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Reconstructing Pitaguary Identity: Indian Exchange and Outside Resources

Tess McMahon
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Reconstructing Pitaguary Identity: Indian Exchange and Outside Resources

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Abstract

This research explores the recent methods by which the Pitaguary Indians in Ceará, Brazil have been reconstructing and revalorizing their indigenous culture using outside resources. Like many Indian populations within the Latin America, the Pitaguary have lost their culture due to conquest, exploitation, and assimilation policies. Only in 1997 did the Pitaguary file for governmental recognition and territorial demarcation¹ as an indigenous group. Since the mid-1990s, the tribe has been engaged in ‘rescuing’ and rediscovering their traditions and their culture. Three years ago, in 2007, an organization called *Movimento Saude Mental Comunidade do Bom Jardim*² came to the Pitaguary through an Italian Catholic priest named Padre Ottorino ‘Rino’ Bonvini. Through Padre Rino, the Pitaguary have come into contact with the Lakota Sioux of North Dakota, United States of America. The relationship that has grown between the two tribes has had a domino effect on how the Pitaguary are reconstructing their heritage. With new perspectives and new financial backing, the Pitaguary have expanded their abilities to scholastically and culturally educate their children in the hopes for a better future as an indigenous tribe.

¹ Territorial demarcation implies that via FUNAI (see below) the government will create territorial boundaries for indigenous lands. Demarcated tribes also come under the regulations and guardianship of FUNAI.

² Mental Health Movement: Community of the Good Garden

Methodology

Initially, my project was to study how the Pitaguary are using acculturation³ to reconstruct their indigenous identity. However, after my first interview with one of the tribal leaders, Francisco Carlos “Carlinho” do Nascimento Morrira, I quickly realized that to study acculturation in a group trying to assert only one ethnic heritage, a researcher would need a substantial amount of time. As I only had three to four weeks, I decided to change tactics and study the use of outside resources within the last three years in the *aldeia* Santo Antônio do Pitaguary.

My research involved both participant observation and interviews. Most of my observations were made at Casa de Alta, which has become a central hub of re-indigenization activity, especially within the last three years. I attended sweat lodge ceremonies, performances, children’s classes, and meetings with the children’s group Iandé Meme Maranongara. At most of these events I was able to take notes on the spot, which I transcribed onto the computer later. For some activities, such as the sweat lodge ceremonies, taking notes during the ritual was neither appropriate nor possible. For these ceremonies, I relied on memory and would write my experiences onto the computer directly after the events.

My interviews mostly took place in informal settings, usually within people’s homes. Of my six interviews, I recorded four of them and partially or fully transcribed them onto paper. For the others, I took detailed notes. As, especially in the beginning of my research, Portuguese was a barrier for me, I enlisted the help of the family I was staying with in transcribing and interpreting my notes. As my language skills improved, I was able to review and correct the transcriptions written earlier. Any mistakes made in interpretation are fully my own.

³ Acculturation: incorporating elements of another culture into one’s own

Introduction



Within the last twenty years in Brazil's northeastern region, previously unrecognized indigenous groups have been making land claims using provisions written into the 1988 Brazilian constitution. Asserting their rights to their tribal lands, these indigenous groups have become embroiled in a battle to not only claim their territories, but also to prove their Indian heritage to both their communities and to the Brazilian public at large. Just outside of Fortaleza, the state capital of Ceará, the Pitaguary indigenous tribe has recently won territorial demarcation from FUNAI⁵ in the municipalities of Maracanaú and Pacatuba. Like many indigenous tribes in northeastern Brazil, the Pitaguary have all but lost their Indian culture. They do not speak their native language, Tupi, and only since the mid-nineteen-nineties have they resumed reclaiming indigenous traditions such as the *toré*, a traditional Indian dance in the Northeast.

Three years ago, in 2007, the Pitaguary came into contact with an Italian Catholic priest, Padre Ottorino "Rino" Bonvini. An adopted brother of the North

⁴ Statue of Cacique Daniel

⁵ *Fundação Nacional do Índio*: The National Indian Foundation is responsible for identifying, demarcating, and maintaining indigenous territories in Brazil.

American Lakota Sioux tribe in South Dakota, Padre Rino^f brought with him Lakota traditions such as the sweat lodge ceremony as well as the power of his non-governmental organization (NGO) *Movimento Saúde Mental: Comunidade do Bom Jardim* (MSMCBJ). Padre Rino's presence has led to numerous changes in the Pitaguary community. With the help of the priest and other outside resources, the Pitaguary have been able to bring their dreams for cultural restoration and providing better futures for their children to life.

This paper will explore the radical changes in the Pitaguary *aldeia*⁶ Santo Antônio do Pitaguary within the last three years. I will focus on movement within Casa de Alta, a home and community space where the sweat lodge ceremonies are performed, community meetings and performances are held, and where the classes for cultural restoration and scholastic reinforcement take place. The paper will examine how specifically within the last three years the community has been working on reclaiming their indigenous heritage and their plans for the future of the tribe. In studying the Pitaguary re-indigenization methods, this paper will create a greater understanding of how and why many Indian communities in Brazil are claiming long-lost ethnic identities and why they are choosing to use outside resources to rebuild their inner cultural traditions.

^f As the Pitaguary generally use first names only, this paper will refer to informants by their first names.

⁶ *Aldeia*: village

A History of Suppression- Eliminating the Indian in Latin America, Rediscovering the Indian in Brazil's Northeast

Recent indigenous movements have been founded on a history of colonial expansion and the subsequent loss of native lands and cultures. Through violence and missionization, many groups throughout Latin America have lost their heritage as Indians. As Lee Swepston comments in his article “Latin American approaches to the ‘Indian Problem’”:

In several countries their [Indian] cultures have disintegrated entirely as a result of war, disease, and loss of the lands they once occupied, and there are no longer groups identifiable as Indians. In other countries they still survive as forest-dwelling populations, or they have been partially assimilated into the national economies, retaining only fragments of their own cultures.

Swepston 2004, p 179

Those people who have been partially or fully integrated into Latin American societies are now trying to rebuild a history that for five hundred years has been wearing away under the pressure of assimilation.

Behind high mortality rates due to violence and disease, the leading causes for sharp declines in indigenous populations are ethnic blending and racial stigmatization (Perz, et al, 2008). Many countries throughout Latin America had assimilation policies (*Idem*). In some regions, such as Brazil's northeast, authorities actually declared that indigenous populations no longer existed due to racial mixing (*Idem*). Jan Hoffman

French, a University of Richmond assistant professor of anthropology, asserts that the reason Northeastern Brazilian leadership claimed the extinction of indigenous populaces was to facilitate land grabs by wealthy families in the region:

People claiming land as Indians may believe that the only possible successful appeal to is one that reaches to the natural law of a supreme sovereign. They may believe this to be necessary because, beginning with the 1850 land law, a series of government actions declared land not yet titled to be up for grabs. Within a few years, all indigenous groups in the [Northeastern] region were declared to be extinct on the ground they had mixed with the general population. As such, they had no claims to land.

French, 2009

Therefore, the loss of indigenous heritage, already facilitated by high mortality, was compounded by the greed of wealthy land owners seeking to block native groups from reclaiming their natural properties.

Pejorative connotations and stigmatizations instigated by Eurocentric religious affiliation also significantly contributed to the rapid deterioration of indigenous culture. The Catholic Church spent nearly all of its first five hundred years in Latin America converting and assimilating Indian populations, usually by force and through the demonization of native traditions (Sandberg, 2006). In an interview conducted by French, one priest stated: “Italian Capuchin priests thought the dances of Indians were expressions of the devil.... The church was the most guilty for their loss of identity” (French, 2009). Because of cultural misunderstanding and prejudice, indigenous traditions were devalorized and subsequently destroyed in many regions throughout Latin America. What replaced native religion was varying mixtures of folk Catholicism

and combinations of African, European, and Indian belief systems (French, 2009). In Northeastern Brazil these practices entail: "...praying over people who are ill, using local plants to treat ailments, predawn processions dedicated to patron saints, passion plays, festivals, and complex systems of god-parentage" (*Idem*).

Due to the history of racial mixing exemplified by the practice of non-indigenous religion, public skepticism criticizes modern movements to 're-indigenize,' saying that those claiming indigenous heritage in fact are no different than the rest of Brazilian society (French, 2009). However, the controversial nature of Latin America often allows people to claim more than one ethnic identity while at the same time asserting their rights as, for example, Indians (Jackson and Warren, 2005). In order to understand the indigenous movement, skeptics should first understand that ethnic identity in Latin America and especially in Brazil is fluid and easily changeable. In addition, in many contexts in Brazil, how a person identifies is often more important in the eyes of the law than actual blood percentages (French, 2009).

Indigenous groups in Brazil began to mobilize in the 1960s and 1970s. Recognizing common problems among different Indian communities in the 1960s, various groups organized themselves around two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to legally fight for better access to quality living: the *Conselho Indigenista Missionário*⁷ (CIMI) and the *Centro Ecumênico de Documentação*⁸ (CEDI) (Perz et al, 2008). The relationship between CIMI and the CEDI led to the emergence of the *União das Nações Indígenas*⁹ (UNI). The Indian Statute of 1973¹⁰, installed during a

⁷ The Indigenist Missionary Council

⁸ Eumenical Center for Documentation and Information

⁹ Union of Indian Nations

¹⁰ The Indian Statute required the delimitation of indigenous lands and permitting relocation if national development required it. While it gave indigenous groups more rights, it was intended to give the government greater control of Amazonian land. Unwittingly, it also opened legal

repressive dictatorship, was intended to control indigenous populations in the Amazon as industry expanded into the forests but in fact became a tool for the reemergence of dormant indigenous culture in the Brazilian Northeast (French, 2009). Later, when Brazil rewrote its constitution in 1988, the UNI became instrumental in the implementation of the Indian Statute. Interestingly, the Indian Statute of 1973 is only an *implicitly* race-based law. This allowed for fluidity in the definition of identity, as “... because [the Indian Statute and the *quilombo clause*¹¹] are not *explicitly* race based, they result in political identities connected to, but not solely defined by, race” (*Idem*).

It is ironic that today’s champion in the fight for indigenous rights, the Catholic Church, was once instrumental in stripping those rights. Liberation theology, a relatively new Catholic philosophy which promoted working for the poor rather than ruling the poor, was on the rise among priests throughout Latin America in the 1950s and gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s. In Brazil, liberation theologians were instrumental in the formation of groups such as the CEDI and CIMI, which still function today (Perz et al, 2008). As exemplified by many different indigenous movements, liberation theology “played a critical role in the Church’s changing attitudes toward land struggles and indigenous rights and served as the catalyzing force behind the creative use of law to advance these goals” (French, 2009). With the help of the Church and programs promoted by the Church, indigenous groups went to court in order to gain legal rights to the lands they had been living on for generations.

One of the chief goals of the liberation theology movement was helping indigenous groups claim land rights (French, 2009). In addition to including the *quilombo* clause, in 1988 the progressively written Brazilian constitution asserts the

grounds for indigenous groups in the Northeast to begin claiming indigenous territories (French, 2009).

¹¹ The *quilombo* clause offered similar rights to communities descended from escaped slaves, often who have similar histories to indigenous groups in the Northeast

rights of the remaining indigenous groups to Brazilian lands (largely thanks to the UNI and other church-backed indigenous groups): “... Article 231 of the 1988 constitution holds that Brazil’s indigenous people are the original and natural owners of Brazilian land and that their land rights have precedence over other land rights. The state should respect, demarcate, and protect *terras indigenas*¹² (TIs)...” (Stocks, 2005). FUNAI was put in charge of demarcating the TIs, and since 1988 Brazil has recognized thirty new indigenous communities in the Northeast alone, including the Pitaguary tribe in Ceará (Jackson and Warren, 2005).

The employment of identity politics in newly-recognized indigenous groups in regions such as Brazil has shown “that adopting an overall strategy of cultural and historical recovery and revival is often the best route for achieving a degree of autonomy and self-determination ...” (Jackson and Warren, 2005). According to Jackson and Warren, indigenous identity itself has been turned into a strategy to gain territory, but that fact in itself does not diminish the legitimacy of their cultural claims. In fact, reidentifying as Indian has given some groups a concrete identity to hold onto. Both French and Jackson and Warren quote former *caboclos*¹³ who claim that before learning of their indigenous heritage, they had nothing to pride themselves on. “‘Before, we weren’t registered [with the national bureau of affairs], we weren’t anything. We are just now becoming aware of ourselves as an ‘indigenous community’ (Occhipinti 2003, pp. 159-160)’” (*Idem*).

¹² Indigenous territories

¹³ Caboclo: a Brazilian of mixed indigenous and non-indigenous blood

Organizing the Indians: The Rise of the Pitaguary



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The Pitaguary tribe is located in the Brazilian northeastern state Ceará, just outside the state capital of Fortaleza. Their territory covers 1,735.65 hectares and is divided into four different communities located in two different municipalities. (Pinheiro, 2002; Journal, p). Three of the *aldeias*,¹⁵ Santo Antônio do Pitaguary, Olho d'Água, and Horto are in the Maracanaú municipality. A thirty-minute bus ride away is the Monguba *aldeia*, placed in the Pacatuba municipality (Field Journal, p4). The bulk of this research was conducted in Santo Antônio do Pitaguary, where most of the indigenous population lives.

Santo Antônio is surrounded by small mountains. In the winter season the land is green, but during the summer, when this research was conducted, the area is hot and dry, and the mountains are covered in bare thorny branches of skinny low-lying scrub. Driving into the community, visitors are greeted by a gate with a new large sign overhead reading Santo Antônio do Pitaguary. On the right as one enters is the sleek new *cras*, a rounded building where community meetings and official business is

¹⁴ A view of the lake and surrounding mountains. Photo taken by author

¹⁵ *Aldeia*: village

conducted. Most of the houses in the community are built of brick and concrete, often smoothed over with white plaster. Some families paint their homes bright colors, while others have Pitaguary colors (black, red, and white) and designs decorating their walls and declaring their commitment to the tribe. As one drives farther into the *aldeia*, many of the houses do not have plaster obscuring their hand-built brick and concrete walls.

At the center of the *aldeia* is a small lake overlooked by a white church on a hill. The lake is surrounded by hills and a few houses. On the northern side there is a dam with a sign that reads:

PROIBIDO BANHO
ÁREA DE PRESERVAÇÃO INDÍGENA
SUJEITO AS PENALIDADES DA LEI
MINISTÉRIO DA JUSTIÇA FUNAI¹⁶

For the locals the lake is both a social and a functional space for the community. Despite the sign, people wash clothes, play, jump off the large dam, wash their animals and even on occasion wash themselves at the lake. In addition, the men often fish in the lake, which is an important activity that the Pitaguary often link to their indigenous heritage (Pinheiro, 2002).

¹⁶ PROHIBITED TO SWIM/ INDIGENOUS PRESERVATION AREA/ SUBJECT OF PENALTY OF LAW/ MINISTRY OF JUSTICE FUNAI



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The road that connects the *aldeia* is constructed of several materials. It starts as a pot-hole laden paved road before transitioning into dirt, then to cobblestone, and back to dirt again. The road splits off at a home called Casa de Alta into two roads that run side-by-side for a while before separating and reunifying again at the lakeside. Usually people use these roads as one-way streets, but it is not uncommon to see people going the wrong way. The FUNAI workers and policemen who work on the lands do not seem to enforce the one-way rule. Chickens, turkeys, peacocks, **capuchins**¹⁸, goats, cows, horses and a large number of dogs often walk alongside the roads. As the animals are present everywhere within the community, locals rarely take note.

Most often those who live and work in the *aldeia* wear the same clothes as other Cearense people of the same economic bracket. The only distinction in wardrobe is often the jewelry. In the Pitaguary community, craft work has become a central method by which the group is reclaiming their heritage (Field Journal, p124). As a result, many people chose to wear jewelry created from materials found on Pitaguary lands such as feathers, seeds, and berries. Some of the men wore bone and seed necklaces.

¹⁷ The lake dam. Photo taken by author

¹⁸ Capuchin: A chicken-like bird that originated in Angola. A capote has black feathers speckled by small white spots. It also sports a small red crown on its head and red flaps beneath its beak.

The Pitaguary movement to claim their territory, like many other Latin American indigenous movements, has been founded on a history of colonial expansion and the subsequent loss of native lands and cultures. Through racial violence and slavery, the Pitaguary until recently did not even recognize themselves as an indigenous tribe (Pinheiro, 2002). Only in 1997 did the tribe begin the process to gain governmental demarcation of their lands. By 2007, the tribe won its claim and currently is monitored and maintained by FUNAI (Field Journal, p8). Leaders of the modern tribe include but are not limited to *cacique*¹⁹ Daniel Araújo, *pajé*²⁰ Barbosa Pitaguary, Francisco Carlos “Carlinho” do Nascimento Morreira and his wife Ana “Aninha” Lucia Silva Duarte.

The Pitaguary, like many indigenous tribes in Brazil who came into contact with Europeans early in Brazil’s history were by the twentieth-century all but stripped of their native heritage. In the *aldeias*, many people were enslaved and exploited (Pinheiro, 2002). During this period, a large number of tribe members became racially mixed, by force and by choice. Despite having their lands recognized in 1722 and registered 1854, Indians were considered extinct in the northeast soon after the implementation of the 1850 land law (Pinheiro, 2002; French, 2009). As French explains in the previous section, these actions were motivated by the desires of large landowners to gain control over more territory. The result was the absolute control over the local impoverished people, including the ancestors of the modern Pitaguary tribe (Pinheiro, 2002).

When the Pitaguary joined the indigenous movement in 1997, they not only began a fight to regain their lands, but they embarked on a journey to rediscover who they were as a community. Because of their slave past, the tribe’s Indian heritage was

¹⁹ *Cacique*: Chief in Tupi.

²⁰ *Pajé*: Healer

formerly stigmatized and ignored (Pinheiro, 2002). The battle became to revalorize the culture. The community created a radio station, 'Radio Pitaguary' and began to rally their neighbors. (*Idem*) One man interviewed by Joceny de Deus Pinheiro recalled this early movement to gain community support: "Eu digo, 'rapaz, nós somos índios!' 'não puro, mas nós somos sim, somos descendentes de índio'²¹" (Antônio Pitaguary, Pinheiro, 2002). Today the group has art classes, language classes, history classes and more aimed at instilling pride in the Pitaguary community and in their historical past (Field Journal, p87-88). In addition, they perform their resurrected sacred dance the *Toré* for ceremonial days, parties, and public events.

Building Places of Pride at Casa de Alta: The Arrival of Movimento Saude Mental Comunidade do Bom Jardim in Santo Antônio do Pitaguary



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Casa de Alta is a family home and community center. The home itself was built in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, according to those who live in the *aldeia*, and it has a classic Brazilian tile roof and simple but strong white plaster walls (Field Journal,

²¹ I said, "boy, we are Indians!" "not pure, but we are, we are descendents of Indians!"

²² Casa de Alta. Photo taken by author

83). Today it houses cultural and scholastic classes and activities all week long. Its white walls are adorned with native symbolism, including the large swirling ‘P’ representing the Pitaguary Indians. Within the large home there is a small classroom, a small children’s library, and a large music and art room. The property itself also contains a sweat lodge and a large gazebo structure called a *palhoça*, both of which will be discussed later on (Field Journal, 69).

Ana and Carlinho moved into Casa de Alta twelve years ago (around 1998) with a dream to help their community not only revive their culture, but to value it as well (Field Journal, p85). Due to the history of slavery and cultural alienation, members of the community are engaged in a battle for self-esteem, and many of the activities within the tribe are aimed at valorizing the group’s indigenous heritage and building hope for a better future. However, when the couple took over the circa eighteenth-century home, they had little idea of how they were to begin accomplishing these goals and they had no outside support to bring them to life. When Padre Rino arrived in 2007 (the same year the tribe won full demarcation), the group found the means to concretely begin the mission Aninha and Carlinho dreamed of.

Ana: Assim, Tess, nós tínhamos um sonho de ajudar nossa comunidade. Só não sabíamos como começar. Nós tínhamos esse sonho de fazer alguma coisa na comunidade, mas nós não sabia-

We had a dream to help our community. We just didn’t know how to start. We had a dream to do something in our community, but we didn’t know-

Carlinho: Saber sabíamos, só não tinha como- não tinha apoio

We knew, we just didn’t have support.

Ana: Apoio, aí quando o Padre Rino chegou aqui aí ele comencou ajudar a gente. Vamos fazer assim, e isso a coisa foi fluindo e hoje é dia as coisas vão melhorar ainda mais. Hoje nós não estamos só. Hoje nós temos alguém que pode nós ajudar.

Support, and when Padre Rino arrived here he began to help us. We began, and things began to flow, and today things are already better. Today we are not alone. Now we have somebody who can help us.

(Ana Lucia Silva Duarte & Francisco Carlos do Nascimento Morrira, Field Journal p88).

Plans shared between Padre Rino and the Pitaguary leaders were focused mainly on the children of the community. In an interview, Carlinho discussed the reasoning behind focusing primarily on Pitaguary youth:

Hoje a papel dessas crianças é o grande papel essas criança têm. Essas crianças têm uma grande missão, todos eles. É uma familia de dar continuidade a nossa cultura, a nossa realidade. Eles que vão conduzir porque quando nós pararmos eles que vão dar continuidade. Nessas crianças, nós estamos vendo um proposito de um aldeia melhor do que hoje.

Today the role of the children is a huge role. These children have a huge mission, all of them. This family (the group of children) will give continuity to our culture, our reality. They will drive [the movement] because when we stop [die], they will continue on. These children, we are giving them a better village than they have today.

The idea shared between the tribal leaders and the priest was to transform Casa de Alta into a space where community members, especially the tribe's youth, could come to learn about their culture and to celebrate their heritage as Indians. In addition, the group came up with a plan to create classes for the scholastic education of Pitaguary youth.

The hope was and is to instill indigenous pride, recover the culture and to create young university-educated professionals who will work locally within the tribe in fields such as medicine and psychology (Field Journal, p75). Carlinho explains the push for young indigenous professionals is due to a lack of local expertise in various academic and professional fields:

Temos educadores indigena, mas não temos médicos, clinico gerail nós não temos, nós não temos sociologos, nós não temos antropologos, nós não temos psicologos, nós não temos dentistas, nós não temos enfermeiros, nós não temos nada nessa area. [...]E eu queria que isso fosse indigena, por que o índio com o índio fala mesmo linguagem e existe o mesmo entendimento mais facile. E é, e é assim, nessa luta que damos as mãos e rendemos a ela e luta por isso. Para que os jovens vão se capacita, tem oportunidade emprego que está dentro da comunidade esperando por ele.

We have indigenous educators, but we do not have doctors, we do not have a general clinic, we do not have sociologists, we do not have anthropologists, psychologists, dentists, nurses, we do not have anything in these fields.[...] And I want [people working in these areas] to be indigenous, because an Indian with an Indian speaks the same language and understands the other better [than non-indigenous]. And this fight we have on our hands is for this. Because our young will have the capacity [to work in these fields], and there will be opportunities for them to work in the community.

(Francisco Carlos do Nascimento Morrira, Field Journal, p 91)

The first action Padre Rino took within the community was to construct a sweat lodge, which will be discussed in a different section. Then, through the MSMCBJ, the group built the *palhoça*²³ (Field Journal, 79). The *palhoça* is a circular structure about twenty feet in diameter. It has concrete floors and a two-and-a-half foot border painted white with several Pitaguary symbols in black and red. Polished palm trunks hold up the

²³ *Palhoça*: gazebo

leafy roof. Some of the wooden support beams sport florescent lights that allow activities to continue into the night. “The palhoça is a symbolic space in which people can be together, do things, play, sing, dance, and there are meetings, and it’s like kind of an identity space” (Padre Ottorino Bonvini, Field Journal, p79). Today, classes, presentations, dances, children’s modeling shows, *capoeira* lessons, parties and more are all held under the palm-frond roof of the *palhoça* (Field Journal, 79).

A palhoça, como Aninha disse, veio de uma proposta da gente ocupar essas crianças em alguma coisa, em na proposta eles não tinham espaço e veio essa proposta. Na proposta junto com Padre Rino, a nos conhecemos, veio a proposta da palhoça. Porque seria uma coisa que juntava. A palhoça na comunidade não existia antes, que existiu mas tudo foi tomado, e a retomada começou construindo a palhoça. Começando pela palhoça seria o passo inicial tudo porque eles estavam indo buscar resgate cultural, valorização e conscientização.

The palhoça, as Aninha said, was based in an idea we had to house the children somewhere [for cultural activities], but we did not have a place for it. Along with Padre Rino, we had the idea for the palhoça, because the palhoça would be a helpful thing. The community did not have a palhoça, one existed a long time ago but it was destroyed, and [so] we began to construct the palhoça. Beginning the palhoça was a first step because they [the children] were going to be [engaged in] cultural revival, valorization, and raising conscientiousness [about the culture].

(Francisco Carlos do Nascimento Morrira, Field Journal, p87)

The palhoça has become the place where the children go to play and learn. At any given time of day, children are in and around the palhoça, even when no official activities are being held.

In addition to creating a space for the children to learn, practice, and discuss their indigenous culture and heritage, Padre Rino and the community leaders created the

group *Iandé/Ore Meme Maranongara*²⁴. The group is comprised of children from the Santo Antonio *aldeia* and was intended to replace the old group, *Toré Mirim* (also known as *Yby Porang*)²⁵ (Field Journal, 75). While children from all over the community are welcome to participate in dances, presentation, and other group activities these children are expected to participate (Field Journal, p55). In addition, the children in the Ore Meme group are encouraged to share their ideas and put them into action.

E a gente começamos a desinvolver e as crianças perguntavam quando ir começar e vai proposta, vem proposta, idéia vai, idéia vem de um lado para o outro, sempre com grupo. [...]E fomos atras de formar um grupo. O grupo Iandé Meme Maranongara. [...]Fomos trabalhando com os meninos e botamos o nome do grupo assim porque no Tupi quer dizer que Somos Todos Parentes.

And we began to involve the children and the children asked when we would begin [putting the proposal into action]. Ideas went back and forth, always within the group. [...] And it was before [we constructed the Palhoço Pitaguary] that we formed the group. The group Iandé Meme Maranongara. [...]We worked with the children and picked this name because in Tupi it means 'We are all children.'

(Francisco Carlos do Nascimento Morrira, Field Journal, p75)

Guided partially by the decisions of the children's group, the community created a small classroom and library. The MSMCBJ funded the bulk of the project. As Aninha said,

A gente junto com Padre Rino [e Aninha diz que Padre Rino foi como um anjo]. Pra que podesse nós ajuda. E o Padre Rino com os conhecimentos dele pode trazer tudo que

²⁴ *Iandé Meme Maranongara* or *Ore Meme Maranongara* are Tupi translations for 'We are all parents.' In Tupi, there are several different ways to say 'we,' which is why the group has two different but similar names that are used interchangeably by the community.

²⁵ *Toré Mirim* means Little Toré. *Yby Porang* is the Tupi translation.

nós temos hoje. De ajudar, como por exemplo, a biblioteca que as crianças têm livros, informatica, e que têm varias coisas que antes eles tinha vontade mas não tinha condições.

We worked helped by Padre Rino [Padre Rino was like an angel]. Because he could help us. Padre Rino and his acquaintances could give us everything we have today. They helped, for example, the library that has books for the children, computers, many things that before they [the children] wanted but did not have the [means for].

(Ana Lucia Silva Duarte, Field Journal, p89)

The classes that are held within the small classroom, the large adjacent music room and in the palhoça are not simply cultural lessons^f. They also have scholastic reinforcement classes and computer classes (Field Journal, p34, 37). When asked why Casa de Alta had classes that were not aimed at cultural revival, Aninha responded:

Por que a gente ai é indigena, mas nós presisamos sempre informar do que a contessa lá fora por que todo mundo precisa trabalhar, precisa ter felicidade, e esse trabalho qui ta sendo feito, a pessoa tem mais facilidade de arranjar um emprego, e ter uma vida melhor.

Because we are indigenous, but we need to always keep in touch with what is going on outside [the aldeia], because everybody needs to work, be happy, and [with] this work that is being done, it will be easier for a person to arrange for a job and have a better life.

(Ana Lucia Silva Duarte, Field Journal, p86).

As mentioned before, the community wants local professionals working within the tribe. With the help of MSMCBJ, thirty young people are using classes at Casa de Alta to

^f Cultural classes will be discussed in a different section of the paper.

prepare to go to good high schools. The hope is they will use their scholarship-funded education to get into college:

And now, we [have a new project] preparing 30 young people in order to get them into a high school, a good high school, for college. The kids out there [at the palhoça] studying in the morning are learning a program for applying to a good school. So we've got thirty scholarships, so thirty people like Neto can go to a high school that are normally for rich people, in order to [prepare] for the vestibular test [to get into public university for free], which is very hard.

(Padre Ottorino Bonvini, Field Journal, p79)

With this and other similar projects, the Pitaguary are hoping to raise the standard of living within the *aldeia* for future generations.

The Lakota Influence and the Idea of the Natural Indian



An adopted brother of the Lakota Sioux indigenous tribe in North America, Padre Rino became interested in the Pitaguary after returning from a trip to the United States. He brought with him Lakota traditions such as the sweat lodge.

²⁶ Buffalo skull given to the Pitaguary by the Lakota Indians. Photo taken by author.

I am an adopted brother of the Lakota Sioux, and I had returned from the Sun Dance three years ago, and I decided that it was time to bring my experience with the Lakota there to an Indian tribe here. So, I looked for a contact here, and I had a patient of mine who worked at the cras here. I asked her to put him and the group leaders into contact. Carlinho and another girl came to my house. They came there and shared and talked and we [had an instant connection]. And then I went there and sat down with them and shared my experience with the Lakota people and the sweat and they got very interested. So, we build up a sweat lodge and once or twice a week we'd sweat and [experience] the spiritual side, without [making up people's minds; it was their free choice].

(Padre Ottorino Bonvini, Field Journal, p78)

Three years later, the sweat lodge is still practiced at least once a week.

The sweat lodge is constructed from wooden branches gathered on Pitaguary lands and plastic tarps. The branches are bent into a dome-shape, and during the ceremony the tarps completely envelop the structure, obscuring any light from entering. The floor of the pit is earth and covered by simple straw mats. In the center of the structure there is a pit about ten to twelve inches deep and about two-and-a-half feet in diameter. Outside the structure is a metal pole with a buffalo skull at its base. The skull has a circle split into four quadrants colored red, black, yellow and white painted onto its forehead. Over the nasal cavity the Pitaguary symbol, a swirling "P" in triangles of red, white, and black. Sage from North America is stuffed into the nostrils. Often two deer antlers accompany the skull (Field Journal, p59).

Before the ceremony begins, a large fire is built to heat the stones used in the ceremonies. To the Lakota, seven is a sacred number, so the number of stones is always in series of seven. Usually the group uses twenty-one. The stones are heated for hours

until they glow a bright, fiery red. As the stones are heating, those conducting the ceremony prepare the other ritualistic materials. Usually, Carlinho fills two water buckets, one for drinking and one for throwing on the stones. Padre Rino is generally the one to crumple the herbs for throwing on the stones and for smoking from a hand-crafted Lakota pipe after the ceremony. Often Padre Rino is assisted by a teenage community member referred to as Neto. The herbs consist of different types of mint and the sage from the United States. They are collected in an abalone shell (Field Journal, p51).

The ceremony often begins well into the warm Brazilian night. When the stones are ready, those participating enter the lodge, leaving their shoes at the door. As they step through the entrance, Padre Rino greets them on from a sitting position on the right-hand side, saying *Mitakuye Oyasin*, or “We are all parents” in Lakota.²⁷ The participants then shuffle, slide, or crawl clockwise to their seats. Looking in from the entrance, the men sit on the left-hand side and the women sit on the right. The exception, again, is Padre Rino, who sits on the right of the door flap. After the participants are seated, the stones are shoveled into the pit in the center of the lodge. After each load, the stones are re-arranged using the deer antlers and the herbs are sprinkled over the rocks, sending small tufts of pungent smoke into the air. Once all the stones are in and all the participants are seated, the door-flap is closed and the tarps are rearranged to shut out all light.

The ceremony begins with Padre Rino greeting the group. The stones, still glowing from the fire, are the only source of light and illuminate only the edges of the pit in which they rest. Following the greeting, the participants ignore the dry heat and grasp hands, chanting the Lord’s Prayer in unison while sweating profusely. Then the

²⁷ The group *landé Meme Maranongara* derived its name from this Lakota saying.

songs begin. Most songs are in Tupi Guarani, the language of the Pitaguary Indians, but some are also in Portuguese and two are in Lakota. After the first two or three songs, Padre Rino begins to toss ladles of water onto the stones, sending plumes of scorching steam into the air. As the temperature rises, the Pitaguary sing their songs louder, accompanied by a maraca and often a *tambo*.²⁸ For some the heat is unbearable, and should the participants choose they may leave at any time.

About two-thirds or three-fourths of the way into the ceremony, at the apex of the heat, the flap is opened for several minutes. Members pass ladles of drinking water, and often if there is room many people lie down to rest. Even with the door open, the heat is suffocating. Then the group members pass around a small, thumb-sized smooth white rock. Sometimes this happens with the flap open and other times with the flap closed fast. As members receive the rock, they can choose to say a few words. Some people make prayers, others share experiences, and still others talk about issues of concern for themselves or for the community. After each person speaks, and often while they are speaking, people within the tent say the Lakota word “aho” in a similar way that “Amen” would be used in Christian churches. Afterwards, should the flap be open, the lodge is closed once more and the group finishes the ceremony with two Lakota songs led by Padre Rino.

After the ceremony, the Lakota pipe filled with mint is passed around. The pipe itself is made of two pieces. It has a simple, long wooden stem decorated a small, ornately beaded cloth. The bowl is carved into the shape of a buffalo from a red rock. The pipe is passed bowl first to the person’s left hand, with the right hand taking the stem and swinging it up to the lips. When smoking, people inhale rapidly and then exhaled through the mouth. As the smoke rises from their lips into the night air they

²⁸ *Tambo*: Drum

waft it with their hands over their head, for purification. When the herbs no longer produce smoke, people often head inside to drink coffee and to eat snacks such as sweet bread and yogurt (Field Journal, p38, 51).

Why would the Pitaguary, who live in Northeastern Brazil, decide to incorporate a ritual from a North American Indian tribe into their weekly ceremonial lives? Padre Rino answered this question by citing both the idea of the natural Indian and the aim to empower native cultures:

Because they experienced that, and they felt that it was a very indigenous experience. So they understood, they felt that it was empowering. It is not a Pitaguary ritual, but it is helping to recover the roots. [...] it is very Indian. It is very natural, it has all the elements: water, stones, the spirit of water...

(Padre Ottorino Bonvini, Field Journal, p82)

The idea of the Indian is constant and contradictory in Pitaguary society. Both in interviews and in daily conversations, people often cite themselves as being caretakers of the woods and users of generally natural resources:

Eles faz a cabana e faz a fugeira com material do mato. E a gente não corta a madeira verde. A gente só pega o resto da madeira que só servi para queimar, que não servi mais. Não é verde, e sem causa danos, a natureza. E a gente reoli essa madeira seca, as rancas, os tocos secos que é para não causa nenhum dano almeio ambiente. Essim abrir espaço para que nassa outra.

They make the hut [sweat lodge] and make the fire with material from the woods. We do not cut green wood. We take [the dead] woods that only serve for burning, that are not good for anything else. It is not green and is unaffected by us, natural. We collect this dry wood, the rotten wood, those that are dry so as not to cause any environmental damage. This opens space for the other trees [to grow].

Carlinho and others also site the idea that Indian cultures, despite being different, share this connection to the earth, especially when it applies to herbal remedies and medicines. “As ervas, ela é muito forte em todas etnias indígenas. Porque a herba, ela vem e faz parte do dia-a-dia do índio, da medicina indígena” (Francisco Carlos do Nascimento Morrira, Field Journal, p94). Children in the *aldeia* learn about the plants and animals, and are constantly being instructed to love and care for the earth (Field Journal, p81). Contrasting the tribes proclaimed duty to nurture the earth, trash litters the *aldeia*. People often throw trash such as plastic wrappers, soda bottles, and more on the sides of trails, roads, and on the lakeshore. However, this December, 2010, the tribal leaders are fronting an ‘intervention’ titled “Natal Sem Lixo na Minha Aldeia” (Field Journal, p55).

Often the ideas about what an Indian should be are promoted by the Brazilian national image of the “naked Indian.” In a published essay written by two Pitaguary women, they write, “O que as pessoas querem encontrar nos indígenas é a imagem criada e imutável: é índio apenas aquele que anda nu, fala uma lingua nativa, tem comportamentos toalmente diferentes dos seus²⁹” (Alves Feitosa and Alves Feitosa, 2009) Within the tribe, jokes are often made about the stereotype of the Indian. On several occasions, a woman named Simone often made comments about being “bem índio” while performing tasks that would fall into the Brazilian imagery of indigenous activities.

Simone, Michele, and Bia began preparations for tomorrow’s party. They had five coconuts, which we all bore holes into to drink the water within. Then we threw them

²⁹ What people want to see in us indigenous people is an image created [by society] and immutable: it is the Indian who only runs naked, speaks a native language and has totally different behaviors than us [the Pitaguary]

on the ground to break them. As we did this, Simone laughed and said ‘somos bem índios agora!’³⁰,”

(Field Journal, p23)

In addition, it is not uncommon for one to see and hear children within the *aldeia* loudly making an ‘oh-oh-oh-oh-oh’ noise while rapidly patting their mouth with their hand, reminiscent of old Indian cartoons in the United States (Field Journal, p17, 54). While in the United States the use of these stereotypical comments and actions often would be construed as offensive, the Pitaguary are a people struggling to transition into their new identities as an indigenous culture. As mentioned before, the Pitaguary only in the mid-nineteen-ninties were recognized as indigenous. Perhaps by exploring the idea of the Indian as propagated by Brazilian society the Pitaguary are attempting to discover how they are supposed to behave as a recognized indigenous culture.

During interviews, Carlinho also suggested that the incorporation of the sweat lodge was a way to bring the community together as they work to revive their indigenous culture.

E a influencia da sauna é interessante. [...] A importancia e que, a gente se reuni sempre na metodologia indígena. Canta, dança, jovens que nunca dançaram o Toré na seguira de conhecer. A sauna a gente juntou um monte de jovens e dançamos o Toré. Têm uma importancia boa, muito boa. A troca de cultura, a troca de conhecimento, favoreçe muito a nossa cultura, ao rezgate, essa é a influencia da sauna.

The influence of the sweat lodge is interesting. The importance is, the people come together for indigenous methods [practices]. Sing, dance, [there are] young people who never danced the Toré. The sweat lodge brought us and a lot of children together and we danced Toré. It is very

³⁰ We are good Indians now!

important. The exchange of culture, the exchange of acquaintance, benefits our culture, the rescue [of our culture]. This is the influence of the sweat lodge.

(Francisco Carlos do Nascimento Morrira, Field Journal, p92)

By mentioning the unifying effect of the sauna's influence on the Pitaguary, it brings up the fact that the group has few ceremonial opportunities to come together as a community. While the *Toré*, an indigenous dance practiced by many northeastern groups including the Pitaguary, is danced at presentations and during certain festivals throughout the year, it is not a weekly practice and thus leaves little room for discussion about the community. In contrast, the sweat lodge ceremonies occur at least once a week. In the periods before and after the ceremony, people have time to converse about community events, traditions, ideas for the future, and more. In addition, within the actual ceremony, people sometimes discuss the idea of being an Indian, which is important for a culture trying to recreate their traditions (Field Journal, p52).

The Domino Effect: The Lakota and Language Classes at Casa de Alta



31

“The Spirit speaks and talks through the language” (Padre Rino, Journal, p).

When the Lakota came to the Pitaguary society, they brought with them not only their traditions, but also their perspective. Padre Rino explains that the Lakota, like the Pitaguary, had been through cultural genocide. Through monumental efforts, they had found a way to preserve their language and their roots (Field Journal, p78). Influenced by the experiences shared by the Lakota Indians, the Pitaguary engaged in the difficult task of recovering their language, Tupi as a way to strengthen their culture and their community (*Idem*).

[My Lakota brother’s name] was Adam Little Elk. [...] From the Rosebud Reservation, in South Dakota. And so he shared some things about Lakota culture, so there has kind of a family relationship. So the dialogue between Pitaguary and Lakota culture has been very intimate and rich. And one of the side effects, one of the interesting side effects is that the people now are starting to learn the Tupi language again.

(Padre Ottorino Bonvini, Field Journal, p78)

³¹ Alex Alves de Mendonça teaching a Tupi class at Casa de Alta. Photo taken by author.

In an interview, Carlinho explained the leaders' motivation for relearning Tupi: gaining credibility with the Brazilian public:

Ah, porque têm muitas vezes por aí, a gente está no encontro as pessoas pergunta: 'voçes são índio? Só que índio é esse, que não fala sua língua?' É muito importante quando eles perguntar a gente responder em Tupi. [...] É sempre bom reconhece sua propra lingua que foi retirada a muito tempo atras. É uma coisa mais importante do mundo, e reconhecer sua propra lingua.

Because, there were many times when we would meet people who asked: "You all are Indians? Just what kind of Indian is this, that doesn't speak the language?" It is very important that when they ask this we respond in Tupi. [...] It is always good to relearn your proper language that was retired a long time ago. It is the most important thing in the world, to relearn your proper language.

(Francisco Carlos do Nascimento Morrira, Field Journal, p77)

Although, as Carlinho said, the leaders had wanted to bring back the language for years, Padre Rino explains that before the arrival of the Lakota, no true action had been taken (Field Journal, p77-79).

So, what happened? After my brother visited, we organized the Tupi course, we bought the books, we organized the classes... so before, nothing was done. I'm not saying nothing was done, but nothing concretely was done.

(Padre Ottorino Bonvini, Field Journal, p79)

Having decided to relearn and reincorporate the Tupi language into their culture, the Pitaguary got into contact with the Potiguara Indians, located in the Brazilian state Paraiba (Field Journal, p83). The Potiguara are distant relatives of the Pitaguary who still speak Tupi. In the past Tupi Guarani was spoken by many tribes along the Brazilian

coast (Field Journal, p48). With the help of a Potiguara man named Josafar Freire, the Pitaguary obtained Tupi dictionaries and began to translate their songs into Tupi.

Tessie, nós... a gente sentimos dificuldade para a nossa língua, a resgate nossa língua [...] eu e Padre Rino conseguiram o ajuda do nossos irmãos Potiguara uma apostila em Tupi. E aí nós fizamos o trabalho com os crianças, [e os crianças commencaram de pegar] aulas em Tupi, onde eles traduziram a musica de nós em Portuguese para o Tupi..

Tess, we... we feel the difficulty [of rescuing our language]. [...] Padre Rino and I got with the help of our Potiguara brothers study aid in Tupi. And so we worked with the children, and the children began to take classes in Tupi, where they translated our music into Tupi.

(Ana Lucia Silva Duarte, Field Journal, p90)

For the Pitaguary, translating the songs was very important, as for them, “Os cantos indígenas, eles fazem parte, eles faz parte dos resgates das historias. Eles faz parte das muitas coisas, contexto do nosso dia-a-dia. Isso está no sangue...”³² (Francisco Carlos do Nascimento Morrira, Field Journal, p74).

One year ago, the Pitaguary acquired new teachers from Rio de Janeiro; a couple named Michelle Ferreira dos Santos Mendonça and Alex Alves de Mendonça (Field Journal, p83). The husband, Alex, took over the basic Tupi classes held in the *palhoça* and in the small classroom at Casa de Alta. Carlinho relays discovering Alex’s potential in Tupi:

Nesse tempo, eu descobriu que ele tem um potencial muito forte para o Tupi. E aí, a gente pegamos uma apostila de um trabalho que a Ana tinha feito com

³² Indigenous songs, they are a part, they are a part of rescuing our history. They are a part of many things, day to day. [Songs] are in the blood.

Padre Rino e as crianças, alunos dias atras. Passou apostila para Alex e começaram a incinar ele.

This time [that Alex came to the tribe], I discovered that he has great potential in Tupi. And so, we gave him a study guide from Ana and Padre Rino and the children, already students [of Tupi]. We gave the study guide to Alex and began to teach him.

(Francisco Carlos do Nascimento Morrira, Field Journal, p89)

Today Alex and his wife, Michelle have devoted their time to teaching Tupi and other courses at Casa de Alta, mostly on Fridays and Saturdays (Field Journal, p48).

Evangelical missionaries, they founded the Projeto Visão Indígena³³ (PVI) and plan to spend the rest of their working lives volunteering in indigenous tribes throughout Brazil, paid only by their church. Their goals are to help revive and valorize the culture (Field Journal, p84).

³³ Project Indigenous Vision

Bringing it to the Public: Iandé Meme Maranongara



As mentioned before, with the aid of Padre Rino, the Pitaguary replaced the former children's group Toré Mirim with the group Iandé Meme Maranongara (Field Journal, p75). This group has a large role in rescuing the culture and valorizing the community's indigenous roots. The children are expected to participate in the sweat lodge ceremonies, Tupi classes, indigenous art classes, *toré* performances and more. Another huge part of the group's role in community is to bring information about the Pitaguary to non-tribe members, both in Brazil and in other countries.

The presentations usually are performances of the *toré*. The children will dress in hand-made dried palm skirts adorned with intricate grass netting and natural beads made from berries or seeds. Both genders may wear T-shirts printed by MSMCBJ that have mixed symbolism from the Pitaguary and the Lakota Indians. The shirts generally read "Ore Meme Maranongara" or "Mitakuye Oyasin," both of which mean "We are all parents" respectively in Tupi and Lakota. The other option for the girls is to wear hand-made palm shirts and for the boys, no shirt at all. Many of the children wear

³⁴ A member of the group getting their face painted for a presentation. Photo taken by author.

headdresses, called *cocars* in Tupi. The boys have larger headdresses that tend to be made of either sturdy dry grass-like material or tall straight feathers such as peacock feathers. The girls have smaller *cocars* made from smaller, more flexible feathers, such as the feathers of capuchins or chickens. The girls often also wear seed and feather earrings, and *tereres*³⁵ as well as seed bracelets and necklaces. The children also wear red and/or black face and body paint representing the colors of the Pitaguary³⁶.

Many *toré* performances begin with the Lord's Prayer. When the Pajé is present, he smokes tobacco for purification (retreat and performance 2). The *toré* itself is a simple counter-clockwise two-step dance. The music usually involves a tall drum, called *tambo*, and maracas. Sometimes some of the children will carry four-to-five-foot-long sticks called *pau*. These sticks can be used to tap out the one-two-three-pause beat. They also sometimes are used to dance mock battles during the *toré*. As the children dance, they sing the Pitaguary songs both in Portuguese and in Tupi.

The Pitaguary, especially Iandé Meme Maranongara, often leave the *aldeias* to participate in conferences or to perform these presentations (Field Journal, p4). In addition, the tribe frequently receives visitors, especially during the sweat lodge ceremonies (Field Journal, p9). Padre Rino explains one of the reasons that the tribe promotes exchange with the outside is because they are combating racism against indigenous groups:

Tess: Why do you bring non-Indians into the Pitaguary community to participate in the sweat lodge ceremonies?

³⁵ *Terere*: A long, singular string of seed beads. They often have parakeet or other feathers attached to the end. They are clipped to the top of the scalp, with the feather dangling at the shoulder or upper-back.

³⁶ The Pitaguary colors are red, black, and white. Red stands for war, black stands for sadness, and white stands for peace (Field Journal,).

Padre Rino: Because we believe that, uh, Indian culture, native culture, is very much discriminated, and Indian people are like black people, they are second-level people, and until a few years ago they were considered animals, with no soul.

Tess: Really?

Padre Rino: Yes, if you go back in history, slavery in Brazil was up until 1884, so until then Indian people, black people, were considered animals. So they were supposed to suffer here, for any access to the Paradise in the second life. So, still, the conservatives and dominant parties consider blacks and Indians inferior. So this is why the sharing and dialogue between different races. It's a step, it's a step for the world, for the community. It's a way of being brothers and sisters.

(Padre Ottorino Bonvini, Field Journal, p82)

As with many minority groups in Brazil, the Pitaguary are struggling to recover human dignity after centuries of exploitation (Pinheiro, 2002). By bringing outsiders into their tribes or by putting on exhibits for outsiders, they are aiming to revalorize their cultural heritage in the eyes of the general public.

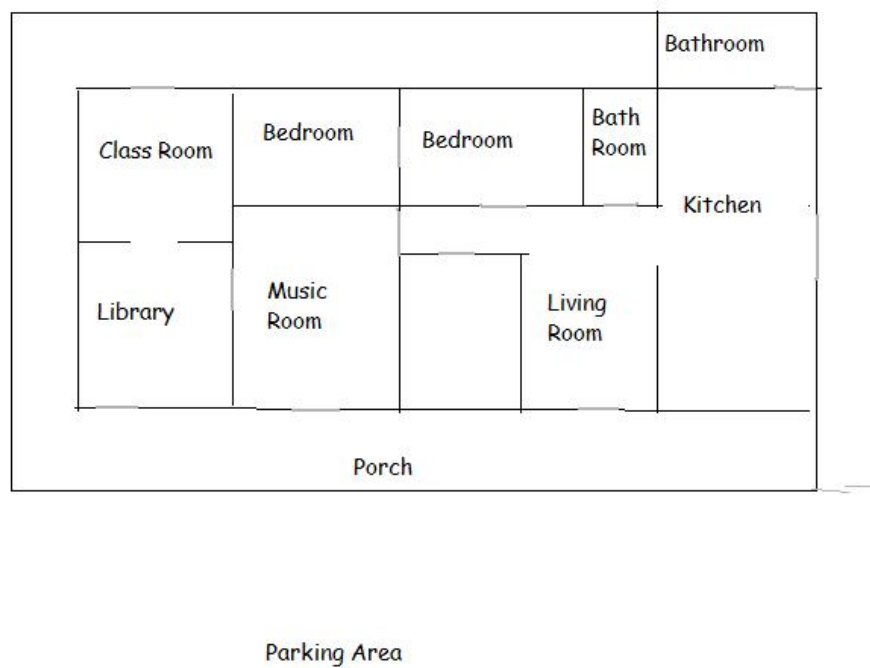
Conclusion

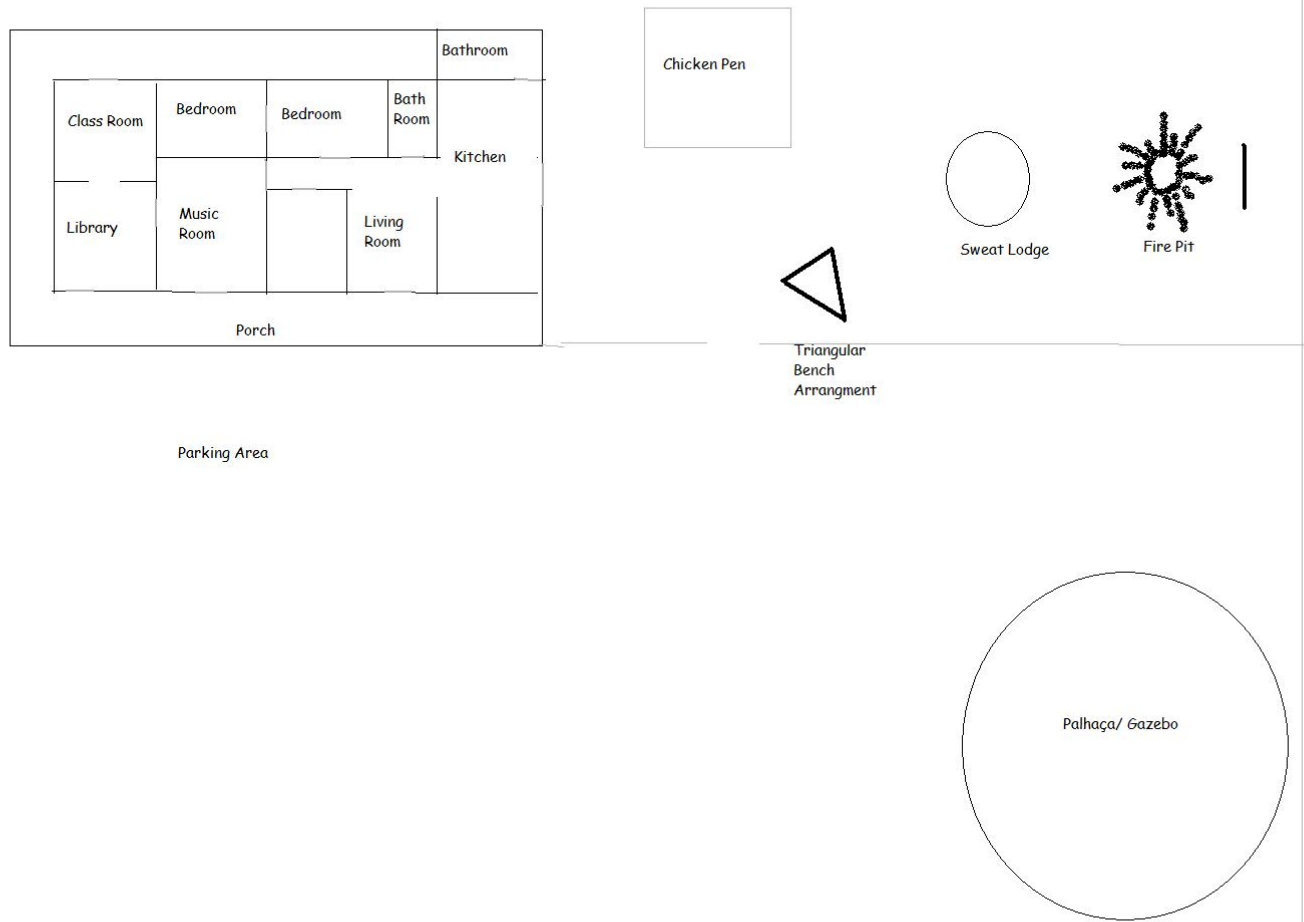
The Pitaguary after centuries of exploitation have been rebuilding their culture. In the last three years, with the help of Padre Rino and the MSMCBJ the movement to rescue and valorize the culture has gained momentum. Although the classes and activities held at the Casa de Alta are sometimes taught by outsiders and aided by foreign tribes, the motivation for this reteaching of Pitaguary culture and the goals for self-awareness and indigenous valorization come from the Pitaguary themselves. By

using outside resources, the Pitaguary have found a way to power their dream for a unified community that values and practices its heritage. By bringing information to the public, the Pitaguary are both campaigning for public credibility and understanding. The movement, more than simply created to gain territory, is to bring about a brighter, dignified future for their children.

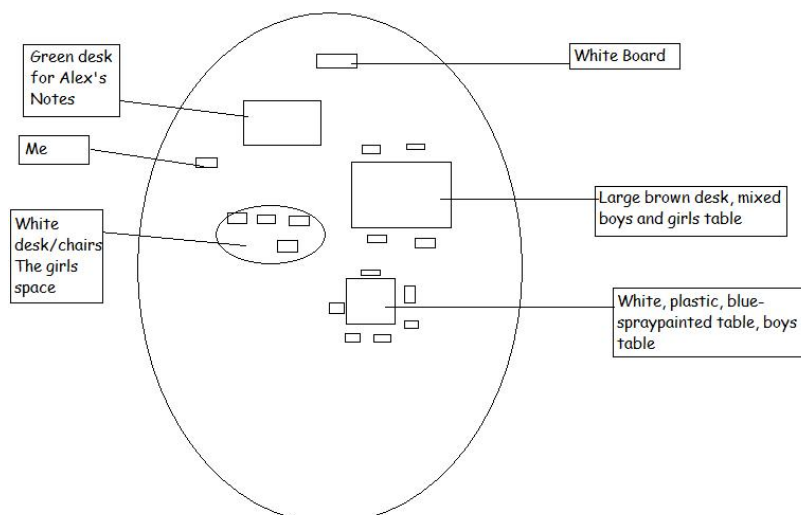
Diagrams

Casa de Alta:

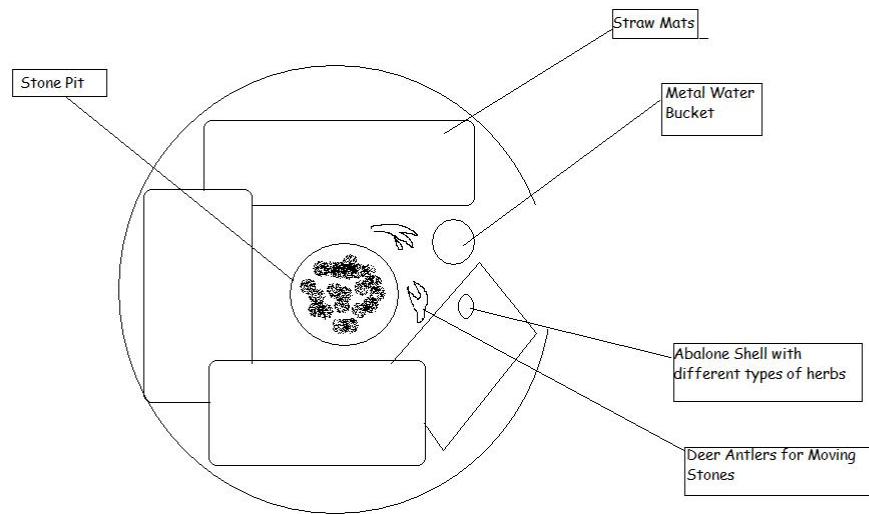




Palhoça



Sweat Lodge



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Appendix Questions

1. Could you have done this project in the USA? What data or sources were unique to the culture in which you did the project?

No, I could not have done this project in the USA. The Pitaguary Indians are located only in the Cearense municipalities Maracanaú and Pacatuba. While many indigenous cultures throughout the Americas are recovering their heritage, the Pitaguary methodology in rebuilding their culture is unique, and my research could not be reproduced with another tribe within Brazil, much less within USA.

2. Could you have done any part of it in the USA? Would the results have been different? How?

I could have studied the use of outside resources in mobilizing a US indigenous tribe's efforts to recreate their culture. However, legal regulations for Indians are drastically different in the United States. Indigenous claims there may only be made by those who have cultural continuity and are regulated by blood quotas, whereas in Brazil ethnic identity is fluid and often unrelated to actual blood percentages. Therefore, in the US there is not the same phenomenon of reclaiming indigenous heritage that there is in Brazil.

3. Did the process of doing the ISP modify your learning style? How was this different from your previous style and approaches to learning?

During my ISP, I learned how to organize my data, conduct pertinent interviews and organize them into a paper. While I would not say my general study habits and learning style has been altered drastically, I have gained valuable experience in field study.

4. How much of the final monograph is primary data? How much is from secondary sources?

Aside from historical information on the indigenous movement in Brazil, nearly all of my paper is derived from primary sources.

5. What criteria did you use to evaluate your data for inclusion in the final monograph? Or how did you decide to exclude certain data?

I gathered too much information for one paper in my ISP period. I narrowed it down based on my thesis about outer resources. While the majority of the Pitaguary movement was internal and I gathered data on this fact, my thesis was concerned with outside help and so I only included information about that.

6. How did the "drop-off's" or field exercises contribute to the process and completion of the ISP?

Frankly, while the drop off was a great exercise for getting to know Fortaleza and getting used to being in unknown situations, it did not significantly contribute to my project. The community project, however, was a very helpful introduction to conducting field research.

7. What part of the FSS most significantly influenced the ISP process?

I believe the ethical questions raised were important, but the seminars were vague and generally uninformative.

8. What were the principal problems you encountered while doing the ISP? Were you able to resolve these and how?

My major problem at first was the language barrier, and at first conducting and transcribing interviews was very difficult. I overcame this by enlisting the help of the family I was living with. By the end of my period with the Pitaguary I had barely spoken English and my Portuguese skills had advanced to the point where I was able to conduct and transcribe my interviews alone, with occasional clarification from the same family members.

9. Did you experience any time constraints? How could these have been resolved?

I did experience some time constraints, but as was lucky enough to study the Pitaguary during my community project, I had one extra week of research (about four weeks in total) and I gathered more than enough information for this paper. However, I would suggest that everybody be given at least four weeks of research time, as many other people in the program were having difficulties meeting the deadline.

10. Did your original topic change and evolved as you discovered or did not discover new and different resources? Did the resources available modify or determine the topic?
11. How did you go about finding resources: institutions, interviewees, publications, etc.?

Dona Simone, the woman I was living with, got me in contact with all of my key informants. She and her family were incredibly helpful to my project.

12. What method(s) did you use? How did you decide to use such method(s)?

I used participant observation and interviews to conduct my research. Because I was doing more of an anthropological paper, these were the most obvious methods.

13. Comment on your relations with your advisor: indispensable? Occasionally helpful? Not very helpful? At what point was he/she most helpful? Were there cultural differences, which influenced your relationship? A different understanding of educational processes and goals? Was working with the advisor instructional?

My advisor was very helpful with gathering information about the tribe, as he also was a key informant. He also provided great reading material about the Pitaguary that was indispensable for my research. However, we generally did not discuss organizational issues, which worked well with my personal writing process.

14. Did you reach any dead ends? Hypotheses which turned out to be not useful? Interviews or visits that had no application?

My original plan was to study acculturation of other religious practices into the Pitaguary ritualistic life. While I found evidence for acculturation, in interviews my key informants chose to deny the incorporation of say, African culture. Because of this, I decided to change to the use of outside resources rather than cultural mixing.

15. What insights did you gain into the culture as a result of doing the ISP, which you might not otherwise have gained?

I learned a great deal about ethnic identity in Brazil which I otherwise would not have learned.

16. Did the ISP process assist your adjustment to the culture? Integration?

Because I lived with the Pitaguary, I was fully immersed into the language. As a result, by the time I returned to Fortaleza my Portuguese had improved dramatically. Having the language skills has really allowed me to actively participant in all Brazilian experiences.

17. What were the principal lessons you learned from the ISP process?

Do not have interviews that are too long or rise above your language abilities. They will only frustrate you.

18. If you met a future student who wanted to do this same project, what would be your recommendations to him/her?

Ask a lot of questions and do not be shy. These people want you to learn about them, as they have decided to invite into their homes and into their culture. And if you enter the sweat lodge ceremony, do not panic.

19. Given what you know now, would you undertake this, or a similar project again?

Yes. I am hoping to come back and further study the Pitaguary-Lakota connection as well as the alliance between Cearense and other northeastern indigenous tribes.