

Image and instrumentality in a Xavante politics of existential recognition:

The public outreach work of Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa

ABSTRACT

This analysis of one Xavante group's innovative projects to represent Xavante culture to nonindigenous audiences reveals multiple and complex perceptions of instrumentalities as well as political goals. Unlike many contemporary Native (Amazonian and other) groups that use aspects of their culture to attract support and achieve concrete political goals, local objectives are relatively abstract and future oriented, having to do with public "image" and "existential recognition." Analysis illustrates that local ideas about indigenous cultural displays aimed primarily at nonindigenous audiences, including "identity politics" and apparently straightforward cultural commodification, may not neatly correspond with anthropologists' or other outsiders' expectations. Overly narrow interpretive foci may cause anthropologists to overlook the potential for multiple and complex objectives and a diversity of locally significant dimensions. [*Native Amazonia (Brazil), identity politics, politics of recognition, existential recognition, performance, public sphere, cultural commodification*]

The Spectacle is not a collection of images; rather it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.

—Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*

In May 1999, with curiosity and a touch of skepticism—perhaps *trepidation* more aptly describes my sentiments—I attended my first Xavante "show." This was a professionally produced cultural spectacle titled *Isari* (Roots). Twenty-one men from the community of Pimentel Barbosa performed *Isari* before an audience of over 200 spectators in São Paulo, Brazil's largest city (estimated population 17.8 million).¹ "It's spectacular . . . very moving," assured several friends who had seen men from the Pimentel Barbosa community perform in São Paulo in 1997 as part of a professional world music and dance program.² Even so, visions of an essentialized, Xavante-style Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, a Tillicum Village-kitsch production, or an overproduced Native Amazonian "ballet folklórico" came to my mind.³ In fact, the performance I witnessed was, indeed, beautiful—a stunningly choreographed display of color, movement, and sound (see Figure 1).

What struck me most about the event I witnessed (which I describe toward the end of this article) was the complete lack of overtly political content as well as the absence of contextualizing information about the Xavante and about the community of Pimentel Barbosa, in particular. Xavante are well-known in Brazil for being extremely political and outspoken. Mario Juruna, the first indigenous person to be active in national politics, was Xavante.⁴ And all Xavante groups have a history both of vigorous, persistent, and high-profile campaigns for land, goods, and services and of continuous battles with the Fundação Nacional do Índio (FUNAI), Brazil's counterpart to a national bureau of Indian affairs. In May 1999, in fact, Pimentel Barbosa Xavante were fighting the most serious threat they had confronted since their battle, in the late 1970s and

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Figure 1. Scene from the 1998 *Isari* performance in Paulínia, S.P. (Photo by João Caldas. Courtesy of IDET.)

early 1980s, to gain legal title to their land. This was the proposed implementation of a massive *hidrovia* (hydro-engineering) project that, if realized, would have disastrous environmental and social consequences for the community. Pimentel Barbosa—or Eténhiritipa, as the community is known in Xavante—had taken a lead in opposing the project and was attempting to mount broader opposition in the region, as well, among other regional indigenous groups (see Graham 1998).⁵

Given the Xavante's history of making demands in public arenas, I expected the performance—or at least some ancillary materials—to reference the urgent *hidrovia* problem. Moreover, I conceptually situated the spectacle within the framework of recent Native Amazonian “identity politics” and anticipated some aspect of the spectacle to be directed toward achieving an identifiable political goal, such as garnering support for opposition to the proposed *hidrovia*.

I was wrong. During the performance, not a single word about the *hidrovia* was uttered. The high-quality, professionally printed program made no reference to it, either (see Figure 2). I was astonished that neither mentioned

this impending crisis or other serious—but ongoing—problems in the community, such as the appalling lack of health care, education, and other basic social services.

The absence of such information contrasted sharply with ways that other indigenous peoples, including other Xavante groups, in particular, the neighboring Kayapó, had been projecting their image into national and international public spaces in recent years. During the late 1980s and 1990s, the Kayapó staged dramatic theatrical performances that helped them to gain legal title to territory they claimed, successfully halt the planned implementation of a series of hydroelectric dams that would have inundated portions of their land, and impede the government from dumping nuclear waste in their territory (see, e.g., Turner 1991a). In what was becoming a burgeoning movement of indigenous identity politics in Brazil, Indians—and groups claiming to be Indian (see Warren 2001)—were using various forms of cultural display to attract public attention and achieve support for their political objectives. Some, having lost their Native languages and customs, “borrowed” forms of bodily adornment and even languages from other publicly recognized



Figure 2. Program for IDET's 2000 "Rite of Passage" and tickets to the 2001 "Rite of Passage" (Courtesy of IDET.)

indigenous groups to authenticate their claims (see Ramos 1998; see also Conklin 1997). In this context, the total absence of publicity about the community's challenges and urgent needs made this, and other Pimentel Barbosa performances that I attended in São Paulo and other Brazilian cities from 1999 to 2002, perplexing.⁶

In this attempt to understand the meanings, for participants, of Pimentel Barbosa's representations of culture to outside publics (see Myers 1994:681) what interests me are local conceptions of instrumentality and the goals of this outreach, which, at first glance, appears to be explicitly apolitical. I argue that adult men (the primary participants in externally directed public displays of Xavante identity) have multiple and complex perceptions of the projects' instrumentalities and goals.⁷ Objectives vary according to the age and social position of individual actors. Further, men's perspectives differ in their emphasis on individual as opposed to community-wide goals. Young male leaders, those who have the most experience dealing with outside society, are particularly concerned with "image"—public perceptions of Xavante within the broader national public sphere. Senior and elder men, in contrast, are invested in the pursuit of "recognition"—in fact, a specific form of recognition that I call "existential recognition"—from outsiders, which they consider to be essential to their ultimate goal of perpetuating "cultural continuity." Whereas younger men seek to improve an outside public's perceptions of Xavante in the present, elders are oriented toward a distant future. Their concern centers on ways that outsiders' recognition of the Xavante's very existence and unique knowledge of the world will ensure Xavante cultural continuity.

This case illustrates that local ideas about the purpose of indigenous cultural displays aimed primarily at nonindigenous audiences, including those that contemporary scholars think of primarily as identity politics, may be complex, heterogeneous, and possibly even contested at the local level. These objectives may not correspond neatly with anthropologists' or other outsiders' expectations. I suggest that dominant anthropological interpretations of instrumentality that focus almost exclusively on indigenous peoples' rights or empowerment within the context of national or international institutions may inhibit one's ability to notice other concurrent objectives. The prevailing narrow focus may lead to what are, from the perspective of participants themselves, limited interpretations of the instrumentality of such events. Although agendas concerning national or international institutions may be present to a greater or lesser extent in specific instances, an excessively narrow focus may cause anthropologists to overlook the potential for a diversity of locally significant dimensions in such activities and, as Suzanne Oakdale (2004) has recently demonstrated, possibilities for multiple and subsequent instrumental recontextualizations at the

local level. Similarly, as Fred Myers's (2002) work on Australian Aboriginal painters demonstrates, anthropological attempts to understand local motivations for cultural commodification must also be sensitive to multiple and complex perspectives.

Cultural projects as "identity politics"

Since the mid-1990s, in collaboration with urban-based nongovernmental-organization (NGO) advocates, especially, Angela Pappiani of the Núcleo de Cultura Indígena (NCI) and, later, the Instituto das Tradições Indígenas (IDET), the Xavante of Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa have creatively engaged in innovative activities—"cultural projects"—designed to project images of Xavante culture, and, specifically, of their community, outward into national and international public arenas.⁸ The products of this collaboration consist of a CD, *Etenhiritipá: Cantos da tradição Xavante* (NCI 1994), that has sold well in Brazil and Europe (see Figure 3), a music video, a Xavante-illustrated book of myths and narratives of the contact period (Serebu'rã et al. 1997; see Figure 4), two documentary videos (IDET 2004; Pappiani et al. 2000), and the performance spectacles. As forms of culturally based "activism within a multicultural context" (Myers 2002:5), these projects, I submit, constitute an identity-based politics.

All identity or cultural politics are instrumental. They are also political, even if their political objectives are not obvious to outsiders. Social actors manipulate markers of their unique identity to change aspects of the status quo. Individuals or groups strategically deploy culturally specific signs or behaviors—clothing or bodily adornment, language, discourse, or forms of social action that demonstrate cultural distinctions (Bourdieu 1984)—toward some identifiable end or ends.

If Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa's ongoing efforts to reach out to broader publics can be interpreted as a form of identity politics, at least from the perspective of conventional academic discussions concerning the topic, the concrete goals of the community's cultural outreach work should be readily apparent to outsiders.⁹ Yet male leaders and the senior men who are spearheading this work state that they purposefully avoid providing information about or requesting help to confront challenges the community faces. They shun requesting political support from outside audiences and making appeals for financial or material assistance. Leaders deliberately detach this work from what members of a nonindigenous audience, like myself, typically recognize as "political" objectives.¹⁰ Yet, locally, men view these projects as decidedly instrumental to multiple identifiable and clearly definable goals.

Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa's cultural outreach projects, like the Australian Aboriginal painters that Myers (2002) discusses, challenge conventional anthropological



Figure 3. CD Cover for *Etenhiritipá: Cantos da tradição Xavante*. (Courtesy of Núcleo das Tradições Indígenas.)

understandings of instrumentality in identity-based politics. Even though the performances I witnessed appear to lack an explicit political aim that is readily apparent to outsiders, local actors view them and their other cultural projects as instrumental to the achievement of significant indigenously defined goals. Before turning to discussion of

these objectives, brief ethnographic contextualization will help to explain why an outside observer—such as I—might expect Xavante to engage in a cultural politics directed to achieving specific concrete goals, such as assistance for health care, education, or the campaign against the hidrovía. These are immediate, pressing needs for which



Figure 4. Cover of *Wamrêmé za'ra/Nossa palavra: Mito e história do povo Xavante* (Sereburã et al. 1997). (Courtesy of Editora SENAC.)

men—interacting with outsiders in other contexts—do not hesitate to solicit support.¹¹

Contemporary Xavante

Next to the Yanomami, the Xavante, who today number some 13,000, are the largest indigenous group in the Brazilian Amazon basin. They live on seven indigenous reserves in the state of Mato Grosso, in a complex ecozone consisting of savannah and gallery forest. These reserves are surrounded (sometimes invaded) by large *fazendas* (ranches, primarily cattle and monocrop soy or rice agri-

culture). Traditionally, Xavante were seminomadic hunter-gatherers. Now they are attempting to adapt to bounded territorial spaces, a more sedentary lifestyle, and the inability of their traditional subsistence patterns to meet their current needs.

Contemporary Xavante no longer rely on their nutritious, traditional food staples, including roots, tubers, and nuts. A government-sponsored economic project implemented during the late 1970s and 1980s brought mechanized rice farming to all Xavante reserves and created a nearly exclusive dependence on upland white rice as the staple food.¹² As a result, much knowledge about

nutritious traditional foods has been lost. In some areas individuals who recognize the importance of this knowledge are currently attempting to recoup it and reinvigorate traditional harvesting and processing practices. Environmental degradation, resulting from cattle ranching and monocrop agriculture in and around Xavante land, has greatly reduced game in their reserves. Meat and fish, the principle protein sources, are scarce in most areas, and game shortages are acute in smaller reserves (see Leeuwenberg 1997, 2001; Leeuwenberg and Robinson 2000).

Basic social services—sanitation, health care, elementary Western-style education—are sorely lacking in many Xavante communities and virtually nonexistent in most. Although the Xavante are experiencing a process of population recuperation through elevated birth rates, the infant mortality index is well above national averages in reserves where studies have been conducted.¹³ Only 86 percent of children survive to ten years (Souza and Santos 1999:16; see also Ávila-Desser 1993:10). In many cases, cause of death is the result of treatable illness, polluted water, or poor sanitation that could be improved with basic public-health measures. Gastrointestinal disease and respiratory infection account for a significant proportion of childhood deaths (Coimbra and Santos 1994). In some communities, human waste enters water supplies that are consumed by community members. Agrottoxins from surrounding fazendas also contaminate water supplies, and Xavante must maintain constant vigilance over their reserves to protect their resources.¹⁴

Dramatic changes in the diet that are the result of sedentism and government development schemes have also incurred malnutrition and related health problems (see Coimbra et al. 2002). A recent nutritional study showed that, in the reserve studied, children under age ten suffered a 22 percent rate of energy-protein deficiency and a 74 percent rate of anemia (Leite 1998). Changes in the diet are also manifesting themselves in an alarming incidence of diabetes linked to obesity. In recent years, a noticeable number of deaths have allegedly occurred as a result of this disease, which is new to this population and has not been the subject of systematic study (see Coimbra et al. 2002:263–267). Diabetes poses a particularly menacing threat because of the dramatic changes in lifestyle and diet. It is aggravated by the recently acquired taste for refined sugar, a dietary novelty, and in some areas by alcohol, particularly in communities that are located close to Brazilian towns.

Pemphigus foliaceus (fogo selvagem) and tuberculosis are also prevalent (see Coimbra et al. 2002:221–223; Coimbra and Santos 1992).¹⁵ The treatment for both diseases requires constant medical accompaniment and persistence, aspects of health care that are sorely lacking in most Xavante communities. Xavante constantly struggle for access to social services such as health care and education.

At the present time, the proposed Tocantins–Araguaia Hidrovia (also known as the “Central–Northern Multimodal Transport Corridor”) poses the most serious threat to the inhabitants of the Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa Reserve and the nearby Xavante reserve of Areões.¹⁶ This multimillion-dollar project would, if implemented, transform the most extensive river basin of central Brazil and the eastern Amazon (one of Brazil’s four most important river basins) into a commercial waterway to support barge convoys transporting, principally, soy products to ports on the Amazon River. These products, destined for Europe, would be used primarily as feedstock for pigs and chicken. The project would devastate the environment Xavante depend on for their livelihood and exacerbate unjust social and economic conditions in the general region.

The hidrovia would affect, in addition to Xavante, over 10,000 Indians from ten different tribes as well as thousands of nonindigenous riverine peoples who also depend on the river for their living. In 2002, the proposal appeared to have been abandoned but, as of mid-2004 discussion as well as activity were reviving, and barges were allowed to transport cargo on rivers during high-water periods. As the history of other development projects in Brazil shows, “abandoned” plans may be resuscitated in changed social or political contexts. Even if it appears to be dormant, the hidrovia menace persists.

Living conditions for Xavante are often discouraging. Gesturing broadly while we gazed across Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa’s central plaza in March 2001—taking in thatched houses, children with swollen bellies, and people in tattered clothes—one man commented, “Olha aqui. É uma porcaria” [Look around here. It’s a mess]. This man, Valdo, had, in the last two years, traveled to São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and various cities in Europe to participate in activities designed to show Xavante “culture” to national and international audiences. He had seen the poverty of Brazil’s urban poor and the country’s extreme wealth. Among other notable observations he reported from his European tour, he commented on the well-kept sidewalks in Germany and on the order of tidy houses and well-kept properties in the Netherlands. Also, like other men in the community, he noticed that many outsiders value Xavante simply for being “real” Indians. “Across the ocean [in Europe] they like us,” Valdo stated, “because we are real Indians.”

Valdo, and other men in Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa, finds outsiders’ appreciation of their indigeneity deeply gratifying. It fuels deep-seated pride in upholding what Xavante men call “true” or “authentic” Xavante tradition. Outsiders’ positive attitudes toward their expressive forms appear entirely natural, for men think these forms are most beautiful to behold. Moreover, the positive reception they generally receive in urban and international contexts, in which audiences positively value unique

expressions of Xavante culture, contrasts with the systematic racism that Xavante encounter at the regional level from members of a population that views them as backward and “uncivilized.” The positive responses they enjoy in cosmopolitan contexts also provide a glimmer of hope for the future.

“True” Xavante culture

Because uniquely Xavante notions of authenticity inform ideas about outsiders’ appreciation of their indigeneity and understanding of outsiders’ enjoyment of Xavante expressive forms, understanding local notions of what constitutes “true” or “authentic” Xavante is useful. Inhabitants of Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa, like other Xavante, are intensely proud of their *a’uwē* (Xavante) identity and *a’uwē-höïmanazé* (Xavante way of life, traditions). “A’uwē-höïmanazé” (or the generic form, “da-höïmanazé”) embraces everything that contemporary Xavante associate with their forebears.¹⁷ The concept refers to uniquely Xavante ways of living, believing, and doing things. It entails unique forms of social organization (see Maybury-Lewis 1974; see also Lopes da Silva 1986), including age sets and age grades and traditional practices such as boys’ living in the bachelors’ hut, hunting, fishing, and collecting. Ceremonial activities—boys’ initiation rituals, girls’ naming, log racing, wrestling matches, and club fights (*óí’ó*)—are also *a’uwē-höïmanazé*, as are language and expressive behaviors such as song, dance, myth telling, lament, body decoration and adornment, and coiffure. Traditional foods and postures as well forms of architecture are all *da-höïmanazé*.¹⁸

A’uwē-höïmanazé has existed since the beginning (see Serebu’rã et al. 1997:18) and is passed from one generation to the next through narratives, song, dance, and other cultural practices. All things, practices, and beliefs that Xavante consider uniquely their own are *a’uwē-höïmanazé*. Engaging in and continuing *a’uwē-höïmanazé* is what makes Xavante people Xavante. The elder Warodi states this clearly in telling the narrative of a dream in which he received *da-ño’re* songs from the creator ancestors. Warodi shares the dream songs, icons of the ancestors’ customs and way of life, with the youth and wider Xavante community so that they will continue singing and following the practices of their forebears. The dreamed songs, in Warodi’s words, are for

... Xavante

to be always Xavante

in order to live as Xavante always

according to their customs [cultural practices and traditions]

according to their customs

i[t, the dream performance]

it is for that

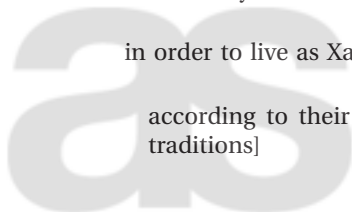
it is for that. [Graham 1995:268]

For contemporary Xavante (and, possibly, historically) *da-höïmanazé* is an essentialized standard upheld as a measure of “true Xavanteness.”¹⁹ Contemporary Xavante employ the concept as a standard of their own “authenticity.” For them, “authenticity” pertains to the relationship between the past and the present, and it implies replicating ancestral ways.

Members of rival communities critique or praise each other on the basis of perceived adherence, or lack thereof, to *da-höïmanazé*. “They don’t cut their hair [in proper Xavante fashion]” or “Disgusting! Look at that facial hair” are jibes that people from Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa (who consider themselves to be the “most authentic”) frequently level at members of rival communities.²⁰ Regardless of their community affiliation, all Xavante pride themselves on being *a’uwē uptabi*—“true” or “authentic” Xavante.

Since the mid-1990s, when the community began its cultural collaboration with the São Paulo-based NCI and as its interactions increased with other outsiders who positively value Xavante as metonyms of “indigenous culture,” younger men have incorporated a new word into their speech: *cultura* (culture). Bilingual Xavante-Portuguese speakers gloss *da-höïmanazé* as *cultura* (or as *tradição*, tradition). This Portuguese loanword now sprinkles the discourse of even the most elderly, who pronounce the word [dutuura]. The idea of “culture” as a set of practices, beliefs, and things is deeply rooted in Xavante history. Yet leaders and other community members’ “consciousness” that *a’uwē-höïmanazé* is valued positively by certain outside audiences dramatically increased during the 1990s.²¹ Largely owing to changes in Brazil’s 1988 constitution that enabled outsiders to interact directly with indigenous peoples rather than requiring FUNAI to act as intermediary, Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa experienced visits from an unprecedented number of outsiders who sought them out because of their “authentic” indigenous culture. Among these were NGO representatives, German teenage tourists, film crews, and Sepultura, an internationally renowned heavy metal rock group.²²

Outsiders’ positive evaluations of Xavante’s “authentic indigeneity” play directly into their pride in *da-höïmanazé*. Because the songs, dances, and ceremonies that Xavante men present to outsiders possess (via association with the ancestors and the past) intrinsic beauty, they are “good to look at” (*madö’ö wê di*) and good to listen to (*wapari ze ti*). Nonindigenous peoples’ and other outsiders’ desire



to see da-höimanazé (song, dance, body decoration, etc.) is, therefore, for the men of Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa, entirely natural. “It is beautiful to see true Xavante,” Sawewa stated. “Across the ocean they only know mixed bloods, not real, authentic Indians. . . . For this they want to see us.”

The observation that many outsiders value them as “real” Indians, and the awareness that their expressive practices may be positively valued by new audiences and in new contexts, has led the men of Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa to new conceptions of the instrumentality of their expressive forms.

Instrumentality and cultural display

Because they make no overt appeals for political or material support, at first glance, Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa’s cultural projects may appear to outsiders as they initially did to me: relatively straightforward cultural promotion and expressions of incipient cultural commodification. Individuals’ motivations for participating and ideas about anticipated rewards, however, are considerably more complex, as my ethnographic research revealed.

Male members of the community differ in their understandings of the projects’ purposes and expectations of benefits. Age difference and leadership account, in large measure, for the variations that I have been able to detect. Certainly all men enjoy personal rewards by virtue of their participation in various aspects of production. Beyond this, younger men who occupy leadership positions have very different visions of the projects’ instrumentality than their peers do. These individuals are primarily concerned with Brazilians’ perceptions of “the Xavante,” with a *imagem*, the Xavante’s “image” in Brazil. Further, like most senior men, they are conscious of the potential to gain prestige within the realm of intracommunity factionalism and to demonstrate Xavante superiority over other Brazilian indigenous groups, such as the Kayapó, who also have a prominent public profile. Elder men, however, are overwhelmingly preoccupied with outsiders’ exposure to and knowledge of Xavante traditions, especially with how outsiders’ understanding relates to the elders’ ideas about the continuity of those traditions and of their ability to “continue forever,” as Warodi emphasized in his dream narrative (see Graham 1995).

For all men, the cultural work provides opportunities for travel—thereby satisfying a persistent seminomadic wanderlust—and some economic gain. Young men, those who have had few or no opportunities to venture outside the local region, especially enjoy participating in performance trips that take them to the nation’s metropolitan areas, to see the sea (no small thing for anyone from central Brazil), and occasionally to visit “lands across the sea.” Nearly all men look forward to the novel experiences

their trips bring and to the opportunities to meet new people. As this article goes to press, men of Eténhiritipa are enthusiastic about upcoming trips in July and August 2005 to perform at the Venice Biennale and as part of France’s national Year of Brazil in Paris, and two individuals will take part in an avant-garde theatrical production at the Festival of Avignon.²³

The cultural work also provides a small, but helpful, additional means of generating income for a community struggling to achieve economic independence. Participants, initiated men, reap specific economic rewards that they transfer to other family members. Consequently, noninitiated members of the entire community indirectly gain modest economic benefits. The men’s council, *warã*, dictates that income from the cultural work be divided equally among all adult men. Each nuclear family earns \$100 or \$200 from any single performance trip. Given the inflated rural prices in the region Xavante inhabit, the small amount that families receive from any one performance engagement supplies only enough for the purchase of miscellaneous small items such as cloth to make a few dresses for the women and girls, household items such as pots, knives, food, or perhaps a gun for hunting.

In addition to financial rewards and opportunities for travel, the cultural work—performances, in particular—offers participants of all ages emotional gratification and the thrill of positive audience responses. Agostim, a respected senior man, related with satisfaction and pride:

Across the ocean the *warazu* (non-Indians) are sentimental.

They cried when they saw our dances . . .

Across the ocean our songs and dances brought tears to their [Europeans’]

eyes.²⁴

Emotional gratification, financial rewards, and travel are, unmistakably, factors that motivate individual men to participate. The cultural projects are, thus, instrumental to the achievement of participants’ personal benefits (travel, emotional gratification, and new experiences and friendships) and rewards for individual families (money and material goods) as well as supplying individual emotional rewards.

Young leaders

In their discourse, young men, those whose interests are relatively limited to personal needs or to the needs of a very limited number of individuals (a wife and one or two small children), do not situate the cultural work within broader socioeconomic or institutional frameworks. This

contrasts with the perspective articulated by members of the relatively young generation of leaders, in particular, Supto (who is “cacique” or “chief”) and Paulo Suptaprã (who is “vice cacique”) and a few other young men who have more experience than most in dealing with outsiders. These men see the community’s cultural projects as extremely important instruments for “improving” the Xavantes’ public image within the national public sphere. They speak with disdain of other groups that couple public displays of Xavante identity with outrageous demands for assistance and whose public behaviors have, over the past two decades, transformed Brazilian public perceptions of Xavante, no longer seen as a brave and noble people but, rather, the archetype for belligerent social pariahs (see Graham 2001). These leaders blame the media for disseminating images that support negative popular stereotypes, but they lay equal blame on other Xavante groups for supplying the sensational images that the media circulate and that tarnish the public image of the entire group. From their perspective, cultural work that is detached from explicit demands distinguishes and elevates Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa above other Xavante groups. This reinforces the community’s sense of superiority over other Xavante communities.

When discussing public notions of Xavante and other indigenous groups, Supto and other relatively young leaders acknowledge that negative popular perceptions of indigenous people in Brazil are not just limited to the Xavante. “The image of the Indian (*o índio*) in Brazil is really bad,” Supto states. Then he adds, “We, the people of this community, are trying to change that.” These and other similar statements suggest that Supto and his peers conceive of the community’s cultural work as part of a broader mission: They seek to improve wider public appreciation of the Xavante, and, simultaneously, they also hope to increase the public’s understanding of indigenous peoples, in general. The grandiose assertion that Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa’s work is instrumental to reshaping national imaginaries of indigeneity suggests high community and self-esteem. I take this to be an expression of individual leaders’ as well as the entire community’s sense of prestige and superiority vis-à-vis other Xavante and, indeed, other indigenous groups who are nationally renowned.

Beyond this, I suggest that leaders discursively frame this work as apolitical, as an entirely “cultural” enterprise, in response—at least, in some measure—to other indigenous groups’ (particularly the Kayapó’s) highly prominent and overtly political public displays of identity in national and international arenas. Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa’s leadership is aware of the Kayapó’s positive public image and may be, frankly, a bit envious of the other group’s relatively recent ability to dominate public attention and garner public favor. Being out of the national spotlight—

and, since the 1980s, negatively portrayed when in the spotlight—is, for Xavante, a relatively recently phenomenon. For a period of several decades, from the late 1940s to the mid-1980s, Xavante enjoyed an extremely positive, even if romanticized, and very high-profile public reputation.²⁵ This positive image persisted through the late 1970s and into the early 1980s, when, after the high point during the “contact period,” Xavante celebrity again peaked in the outspoken Xavante leader Mario Juruna. Because he dared to publicly speak out against the military dictatorship during a period of strict censorship, Juruna earned notoriety as a courageous advocate not just for the Xavante or for indigenous peoples, but for all of Brazil’s oppressed peoples.

The spectacular and theatrical displays the Kayapó staged during Brazil’s constitutional assembly in the late 1980s displaced Xavante from national prominence. As the Kayapó assumed the position of celebrity Indians in national and international arenas, the Xavante receded into the background. Media portrayals of many of the same behaviors (some bordering on civil disobedience) that Juruna and other Xavante had used to gain favor and public attention turned sour. Yet, as Xavante fell out of public favor, most of the dire conditions that prompted them to stage dramatic public acts persisted (see Graham 2001).

In my view, leaders are designing the current, expressly apolitical, and exclusively “cultural” outreach work as a means of distancing this community from other Xavante groups that perpetrate the type of bellicose public actions that earned the group its reputation for belligerence. They seek to distinguish their community from other Xavante groups that also use culture to achieve explicit political goals, especially in their dealings with FUNAI. Simultaneously, I see the young leaders of Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa attempting to set themselves apart from other indigenous groups, such as the Kayapó, that strategically use “culture,” or identity, instrumentally to achieve expressly political goals. Paradoxically, these leaders want outsiders to view their culture as apolitical—as Culture and not as political instrument—when, in fact, from an internal point of view, they are exercising “culture” to issue very political claims.

Seniors and elders

Whereas the younger image-conscious leaders speak of presenting culture to “improve the image of the Xavante (and indigenous peoples, generally),” senior and elder men express a desire to reach a different but equally abstract goal. Their principal ambition is to be recognized by non-indigenous peoples. Specifically, they wish to be known by members of First World publics in Brazil and elsewhere, as “real” or “true” Indians and, especially, as Xavante. “Our work,” explains Serebu’rã, “is so that warazu (non-Indians) can know us.”

The theme of achieving recognition, becoming known, ran through every conversation and narrative I had with more than 20 senior adult men who have participated in the community's cultural work. Valdo eloquently put it this way:

We went to show our culture
 our true Xavante culture.
 I went for this, to sing in each city,
 just like those whites [Sepultura]
 who came here to sing not long ago ...
 We went to show our dances
 so that they could hear our songs ...

The recognition that the senior men of Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa desire is distinct from that identified in contemporary philosophical discussions of the politics of recognition emerging within the context of debates about multiculturalism, feminism, and gender studies (see Taylor 1992; see also Huntington 1998). These explore notions of identity and people's desire to be recognized for their difference from others. The ideal in these discussions is based, as Benjamin Lee (1995) points out, on Habermasian notions of individual rational speakers debating in a bourgeois public sphere. It "presupposes a certain equality of recognition" (Lee 1995:586).

Elder Xavante desire more than straightforward recognition of difference within a system of equals. They seek a particular kind of recognition, a form that I call "existential recognition." As I understand it, their objective is akin to the "radical equality" that Lee (1995:587) suggests characterizes contemporary identity politics. Radical equality implies moving beyond mere recognition to an active fostering of particularity and difference. The basis of a Xavante radical equality is elders' belief that, beyond being essential to Xavante continuity, their traditions (esp. those from Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa) are intrinsically significant. They believe that these embody knowledge that will make worthwhile contributions to a broad public—to humanity.

Existential recognition

According to Johannes Fabian (1999), the English word *recognition* semantically collapses at least three connotations that are distinct in German, Fabian's native language. *Erkennen* (knowing) is an act of cognition; *Wiedererkennen*

is an act of memory; and *Anerkennen* is an act of acknowledgment. Fabian notes that a fourth connotation, that of "recognizing a speaker," is significant in discussions of identity politics. It means "to be given a voice" (Fabian 1999:53).

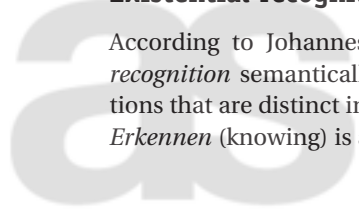
Although all four connotations of *recognition* are relevant to the Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa case, "being known" (*Erkennen*, an act of cognition) stands out as a paramount motivation for the community's contemporary public outreach work. Recognition, in this case, however, does not simply entail the acknowledgment of difference in the sense identified by Charles Taylor. Instead, for senior men, this is a politics of *existential* recognition. Leaders and elders wish for the Xavante's uniqueness and very existence, specifically the existence of Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa, to be known to a broad public.

Seniors and elders intend their cultural projects to be existential statements. The projects are, from their perspective, performative acts in the Austinian sense (Austin 1962). They are designed to change the Xavante's status within the broader public sphere from unknown to known, from not existing (– existence) to existing (+ existence) within a wide nonindigenous public consciousness. Elders conceptualize the community's projects as ways of objectifying unique Xavante identity as well as Xavante aesthetics and performance in much the same way that, according to Myers (2002), Australian Aboriginal acrylic paintings operate. Both endeavors make the indigenous visible in broader public arenas. To representatives of national and international publics these projects proclaim, "We, Xavante people, exist."

Like any cultural politics, Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa's work is designed to change the status quo. Through it, actors attempt to transform "categories of *perception* and *appreciation* of the social world, and through this, the social world itself" (Bourdieu 1984:483, emphasis added). Elders seek to promote outsiders' awareness of the group's very existence. "Seeing us, they will know that true Indians, that beautiful Xavante, still exist," Sawewa explained.

Within this politics of existential recognition, seniors anticipate outsiders' appreciation as a logical entailment of knowledge. Teleologically, elders' logic goes, once outsiders become aware that Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa exists and once they know—through experience of its expressive forms—that its inhabitants uphold Xavante traditions, they will naturally appreciate and value the Xavante way of life, a'uwē-höimanazé. "We want people to see our culture, to know our songs and dances, our traditions," Jurandir explained. "We show these so that others may know us."

Although recognition may appear to outsiders to be an abstract, nonspecific objective—what a group might hope for as a secondary or indirect benefit in identity politics, as in a "second-order" instrumentality—for the



senior men of Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa, existential recognition is the explicit primary objective; they perceive their cultural work as primarily instrumental, as in a “first-order” instrumentality, to the achievement of existential recognition. Recognition is a goal that elders value as an end in itself, even if it takes a long time to achieve. Moreover, it is a goal that many view as prerequisite to other, more specific political aims. Several men indicated that once “others” know that “true” Indians exist in Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa, those others may seek to help the community in its efforts to continue its traditions and to remain “forever Xavante.”

Like other elders with whom I spoke, Agostim views existential recognition to be the primary objective of the community’s cultural work. Beyond this, however, he suggests that pragmatic forms of assistance or other forms of political support may be forthcoming as indirect benefits of outsiders’ knowledge. When I asked him why men perform for outsiders and what they hope to get, he replied,

It [performance] is not in exchange for anything . . .

It is so they [warazu] will know our ancestors [through us]

It is so they will respect our grandchildren

It is so they will assist us.

As his statement clearly indicates, Agostim does not equate the community’s outreach efforts with any sort of direct exchange relation. He conceives of the cultural outreach work as a means of imparting knowledge and displaying to outsiders that members of the Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa continue to practice the ancestors’ traditions. For him, existential recognition is the first-order objective. He further suggests that other forms of assistance—perhaps more concrete forms—may be forthcoming. Should this occur, it would be after outsiders know that Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa’s inhabitants continue to practice the ancestors’ traditions. For Agostim, any potential secondary benefits (material or political support) depend on outsiders’ ability to recognize community members as “real Indians,” specifically, as “true Xavante.”

Authentic Xavante: Change in a “metaculture” of continuity

For Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa’s inhabitants, standards of “authentic” or “true” Xavante culture (a’uwē-höïmanazê) are flexible, subject to local criteria and adaptable to local historical circumstances. People can still be “authentic” and, for example, wear clothes, drive trucks or—most recently—motorcycles, listen to radios, and use video cam-

eras. Responding to critiques of “modern” Indians that he has heard, Valdo put it this way:

Clothes, they mean nothing to us [clothes don’t make us non-Indian].

So [wearing shorts and body paint] they saw us [perform] in Germany.

[The Germans exclaimed], “So real Xavante still do live with their dances.

Gee! How people have lied to us [Germans, i.e., by saying that real Indians no longer exist]!”

Valdo’s remarks suggest that he views change and innovation as inevitable and, moreover, that change (at least certain types of change) does not necessarily undermine the local constitution of authentic a’uwē-höïmanazê (Xavante tradition).

Thus, even though the *Isari* spectacles depart radically from performance as it would normally unfold in the context of Xavante social life—for instance, some parts showcase performers from the “wrong” age grades and include elders who are well past the age of public performance in the context of in situ ceremonial cycles—men do not view these cultural displays as “inauthentic” or “corrupt.” The spectacles are choreographed displays of decontextualized excerpts, recognizable pieces of ceremonial practices that are parts of larger, very familiar, ceremonial wholes. For Xavante and spectators who are familiar with their ceremonial practices, the performances are distinctively Xavante; in no way could they be interpreted as displays of a generic or imagined Native Amazonia or anything akin to a contemporary Amazonian incarnation of a Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show.

Further, *Isari* is definitely not a static production. Men make adjustments in the composition of ceremonial components from one production to the next “to keep it interesting” for performers. Several elements consistently characterize *Isari*, making this spectacle distinct from other Xavante cultural performances that I have witnessed (or seen on video). The performance space, consisting of a circle of tamped red earth with a blazing fire in the center, simulates the central plaza (*warā*) and principal public performance arena in all Xavante communities. *Isari* opens dramatically as performers, swooping large *wamñorō* masks up and down by their sides, run onto the plaza stage, circling it several times before placing the long straw masks on tall poles to form a semi-circular backdrop behind the plaza that is almost spectral in the dim light. Two *pahōri’wa*—adorned with immense turbans of spun cotton yarn and strikingly decorated with two macaw feathers and leg rattles—emerge from the



Figure 5. Pahōri'wa dance, 1998. (Photo by João Caldas. Courtesy of IDET.)

darkness into the spotlight to perform, in tandem, a magnificent dance of precisely coordinated, identical movements (see Figure 5).²⁶ In addition, each performance displays several *da-ño're* song-dance forms, including a *da-tsiwāiwērē*, a type of *da-ño're* (specifically, a *da-hipópó*, “leg bouncing song-dance”) performed for curing.²⁷ During the *da-tsiwāiwērē*, a man painted entirely in red steps forward and kneels before the audience.²⁸ Through his behavior he is immediately recognizable to most outside audiences as a “healer” or “shaman.” He repeatedly makes blowing motions while reaching forward and upward toward the audience and grasping, as if to catch something out of the air. He then stands abruptly and motions violently, as if casting what he has “caught” to the ground, and thereafter he vigorously stamps on “it” while raising a cloud of red dust to a burst of audience applause.

At the same time that men insist that the *Isari* performances are “authentic,” they also concede that they are “different” from performances staged in local contexts. For them, neither this difference nor the production’s heavy dependence on outside intermediaries such as Pappiani makes the products of their outreach work any less

“real” or “authentic.”²⁹ In a discussion of the *Isari* performances I had with Paulo in August 2004, he confided, “We show only those parts of our rituals that outsiders may see. We don’t reveal [‘classified ceremonials’].” As Paulo’s statement suggests, men conceive of the *Isari* performances as selective cultural arrangements that, like other products—such as their book (Serebu’rã et al. 1997), CD (NCI 1994), and video (Pappiani et al. 2000)—are self-consciously produced for warazu.³⁰

For Paulo, as for other adult men that I have consulted, the *Isari* performances and other cultural products show “real” Xavante culture to outside publics. They do not, however, exhibit all that is real. Xavante men display what they want others to see, hear, and know. These works most certainly portray “real” Xavante culture in the context of the new millennium. And this outreach, as well as the forms it takes, does not imply a rupture with tradition.

Local “discourses of tradition” (Gewertz and Errington 1996), or the prevailing “metaculture of tradition” (Urban 2001), explicitly value continuity and the replication of past behaviors.³¹ Talk about “culture” (a’uwē-höïmanazé) emphasizes continuity, particularly between present behaviors and the past. Even though behaviors inevitably

change, discursive and performance conventions foreground continuities (see Graham 1995). Cyclicity—the basis of Xavante ontology—manifests in repeating forms of social organization such as age sets, ceremonial cycles, and expressive performances and in life itself, for Xavante believe in reincarnation.

Metadiscourse links expressive practices to the past and the ancestors, forming associations that infuse expressive forms with “intrinsic beauty.” Dreamed songs originate with the ancestors (see Graham 1995), and ceremonials repeat previous ceremonials as closely as possible. Tremendous aesthetic appreciation for the expressive forms associated with a’uwē-höïmanazé—song and dance, myth telling, keening, ceremonial practices, and bodily adornments, the forms through which members of the culture represent “culture” to themselves (and now to Others)—is an essential component of this metaculture or discourse of tradition. The powerful aesthetic of the traditional helps ensure the continuity of expressive forms that members of the group equate, either discursively or through performance, with tradition. This aesthetic enables Xavante to construct continuity despite inevitable change, for continuity is itself a cultural construction. I submit that such an aesthetic is likely to be characteristic of metacultures of tradition, in general, for a robust aesthetic of appreciation for “traditional” expressive forms ensures their continuity as representative of “traditional culture” even as the forms themselves change.

Metacultures or discourses of tradition must permit innovation to persist. Thus, although some might interpret the packaging of a’uwē-höïmanazé for outsiders’ consumption (as in CDs, videos, books, and performances) as a dramatic departure from “traditional” a’uwē-höïmanazé (one that some outsiders might see as an ironic or oxymoronic dimension of work that is ultimately designed to maintain “traditional culture” and continuity), Xavante men do not experience this highly creative dimension of their work as ironic, negative, or “antitraditional” in any way. In fact, some of the community’s “most traditional” elders, such as Serebu’rã, are among the projects’ strongest advocates and most enthusiastic stage performers. Most elder men with whom I spoke assert that the current work is in no way at odds with the goal of continuity. Rather, elders conceive of these innovative performances, and other forms of cultural outreach, as decidedly instrumental to their fundamental goal of ensuring the future continuity they so desire.

Caveat emptor

The snug fit between men’s attitudes about “authentic” da-höïmanazé and outsiders’ essentialized popular stereotypes of “real Indians” or indigenous “authenticity” prevents most men from developing a healthy skepticism

about their reception by outsiders and the potential problematics that may be entailed in exhibiting themselves and their culture to outside spectators. European and urban Brazilian audiences’ appreciation has, to some extent, seduced nearly all those who have performed for outsiders. Men speak enthusiastically of applause, media attention, and “bringing tears to [outsiders’] eyes.”

The seduction has gone so far as to affect local activities that, up to this point, elders and leaders have adamantly resisted changing. For example, prior to initiating performances for outside audiences, once dates had been set for any ceremonial, nothing short of the death of a significant elder could alter them. But, to my amazement, performances for outsiders can now take priority over scheduled ceremonial activities within the community. In 2001, for instance, the elders advanced the ear-piercing ceremony—a highlight of the elaborate male initiation cycle—so that participants would be able to travel to performances in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro that had been arranged after the ceremonial schedule had been set. Most recently, the opportunities to perform in France and Venice in July and August 2005 have prompted leaders to postpone initiation ceremonials scheduled for July 2005 until the following year. Thus, even though the elder men’s stated primary goal may be to continue traditional practices, the attention they receive from outsiders is dramatically altering former pathways to achieving continuity.

Performances have also jeopardized various NGO-sponsored projects in the community and have conflicted with Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa’s involvement in regional political struggles. In 2000, a literacy program came to a standstill because the teachers and other principal actors in the project left the community to participate in a performance tour. Similarly, opportunities to perform lured Supto away from the campaign against the proposed Araguaia–Tocantins Hidrovia at a critical point in the opposition movement. Instead of making himself available for an important meeting with government officials, at which he was to voice community opposition to the colossal project, “he traveled to São Paulo to dance!” (Frans Leeuwenberg, personal communication, June 8, 2000).

Xavante men’s tendency to naturalize others’ exoticism nourishes this powerful seduction. As men naturalize outsiders’ appreciation, they cater to—literally perform to—European romanticized ideas of authenticity.³² In their theatrical spectacles, Xavante men perform Herderian essentializations of language, song, and dance (see Bauman and Briggs 2000)—the emblems of their unique culture—and become living signs of themselves. As signs—not socially positioned whole beings—they can become easily subject to exoticism (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998a).

Given the absence of contextualizing information, non-indigenous audiences necessarily receive the cultural products that the community makes available for outsiders’

consumption as unmediated aesthetic objects. Inevitably outsiders interpret these products according to the norms of European “cultures of viewing” (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1992; see also Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998b; Kratz 2002) or, in the case of the CD *Etenhiritipá*, urban “cultures of listening,” specifically, contemporary cultures of world beat or world music listening.³³

The conceptual design of the Xavante productions—especially the CD and spectacle performances—resembles Peter Sellars’s avant-garde vision of cultural performance at the 1990 Los Angeles Festival of Arts, as described by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998a). Like average festival spectators, who were “noninitiated” consumers of avant-garde art, the aesthetic experience for spectators of ethnographic display necessarily occurs at the formal level, in the perception of distinctive visual and acoustic forms. Audience members appreciate recontextualized Xavante performances for their formal differences from familiar forms of aesthetic production (see also Graham 2002). Consequently, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes, cultural performances that are semantically dense for their home audiences acquire the “quality of free floating signifiers” (1998a:235). Rather than deepening sensitivities to alternative ways of being in the world, cultural productions designed for outsiders’ consumption (such as the Xavante *Isari* or performances in Sellars’s 1990 Los Angeles festival) are interpreted through whatever lens audience members bring to the product, including the lens of uncontested essentialized and romanticized stereotypes.

Instead of acknowledging and working to undermine potential exoticisms, Xavante men celebrate outsiders’ appreciation of their “authenticity” and perform in ways that nurture it. This is because they interpret outsiders’ use of such concepts as “authentic Indian” or “true Indian” within the framework of an ideology that positively values these notions. Men are flattered that outsiders want to see them as “authentic” or “true” Indians. After all, this work is, as elders say, designed to show others that “true” Xavante exist as “real Indians” as well as to demonstrate that their community, in particular, has something significant to contribute to humanity. Even when elders acknowledge that romanticized or simplistic interpretations are possible, few appear to be concerned with how or why outside audiences might appreciate the community’s cultural outreach work. It is sufficient for them, at least for the moment, that outsiders gain exposure to Xavante culture.

Recognition, humanism, and continuity

In the decades since members of the community that is now Eténhiritipá Pimentel Barbosa established the first peaceful Xavante “contact” with representatives of Brazilian national society in the late 1940s, a few senior men have demonstrated an interest in being known to outside

audiences. Both David Maybury-Lewis (personal communication, March 6, 2002), who pioneered ethnographic research with this community in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and Nancy Flowers (personal communication, March 11, 2002), who carried out ethnographic work there during the 1970s and 1990s, recall leaders expressing desires to be known abroad. Similarly, during my first visit to Eténhiritipá Pimentel Barbosa in 1981, the elder Warodi enlisted me in his mission to make the community and his knowledge of Xavante traditions known “across the ocean” (see Graham 1995).

Until recently, I attributed Warodi’s motivation to his conviction that Xavante beliefs and traditions possess intrinsic merit and beauty as well as to his fundamentally humanistic nature. I understood his deliberate interest in my work and his attempts to influence it to be driven by his desire for others to know of and benefit from Xavante wisdom. Now, as I ponder another generation of elders making use of new opportunities and technologies to satisfy the desire to be more broadly known outside, I realize that existential recognition may have been one of Warodi’s principal objectives, as well.

The desire for existential recognition appears to be a pattern among elder Xavante men. This pattern is, I suggest, related to elders’ preoccupation with cultural continuity and the prevailing metaculture of tradition. Contemporary elder men—like Warodi before them—connect the possibility for cultural continuity to their ability to move their culture outward into a broader public arena. Extending culture outward, “horizontally,” into wider public space is a means of creating cultural continuity, or “vertical continuity,” within Xavante society over time.

Since the 18th century, Xavante have experienced unrelenting pressure from an ever expanding Brazilian national society to give up their territorial space and, ultimately, to give up their a’uwē-höïmanazé traditions and way of life. Now, contemporary Xavante are using da-höïmanazé, “culture,” in new and creative ways to exert a counterforce against this pressure. They are pushing “their culture” outward into a broader public sphere in a process of horizontal cultural transmission. I suggest that elders believe they must now move their culture outward into a broader public sphere to transmit culture across generations. For contemporary elders, the possibility for vertical cultural continuity now also entails horizontal cultural transmission.

As the men of Eténhiritipá Pimentel Barbosa take advantage of new opportunities (provided by NGOs, uniquely skilled go-betweens such as Pappiani, and ethnographers) to broadcast their unique Xavante identity and culture outward—horizontally—into national and global public arenas, they are using the discourses available to them (Escobar 1995) and adapting them to fit new channels for public circulation. These discourses are the very expressive

forms that Xavante traditionally use to create continuities and to express identities within the local context (see Graham 1995). Whereas, for Xavante actors in traditional contexts, each distinct performance form signals complex meanings (such as age-set membership or ceremonial position), for members of a non-Xavante outside audience, these forms act as “second-order indexicals” (Silverstein 1996) displaying nothing more than “Xavanteness” or, perhaps, more simply, “Native Amazonianness” or even a more generic “indigeneity.” This disjuncture has not, at least thus far, troubled the projects’ principal indigenous organizers.

When considering Xavante dealings with outsiders over the past two decades, I see the younger leaders’ desire to “improve the Xavante’s image” and the elders’ quest for existential recognition from the outside as a maturing of Xavante dealings with the outside world. Through the cultural outreach projects, they are placing themselves in the public sphere on their own terms: as performers of “traditional” Xavante culture. Although the cultural presentations certainly have political entailments, I submit that Xavante men’s motivations for cultural dissemination have to do with their perceptions of how they are viewed by outsiders and how they want outsiders to know their Xavante culture and this specific community. Elders and leaders want to be recognized as practitioners of “traditional” a’uwẽ-höimanazé culture. They expressly wish to be known in positive ways. Their work is unmistakably raising the profile of this community, and Xavante generally, as practitioners of a unique, vibrant, and performing culture.

In confessing the extent to which my expectations about the community’s goals in relation to cultural outreach were off the mark, I hope to stimulate further ethnographic study of local participants’ investments in displays of culture in intercultural contexts, particularly ones labeled “identity politics.” The search for multiple, potentially diverse, and complex meanings at the local level will necessarily enrich anthropological understanding of the outwardly directed displays and activities that anthropologists think of as “identity politics” as well as those that we think of primarily in terms of cultural commodification or, for that matter, from the perspective of any other interpretive paradigm.

Notes

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1. Metropolitan São Paulo’s population totaled 17,834,664 in 2000, according to the most recent census data available from the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística; see Prefeitura de Cidade de São Paulo n.d.

2. This event was sponsored by Serviço Social do Comércio (SESC) São Paulo.

3. For excellent discussions of ways that issues of Native American representation and identity are worked out in the context of Wild West shows, fairs, and exhibitions, see Moses 1996, Nesper 2003, and Parezo and Troutman 2001. Tillicum Village presentations stage Native Northwest Coast cultures and a salmon-dining experience for visitors; see Hewitt 1997 and Johnson and Underiner 2001. For critical discussions of live ethnological exhibits focusing on groups other than Native Americans, see, for example, Lindfors 1999 and Stanley 1998; see also Desmond 1999 and Mathur 2000.

4. See Juruna et al. 1982; see also Conklin and Graham 1995, Maybury-Lewis 1991, and Ramos 1998:101–115.

5. The community is located at the foot of a long rock mesa, from which it takes its Xavante name (*été*: “rock”; *pa*: “long”); variant spellings are Etéñitêpa and Etenhiritipá. There are also several variants of “Xavante”: Shavante, Chavante, and Xávante.

6. Between April 1999 and May 2002, I attended five major Pimentel Barbosa spectacle events. I also attended rehearsals in cities as well as in the community and participated in numerous smaller “workshops” in which Xavante educated nonindigenous adults and children about their culture. To understand participant and audience expectations and reactions, I spoke with numerous audience members before and after each event.

7. Women have had minimal participation in the community’s cultural projects. Some appear briefly in one of the documentary videotapes (Pappiani et al. 2000). They were not included in *Isari* performances until 2003, when male leaders finally conceded that a small number could travel and participate in performances that had previously been entirely male dominated. No women will travel to Europe in July and August 2005 for performances scheduled in France and Italy.

8. Pappiani, a journalist by training, is the principal architect of Pimentel Barbosa’s recent cultural projects. She is the former wife of Ailton Krenak, a well-known Brazilian indigenous activist, former president of the now defunct União das Nações Indígenas (UNI), and founder and president of NCI, also now defunct. Through her relationship with Krenak, Pappiani became involved with Brazilian indigenous peoples’ advocacy movements. In 1999, following the folding of NCI, Pappiani founded IDET with Jurandir Serediwẽ Xavante, who is originally from Etéñhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa but who now resides in São

Paulo. IDET began by staging theatrical displays of indigeneity, called "Rito de Passagem" (Rite of Passage). IDET's Rites of Passage were modeled on Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa's *Isari* but have included more than one performing group. The first two IDET Rite of Passage events featured the Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa Xavante and the neighboring Mehinaku from the Upper Xingu (see Figure 2). Subsequent Rite of Passage spectacles have included Bororo, Guarani, Kaxinawá, Karaja, Krikati, Tukano, and, in 2002, a group of Ainu from Japan. For information on the institution, see IDET n.d.

9. See, for example, Alvarez and Escobar 1998.

10. Some conceive of identity politics, following Göle 1996, as "fundamentally different from political strategies, which revolve around the seizure of political power and changes in the state and legal systems" (White 2002:191).

11. See, for example, discussion of Xavante interaction with representatives of the Gaia Foundation at Altamira, Brazil, in Graham 2002:198–201. See Gaia Foundation n.d. for information on that organization.

12. For discussion of the Xavante rice projects, see Coimbra et al. 2002:175–178, Garfield 2001:192–196, and Graham 1995:44–55.

13. See Coimbra et al. 2002, Flowers 1994, and Souza and Santos 1999. A recent study in the Sangradouro Reserve indicates mortality rates that are well above the national average (Souza and Santos 1999). The infant mortality index calculated for the period 1993–97 (87.1 per 1,000) is significantly above the national average (37.5 per 1,000 in 1996) and well above that for the impoverished Northeast region (60.4 per 1,000 in 1996; Souza and Santos 1999:16). Demographic studies conducted in the Pimentel Barbosa Reserve for the period 1972–90 also reveal an elevated infant mortality index, 70.8 per 1,000 (Flowers 1994). For an excellent account of contemporary health and demographics among the Xavante and, specifically, for Pimentel Barbosa, see Coimbra et al. 2002.

14. In recent years, the Sangradouro Reserve has suffered several incidents of water contamination as part of long-standing conflicts with neighboring ranchers who regularly encroach into Xavante land. The Sangradouro community of Izó'uhu is currently waging a campaign to remove these ranchers, and tensions between ranchers and the community are extremely tense (see <http://www.xavantewara.org.br>).

15. A preliminary study conducted among the Pimentel Barbosa population indicated that 3.1 percent of the population is infected (Coimbra and Santos 1992). The authors note that this percentage is extremely elevated, but, owing to lack of studies, how it compares with frequencies in other populations is difficult to ascertain. They also note that the form of pemphigus found among the Xavante does not differ clinically from that found in other, nonindigenous populations.

16. This project is one of several large-scale waterway projects that have been proposed for Brazil. Others include the Paraguay–Paraná, Tapajós–Telles Pires, and Madeira–Amazonas. At the time of this writing, plans to begin work on the Tocantins–Araguaia Hidrovia have been halted. Environmental groups remain vigilant, however, because strong support for the project exists among soy producers, who stand to be the project's primary beneficiaries, and among the governments of states that would be affected (for further information, see International Rivers Network n.d.).

17. *A'uwê-höïmanazé*, or the generic form *da-höïmanazé*, is a complex noun: *a'uwê* is the Xavante autodenomination; *da* is a generic pronoun; *höïmana* means life; *zé* (or *dzê*) is instrumental.

Other peoples have their own *höïmanazé*, or way of life. The neighboring Karajá, whom Xavante call "warazutoro," have

warazutoro-höïmanazé. Kayapó have *Kayapó-höïmanazé*. Warazu, non-Indians, have *warazu-höïmanazé*, or non-Indian ways of life. Warazu-höïmanazé include nonindigenous (generally Brazilian) music and customs as well as foods, automobiles, and all other things that outsiders have introduced to Xavante or that they use themselves. Individuals also have their own *höïmanazé*; an individual's *höïmanazé* refers to one's specific way of doing things and one's path in life.

18. For example, the traditional Xavante beehive-shaped thatched house is *da-höïmanazé*. The rectangular-shaped thatched house that many Xavante have recently adopted from settlers and poor Brazilian immigrants to the region is *warazu-höïmanazé*.

19. A consciousness of essentialized "culture" may have originated at or around the time of the Xavante's separation from the Xerente, with whom they share common ancestry (see Lopes da Silva 1992; Ravaganni 1978), or it may have developed through encounters with other indigenous peoples with whom they historically interacted. The concept may well be more recent, precipitated out of encounters with Brazilian national society. Whatever the concept's historical origin, there can be no doubt that a consciousness of unique culture has intensified since the late 1980s, when Brazil's 1988 constitution opened the way for greater and much more intensive exchange between Xavante and outsiders.

20. The *da-höïmanazé* aesthetic in Pimentel Barbosa proscribes the growth of facial hair, including eyebrows and eye lashes. The practice of diligently plucking facial hair has been abandoned in several other communities, whose members are critiqued for their offensive appearance by residents of Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa.

21. For discussions of indigenous ideas of reified "culture" or "identity" in Amazonia, see, for example, Briggs 1996; Jackson 1989, 1991, 1995a, 1995b; Maybury-Lewis 1991; Oakdale 2004; Turner 1991a, 1991b; and Warren and Jackson 2002.

22. The rock group Sepultura visited Pimentel Barbosa in 1997. Photos and recordings of this musical collaboration are featured in Sepultura's (1996) *Roots* release.

23. Publicity for the 2005 Venice Biennale features the group from Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa: "In Brazilian Indians' first trip to Italy, 30 warriors from the Xavante tribe ... interpret their ancient rituals" (see Biennale di Venezia 2005).

At the 2005 Avignon Festival, Xavante performers will appear in Jean Lambert Wild's production titled "*Mue—Première mélopée*," scheduled to run July 12–23 (326 music 2002). This piece builds on Lambert Wild's previous experimental performance, "In My Dream, I start Walking, second metamorphosis," that debuted in São Paulo in October 2004 and featured Lambert Wild, Brazilian actress Simone Spoladore, and two Xavante men from Eténhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa. Lambert Wild describes the performance as "[a] 45 minute Poetic and Sonorous Wara [*sic*] for five voices, percussion and sonorous installation" (Théâtre-Contemporain 2001).

24. Xavante refer to all nonindigenous people as *warazu*. "Warazu" is a homogeneous category that includes people of European, African, and Asian descent.

25. Beginning in the late 1940s, public discourse and the media of President Ernesto Geisel's Estado Novo championed the Xavante as "noble savages" who initially resisted but were ultimately "tamed" by government agents who brought "civilization" to the frontier as part of Geisel's famous "March toward progress" that opened Brazil's hinterland to economic expansion (for further discussion of public discourse about the Xavante during the contact period, see Garfield 2001).

26. Pahöiri'wa, a ceremonial role belonging to the Poriza'ono moiety, perform this "dance for the raising sun" as part of

the initiation ceremonial complex. For further discussion of pahōri'wa, see Maybury-Lewis 1974:123–129; see also Giaccaria and Heide 1972:165–168.

27. For discussions of da-ño're, see Graham 1995:103–136; see also Aytai 1985.

28. This man's body paint contrasts with the designs worn by other men, whose torsos are painted black with red rectangles over the stomach. For information on Xavante body painting, see Giaccaria and Heide 1972 and Müller 1992.

29. In public, outside culture brokers, such as Pappiani, typically downplay or mask the significance of their contributions. Such a public presentation enhances the indigenous "authenticity" of the "indigenous" cultural product.

30. One notable difference is the videos (e.g., Patira et al. 1999; Waiassé 1996; Waiassé and Protodi 2005), which are also produced with a great deal of outside technical assistance and, in some cases, conceptual direction (Tutu Nunes and Vincent Carelli, personal communication, February 11, 1999). The Xavante video-maker Caimi Waiassé often represents his works to national and international audience as products that are explicitly produced for Xavante audiences, "to preserve our culture and traditions" (Waiassé 2000). Yet, as anthropologist Paula Morgada (of the Universidade de São Paulo's Laboratório de Imagem e Som em Antropologia; personal communication, April 27, 2005) commented after the presentation and debut screening of Waiassé's recent collaboration with Jorge Protodi and photographer Rosa Gauditano (Waiassé and Protodi 2005), the video was clearly directed toward non-Xavante audiences. By presenting his work as being "for Xavante eyes" Waiassé enhances its appeal to outsiders who want to believe that his "indigenous video" is not "contaminated" with outside influences.

31. Greg Urban (2001) contrasts "metacultures of tradition" with what he calls "metacultures of modernity" that value innovation and dissemination across space. His "metacultures" of "tradition" and "modernity" have some commonality with Claude Lévi-Strauss's notions of "cold" and "hot" societies. The concept of "metaculture" is, however, distinct in that it brings attention to ways that cultural forms interact with each other to accelerate or decelerate processes of innovation and movement through space and time.

32. For discussions of "authenticity," see Bruner 2005, Clifford 1988, and Handler 1984; see also Handler and Linnekin 1984; Linnekin 1983, 1991; and Wagner 1975. For discussions of Native Amazonians specifically, see Conklin 1997, Conklin and Graham 1995, Graham 2002, and Ramos 1998.

33. For critical discussion of differential power relations in the production and consumption of contemporary world beat, see Feld 1994, 2000; and Meintjes 1990.

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