, are their first reference under which he produces the reading of the *nape* world. Both emphasize the defense of the Yanomami rights is not about a rupture, or gaps between young and old generations, but of distinct ways for a construction of references by means of which they build the force of their speeches.

The young ones started to understand the activities constantly carried through in the scope of the relations with the non-Indians as representation and leadership position. For they spoke Portuguese fluently and had a better understanding about the conceptions of the world to mediate the Yanomami and non-indian relations in distinct contexts outside the villages, and with the absence of the *pata thëpë*, the young men have started to assume roles as representative of the *Yanomami*.

Dário Vitório Yanomami, V Pan Amazonian Forum, Debate Table: “Mining the Open Veins of the Land”:

Bom dia a todos! Eu sou Dário Yanomami, filho de Davi Yanomami, vou falar o pensamento dos Yanomami sobre Mineração em nossas terras. A nossa terra indígena está localizada em Roraima e também no Amazonas. Tem Yanomami também na Venezuela. Nossa terra só foi homologada pelo presidente Fernando Collor, em 1992. A mineração na nossa terra ficou muito forte por que o Governo brasileiro fez o Projeto RADAMBRASIL e espalhou para os brancos que havia muito minério na terra dos Yanomami. Os garimpeiros invadiram nossa terra, fizeram muitas pistas de avião. Quarenta mil garimpeiros entraram em toda terra Yanomami, trouxeram as doenças dos brancos, e muitos Yanomami morreram de malária, e outras doenças. Nós sofremos muito. Atualmente, nós Yanomami voltamos a crescer, somos dezenove mil Yanomami, por isso, não queremos garimpo, nem

more clarified and don't commit the errors of the past. He called attention for the lack of knowledge of the old *pata pë* regarding to the non-indians, emphasizing his ability with the Portuguese language, who qualifies him to understand the thoughts of the “white men”, necessary requirement to make a strong Association.

Retaking the speech, the *pata T.Yanomami*, after Gerson's speech he went until the front and countered his critics, affirmed his wisdom, although he does not know Portuguese, he knows the non-indians thoughts, and that the wise men only possess this ability, the children, the young, inexperienced and in learning phase, must learn with them. In the end of the meeting, around the noon, all of them were invited to the lunch time where fish and a lot of *caxiri* was distributed. The guests of the other villages had returned to their respective houses. (CARVALHO, field report, September of 2005).”

mineradora em nossas terras. A Constituição Federal garante os nossos direitos; o artigo 232 da Constituição Federal garante nosso direito de território. Agora, os políticos, o Romero Jucá, querem fazer Lei de mineração nas terras indígenas, se isso acontecer, se os brancos invadirem nossa terra novamente, os Yanomami vão fazer guerra. Os brancos têm bombas, mas nós não temos medo, vamos fazer guerra usando arcos e flechas para defender nosso território. (CARVALHO, relatório novembro de 2010).⁸

It is possible to evidence that the young men are aware of the choice of what to say, who to say, and when to say. They are aware against the expectations that the non-Indians project and construct representations on what is to be a Yanomami, in this it includes the projections of the Yanomami as a unified and cohesive people.

Of ownership of these world information *napë*, the young Yanomami, with more fluency in the Portuguese language, in Mathematics, that know how to go to the bank, to count money, to make purchases, to read and write stimulated the production of a differentiated position inside the Yanomami society. Their presence in assemblies, meetings and events it is seen by the Yanomami and non-Indians as necessary for decoding with more ability the construction of the non-Indians world.

These attributes had passed to be perceived by these young men as exclusive adjectives that guarantees to them differentiated *status* and place them in prominence and power to filter, also, the translation of the speech of the *pata thëpë*, for supposedly withholding greater knowledge upon the non-Indians. Besides, the young people contribute by means of their salaries, with industrialized goods for the network of relations among themselves and among local groups.

It is observed in the youngest leaderships' speeches (as mentioned previously), a way of speaking that adjusted in accordance with the interlocutors. In the local assemblies, we perceive the traditional structure of the strong speech, at the same time, mix with the native way of speaking, expressions stuffed with words in Portuguese, indicating its importance to the nucleus of the speech.

⁸ Good morning to everybody! I am Dário Yanomami, Davi Yanomami's son, I will talk about the thought of the Yanomami about Mining in our lands. Our indigenous land is located in Roraima and also in Amazon. There are also Yanomami people in Venezuela. Our land was homologated by the president Fernando Collor, only in 1992. The mining in our land became very strong because the Brazilian Government created the RADAMBRASIL project and spread for the whites that there were so much more in the Yanomami land. The gold prospector had invaded our land and built lots of airplane tracks. Forty thousand prospectors had entered in all Yanomami land, they had brought the illnesses of the white men, and lots of Yanomami died of malaria, and other diseases. We faced too much suffering. Currently, we Yanomami started to grow again, we are nineteen thousand Yanomami, therefore, we do not want gold prospecting nor mining in our lands. The Federal Constitution guarantees our rights; The article 232 of the Federal Constitution guarantees our right of territory. Now, the politicians, like Romero Jucá, wants to make a mining law in the a indigenous lands, if it happens, if the white men invade our land again, the Yanomami will start a war. The white men have bombs, but we do not have fear, we will make war using arcs and arrows to defend our territory. (CARVALHO, report November of 2010).

However, they know that to acquire status of *pata* they will have to learn and fulfill all the requirements for acquisition of a wisdom that will only come with time and maturity.

The choice of the young ones to assume the direction of Hutukara does not mean loss of power from the old ones to the new ones. For the *pata thëpë* the young men do not become head-chiefs because of their occupation as direction rank, treasure-house of the Hutukara, in contrast, it distances itself from the Yanomami life, as they involve themselves more in the life of the *napë pë*.

The elders do not feel threatened by the young, since the professors are still young for the command. A young that remains months and months in the city involves himself constantly with alcoholic beverage, that marries *napë* woman or indigenous from another group, moves away from the qualities that define a *Pata*, and it is difficult for them to be recognized by the Yanomami as a great head-chief.

A comunidade observa quem é de confiança, quem não faz besteira ou se envolve com bebida alcoólica. Só assim é que podem ser representantes. Os representantes têm que ouvir os *pata thëpë* e obedecer, senão eles tiram, não vai mais representar os Yanomami.

Os *pata thëpë* cuidam dos jovens representantes quando estão na cidade, mandam os espíritos cuidarem de nós para não adoecermos, nos protegem para não pegarmos gripe. Eles aconselham nós jovens para termos juízo; quando viajar para a cidade não fazer filho com as mulheres *napë* nem com outras mulheres de outras etnias. Eles aconselham a comer pouco a comida dos *napë*, para evitar que nossa alma enfraqueça. Se comeremos muito a comida dos *napë*, futuramente, se quisermos ser xamãs, vamos sofrer muito.

Os *pata thëpë* nos aconselham para ficarmos até dois meses na cidade, no máximo três meses, depois devemos voltar para a floresta. É assim que os *pata thëpë* falam pra nós.

(Enio Mayanawa Yanomami, professor e diretor da Hutukara, novembro, 2011).⁹

⁹ The community observes who is reliable, who does not take silly decisions or involves themselves with alcoholic beverage. It is only following certain rules that they can be representatives. The representatives have to hear the *pata thëpë* and to obey, otherwise the Yanomami remove them from the power, and they do not represent the Yanomami anymore.

The *pata thëpë* takes care of the young representatives when they are in the city, they send the spirits to take care of us so we do not get sick, they protect us in so we do not get the flu. They advise us, the young ones, to think wisely; when travelling to the city do not procreate with *napë* women nor women from other ethnicities. They advise us to do not exaggerate eating the *napë*, food to avoid our soul weakening. If we eat too much the food of *napë*, in the future, if we want to be shamans, we will suffer a lot.

The *pata thëpë* advises us to stay in the city only for two or three months, nothing more, then we must return to the forest. And this is the way *Pata Thëpë* talk to us.

(Enio Mayanawa Yanomami, professor and director of the Hutukara, November, 2011).

Final considerations

The initial question that instigated and aroused my interest, since the beginning of this research, was to understand the place of the Association in the Yanomami sociopolitical dynamics, the movement of the *pata thëpë* and the young Yanomami leaders inside of these dynamics, and the implications that this form of political organization, for it operates politically by means of chosen representatives.

The interethnic contact with different agents of the national society, including the state, the several expansion fronts, and especially the work of the support networks, have generated new standards for dialogues and construction of knowledge between the *pata thëpë* and the youth. The young men have developed their fluency in Portuguese, they have learned the knowledge of Mathematics, how to count money, how to go to the bank, to go shopping, to read and write in their languages and in Portuguese and have developed notions concerning computers.

The young men exert the representation and the power of “speaking on behalf of”, “to decide on behalf of”, “to be the mouth that speaks for the other”, even though such practices till then were weird to the Yanomami political dynamics, for those who speech was not allowed – which means they cannot talk on behalf of somebody. Even so, the young men are not considered leaderships, but representatives, and their choices from criteria of knowledge of the *napë* world to assume the direction of the Hutukara do not mean loss of power from the old face to the new. For the *pata thëpë* the young men do not become head-chiefs for occupying the Hutukara direction rank; in contrast, they distance themselves from the *Yanomami* life as they become more involved in the non-Indians life. The extended months that they remain in the city, and the removal of the villages from the “Yanomami world”, constitute ingredients that increasingly move them away from the possibility to become a *pata*.

They will become great *pata pë* if they learn the hymns, the histories of their ancestors, constitute family and establish a village. The *pata thëpë* consider the young men in formation process not to possess the constituent ingredients for being leaders. However, to the *pata thëpë*, the presence of the youth in assemblies, meetings and events is seen as necessary, because they decode with more ability, the construction of the non-Indians world and receive knowledge from them.

The domains of the old ones and the young are connected by the same principles: the speech and the knowledge, and both emphasize the defense of the Yano-

mami rights. Therefore, it is not about a rupture, or generation gaps between young and old, but of distinct ways for constructing references by means of which they construct the force of their speech.

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