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## **PARTICIPATORY VIDEO AS A MEANS OF REFLECTION AND SELF-REFLECTION ABOUT THE IMAGE AND IDENTITY OF RE-EMERGING INDIGENOUS GROUPS IN NORTH-EASTERN BRAZIL**

Peter Anton Zoettl<sup>1</sup>

*In the north-east of Brazil, the last decades have seen an unfamiliar phenomenon: the rise of ‘new’ indigenous tribes in areas that were long considered as ‘acculturated’ by both the state and public opinion. In their pursuit to be recognized by the authorities and by fellow Non-Indian citizens, these ‘re-emerging’ Indians have continually carried out a peculiar re-construction of their ‘image’ as Indians, torn between romantic ideas of Indianness, and the demand to fully integrate within national society. Drawing on recent fieldwork experience with a group of Pataxó Indians in the state of Bahia, the article discusses how the visual-anthropological method of participatory video can be used as a means of reflecting on the importance of images within identity formation processes of minority groups. By producing a video about the tourists who visit their Indian village and nature reserve, the Pataxó were encouraged to question the stereotypic use of images, conducing to a better understanding of the relation between the Other’s notion and their own representation of ‘Indianness’.*

Keywords: Brazilian Indians, ethnic tourism, identity, image, Indianness, participatory video, Pataxó, visual anthropology

Brazilian Indians today are still far from ‘emergent’ in the economic sense used by social scientists (*cf.* Fortun 2010) to describe certain American Indian groups that have been able to profit from their legal status as nations to open up casinos in their territories, and thus access to the surplus of capitalist economy, through the hands of their – mainly ‘white’ –American gambling customers. North-eastern Brazilian Indian communities, some of whom have only recently been acknowledged publicly, in no way appreciate the term ‘*emergentes*’ (the Portuguese for ‘emergent’). For them the expression implies that they had ceased to exist, and are only now ‘coming into being’ (Oxford 2010) again. Instead of ‘*emergentes*’, they say they

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should be called '*índios existentes e resistentes*' ('existing and resisting Indians'), in reference to a century-long fight for their rights as a native population which, from the age of 'discovery' to the present day, has been robbed of their lands and, in consequence, of their cultural identity.

Indeed, in those parts of Brazil which, for geographical or political reasons, were more easily accessible to the colonizers (the coastline, and areas close to roads, railways or the shifting economic and political capitals) many indigenous groups had ceased to exist – in the mind of the state and the public. For centuries, missionaries and governors had driven them from their homelands into confined areas, where their labour could be more easily exploited, and where their mere existence (if they managed to survive on subsistence agriculture) would occupy less space – space which was needed for monoculture (sugarcane, cacao) or cattle breeding. When the missionaries were expelled from Brazil during the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the remaining Indian population sometimes also had to leave, and sometimes was permitted to remain. Some tried to superficially 'merge' with the national Brazilian population and were now called, and called themselves, '*caboclos*' (people of Indian and 'white' ancestry). Others simply disappeared into the interior of a country that was half the size of the continent.

Even considering the magnitude of Brazil's vast territory, it is surprising that, for instance, the Pataxó-Indians (mainly found in the underdeveloped but densely populated state of Bahia) only made their way back into the public eye in the 1950s. They had, of course, never ceased to exist, but had retreated to an area which was – then – not yet of interest to planters or land developers. In 1951, following an incident still not thoroughly explained (Sampaio 2000) during which a group of Pataxó Indians were persuaded by two, allegedly communist, *agents provocateurs* to plunder a nearby 'white' sales post, the Pataxó were suddenly back in the news. Their one-day escapade provoked an extremely violent response from the state military police, a brutal demonstration of government force, accompanied by rape and murder (welcomed by parts of the non Indian population), which created a trauma that still affects the Pataxó collective memory today. The '*Fogo de '51*' ('The Fire of '51') displaced most of the Pataxó to various parts of the country but also brought them back into the public consciousness, and therefore, into public *existence*.

Other groups, such as the Tupinambá, who live a couple of hundred kilometres north of the Pataxó, have only very recently had their 'coming out'. An external stimulus was required to encourage them to assume their Indianness and make it public to the outside world. In the

late 1990s, when non-governmental organizations approached a scattered population of Indian descent who inhabited a vast rural area not far from the city of Ilhéus (the region's cacao capital, whose spectacular growth at the beginning of the century was the motor behind the 'takeover' of most of the Indians' lands), they initially wondered about the 'underdeveloped' political consciousness of the Tupinambá, who at this time still called themselves '*caboclos*':

Between 1997 and 1998, political activists who made an effort to encourage the Indians of Olivença [a village next to Ilhéus] to claim their rights from the state, were disappointed by what they considered to be some of the Indians' lack of a sense of 'community', 'collectivity', or 'union' [...] In fact, at this time, the Tupinambá who lived in these various locations did not consider themselves a group, and were not interested in the possibility of getting to know those living in other locations. (Viegas 2008: 207)

The Pataxó and Tupinambá experiences demonstrate that to *be* Indian – within a society where a sizeable portion of the population admits, at least partially, its Indian ancestry (in all likelihood only a minority of Brazilians could rightfully claim not to have Indian or African blood in their veins) – is closely related to being *seen*, noticed, or visualized – or not – as Indian. While many of the Indians who, through the course of history and as a consequence of their geographical proximity to Brazilian 'nationals', have adopted their neighbours' lifestyle and language (in north-eastern Brazil, the Fulniô are the only indigenous people who maintain their native language), the great majority have never stopped considering themselves Indian. If they had ceased to exist within the consciousness of the national populace, it is because they had ceased to be recognized and express themselves as Indians – in an attempt to avoid discrimination about something which they knew they were, but which they disguised by adopting the label '*caboclo*'.

Brazilian Indian identity is thus very closely linked to questions about the *image* of Indians: firstly images in the sense of mental representations or ideas, 'the general impression that a person, organization, or product presents to the public' (Oxford 2010), and secondly, images in the narrow, pictorial sense. Indians in Brazil are not only seen (conceptualized) by the population (and themselves) in a certain way, they are also represented by means of photography, film and paintings, in an often stereotyped manner. Their Indianness does not only exist as a concept, but is also something that is communicated and disseminated, mainly by the Brazilian mass media, which is effectively dominated by a small number of national TV stations. Clearly, these two expressions of the Indian's 'image' are closely interconnected: the pictorial representation of Indians disseminated by the media partly determines the mental representation Brazilians acquire of 'their' Indians, which is in turn responsible for certain notions (and images) of Indianness reiterated in the public sphere. Given their small number

and economic importance, it is evident that the Indians are not the ones in control of the production of these representational images, and thus the mental images that ‘white’ Brazilians have of them.

Within this context, the use of participatory video was proposed as a means of enabling the Pataxó to have a voice in the construction of their image and help both the anthropologist and the community members who would be involved in the production process to find out more about the role of images in the construction and representation of Brazilian Indian identity. After initial ‘negotiations’ with various groups of Pataxó Indians which lasted a couple of weeks (Brazilian Indians today are very sensitive about questions of authorial rights and many of them report how they have previously, in their view, been ‘robbed’ of their image), we agreed on the terms of a video workshop, in which half a dozen Pataxó would be introduced to the techniques of video filmmaking in order to produce a short documentary on a topic of their choice.

During the first group meeting, we started out brainstorming about what the documentary should be about. The ideas that came up ranged from topics like ‘the elders of the village’, ‘the knowledge, wisdom and experience of the older Pataxó Indians’ or ‘the Indigenous Games’ (a yearly event, where the Pataxó from all over Bahia compete in disciplines like archery or tug-of-war), to ‘body painting’, ‘medical herbs’, ‘the Pataxó children’ and ‘a day in the village’. It couldn’t go without notice that some of the proposals resembled closely the topics that are regularly addressed in media reports about indigenous people, as well as those addressed by other community media projects like the well-known ‘Video in the Villages’ (*Vídeo nas Aldeias*). Andreza, a teenager of thirteen years and one of the youngest participants in the workshop, finally suggested making a video about ‘the question of tourism in the village’. The discussion that followed Andreza’s proposal made clear that everybody in the group seemed to have a lot to say about this issue and that the relation between ‘the tourists’ and ‘the Indians’ was a topic charged with emotion, making it the subject of choice in the vote that followed our brainstorming.

Certainly, Andreza’s idea didn’t come up by chance, since a great many of the Pataxó Indians, who live in about two dozen villages in the extreme south of the state of Bahia, earn their living from tourism, principally through the sale of handicrafts. In Coroa Vermelha, the village where the workshop finally took place, it is likely that the vast majority of inhabitants live off tourism. This is not surprising given that the village is located a short bus or car ride away from the city of Porto Seguro, one of Bahia’s (and Brazil’s) tourist capitals, with direct

flights to various European cities. In fact, Coroa Vermelha has developed into a village that is both a holiday resort and an Indian community. Most of its magnificent beaches and the main part of the (architecturally less grandiose) village lie within the Pataxó reserve limits. The lives of the Indians and the tourism industry are so closely intertwined that some authors have come to refer to them as ‘tourist Indians’, an expression rejected by others, including, understandably, the Pataxó themselves (*cf.* Grünewald 1999: 19; Castro 2008). However named, the Pataxó of Coroa Vermelha have been able to receive their share in the revenues of the local tourist industry, not only through the sale of Pataxó handcrafts but also by organizing guided tours in the nearby nature reserve of Jaqueira, set up and administrated entirely by themselves. Like in other parts of the Americas (*cf.* Theodossopoulos 2010), indigenous culture in Brazil has become a valuable resource and an opportunity for some of the notoriously impoverished Indians in the country to make a better living. Understandably, this is generally the case only for those Indians that live not too distant from already established tourist routes, as ‘the desire of most tourists to have an encounter with an indigenous Amerindian culture is not strong enough to overcome the prospect of bad roads, poor infrastructure and the arduous task of travelling long distances’, as Theodossopoulos (*ib.*: 125) puts it.

The Pataxó’s contact with tourists has made them conscious of the question of ‘image’: they know very well that representational images of ‘generic’ Indians are used to sell souvenirs to visitors all over the region. When, on our second meeting, we started to compile a list of topics and images that could be useful to demonstrate the relation between the villagers and the tourists, one of the participants proposed filming ‘white businesses that sell their products using images of Indians’. All of the workshop participants had very clear feelings about the double meaning of ‘image’ in this context (which is also inherent in the Portuguese word ‘*imagem*’). It was suggested that the film not only capture the innumerable paintings and statues in the area that depict Indians of unknown origin, but also the signboards of hotels and shops that have adopted Pataxó names to attract their customers, as visual evidence that not only are pictorial images employed for commerce, but that the whole idea of ‘being Indian’ has entered the commercial arena.

Furthermore, the commercialization of Indianness has confronted the Pataxó with the ‘quest for authenticity’. Brazilian tourists – as most of the interviews conducted during the workshop demonstrated – know very little about the north-eastern Indians but are nonetheless very concerned about ‘getting the real thing’. A common complaint is that the Pataxó merely

‘disguise’ themselves as Indians, which is conceived by the inhabitants of Coroa Vermelha to be not only insulting but also harmful to their business and thus their economic existence. The problem of ‘authenticity’, cited as of little relevance by many anthropologists (*cf.* e.g. Grünewald 1999: 35ff), indeed seems to be of utmost importance to both the Indians and their fellow citizens. ‘Authenticity’ in itself is of course one of the chief commodities offered by the tourism industry and an essential part of the experience of those who come to see and meet the Other. Deirdre Evans-Pritchard, for instance, has pointed out how North American Indians are constantly compelled by visitors to make a statement about the ‘cultural significance’ of their craftwork, even though most of them would rather be treated ‘purely as artists, not as representatives of Indian culture’ (1989: 95).

For the Pataxó, to be considered ‘truly’ Indian is not only a commercial necessity (only ‘real’ Indians produce ‘authentic’, sought-after, artwork) but a simple quest for their identity to be recognized, not only legally by the state, but also emotionally and genuinely by the rest of the population. After all, Brazilian Indians are also Brazilians. They support their ‘*seleção*’ (the national soccer team) as frenetically as everybody else in the country, and being Pataxó does not stop them from dancing *forro* (a Brazilian dance particularly popular in the northeast). But they, like everyone else, also seek to be recognized by their fellow countrymen for their distinctiveness, which for them is grounded in their Indianness – in all likelihood prior to any other group identities they eventually manifest, such as ‘Brazilian’, ‘*nordestino*’ (‘north easterner’), ‘*baiano*’ (from the state of Bahia), or the individual identities of gender, age, profession etc. Confirming Barth’s (1969: 10) observation that ethnic identities are ‘categories of ascription’, the Pataxó experience day-to-day that being legally recognized as ‘Indian’ does not mean to be emotionally accepted as Indian. In fact, the state’s ‘power of nomination’ (Bourdieu 1996) – which in the case of Indian affairs in Brazil is exercised by the National Foundation for the Indian (FUNAI<sup>2</sup>) – only recognized Coroa Vermelha as Indian territory in 1998 (Grünewald 1999: 59), thus declaring its inhabitants as ‘rightful’ Indians. Still, public opinion holds that many of the north-eastern Indians ‘invented’ their identity in order to gain what eventually comes with being ‘declared’ Indian: (unreliable) health care, pension schemes, and access to publicly owned land. Brazilian ‘emergent’ Indians, therefore, often find themselves termed ‘Indians’ by their compatriots without actually being accepted as such.

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<sup>2</sup> *Fundação Nacional do Índio.*

The question of being seen or not as a ‘real’ Indian proved its relevance right on the first day of shooting. Pataxó Indians do not normally wear special attire unless they are attending some kind of ceremony, nor do they all correspond to what is considered to be a ‘typical’ Indian phenotype. When the Pataxó directors of the workshop interviewed tourists from all over Brazil in front of a huge metal cross erected by the municipality in Coroa Vermelha’s town square as a memorial to the first Christian mass celebrated in Brazil, asking them if they had encountered any Indians during their visit, the majority of their guests – standing in the middle of the second most populated Pataxó village in the country, with a population of approximately 5.000 inhabitants – resolutely replied, ‘No’. As none of the workshop’s participants was dressed in any special way, most interviewees did not seem to realize that they were being interviewed by Pataxó Indians, sharing frankly their opinions in relation to what they deemed to be a lack of Indian ‘culture’ in north-eastern Brazil. Some described the Indians of the state of Bahia as supposedly ‘acculturated’ or ‘urbanized’, and mentioned TV programs that featured Indians from remote areas as an example of what ‘being Indian’ really meant to them. Once the camera was powered off, the conversation between the Pataxó directors and the tourists often continued, giving the Indians the chance to explain more about their situation and the tourists the opportunity to gain some insights they would probably have missed by only engaging superficially with street vendors or local tourist guides.

The widespread suspicion that north-eastern ‘emergent’ Indians are ‘acculturated’ is a popular belief that can be traced back to a scientific concept. In the pre-Barth era, until the beginning of the 1960s, acculturation studies were still commonplace among national and foreign anthropologists in Brazil (Melatti 2007: 13ff). But the verdicts ‘acculturated’ and ‘urbanized’ are not only commonsense versions of anthropological trait lists, they are usually grounded in *visual* evidence, judged from a distance. The fact that the Pataxó of Coroa Vermelha do not live in straw huts like the Indians on TV, but in houses that *look* like ‘normal’ Brazilian dwellings, makes them – in the eyes of their visitors – ‘urbanized’. Likewise, the observation that Pataxó Indians normally dress like everybody else is interpreted as a (visible) sign of their ‘acculturation’.

The Pataxó feel this Brazilian society demand that Indians should also look Indian very intently. One of my informants from the Indian village of Aldeia Velha (another Pataxó village close to Porto Seguro) remarked that failure to dress ‘traditionally’ often implied not being taken seriously, that is, not being considered Indian. This is not only true with regard to the stereotypical ideas manifest in public opinion, but also in encounters with the state.



Whenever ‘emergent’ Indians participate in meetings with FUNAI agents or hand petitions in to government officials, they make sure that they dress in the manner expected of them. Unfortunately, it seems to be appearance first of all which to non-Indians makes ‘Indians’ Indian. However, while the Pataxó unanimously reject (and mock) the ‘white’ stereotypical picture of Indians, to a certain extent they also contribute to it. The discussions during the workshop about how to turn into a video the notion of ‘stereotypes’ made clear that the participants were (or became) aware of the ways in which certain images are deployed by the non-Indian tourist industry *and* by themselves in quite a similar way. As Deirdre Evans-Pritchard (1989: 91) emphasizes, stereotyping occurs on both sides, and often comes as part of a ‘parcel of communication’ that provides Native Americans ‘with formulae for protecting their privacy while selling to the tourists’. Difference being the ‘currency of cultural tourism’, stereotypes, following Evans-Pritchard, help to keep the roles of buyers and seller separate, and by stereotyping ‘tourists, and aware of touristic stereotypes of Indians, Indians can exercise more control over frequently uncomfortable situations’ (*ib.*: 102).

The experience of filming themselves, filming the Other, and questioning the Other’s image of the Indians, created a reflective dialogue not only between the Pataxó and the tourists who had come to see them, but also amongst the Pataxó themselves. The participatory video shooting brought them into closer contact with their visitors and confronted them, on and off camera, with beliefs they knew to be widespread, but which they hardly ever had discussed directly with the Other. Some of the tourists pointed out that the Pataxó of Cora Vermelha would actually contribute to a stereotyped view of their culture by engaging only in a very superficial way with their visitors, and made the workshop’s participants thus reflect on their ‘image’ in a broader sense: the image they hold of themselves, as much as the image they *produce* of themselves. As a consequence, it was decided by the directors to juxtapose in the video the tourist guides that work on the beach of Coroa Vermelha with the guided tours offered at the nature reserve of Jaqueira, as an attempt to demonstrate their endeavour to deal in a more nuanced way with tourism, offering deeper insights in their culture.

In fact, the *Reserva Pataxó da Jaqueira* from the beginning of the workshop was considered by all of the participants as an indispensable setting for filming, not only because it is the source of a large part of the Indian’s revenue, but also as an example of professional entrepreneurship, of the Pataxó’s capacity to manage their own affairs. Jaqueira means far more to the Pataxó of Coroa Vermelha than an opportunity to participate in the tourism industry on their own terms. The reserve is considered by its administrators to be a place

where Pataxó culture is being reinforced and strengthened amongst the Indians themselves. Most of the Pataxó leaders were involved in the establishment of the reserve, overcoming enormous obstacles, which in turn helped, as they affirm, to build a stronger community spirit.

A visit to Jaqueira demonstrates, however, that the self-image propagated by the Pataxó does not always match their critical discourse on their visitor's ideas of Indianness. The images evoked during a visit at Jaqueira at times closely resemble the very image that has been imposed on them by Brazilian society, and which they reject as a stereotype. The museum-like presentation of traditional dresses, worn only within the limits of the reserve, for instance, probably matches pretty closely the kind of pictures most tourists have in mind when they arrive in Coroa Vermelha, eager to catch sight of 'live' Indians as part of their holiday experience. Without doubt, a visitor to Jaqueira will learn a lot more about Pataxó culture than those who are guided around the village by one of the Indian children who hastily reels off what they hold, or have been told, to be the basics of their culture. However, the manner in which the Pataxó appear to people from the outside is clearly a kind of enactment, during which visitors are guided on a separate trail to the centre of the reserve in order to avoid encounters between stage and backstage 'actors', in a truly Goffmanian (2008) manner.

Yet, the Pataxó's anxiety to present themselves within the reserve '*a carater*' (according to Indian 'fashion') is far more than the fear of an eventual fall in profits or of non-fulfilment of their customer's expectations. It touches once again on the notion of 'authenticity', the question of who is, and who is not, a 'real', 'rightful', 'legitimate' Indian – and who decides this. During the workshop meetings, the participants often expressed their anger about the tourists' (and other fellow Brazilians') suspicion that the Pataxó are 'less' Indian than the Indians of the country's centre and northern regions. Brazilians would like to see them live the way their ancestors used to live at the time of Cabral's arrival, thus denying them their right to develop and become 'modern'. Iracema, a shopkeeper of a souvenir shop who was interviewed by the Pataxó directors and asked about the tourists' expectations confirmed such concerns, reporting that

the majority [of the tourists] think that as we're Indians, we should stay like in ancient times, we shouldn't progress. They believe that we should be more backward. When they come in and listen to me, or see the credit card terminals which we use to ease the tourist's life, they are shocked: 'Oh, these Indians! And how well you speak!' Some even doubt that I'm a real Indian!

Indeed, the demand for Indian ‘authenticity’ is not only a tourists’ request. Only a few decades ago, other ‘emergent’ indigenous groups still found themselves pressured by FUNAI to perform the ‘traditional’ *toré* dance, to ‘prove’ that their demands for legal recognition was legitimate (Oliveira 1998: 60). The fact that the *toré* (or *auê* in the case of the Pataxó) is today presented by all the Indians in north-eastern Brazil as a showpiece of their tradition (making it probably the most frequently videotaped part of Indian culture), demonstrates how complex the relationship sometimes is between notions of Indianness prescribed from the outside, and elements of culture that the Indians consider to be the outcome of a process of ‘reaffirmation’. Since they are ‘re-emergent’, the Pataxó still feel the need to *prove* their Indianness, and what they produce for the Other as evidence of this at times seems determined not by their own but by the Other’s image of them. The Brazilian anthropologist Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira, one of the pioneers in ethnicity-studies that sought to overcome the limits of the acculturation-paradigm, considered the discrimination of Indians as ‘*caboclos*’ responsible for what he called their ‘unfortunate consciousness’ (‘*consciência infeliz*’), and their tendency to accept the Other’s view of oneself. Being ‘neither allowed to be Indian nor white’ the ‘*caboclo*’, as Cardoso de Oliveira (2006: 74f) puts it, occupies ‘an intermediate position, adopting the projection of the stereotyped vision which his ‘white’ neighbours have bestowed on him.’

As the terms ‘projection’ and ‘vision’ suggest, a large part of the process of stereotyping culture and identity occurs through images and imaging. While stereotyping is not limited to representational images, stereotyped concepts are often disseminated with the aid of stereotyped pictorial images. During the process of ascribing ethnicity, as the Pataxó case shows, representational images are employed as arguments for the definition, affirmation or rejection of the Other’s identity. In this context, ‘Culture’ is often mistaken for what one can perceive of it, for the visual evidence it produces, something frequently called ‘cultural manifestation’ (‘*manifestações culturais*’) in Brazilian government jargon (*cf.* Zoetl 2011).

Today Brazilian Indians understand very well the power of the image in politics. They feel that their image problem is also a problem of communication, of not being able to make their own vision of themselves perceived within the public sphere. Public opinion – formed and propagated by the media – is frequently felt to be an enemy of their demands, which generally stand in strong opposition to the interests of influential pressure groups, such as landowners or the land consuming industries (e.g. the multinational pulp and paper producer Veracel which operates in southern Bahia). When Indians make it into the news, it is often, especially in north-eastern Brazil, as ‘troublemakers’, in permanent conflict with the authorities.

In this context, participatory video can contribute to the communicational emancipation of minority groups, by imparting technical and artistic knowledge which is not necessarily transferred when equipment is simply handed over to people who have been marginalized for decades. With financial help from governmental and non-governmental organizations, some Brazilian indigenous groups have managed to set up basic editing facilities, and have started to make films about Indians, themselves. Although these efforts are generally still a long way from achieving the visibility of the internationally renowned ‘*Vídeo nas Aldeias*’ project, which has toured festivals all over the world (*cf.* Bessire 2009), they are a first step towards a more equal power balance in the public negotiation of the Indian image. In fact, when I approached the Pataxó of Coroa Vermelha they had already started to install video editing facilities, with money from a governmental programme that seeks to promote cultural activities at community level (‘*Ponto de Cultura*’ or ‘Culture Spot’). The camera they had acquired was not semi-professional but good enough to shoot decent images, and the computers could draw on sufficient CPU power to run basic editing software. What was missing was the knowledge of how to use such a software, how to get the most out of the camera they owned and, not least, how to conceptualize and turn into a story an idea for a non-fiction video.

But working with film is not only a question of camera, narrative and editing techniques. The workshop at Coroa Vermelha demonstrated the importance of a thorough reflection about the social meaning of images. More than the actual filming and editing, it was the discussions that came up during brainstorming, scripting or screening of raw material that eventually fostered an awareness of the participants in relation to the stereotypic connotations of pictorial images. The filmic encounter of the Pataxó directors and their visitors made obvious that stereotypes persist on both sides, and that many of them are anchored in the visual world. ‘Reference images’ that appear to encode Indianness are all too easily adopted by ‘whites’ and Indians alike, and ‘white’ notions of how Indians should look are sometimes only rejected in theory. Making a video – much more than watching videos or television – helped to encourage a process of reflection on the Pataxós’ own notion of Indianness. Exploring, with the camera, the tourist’s vision of Indians did not lead the Pataxó directors only to question the Other’s point of view, it also made them reflect on their own self-conception, and the way they present and represent themselves visually.

Of course, filmmaking, as well as storytelling, has to be learned. Although the technical aspects of digital video are becoming increasingly simple for the end-user, there are millions

of ways to look at the world, to dissect it with the help of the camera's eye, and to reassemble it in the editing suite to convey some kind of filmic meaning. The time-consuming editing process, particularly, is the crux of participatory video projects, since it is often dominated by the organizers of the project – from outside the community. This, unfortunately, is what also happened in Coroa Vermelha. Due to the time constraints of the workshop and technical problems with the computer setup, the editing of the film was, in the end, completed by the anthropologist (and approved afterwards by the directors and representatives of the community). It was not only external circumstances, however, that led the Pataxó directors to entrust their raw material to somebody from outside the community. Experience indicates that, while it is true that many Indian (and other) communities very much want to *have* films about them and their culture, it would of course be wrong to assume that all of them want to *make* films, in the sense of being genuinely interested in the whole production process. Handing over the camera to the 'subjects' of social science is indeed a valuable method of facilitating a more dialogical approach to ethnographic research, but it is not devoid of a certain romantic denial of authorship which has frequently haunted visual anthropologists (*cf.* Henley 2009). While everybody loves to shoot – and admittedly it doesn't take much to produce fairly good quality images nowadays – montage is an artistic undertaking that requires much more than time and knowledge, it also requires *muse*.

Still, the potential uses of film are manifold. Most of the 'emergent' Indians in Brazil are in all likelihood more interested, at the moment, in the political implications of making movies than they are concerned about the artistic outcome of the visual enterprise. Video can be used as a means to give voice to one's grievances in a more effective and visible way, it can help to create a better understanding for a minority's culture, its problems and claims within society as a whole, and it may even help to improve the economical situation of a community by promoting tourism or other commercial activities. The success of websites like *Índios Online*<sup>3</sup> demonstrates that there is an actual demand for communicational platforms for indigenous matters in Brazil and that there is no lack neither of indigenous content creators nor non-Indian content users. What is missing, occasionally, is a more professional 'wrapping' of indigenous topics to ensure their proper divulgation and, eventually, a deeper reflection on questions concerning, for instance, the political uses and misuses of 'ethnic' identity within societal discourse. Participatory video can be helpful in either case, as long as it seeks to combine capacity building with awareness-raising, within a course of action where

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<sup>3</sup> [Http://www.indiosonline.net](http://www.indiosonline.net)

the filmic outcome is only the visible result of a self-conscious process of reflection, ideally as part of what the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire (2005 [1968]: 78) has called ‘problematizing education’. The anthropologist-teacher may only profit from such a participatory perspective: ‘Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow’ (*ib.*: 80).

In recent years, in other parts of the country, where Indians live in much greater isolation from ‘civilization’ than in Bahia, but where, at the same time, they may feel more self-assured about their Indianness, Indians have made their debuts as film directors and created opportunities to screen their works in international and national festivals, such as the ‘*Vídeo Índio*’ in Mato Grosso do Sul (*cf.* Espíndola 2010). In the same state of Mato Grosso do Sul, tucked away between Paraguay, Bolivia and the south-western part of Brazil, certain Indians are known not for their accurate performance of the *toré*, but as hip-hop artists. Both instances could be seen as part of an emancipation process for Indian identity, for an identity which produces images that choose to confuse, instead of validate, outdated clichés of Indianness. In the Brazilian northeast, indigenous media has yet to come of age, but hopefully community and participatory video projects can play their part in helping to create and foster images that reflect a genuinely native point of view.

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