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TREES AND PEOPLE

An anthropology of British campaigners for the Amazon Rainforest

A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

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June 1998

To Odete and Klemens with love

O pintor Paul Gauguin amou a luz da Baía de Guanabara
 O compositor Cole Porter adorou as luzes na noite dela
 A Baía de Guanabara
 O antropólogo Claude Lévi-Strauss detestou a Baía de Guanabara
 Pareceu-lhe uma boca banguela
 E eu, menos a conhecera mais a amara?
 Sou cego de tanto vê-la, de tanto tê-la estrela
 O que é uma coisa bela?
 O amor é cego
 Ray Charles é cego
 Stevie Wonder é cego
 e o albino Hermeto não enxerga mesmo muito bem
 Uma baleia, uma telenovela, um alaúde, um trem?
 Uma arara?
 Mas era ao mesmo tempo bela e banguela a Guanabara
 Em que se passara passa passará o raro pesadelo
 Que aqui começo a construir sempre buscando o belo e o Amaro
 Eu não sonhei:
 A praia de Botafogo era uma esteira rolante de areia branca e óleo diesel
 Sob meia tênis
 E o Pão de Açúcar menos óbvio possível
 À minha frente
 Um Pão de Açúcar com umas arestas insuspeitadas
 À áspera luz laranja contra a quase não luz quase não púrpura
 Do branco das areias e das espumas
 Que era tudo quanto havia então de aurora.
 Estão às minhas costas um velho de cabelo nas narinas
 E uma menina ainda adolescente e muito linda
 Não olho pra trás mas sei de tudo
 Cego às avessas, como nos sonhos, vejo o que desejo
 Mas eu não desejo ver o terno negro do velho
 Nem os dentes quase não púrpura da menina
 (Pense Seurat e pense impressionista
 Essa coisa de luz nos brancos dentes e onda
 Mas não pense surrealista que é outra onda)
 E ouço as vozes
 Os dois me dizem
 Num duplo som
 Como sampleados num Sinclavier:
 " É chegada a hora da reeducação de alguém
 Do Pai do Filho do Espírito Santo amém
 O certo é louco tomar eletrochoque
 O certo é saber que o certo é certo
 O macho adulto sempre no comando
 E o resto ao resto, o sexo é o corte, o sexo
 Reconhecer o valor necessário do ato hipócrita
 Riscar os índios, nada esperar dos pretos"
 E eu, menos estrangeiro no lugar que no momento
 Sigo mais sozinho caminhando contra o vento
 E entendo o centro do que estão dizendo
 Aquela cara e aquela:
 É um desmascaro
 Singelo grito:
 " o rei está nú"
 Mas eu desperto porque tudo cala frente ao fato de que o
 Rei é mais bonito nú
 E eu vou e amo o azul, o púrpura e o amarelo
 E entre o meu ir e o do sol, um aro, um elo
 ("Some may like a soft Brazilian singer
 But I've given up all attempts at perfection")

Caetano Veloso, *Estrangeiro*

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an ethnography of British campaigners and campaigns for the Brazilian Amazon rainforest in the 1990s. It is the result of over two and a half years investigation amongst campaigners in environmental, social and human rights organisations in the UK. My approach combines different theoretical and methodological perspectives, such as participant observation, discourse analysis, and oral history techniques, focusing on the questions involving the intersection of culture and power in 'global/local' relationships. In this context, this research also represents an inversion of historical patterns of anthropological investigation conducted by Europeans in tropical areas.

I understand the Amazon rainforest as one of the most important symbols of global environmentalism. As such, it is constituted by social, political and historical places and spaces that are highly contested by different groups, not only at local, regional and national levels, but also in the global realm. Consequently, by cutting across nation-state boundaries, the Amazon appears to be a transnational political space around which issues and dilemmas constitute themselves. Questions of ethnicity, national sovereignty, and social justice cut across issues concerning the global environment and the future of the planet.

British campaigners have been one of the most active transnational actors in the Amazon region. Through the analysis of their social and personal trajectories, I have identified three major tendencies concerning the Amazon - which I metaphorically call '*trees*', '*trees and people*' and '*people*' tendencies. Furthermore, I discuss the two principal ongoing campaigns in the 1990s in which the campaigners are involved - the mahogany campaign and the campaign for the demarcation of indigenous lands.

My analysis discusses the possibilities and limits of global campaigns for the Amazon, highlighting the articulation of social justice and environmental issues through the dynamics of 'global/local' relations. It shows that the UK campaign focus on mahogany and indigenous peoples, although crucial in forging policies towards the Amazon, may render a more complex reality invisible on the global arena. Furthermore, this global perspective may reflect back on how the Amazon is dealt with within Brazil itself. The analysis of different campaign strategies also points to the difficulties of concretely defining and establishing initiatives aiming at 'sustainable development'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The realisation of this thesis entails a long story involving the support of several institutions and persons both in Brazil and in England. The list of people I wish to acknowledge is therefore immense, and I can only mention a few names here.

I first conceived the idea of researching British campaigners for the Amazon when I was a PhD student in the area of Culture and Politics in the Doctoral Programme in Social Sciences, at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp), Brazil. I am very grateful to all of those who supported me at Unicamp, not only during the PhD, but even long before during my MA in Social Anthropology. Among those, my especial thanks to Ana Maria de Niemeyer, Antonio Augusto Arantes, Evelina Dagnino, Bela Feldman Bianco, Renato Ortiz, Arlete Moisés, and Octavio Ianni.

My stay in Essex was possible due to a research grant from the Brazilian educational agency CAPES - Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - who funded me during the first two years of research in the United Kingdom. Grants from the Small Grant Research Fund, through the Department of Sociology at Essex University also made possible field trips to Germany, The Netherlands and Sweden, further allowing me to present my ongoing work in a number of international conferences.

I am grateful to Paul Thompson for supervising me at Essex, as well as to Andrew Canessa, Carlo Ruzza and Ken Plummer who read different chapters while members of my supervisory board committee. Colin Samson was a constant interlocutor, bringing me back to my anthropological roots, challenging my assumptions, asking for intellectual rigour at the same time as encouraging some more creative and daring ideas and positions. Jeff Geiger not only made a great job improving my English, but helped to clarify and polish several theoretical positions. My thank you also to Ernesto Laclau, Mary Chamberlain, Darrel Posey, David Treece, and Sue Branford who provided useful comments in different occasions.

Many thanks to Brenda Corti, Mary Girling, Sue Aylott, Diana Streeting and Helen Hannick for coping with my many requests in the office. Also, my warm thank you to my colleagues and friends who gave me support in very difficult moments: Oonagh Jones, David Ford, Edinaldo Pizzolato, Rodrigo Peixoto, Lucia Helena Manara, and Mattias R. Assunção; and in Campinas, Teresa G. Alves, João Stehman, Ana Fonseca, Adriana Piscitelli and Luzia Watanabe.

Finally and most importantly, I am absolutely in debt with all those who I interviewed for this research: campaigners of different NGOs, journalists, film-makers, and photographers who gave me part of their precious time, coped with my presence, requests, interferences and invasion, and despite all doubts and political risks, they made this thesis possible. Some of them became close friends who I will cherish for life. For obvious reasons, most of their names will not be mentioned here nor in the research. I also extend my thanks to the staff of the Brazilian Embassy, IBA-MA officials, the Timber Trade Federation, the Body Shop, the director of the Kew Gardens, Prof. G. Prance, who all very kindly agreed to be interviewed and provided me with useful information.

I am eternally grateful to my family for their unconditional support without which this task would not be accomplished. Last but not least, Klemens Laschefski was my most important informant, source of inspiration, constant interlocutor, supporter, and tolerant companion. I hope he finds the waiting worthwhile.

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CHAPTER 1 **INTRODUCTION**

As for progress, it is devouring itself. More and more, the advances of science and technology, including medical breakthroughs - a blessing for individuals, an evil for our species - have as their principal objective, often used as a pretext, the correction of the harmful consequences of previous innovations. And when that end is achieved, further ill-fated consequences will result, for which it will be necessary to devise other inventions as a remedy. Dispossessed of our culture, stripped of values that we cherished - the purity of water and air, the charms of nature, the diversity of animals and plants - we are all Indians henceforth, making of ourselves what we made of them. (Lévi-Strauss 1995:18)

1.1 - 'We Are All Indians'

Saudades - one of the most difficult Portuguese words to encounter translation in English - conveys feelings of nostalgia. Nostalgia for that what no longer is. This is a feeling that I share, to some extent, with the French anthropologist, despite over half a century separating our life experiences, as well as our different linguistic, historical, cultural and geographical locations. In *Saudades do Brasil* Lévi-Strauss reiterates, both in photographs and written text, what he had already expressed in *Tristes Tropiques* many decades earlier - his feelings of nostalgia for Brazil, the 'object' of anthropology, the beginnings of his career, his youth, and the European continent.¹

Saudades for that which already existed only as a memory of memories in our great-grandparents recollections is a feeling I also share (and I dare to admit this in the best tradition of anthropological confessions) with many of the subjects of my research, though the unspoken depths of this feeling are carefully suppressed by our best and most rational arguments. *Saudades* for that which has never, in fact, existed beyond our western foundational myth of Eve and Adam in Eden: for that non-mediated experience of the natural world and human condition that perhaps the Amazon and its indigenous peoples have long evoked in us.

We are all Indians henceforth, says Lévi-Strauss in the above quote, *making of ourselves what we made of them*. Yet nostalgia and sadness accede themselves to history and sociological evidence, giving way to a tentative glimmer of hope. At the end of the century and the millennium, the '*invention of the Amazon*' (Gondim 1994) re-

¹As it is generally known amongst anthropologists, Lévi-Strauss was part of an academic French mission involved in the founding of the University of São Paulo in the early 1930s. His travelling to central Brazil and southern Amazônia is registered in *Tristes Tropiques* (Lévi-Strauss 1955). The book is a classic anthropological reference to the European encounter and construction of the Brazilian Other.

emerges as a 'symbolic anchor' in a world of uncertainties and risks, of instantaneous and simultaneous transformations.²

Despite centuries of capitalist expansion, the Amazon forest has not yet totally disappeared, while indigenous peoples have also refused to vanish and become sad memories in anthropologists' minds: museum artefacts or characters in the pages of history textbooks which proclaim the widespread foundational myth of the Brazilian nation as a 'racial democracy'. They have endured in a struggle for the right of existence, and perhaps, as Indians ourselves, many of us aligned with them, we refuse to conform to the ill-fated consequences of self-devouring progress (Lévi-Strauss 1995).

Still, resistance has many layers and further complicates the picture. Under the eyes of the European, Brazil as a country is generally subsumed to the Amazon and its indigenous peoples. In the recollections of another French intellectual traveller:

Brazil plays a sort of a giant chlorophyll role for the whole of humanity. It is the planetary accumulator of joy, elation, languor, physical animality and seduction coupled with vital exuberance and political derision. If ever the human race should fall into depression it is there that it would regain its vitality, just as, if it should ever be near to suffocation, it is beside the Amazon that it would get its breath back. (Baudrillard 1990:185)

Planetary deposit and haven of joy, sensuality, outlaws, raw material and oxygen - Brazil is also a society striving to exist in its own right, and to set itself free from its historical fate of being defined through external references, desires and expectations. Thus, it may well be that this thesis also adds a brief page to this complex story of tension between accommodation and resistance, including that within the researcher herself - a female 'Latin-American' of immigrant origin, a politically engaged anthropologist and environmentalist.³

1.2 - 'Britishness' Via The Amazon

Historically, western anthropologists have travelled to places like Africa and the Amazon to study 'native' peoples - the 'primitive'. My own route to the Amazon has taken me in the opposite direction to that of the classic anthropological tradition: as a *wes-*

² Nostalgia and authenticity have become important topics in the fields of social and cultural theory. See for instance Clifford (1988). For a discussion of nostalgia as a global issue - doubly globalized, that is - 'collective on a global scale and directed at globality itself', particularly through environmental discourses, see Robertson (1992:146-163). For a recent debate and substantive analysis of authenticity and nostalgia see articles in Beckett, J. and Mato, D. (eds.) 'Special Issue: Indigenous Peoples/Global Terrains' in *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 3(1-2), October 1996. Nostalgia as a component of post-modernist form of pastiche in films is analysed by Jameson (1983: 111-25). For perspectives on risk see Beck (1992), Douglas (1985, 1992), and Lash et al. (1996). A discussion of globalization is further presented below.

³ I take a stand similar to Sheper-Hughes's (1995:415) claim for '...an active, politically committed, morally engaged anthropology...' My sympathies are clearly placed alongside Brazilian grassroots and social movements, as well as their transnational allies, most of whom are the subject of this investigation. See chapter three.

tern Brazilian, I have found my 'natives' in western Europe. However, this is not a case of the 'anthropologised turning into the anthropologist' - the reprisal of the Indian, the *caboclo* or the riverine - since I am not a Brazilian from the Amazon. My particular standpoint stems from the fact that Brazil is a country which has historically been an object of European and North American studies, whereas England, in particular, has always epitomised the European Other for Brazil. This cultural and sociological relationship is well represented by the Brazilian popular expression '*para inglês ver*' - for the English to see - whose meaning I discuss further in chapter six.

The peculiarity of my social and historical location is certainly relevant to this research, and I hope this will become clear in the following pages (particularly in chapter three). For the moment, it is hopefully sufficient to state that this thesis presents an anthropology of the British non-governmental organisations (NGOs), particularly focusing on an ethnography of the campaigners and campaigns for the Brazilian Amazon in the 1990s.⁴

Hence, this is *not* a thesis about the Amazon, as such. The reader will not find maps and figures depicting the largest remaining tropical rainforest in the world - with its enormous river and overwhelming variety of plants, insects and natural resources - and the outrageous rate at which it has been destroyed during the course of the last three decades. Nor will the reader find an assessment of the Amazon's political economy and the diversity of its social and cultural organisations - indigenous and non-indigenous alike. Such topics are well-documented in the vast literature on the Amazon which has both influenced my approach and the subjects of my research. This thesis, however, seeks to consider the ways the subjects of my research engage with this textual history.

This is, thus, a thesis about 'Britishness' in the context of contemporary transnational processes. NGOs at large, and environmental groups in particular, can show us a lot about the idea of Britishness, especially in the colonial and post-colonial contexts. The starting point of this research is the observation that the Amazon rainforest is one of the most powerful symbols of global environmentalism. The Amazon is constituted by social, political and historical places and spaces which are highly contested by different groups, not only at local, regional and national levels, but also in the global realm. Thus, for a local rubber tapper, a riverine *caboclo* or an Indian, the Amazon might represent a living resource for everyday life. For a Brazilian general it might be a frontier to defend. A multinational company might see timber to be exported or minerals to be explored, while scientists see the biggest biodiversity ecosystem to be investigated, and anthropologists see cultural diversity. Travellers seek adventure and 'joy in nature', whereas an environmentalist might value the forest as a vital natural resource and a home to people whose way of life is threatened by transnational capital.

⁴ I am using the word 'campaigner' to state the professional character of those working for NGOs, in opposition to activists who are lay and non-professional political actors. NGO is also a problematic concept. Although acknowledging the distinctions between Non-Governmental Organisations, Volunteer Organisations, Community Organisations and Grass-Roots Organisations (Edwards and Hulmes 1995), I use the term NGO in the broad and most popular sense - that of non-profit organisation - as it is employed by the campaigners themselves as part of their cultural and political identity as a collective actor. This is regardless of their working for highly structured and hierarchical environmental organisations such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, WWF, or small volunteer organisations such as Reforest the Earth, even their working for developmental or social organisations such as Oxfam and Christian Aid, or human rights and indigenous peoples support organisations such as Amnesty International and Survival International. On collective identities see Melucci (1995).

Consequently, by cutting across nation-state boundaries, the Amazon appears to be a transnational political space around which issues and dilemmas constitute themselves.⁵ At the same time as it exposes conflicts between different groups in the local, national and global dimensions, it is also a territory in which a transcultural and transnational 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983) is constructed and contested, through the forming of alliances: for example, between a variety of transnational NGOs, as well as between NGOs and forest dwellers. That is why it is such a powerful symbol of contemporary environmentalism, and why I am researching British NGOs campaigning in the Brazilian Amazon.

If a *non*-homogenised transnational and transcultural 'imagined community' is envisaged, what are the dynamics of its existence? What are the social, environmental, economic, cultural and political elements articulated in the creation of alliances between British campaigners, Brazilian NGOs and the Amazon people? How do British campaigners perceive, experience, elaborate and articulate the Amazon as an issue? How do they converge with, or diverge from, their Brazilian counterparts? What is common about the global space? What is peculiar to the British legacy? How might global and British perspectives strengthen or weaken local positions? These were some of the general questions underlying my fieldwork amongst NGOs in the United Kingdom. They are placed against a background concerned with the interface of culture and power in cross-societal and cross-cultural encounters.

Nonetheless, before I proceed with a discussion of the general theoretical and methodological framework within which these questions are addressed, I shall step back to present a brief account and literature review of the historical precedents of this research - that is, an account of the period between the 1970s and 1980s, when the Amazon became an object of systematic transnational campaigning, with the key support of the transnational NGOs for Brazilian grassroots and social movements.

1.3 - Brief Historical Precedents

The peculiarities and dynamics of the British campaigners and campaigns in relation to the Brazilian Amazon in the 1990s, as I shall discuss in this thesis, need to be initially understood against the general background of international and transnational environmental developments, particularly since the 1980s, when the Amazon became an object of systematic international concern and campaigning.

Indigenous rights support organisations emerged in the early 70s both in Brazil and abroad. This is the case, for instance, of CIMI - the Catholic Indigenist Missionary Council - created in 1972 in Brazil by the initiative of the church. In the international context, Survival International was created following the publication of a supplement magazine of the London *Sunday Times* denouncing a policy of indigenous genocide by the military regime in Brazil in the late 60s. The article caused great consternation and mobilised anthropologists, journalists and lawyers in Britain to act in support of the in-

⁵It is also important to bear in mind that the Amazon rainforest actually cuts across the borders of several countries - Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia, Guyana, Ecuador and Surinam - although the majority of its territory is situated in Brazil. For a geopolitical perspective see Meira Mattos (1980).

indigenous peoples of Brazil. Later on, the organisation would expand its support to 'tribal' peoples world-wide.⁶

Thus, as pointed out by Ramos (1994:153-171), during the 70s and 80s, 'the enemy' was epitomised by the military amongst indigenist and Indian support organisations in Brazil, providing them with a sense of collective identity.⁷ Hence, campaigning against a Cold War international scenario that supported a repressive regime in Brazil in the 70s, the international pressures of indigenous rights support organisations over governments, multinational corporations and bodies such as the World Bank, for instance, became more visible within the Brazilian society and helped form international public opinion later on in the 1980s. This happened along with a conjunction of factors, such as the 'internationalisation' of environmental issues, the democratisation of Brazilian society and the development of new international relations.

A variety of social movements of different political affiliations sprang up throughout Brazilian society with the gradual democratic opening of the political regime after the late 1970s. However, the regional diversities and economic inequalities of the country were also reflected in the different levels such movements were articulated. In this context, new environmental movements flourished, particularly in the highly industrialised and urbanised southern regions of Brazil in the 1980s. They assumed an urban foothold in the face of the crisis promoted by the accelerated rate of industrialisation and growth of big cities. Environmental issues, which were previously treated as a minor topic behind more urgent themes such as democratisation, development, inflation and unemployment, were gradually combined with urban problems such as basic sanitation, pollution, growth of shantytowns, collective transportation, among others, eventually entering the political arena by the mid 80s (Zhouri 1992, 1996).

Social urban and rural movements in the Amazon region itself were confined to a more local dimension, failing to consistently reach national media coverage or public opinion in the centres of power.⁸ This was due to a conjunction of features, among which I would highlight: the geographic remoteness of the Amazon in relation to the centres of political decision in Brazil, the scale of its size in combination with the lack of resources and articulation of its various complex social and political dimensions, and the long and violent history of political oppression of civil society through alliances between state forces and local elites in the region. Therefore, the international NGO pressures that mounted in the 1980s were crucial in terms of giving visibility to national and regional movements, and also in promoting environmental programmes and public policies, albeit the reactive features of the latter.

In the 1980s, forests became one of the central topics in the articulation of environmentalism on a global scale. The fact that tropical rainforests are located in so-called 'Third-world' countries re-created the debate over the Northern hemisphere-Southern hemisphere divide, with a sort of 'Third-worldism' of multiple developmental meanings

⁶From the publications Survival International, *Review: 21 years of Survival International*, 1990; *Survival: 25 years standing by tribal peoples*, The Newsletter of Survival International 33, 1994; and *Survival: a unique organisation for tribal peoples*, 1995.

⁷The dictatorship regime in Brazil lasted twenty-one years, from 1964 to 1985.

⁸For an analysis of the differences and inequalities between NGOs in the southern part of Brazil and the groups in the Amazon in different episodes of recent history, such as during the UNCED-92 and the participation in the Pilot Program for the Conservation of the Brazilian Rainforests, supported by the G7, see Kolk (1996) and Hagemann (1995).

(i.e. environmental debt swaps, transfer of technology, empowerment of the poor and so on) in the context of globalization, transnationalisation of the world economy and its expression in agencies such as the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank.⁹ The negative effects of the Multilateral Development Banks' economic policies over forests, and particularly the deforestation of tropical rainforests, were well documented by environmentalists from Northern industrialised countries, especially those from the US, which is the major financial contributor to those banks.¹⁰ In turn, the forest served as a catalyst for wider discussion of global economic issues.

Hence, the Brazilian Amazon became a focus of 'international' mobilisation following the launching of the Multilateral Development Banks' campaign by US environmental NGOs in 1983.¹¹ Their approach was based on case studies that exposed the impacts of Bank projects on the local population and the natural environment, such as the case of the Polonoeste project in Rondônia - the advancing of the frontier towards the north western parts of the Amazon - which had been the subject of ongoing protests by grassroots movements in Brazil. Their new connection to US organisations and other European groups which later joined the campaign strengthened local protesters and NGOs, which in turn provided credibility for the former. With new and instantaneous means of communication and exchange, such as the Internet, the co-operation between Brazilian, American and European NGOs revealed new possibilities for political networks. The practice of bringing local people from the Amazon and also from Brazilian NGOs to meetings with politicians, bank representatives and the general public - in the US and in Europe - was developed during this campaign, which also made use of intense media documentation, such as films and documentaries produced in situ (see chapter six).

In this process, local political actors, mainly unknown on the national political scene, were projected into the global arena where they assumed different roles and meanings in relation to the national realm. In this regard, a classic example is Chico Mendes, a local rubber tapper leader and trade unionist who was projected internationally as an environmentalist. After a presentation to the US congress, Mendes had a crucial role in stopping the World Bank's loan to the Polonoeste programme. Similarly, several indigenous leaders were also taken from their daily local agenda (conflict with local farmers and state officials, for instance) and launched into the global realm for public presentations and talks to politicians in the UK and elsewhere.

In a close association between ethnicity and environmentalism,¹² a generic 'model Indian' began to appear on the public scene, a 'hyperreal Indian custodian of nature' (Ramos 1994:153-171). At times this figure symbolised the 'natural world' of the Amazon. Those Indian leaders acted as tokens for many organisations and bodies in the UK. Hence, the Kaiapó chief Raoni undertook a world-wide tour with British pop singer Sting in the late 80s, when images of the burning of the forest dominated the media and

⁹For the critique of the 'development discourse', see contributions in Sachs (ed.) (1992).

¹⁰ For an analysis of the campaigns against Multilateral Development Banks in the 1980s, see Arnt and Schwartzman (1992), Rich (1994), and Kolk (1996). For a further analysis of the effects of the banks' policies in the Amazon see Hagemann (1995).

¹¹ See further Kolk (1996:247-249) for an explanation about the leadership role of the US groups in the campaign.

¹² For a discussion about ecological ethnicity and ethno-environmentalism see Parajuli (1996:15-59) and Rogers (1996:73-125).

found echo in the extraordinary heat of the 1988 summer in the US. Another Kaiapó Indian, Paulinho Paiakan, became a symbol for The Body Shop's *Trade Not Aid* programme, whereas Airton Krenak and David Yanomami were the equivalents for Gaia Foundation and Survival International, respectively.

The destruction of the Amazon rainforest was dramatically portrayed by the international media and some of the conservationist movements.¹³ The drama unveiled martyrs and heroes. Thus, the murder of Chico Mendes by farmers in December 1988 provided a martyr for the Amazonian cause, whereas in 1992, before the Rio Conference, the Kaiapó leader Paulinho Paiakan was celebrated as a hero on the front page of the American *The Washington Post* as 'A Man Who Would Save The World'. Paiakan's trajectory is in itself very revealing of the processes and effects of how local, national and global dimensions are related. Ironically, a couple of months after *The Washington Post* article, during the UN Conference in Rio, Paiakan was presented as a villain on the front page of the Brazilian weekly magazine *Veja* as 'The Savage', a man accused of raping a Brazilian student. Driven away from his local context, acquiring powers that brought disruptions to his local village and people, Paiakan was 'ethnic-environmentally' celebrated globally, while condemned nationally as an 'uncivilised savage' by a nation struggling to be acknowledged as 'civilised'. Ironically enough, as a 'flesh and blood' - neither villain nor hero - Indian, he is 'reconciled' back to his village and people, doomed to the place 'reserved' for him within Brazilian society.¹⁴

Nevertheless, beyond the international euphoria and apocalyptic drama, with its heroes and villains, the MDB campaign was crucial to building up transnational bonds or global networking where Brazilian NGOs and Amazonian grassroots would find support for their struggles in the Northern hemisphere. Besides, the campaign made clear the links, roles, and responsibilities of Northern governments and bodies in funding some of the Amazonian disasters. British NGOs were one of the most active in the period. Friends of the Earth, for example, had a major role in the organisation of the Altamira gathering of indigenous groups in February 1989, for the protest against the building of a hydroelectric dam. Likewise, campaigning for the demarcation of indigenous lands for many years, Survival International had a fundamental role in lobbying for the demarcation of the Yanomami territory in 1991, shortly before the Rio Conference (see chapter two).

Hence, as a development of those linkages, in the 1990s - the period in which this research is focused - the British environmental campaign for the Amazon rainforest has focused on the peculiarity of the trade relationship between Britain and the Amazon region. In the case of the Brazilian Amazon, the main target of British NGOs has been the timber trade, which is in turn a very specialist trade, e.g. mainly Brazilian mahogany, popularly known as the 'ouro verde' (green gold) of the Amazon (a reference to its peculiar environmental status and high value on the international market). On the other hand, campaigns for social justice in Brazil and in the Amazon have particularly fo-

¹³ For a reference to news reports as dominated by the narrative form, that is, the production of a drama, see Gamson (1992:34), and discussion in chapter six. The stories focus attention on motivated actors rather than on sociological forces or structural frames. Thus, for instance, much of the media discourse about the Amazon in the late 80s was focused on the farmers or peasants of the Amazon who were burning down the forest. See further developments in chapter five.

¹⁴ I am indebted to Carlos Alberto Ricardo for the suggestion of this example in a personal communication in December 1996. For more details of this case see Ricardo (1996: 412-413).

cused on the issue of land reform in general, and the demarcation of indigenous lands in particular. Whilst these specific campaigns will be thoroughly analysed in chapter five, I shall now discuss the general argument and research technique employed on this thesis as a whole.

1.4 - On Aims, Arguments and Methods

From a global perspective, I understand the Amazon as constituting a discursive field where different cultural - social and economic - perspectives engage and compete.¹⁵ It is an arena of tension involving communication *and* power relations. I shall argue that the tension between globalist and localist perspectives is constitutive of the British discursive field about the Amazon. This becomes apparent in the analysis of the discourses of the campaigners and their interlocutors presented in chapters four and five, particularly as they were articulated during the course of my own interviews and participant observation.

The articulation of, and the tensions between, concerns with biodiversity, or the *strictu sensus* 'environment' and social justice issues are constitutive of all of the discourses which permeate the whole of this research. Nevertheless, for the purpose of analysis, I am placing the emphasis on certain tendencies: environment/biodiversity ('*trees*') on the one hand, or development/social justice issues ('*people*') on the other, but also on their synthesis ('*trees and people*'). A substantive analysis of these three main tendencies amongst campaigners is presented in chapter four.

The words '*trees*' and '*people*' are employed metaphorically rather than in a literal sense, epitomising on the one hand concerns with the conservation, preservation, protection and sustainable uses of 'the environment' and, on the other hand, issues of social justice, development and human rights. Because reality is rather more complex than any possible mode of sociological and anthropological abstraction and analysis, I speak of predominant tendencies amongst campaigners to highlight the flexible nature and heuristic element of such classification beyond the rigid and obvious differences between NGOs. The word *tendency* amongst campaigners suggests that, in actual fact, there is some interplay between communication and tension among them since, broadly speaking, most campaigners have acknowledged the need to bridge environmental and social justice issues. However, although such an attempt to link up these issues is identified easily enough on the levels of language or terminology, the initiatives and campaigns combining environment, social justice and human rights issues have continued to be problematic and difficult.

Hence, this thesis presents the perspectives of British campaigners and film-makers, British timber traders, Brazilian officials and Brazilian indigenous peoples' representatives. In analysing their discourses, the idea was not to reveal the truth or falsity of their statements, arguments, and counter arguments (Foucault 1980: 131-33), but rather to understand how meanings are constructed and contested in social relations under historical processes. Along similar lines, Rabinow (1986:239) states that '...conversation,

¹⁵ For the concepts of *field of forces* or *field of struggle* in the cultural production, ideas which inspire my standpoint, see Bourdieu (1993a) and discussion below.

between individuals or cultures, is only possible within contexts shaped and constrained by historical, cultural and political relations and the only *partially* discursive social practices that constitute them' (emphasis added).

In highlighting the relevance of contexts in the analysis of discourses, Bourdieu helps us to understand the context of the production of culture and discourses as *fields of forces* or *fields of struggles* (Bourdieu 1993a), where social positions and interests are variables constitutive of *habitus*. These are sets of structured dispositions within which structures are actualised and which tend to reproduce them. The *habitus*, thus, represents the mediation between objectivity and subjectivity, structures and individual practices. It appears as dispositions and regularities identifiable in social (and discursive) practices without necessarily being the rigid orchestration of rules (Bourdieu 1993b [1977]: 72, 83).

Identifiable through regularities in discursive practices, *habitus* entails, thus, many marks of social position, such as gender, class, education, nationality, and so on (Bourdieu 1993b [1977]: 82). Because people's views and position in the field are related to their *habitus*, it becomes relevant to investigate, for instance, their social backgrounds and personal trajectories - a task I have undertaken through in-depth interviews with campaigners, and also with journalists and film-makers who keep a close contact with them. This has allowed me to identify the major tendencies amongst campaigners, and to explore the dynamics of the relationship amongst them, as well as between them and the other subjects in the field.

This focus on the social and cultural background of campaigners stems from the fact that they are the carriers of NGO ethos. In other words, they are the actual agents constructing and implementing NGOs' agendas. Therefore, beyond the obvious division or classification of NGOs into environmental, human rights and social groups, it is necessary to consider the agents of NGOs' practices, that is, those who are actually engaged in a general debate about the Amazon. The marks of their *habitus* - their social and cultural experiences - reflect upon their framing of the Amazon as an issue, and reveal the major tendencies guiding different NGO approaches. Likewise, it is essential to unveil the contextual layers within and against which their assumptions are enunciated. These contexts are represented here by the perspectives of the Brazilian military and Amazonian elites voicing against environmentalists and indigenous peoples support groups (chapter two), the immediate context of personal and social interaction with a Brazilian researcher (chapter three), and the context presented by the views and responses of timber traders and Brazilian officials (chapter five).

In order to write such an ethnography of British campaigners and campaigns for the Brazilian Amazon in the 1990s, I have carried out two and a half years of fieldwork (between 1994 and 1996) in the United Kingdom, mainly England, where the majority of the British NGOs campaigning for the Amazon - particularly the Brazilian Amazon - are based. The strategies of investigation comprised the technique of participant observation during demonstrations, NGOs' gatherings (in England as well as in Germany, The Netherlands and Sweden), meetings between NGOs and the timber traders and between NGOs and the Brazilian officials, and public meetings with Brazilian indigenous peoples' representatives in London.

Besides participant observation in different situations and events, I have also carried out a total of sixty-two in-depth interviews with campaigners of environmental,

social, and human rights organisations, as well as journalists, photographers and film-makers, representatives of the Timber Trade Federation, Brazilian officials and indigenous peoples' delegates.¹⁶ The in-depth interviews with campaigners, journalists and film-makers followed a general guideline which was divided into two main blocks of questions. The first block was concerned with the interviewees' personal background, and their involvement with environmental, human rights and/or social justice issues, NGOs and the Amazon. The in-depth life story interview technique (Thompson, 1988) in particular was deployed in this first stage of the interviewing process. The difficulties that arose from my attempts to employ these types of interviews are discussed further below, especially in chapter three. The second block of questions was thematic, mainly concerned with the NGOs in terms of their specific campaigns, their relationship with the other NGOs in the UK, their counterparts in Brazil, and so on. The interviews with the other subjects, such as timber traders and Brazilian officials, basically followed a thematic line, since I was rather concerned with their perspectives as responses to the campaigns run by the NGOs.

Along with participant observation and oral testimony, I have also collected and analysed printed materials, such as newspaper articles and documents, for example, the analysis of the perspectives of the Brazilian military and Amazon politicians, the voices against environmentalists and indigenous peoples supporters discussed in chapter two. Research reports, letters, newsletters, and general public documents produced by the NGOs as well as by the timber traders and the Brazilian government - especially the Brazilian Embassy in London - were also analysed.

Finally, I have also analysed media coverage about the Amazon, especially photographs, films and documentaries produced since the mid 1980s. As part of the complementary ethnographic material related to the campaigns and their articulation of '*trees*' and '*people*', I present in chapter six an analysis of three TV documentaries produced by British film-makers. They were chosen for their clear associations with the campaigns run by NGOs.

In short, I have traced the campaigners' interests and emphases on '*trees*' and '*people*' - the metaphorical articulation of environmental and social justice issues - back to their personal and social trajectories and background histories. At the same time, these campaigners are also referred back to the various historical and political contexts or conditions of the production of their discourses - such as the Amazon, the immediate personal interaction with a Brazilian researcher, their understanding of the general Brazilian resistance to their causes, their 'Britishness', their experiences of interacting with other transnational and Brazilian NGOs, Brazilian government officials and grassroots movements, not to mention British business corporations and the media. My analysis reveals the articulation - that is to say, disclosure and concealment - of meanings concerning Britishness, Brazilianess, environmentalism, the Third-world, the Amazon and its peoples (indigenous and non-indigenous alike). These are both meaningful tropes and actual bodies, linked together by a process of communication and tension, '*trees*' and '*people*', global and local. These elements, in my view, are both created of, and give rise to, a heterogeneous field of struggle through their complex actions and interactions.

¹⁶ I have also interviewed representatives of the Community Trade and Public Relations sectors of the cosmetic company The Body Shop, and the director of Kew Gardens, Dr Ghilleen Prance. Although they do not appear in the final edition of this thesis, they provided me with valuable information and relevant views about the Amazon.

Besides this introduction, additional and specific discussions of theoretical and methodological orientation, when necessary, accompanies other chapters of the thesis. As a result of the peculiar nature of my research topic and approach - an anthropology of British campaigners for the Amazon rainforest who act in transnational processes - I have drawn my literature discussion from a diverse range of intellectual fields. In the next sections, I refer anthropology to a literature concerned with theories of globalization, environmentalism, and social movements.

1.5 - Globalization-'Glocalization' and Spaces In-Between

Commentators from a wide range of intellectual perspectives have discussed the different processes of globalization not only in economic terms, but also in their 'cultural' and social aspects (e.g. Canclini 1989, Harvey 1991, Featherstone 1990, Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Glick-Schiller et al. 1992, Giddens 1992, 1995, Robertson 1992, Friedman 1994, Ianni 1992, Ortiz 1994). Environmental crises, and the awareness and the responses they have generated in the last twenty five years,¹⁷ are also analysed within the context of globalization from different perspectives (Beck 1992; Lash et al.1996; Giddens 1992, 1995; Robertson 1992; Redclift & Benton 1994; Milton 1996). Nevertheless, in contrast to this research, their approaches have not substantively and comprehensively considered the ways in which NGO campaigners - particularly environmentalists - both express and experience these global processes.

Within the realm of macro sociology, Robertson's theory of globalization (Robertson 1992) presents a 'middle range' analytical framework between theories of world-systems (Wallerstein 1974, 1992) and civilisation (Wilkinson 1987). His perspective on global cultural processes yields fruitful and relevant possibilities for anthropological studies *vis-à-vis* globalization. Robertson perceives both world-system and civilizational theories as suffering from 'conceptual ambiguity and the *post hoc* treatment of cultural issues' due to a lack of direct engagement with issues of 'culture' and agency (Roudometof and Robertson 1995:273). Instead of treating 'culture' as an epiphenomenon of material factors, the authors propose to bring it to the centre of empirical inquiry, incorporating it alongside economic dimensions. Hence, it does not simply privilege 'culture' over material elements, yet 'it does strongly question the crude and...entirely unrealistic assumption that there is such 'thing' as a 'pure' economic or material interest' (Roudometof and Robertson 1995: 279).

However, in contrast to anthropological approaches, and although this macro-sociological perspective highlights the importance of engaging with issues of 'culture', the term is still employed in a rather unproblematic manner. This is indeed the case in most sociological approaches - regardless of the emphasis they place on 'cultural aspects' -

¹⁷The generally agreed historical and symbolic landmark here is the Club of Rome meeting, the publication of the Meadows report - *Limits of Growth* - and the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in Stockholm in 1972. According to Milton (1996:176): 'Whatever the details of its history, the identification of the human environment with the entire globe can be seen as a combination of two emerging lines of thought: the idea that the Earth is a single ecosystem and the idea that humanity is a single moral community'.

where 'culture' seems generally to mean a widespread range of non-economic aspects.¹⁸ Nevertheless, Roudometof and Robertson's critique of large-scale metatheoretical constructs such as 'world-system' and 'civilisation' is relevant for this discussion, particularly their use of the notion of 'networks of power' as a historical ground for the study of globalization.¹⁹ Hence, it follows from this perspective that societies are conceptualised as overlapping 'networks of power', and globalization is referred to the 'growing contacts among different power networks and their transformation as a result of these contacts' (Roudometof and Robertson 1995: 291,292).

Contrary to many perspectives (Harvey 1991, Lash and Urry 1994), Robertson (1992) does not conceive of globalization as a recent process related to the overexpansion of capitalism in the post-World War II period: 'Global economic integration does not by any means entail the convergence of particular types of capitalism and the cultural homogenisation implied in such a convergence' (Roudometof and Robertson, 1995: 284). Significant to an anthropological approach²⁰ is the fact that most discussions about globalization relate it to processes of cultural homogenisation, such as the diffusionist notions of 'cultural imperialism' or the 'westernization of the world'.²¹ I embrace Roudometof and Robertson's view that the identification of globalization to the development of the modern world system is an Eurocentric view. It postulates 'a cultural entity (the 'West') as an essentially closed system that allows for the examination of its internal development independently of its contacts with other civilisations and cultures across Eurasia' (1995: 286). Growing within the 'West', modernity would then expand to the rest of the world via processes of colonisation, cultural diffusion, and cultural imperialism.

Such assumptions are particularly persistent in environmentalists' analyses where a theory of world systems focusing on economic processes, or economic power networks, entails a classification of the world through sedimented dual categories of 'centre and periphery', 'North and South', or 'West and East', 'Occidental and Oriental', 'producer and consumer countries'. Hence, according to this categorisation, cross-societal encounters result in a one way process whereby the so-called 'periphery, South, East, Oriental, producer countries' supply the 'centre, North, West, occidental, consumer countries' with 'raw materials and labour it needs to fuel its own expansion' (also Milton 1996:145,147). The classification of the world is constitutive of the cultural universe of the subjects of my investigation. It situates them in the world, organises their

¹⁸For a recent and comprehensive analysis of these positions from an anthropological perspective see Milton (1996). For her, world system and international relations theories present culture as a residual category, separated from economics and politics and incorporating everything non-political and non-economical (Milton 1996:149)

¹⁹ The concept of 'networks of power' is drawn from Mann (1986).

²⁰For an overview of the different concepts of globalization and the implications for the concept of culture under the conditions of globalization see Milton (1996:142-171). For a perspective on cultural identities and global processes see Friedman (1994).

²¹ This homogenising principal is often associated and subsumed to the world-wide economic features of capitalism. For another more pessimistic approach see further Latouch (1996). For Latouche, 'The West no longer means Europe, either geographically or historically; it is no longer even a collection of beliefs shared by a group of people scattered over the earth. I see it as a *machine*, impersonal, soulless, and nowadays masterless, which has impressed mankind into its service.' (1996:3) In this perspective, economics becomes an 'autonomous field of social life and an end in itself' (1996:20). Although it might be appealing for those concerned with environmental and ethnic issues, the implications of an over abstraction of power leaves no room for possible changes.

identities, and morally and politically justifies their actions as global actors. The implication of such a construction in cross-societal and cross-cultural contacts is one of the questions posed by this research. I suggest that although these are accurate and effective readings of general global economic and macro political processes within their historical contexts, such classifications of the world are rather problematic in their social and cultural implications. Because the world system approach comprises a Eurocentric standpoint, it also entails the possibility of campaigners unconsciously reproducing the dynamics of power they would rather wish to contest, as I discuss further in chapter four.

Refuting the idea of globalization as a one-way process, Roudometof and Robertson state that globalization is akin to *glocalization* (1995: 284): 'the simultaneous adaptation of cultural items into different locales via the utilisation of local practices and traditions.' In similar terms, Appadurai (1990) has spoken of 'indigenization' to define the process whereby commodities from one society flow to another and are assimilated into the 'receiver' system (also Friedman 1994). The same is true for ideas, symbols and institutions. Anthropology has provided considerable ethnographic evidence against diffusionists arguments.²² Nevertheless, from a cultural perspective, 'glocalization' implies that local and national cultures are constructed through reference to global discursive formations (Robertson 1995).

Robertson speaks of selective incorporation in the process of cross-societal emulation. This is particularly relevant for the discussion of the Amazon as a global environmental issue, in the sense that the Amazon and Brazil are interpellated by and interpellate global spheres. The success of common grounds and joint actions, for instance, between global environmental concerns and national and local agents is dependent upon the extent to which global considerations relate to local and national cultures, speak to those traditions, and vice-versa.²³ In the context of international networks of power, for instance, the Brazilian government inserts the issue of development into negotiations with donor nations over the preservation of the Amazon with donor nations (the Pilot Program for the Preservation of the Brazilian Tropical Forests financed by the G7 is one example), whereas an indigenous plea for land demarcation encounters world-wide support only so long as they also respond to the industrial societies' 'myth of primitive ecological wisdom'. On the other hand, environmentalists borrowing philosophies and practices from non-industrial societies find assistance in the 'creation of international areas for negotiating agreements and setting environmental standards' (Milton 1996:12). Some of the unwitting implications of these processes are discussed in chapters four and five.

Although Giddens identifies globalization as a consequence of modernity, his identification of its expressions is very similar to Robertson's description of the features of the modern global system. For Giddens (1995:4), globalization is about the transformation of space and time. He defines it broadly as *action at distance*, and relates its intensifying over recent years to the emergence of means of instantaneous global communication and mass transportation. One of the environmental implications of such *action at a distance* is, in the case of this research, that the behaviour of consumers in the UK

²² See Hannerz (1990) and Milton (1996) for an overview.

²³ For an analysis of cultural diversity, the differential relationships to the environment, and environmental assumptions, see Milton (1996: 106-141).

might have an affect on the rate of deforestation occurring in the Brazilian Amazon. The same might be true about the decision-making processes taking place in Brasilia, São Paulo, Washington, London, and Bonn. The awareness of such connections and the allocation of moral responsibilities are also part of the consequences of *actions at a distance*. This leads to the question of the implications of looking and acting, say, from the UK, for environmentalists as well as for the Amazon and its people. Although globalization is identified by a 'sense of the global' - a sense that environmentalists clearly articulate - as well as the intensification of cross-cultural contact, this multiple flow of people, objects and ideas in social relations cannot be understood without careful consideration of the cultural constructs and the power relations constitutive of such processes.

In other words, within this new scope of time and space, novel forms of agency and political practice emerge. Time and space compression, the sense of the world-as-a-whole, alongside an element of 'disaffection with orthodox political mechanisms' (Giddens 1995:7) give rise to transnational agents in social, environmental, feminist, and peace movements and organisations. However global and cosmopolitan in scope, these organisations and movements, as carriers of culture between space (Milton 1996:160), still express particular social manifestations circumscribed by, among other factors, historical, cultural, and national legacies.

Thus, questions concerning the contexts, dynamics, and outcomes of intersocietal and cross-cultural encounters appear to be most relevant to my work. For instance, it is important to investigate how the complexities of local cultures, societies and experiences are dealt with by political actors located at a distance. On the one hand, what aspects of local realities are perceived and understood, and, on the other hand, which ones are missed, erased or forgotten, and why? Most importantly, what might be the actual implications of looking from within and looking from afar? One of the challenges for anthropology is to carry out research in those spaces in between (Rabinow 1986, Asad 1973, Okeley 1992, Milton 1996, Bhabha 1990, 1994).

1.6- Anthropology and Environmentalism

Although I focus and expand my particular anthropological standpoint further in chapter three, I shall discuss in this section the contribution of an anthropological approach to environmentalism. An important aspect of this research is the understanding that a 'cultural' dimension remains marginalised in the environmental debate (Zhouri 1992) - both in the environmental discourses of, for instance, activists, campaigners, politicians and scientists, as well as in the social sciences' analyses about environmentalism.²⁴ Recent and more comprehensive studies (Macnaghten and Urry 1998, Milton 1996, Eder 1996, Lash et al. 1996) have pointed in the same direction. Similar to my research, these constitute attempts at overcoming the reification of 'nature' and 'culture' which has characterised both realist and constructivist investigations.

There has been a general recognition that 'environmental discourses' have become diluted since the late 1980s - with the publication in 1987 of the Brundtland Report and its concept of sustainable development, and the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.²⁵ I believe this process has been two-fold. With the end of the Cold War period, the political has lost its traditional place of enunciation and, through a process of multiple dislocations, it has come to be expressed, along with other issues (such as gender, class, religious, national and ethnic relations, to name but a few) through the debate about environmental concerns. This was most evident during the Rio-92 conference, where different social groups, commonly called 'the excluded' - such as street children, shantytown dwellers, the elderly, workers' leagues and ethnic minorities, among others - expressed their voices in the Global Forum, the event parallel to the Earth Summit.²⁶ Hence, environmentalism has also become an important catalyst for political discourses and discourses about the political, even if at the same time its own discourse has been diluted.

The implications for environmentalism of such 'proliferation of greentalk' are discussed by different contributors in Lash et al. (1996). Nevertheless, one of their common assumptions is that:

...the translation of things 'environmental' into authoritative scientific and policy vocabularies occurs in ways which could be described as, amongst other things, epistemologically 'realist', positivistic, disembedded, technological and cognitivist, and that it thus tends to mask important cultural, social and existential dimensions of the contemporary 'environmental crisis' (1996:1).

Both Milton (1996) and Lash et al. (1996) point to the problems of the reification of environmental issues - generated by the assumption of an autonomous nature which, in turn, determines societal responses. They further examine the sociological responses to scientific reification that, on the other hand, view environmental problems solely as so-

²⁴ For a critique of a generic environmental discourse about the Amazon in the global context which keeps Amazonian societies invisible, see Nugent (1990, 1993).

²⁵ For a critical perspective of the UNCED-92, the Brundtland Report and the concept of sustainable development, see contributions in Sachs (1995 [1993]).

²⁶ For an analysis of the Global Forum in the Rio-92 Conference, and environmentalism as a catalyst of political discourses (and practices), see Zhouri (1993).

cial constructions (also Redclift and Benton 1994). According to Lash et al (1996:3), 'Both such positions simply reproduce the cultural categories of modernity, nature versus culture, which are rightly problematised as part and parcel of the environmental problem.'

Attentive to the dangers imposed by such reductionism, my anthropological approach - which is hermeneutic, situated, and reflexive in method (see chapter three) - aims also at understanding the entanglement of 'nature' and 'culture' embodied in the perspectives held by British campaigners for the Brazilian Amazon rainforest. Although mainly focused on environmental NGOs, a broader and relational perspective is adopted through the analysis of human rights, indigenous peoples support organisations, and social or developmental NGOs.

From an anthropological perspective, I understand environmentalism as a cultural phenomenon which expresses itself through many different modalities in the global context. Hence, it suggests changing 'structures of feeling' (Williams 1961) arising through the emergence of new forms of sociability and political commitment, concerning the redefinition of relationships among people themselves, and between people and nature.

In a comprehensive analysis of the contribution of anthropology to the understanding of environmentalism, Milton (1996) seems to conceive it in a similar vein. Responding to calls for interdisciplinary approaches to 'the environment', Milton sets herself up for the difficult task of establishing a dialogue with other disciplines in the social sciences - such as sociology and political science - which have more commonly identified environmentalism as a (new) social movement and as an ideology. In a critical review of the literature, the author challenges the 'taken for granted' assumption, within

both American resource mobilisation and European collective action perspectives, that holds environmentalism as a social movement.²⁷

Thus, in the realm of the so-called 'new' social movements, environmental organisations and Egos of different political orientations are generally analysed in terms of their ideology, organisational structure, resource mobilisation, political style, accountability, performance, relationship with the state and beneficiaries, their base of support, and even the motivations of their supporters. Nonetheless, most studies are limited to confining their approaches within the boundaries of nation-states or, on to a comparative perspective, between these industrial societies.²⁸ Thus, as defined within the boundaries of nation-states (a term which expresses an isomorphism between society and geographic territory) culture, in a broad sense, is incorporated merely as a 'dimension' which nonetheless seems crucial to the definition of social movements as 'new'. The category of 'culture' remains as a secondary or even residual one in most of these studies. At best, culture is partially taken as meaning the expressive and symbolic elements in the construction of collective identities (Melucci 1989), or even in cognitive approaches as knowledge (Eyerman and Jamison 1991).²⁹

An anthropological approach to environmentalism as a cultural perspective decentralises industrial nation-states as the main social units for analysis, and social movements as a privileged analytical category. It thus allows for a broader understanding of how different cultures and societies perceive and interact with their environments, at the same time as it also transforms contemporary industrial societies into objects of anthropological scrutiny. Therefore, comparison in a global realm expands comparative stu-

²⁷ For different approaches see, for instance, Muller and Morris (eds.) (1992), Dalton and Kuechler (1994), Edwards and Hulme (1992, 1995), Eyerman and Jamison (1991), Johnston and Klandermans (1995), Lyman (1995), Mellucci (1989), Eder (1996), Donati (1996), among others. A discussion on the distinctions between Green Politics, Ecologism and Environmentalism is presented in my analysis of the Brazilian context in the mid 1980s (Zhouri 1992). A recent overview of the literature on the theme is found in Milton (1996). Milton refers to the *dualistic* conceptualisation prevailing in the literature until the 1980s, whereby conservationists and preservationists, conservative and radical environmentalism, catastrophists and cornucopians, technocentric and ecocentric forms of environmentalism would be identified by different analysts. Briefly speaking, these differences would correspond to varying positions in relation to, for instance, the protection of 'nature' *for* or *from* human use; the accommodation within the structures of industrial society, vs. demands for fundamental changes to those structures, that is, reformist vs. revolutionary environmentalism; and also the faith in technology and human ingenuity vs. the reverse position that humankind is, rather, subject to nature. During the 80s, a 'New Ecological Paradigm' (Lowe and Rüdiger 1986) emerged fuelling and being fuelled by other interpretations of this dualism. For example, the concept of Ecologism by Dobson (1990), meaning 'deep ecology' - the decentralisation of human beings through the understanding that the environment has a value in its own right - which contrasts with environmentalism as an anthropocentric perspective. However, as Milton points out, the dichotomy between the dual environmentalism represented by different writers reflects analytical interpretations rather than grounded empirical investigation (1996:74-78). In actual fact, one or another perspective can be more or less articulated in social practices. Along similar lines, within the literature on social movements and frame analysis, Eder (1996:177-180) identifies three 'symbolic packages of modern environmentalism', that is, a conservationist package, a political ecology package and a fundamentalist package (Deep Ecology). Environmentalist organisations such as WWF and Greenpeace are placed within the conservationist package. I have found this classification difficult to assess in my research experience.

²⁸ See further Jamison et al. (1990). For a perspective from the US see McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996) and their European collaborators. For a comparison of Latin American and European environmental movements see Garcia-Guadilla and Blauert (eds.) (1992).

²⁹ For other approaches see Johnston and Klandermans (1995).

dies which have been mainly focused on environmental social movements within various industrial societies (Milton 1996:103-104).

In this sense, environmental social movements are understood as *one* expression, among many, of environmentalism. The latter thus is concerned with the way people know, feel, think and interact with their environments in the sense that they might express any concern or responsibility towards it. In Milton's words (1996:104-105),

If culture in its general sense is the mechanism through which we interact with our environment, then specific cultures and cultural perspectives can be treated as distinct forms of this relationship, and environmentalism as one such form. In other words, environmentalism is one of the many ecological alternatives employed by people - it is a basis for interacting with the environment - and we can advance our understanding of it as such by isolating its essential cultural features...Just as treating environmentalism as a social movement provides a basis for its comparison with other social movements, so treating it as a cultural perspective enables us to compare it with other cultural perspectives, in order to identify more closely its distinguishing features.

Hence, a cross-cultural perspective allows for the understanding of environmentalism within different sectors of a given society as well as between different societies. In analysing the particular campaigners for the Brazilian Amazon within different NGOs in the UK, the idea was to go beyond the understanding and interpretation of their organisations *vis-à-vis* broader social movement categories of, for instance, environmental and social/developmental NGOs. The task was rather to understand the ways in which the campaigners know, think, feel and interact with the Amazon - both as an environmental and social space - as well as the ways they interact with the different actors in the UK also related to the rainforest, as well as the Brazilian government, Brazilian NGOs and Amazonian grassroots movements and people. The aim was to unveil cultural features that can provide a basis for comparison with other Brazilian environmental and social perspectives and illuminate possible joint practices.

It follows that the overall methodology employed in this research has been an ethnographic approach (see chapter three), which also challenges the assumption that anthropology is doomed to analyse 'non-industrial' societies - the 'exotic and primitive' - or small scale processes. A considerable body of knowledge about non-industrial societies, with an emphasis on small scale processes have been produced within anthropology. An anthropology from a 'global' perspective allows that information might also be made available to local spheres, therefore creating space for the understanding and improvement of communication under conditions of globalization and power relations.³⁰

Because communication is one of the most important features of globalization, and environmentalism has taken on a global perspective, different and, at times, overlapping perspectives have spoken of environmentalism as an arena of communication, while the communication about the protection of 'the environment' has been identified as an environmentalist discourse (Milton 1996, Eder 1996, Gamson 1989, Snow 1986,

³⁰ See also Mato (1996), and further developments in chapter three.

Benford 1993). From a Habermasian perspective of communicative action (Habermas 1987a, 1987b), and within an approach of frame analysis in social movements, Eder (1996) has even spoken about a post-environmentalist era. The focus of his analysis, however, is western European nations and the emphasis is on cognitive and reasoning processes.³¹ Because such a discourse analysis perspective assumes that there is some level of consensus about environmental matters, it downplays the importance of historical and political contexts in substantive analysis.

I find the definition of discourse in terms of its communicative functions rather restrictive, however appealing it is under conditions of globalization. Mainly focused on the performative aspects of language, the communicative approach elides considerations of the power mechanisms underlying the constitution of meanings and social subjects under global flows of cultural perspectives. It presupposes that different cultural perspectives have the same weight even in cross-cultural contacts and therefore, that claims of truth are made in situations where there is an equal balance of power and historical positionality.

As mentioned above, from a global standpoint, I understand the Amazon as constituting a discursive field where different cultural perspectives engage and compete. Far from an arena of consensus, it is an arena of tension involving communication *and* power relations. As such, the British-Amazonian field encapsulates the intensification of social relations over long distances, as typical of environmentalist transcultural discourses (Milton 1996:171), yet the features and dynamics of such social relations must be scrutinised. From this perspective, both Michel Foucault (1995 [1972], 1980) and particularly Pierre Bourdieu (1993a, 1993b [1977], 1996) have developed valuable analytical tools for the understanding of the interaction of knowledge and power as well as the conditions of the production and reception of culture and discourses.

Milton furthermore identifies the environmental debate as a 'site of struggle' in which 'the meanings of key concepts, "development", "sustainability", "democracy", as well as versions of the past and visions of the future, are fiercely contested' (1996: 173-174). I suggest that the meanings of those signifiers are produced within social, economic and political contexts in which the subjects of the enunciation are embedded, in spite of the fact that the boundaries of certain locations might appear blurred. Milton's identification of globalist and anti-globalist perspectives in relation to those concepts in environmentalism is one way of illustrating the issue. Another way is to reflexively and critically engage with notions of environmentalism itself as part of numerous Western systems which might also unwittingly abstract 'nature' from 'culture', '*trees*' from '*people*'. The study of the interface of culture and power in intersocietal and cross-cultural encounters may be a way of accounting for this problem. My critical reading of British NGOs and campaigners helps to shed light on this issue. While I stand by environmentalists confronting economic interests and government policies, I also stand by 'local

³¹See also Eyerman and Jamison (1991)

cultures' and grassroots movements who might face situations where their 'cultural systems' are abstracted from their 'environments' by systems of scientific hegemony.³²

1.7 - The Organisation of This Thesis

A final word needs to be said about the structure and organisation of this thesis. It is composed of six other chapters besides this introduction. Chapter two analyses the Brazilian military and Amazonian elites' discourses, which initially inspired me to carry out research in the UK. They are presented as a general, and oppositional, background to the discourses produced during my fieldwork, amongst British campaigners. It is important to notice that, from a nationalist Brazilian perspective, transnational NGOs are viewed with suspicion by many groups, especially local economic and political elites and the military. Accusations of eco-colonialism, or eco-imperialism, and romanticism, as well as suspicions that these groups act in the name of powerful economic interests from 'developed' countries, are often arguments raised by such nationalist sectors of Brazilian society. They were particularly strong in the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, before the Rio-92 conference. British NGO campaigners are very much aware of how they are perceived by such nationalist groups and thus the fact that interviews were carried out by a Brazilian researcher certainly affected many of the questions and answers regarding the issues raised.³³

The dynamics of the fieldwork situation - that is, my interaction with the campaigners - is discussed in chapter three. Apart from a certain bias created by their interaction with a Brazilian researcher, there was also the need to emphasise their identities as professionals and, therefore, to frame their environmental concerns in technical and scientific ways. In this regard, it is equally important to consider that in modern societies, political actors, like intellectuals, typically wish to construct their arguments rationally rather than emotionally, objectively rather than subjectively.³⁴ Personal recollections, emotions, and fantasies are regarded as unscientific and apolitical forms of expression, and as non-legitimising aspects of working and political lives. Hence, in contrast to reports from those interviewing the elderly (Thompson 1988; Thompson et al. 1990) or the 'excluded' (Slim et al. 1993; Townsend 1995), I found that political actors, such as NGO campaigners, speak with their own voice through their own channels of communication. This, and the fact that they are more generally accustomed to perform-

³²A World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) fund-raising advert in the *Financial Times* (31-12-94) raises concerns. The heading under a photograph of what seems to be an Indian cutting down a tree reads: 'He's destroying his own rainforest. To stop him, do you send in the army or an anthropologist?' The text praises the skills of WWF's conservation scientists and anthropologists engaged in research in the Amazon. It was met with criticism by other NGOs such as Survival International (*The Guardian*, 3/2/95) and alerts us against the Western scientific 'wisdom' which transforms societies and cultures into 'populations' and land into 'forests' to be 'managed'. See also Nugent (1990, 1993), Shiva (1993a), Sachs (1995[1993]) and more specifically on conservation and communities, Lima (1996), Diégues (1996), Queiroz (1996).

³³ Bourdieu criticises both quantitative and qualitative methods, particularly the subjectivist views of ethnomethodologists, for ignoring the effects exerted by objective structures in the interactions between researchers and those interviewed or observed. For a discussion of the research interview relationship as a *social* relation see Bourdieu (1996, 1993c). For a perspective on the personal aspects of the interaction see Thompson (1988). See also my discussion in chapter three.

³⁴ For another version of this idea see Melucci (1989).

ing the roles of observers and researchers themselves, contributed to an atmosphere of self-censorship and unease in many moments during my investigation.

Based on the ethnographic experience and the analysis of my interviews, chapter four identifies and discusses the three major tendencies amongst British campaigners for the Brazilian Amazon - *trees*, *trees and people*, and *people*. Beyond developmental, environmental and human rights orientations, the idea was to trace their personal background history and the history of their involvement with Brazil and the Amazon in order to identify the elements articulated in their concerns for the environment and the people of the Amazon. If social justice and environmental concerns are said to be reconciled since the late 1980s with the concept of 'sustainable development', the articulation of both concerns can be critically read from the oral testimonies of campaigners.

Following an analysis of the interviews, chapter five presents a discussion of the major Amazon campaigns run by '*trees*', '*trees and people*' and '*people*' in the 1990s, that is, the mahogany campaign and the campaign for the demarcation of indigenous lands. In analysing the mahogany campaign, this chapter also presents the counter-arguments of the British timber traders and the Brazilian officials, as the main targets of the campaigns. The campaign for the demarcation of indigenous lands interfaces with the mahogany campaign since the latter argues that the timber is illegally extracted from indigenous territories. The indigenous rights supporters and indigenous peoples representatives' positions are analysed through an ethnography of public meetings held in London.

Chapter six presents an analysis of three British documentaries about the Amazon broadcast by Channel Four in the 1990s. They are taken as complementary ethnographic material due to their references to the campaigns run in the UK and the major tendencies identified amongst campaigners - '*trees*', '*trees and people*' and '*people*'. General features of the 'Britishness' and their representation of 'Brazilianess' are also discussed, which in fact is an issue underlying the thesis as a whole and concerns questions of culture and power in cross-societal and cross-cultural encounters.

Finally, in chapter seven, the issues and questions raised in this introduction are referred back to the analysis presented in the thesis. Hence, the dynamics, possibilities and impossibilities of a transnational 'imagined community' - through an analysis of key actors in Britain - are discussed in the light of a field composed of the local, the national and the transnational: all relating to the Amazon rainforest, a symbol of transnational environmentalism.

CHAPTER 2

THE BRAZILIAN MILITARY, THE AMAZON ELITES AND THE 'NEW SUBVERSIVES'

They (the military) are worried about losing Brazil. Brazil will not go away. Brazil will always be here for years and many years to come...(David Yanomami, *Folha de São Paulo*, 30-08-93)

But for two-thirds of the people on earth, this positive meaning of the word 'development' - profoundly rooted after two centuries of its social construction - is a reminder of *what they are not*. It is a reminder of an undesirable, undignified condition. To escape from it, they need to be enslaved to others' experiences and dreams. (Esteva 1992)

I have argued that the Amazon constitutes a field where social, political and historical places and spaces are highly contested by different and opposed groups in the local, regional, national and transnational realms. Thus ethnicity, national boundaries, and sovereignty cut across issues concerning both economic interests and the future of the planet.

In this chapter, I present the Brazilian context which inspired me to set my research in motion in the UK. Such a context is represented by regional economic and political interests in the Amazon, and a nationalist perspective that reacted in opposition to transnational and national concerns about the rainforest and its indigenous peoples in the early 1990s. The voices questioning the legitimacy of those concerns were mainly raised by sectors within the Military Forces and Amazon politicians who hold a specific notion of development.³⁵ Therefore, they perceived any criticism of the predatory model of development they implemented in the Amazon as representing, in fact, the national

³⁵As already mentioned, Brazil was a military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985, a period when the military intensified 'development' policies in the Amazon based on the 'triple alliance' of international, domestic and state corporations (Hecht 1990:108, and further Evans 1979). In short, that implied rapid and massive investment of capital and labour with land concessions, loans and credit incentives, infrastructure policies, encouragement of immigration and settlement, a commitment to livestock and agriculture, and the 'assimilation' of indigenous groups into the dominant society. For a synthesis of the "generals' blueprint" see Hecht and Cockburn (1990:104-141). On the economic history of the Amazon see Santos (1980). For a more comprehensive historical analysis on the role of the military in Brazil see Skidmore (1967, 1988), and analysis of policies for the Amazon in Velho (1972), Martins (1984, 1987), Smith (1982), Schimink and Wood (eds) (1984). Since the democratisation of the country and the promulgation of the new Constitution in 1988, the military have had to redefine their role in the Brazilian society. One of their key issues has continued to be the defence of Brazil's northern borders in the Amazon region. Although the military and Amazon politicians do not currently represent the major players on the Brazilian national political scene, they are certainly relevant in the Amazon region.

economic interests of wealthy nations. However, far from addressing the real exploitative national and transnational economic interests in the Amazon - as in the case of logging, mineral, pharmaceutical industries, and agribusiness, among others - the nationalist arguments of the Brazilian military and Amazon politicians are mainly drawn against environmentalists and human rights advocates.

Fears about a possible 'internationalisation of the Amazon', at times very legitimate (Hecht 1990:138), have been part of the history of the region providing the basis for geopolitical approaches that have always shaped the policies adopted for the occupation of the region.³⁶ Nevertheless, with the rise of international environmental concerns in the mid 70s, the end of the Cold War period in the 1980s, and the transnationalisation of the economy, the idea of 'internationalisation' was revived and assumes new features.³⁷ The ghosts of an 'international conspiracy' to occupy the Amazon arose once again, and were ritualised through the debates that anticipated the United Nations Conference for Environment and Development - UNCED-92, held in Rio de Janeiro.

In this chapter, I will present some of the military's and Amazon politicians' arguments, as they constitute the most extreme contrast to the perspectives held by British campaigners studied in this thesis. I shall argue that the military's and Amazon politicians' approaches reveal a strategy of simplification and stereotyping of complex social and political issues that involved different conflicting social positions. Such a strategy serves, among other factors, to de-legitimise the claims of indigenous peoples, and environmental and human rights advocates in Brazilian society. It does so by reducing the complex issues involving a sustainable development of the Amazon to matters of *international conspiracy*, *national security* and *sovereignty*.

In other words, the discursive strategy of the military and Amazonian politicians is constructed in geopolitical terms: as a case of *us*, Brazilians, against *them*, the 'developed world', whereby *us* and *them* assume a homogeneous generic meaning under the umbrella concept of nation-states. In this process, there is a silencing of *us*, as a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, whereas *them* is also presented as an oppositional category encompassing different actors - such as governments, corporations, environmentalists and human rights advocates. Hence, in a distorted logical move, environmentalists are held as the voices of capitalists. The fact that governments and international economic interests are ambiguously and vaguely mentioned, leaves open the actual possibility for particular economic alliances. Meanwhile, the construction of an 'external enemy' creates and justifies a role for the Armies, whose political space has declined with the democratisation of the Brazilian society since the mid 1980s and the end of the Cold War period.

In the following sections I will analyse the discourses of the military and of Amazon politicians as they were ritualised in debates through the press, and in a military document produced before the Rio-92 conference and the demarcation of the Yanomamis' lands in 1991. Next, I will present some of the actual effects of these discourses, focusing my analysis on the episode of the massacre of Yanomamis by gold diggers in

³⁶For a geopolitical perspective in relation to the Amazon see Meira Mattos (1980). For a view on the issue of 'international conspiracy' to occupy Amazônia see Reis (1968).

³⁷For the identity crisis of the Brazilian military in the late 1980s and early 1990s *vis-à-vis* the 'New World Order', see Zirker and Martins (1996).

1993, which also resulted in the approval of a military project for the monitoring and surveillance of the Amazon - the Sivam-Sipam project.

2.1 - Rio-92: An 'International Conspiracy'

In the eve of the UNCED-92 held in Rio de Janeiro, sectors of the Armed Forces and environmentalists exchanged accusations that were widely publicised by the Brazilian press. At the time, nationalist groups denounced an '*international conspiracy to occupy Amazônia*'. According to their theory, such an occupation would be consolidated and made official with the consent of environmentalists and the Brazilian government during UNCED-92. As a solution to this problem they had suggested that the conference be supervised by '*people capable of defending national interests: the Armed Forces*'.³⁸ In response to such a theory and suggestion questioning the legitimacy of the conference, environmentalists accused the military dictatorship of promoting most of the Amazon region's problems through their ideas and plans for economic growth at any cost during the 1970s. Thus, due to mutual accusations, the meaning of the conference and the political space it represented for discussing socio-economic, political, and environmental projects - in the context of 'North' and 'South' relations, for instance - was undermined by the idea that '*the*' national interest should be defended by military means.

The accusations escalated, with Brazilian military officers accusing environmentalists of being '*internationalists and non-patriotic*', or '*enemies of the nation*'; while environmentalists responded by accusing the military of being internationalists themselves when they facilitated international economic investments in the Amazon in the early 1970s, such as the *Projeto Jari*, among others.³⁹ Ex-Army Secretary Leônidas Pires even publicly declared that he felt for José Lutzenberger, the Environmental Secretary at the time, '*the same hate I felt for the communist leader Luis Carlos Prestes*'.⁴⁰ The comparison between José Lutzenberger - an internationally known Brazilian environmentalist who played an important role in denouncing and stopping World Bank's projects in the Amazon in the late 1980s - and Luiz Carlos Prestes - the head of the communist party in Brazil for many decades - can illustrate how environmentalists came to replace communists as '*enemies of the nation*' in the eyes of these military groups between the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The same nationalist and war strategy discourse employed by the military in the 1960s to justify the state coup and the geopolitics for the occupation and 'development' of the Amazon - with the persecution, torture and death of many Brazilians - was then

³⁸ *Folha de São Paulo*, 08/04/91.

³⁹ The *Projeto Jari* was a wood pulp operation on the Jari river launched in 1967 by North American shipping magnate Daniel Ludwig with high incentives from the Brazilian government. The plan involved buying 3 million acres in northern Pará state to raise plantations of a fast-growing East India tree known as *Gmelina Arborea*. *Gmelina* did very badly on the sandy soils of the Amazon. The project was, thus, very costly and a total failure. A short account of this project and other military plans for the 'development' of the Amazon can be found in Hecht and Cockburn (1990:104-141).

⁴⁰ *Folha de São Paulo* 10/12/91. Interestingly enough, on the next day the same newspaper published an article by Oscar Niemeyer - the well-known communist and modernist architect who built Brasília - with the title: *A Amazônia é nossa* (The Amazon is ours). His arguments defending Brazilian sovereignty in Amazônia apparently come close to the views of this military official, but, in fact, reveal different meanings of nationalist positions.

used against environmentalists, human rights advocates and anthropologists, who became the new '*enemies of the nation*'. Moreover, this discourse corroborates with the creation of a social climate whereby human rights abuses and deaths in the conflicts for land involving indigenous peoples, settlers, miners and ranchers are sometimes accepted or tolerated, and sometimes incited, as I shall discuss in the next section.⁴¹

Along with the discursive battle presented in the press, the military and Amazon politicians' arguments can be read through a document they produced aiming at mobilising public opinion over the possible conspiracy represented by the Rio-92 conference. The document resulted from a symposium organised in October 1991 by ECEME (Escola de Comando e Estado-Maior do Exército) and CEBRES (Centro Brasileiro de Estudos Estratégicos), two national army bodies. The general atmosphere involving the military, the Amazon politicians, and elites, who were the main participants in the symposium, can be read from the introductory pages of the document:

This document reflects with absolute transparency what Brazilians from different schools of thought believe to be the most appropriate *Strategy for the development of the Amazon*. It openly denounces *external and internal pressures* in the procedures of deciding the aims to be achieved during the *United Nations Environmental Conference - Eco-92*, most of which are openly against Brazilian interests. The document hopes to motivate public opinion to stand up in the *defence of legitimate national interests*.⁴² (My translation and emphasis here, and in all following quotes)

The geopolitical theory elaborated in the 1960s by general Golbery do Couto e Silva⁴³ still provides the basis for the discourse of the military and Amazon politicians presented in the document. It still views 'the development of the Amazon' as a matter of military strategy, while social and political actors outside the military and the elite circle of power are excluded from the debate - such as the Amazon traditional communities and indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the document avoids addressing the discussion about the concept of 'development' promoted by the Rio-92 conference, offering instead a strategy of creating internal and external enemies concerned with the issue of 'the environment', which in their view is dissociated from the issue of 'development'. Significantly, they do so while misnaming the conference: instead of *The United Nations Conference for Environment and Development - UNCED-92*, also called Rio-92, they name it *the United Nations Environmental Conference - Eco-92*. Therefore, they establish an opposition between economy/development and environment that also resonates with the opposition between *we* (Brazilians) and *they* (the 'developed' countries, enemies of 'Brazilian development'). As Gilberto Mestrinho, governor of the state of Amazonas at the time, points out:

⁴¹The state of violence in the Amazon is already widely known. In April 1996, for instance, during a demonstration of the landless movement in Eldorado de Carajás, in Pará, nineteen people were killed and forty wounded by the military police of that state. The episode was filmed and broadcast in Brazil and abroad. It was also publicised by the press world-wide. See, for instance, *Time*, May 6, 1996.

⁴²CEBRES and ECEME (1991), *A Amazônia Brasileira*, Cadernos de Estudos Estratégicos, Simpósio CEBRES-ECEME, n.1, Outubro de 1991.

⁴³Couto e Silva (1967), Meira Mattos (1980).

There is an industry of mystification making *us* believe that *we* cannot cut down the trees because of the ecosystem, the symbiosis, the fragility of the Amazon ecosystem ...why do *they* spread such myths and why this anxiety in relation to the Amazon?...Because a satellite passed above the Amazon and revealed that it comprises *the biggest mineral area in the world*...Hence, immediately in the second half of the 60s and strongly in the 70s, Brazil was invaded by a campaign for the preservation of the Amazon, that it should remain untouched. But this work was done and created almost a national psychosis that nobody could touch the Amazon. Exactly for what purpose? *Because the rich mineral resources of the Amazon compete with the investments that developed countries have in other parts of the world*. When there is, for instance, an exploration of a mine in the Amazon, lets say tin, the Malaysian mines then will close down, because their mines are a certain age, and they are exhausted.⁴⁴

The use of national categories such as the opposed binary pair *us* (Brazilians) and *them* (the 'developed countries') - symbolising at times the US, and at other times referring to 'them, the Germans', or 'them, the British',⁴⁵ - produces an effect of general homogeneity that erases any possible element of global diversity, as well as erasing the different and opposing sectors existing within a single nation-state. The category *we*, Brazilians, concerning the ones who would benefit from the exploration of natural resources, conceals the actual exclusion of groups such as indigenous peoples and forest dwellers, peasants and colonists, from the process of circulation and distribution of wealth and power. On the other hand, the category *them*, foreigners, does not address or name real international or transnational economic interests in the region, or even the processes whereby 'developed nations' actually produce an enormous debtor country like Brazil. Hence, in a symbiotic process, financial agencies such as the World Bank, as well as governments and corporations from 'developed countries' are mixed with, and, thus, concealed under the 'threatening' category of environmentalists. Environmental issues are seen as false issues that hide economic interests and misconstrue the debate about the 'development of the Amazon'.

Furthermore, the idea of *intocabilidade* ('untouchability') of the forest is rescued from past and radical conservationist perspectives and expanded to encompass all environmental concerns. There are, for instance, no inquiries about why other countries' natural resources are exhausted - such as the above mentioned Malaysia - and therefore there is no attempt to address the issue of alternative modes of development. In other words, a discussion about sustainable uses of the forest, proposed for the UN conference, is played down by the strategy of polarisation and confrontation with possible enemies.

Whilst transnational actors such as environmentalists and human rights advocates are perceived as representatives of economic interests from other nations, similar actors within Brazil are classified as subversives on the one hand, or emotional, romantic and naive political activists on the other. In any case, they are perceived as allied to foreign interests, or are even classified as foreigners to the Amazon region themselves. As Senator Aluisio Bezerra, a local politician defending the military occupation of the Amazon, pointed out:

⁴⁴CEBRES and ECEME (1991:79-80)

⁴⁵See also Mestrinho (1994) and further discussion in the next section.

When we speak about the Amazon we cannot be naive and pretend we do not see the greed there is over it: we cannot think naively as Mr Lutzenberger does. It is the biggest mineral region of the planet with 90% of its five million square kilometres in the form of an untouched ecological system. In other words, it is an enormous genetic bank coveted by those countries which can make good use of this bank to continuously monopolise on biotechnology, not to mention the use of strategic minerals...The national defence of the Amazon must be supported by a better equipped regional military structure...On the other hand, we know that before anything else, the issue of national defence is the defence of the Brazilian man*. We must discuss the modernisation of the defence of our northern borders. And, when I speak about the northern borders I do not speak like the environmentalists who speak from the bars of Ipanema, Leblon or any other in São Paulo.⁴⁶

Although the issue of natural resources raises important concerns in the context of the transnational economy, and may perhaps shape new concepts of security,⁴⁷ such attacks on environmental activists and defences of military occupation of the Amazon, misfocus and misaddress legitimate political and economic concerns. This topic was indeed very much in discussion during the conference in Rio, particularly as the policy of biotechnological transference and the exploration of the genetic bank within 'Northern' and 'Southern' nations relations.⁴⁸ However, the practice of accusations misleads the political debate and fails to address and seriously discuss the exploitation of natural resources in the Amazon.

Finally, the above reference to environmentalists who would be speaking about the Amazon from fashionable bars in the south of the country unveils xenophobic feelings of regionalism, and intends to de-authorise any critical perspective from southern Brazilians.⁴⁹ Besides, it refers also to the image of a rich middle class youth - in the sense of urban, alienated and 'immature' - speaking about 'the environment', as though a less important matter.⁵⁰ Ipanema and Leblon are *bairros* (suburbs) in Rio de Janeiro that

* The word used in Portuguese is 'homem' rather than 'povo', and was translated directly as 'man' rather than 'people'.

⁴⁶ CEBRES and ECEME (1991:130-131).

⁴⁷ For issues related to environmental security in an international context see Sands (1995), Vavrousek (1995), Werksman (1995) and Pearce (1995). In relation to the Amazon, see Brigagão (1995).

⁴⁸ For an analysis of the relation biodiversity and biotechnology see Santos (1994) and also Shiva (1993a), Wilson (1992), WRI (1993).

⁴⁹ Besides the comparison of José Lutzenberger with the communist leader, he is also at times referred to as 'the foreigner', because of his German background, his establishment in the southern region of the country and his international experience.

⁵⁰ This image is drawn, firstly, from the size, cultural difference and, especially, economic inequality between the 'rich' southern and the 'poor' northern states of Brazil. Therefore, the 'rich' south of Brazil is associated with the 'rich' countries of the northern hemisphere and thus, environmentalists from the southern states are considered as aliens like their transnational partners. Secondly, as I have discussed in my study of the Brazilian political environmental discourses of the mid 80s, these political discourses promote a separation between economic and environmental issues whereby environmental issues are reduced to the cultural sphere - as a reified and superstructural dimension - therefore understood as secondary, in opposition to the economic and main arena. Moreover, there is also a symbolic attribution of immaturity associated with environmental issues even conveyed by the colour green as a symbol of both new (young, youth) and immaturity (Zhouri 1992).

comprise very strong symbolic references in Brazilian culture. These references consist basically of two different and at times paradoxical meanings: on the one hand, they were considered to be rich, urban, cool and fashionable places between the 60s and 70s⁵¹ and, on the other hand, these two areas were political meeting points for urban middle class leftist groups consisting of artists, intellectuals and students during the dictatorship years. Such a comparison once again groups environmentalists of the 1990s into the same symbolic political space that the intellectual political resistance movement occupied in the 1960s and 1970s, when the opponents to the military regime were labelled as 'subversives' and 'enemies of the nation'.

The discourse of military officers and local Amazon elites classifying environmentalists and human rights advocates as subversives is not a phenomenon peculiar to the Brazilian context. Jonathan Hill (1994) identifies the same tendency in his study of an indigenous land dispute in the Venezuelan Amazon. However, while in Venezuela environmentalists are classified under the category of 'subversives' and are associated with the practice of 'terrorism' and guerrilla warfare, in Brazil the emphasis is on the romanticism of an intellectual, rich and fashionable middle class who would be distant from the Amazon reality, thus not authorised to speak about its issues. On the other hand, environmentalism may also be associated with a list of illegal and antisocial behaviours such as the illegal trade of drugs and minerals. In the symposium document, environmental and indigenous issues are classified as *Amazon problems* associated with and having the same status as: guerrillas, narcotics smugglers and illegal mining - problems to be eliminated with a geopolitical strategy for the Amazon.⁵² These sets of associations are identified by Hill in his analysis of the Venezuelan case as a process of 'semantic accommodation' whereby the use of radical metaphor, or analogy, opens up the semantic category of 'terrorist subversion' into an infinitely expandable list of 'enemies'. From another point of view, we could say with Laclau (1994) that the military and local politicians' discourses create a 'chain of equivalence' between signifiers that are emptied of their particular meanings. Therefore, communists, environmentalists, terrorists and drug traders, for instance, can be subsumed under the categories of 'enemies' or 'subversives'

Military officers, as the most loyal guardians of the nation, labelled the opponents of the military dictatorship in the 60s and 70s as 'communists' and 'subversives' - not as the enemies of the dictatorial regime, but the enemies of the nation. In the post-war and post-dictatorship context of the late 80s and 90s, through dislocations and associations, environmentalists and human rights advocates are classified under the same label. They are not perceived as opponents of a predatory model of economic development adopted by the military since the 1960s, but as the enemies of the nation.

Furthermore, Hill identifies this as a more widespread military attitude or policy in Latin America as a whole. He shows how the theory of a conspiracy appears in the documents of the *17th Congress of the Armies of the Americas* held in Argentina in November 1987. His analysis reveals the process of stereotyping indigenous peoples and their supporters as 'subversive organisations' with ties to an international communist movement, which thus reduces complex social problems into a bipolar opposition be-

⁵¹The song *Girl from Ipanema* is paradigmatic of this image. It popularised both the 'cool' and trendy lifestyle of people from Ipanema, as well as *Bossa Nova* as a new cool music style in Brazil during the 50s and 60s.

⁵²CEBRES and ECEME (1991:203).

tween 'national security' and 'terrorist subversion'. In doing so, an alternative historical discourse about cultural pluralism within the nation-state is suppressed by the imposition of a military discourse of sovereignty versus subversion (Hill 1994:22-25).

In the Brazilian case, the same viewpoint regarding indigenous lands can be identified in the CEBRES-ECEME document which states:

The Brazilian Centre for Strategic Studies considers it necessary to prevent any isolated indigenous grouping or, at least, to conserve those groups not yet contacted in areas of environmental protection...The Centre is also against the delimitation of reserves in open lands, thus avoiding them forming boundaries with neighbour countries. This is a serious security issue, and one in which we can simply eliminate possible attempts to discuss Brazilian sovereignty over those territories...Finally, CEBRES is against the radical preservation of the aboriginal culture and the formation of cysts* in areas not proportionally related to the number of *silvículas*.⁵³

The denomination of indigenous groups as *silvículas* who would be placed in '*areas of environmental protection*' produces an effect of de-humanisation, whilst withdrawing from indigenous peoples the status of social, political and cultural groups within Brazilian society. The reference to areas '*not proportionally related to the number of silvículas*' is clearly a reference to the demarcation of the Yanomami lands about to occur during that time, before the conference in Rio (see following section).

Since the Yanomami became a paradigmatic symbol of the struggle for the demarcation of indigenous lands in Brazil, and since Gilberto Mestrinho, governor of the state of Amazonas, became a representative opponent to this demarcation and to environmentalists, it is worthwhile to raise some final considerations about Mestrinho's position regarding the demarcation of the Yanomamis' lands:

It (the Amazon region) is 500 million hectares. It is such an enormous area... A little piece of the state of Amazonas alone is bigger than Portugal: 9.4 million hectares in one area of 150 million hectares. And it is precisely an area equivalent to the dimensions of Portugal that they want to transform into an indigenous reserve for three thousand or so Indians (sic)...*But the whole world stood up demanding the preservation and demarcation of the reserve, not for the tribe, but for the Yanomami nation.* Precisely because they are occupying that area, the richest area of the Alto Rio Negro region where...there are primary natural deposits of Amazon gold...

So, there is the need to give the Yanomami 9.4 million hectares of land, 250 thousand hectares bigger than Portugal, where eleven million Portuguese live...And how many Yanomamis are there? They belong to four different

* The Portuguese word is 'cisto' - a cancerous cell - translated here as 'cyst' to keep the connotation of negative or evil cells.

19- CEBRES and ECEME (1991:205). The word *silvícula* has a Latin origin. It implies those who live in or belong to the forest, and it is used by the military in order to avoid the openly offensive term *savage*.

groups who speak different languages and do not get along with each other...So, these Yanomamis, according to data collected by the army, number 3.460 (sic)...*on the Brazilian side. Because there are also those Indians on the Venezuelan side, in bigger numbers than the ones on this side here. But the whole world defends them.* They invented the myth that the Indian needs to walk. Areas for wandering around...This is an invention of bureaucrats. *Thus, they want to give to the Yanomamis an open reserve of 9.4 million hectares. However, we are not allowed to give an inch of land to a small farmer, because he will damage the forest. That's the point... there is a whole strategy of emptying the Amazon. To create difficulties in the life of the rural man of the Amazon.* It is almost a system of expelling the rural man to create demographic empty spaces. Then, this man cannot cut timber, cannot hunt, or fish or mine, because all these damage the environment...at the same time, there are established reserves of various kinds. The state of Amazonas has currently forty-eight per cent of its surface occupied with reserves. A totally balkanization of the state.⁵⁴

There are several important issues to be considered in the above excerpt. Firstly, it is a discourse still built upon a bipolar dichotomy of *us* and *them* - white western 'underdeveloped' and 'developed' nations. A discourse that places *them*, the white western 'developed' nations, in the position of the greedy people who use the Yanomami as means to achieve their ends. The Yanomamis themselves are seen, therefore, as objects, or non-humans *occupying* an area rich in gold. In other words, the Indians are not perceived as subjects who have a voice, and an original and legitimate right to their lands. In a process of social and historical inversion, they are transformed into intruders in a land to be exploited by western entrepreneurs. Secondly, from a white western nation-state and geopolitical perspective, the sizes of territories are related to the amount of population, in which the social organisation of the Yanomami as a people with a history, culture and a specific relationship to their land is denied. The comparison between the size of the Yanomami reserve and a European State (Portugal) establishes a frame of reference for what is common to *us* and *them* - *white western nation-states* - and for what would be not acceptable: that a *tribe*, not a nation, which does not even present the uniform character of a nation, nor a single language nor a common 'peaceful' relationship with one another (meanings associated to the idea of 'civilisation') would *be given* a territory the size of a nation-state. As Mestrinho himself states, the Yanomami's area is a small piece of land in relation to the whole of the Amazon. It is only perceived as 'too big' when compared to Portugal, a European state.

The fact that the Yanomamis are spread between Brazil and Venezuela is also another factor in denying the Indians' rights over their lands. They are on the frontier or on the border, therefore they are neither Brazilians nor Venezuelans. Literally living on the margins of society, they are also marginalised. From a geopolitical perspective they assume the same ambiguous status of the stranger.

The stranger is, according to Zygmunt Bauman (1994), neither a friend nor an enemy. S/he belongs to the realm of the uncertain, the indeterminate and the unfamiliar which escapes from the comfort of cognitive clarity. The stranger is a constant threat to

⁵⁴ CEBRES and ECEME (1991:78, 81-82).

the world order.⁵⁵ S/he is the third element that does not fit into the bipolar logic of the friends versus the enemies. Hence, Yanomamis are transformed into a threat to Brazilian sovereignty not only because in the military view they can become a nation-state, but because they can be either Venezuelans or Brazilians, thus opening up a vulnerable space in the borders with Venezuela. They also expose Brazil's 'vulnerability' in relation to other nation-states through their alliances with environmentalists and indigenous rights support groups world-wide.

Finally, another discursive strategy observed in Mestrinho's statement is the promotion of opposition and conflict between sectors which share the same social position as excluded groups within Brazilian society. These are the indigenous peoples and the *poor, rural 'man'*. His arguments lead one to believe that environmental concerns with the Amazon forest and the plea for the demarcation of indigenous lands are actually incompatible with the 'development' of the region and contribute to the impoverishment of local peoples. He opposes the 'silvículas' or 'savages' - the uncivilised others who are neither Venezuelans nor Brazilians - to the 'rural man', the 'legitimate Brazilian' whom they - local elites and politicians - claim to be protecting. In this process, the occupation of vast quantities of land in the Amazon - with the help of high government incentives - by big farmers and national and transnational corporations, is not contemplated.⁵⁶

In addition to many concrete implications stemming from the perspectives and discursive strategies analysed above, I will highlight in the next section the violent conflicts among excluded groups, such as gold diggers and Indians, with the consequent military claims for controlling the Amazon borders.

⁵⁵In this sense, a similar reference could also be made here to Douglas' (1966) analysis of the categories purity and danger, order and disorder, in which the Indians do not fit into the 'order' of the civilised nation-state ideas conceived by the Amazon politician.

⁵⁶ In figures from the same period: fourteen per cent the total area of the Amazonia Legal was licensed for the research and exploration of minerals, thirty-three per cent of which was within indigenous areas. From the total of these licenses, fifty-six per cent benefited the national private sector, thirty-four per cent belonged to multinational groups, such as the Anglo American/Bozzano Simonsen and the Brascan British Petroleum, and nine and a half per cent benefited State owned companies. These licenses corresponded to a situation of setting aside the subsoil for future exploration (Becker, B. 1990). According to recent data publicised by Instituto Socio-Ambiental, mining companies have required official licensing for exploration in 60.46% of the subsoil under the Yanomami territory, and 49.07% under the Waimiri-Atroari reserve (Gonçalves 1998).

2.2 - Unfolding Effects: The Massacre of the Yanomamis and the Sivam-Sipam Project

The indigenous peoples' land rights in Brazil are regulated by Article 231 of the 1988 Federal Constitution. The *caput* of the Article reads:

It is recognised to indigenous peoples their social organisation, their customs, languages, beliefs and traditions and the original rights over lands they traditionally occupy, belonging to the Union to demarcate them, to protect and enforce respect for all their assets.⁵⁷

This was a result of many years of struggle by organised indigenous groups and their support organisations in Brazil and world-wide. It has been estimated that the population of Indians in Brazil numbers around three hundred thousand, therefore constituting 0.2 per cent of the total population of the country.⁵⁸

The Yanomamis live in the Amazon and are one of the 206 indigenous groups in Brazil. Their population is estimated at around ten thousand, spread between the Brazilian states of Roraima and Amazonas, but there are also fifteen thousand of them living on the Venezuelan side of the border. Since gold was first found in Roraima in 1987, there has been a race of thousands of *garimpeiros* (gold diggers) to the Yanomamis' territory. The 'contact' with *garimpeiros* has been a complete disaster for the Yanomamis. It brought them death, either by diseases - such as flu, malaria, malnutrition and other co-related illness - or death by conflict and murder. A massive campaign to have their area demarcated was launched in Brazil and world-wide, and soon the Yanomamis became a symbol, not only of the struggle for indigenous peoples' rights, but also of the impasses and dramas of the frontier.⁵⁹

As an attempt to improve Brazil's image and soften the criticisms of the international community during the Rio-92 conference, former president Fernando Collor signed a law recognising the 9.4 million hectares of continuous Yanomami territory, a few months before the UN conference. In doing so, he replaced previous president Sarney's decree for creating nineteen 'islands' of reserves, a proposal that was more acceptable to the military, but which went against Yanomamis' rights and interests.

⁵⁷ As translated into English by the Ministry of Justice of Brazil in the document: *Legal framework of the demarcation process of indigenous lands in Brazil*, Ministry of Justice of Brazil, February, 1996. Although the Brazilian Constitution granted the Indians the rights to the lands they traditionally occupy, no indigenous lands ownership is recognised. Brazil applies a 'reserve' system in which the land is owned by the State.

⁵⁸ For an overall mapping of indigenous peoples in Brazil see Ricardo (1996:V-XII). Brazil holds a unique position in Latin America in terms of the reduced overall number and yet great variety of indigenous groups. For a comparison with the situation in other countries see further Wearne (1996). For the relationship between ethnicity and nation-states in Brazil see Maybury-Lewis (1994), Souza Lima (1994), and in other Latin American countries see Urban and Sherzer (1994).

⁵⁹ At the time of the symposium organised by the military in 1991, there were 717 claims for the exploration of mineral resources in the Yanomamis' area awaiting the House of Representatives' authorisation, as it is determined by the Brazilian Constitution. See Ricardo (1996: 224). For further discussion on different perspectives of the concept of frontier and the Amazon as a frontier see Souza Martins (1995), Foreaker (1981), Velho (1972), Ianni (1979), Hemming (1987), Branford and Glock (1985) and Ribeiro (1977).

The military, frightened by the fragility of the border, and allied to the local elites' fears of losing the mineral resources of the region, never accepted the new demarcation. Since the Brazilian Constitution was promulgated in 1988, there have been several attempts at reviewing it regarding demarcation of indigenous lands. Most of the proposals presented in the House of Representatives are created by congressmen from the Amazon states. They aim at stopping new demarcations of indigenous lands, and also changing the demarcation already established in the Yanomamis lands.⁶⁰

Hence, the discourses of the military and Amazon politicians analysed in the previous section can be understood retrospectively in the context of the numerous attempts at jeopardising the demarcations of indigenous lands.⁶¹ Some of their concrete consequences can be read in the light of the ongoing violent conflicts in the Amazon - as it is the case of the murdering of Yanomamis by gold diggers in 1993, and the subsequent approval of a military plan to occupy the Amazon borders.

As already stated above, since 1987 thousands of gold diggers have been invading the Yanomamis lands, many of them remaining illegally in the area even after the demarcation in 1991.⁶² Thus, besides the political and legal battle, another battle on the ground confronts Yanomamis and desperate gold diggers who were themselves expelled from other parts of the country to the Amazon, and have also been used and exploited themselves by mineral companies.

The violence in the Yanomamis' lands derives indeed from a chronic interethnic conflict caused by the predatory mining activity. The dynamics of a such situation are explained by Albert (1996), and I summarise and translate it as follows:

When the *garimpeiros* establish themselves in a new area within the Yanomamis' territory, they come in small groups and feel very vulnerable in relation to the indigenous population. In fear of a negative reaction from the Indians, they try to buy their friendship with distribution of goods and food. On the other hand, the Indians have very little experience with whites, and they understand the *garimpeiros'* attitude as proof of generosity, as part of the common establishment of intercommunitarian ties between groups. At this stage, the Indians do not perceive or feel yet the destructive impact of the mining activity.

In the second step of this interethnic contact, once the number of *garimpeiros* increases, their 'generosity' ceases. The Indians are, thus, perceived by the *garimpeiros* no longer as a threat, but as an obstacle or annoyance with their constant demand for the goods that they became accustomed to receiving. The *garimpeiros* try, then, to repel the Indians either with false future promises or by means of violence. At this stage, the Indians begin to feel the deterioration of

⁶⁰ See further Ramos (1996).

⁶¹ A more recent attempt came from the federal government itself through the Ministry of Justice's decree 1775 of July 1996. This decree attempted to establish the right of contestation over lands already demarcated, and those about to become so, by any interested party (see chapter five).

⁶² The Brazilian Constitution allows mineral exploration in Indian reserves depending on the approval by the House of Representatives. However, the complementary law which should have regulated the issue was not approved by the House. Therefore, the activity of digging in the reserves was illegal, since not authorised by the National Department for Mineral Exploration (DNPM). See a further case in *Folha de São Paulo*, 22/08/93.

their health and livelihood. The rivers get polluted, the game is gone, and many people die of malaria and flu epidemics, among others. Thus, the Indians begin to perceive the goods and food from the *garimpeiros* as a vital compensation for the destruction they have caused. In their view, when the compensation is denied, there is a situation of explicit hostility. Therefore, an impasse is generated since the Indians become dependent on the *garimpeiros* at the same time as the latter no longer need their 'friendship'. This contradiction underlines all the conflicts involving Indians and *garimpeiros*, with the former always suffering the violence of the stronger latter ones. (1996:203)

In July 1993, conflicts between gold diggers and Yanomamis ended up in a horrendous massacre of sixteen Indians - mostly women and children - from the settlement of Haximu, on the borders of Brazil and Venezuela. The episode came to public attention a month later and, for several days and even months, different versions of the incident rapidly emerged from different groups involved in the issue.⁶³

The remoteness of the region along with the peculiarity of the Yanomamis' culture - for example, they cremate the bodies of their dead whose ashes are kept to be used in funeral rituals for several months - contributed to doubts about the precise locality of the massacre, the number of Indians killed, and even doubts as to whether the massacre had really occurred. Fearing international pressure, the Brazilian government promptly reacted sending the minister of justice, Mauricio Correa, to the venue of the massacre - a place which could only be reached by helicopter. The minister found the Haximu's huts completely destroyed by fire. A corpse and several guns' bullets were evidence of the massacre reported by the survivors at the nearest FUNAI (Federal Indigenous Agency) office.⁶⁴ The population of that particular group was estimated to have been over eighty people.

The federal government's anxiety over giving an explanation and solution to the problem also contributed to several versions about what had really happened. In a time span of three days, the numbers of dead announced in the press varied from none to nineteen, forty, and seventy-three, and a version of the genocide was immediately adopted by the federal authorities. Without the precise number of victims, explanations about the episode were drawn up by different groups involved in the area. Through an analysis of the different versions of the episode it is possible to identify the different *racionales* guiding the actors in dispute.

In the initial versions that appeared in the press, the mutual accusations exchanged by FUNAI officials, *garimpeiros*, the military and the governor of Roraima state mapped out the clumsy, cynical and dramatically contentious atmosphere. For the FUNAI president, Claudio Romero, the massacre was the gold diggers' reaction to the *Operação Selva Livre* - a joint operation driven by the Federal Police and FUNAI to evict gold diggers from the Yanomamis' reserve. On the other hand, for the gold diggers' leader, José Altino Machado, the massacre was just the result of a '*fight between*

⁶³ The most accurate account is reported by Bruce Albert, who was working with the Yanomami when the massacre happened. He helped as an interpreter to the Yanomamis during their testimonies to FUNAI. See Albert (1996).

⁶⁴ For an analysis of indigenist policies in Brazil see Souza Lima (1994) and also Maybury-Lewis (1994) for further comparisons to other cases in Lowland South America.

tribes'.⁶⁵ This version was also initially adopted by the militaries operating in the region.

Nevertheless, while the accusations against gold diggers were immediately confirmed, another version soon emerged - that the massacre was a retaliation against the murdering of three gold diggers by Yanomamis who worked as guides for the Venezuelan National Guard.⁶⁶ From this point, after initially accepting the involvement of *garimpeiros* in the episode, the governor of Roraima, Ottomar Pinto, began to imply that the conflicts with Indians were created by '*external*' interests in the mineral resources, and also the progressive church.⁶⁷ In his words:

In almost two centuries, farmers and Indians used to live in harmony and peace, farms and huts lived in fraternity. After the Radam and the US satellites discoveries of minerals in Roraima, and allied with the progressive church acting in Roraima, the conflicts emerged.⁶⁸

However, despite the acknowledgement of conflicts with Indians - and already connecting them to the thesis of 'international interests' - the initial versions and statements soon gave way to a strategy of denying the occurrence of the massacre itself. Such a strategy was adopted by both the governors of Roraima and Amazonas, as well as by the military. With an argument stating that since the bodies of the victims were not found there was no evidence of a massacre, the governor of Roraima further stated that the massacre was an '*invention*' - a '*farce*' created by groups interested in the demarcation of indigenous lands.

Ignoring the Yanomamis' culture and grief, the evidence actually found, and the dramatic testimonies of the survivors of the massacre, the speculation over an 'international conspiracy' was also articulated by the military, at times with pathetic cynicism. This is the case, for instance, of Brig. Ivan Moacyr da Frota - a presidential candidate at the time - for whom the massacre of Indians could not have happened. In his view, it could have been possible that '*powerful countries had given money to the Indians*' to state that there was a massacre. Thus, 'the massacre', in inverted commas, could serve as a '*very strong international propaganda*'.⁶⁹ With this cynical strategy in place, it was possible to reassert the myth that holds the Brazilian self-image as a peaceful, friendly and happy racial democracy where violence and conflicts - when and if they ever rarely occur - are induced by alien forces.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ *Folha de São Paulo*, 19/08/93.

⁶⁶ *Folha de São Paulo*, 20/08/93.

⁶⁷ Same overall perspective hold in the symposium organised by CEBRES and ECEME and analysed in the previous section.

⁶⁸ *Folha de São Paulo*, 20/08/93. In response to that accusation, the bishop of Roraima, D. Aldo Mogiano, states that local politicians used to encourage *garimpeiros* to invade the Yanomamis' reserve, saying that as Brazilians, they had free access to an area which is inside the Brazilian territory (*Folha de São Paulo*, 22/08/93).

⁶⁹ *Folha de São Paulo*, 24/08/93.

⁷⁰ The Brazilian myth of origin is based on the idea of racial democracy - the mixture of the three races: European, Indian and African. In actual fact, it serves to veil a history of racial discrimination. On this issue, see amongst others Buarque de Hollanda (1936), Da Matta (1981), Ortiz (1984). For the links and ambiguities between perceptions of race and racial relations, and perceptions of nature and environmental relations in Brazil see Sussekind (1990) and Ventura (1991).

Meanwhile, the debate about the 'internationalisation' of the Amazon gained a new twist with the suspicion that, in fact, the massacre had occurred on the Venezuelan side of the border, with the manoeuvres of the US Army in Guyana going on during that same period. In an interview to *Folha S. Paulo* newspaper, the Army minister, Zenildo Lucena, was asked if he believed in the thesis of the 'internationalisation of the Amazon'. The minister replied:

That is one preoccupation of ours. The wealth of the Amazon leads us to these worries. There are enormous interests in the area. It is the world's largest mineral resource, as the permanent presence of gold diggers indicates.⁷¹

Interestingly enough, however, the minister dismisses any real discussion about the 'internationalisation' that would possibly come from the massacre of the Yanomamis. In his view:

*There are only 'interference', like some movements in England. They have worries that they didn't have in their own territories - and maybe for that reason, they have it today about the territories of others... The issue of the 'Yanomami nation' is very dangerous. The nation is the Brazilian one. There is a need to be careful. There is the case of Bosnia to prove it. Who knows if the Yanomamis, after being acculturated, in the borders of Venezuela and with relatives on the other side, who knows what they will want later?*⁷²

The allusion to '*interference by movements in England*' is clearly related to the international indigenous peoples support organisations and, more precisely, to the reactions about the massacre, particularly the demonstrations in London and US by human rights advocates and environmental groups. Among these, Survival International in London has been adamantly campaigning for the Yanomamis along with Brazilian support organisations, such as the CCPY - Comissão para Criação do Parque Yanomami.⁷³

Nonetheless, the confirmation that the massacre had actually occurred in Venezuela, and was carried out by Brazilian *garimpeiros*, sent out a new wave of accusations involving more closely the military and the ministry of foreign relations of both countries. The Brazilian military added a new thrust to their campaign for both an increase in their budget and for the implementation of a new phase of the Calha Norte project⁷⁴ - the military occupation of the northern frontiers - represented by the Sipam/Sivam project.

During the investigations of the massacre, and the debate about the 'internationalisation of Amazônia' with the exchange of accusations between different interest

⁷¹ *Folha de São Paulo*, 27/08/93.

⁷² *Folha de São Paulo*, 27/08/93.

⁷³ Survival campaigns for indigenous peoples self-determination and land ownership, and was also working on the UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights, which the Brazilian government did not sign for fear that indigenous territories would be acknowledged as nation states by the UN. See discussion below on chapter five.

⁷⁴ On the Calha Norte project see de Oliveira (1991, 1990, 1989), Myamoto (1990, 1989), Treece (1993). For an overview of the military geopolitics and the Calha Norte see Hecht and Cockburn (1990: 104-141).

groups, the National Defence Council approved the implementation of Sivam - System of Surveillance of the Amazon - with costs around 500 million dollars. Alleging security reasons, the investment was to be done in the most authoritarian fashion, without public bidding or participation. The purpose of this programme was said to guarantee the defence of the aerial space and the protection of flights in the Amazon region. The government was regarding the Sivam as an important instrument for the fight against illegal drug trade, the defence of the environment and the monitoring of indigenous areas. Its approval was an internal response to the worries about US military manoeuvres on the borders of the Brazilian Amazon. In the international realm, it was Brazil's 'precautions' after the discussion on indigenous rights by the UN and the NGOs.

Furthermore, with the argument that the US was installing a military base in Guyana, the Armed Forces demanded from the government a policy of occupation of the Amazon. Their demands were represented by the Sipam - System of Protection of the Amazon - with costs estimated in 1.4 billion dollars. In an effort to avoid the idea that the Sipam was essentially a military initiative, and in order to attract multilateral funding for the project, the military argued for the need to increase State presence in the Amazon with programmes of settlement, creation of jobs, health assistance, school building and smuggling prevention through the increase of the Federal Police work in the area. The Sivam-Sipam project was eventually approved in 1995 amidst scandals of corruption involving, ironically enough, members of the US government and an American company - Raytheon - which would sell the technology for the implementation of the Sivam-Sipam.⁷⁵

The military plans for the occupation of the borders with Venezuela were met with strong resistance within indigenous groups and their support organisations, such as respectively COIAB - the Co-ordination for the Indigenous Organisations of the Brazilian Amazon - and CIMI - the Indigenist Missionary Council. Their arguments pointed out the failures of the Calha-Norte project in bringing benefits to the indigenous communities, and most importantly, the disasters caused by previous military predatory strategies for the occupation of the Amazon. In that sense, it is worthwhile reproducing here the words of David Yanomami, leader of the Yanomamis, in an interview to *Folha S. Paulo* following the massacre of his people and the approval of the Sivam-Sipam project:

The military never spoke to me. I've learnt about the Calha-Norte through the press. I fear for the opening of roads on the borders of Brazil and Venezuela. This is a very dangerous path. It is the path of diseases, of the killing of my people. It is the path of death through the arrival of garimpeiros and farmers. I am very worried about this project. We, Yanomamis, are not prepared to cope with the diseases. I agree with the military's job of keeping guard over the borders of Brazil. But they need to do that without destruction, without opening roads. They should protect the borders, the environment...but if they want to help, they should build more posts like FUNAI's. They are worried about losing Brazil. Brazil will not go away. Brazil will always be here for years and many years to come...

⁷⁵ For an account on the Sivam-Sipam project see Brigagão (1995).

He spoke further about the criticisms over the size of the Yanomamis' territory and their legitimate claims to the land:

This land we call it Oma. The land doesn't die, but we do. The earth remains. The planet always remains, but we have to know how to take care of it because we are living on top of the earth. We are collecting its fruits, we eat, drink, have our health. We need to take care of it in order not to create problems. I want to share this with people, this experience of mine, my own knowledge. Nobody can take better care of this land than us, who have learnt about it since our ancestors and have occupied this land from one edge to another since long ago.

And speaking about the gold diggers who invade their land, David exposes a rationale that depicts the reality of the contradictions and implications of the mode of 'development' defended by the military and Amazon elites - such as the growing of cities and their shantytowns and street children. Interesting to note is the mention of women and children, in contrast to the male-biased 'developmental' discourse of politicians analysed in the previous section:

The garimpeiros don't have jobs. That is why they come here. The garimpeiros don't have land. That is why they are walking. They are poor. They have nothing. Their sons and wives get ill. The government don't give them land or jobs. If there were jobs in the cities they would stay there. As they have nothing they become angry and want to get into the reserve. They are incited by others who are behind them. They attack the Yanomamis and have their bosses to defend them in the cities...The guilty are the men who live in nice houses in town. They don't waste energy or dirt their hands. The garimpeiros are paid to kill Indians and create problems. That is why they are dangerous. The garimpeiros are always smiling. The Yanomamis are crying. Later on the garimpeiros will pay for our deaths. Their sons will suffer. Their families will suffer eating rubbish on the streets of the big cities. This is already happening with the children, because of their parents' mistakes and the mistakes of the government and politicians.⁷⁶

As I have discussed in this chapter, through the logic of isomorphism between geographic space, territory, place, and nation, military officials alleged that the demarcation of the Yanomamis' lands could lead to the lands being recognised as independent 'nations' by the United Nations, thus threatening Brazilian sovereignty in the region.

This argument, along with denunciations of US Army manoeuvres at the border in Guyana, which was argued to be part of a plan to invade the Amazon rainforest, came to reinforce military demands for financial resources to set up a surveillance system in Amazônia.

These military arguments and the political space they have actually occupied could be briefly understood as anachronistic positions if one takes into account the recent political history of Brazil, and the actual international context. However, a closer look reveals a rather more complex situation.

⁷⁶*Folha de São Paulo*, 30/08/93.

In the Brazilian context, it is possible to say that the recent military positions concerning Amazônia - the arguments in defence of its borders, or even in favour of its military occupation - are related to the loss of the military political power in Brazilian society with the consolidation of the transition to democracy since the 1988 Constitution. Furthermore, besides the national context, it is important to consider transformations at the world level, which, with the end of the Cold War period, have led to the military's loss of status in the new world order.

Nevertheless, geopolitical issues, the domain of natural resources and space as a political issue, as well as an attachment to symbols, concepts, and images that represent security and stability result as important features from the current phase of flexible accumulation of capital.⁷⁷

The apparent anachronism of the military reveals itself through their treatment of Amazon issues with parameters which no longer fit into the new perspective of nation-states in the context of globalisation.⁷⁸ From this standpoint, the national defence holds transnational environmental movements as one of its major 'enemy'. In the eyes of nationalist groups - which have a specific conception of modernity, development and progress - transnational environmental actors appear as a 'mask'. This mask is understood as an anachronism itself of a romantic and naive people fighting against 'development'. It hides economic interests from other nations. In this discourse, real national and international economic interests in Amazônia are not named. They become diluted at the same time as they are given voice through the accusations against NGOs.

The military, as defenders of the nation-state and nation - the former as a political expression of the latter - try to eliminate all alterity that does not fit in with the homogenising perspective of their 'imagined community'.⁷⁹ 'Strangers', as an ambiguous category, are defined as friends or enemies through the politics of nationalist assimilation or elimination. On the other hand, taking into account the geographic distribution of capitalism, it is also the case that the State in 'Third-world' regions assumes an ambiguous position upon having to defend the interests of a local elite and, at the same time, to maintain a relationship inside the transnational financial power networks - credit and deficit systems related with the World Bank and IMF, for instance. Therefore, the conflicts in Amazônia, apart from the local, regional and national particularities, need to be considered in the light of the transnationality of capital and the market. Countries with a peripheral position in the global economy find themselves immersed in the contradictions of this system and are representative of its perverse consequences.

Hostility to environmentalists, indigenous peoples and their supporters overshadows any serious consideration of the broader economic framework and wider issues of environmental security. Moreover, it reassures the continued insistence on a model of development which is predatory, and which privileges the wealth of an elite at the expense of ethnic minorities, human rights, and the majority of the population who, after all these years of 'development' in the Amazon, remain as poor as ever. It is against this general framework and state of affairs that NGO campaigners raise their voices. And in order to understand the complexities and nuances of their perspectives as transnational

⁷⁷ For the features of globalization in the phase of flexible accumulation of capital see Harvey (1991). On the issue of environmental security see note 13.

⁷⁸ For a discussion on the differences between internationalism and globalism see Robertson (1991).

⁷⁹ For a perspective on the creation of nation-states see Anderson (1983), Hobsbawm and Rogers (1983).

actors, I find myself in the UK, writing an anthropology of British campaigners for the Amazon rainforest.

CHAPTER 3

THE HERMENEUTIC ENCOUNTER: WHEN THE BRAZILIAN ANTHROPOLOGIST MEETS HER BRITISH 'NATIVES'

Now, experience in anthropology is our insertion as social subjects into a whole in which the synthesis our intelligence laboriously looks for has already been effected, since we live in the unity of one single life all the systems our culture is composed of...It is a question of constructing a general system of reference in which the point of view of the native, the point of view of the civilized man [*sic*], and the mistaken views each has of the other can all find a place - that is, of constituting a more comprehensive experience which becomes in principle accessible to men of a different time and country.

Ethnology is not a speciality defined by a particular object, 'primitive societies'. It is a way of thinking, the way which imposes itself when the object is 'different', and requires us to transform ourselves. We also become the ethnologists of our own society if we set ourselves at a distance from it...This is a remarkable method, which consists in learning to see what is ours as alien and what is alien as our own. And not even this expatriate eye of ours can be trusted; the will to go abroad itself has its personal motives, which may distort the evidence. Thus we shall have to say what these motives are too, precisely because we want to be true. Not because ethnology is literature, but because on the contrary its uncertainty ends only if the man who speaks of a man does not wear a mask himself. (Merleau-Ponty 1964 [1960]:119-120)

Nearly four decades have passed since Merleau-Ponty's remarks about the contribution of Mauss and Lévi-Strauss to anthropology and the predicament of the discipline. In a broader context, during that time, the epistemological debate about positivism and the 'crisis of the Social Sciences'⁸⁰ launched new grounds for the attempts to overcome the underlying sociological dichotomies of, for example, subject-object, subjectivity-objectivity, individual-society and agent-structure. The debate on epistemology along with historical and ideological shifts and critiques have also particularly involved anthropology as a discipline. Post-colonialism, feminism, ethnicity, on the one hand, and literary criticism, post-modernism, post-structuralism, neo-Marxism, environmentalism - amongst other alternative epistemologies and positions - on the other hand, have also progressed in the past decades, and evolved into pluralisms.⁸¹

Anthropology has indeed come a long way since Merleau-Ponty proclaimed it as a way of thinking which also comprised researching the ethnographer's own society. Learning '*to see what is ours as alien and what is alien as our own*' became a catch phrase for those researching within ones own society. Moreover, the nature of the ethnographic fieldwork as an encounter not only of social *personas* but personal selves has

⁸⁰See Adorno (1976), Adorno and Horkheimer (1973), Popper (1959, 1992), Lakatos and Musgrave (1968, 1970), Kuhn (1970) and particularly Feyerabend (1975).

⁸¹ On the question of recent critical theory and pluralism, see Mohanty (1997). For a discussion about various shifts in anthropology, see contributions in Clifford and Marcus (1986), Okely (1992), Denzin and Lincoln (1994), and Behar and Gordon (1995).

heightened the claims for reflexivity, particularly since the publication of Malinowski's diary.⁸² The ethnographer's self (and authority) concealed (and protected) behind the curtains of science and scientificism is encouraged to come out to the front stage - to leave the pages of personal diaries and fieldnotes, or the timid appearances in appendixes and footnotes, and become incorporated into the core body of the work, as a constitutive part of the accounts and the outcome of the research.⁸³

The anthropological gaze assumes, thus, an enlarged meaning with the concept of ethnography as a *total* experience in a condition of *betweenness* - in a constant movement of immersion and distancing in the hermeneutic fusion of cultural horizons. Echoing the dialogical concept of culture by Tedlock (1979), Clifford states that:

Ethnography is actively situated *between* powerful systems of meanings. It poses its questions at the boundaries of civilizations, cultures, classes, races and genders. Ethnography decodes and recodes, telling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion. It describes processes of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of these processes. (1986:2-3)

Such an ethnographic perspective enlarges and advances Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, and it is furthermore echoed by Okely (1992: xi) who also states that: 'the 'race', nationality, gender, age, and personal history of the fieldworker affect the process, interaction and emergent material.'⁸⁴

From such a perspective, reflexivity is neither about self-adoration nor self-absorption. It entails a political dimension of the fieldwork experience in the sense of the necessary disclosure, confrontation and critique of its power relations, pre-conceptions and projected images. It assumes, thus, that what the ethnographer learns is informed not only *by* her own culture, society, institutional and intellectual trajectory and affiliations, but is knowledge apprehended *by herself* through all her *senses* - taste, smell, colours, emotions - in her relationship with others who may become friends, colleagues, as well as opponents and rivals.⁸⁵

Nonetheless, the relationship between ethnographer and 'informant' constitutive of the fieldwork activity is also underlined by power relations in a series of revelations and secrets, as much as the process of writing ethnography involves a careful selection of fieldnotes, stories and memories, being therefore a constructed narrative with moral and political implications. The post-colonial critique of anthropological history (Asad 1973, Said 1978, Stocking 1983, 1991) exposes the epistemological problem in terms of

⁸²See further Okely (1992, 1996), and also contributions in Denzin and Lincoln (1994), particularly Fine (1994) on shifting selves and others, Clandinin and Connelly (1994) on personal experience, Marcus (1994) on reflexivity, and Vidich and Lyman (1994) on its history, and Lincoln and Denzin (1994) on the 'Fifth Moment' in the history of the discipline.

⁸³A classic of this genre is Rabinow's *Reflection on Fieldnote in Morocco* (1977). Some researchers, however, took this position a bit too far, producing a 'navel gazing' type of auto-biography where the 'other' became simply an excuse to speak about oneself. For post-modernist ethnography that erases the self/other dichotomy, see, for example, the implications of work of Stephen Tyler in Clifford and Marcus (1986).

⁸⁴See also contributions in Denzin and Lincoln (1994).

⁸⁵On the concept of necessity of self-reflexivity in intellectual/scholarly filiation and affiliation, see Said (1983).

the wider context of power relations in the production of knowledge about 'other' cultures. These personal and social processes constitutive of the ethnographic experience are brilliantly accounted for by Scheper-Hughes (1993) in her analysis of child death in a north-east Brazilian shantytown. However, although the dynamics and power implications derived from the relationship between a North American anthropologist - *companheira* by request as well as ethical and political choice - and Brazilian shantytown women can more evidently be established in given historical conditions, the same cannot be said about my own interaction with European campaigners.

There is a different kind of tension, negotiation and struggle at stake when the 'other' is not an 'excluded' or disadvantaged group - who either needs to be 'given' a voice by the anthropologists' writings, or actively negotiates with anthropological writing as a political vehicle. The anthropological 'intrusion' is powerfully resisted or fought back when the 'other' is a 'politicised', and culturally close subject - a shifting 'self-other' with hyphen (Fine 1994) - who speaks with her/his own voice, and has her/his own means and strategies of putting forward her/his messages, as well as controlling her/his own publicity. In such cases, furthermore, power relations may be more explicitly negotiated. Anthropologists may be perceived as a threat when associated with opposing sectors, and equally so, they may also be associated with a powerless position by their specific historical locations as constitutive of on going struggles. The balance of power between anthropologist and anthropologised is thus constantly shifting and renegotiated.

In this chapter I will present an ethnographic account of my encounters with the main subjects of my research based on selected passages from my fieldnotes. Since the *poetics-politics* of ethnography is composed of anecdotes (Geertz, 1996) or contingent stories (Clifford, 1986), these selected accounts are relevant for what they reveal of the chronology and dynamics of my fieldwork experience, particularly during the first year. This includes the development and shaping of the research topic, the mutual stereotyping at play in my encounters with 'self-others', and the peculiar dynamics of the interaction between British NGO campaigners related to the Brazilian Amazon and an anthropologist from Brazil. It represents a political encounter of the *west* with the *West*, embodied in my personal experience of fieldwork amongst political actors located in the UK, mainly in England. In this sense, the immediate personal context is embedded in a broader framework (see, for instance, chapter two) and both set the stage for the analysis of the campaigners' discourses as they were produced during the course of my own interviews (chapter four).

3.1 - Winter: A Demonstration in Colchester, first contacts

February 1995. It was a Saturday morning. The sun was exceptionally bright outside my window, but I knew that it was cold and windy out there. I wrapped myself up in my many layers of clothes - a necessary ritual that I never quite got used to since my arrival in England. I was shivering with the prospect of a long stay outdoors, and I suspect with the excitement about my first participation in a demonstration in the UK. After all, this was not just *any* demonstration. It was my first encounter with 'British demonstrators' for the Amazon, my first incursion into the field.

I was still in the first stages of my research: searching for a focus, mapping the actors involved, trying my first contacts with the so often busy NGOs. I knew very little, then, about the organisation and dynamics of British NGOs, and even less about their current agenda for the Amazon. It was during a telephone contact for the booking of an interview with a Friends of the Earth (FOE) campaigner, at the headquarters in London, that I learnt about the *Mahogany Week*: a series of demonstrations all over the UK, as part of the *Mahogany Campaign* against British imports of mahogany from the Brazilian Amazon (further in chapter five). The local FOE group in Colchester would be organising a demonstration the following day. A name and contact telephone number was provided, so I could try to participate in the event.

It was only very late in the evening when I could actually speak to one of the organisers in Colchester. After mentioning the name of the FOE person in London, and identifying myself as a Brazilian researcher at the University of Essex, my participation at the demonstration was permitted. The demonstration would take place the following morning, in front of a furniture shop called Hatfields. Thus, with such short notice and very little information about the event and the context in which it would be occurring - the mahogany campaign - it was with great anxiety that I set myself out towards the demonstration the next morning. At the time, it seemed to me quite extraordinary that people from an ordinary small East Anglian town would be demonstrating for the Brazilian Amazon - a place so far away and alien from their own local environment. While searching for a gathering of people in front of a shop, I kept wondering about the possible links between the people I was about to meet and the people in the Amazon, the actual practical and symbolic forces binding them together. It was not until later that I came to realise that local groups of mainstream NGOs - such as FOE - would join 'international' campaigns set up by the headquarters as supporters of the organisation, rather than act directly as supporters, with special bonds to the subject matter of the campaign themselves. Notwithstanding their genuine concern for the environment, they tended to identify with NGOs in similar ways to those of football supporters in relation to their particular teams. That is, their affiliations were directed to the organisation, rather than specific issues, as such.

Eventually, after my arrival at the venue, I could actually recognise a rather familiar scene taken from my own experience of environmental demonstrations way back in São Paulo: I found a group of ten people - ages ranging between their 40s and 60s - holding banners, posters and delivering leaflets to the passers by. The motto on the banners, posters and leaflets read: *Mahogany is Murder*, followed by photographs of the forest with huge logs of mahogany trees and the indigenous people who would be suffering from the illegal extraction of mahogany from their reserves. Adding a relaxing

and peaceful touch to the event, two of the demonstrators were dressed in gorilla suits, and there was also a huge tiger puppet standing amongst them. As I approached the group, a leaflet was handed out to me and, feeling a little timid and awkward as an intruder, I introduced myself offering to join them in the demonstration. Their response was a mixture of surprise and friendliness. As I identified myself to the person I had spoken to in the previous evening, I suddenly found my hands full of leaflets to hand out myself.

It was a very cold morning indeed I found the situation a little embarrassing at first, since the protesters seemed - though it was not spoken - quite puzzled and amazed by the unexpected presence of a Brazilian among them. After handing out a few leaflets, I decided to 'break the ice' and started a conversation with the woman who was standing next to me. Similar in background to other women in the group, she was a retired primary school teacher who now felt she had the available time to be an activist - to write letters to shop managers as well as to members of parliament, to hand out leaflets in order to raise awareness and educate the population. She was very keen on speaking to me, and the rest of the group kept following our conversation with great interest. A few minutes had passed, and sensing the distraction that my presence seemed to be imposing upon the protesters, the co-ordinator of the group intervened calling everybody back to their leaflet activity.

However, as the number of passers-by was very limited, every now and again there was the possibility for a little chat. The group was observing me just as much as I was observing them. I believe they had never been so close to or even seen a Brazilian before, and they found my presence amongst them quite extraordinary. However, more than amazement and amusement, there was a mutual exploration of 'otherness' at play, derived from inversions and diversions of our common, stereotyped images. To begin with, my physical appearance (for I am a strong woman, over six feet tall) in no way resembled the photographs of the indigenous peoples of their posters, nor the Brazilians generally displayed in British TV documentaries about Brazil. Moreover, besides my 'unusual' appearance, I was also performing an 'unusual' role - that of a Brazilian anthropologist doing fieldwork in England. The situation seemed to be felt by them as quite unique and rather ambiguous.

As the demonstration continued its course, and with the recurring intervals between the leaflet distribution, I would suddenly find myself again in the centre of a semi-circle composed of the retired school teacher, three of her other colleagues and a retired male telephone engineer. They wanted to know as much about me as I wanted to know about them. Nevertheless, my inquiries about their experience and engagement with the Brazilian Amazon seemed to be taken as a challenge to their information and knowledge about the subject of their campaign. As though to assert their knowledge of Brazilian society and culture beyond forest issues, and perhaps trying to place myself within this frame of reference (for instance, one of the teachers mentioned the name of Villa Lobos, the Brazilian classic music composer who she claimed to listen to and enjoy); the conversation followed in the direction of the 'westernised' features of my country. I began to realise then, that the fact that I was a Brazilian researching British 'images' of the Amazon could sound like a challenge to them, since in their eyes I was supposed to know more about the Amazon than anybody else in their group. The idea that the Amazon rainforest could be nearly as alien to me as it was to them (since I am from the south-eastern region of the country, and the Amazon is located in the north re-

gion) sounded unimaginable since compared to the British geographic scale, the size and diversity of Brazil finds no equivalence.

As time went by, the cold grew unbearable to me and, after an hour or so, and also in order to avoid any further reprimand from the group co-ordinator concerning the distractions I seemed to be imposing upon the group, I decided to go home. I left the demonstration excusing myself for no longer coping with the cold - a justification which the protesters seemed to understand perfectly well, perhaps even considering it very appropriate for a 'tropical person' under the circumstances. In this way, we light-heartedly were able to play on our mutual stereotypes.

On my way back home I began to think and realise, for the first time, the possible dynamics of my fieldwork in the UK and the implications for my research as a whole. I wondered about the to which extent it could correspond to an inversion of long-standing historical practices and traditions, as well as challenges to, and even subversions of, mutual images, roles and locations deeply established in our cultures. After all, it was not only unusual that an anthropologist would be researching middle class, educated, and politically aware Europeans (and this is indeed the category under which the British are placed in Brazil, although I came to learn that they do not consider themselves as such) but that this anthropologist was herself a national citizen of a country which has been for a long period, even since its colonisation, the subject of studies by Europeans themselves. Equally, this Brazilian anthropologist would be looking into the ways Europeans were looking at the forest and its people from her country. I had never so vividly realised the role that my nationality would play in my interaction with the subjects of my research. As a 'white', middle class Brazilian, trained as an anthropologist in São Paulo, researching urban social movements in Brazil, I was obviously aware of my place on the periphery of the unequal historical process of global relations. Yet in England I was actually *experiencing* myself as a 'non-western' and 'non-white' individual. Hence, in a way, I was practising anthropology simultaneously *at home and abroad*, acting with and against mutual stereotyped roles, locations and power relations. In the sense of Rabinow (1986) and Okely (1996), this was to be an anthropology at home - broadly meaning the 'West'. On the other hand, however, as a 'white Indian' in the sense of Taussig (1993) I found myself in a constant battle, questioning the grounds from which I was representing others and being represented by them (Clifford 1986:22).

The mutual interplay of images and representations would assume several facets as the research followed its course. As far as the demonstration in Colchester is concerned, things did not stop where I had left them. In the following day, I was told that the protesters had been arrested shortly after I left. The shop manager called the police and accused the demonstrators of damaging some of the mahogany furniture as they went inside the shop to stick some '*mahogany is murder*' stickers on the labels of the furniture. The co-ordinator of the group was completely astonished and in panic when she phoned me with the news. She described how tough the police had been to the protesters, keeping them outdoors in the cold for more than 12 hours and with no outside communications. She suspected that their attitude had some connection with the repressive mood surrounding clashes between the police and the live animal exports protesters of the nearby town of Brightlingsea at the time. However, looking back now, the attitudes of protesters, shop manager and police could well be understood in the context of the *Mahogany Campaign* itself, where the strategy of direct action used by other protesters in different demonstrations involved *ethical shop-lifting* - as at Harrods in 1993 - a

campaign strategy that I will discuss below in chapter five. The shop manager and police might have acted informed by the knowledge of such a strategy, while the protesters, as non-professional campaigners, inexperienced and unaware of the necessary preparations for direct action, and not really intending to undertake any radical move, had been simply carried away during the demonstration. Expressing her astonishment the co-ordinator stated: *'The lack of democracy is transforming this country into a country like Brazil. Thank God you left earlier. Thank God none of us depend on our jobs. We are pacifists, teachers and retired persons. Thank God there was nobody there below thirty.'* She then asked me to give an interview to the local paper: *'as a Brazilian who was participating in the demonstration'*. She believed that my testimony would add some sort of legitimacy to their campaign.

Nonetheless, for reasons still not totally clear to me, the interview never occurred. If at first I was perceived as an ally - a 'native' who would provide additional credibility to their campaign in Colchester - within a couple of days my image had undergone a dramatic change in the eyes of the protesters. When I asked the co-ordinator whether I could participate in their next meeting, she hesitated, saying that the meeting would be internal and confidential in order to prepare their defence strategy against the shop's accusations. As a foreign student, I would be better off not being involved, she advised me.

Later on, however, as she agreed to meet me for a personal interview, she justified their decision, pointing out that they had to be *suspicious* of everybody because they had been very naive in entering the shop, and that during the day of the demonstration a series of coincidences had happened. My presence there was taken as one of them. She believed that the mahogany lobby from Brazil was so powerful that I could well be a person sent from Brazil in order to infiltrate amongst them and jeopardise the campaign. My identity as a researcher in Essex would not ease their suspicions.

Thus, from a 'native' who could add credibility to the campaign, as a close witness to the damage caused by the mahogany trade, I became a potential 'spy' sent by the loggers in order to ruin the campaign. There was no other role I could possibly be performing in a story composed of innocent victims and powerful villains, and in which they, the protesters, were playing David against Goliath. The idea of a Brazilian anthropologist researching in Britain sounded too extraordinary and disruptive of classic and well-established roles to correspond to reality. These were ordinary people, retired teachers and other professionals who spent their time supporting the campaigns of groups such as FOE, and also running their local campaigns. They were not professional campaigners and were too frightened by the consequences of what they had done. As I naively believed at the time, it was understandable that an element of 'paranoia' could be found under the circumstances. Nevertheless, time would prove that the national element of my identity would never be downplayed during my fieldwork experience. If Scheper-Hughes (1993:18) found herself playing the role of *despachante* (the intermediary who expedites or hastens projects along through Brazilian bureaucracy) for the shantytown people of the north-east, my role in England would ambiguously range from that of a 'native' Brazilian - an informant, an ally and a 'voice of the South' - to that of a spy or representative of the Brazilian government and the timber lobby, but always as an 'other'.

In Brazil, it is very common to speak about how-well defined seasons are in Europe, in contrast to what is believed to be the less sharp differences in our country. Indeed, I was looking forward to witness myself the transformations to come in the English 'environment'. I was already enchanted by the beauty of the autumn colours and the magical movements of leaves falling gently down from the trees to form a carpet underneath my feet. Nevertheless, winter had inevitably been very tough: cold and dark, and the contacts with NGOs very difficult to arrange. Some interviews were booked, whereas others were cancelled. Meanwhile, I tried to keep my hopes high for later, since it is a common cliché to speak of spring-time as the season of blossoming.

3.2 - Spring: On My Way to an Interview, mutual generic stereotypes

March 1995 - Spring had officially begun. Yet, although I could see the days were getting brighter and longer, it still felt pretty cold to me. I had missed the 8:24 a.m. bus to the railway station that morning, and so, in order to catch my train to London at 9:06, I had to take a cab. Those timetables seemed quite funny to me at the time: 8:24 and 9:06. I wondered why the minutes had to be so precise. The British are generically known for their punctuality. Although in practice I came to learn things would not always work out that way, the myth persists and might even be perpetuated by such odd train and bus timetables. In any case, the fact that I could so easily travel to meet NGOs in London, Oxford, Norwich, Godalming and other towns in England - and also cross England and arrive in Scotland in a matter of just a few hours - made me inevitably think about geographic scales. I began to compare my research situation in the UK to a possible similar task in Brazil, including the Amazon. I concluded that it could only be comparable, in fact, to the scale of my previous research in the state of São Paulo, and São Paulo is still a few thousand miles away from the eastern edges of the Amazon.

From the cab window, I could see the daffodils blooming all the way from the University to the rail station. I was quite stunned by this overnight visual transformation. Observing the people walking on the streets, I noticed that their appearance had also undergone enormous changes: from dark heavy clothes and shoes to lighter and more colourful ones. A chilly sensation ran down my spine when I saw a woman wearing beige sandals with all her toes very well exposed. It was still absolutely freezing to me and I felt a genuine sympathy for British efforts to counterbalance the harshness of the weather. I recalled that in contrast to the outdoor reality, the morning TV programmes were extremely bright and 'tropically' colourful all year around, whilst the presenters made their best to cheer up the mood of the audience.

I was totally immersed in such thoughts and somehow longing for the warmth of my home country when suddenly, as if reading my feelings, the voice of the cab driver broke through: *'are you going home for Easter?'* he asked me. *'No'*, I said a little nostalgic in my recognised and reassured 'foreignness', *'home is too far away'*. *'Where is home then?'*, he pursued *'Brazil'*, I responded. A long silence followed my response, and since there was no sign of an attempt to follow up the chat, I assumed he did not know where Brazil was. After all, I had noticed that the space for international news in the British press was very limited, and items on Brazil would seldom be reported, and then often only connected to some tragedy or bad news. *'South America'*, I eventually said.

Pretending an exaggerated surprise, he exclaimed in the best tradition of British irony: *'Oh, really?! I think that is where they have this football team!?'.* I had forgotten that the British share with the Brazilians a similar passion for football, and that indeed, Brazil had just recently won the last world championship. *'Everybody knows where Brazil is'*, he continued in an attempt to set the record straight in terms of British geographical and general knowledge. *'We know many things about Brazil: football, coffee, nuts...what else?'.* *'What else?'* I said to myself as I thought about the political economy of Caio Prado Jr (1963) and Brazil's historical constitution as a supplier of raw material and products to be consumed by the European market.⁸⁶ After a few moments of silence, I asked, *'What else?'* As the silence continued, perhaps reflecting a search in his mind for other products, or some appropriate and positive images of my country, I went on driving the conversation towards my favourite subject. *'Rainforests?'* I suggested. *'Oh, yes! The rainforest, yeah! But if you say Brazil, rainforest, in this country, people will say: the Amazon'*, he stated in a pedagogical tone. Thus, I asked him to tell me what he knew about the Amazon. *'It's got a river there'*, he said. *'Yes, the river...And what else?'* I probed. *'Trees, birds...I think they are cutting down the trees, aren't they?'*, he considered. *'Who?'*, I went on, finding the conversation already most extraordinary. *'Who is cutting down the trees?'*

The silence was longer this time. The answer to this question seemed either too complex and difficult or too simple and obvious. In the latter case, this 'ambassador' of British culture - as cab drivers often seem to be in relation to their towns and countries - would not run the risk of being rude by answering *'the Brazilians'*. However, without directly answering my question, he eventually turned to me and inquired: *'what is this? A sort of a quiz? A school test or something like that?'* So, I realised I had gone too far, and most importantly, that I had framed the question in non-appropriate English fashion. Although his move sounded more like an appropriate strategic exit, I apologised for being so excessively interested or inquisitive. I explained to him that I was doing research about the British 'experience' and 'images' of the Amazon, and that I believed I got too carried away by the conversation. My explanation seemed to have a great impact on him. With a renewed enthusiasm for the conversation, and perhaps feeling a sense of responsibility as an authoritative source of 'British culture', he began even more seriously and pedagogically than before to explain to me the following:

'Oh, if you ask an English man about the Amazon, he will tell you about the trees, the river, the birds, butterflies. It is not a jungle. The jungle is Africa. It is related to a threatening idea: danger, tigers, elephants, snakes. Whereas the Amazon is not related to darkness and danger. It's related to beauty, and that it is disappearing. Whereas the jungle is more like nature, if you see what I mean. We have forests here in England as well. It's always related to trees, and to the woods. That is why I think the

⁸⁶Constituted to be consumed...from traditional items such as gold, tobacco, coffee, nuts and sugar, to more recent ones such as footballers, music and women - always the biodiversity of the 'tropics'. On the issue of Brazil's political economy see further Buarque de Holanda (1936, 1959); on a recent perspective about biodiversity see Santos (1994); and Piscitelli (1996) on European sex tourism in Brazil.

*Amazon has this idea too. If you see a TV programme, and they speak about jungle, it's never the Amazon, it's Africa.'*⁸⁷

The perception of the Amazon as 'beauty that is disappearing', mainly because the trees have been cut down, was recurrent in all the conversations I had a chance to have with ordinary people in the UK.⁸⁸ However, the response to my question about who was cutting down the trees was left unanswered not only by the cab driver, but also by many others. The few who actually named the agents of destruction would timidly point to the local people: '*the Brazilians, I suppose, in order to make a living, isn't it?*', perhaps reflecting some of the media coverage about the issue, or even some of the NGOs own fund-raising adverts.⁸⁹ A very few others, would vaguely mentioned big business interests or even transnational corporations as possible agents of destruction.

In generic terms, the British struck me as being less environmentally aware in their daily lives and attitudes than I expected from my stereotyped image of 'Europeans concerned with the environment'. For instance, I was quite surprised by the waste of huge amounts of paper and plastic, and found fewer bicycles and more cars running down the streets than I had imagined when still in Brazil.⁹⁰ Yet, their concern and interest for landscapes impressed me enormously, beyond the widespread stereotypical image of the British as good gardeners. To feel this with my own senses, through my own experience, was quite amazing. And I was genuinely shocked to perceive that there is hardly a single piece of land in England that has not been touched by human hands, so that even the woods looked very tidy and ordained, like carefully gardened places and with limited varieties of tree species.

I would like to suggest that, in symbolic and mythical terms, the possible generic British interest about the Amazon may be associated with their interest in landscapes, the picturesque, and the idea of the garden, rather than to a general public environmental or political awareness. Moreover, this may be also related to a nineteenth century tradition of scientific, and particularly botanical, expeditions and literature connected with the works of Darwin, Bates and Spencer, though a further exploration into this deserves a thesis on its own.⁹¹ However, as the cab driver aptly expressed it, his understanding of what a forest was came from his experience of the woods at home, in England. The forest is conceived as a place with trees, birds and butterflies - like a big park or garden -

⁸⁷ For English ambiguous feelings in relation to the 'natural world' see further Thomas (1984). The comparison between the Amazon and Africa, forest and jungle, beauty and danger, resonates with ideas of social order and social disorder in the analysis of Douglas (1966) and Eder (1996). As the Amazon is associated to the idea of woods, or parks at home, it conveys a sense of order which is lacking in the unfamiliar or alien realm of the jungle. Symbolically it is indeed associated to the idea of paradise or Eden, whereas Africa is the *Heart of Darkness* of Conrad.

⁸⁸ It is interesting to note that while I was framing my interest in 'British' experience and culture, the cab driver was speaking as an 'English man'. Brazilians, in general, make no clear distinction between British and English. In fact, British and English are intertwined in a way that Englishness encapsulates Britishness, perhaps as a consequence of historical and colonial circumstances. In any case, the cab driver himself seemed to have performed the same encapsulation.

⁸⁹ See respectively chapter six and note 32 in chapter one.

⁹⁰ My feelings are also supported by a WWF-UK special report that states that only five per cent of British household waste is recycled, while 'only two per cent of Londoners used their bicycles in 1995 compared with ten per cent in 1985.' WWF, *One Thousand Days*, 5 April, 1997, p.7.

⁹¹ See further Thomas (1984), Bates (1975 [1863]), Raby (1996), Grove (1995), and particularly Arnold (1996, chapter 8).

with no big nor nasty animals and insects, and people live outside of it, only occasionally going in for their enjoyment and pleasure.⁹² People are actually suppressed from his and other discourses about the ideal forest, only to emerge as a negative, disruptive element in the 'natural landscape' as, for instance, when people and economic activity in the forest is connected explicitly to the fact that the Amazon is disappearing.

The absence of people from the forest landscape may further reflect the modernist nineteenth century separation of society from nature, and the subsequent attitudes related to colonialism and racial oppression. Nature as the 'other' of society became a domain to be exploited. It became spatially constructed and geographically located in the tropics, whilst society was grounded in the West (Macnaghten and Urry 1998:14). Hence, Mary Louise Pratt (cf. Arnold 1996:146) argues that if the naturalist Alexander von Humboldt was responsible for the 'reinvention' of America, it was America as nature rather than an anciently peopled place. As Arnold (1996) further states, in Humboldt's accounts of the tropics, people were dwarfed by the power and majesty of its mountains, rivers and plains. The exploitation of nature as 'other' is connected to the exploitation of people as 'others' who are naturalised and objectified into slavery. The ambiguous meanings of nature as the domain of both good and evil - as in Locke and Rousseau in the first place, and Hobbes on the other hand - is also transferred into space as the tropical areas became the utmost representation of nature (Arnold 1996:141-168). Hence, the cab driver's differences between forest and jungle are geographically grounded as differences between the Amazon as the Garden of Eden, and Africa as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

Western culture is brimming with mythical representations of forests and their living beings, which makes any attempt to discuss them here an enormous digression beyond the scope of this thesis.⁹³ The Amazon itself has stimulated the western imagination since the first travellers arrived there.⁹⁴ Even the name is derived from the Greek legend of the warrior women, and expressions such as 'the lost paradise' or the Garden of Eden became popular clichés associated with it. Thus, for instance, it is worth mentioning that the first visual representation of Amazon Indians in England depicts somewhat angelical figures conveying an impression of innocence. The sculptures are found in a merchant's tomb of 1569, at Burford church in Oxfordshire. It is significant that the image of the 'other' as innocent is related to an English merchant involved in the transatlantic trading ventures. The 'other' of innocence being wise and gentle establishes an English self-perception which underlines and justifies a historical relationship of patronage, tutelage, dominance and power with the people of tropical areas (see chapter six). Furthermore, representations of native Americans are punctuated by ambiguous and shifting feelings. Along with images of innocent creatures living in beautiful gardens - a close association to an ideal of pristine nature - there are equally representations of native Americans as dangerous cannibals, especially when references and comparisons are

⁹²For an analysis on the western landscape and the imagination, and the different meanings of forest in Germany, France, England, Poland and the US see Schama (1995). In England, the association is with the idyll, with authenticity, and with the space of liberty under the greenwood (Shama, 1995: 135-184). For different concepts of 'nature' in English, and further feelings and attitudes towards urban and rural areas see Willams (1973).

⁹³A very interesting post-colonial critique of western imagery of the 'new world' and their 'beings' is found in Mason (1990).

⁹⁴See, for instance, Gondim (1994).

made in relation to modes of culture and habits, characterising thus, the anti-world, as the anti-civilisation in the encounters between Europeans and the 'other'.⁹⁵

Notwithstanding, the association of the Amazon with the Garden of Eden finds its counterpart in the association of Africa with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, whilst the paradigmatic differences between forest and jungle, as stated by the cab driver, also echo those between the emblematic mythical figures of the Green Man and the Wild People.⁹⁶ Whilst the Green Man is often portrayed with positive attributes and symbolises the 'civilised', the Wild Man and Woman are depicted in more negative terms, symbolising the 'uncivilised', 'untamed' and 'savage' people. Whereas the Green Man could be identified as a gardener, the Wild Man could be well defined as the 'primitive' woodman. Because the Green Man is depicted as a gardener, that is, with 'civilised' attributes, it is linked by Anderson (1990) to modern environmentalists rather than to the woodland figure of the Wild Man, which is still an archetype reserved for those non-European 'others'.

Nevertheless, beyond mythical archetypes, speculations of underlying symbolism, and generic stereotypes, the under-representation of society within forest realms is a topic that deserves a more focused analysis regarding environmentalism. I thus must return to my unanswered question of *who is cutting down the trees*. I shall discuss how environmentalists, as professionally trained campaigners within non-governmental organisations, perceive, explain and act against the destruction of the Amazon. As professionals with trained expertise on environmental issues, as well as political campaigners engaged in forest matters, they were much more self-conscious of their responses to me. Inquiring '*Who is cutting down the trees*', in their case, met very precise and specific responses.

⁹⁵Mason (1990), Sussekind (1990), Gondim (1994), Arnold (1996) and Macnaghten and Urry (1998).

⁹⁶For a mythological account see Frazer (1922) and Anderson (1990). For a critical view see Mason (1990). Green and wild men are anthropomorphic woodland figures also abundantly found in literature as well as in visual arts since medieval times. The Green Man sculptures are commonly found in churches spread all over England, whereas the Wild Man is more widely represented in literature. The Green Man is typically represented in the sculptures by the head of a male figure, with vegetation growing out of its mouth, or surrounding its face. It is usually associated with trees, vines, and fertility, whereas the Wild Man is the creature of the dark, dangerous and sinister woodlands of medieval times. By contrast to the Green Man, the Wild Man is represented in full figure and with a hairy body, and can also be a female character. Anderson (1990,14) speculates about the meaning of the Green Man as symbol of 'the union of humanity and the vegetable world'. I would suggest an opposite interpretation: that instead of a union the Green Man represents rather the 'control' of 'Western civilisation' over nature as well as other cultures. After all, why is it always represented by the head of a male figure? What are the meanings associated with the head in Western culture? The head is the realm of reason, rationality, knowledge, and science, all attributes that male-dominated Western civilisation used to proclaim the superiority of 'man' over other species, cultures and nature. That is why it is represented in more positive ways, whereas the Wild Man and Woman are represented with negative attributes. They are the untamed, autonomous figures, and dangerous because not subsumed by the order of the self-proclaimed civilised world.

3.3 - Summer: The Forest Movement-Europe Workshop, engaging with the NGOs

July 1995. The temperatures would regularly rise to thirty degrees Celsius that summer. It was said to be the hottest in England for 70 years. Gradually, boots, coats and jumpers gave place to sandals and short sleeves. I was enjoying the new season and the more lively atmosphere of my surroundings, as well as the more positive prospects of my research. At this stage, I had already managed to contact most of the NGOs and had interviewed the forest campaigners related to the Amazon. As their agenda and dynamics gradually became familiar to me, I could also identify two major networks of NGOs within which there was some regular campaigning related to the Brazilian Amazon: the UK-Forest Network and the Brazil Network. The environmental and conservation organisations were concentrated within the first network, whereas the social or developmental NGOs were in the second. My eventual participation in both networks was crucial for the understanding of their dynamics and the issues at stake.

It was through the UK-Forest Network that I came to learn about the Forest Movement Europe and their annual meeting held in the Black Forest, Germany, that summer. The meeting was an opportunity to meet the NGOs 'in their own environment', and also to situate the British groups in a broader context, in relation to other European organisations. As it turned out, this moment represented a crucial turning point in my investigation. Nevertheless, before I discuss my participation in this particular event, I shall make a brief explanation about the Forest Movement Europe (FME) and the general context and agenda of transnational forest campaigns which that meeting allowed me to understand.

The Forest Movement Europe (FME) is a network of European environmental NGOs campaigning on forest issues, particularly tackling the timber trade. It was originally set up as the European Rainforest Movement in 1988, following up the campaign against Japanese companies' predatory activities in South East Asia, and also when the campaign for the Amazon reached its peak. An overall goal at the time was to stop the trade of tropical timber in the European market. Nevertheless, a shift towards a broader forest campaigning strategy took place in the beginning of the 1990s, encompassing boreal and temperate forests. Eventually, in 1994, the network changed its name from European Rainforest Movement to Forest Movement Europe.

A combination of factors contributed to such a shift, from which I highlight the following two. The first factor is related to political criticism from 'Southern' countries against 'Northern' concerns and campaigns focused on tropical forests. This criticism was formalised during the Rio Summit in 1992, when 'Southern' governments accused 'Northern' countries - governments as well as environmentalists - of being 'eco-imperialists' for interfering in the 'development' of their countries, which seemed especially hypocritical when all the forests in the 'North' had been destroyed in the promotion of development (see discussion in chapter two).⁹⁷ Secondly, echoing these 'Southern' criticisms, there were pressures and claims from campaigning groups in the 'North' itself, more precisely from groups in boreal and temperate forests who resented and criticised the international campaigns' focus on tropical forests, while the problems of those

⁹⁷See also Arnt and Schwartzman (1992: 99-100) for discussion on external and internal colonialism, that is, the colonisation of the country by its own elites at the expenses of indigenous peoples and the majority of the population.

'Northern producer' countries were being neglected. One of their main arguments was actually the fact that most of the timber, fibres and paper consumed in Europe, particularly in Germany and the in UK, came primarily from Scandinavian, and also Russian and Canadian forests.⁹⁸ Thereafter, environmental NGOs around Europe, and particularly in the UK and Germany, started to reformulate their forest campaign units in order to encompass non-tropical forests in their campaign activities.⁹⁹

The very bottom line of this shift was also a gradual attempt to move from simply pointing out the problems of forest destruction towards constructing alternatives to predatory economic modes and practices - a trend in environmental issues at large. It also represented an attempt to move from a tendency still influenced by a conservationist perspective towards an enlarged environmental approach. Putting it simply, there was a shift from the idea of forests as empty spaces in human terms towards a concept of sustainable uses underlined by the realisation that forests are homes of people who actually live from their resources, both in tropical as well as in boreal and temperate forests. The idea of 'sustainable development' and the harvesting of forests' products is a component of this general context, which also generated a new approach to the issue of logging.¹⁰⁰ The idea of a market tool - the eco-labelling of timber certifying that it comes from a well-managed forest - was originated in this context in the early 1990s. An international certification scheme called FSC - Forest Stewardship Council - was launched by the World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF-UK, and I shall discuss this in detail in chapter five.

At the moment, it is simply important to note that the realisation that changes in campaigning were necessary did not imply that the actual shifts would evolve in a linear, unified way. This could be learned from the heated debates during the workshop on timber certification promoted by the FME that summer in the Black Forest. After all, the FSC was a market-oriented strategy, yet it was precisely the most established market practices, and the most profitable, which were unsustainable and often detrimental to the communities of forest dwellers. Furthermore, the definition of 'sustainable forest', or well-managed forest, seemed far too complex, involving, beyond technical definitions, the different interest and political groups at stake, alongside the need to create a consumer awareness and demand for such timber.

If a general tropical timber boycott campaign seemed a more straightforward political campaign to run, and had achieved great success up to that moment, a market tool initiative seemed to demand a more complex and technical understanding of forest issues, which in turn would push groups to re-think their ideas and to elaborate new political, strategic practices, the latter involving the unwelcome prospect of a dialogue with timber traders. Thus, the workshop on timber certification which followed the FME meeting that summer, with the tensions and conflicts that emerged within it, needs to be understood in the context of these shifting and new perspectives in forest campaigning. Whilst I will more closely discuss the FSC and the positions of NGOs in relation to it in chapter five, in this section I will focus the analysis on the dynamics of the

⁹⁸ From interview with Karin Lindahl, co-ordinator of the Taiga Rescue Network, organisation based in Sweden, in July 1995.

⁹⁹ For instance, Friends of the Earth-UK's forest campaign unit was called Tropical Rainforest Campaign, and gradually, with the incorporation of boreal and temperate forest issues it became subsumed under a larger unit called Biodiversity and Habitats Unit.

¹⁰⁰ See for instance, Prance (1990a, 1990b), and Posey (1983).

workshop, for the ways it sheds light on the cultural features of the NGO world, and also offers insight into my interaction in the field.

Firstly, I must say that personally, as bizarre as it may sound, the Black Forest struck me very much as resembling - in terms of the contour of its landscape - the mountains where I was born in *Serra da Mantiqueira*, south of Minas Gerais. However, it equally struck me for its reduced diversity of tree species despite the enormous area it actually encompasses. It seemed to me as a gigantic monocultural plantation, where all trees had the same colour, shape and height. This first-hand experience, which was based on purely lay observation (since I have no training in forestry or ecology) made a profound impact on me. I began to realise the meaning of biodiversity by observing the old European forest and comparing it to what I had seen of forests back home. I also began to think, in the opposite direction, about the impact that forests, such as the Amazon, might have produced on people who had never witnessed such diversity before their eyes.

The workshop on timber certification followed the annual meeting of the FME, held in the tourist town of Todtmoos, deep in the Black Forest, in southern Germany. The FME meeting, as a political gathering of environmental organisations, was strictly restricted to NGO forest campaigners. There were representatives of groups from over fourteen different countries, particularly from North-western Europe, but there were also representatives of non-European organisations such as the American-based Rainforest Action Network, a representative of Greenpeace-Brazil and a campaigner from the Centre for Environment and Development, an NGO based in Cameroon. The participation of researchers, like myself, was only allowed in the timber certification workshop, an event that followed the main political meeting, and which carried a more technical agenda.¹⁰¹

Significantly enough, however, the representatives of the Brazilian and African NGOs who were taking part in the political meeting did not stay for the workshop. Thus, I was actually the only 'Southern' participant in the event, and in spite of the initial technical programme, political discussions did emerge and overtook the agenda of the workshop. As it became clear under the tense atmosphere, the absence of the 'Southern' NGOs would be a sign of the irrelevance of certification as an issue for those countries at the time. These observations were also reconfirmed in a conversation I had with the campaigner from Cameroon before his departure from the Black Forest. He was even unaware that a timber certification workshop would follow the FME meeting. The gap between African and European NGOs in terms of the process of certification and the

¹⁰¹For ethical as well as for epistemological reasons, I had always introduced myself as a researcher from Brazil who was studying UK-based groups campaigning for the Brazilian Amazon. Therefore, my attempts to participate in the FME meeting were turned down, although I believe that I could have been accepted had I introduced myself as a representative of a recently created organisation. This is due to my social and cultural proximity to the subjects of my investigation, despite my nationality, as well as the informality and horizontalization that are part of the ethos of the NGO world, particularly in such gatherings. Those are elements that keep the NGOs culturally inscribed in the realm of the social movements' universe, despite the professionalisation and hierarchisation of individual organisations in recent years.

FSC was further stated by him in a written letter to the participants of the workshop.¹⁰² Furthermore, a petition letter was also left by the Brazilian Greenpeace representative, in which more than 60 groups in Brazil were asking the support of European groups for a boycott campaign of mahogany. Therefore, differences between 'Southern' and 'Northern' countries would define the discussions about certification. On many occasions, some of these differences were even triggered by my very presence, as I shall discuss below. Different perspectives amongst NGOs, and even conflicts and antagonisms between their different political positions, did emerge during the workshop, thus allowing an understanding of the general field in which British NGOs act on their concerns for the Amazon. Above all, certification proved to be a dominant but very sensitive issue for most of the NGOs participating in the workshop.

The participants formed a very heterogeneous group in terms of political and technical backgrounds, as well as in terms of their expectations about the workshop. They ranged from those who knew nothing about certification and wanted to learn what it was all about, including myself, to those who were already acting within the existing schemes. This was the case of representatives of UK-based organisations such as the FSC-UK Working Group and the certifier Soil Association. There were also those willing to discuss the means to make certification work, and those who totally rejected the idea for they were more radically engaged in a boycott campaign against tropical timber. These individuals perceived certification as a mean to legitimise trade, a position that was most evident amongst German groups, and also held by the Rainforest Action Network delegate from the USA.

One of the central disagreements emerged right on the first day of the workshop when some of the participants expressed their dissatisfaction with its excessively technical and localised agenda, as well as the rigid and centralised way in which it was being conducted by one of the organisers - a representative of a more technical organisation who was in favour of certification and the FSC. Hence, broadly speaking, two antagonistic positions could be identified at this level: on the one hand, a technical advisory and market-oriented NGO and, on the other hand, the campaigning NGOs which were more politically oriented, and eager to discuss the pros and cons of certification and the FSC - an issue that raised other antagonistic divisions amongst the campaigning NGOs themselves.

As it turned out, through applying to the workshop the same political practices which they used in their own environmental activism, the programme and organisation of the workshop was totally overtaken by the more political and actively campaigning groups on the second day of the workshop. It is important to highlight that the shifting of the agenda towards a more political discussion was carried out by certain charismatic

¹⁰² The letter addressed to the participants of the workshop by the representative of the Centre for Environment and Development-Cameroon raised concerns about the different agenda between 'Northern' and 'Southern' NGOs, the difficulties on integration and communication between them, the peculiar and more complex situation of forest issues and, consequently, the implementation of certification in the tropics (for example, that certification must be related to other issues in the tropics, such as mining, ranching, plantation, and land rights). Furthermore, questions were also raised concerning the misrepresentation of the FSC process in the 'South' due to the participation of some 'Southern' NGOs in the international process. Interesting to note, the representative of Cameroon is currently a member of the FSC board of directors.

campaigners with a more political than technical background, and who had a long standing history of lobbying and activism within the environmental movement.

Hence, beyond a refusal of the technical agenda established by the original programme, which took for granted the NGOs' positive response to certification and favoured the FSC, there was also a cultural rejection involving the lack of identification with the organiser of the workshop, who did not seem to share the same ethos of the other NGOs. In a passionate speech, the representative of the German group *Retter den Regenwald* addressed the organiser of the workshop, demanding changes in the programme and saying: 'we are not students, and you are not our leader'.

This episode underlined for me the importance of the interplay between the personal and the public aspects that composes the politics of the social movement field in which the environmental movement is inscribed. Although the professionalisation, the development of technical expertise, and the hierarchisation of organisations has set the tone of environmental campaigning in the last two decades, and was crucial for the inclusion of environmental concerns into the official political debate and agenda, I came to realise that perhaps long-time political campaigners, acting from their small organisations, sometimes composed of only themselves and a couple of volunteers, still play a crucial role within the movement as a whole. They are the ones that provide the identity for the group as a movement, and act to push the larger groups back to their roots when they seem to 'get off track' whenever negotiating with politicians and the private sector.¹⁰³

Another important aspect to highlight from the conflicts that arose during the workshop concerns the discussion about the differences between 'Northern hemisphere-Southern hemisphere' in relation to certification and the FSC. As mentioned above, this was provoked by the position letter left by the representative from Cameroon, and I believe it was heightened by my own presence in the workshop. The fact that I was a Brazilian researcher put me in a rather ambiguous position, or gave me a double role in the eyes of the group: I was perceived by some of the participants as a researcher from 'the South', at the same time I was also seen by others as a representative from 'the South', in a generic way, as a 'voice from the South'.

As a 'voice from the South', some would request my opinion or information about the certification debate within Brazil. Besides an element of 'political correctness' underlying such inquiries - that is, the idea of opening a space for my 'voice', as a 'voice of the South', to be heard - it also expressed the need to fill the void created by the absence of the NGO representatives from Brazil and Cameroon. There was a general lack of information about what was happening in those countries - in 'the South' as they homogeneously framed it - and a vague feeling that certification was not a priority for those groups, or for the realities of those countries. This topic would dominate the discussion of the working group in which I was actively taking part, in contrast to the outcome of the other three.¹⁰⁴

Here again, as in the demonstration in Colchester, I had a role as a 'native', although this time I was more associated with the Brazilian campaigners since I kept a

¹⁰³See analysis of campaigns in chapter five.

¹⁰⁴ After the NGOs took over the organisation of the workshop, the participants were spread into four working groups for the discussion of the pros and cons of certification, before a general discussion in the plenary.

social, cultural and political profile very similar to them. My political identity as a 'Southerner', with all the possible meanings this signifier entails, was inevitably assumed in the engagement with the 'others' who were positioning themselves as 'Northerners'. Differences between groups and realities in the 'South' were erased, as were those in the 'North'.¹⁰⁵ However, this attitude would shift towards a more hostile one in other more political and contentious moments, since the overall atmosphere was one of tension, conflict and dispute.

By contrast, my other role, that of a researcher from 'the South', carried a more negative connotation and was also underlined in several moments by some other leading campaigners. In a conversation with a representative of Friends of the Earth-the Netherlands, for instance, I asked him why my participation in the FME meeting was turned down. When I approached him, my self-identity was indeed blurred I was actually assuming my identity as an 'excluded campaigner from the South'. However, he was perceiving me as a potential threat to him and his peers. Through examples of how anthropologists were used in the past as collaborators with imperialist governments against non-western people, he then explained to me that the FME meeting was a political gathering of NGOs, and that my research was very dangerous since I could provide information to the Brazilian government about the strategies of the NGOs.

Similar to the episode in Colchester, I was also perceived here as a threat, an infiltrator and a possible 'spy'. The intrusion of the fieldwork practice and its ethical dimensions were reflected back to me in a well-informed manner. A long conversation about imperialist practices and anthropology took place between us in which I tried to counter his statements by saying that the flow of researchers was always from 'the North' to 'the South', and that NGOs from 'the North' were not completely lacking in any power in relation to governmental positions in Brazil, and that I expected my research to be public enough to benefit even NGOs from 'the North', if they happened to be interested in it. Nonetheless, for obvious reasons, he was more concerned with the immediate concerns of his political campaign.

My ambiguous and blurred role as 'Southerner', ranging as the 'native-campaigner-spy', would surface again in many different moments in the course of my research. If in the more passive role of 'informant' I was better accepted, as an active and participant observer and investigator in England I very often had to battle my way through. Besides the general and obvious resistance to being observed and analysed, it is relevant to note that NGO campaigners, some as politically engaged researchers, perceived themselves as doing the 'real work', whereas academics were generally perceived as acting within their own world in the 'ivory tower'. In addition, as a Brazilian researcher, there was also an underlying sense - sometimes even very explicit - that as an academic I should be researching in my own country, in the Amazon, where the 'problems *really* ex-

¹⁰⁵ In a conversation with the NGO representative from Cameroon, for instance, he complained about how NGOs from Brazil would receive more attention and financial support from groups in the 'North' than the African NGOs.

isted'.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, I was convinced that things were, equally, *really* happening in the UK and elsewhere, as the debate about certification exemplified.¹⁰⁷

3.4 - Autumn: Participant Interaction, the context of the interviews

Autumn is a time of maturity. My participation in the FME workshop that summer was indeed very crucial in situating myself in the field, and also to mapping the main NGOs and campaigns from a British as well as a European perspective. After one year in the field, I was actively engaged in the Forest Network-UK, and also in the activities organised by the Brazil Network. The overall research theme - the perspective of British NGOs in relation to the Brazilian Amazon - gradually assumed a more concrete shape.

Looking back, the first contacts and interviews with the British NGO campaigners were indeed very difficult to arrange. They were often too busy, and I had arrived in the UK without any references or recommendations from the Brazilian NGOs, a fact that had to do with a series of setbacks before my departure from Brazil along with my initial uncertainties about the course of the investigation. Moreover, I believed that this would be epistemologically useful, since I would not be identified with any particular group in Brazil, and therefore would not carry the bias of a relationship already established between the parties. Nevertheless, as anthropologists do not act in a vacuum (Okely 1992) or learn from a *tabula rasa* (Cohen 1992), contacts were arranged with help from some of the university staff members, and soon a strategy of contacts developed in which previous NGOs contacts were used to arrange subsequent ones.

Significantly, my first successful contacts were arranged with campaigners from Oxfam and Survival International, two mainstream organisations in the UK, whose campaigners had experience of living and working in Brazil (see chapter four). Gradually, contacts with mainstream environmental NGOs would follow, and from these, the identification of, and contacts with, smaller groups. The existence of the two major networks in which these groups circulate was therefore revealed in the course of the investigation: the Forest Network-UK, the network of the environmental groups, and the Brazil Network, where the social NGOs are concentrated (with exception of Survival International, which is an organisation that acts within both networks).

¹⁰⁶A position that I also found amongst some British sociologists who research in the Brazilian Amazon.

¹⁰⁷After three days of intensive meetings, the workshop ended with small groups drawing out the conversation in the underground bar of our 'conference centre', whereas others were improvising a dance party. My 'otherness' was once again negotiated in a 'familiar' role. As there was a shortage of lively music to keep the dancing going, I was asked to provide some Brazilian music, since I indeed happened to be carrying a 'walkman' cassette player for my train journey. A great disappointment followed from after initial enthusiasm at the prospect of lively Brazilian music. The music of Gilberto Gil - an eclectic African Brazilian who was one of the key figures of the *tropicalia* cultural movement in Brazil in the late 60s - was dismissed as being 'too westernised'. Instead, they preferred dancing to the sound of the '*lambada*' (in fact, a French electronically recorded song very popular in the late 80s), which they identified as the authentic tropical Brazilian style.

In recording the testimonies of the campaigners I have initially attempted to follow a life story form, but I encountered difficulties with this form of interview. The difficulties in collecting data related to the campaigners' personal and social trajectories were due to a conjunction of factors - some have already been mentioned above - which I would like to recapitulate and explore a little further.

The first factor has to do with a Brazilian context, which I have discussed in chapter two. Thus, from a nationalist Brazilian perspective, global or transnational NGOs are viewed with suspicion by many groups, especially local economic and political elites and the military, sectors that have faith in a 'developmental' discourse. Accusations of eco-colonialism, or eco-imperialism and romanticism, as well as suspicions that these groups act in the name of powerful economic interests from 'developed' countries, are often raised by these nationalist sectors of Brazilian society. In addition, different perspectives among NGOs themselves can lead to different relationships between NGOs acting globally and the ones acting locally or within Brazil. British NGO campaigners are very much aware of this, and thus the fact that interviews were carried out by a Brazilian researcher imposed an inevitable bias on the process. For instance, the Brazilian allegations of eco-imperialism and romanticism effected the discourses and attitudes of the British campaigners as they were produced in the course of my interviews. Also, the tensions involving environmental concerns and matters of distribution and social justice made an impact on the direction the interviews took.

The topics of imperialism and romanticism were frequently brought up by the interviewees themselves, although in different ways depending on the campaigners' political orientation. While some would ironically emphasise their alleged romanticism (see section 4.1.3), others would more explicitly formulate a defence against any possible accusations or judgements. The latter instance was particularly the case with young campaigners acting professionally within mainstream environmental organisations, who would bring to the fore their more technical considerations (section 4.1.1). Hence, for instance, before being interviewed, a campaigner from a major international environmental organisation expressed his concern about whether I would 'cite' or 'quote' him in my work. After the interview, which was characteristically punctuated by very technical remarks, he surprised me by saying he believed that his organisation did not fit into my 'hypothesis'. When I asked him what my 'hypothesis' might be, he responded that I wanted to 'prove' that they were all romantics. Similarly, another campaigner, at the time fully engaged in the organisation of the FSC, was even more radical when I asked her for an interview by stating that I wanted to learn about her 'impressions' and 'experience' in the Amazon. She refused to be interviewed with the retort that she was not a 'new age person'.

It seems as though words such as *personal experience*, *impressions*, *images*, and *perceptions* were running counter-current to terms regarded as more relevant and legitimising to the campaigners' agenda: words such as *hypothesis*, *proof*, *evidence*, *management plans*, *standard*, *criteria*, *logs*, *cubic meters* and so on. Interestingly enough, this vocabulary also recalls that of sociologists researching environmental issues.¹⁰⁸ Hence, an element of 'technical' dispute and legitimacy also lingered beneath my interactions with campaigners who claimed their 'equal power' as qualified professional researchers.

¹⁰⁸The role of culture and anthropology in academic research on environmental issues is discussed in chapter one, and particularly in Milton (1992, 1996), and Lash, et al. (1996).

Therefore, apart from noting a certain bias created by their reservations about interacting with a Brazilian researcher, and also their need to emphasise their identities as equally qualified professionals, it is important to consider that in Western societies, political actors, as intellectuals, typically wish to construct their arguments 'rationally' and 'objectively'. Personal recollections, for instance, are regarded as unscientific and apolitical forms of expression. However, as pointed out in anthropology and other disciplines, personal trajectories, memories, myths, and images nevertheless do shape the ways in which individuals think and act. Hence, it seems as though the modern myth of technical, rational and objective beings was played by the interviewees against the myth of environmentalists as romantic and idealistic -accusations which are generally constructed by their opponents.¹⁰⁹ One of the unwitting consequences of Western environmentalism - as science, ideology, political activism, social movement or cultural perspective - might be the ongoing abstraction of 'humans' from 'nature', and social landscape from environmental landscape. This occurs not simply because of an ingrained romantic yearning, but rather as a result of particular areas of experience and expertise among different groups - a topic which I explore below in the analysis of the articulation of 'trees and people' by campaigners.

Furthermore, in contrast to fieldwork carried out among 'excluded' groups whose 'voices' are historically and socially denied, such as women secluded in the rainforests (Towsend 1995) or *favelados* (shanty town dwellers) in Brazil (Scheper-Hughes 1993), middle class educated political campaigners in the UK have their own means to make their voices heard. Resistance to the intrusiveness of fieldwork activity was manifested in this case through their denials to speak about personal experiences, and through the questioning of my 'hypothesis' as well as of my political and ethical positions. Although this is not exclusive to British campaigners, some of its manifestations were indeed very peculiar to this particular research situation.

In other moments of my participant observation, the 'violence' of my presence would be vigorously and even literally bounced back at me. This was the case, for instance, in an episode during one of the Forest Network-UK meetings. My 'voice' was vigorously silenced when I tried to approach the issue of the Brazilian Rubber Tapper Council (CNS) representative's resignation from the board of the FSC. Whilst an FSC staff person attempted to explain the resignation in the context of 'cultural misunderstandings' - between the Brazilian rubber tapper on the one side, and the British way of structuring an organisation on the other - a more aggressive FSC defender - in fact a 'green' timber trader who is a member of the network - abruptly broke through. He shouted at me that Brazil was a very specific case because it was '*corrupt, incompetent, disorganised and suspicious about bureaucracy*' and that they - but who? The British timber traders? The British campaigners? - really needed to go there and '*teach these people how to organise themselves and run their business*'. This episode reveals not only the sensitivity of the FSC topic, particularly in terms of its legitimisation as an international body (see chapter five), but the underlying issue of 'North-South' power rela-

¹⁰⁹ Interestingly enough, as an illustration of this, is the episode of the Brand Spar Campaign - Greenpeace campaign against the dumping of toxic waste in the North Sea by Shell UK. The discourse of the British industry representative was shaped in order to categorise environmentalists' reactions as 'hysterical', 'scientifically uninformed', 'amateur', 'lunatic', and 'not serious'. The German environmentalists, on the other hand, chose to concentrate their counter arguments in nationalist terms, highlighting the British lack of awareness and concern for the environment (BBC2 *News at Night*, 15 June 1995).

tions, along with its mutual stereotyped and sedimented sets of images. Apart from a personal characteristic and economic interest involved in the incident, it is interesting to highlight the game of mutual assumptions and stereotyped meanings at play, regardless of the traders' display of arrogance or sarcasm. He was nevertheless anticipating what he thought I was thinking or implying with my questions. Regarding the group, there was a general silence which was only broken by a campaigner, who advised the trader that I would be taking notes of the things he said to me, as though he had made a mistake to *reveal* himself in such an emotional and blunt way. This revelation perhaps substantiates an analysis that describes the ambivalent character of European historiography and the discourse of the American imaginary. This ambivalent discourse is historically caught between, on the one hand, an 'aesthetisation' of nature, with all the positive images of 'natural happiness' and 'innocence' of tropical inhabitants and, on the other hand, the disenchantment with 'other' cultures through the condemnation of their 'primitive' or 'barbarian' costumes.¹¹⁰

Fieldwork as an experience of revelations, secrecy, negotiations and the interplay of mutually stereotyped roles, is an experience of shifting power relations and tensions. The written ethnography is the outcome of this process, and its layers are the selected narratives of both anthropologised and anthropologist. Significantly, my best 'informants' were found among those campaigners who had a more clear political position regarding gender and 'Third World' issues, and also those from smaller organisations. Those, for instance, with background experience of working in Brazil were more willing to help, perhaps as an extension of their general approach to the country.¹¹¹ Information - as the most valuable currency in the NGO field, as it is in the anthropological fieldwork - would be negotiated and exchanged among us. Eventually, with a gradual trust building, I would join campaigners in lobbying as well as other campaign activities and situations. I would help groups with less resources at their disposal in the translation of documents and letters from and to Brazil. Furthermore, as a researcher taking part in all sorts of events, I was asked to take notes and report back at meetings, and I was also welcome in recording meetings with Brazilian officials at the Brazilian Embassy, and with the traders at the Timber Trade Federation.

Undoubtedly, a component of personal empathy played a crucial role in such close exchanges, but equally relevant was the smaller scale of the organisation and, most importantly, the particular political background and skill of the campaigner.

Despite the initial difficulties in tracing the campaigners' social and personal trajectories, important clues did emerge during the course of the interviews. In the next chapter, I trace the major tendencies amongst British campaigners for the Amazon based on aspects of their social and personal trajectories - how these determined the issues they took up and the organisations they worked for; how they built up their engagement with the Amazon; how they related themselves as British political actors to their Brazilian counterparts, the local context and people; and how they justified their actions.

¹¹⁰ See works previously cited, for instance, Ventura (1991), Sussekind (1991), Mason (1990), Arnt and Schwartzman (1992), and Ortiz (1984).

¹¹¹ Actually, I was surprised by the number of female campaigners related to Brazil - both forest campaigners and 'Brazil' campaigners - although I also noticed that women do not occupy any high posts in the hierarchy of the NGOs.

CHAPTER 4

TREES, TREES AND PEOPLE, PEOPLE - THE CAMPAIGNERS

...Qué tiempos éstos en que ablar sobre árboles es casi un crimen porque supone callar sobre tantas alevosias?¹¹² (Brecht 1982)

The NGO field - and particularly the British NGOs related to the Brazilian Amazon - is composed of diverse positions and perspectives which go beyond the most obvious classifications of organisations into conservationist, environmentalist, human rights, social, and developmental agencies. In this chapter, I will identify and analyse the main tendencies in the 'British-Amazonian' NGO field, based on the testimonies of campaigners recorded during the in-depth interviews I conducted with them.

Besides the background contexts which are constitutive of the discourses produced during the course of my interviews (chapters two and three), I shall now specify the discursive elements that define the different perspectives; that is, the regularities composing each discursive tendency, with focus on the personal and social trajectories that lead the campaigners to engage with them, therefore producing a particular form of discourse and relationship to the Amazon. Hence, the focus on personal trajectories, that is, the cultural and social background of campaigners, is due to the fact that they are actually the carriers of NGO ethos. They are the agents implementing NGOs' agendas, and thus, relevant actors in shaping the debate about the Amazon. The marks of their *habitus* (Bourdieu 1993[1977]), their social and cultural background experiences, reflect on their framing of the Amazon as an issue, and reveal the major tendencies guiding different NGO approaches.

The tension constitutive of the Amazon as a field of communication and struggle between different positions within Brazil, Britain, and the transnational realm can also be observed amongst campaigners. Following the Brundtland report and their concept of 'sustainable development' in the late 1980s, and also reinforced by the Earth Summit in 1992, a policy of incorporating 'social' and 'economic' dimensions into the 'environmental arena', as well as an environmental consideration into the economic agenda, took place through several governmental and non-governmental initiatives. Such an articulation remains, however, actually an unsettled and ongoing dispute involving different social and political positions, in as much as the concept of 'sustainable de-

¹¹²'...What kind of times are they, when a talk about trees is almost a crime because it implies silence about so many horrors?' Published in English by Willet, J. and Manheim R. (1976) 'Poems 1913-1956', in *Bertold Brecht Plays, Poetry and Prose*, London: Eyre Methuen Ltd.

velopment' itself corresponds to vague, shifting and contentious meanings.¹¹³ A case in point is the fact that, in terms of the NGO transnational co-operation, issues of international inequality, trade and debt summoned the attention of 'Northern' environmental groups, and has also underlined their forest campaigns and their relationship to 'Southern' NGOs. This has occurred especially since the MDB campaign in the early 1980s, and was also reinforced later on, during the UNCED-92 process, through the NGOs closer relationship with social agencies already dealing with such matters.¹¹⁴ Hence, it follows that the voicing of, and tension between, concerns with issues of 'biodiversity' and 'social justice' are constitutive of the discourses of British campaigners in relation to the Amazon. Nevertheless, such configuration assumes different forms, and stresses different meanings, according to the campaigners' personal and social trajectories.

For the purpose of a graphic visualisation, I am delineating three tendencies amongst British campaigners for the Amazon rainforest: *trees*, *people*, and *trees and people*. 'Trees' signifies those campaigners that lay stress on environment/biodiversity concerns, 'people' stands in for those that emphasise development/social justice issues, while 'trees and people' signifies the synthesis of the two former tendencies. The words 'trees' and 'people' are used in a metaphorical sense, as though, on the one hand, encapsulating concerns with the conservation, preservation, protection, and sustainable uses of 'the environment' and, on the other hand, encapsulating issues of social justice, development, and human rights. Furthermore, I speak of predominant *tendencies* amongst campaigners to highlight the heuristic and flexible nature of such categories and modes of classification, beyond the evident differences between NGOs and the actual and often irreducible complexities of the issues at stake.¹¹⁵ Therefore, the idea of a tendency amongst campaigners suggests that, in actual fact, there is great deal of interplay, communication, and tension between them, since, broadly speaking, most campaigners have acknowledged the entanglement of environmental and social justice issues in their campaigning activities.

4.1 - British Campaigners: Different Routes/Roots, Different Views/Outcomes

The tendencies towards 'trees', 'trees and people', or 'people' will be here analysed vis-à-vis the interviewees' experiences of displacement, the growth of their political awareness, their involvement with the Amazon, and their justifications for political campaigning.

A common element among those interviewed was that they all experienced travelling and displacement as part of their political engagement. For many of them, this 'displacement' even started way back as part of their family experience and upbringing: in some cases a parent was a diplomat or military personnel, a company employee in Africa and Latin America, and there were even those who moved around England or into England from Scotland, therefore perceiving themselves as migrants or even 'internationalists'. Nevertheless, they differ from British travellers of past centuries - colony

¹¹³See further Sachs (1993), and Kirby, et al. (1995).

¹¹⁴See chapter one, and Kolk (1996).

¹¹⁵As already referred to in chapter one, I am using NGO as a general category employed by campaigners themselves as part of their self-identification (see note 4, chapter one).

bureaucrats, explorers, geographers, scientists and anthropologists - who helped to install in the British imagination a fascination with 'exotic' nature and cultures whilst contributing to the expansion of the British empire and capitalism world-wide.¹¹⁶ Unlike these previous representatives of the interests of national entities, NGO campaigners - as transnational political actors - represent a new relationship between citizenship and nation-states, putting the latter into question by acting and intervening in ways that cut across their boundaries.¹¹⁷

It has been said that due to instantaneous global communication and mass transportation, distances have become shorter, time and space compressed, and contact with different cultures now shapes personal experience of the world in a global way. Of course, such 'global' experiences require some pre-conditions in the form of financial means, access to new technology and linguistic skills. Certainly environmental and human rights agents share this 'global' experience. Thus remote areas have become closer and interlinked just as 'the exotic' has become familiar. However, this is not to say that environmentalists and human rights advocates all hold the same homogeneous image or understanding of the world. Neither is it to say that the intensification of contact implies a better understanding of and communication with 'the other'. Although sharing basic principles, there are different motivations for travel, different routes, different interactions with otherness and different forms of political engagement. It follows, as a consequence, that particular actors have different experiences and 'images', for instance, of the Amazon rainforest, with related meanings they create and reproduce within the universe of British NGOs.

'Being there', having practical or direct experience, is one important component of all testimonies.¹¹⁸ Even though 'being there' lends authority to the political actor embarking on a globalised campaign, direct contact with the Amazon can lead to creation of differential discursive practices and varying political experiences.

4.1.1 - The 'Trees' Tendency

For the group of interviewees with a strictly environmental-biodiversity interest, 'being there' assumes a scientific-political meaning. It is the research practice that supports their views and actions on a professional level. The campaigners who exemplify this tendency are found in the major environmental organisations, namely WWF, FOE and Greenpeace, regardless of the specific political and structural orientations of each group.

With the increasing professionalisation of NGO work since the early 1980s, there has been an inclination towards the recruitment of forest campaigners with expertise in forestry, ecology, biology, geography, botany and related areas. A brief profile of campaigners reveals that the majority of them correspond to a young generation, gener-

¹¹⁶On 'discourses' and 'displacements' see Clifford (1988). For a perspective on imperialism and the history of environmentalism, see Grove (1995), and also Arnold (1996).

¹¹⁷For a discussion on the relation between territory, state, economy and political representation in the context of the Amazon, see Becker (1994:104-109), de Almeida (1994:521-537), Cleary (1994: 159-165), and Singer (1994:167-174).

¹¹⁸On the issue of 'local knowledge', see Geertz (1983).

ally in their late 20s and 30s, who have had academic training in the above mentioned areas of expertise. Although they have travelled to forested areas in Africa or Latin America as part of their fieldwork activities - 'field trips' to tropical forests - they generally have no personal experience of living in 'Third-world' countries or in tropical forest regions. Significantly, their professional qualifications were the first point they make when I asked them: 'tell me about yourself'. This is what I observed in the testimonies of campaigners who were working for Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and also WWF at the time of the interviews. For example:

I started doing a degree in Ecology, at Leeds University...and I have always been involved in NGO work...there is an organisation called British Trust Conservation Volunteers where you spend weekends or a week in the country helping out - *working on conservation issues*, whether it is building a stone wall or working in the forest or - *fieldwork really*. Yeah - since I was at school, I've been involved in that type of project... I was also interested in biology and geography. But *I wasn't interested in the pure science, really. I was interested on the link between that and what was happening today, what was happening in the environment...*[to] learn something that was relevant to the environmental problems you could see around. *So, eventually I wanted to work in a job or position where I found my decisions... would have a direct effect on stopping those environmental abuses.* (Greenpeace campaigner, female in her 30s)¹¹⁹

Similar impetus can be seen in a Friends of the Earth campaigner:

I was brought up all over the world because my father always moved around. I did a geography degree, and I did green politics and environmental issues. And I decided when I was a student that I wanted to work at Friends of the Earth. So, I graduated in 1990 and came straight to Friends of the Earth and I worked in the Rainforest team as a volunteer...Geography has always interested me: different parts of the world. So, I was always very aware of having a job which didn't just done [sic] you money and you went home at the end of the day and forgot about it. I always wanted to do something that I felt I was very very into personally and not just professionally. *My main influence was my tutor at the university. I hated him [laughing]. It is very odd that he was the one who influenced me to go this way, but he did. He came up with this Marxist thing, he was very left wing and used to put his own politics to us. Which we didn't like. We were very sort of apolitical, if you like. I actually found the geographical side of it: weather systems, and how pollution affects weather systems and climate...that really interested me. We have such a strong influence on how the world, the natural world is evolving and it's damaging [sic]...I just sort of realised that was what I wanted to do.* (Friends of the Earth campaigner, female in her 20s)

¹¹⁹ All the emphasis in this and following quotations is mine.

And another, from WWF:

I've been at WWF for 8 years. I came to WWF from university. I did my MSc in Oxford in Forestry and Land Use. And then, I went to Forestry Conservation and initially I was working on field projects, particularly in West Africa, in Nigeria and Cameroon. And increasingly I've been working on policy, forest policy related to government and industry. (WWF campaigner, male in his 30s)

In these cases, it is the possibility of practising an 'applied science' and influencing the policy making related to forest issues that constitutes the basis or the motivating force behind their engagements. They initiated their professional careers at a time when campaigning was already run on a professional basis by NGOs. Although campaigning about the Amazon, the importance these campaigners attribute to 'being there' has not necessarily led them to the Amazon. For this specific group, Africa is the place mentioned as their first personal contact with a forest. It is referred to in the previous quotation from the WWF campaigner, and also in the following cases:

I have been to Africa, but not to any rainforests. But obviously I would like to go. It would be interesting. (FOE campaigner)

I've been enjoying travelling on my own and with friends, just because *I am very interested about what is happening in life around the world*. You know, I am curious and - in particular with Africa, I was very interested *I have got this fascination with Africa. Reaching various places and wildlife, nature in Africa. And I felt it was very important to be...to see these places, to visit and have knowledge and experience behind me. I've travelled a lot with Greenpeace as well. But it is nice to travel and to be involved in something on the ground*. (Greenpeace campaigner)

In terms of wildlife, and also as a personal interest, it seems that Africa (and Asia, but less so Latin America) plays an important role as a topos in the British cultural imagination, as it is mentioned by other campaigners, as well as being equally a popular trope in western literature and colonial texts, particularly the travel genre of which the classic example is Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.¹²⁰ An interest in exotic cultures and wildlife - two concepts which are always interlinked - underlies both imperialist and environmental practices. Some of those interviewed were even explicit in their political statements about the connection, seeing themselves as helping to repair 'what Britain did' to its ex-colonies.¹²¹ But for this particular group of campaigners travelling interests, less than the colonial guilt, have always combined with what a Greenpeace campaigner defined as 'a scientific component, an adventure component, and a community

¹²⁰ In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad writes: 'Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many *blank spaces on the earth*, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up *I will go there*. The North Pole was one of these places, I remember. Well, *I haven't been there yet*, and I shall not try now. The glamour's off' (1995:21-22). The emphases are mine. The idea of glamour and adventure related to the experience of travelling, or of 'being there', is also mentioned by some young campaigners as their first expectations of working for a NGO (See further section 4.1.4).

¹²¹ See section 4.1.2 below.

component'. It seems as though, following this order, it is the adventure component which offers the attachment to science in practical form, so that the community dimension seems simply a consequence of the other two aspects of the experience. All this has a direct influence on how Brazil and the Amazon are perceived within this tendency. The major concern seems to be with the preservation of 'the biodiversity'. When the 'forest people' are considered - mainly indigenous people - it is in relation to the preservation of 'the forest', in a *strictu sensus*.

Although involved in the campaign against the mahogany trade from the Amazon (see chapter five) for four and a half years, the Friends of the Earth campaigner only made her first journey to the Amazon shortly after the interview. The Greenpeace campaigner had just made a few weeks' tour by ship after over two years campaigning on the same topic. Although other campaigners from the same organisations, including WWF, had been on short trips to the Amazon for contacts with local NGOs, the point I am attempting to emphasise is that none of them had any particular personal links to that region of the globe. Expressing a 'sense of the globe', these campaigners were able to articulate forest issues within a frame of general economic and political structures. In other words, they were aware of global processes and politically articulate concerns about the impact of global economic practices upon particular forest areas. However, due to their specific social and personal backgrounds, it appears that for this particular tendency, forests are rather understood and conceptualised in an abstract and technical manner. Hence, it results from this that specific historical, cultural and social realities are still predominantly subsumed under general models of forests. In this sense, the realities comprising the Amazon rainforest seem to be equivalent to other rainforest contexts on the globe, such as Malaysia and Indonesia.

It follows from this that the contact that 'trees' campaigners have with the 'local communities' or 'local people' - as they are generically referred to - is mainly a professional contact with 'local' NGOs which play a crucial role as suppliers of information to those organisations in the UK. As the Friends of the Earth campaigner stated when I asked her if her organisation was developing any project in Brazil:

We have close ties with FOE International in the Amazon. I mean, with the Amazon FOE group. There is an organisation known as GTA which is a network of about 200 Brazilian NGOs. They wrote to us and said: please, can you work on this situation that is really terrible, we need your help... But there are a lot of other groups like that. The socio-ambiental...something like that [the ISA - Instituto Socio-Ambiental, which is a national organisation based in Brasília and São Paulo]. They are working to the same end, really. They are lobbying their government to try and halt the illegal logging of mahogany within the Indian reserves. They are taking on the human rights issue as well, the Indians being murdered and corrupted.

The priority of the agenda is indeed the mahogany trade. Although the Amazon is conceptualised in relation to its different ecosystems, there is a predominant focus on the *terra-firme* forests - the high canopy forest - as they are more easily framed in messages for the general public in the UK. Moreover, reflecting the growing international

concern with social justice and human rights issues, the defence of the 'local people', relates in this case to a particular population of the forest - the indigenous peoples in the Amazon. As the Greenpeace campaigner also states:

We've got an office, Greenpeace now in Rio, and we ally very very closely with them, over coming up with, as a Greenpeace International Representative, to come up with international strategies to make sure the campaign is successful. We have a very good, strong group of NGOs in this country working on the mahogany issue. We will be calling for a moratorium on the trade of Brazilian mahogany on the basis that the information we have from Brazil, from the people on the ground: Indian communities and environmental groups there, as well as Greenpeace, that the majority of mahogany there is logged illegally in indigenous reserves.

Nevertheless, although she is speaking about indigenous peoples and human rights issues, these ideas seem rather to be used as a secondary argument to support the main campaign target. Sometimes it even appears as though the interviewee is formulating a strategic argument for legitimising the campaign and mobilising sympathy, as she further explicitly states when asked about Greenpeace strategies for the mahogany campaign:

*The first stage is to build awareness of the problem. We do that through mailings and also through media coverage by selling the story to newspapers, to the television and to the radio. To get the message out, so to educate people that there is a problem. Once people have been educated that there is a problem, and then *they can use [the fact] that the people are hungry or they want to do something, so you can use that 'people panel' so to speak, to have an effect on where it matches.**

At other times, 'local people' - as a generic abstraction - may also refer to Brazilian NGOs and grassroots groups, as when campaigners need to justify that their campaigns evolved from local people's demands. For this group of campaigners, the links promoted with the Amazon are mainly through the professional, well-established NGOs. The fact that the Amazon is a place imagined in technical terms - mainly through a forestry perspective - increases the distance between global NGOs and the local communities. English, along with technical concepts, is the language spoken by the environmental actors, hence, there is a need for national intermediaries with the same skills. WWF, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth each have their own branches or offices in Brazil. As it was stated above, and in the following quotation from the Friends of the Earth Campaigner:

*We can't afford to support a group that has just set up and wants to work in the rainforest. You know, we don't have the time, the money or the resources. We are working on ourselves. *But, if there is a group working on it as well as us,**

and can provide us information well, we will work with them. Like we work with Survival or Greenpeace. It's mutual, you see.

Surely, there is a need to share principles and mutual goals in a co-operative project. However, the 'mutuality', which stands here for an equal relationship, is clearly defined and only understandable in relation to other UK organisations such as Greenpeace and Survival International. Actually, those NGOs set the standard or profile of what is expected from an organisation to work with in partnership. However, this profile raises some questions when the other side is an organisation from the Amazon. The global British-based NGOs' priority is to work with well-established professional NGOs, those with technical expertise, English, and computer skills which enable them to carry out research and to provide information. Local Amazonian issues need to be translated, and the relationship with grassroots or local Amazonian communities needs to be transformed by the intermediary Brazilian professional NGOs in order to coincide with the global agenda of the transnational organisations. Furthermore, the majority of the intermediary NGOs are based in the south of Brazil and depend on the financial support of international groups. The question that remains is: how far are the Brazilian NGOs able to address the needs of the local agendas, at the same time as they respond to the increasing demands for information from 'people on the ground' from the global NGOs? How much does the global agenda encompass or even erase the local demands? As the Greenpeace Campaigner points out:

The strength of the campaign is that it is international. It has these powerful international links. So, for example, in order for us to be running campaigns against mahogany in the UK, we need specific information from Brazil. Different, specific types of information. We need it in a way that we can use it. There is no point in turning...producing something we cannot use, or it is inappropriate or whatever. So, it is important that we sit down and talk about how to structure the international campaign; what we need from Brazil; to talk about the timing, or when things will happen or how we can help them.

The emphasis is in what 'we' - the UK campaigners - need. Of course this is justifiable in relation to the strategies for an international campaign. Governments, such as the Brazilian government, are vulnerable and responsive to international pressure. Moreover, there are certain limits within which global NGOs can act, and legitimise their actions, in order not to cross a nation-states' sovereignty and sensitivity. The mahogany campaign tackles the international trade - the imports of mahogany from Brazil by the UK and the US - and this is how the UK campaigners can comfortably campaign for the preservation of the forest without interfering in 'domestic' problems. My question is to what extent the Brazilian NGOs face the situation of spending their time and resources providing information to meet the demands of the global NGOs, instead of focusing on local and regional priorities - such as the issue of timber itself (which is predominantly consumed in the internal market), along with the issue of land reform, agribusiness, mining and all the consequent conflicts among different social and economic groups in the Amazon. In addition, are the well-established Brazilian NGOs considered 'global'

after all? If they are, what is their role in setting up global campaigns and strategies? This remains open for further investigation.

4.1.2 - The 'Trees and People' Tendency

Also participating in the mahogany campaign along with the above-mentioned mainstream UK environmental groups, there is a second tendency which tries to articulate the 'forest issues' in a broader political way. The campaigners within this tendency represent an older generation - generally in their 40s - with background training in a diverse range of fields related to the Social Sciences, Literature, Linguistics and the Arts. Hence, they are more diverse as a group than the campaigners analysed as part of the previous tendency. They are spread out in smaller organisations and networks such as Reforest the Earth, Gaia Foundation, and the World Rainforest Movement.

Their involvement with campaigning activity and their framing of the Amazon is related to ethical and political considerations developed since the 1970s, rather than being more technically oriented. A common ground between them is that they have been influenced by publications such as the *Blueprint for Survival*, and often relate to the peace and women's movements as associated areas of interest and engagement. The majority have had some experience of living in 'Third-world' countries (in Africa and Latin America, but not necessarily Brazil) and have established personal and professional links to particular indigenous communities and local organisations. Concerned with the empowerment of 'local communities', their activities range from direct action and political lobbying, to supporting of local projects and the networking of local groups - but are mainly concerned with indigenous peoples, as are the 'trees' campaigners.

Hence, the experience of 'being there' for this group is connected more to the growth of their political awareness and their political militancy rather than exclusively related to their technical and professional qualifications. As a campaigner for the organisation Reforest the Earth (female, 40s) points out:

I became political, I think, just through going to Cameroon and finding out that there were things that were wrong which you had to stand up for and do something about. Therefore I become more political as I get older. Because we have to take the power back from structures that are taking it away from us... I went out to live in Cameroon for three years. Because I wanted to do something called Voluntary Service Overseas. I was interested in - Third World development. You know, why we appeared to be rich and other countries appeared to be poor. And I thought it would be interesting to go to a Third World country and find out about that...I discovered that there was - the fault, if you like, of the Western countries, my country, why these other countries were poor and found out about the unfair trading relationships. I was quite shocked to find that colonialism wasn't dead... And find there was still racism around and begin to understand the whole system whereby people were kept in their place.

The personal experience of living in a 'Third-world' country, experiencing social and economic inequalities, helped to shape her political views and attitudes. The relation between different issues, such as gender, environment and peace, and the links she establishes between them at international, national, and local levels derive from that experience:

What's become quite clear now is that of course, the systems and structures around the world as a whole, it comes as a whole, have taken away the power from their own citizens as well. *So, it has become quite clear that poverty and the gap between rich and poor that we are finding in our country is connected to what I first noticed between the rich world and the poor world.* And it was that experience there and the beginning of the environmental movement here, with the first publication of the first ecologist magazine called *The Blueprint for Survival*, which made me aware of environmental issues.

Her travelling experience made her aware of systems of inequalities and power relations not only between her country and others, but also within her own country. Furthermore, her self-identity is not only formulated as an environmental campaigner, but through the experience of activism in the peace and women's movements:

And I went to Greenham. It was a women's peace camp. It was outside of one of the nuclear bases, American nuclear bases. And it attracted many different women. It was made a women's peace camp because there were some rapes and things early on and they - and also the aggression against men from the military was much greater than against women. There were all sorts of reasons why it became women. That was the first place I got arrested ever. And got involved in blockades. And that empowered me, really, to go back and do it here rather than just stay there.

The Reforest the Earth campaigner is well known for her 'direct actions', which range from office occupations to what she calls 'ethical shop-lifting' (see chapter five) in the case of mahogany, and have taken her to prison on several occasions. Politically she sees herself as coming from a Gandhian perspective of reacting in a non-violent way, with one's own body, to the exercise of power, e.g. by the state or other social structures. For her, the central issue is to 'empower the disempowered at all levels'. She sees gender, peace, human rights and environmental issues as all interlinked, and linked internationally, nationally and locally. Similar to the 'trees' campaigners, she does not have any particular link with the Amazon region or its people. She has made a short visit to the Amazon in order to make contacts with local NGOs, governmental agencies and mahogany traders. She has never lived there or learnt Portuguese, for instance. However, unlike those of the tendency previously discussed, her concerns are less technical than mainly political. Her views are directly concerned with global political and economic structures. Interacting or networking with the 'trees and people' tendency through the Forest Network-UK, her input into the mahogany campaign is to focus on how the international timber trade effects the life of the 'forest peoples':

I have travelled a lot and seen and mixed with so many different people. And I see that the structures that we are fighting are all very similar - and if you don't think of the human beings as part of the ecosystem too, if you don't involve local people, if you don't involve social justice as well - if you are just thinking about conserving a tree or a frog, and you don't look at the whole thing, then you are not going to be able to save it.

Nevertheless, acting globally for a small NGO such as Reforest the Earth implies several restraints. The information coming from the Amazon is pretty much dependent on the level of networking with the other UK NGOs, such as Friends of the Earth, WWF and Greenpeace. Thus, the layers of intermediaries between local communities and this kind of organisation increase enormously. Besides the nationally structured Brazilian NGOs, there is the intermediary of other global British based groups. This difficulty is felt not only on the level of technical information, but also in the lack of communication due to linguistic and cultural differences. Lacking knowledge of the local culture, history and language may imply a construction of generic categories, such as 'powerless', forest people, and so on, which are decontextualized and themselves displaced and emptied of their more precise meanings, they become, in a sense, 'empty signifiers'.¹²² It is also a form of distancing from local peculiarities that again, as with the previous tendency, allows for a political practice in global and structural terms. As such, 'the poor', 'the disempowered' and the 'local people' can be placed and replaced in different political struggles around global issues.

Another representative of this tendency is a former Survival International campaigner who now works in assisting the networking of local groups among themselves, and with global NGOs through the World Rainforest Movement. His personal, professional and political process of displacement took him to Africa and India before living for a few years in the Venezuelan Amazon as an anthropologist. His political awareness developed from his academic experience among the Yanomami people:

I was trying to understand how people conceive their relationship with their environment and to what extent there is a parallel with their real relationship with their environment. It was an academic study for a doctorate...*and all the time I was doing these studies I became more and more concerned about the future of the people.* Because I could see what happened was that these people were being basically destroyed through their contact with Venezuelan society, the outside world. And we were aware of the depredations of transnational corporations as well, as national business as well. All these people, and particularly the issue of land rights, the issue of health, because the Yanomami area had these terrible epidemics ...*and I was a witness to the impact of these epidemics and realised that these people were in crisis, all sorts of crisis...I decided that I didn't want to be an academic. Because the academics didn't seem to really care. They were just studying this process without really intervening, and I felt that we had the moral obligation to intervene in this process which was obviously unjust, and*

¹²² See the concept of 'empty signifier' in Laclau (1994).

certainly deadly. And so I converted into a...I keep becoming a human rights activist. (World Rainforest Movement, male in his 40s)

'Being there' for this campaigner brought him ethical and moral dilemmas which were rationalised in a political manner. Despite calling himself a 'human rights activist', he also classifies himself as a 'green', as in the following excerpt when he speaks about his experience of travelling around the world:

I was familiar with different cultures, with different ways of seeing things, with different languages, and I was also familiar with the fact that, you know, the English were not necessarily the best of everything at all. You know, there are other societies, so there are different answers to the same questions...and in many ways, when I went back to the Amazon in the 1970s, I was looking for alternative societies to explain what went wrong with ours and because even from the age of 16 I felt very alienated from the western civilisations. I was sure it was flawed and wrong, and I've always been a green in the sense that I've always thought that ...basically, capitalism is very materialistic and unloading in the long term. And it denies many other human values. And so, I was particularly interested in other human societies which maybe were driven by different forces.

It is possible to identify in the above statement parallels with the other campaigner regarding the links between their familiarity with other different cultures and their critical view of their own society, and the power relations operating in the global realm. In this particular case, his political identity as 'a green' who belonged to a generation of protesters and as readers of *Blueprint for Survival* in the 70s (the same literature mentioned by the other campaigner) is also matched by his readings of travellers, such as Alexander von Humboldt, in the Amazon. 'Being there' for this campaigner drove him personally closer to indigenous peoples and the problems faced with the 'outside world'. His links are more strictly constructed with indigenous people and their relationship with their environment - a totally exotic culture compared with his own, perhaps perceived as a more 'authentic' one in contrast to the capitalist societies which he classifies as 'wrong'. His primary focus seems to be on indigenous people and the impact they suffer from changes in their environment.

Similar to the statements of the Reforest the Earth campaigner, reflecting on the need to link up people and the environment, he expresses a criticism of the conservationist groups which he sees as particularly concerned with the rainforest destruction without considering the point of view of social justice and the local people. However he perceives this as a past approach and more optimistically points out that there has been a change in this kind of approach with the incorporation of such issues by the environmental movement at large.

When asked about his activities as a campaigner and his relationship with local people he explains:

Well, it's all kinds of different things, because it depends on what they need, or what they want, or what they ask for. So, it may be that they want to gain access to the International Tropical Timber Organisation, because their lands have been logged under projects supported by the ITTO. So, we would facilitate them to go to international meetings to lobby for their rights...So, we raise money so they can represent their own interests directly in negotiations with international institutions...We work to promote their own dialogue with aid agencies that are creating national policies. So, institutions like the World Bank maybe want them to develop a natural resource policy for a country...and the local communities may think that they should at least be consulted [laughing]. And so, we try to help them get information about that process....the majority of the work is on providing technical assistance in policy debates.

In contrast to the 'trees' tendency, the emphasis here is in what 'they' - indigenous communities - need. However, it is possible to say that there is a 'division of labour' in the Forest Network-UK field. As an umbrella organisation, the organisation he works for can encompass the other NGOs, but one of the differences between this approach and that of individual groups is the two-way flow of information. Hence, in contrast to the one-way flow of information from local to global which characterises most NGO relationships, information about global processes which effect local communities is given from global NGOs to local groups rather than simply the other way around. As a network of NGOs, information in this case circulates more local-globally, global-locally, local-locally than in other cases. Nevertheless, there is also the possibility of personal advocacy in specific situations and issues regarding international laws, or the activities of transnational corporations effecting indigenous peoples. His justification for his direct lobbying and advocacy is given in reference to the political context and criticism from nation-states in the 'South':

Unfortunately, it is the case that, you know, many of these governments tend to pay more attention to a Northern environmentalist than to their own people. Even though one's saying exactly the same thing, they take more notice...Some of these countries still require a lot of aid, and aid agencies have now got a concern about the environment. And some of them have got a concern about indigenous rights. The governments feel that the Northern campaigning organisations can affect how much aid they get if they don't show willingness. So, there is a conditionality in aid which can in fact support claims of local communities...so, they use the international campaigning organisations to create what they call 'conditionality' to impose conditions on the government which won't listen to their own people. So, because they won't bother to listen to their own people it's gone this whole laborious route round. So, what the governments have done is actually, by not listening to their own people, they've recreated their own colonialism. Because they now have been told what to do by the North. Because they won't listen to their own people in their own countries.

His remarks illustrate the relevance of 'Northern' NGOs support of claims of local communities that are marginalised by 'Southern' governments driven by a particular hegemonic 'developmental' agenda, which is itself also set up by global financial agencies. Moreover, it articulates a clear response to the allegations and accusations of 'eco-colonialism' by 'Southern' governments and local economic elites. As I have already mentioned, this was a recurrent topic during my interviews and a frame of reference for the discourses of the campaigners interviewed. By rationalising and legitimising their political engagements in global terms, whether through references to the field of international trade and other global power structures, or by stating ethical and moral responsibilities and solidarity with 'indigenous peoples' and 'local communities', they are often aware of the Brazilian sensitivity to the issue of transnational campaigning for the Amazon.

Across the range of environmental NGOs, active as I have shown within the Forest Network-UK, this 'trees and people' tendency still is in the minority, and most campaigners tend to follow the same agenda that is set up by the major environmental NGOs. Networking with the major British-based groups provides those with fewer resources the means to acquire information on 'local contexts', as well as to acquire the technical information they otherwise lack. On the other hand, the smaller groups have contributed valuable political input and skills to the campaigns run by the larger organisations (see chapter five). Nevertheless, lack of resources from smaller NGOs as well as prevailing interest from the major NGOs in the 'trees' tendency has led to the end of the Forest Network-UK in 1997, after a few years of productive exchange between different groups engaged in the mahogany campaign.

4.1.3 -The 'People' Tendency

Campaigners within the 'people' tendency have a political agenda related to the advocacy of human rights, social justice or 'social development' in 'Third-world' countries. They are active within the Brazil Network and are not particularly involved in forest campaigns, although they might express concerns about the Amazon forest mainly as the place where people have their livelihoods. They work for organisations such as Oxfam, Cafod, Christian Aid, Amnesty International and Survival International - this latter group keeping an interface with campaigners of the tendencies discussed above.

Generally speaking, they suggest some similarities to campaigners of the 'trees and people' tendency, particularly in terms of their professional qualifications and age composition. However, in contrast to those, they have a background history of political involvement with Latin America and Brazil. They usually have lived in Brazil, speak the language and have acquired significant knowledge and understanding of regional and domestic contexts, as well as considering their place in global dynamics.

In contrast to the 'trees' campaigners with expertise in forest issues, these campaigners can be defined as being 'Latin Americanists' or 'Brazilianists'. However, they believe they maintain a dialogue with the 'environmental' campaigners and, besides certain criticisms of the others' possible lack of 'knowledge' and acts of 'political compromise' to the Brazilian context, they believe they have politically influenced many of the changes within the field of environmental discourses. The views of this group can be

very close to those of the previous campaigners in the defence of indigenous peoples' rights, but they also encompass the other forest social groups and movements. A common and underlying campaign for this tendency is the campaign for 'land rights'.

Whether an indigenous rights campaigner, with a discourse very close to that of the World Rainforest Movement campaigner, or a campaigner for the peasant and the landless people in the Amazon (i.e. the local communities such as the rubber tappers and the riverine) a key commonality among the campaigners in this tendency is that they have somehow established personal ties or have had personal and professional experience in Brazil or in the Amazon. Alongside the links with local NGOs, they have also established links with local communities, as well as with grassroots and other social and political movements.

This is the case with a campaigner from Survival International, an organisation from this 'people' tendency that has close interaction with environmental organisations. However, the closest personal and professional ties are to those campaigning for social and economic rights in the Amazon:¹²³

I lived in Roraima (a state in the Amazon region), precisely where there are many indigenous problems, for fourteen months. I worked in an environmental project which was run by Impa, in Manaus, and the Royal Geographical Society in London. So, it was a great experience...I heard about the project and I wanted to go back to Latin America. Because I did some academic research in Peru, with the Quechua people, and I spoke a little bit of Quechua. *And also, my parents used to live in Venezuela. So, I always felt myself to have very close ties to Latin America...and then, when I was a child I spent five years in South Africa, and then I think that it comes from there, my awareness of racism and the lack of basic human rights during apartheid. I believe it raised in me the will to be more involved in the minorities' struggles.* (Survival International, female, 30s)

The displacement experience made her politically aware of minority problems, and while living in Latin America the minority in question was the indigenous population. As with others in this group, although also going into 'the field' as a researcher, it is in the areas of humanities or social sciences that they find their interests, and not in the field of forestry. This is for instance also the case with a former Oxfam and Rainforest Foundation campaigner. Belonging to what she defines as 'an older generation' of British activists, in comparison with that she calls 'the greens', her involvement with the Amazon was a result of her political experience in South America, as a socialist supporter of Salvador Allende in Chile in the early 1970s:

In '72 I went to Chile. It was my student's adventure. I wanted to know Latin America. I wanted to know Allende, the country of Salvador Allende. Then I was studying. I was going to do a PhD in Chile. But I studied very little. I spent more than one year, one and a half years in Chile, at that time of Allende. I was

¹²³ This interview was carried out in Portuguese and I have translated the passages presented here into English.

there during the state coup in Chile, right? September '73, right? Then I met many Brazilians, Latin Americans from many countries who were in exile there...*It [socialism] is a kind of romanticism again* [laughs]. Then I decided to come back. I had few options because I had finished my studies with the state coup... I came back after the coup and went to work for the international office of Amnesty International. I will never forget, because my first work, one of my first works at Amnesty was to prepare the campaign of the ten years of coup in Brazil, right?... Researching the number of political prisoners, tortured, disappeared in Brazil. (female in her 40s)

Her involvement with Brazil was, thus, from the beginning a result of her socialist views and interests. The political experience in Chile referred to as a 'student's adventure' places her in the context of the European-Latin American leftist engagement and political solidarity movement of the 1970s, by contrast to the 'environmental' flow of late 1980s and 1990s. Hence, it seems as though the contact with 'the exotic', which for the 'trees' campaigners has a political meaning related to the 'exoticism' of biodiversity, or even the indigenous populations - a utopia of 'nature' in symbolic terms - for this group assumes the meaning of an 'exotic' political regime or a symbolic social utopia. The 'socialist' background is a topic treated with irony, perhaps reflecting the political and ideological fragmentation of the 1990s. The student's romantic adventure in Chile was thus finished with the state coup in that country. Back to England, the student became a professional campaigner for NGOs, whose interests gradually shifted from the advocacy of political human rights to a broader, more economic and social perspective:

Then I left [Amnesty] in 1990. I needed to move. My considerations about the meaning of human rights changed. Amnesty only works about political rights, right? Political and social. And now the issue of economic rights is not worked by Amnesty International. And I was interested in that. I wanted to get into another field, to change and to broaden my knowledge...I was a very active trade unionist. Especially in the 70s and 80s in this country, I was a campaigner for trade unionists and workers who were in prison and persecuted *I suppose that was the kind of way I moved. Because the main problem for the trade unionists, workers, peasants who get persecuted is that they are fighting for a better life. And a better life - as well as being more political freedom is also more economically based - better, better life, you know? A bit more money* [laughing], *more wages, more land...*

The topic of romanticism emerges again when she refers to her connections to the Amazon forest. Her first involvement with the Amazon was while working on the development of health and agricultural projects among two indigenous groups in Peru:

So, my first contact with indigenous forest peoples was with those two peoples. And I grew to love them and respect them enormously. *To love their country, their land, the forest, the trees, the rivers, the insects. The bad thing, the heat, all the bad things that most Europeans hate, the insects - all these things...And*

so, there is a level of romanticism. I'm still a totally incurable romantic. I'm not - I'm not afraid of saying that - but I'm also - working in this area, so I have to try to balance my romanticism with a degree of rigorous objectivity as well.

Her self-image as a romantic person is ironically contrasted to those who she believes are considered romantic by many Brazilians: 'most European environmentalists'. The reason why she emphasises her personal and direct experience of the 'bad things of the forest', particularly the insects, is because she knows that there is a general view in Brazil that Europeans concerned with the preservation of forests are romantic and many times have never been to a forest. She tells me this because she thinks it is something we both acknowledge, although she is not sure about my position as a Brazilian. There is also an implicit criticism, or an opposition to those technical environmentalists. She believes that her practical experience legitimises her involvement with Amazon people: she has 'been there' through her work, therefore despite her 'romanticism', she has 'objective' knowledge and experience of what she campaigns for.

Objectivity and professionalism are highlighted as those attributes currently valued for professional campaigners amidst the proliferation of NGOs, particularly since the UNCED-92. This can be further observed through the statements of the Survival International campaigner:

We think that to achieve positive changes in the world, you have to influence, at the end of the day, the governments, because they are the ones making policies. And the best way to do it is through public pressure. But we do it in a peaceful way and the Brazilians know that. We are respected for our work because we work in a serious way. We are respected because we are always trying to be in the field. I go there and I speak to a lot of people. It is very important to research and to publish after carrying out a rigorous investigation of the facts. We have arguments with governments as well as institutions such as the World Bank. We write letters to the different responsible bodies and we are very respected for the accuracy of our information. It is very important to have direct contact to the area, to speak directly to the indigenous groups and also to the Brazilian organisations working at the grassroots level.

There is an implicit reference here to those various environmental organisations which appeared in the 90s following the environmental wave of the Rio-92 Conference. However, the debate between the different campaigners in the UK can be traced way back to even before the Conference. Belonging to an 'older generation' of political campaigners in the UK with close ties to Latin America, a former Oxfam campaigner tells me of her experience in political debates in the mid 80s with what she classifies as the 'new generation of political activists in Latin America - the greens':

In the years of 86, 87, 88, we were very few who really used to speak about the social issues in the Amazon. The images from the media here were very frustrating and negative. There was only the forest, the green, the animals, the trees, the

burning...*I became very critical and angry about those documentaries. The Indians were not people. They were exotic in the exotic forest: 'we must protect the Indians, the animals, the trees, the river, etc'. They were all equal. It was horrible.* Up till today, the media does not acknowledge that in the Amazon there are cities, big cities which emerged in this period in the 80s. But to speak about cities to the public here in the context of the Amazon, ecology, social development - forget it.

The campaigns concerned with 'Amazonian people' are not only related to the indigenous populations, but encompass other social groups such as peasants and rubber tappers, tackling issues of land rights and fair trading. The Brazil Network, in which the 'people' campaigners act, hosts also a range of individuals such as journalists, film-makers and academics involved with Brazil. As expressed above, there is a certain cleavage between the campaigners within this 'people' tendency, and those concerned with biodiversity issues in the Amazon. There is even a certain dispute in terms of political legitimacy between those who perceive themselves as 'Brazilian experts' and long term militants, and the 'new' political actors represented by the environmentalists. Environmentalists, and events such as the Earth Summit, are resented for having 'stolen peoples' agenda'. Nevertheless, if this group was very critical of environmentalists in the mid 1980s for their lack of sensitivity to social, economic and political issues related to the Amazon, environmentalists for their part might perceive this group as acting as 'charities' on a very localised, temporary and fragmentary basis - as aid agencies rather than as campaigners for transformations on a broader scale. Differences apart, most campaigners for the Amazon within what I have called the three tendencies in the UK do express a vision about global processes and the related effects upon 'local people'. The debate and disputes among them have contributed to a mutual fostering of new perspectives, dynamics, and actions in global as well as in local policies towards the Amazon and its people.

4.1.4 - Being There: Images of the Amazon and Britishness

The differences and tensions between what I have labelled the three tendencies in the UK can also be perceived in an analysis of the campaigners' personal memories of their 'first hand' experience of the Amazon, for instance, through what is remembered and what is forgotten, what is highlighted and what is played down in their statements about their first visit to the Amazon.

In this section I wish to explore a little further some of the campaigners' personal first hand experiences of the Amazon. In doing so, I will discuss three correlated aspects of these experiences. Firstly, I seek to understand their perceptions of, and reflections on, both the forest and their own culture back in Britain. In other words, the extent to which the travelling experiences, particularly the engagement with a place so alien to their home land, shape their local perceptions in their own country. Some of these aspects have already been discussed in the previous section, as in when campaigners articulated a sense of global unequal relations which underlined their political awareness and engagement. I shall focus now on the cultural and symbolic elements underlying

political and professional justifications. Secondly, in following their recollections I will attempt to understand the meanings that are constructed or heightened, on the one hand, and the ones that are forgotten, silenced or erased by the different campaigners. Thirdly, besides the perceptions framed within the context of the features already described in each tendency - such as differences of generation, professional qualifications and political interests - other elements, for instance gender differences, can also be highlighted in relation to their willingness to speak in a more personal manner, and the form in which they choose to do so.¹²⁴

In the personal recollections of the interviewees' first direct experience of the forest, a reflection about the British culture did emerge and was associated with the following topics: adventure, romanticism, political unawareness, racism, lack of community life, sadness, love for animals, among other things. Such topics are critically brought about and negatively assessed by campaigners when speaking about their own society. British cultural elements are assessed in terms of the past, whereas Brazil and the Amazon in terms of future possibilities. The British cultural elements of adventure and romanticism are recurrent topics referred to in mentioning their journeys to the Amazon, but interestingly enough, they are constructed in quite a different manner by a female and a male campaigner, for instance, both who fell into the category of the 'people' tendency.

I went there because the Amazon is a trip of a lifetime for us. It is the ultimate adventurer's dream, right? People sit down and tell exciting stories, like I went to the Amazon or...before the Amazon was the North Pole, I don't know. The Amazon is the ultimate. There is nowhere else on earth, really. (Female campaigner, 20s, Oxfam)¹²⁵

I was certainly aware of it being a very romantic place when I did finally visit it. The expectations must have included all that, in that sense of it being one of the great journeys of the world, if you like. Like visiting the pyramids, or walking the Inca trail or whatever.(Male campaigner, 40s, Save the Children Fund)

My attempts at exploring some of the interviewees' more 'subjective' and 'personal' recollections during the interviews were often underlined by uncomfortable feelings and resistance.¹²⁶ Such uneasiness was solved in different manners by the different campaigners. In the above examples, the male campaigner creates a certain 'distance' that allows him to present some of his feelings without 'compromising' himself. He divides his remarks into two categories: emotional and intellectual ones. Hence, his discourse is presented as though an 'intellectual' evaluation - like a 'public' memory of his experience - stressing his awareness of the Amazon as a place romantically imagined by the

¹²⁴On the forms of narratives and genres see Chamberlain and Thompson (1998).

¹²⁵Here again Joseph Conrad can be evoked in relation to the exploration of the 'blank spots on the map'. For a discussion on the Amazon as a type of Western fetish - a forest that enters the 21st century nearly intact - and the prospects of a new relationship between society and nature, see Arnt and Schwartzman (1992).

¹²⁶ See discussion in chapter three.

British people to convey a cultural and more objective explanation of his expectations. Yet the young female campaigner is more explicit and less cautious in including herself among those seeking adventure in the Amazon. However, it is equally relevant to consider the different contexts in which both journeys took place in order to understand the different forms of narratives. In the first case, the trip to the Amazon was part of a personal journey to the region, and not as a professional experience, as it was in the second case, where the campaigner was undertaking fieldwork, collecting data for the writing of a book commissioned by an organisation.¹²⁷

Nevertheless, whatever the context, when I asked them to tell me about their first impressions of the Amazon, the 'people oriented' campaigners recalled the following:

When I went there, It was the cities that surprised me most. I went to Belém and thinking: this is really big!...it wasn't really until we got the bus from Manaus into the jungle that I understood that the forest and what it was really like to live there. But the thing that surprised me most was the trees, I think. Because I expected trees, trees, trees, and forest. And I found it a shock, really, that from the road everywhere was fazenda (farms) and cattle...It did feel like an adventure, you know. When we got in a bus...full of Brazilians, you know, garimpeiro (gold diggers) who is going to work in his mine, WOW! These were the things we had been hearing about. And he was telling us about the garimpo, and how he had been forced to do that job because he was poor...That is another image people have...people see the problem as black and white. There is good and bad. If you are Indian you are good, if you are white, you are bad...I am not a forest person. I don't really like forests. I find the forest - it was hot, it was very humid, the climate was horrible, and I felt not in control, really...dangerous, animals...uhrr... (Female campaigner, 20s, Oxfam).

I can only answer by highlighting the things that struck me *emotionally* and things that I was *surprised by*. *Just in terms of the environment of it...*there are *two emotional responses*: one is how beautiful it is, and the other is how awful and untamed it is...I got bitten [by mosquitoes] very badly every time I went to the Amazon. So, I understood the sort of green hell vision of the Amazon. I have never been attacked by anything very nasty, but I think I just loved it. It was just such a romantic thing to be there...some more positive, I remember staying in a clearing once, with my arms stretched out like that, and just butterflies landing all over the place. *But I am talking emotionally here*. So, these things are perceptions that I would not share completely *intellectually*. *I was struck by how many people there are in the Amazon*. By the extent to which the region is already colonised...the idea that the Amazon can just be full of fences. You know, the huge sort of cattle estates...just fences saying: this bit belongs to somebody...a lot more people doing a lot more things than I expected. (Male campaigner, 40s, Save the Children Fund)

¹²⁷ Compare also to the 'people oriented' campaigner in section 4.1.3 when she speaks about her romanticism and her objectivity.

In the above excerpts the campaigners separate their remarks into social and physical environmental impressions. It is worth noting that an 'emotional' component of the recollections, particularly as stated in the second quotation, is mainly reserved for the feelings and experiences of the physical or natural environment, whereas the feelings about the social aspects are buried under a 'rationalised' perspective. It is as though one realm would automatically exclude the possibility of the other, or in other words, the reference about 'trees' would automatically imply a silence about social problems. It is equally interesting to highlight here the meaning that an 'adventure in the jungle' might have for the campaigners of different orientations. Besides the more common idea of crossing rivers in exotic, dangerous, unknown or even unpleasant environments, what is implied above is the adventure of being in personal contact with the situations of social problems and conflicts in the Amazon, which these campaigners have acknowledged in theory during their work. This is a point which they also emphasise while speaking about their difficulties of addressing the social dimension in campaigning about the Amazon within the context of the British public:

Intellectually, I get very upset by people in Britain or people in the North who want to romanticise poverty; who want to romanticise environments in which people don't have access to fundamental services like health and education...and people, for example: rubber tappers in the Amazon who may have a journey of a week in order to reach a health post. Who, in that sense, live very hard lives, and who are extremely vulnerable to illness and injury, things that can kill and cripple people...because the Indians really want proper health posts, and they want them within access, they want proper schools, ...and television, or whatever....and no one asked: would you like to live in Xapuri...in a town? Absolutely not. Not one of them want to live in a town...these are some of the things that struck me. (Male campaigner, late 40s, Save the Children Fund).

...[it is very difficult] to speak about cities, big cities to people here [in the UK]...There are many cities in the heart of the Amazon which are whole 'favelas'. They are not planned. They were built like garimpo [mining] or sawmill basis. They are horrible. I just came back from a town called Redenção, in the south of Pará state. It is a little nice town, paved, with shops, with lots of people from Goiás: 'Blondes' right, 'civilised' etc...there is a sense of tranquillity and respect. But this town is finished. The gold diggers went away, the timber traders were expelled by the Federal Police and other federal forces. The city has no economy. It is violent, but you don't see it. It is like a cowboy city on the frontier....It is a contrast because it is a city more or less wealthy. But there, inside this town, there are Indians who have nothing. They are totally dependent on the gold digger, the timber trader...but to speak about cities to the British public is not possible. It is not worth it until nowadays (Former Amnesty and Oxfam campaigner, 40s)

Despite the attempt at 'intellectualised rationality', one can note the presence of a strong emotional response to issues of social exclusion regarding the Amazon. This response further articulates the ongoing accusations that 'Northern' romantic ideas and expectations about the Amazon end up downplaying concerns for social rights. Furthermore, the above excerpts illustrate some of the dilemmas and impasses of campaigning for 'people' regarding the Amazon in the context of the UK.

In contrast to the urban and social recollections of the Amazon by the 'people' campaigners, the narratives of the 'trees' campaigners highlight their experience of the natural environment *strictu sensu*, where memories of cities and people are either absent or very secondary. It is also relevant to mention that their more personal recollections of the Amazon are brought out in a more induced manner, through a question and answer style of interview, instead of coming from a more spontaneous dynamic in the context of their own reflections. As pointed out in the previous sections, the 'trees' campaigners are a younger generation of campaigners, trained in forestry, ecology and other related areas. Their remarks tend to be shaped from a more professional-technical discourse, and they are the ones who most strongly avoid speaking in a more subjective manner, as though avoiding possible accusations of emotionality and romanticism as demonstrated in the quotes below. However, as with the 'people' campaigners, gender differences can also be identified in the way they speak about their personal recollections. This is the case, for instance, of two Greenpeace campaigners who had their first trip to the Amazon during a Greenpeace boat tour in October 1994:

...unfortunately, because of the nature of the boat we didn't get the opportunity to get into the forest. But because we held lots of meetings in the boat with other NGOs, and talking to the people about what they are doing, I found it very inspiring and encouraging...and, of course, the Amazon is just totally beautiful [laughing and pause]...

How was your feeling about it?

No, I was totally overwhelmed by the...leaving Belém...before we went to the main river, it was just incredible. [pause] The most incredible thing I remember from the Amazon was...we had to go out on a trip with inflatables, the little boats, for a day to visit a very small rubber tapper community, and when we came back very late at night, and it was dark as we came back. There was the moonlight coming over, a tiny tiny tributary....we were just sort of closed in by the forest and it was so incredible, and the most amazing thing was the overpowering smell of the forest. It is the thing I remember most. Really incredible.

What kind of smell?

Well, sort of thick, heavy fragrance, suffocating, but a beautiful smell, really powerful smell. That I found it very incredible and it is one of the strongest images that I have...racing on in this boat under a sort of an archway, a trip very close to the forest and just this incredible fragrance, sort of perfume, very thick. So, that's my sort of most powerful memories really in the Amazon. (Female campaigner, 30s, Greenpeace)

It is interesting to point out that in contrast to the 'people' campaigners, there are no explicit or self-reflexive remarks or assessments concerning romanticism and adventure by the 'trees' campaigners. However, the 'beauty' of the forest is spoken about with embarrassment and caution, as suggested by the laugh followed by a pause in this first quotation, when the topic finally did emerge. Furthermore, an element of adventure can be also noted through an indirect reference to Greenpeace's type of actions - as when she mentions crossing the river in little inflatable boats late at night.¹²⁸ This element of adventure can further be observed in the following remarks by a male Greenpeace campaigner, in which the journey in the Amazon also included other elements, such as the extraordinary and risky confrontations against powerful forces, which are components of the Greenpeace's ethos¹²⁹:

How was your experience in the Amazon?

My experience? Well, it is Brazil.

What does it mean?

It is a bit chaotic and officials were giving us a lot of problems, the navy was following us. They just get concerned when anybody talks about the Amazon. It is much bigger than I thought. You really...to understand the scale of the Amazon, that was very impressive to me. Big areas. That is a big area. And to see how people live, and to see how important the Amazon is for people and for movement of people and goods. And really understand, I mean, the main transportation and...settlement. I think the Amazon river, and its tributaries, it is really the key. And so, just to see these things first hand, I think it is very important. The biggest impact for me is that I have a better feeling of the significance of Brazil as an economic and ecological, social important place.

Why?

Because it is big. (Male campaigner, 30s, Greenpeace)

It is important to highlight from the above excerpt, the realisation of the importance of the Amazon *for* people - as though the Amazon was firstly conceived as a system separated from people. Furthermore, this realisation resulted from his first-hand, personal experience of the forest. Nevertheless, another aspect to consider is that here too, as in the previous quote, the element of adventure seems to be connected to situations involving conflict and confrontation - as the situation of being followed by the navy and the police in a country that is perceived as a 'bit chaotic'. But, unlike the meaning of conflict conceived by the 'people' campaigners, in which they present themselves as witnesses of the established social conflict and violence in the region, as for instance, the

¹²⁸It is interesting to note that the same campaigner mentioned in section 4.1.1 that NGO work involved 'adventure, community and scientific' elements.

¹²⁹See further Hansen (1993).

clashes between gold diggers and Indians, or gold diggers and the Federal Police, the Greenpeace campaigners see themselves as the agents or actors in the confrontation.¹³⁰

Another interesting contrast between the two tendencies expressed above regards their different perceptions of the Amazon population. A shared perception amongst all campaigners involves the sense of 'scale' in which the Amazon and Brazil are presented as 'big', perhaps reflecting their comparison with the smaller scale of the UK. Nevertheless, whereas the 'people' campaigners expressed surprise at the extent to which the Amazon is highly populated, and they include big cities in their memories of the Amazon, the experience of the 'trees' campaigners seemed to exclude cities from their recollections about the Amazon. In some cases, they even stressed the more 'empty' or isolated places in the forest, not considering the towns as part of their experiences of the Amazon, as also seen in the following:

It was a surprise how much the banks of the Amazon change. I imagined that it would just be sort of a wall of jungle the whole time we were there. But, it wasn't. Every morning we woke up the banks were totally different: they would be small one day and tangled jungle the next, and sort of flat in the next, and the mountains in the next. So, that was really surprising. I didn't imagine it would be like that...it was full of variety...So, also amazing were tiny little communities, and just one ...you see a little hut and nothing in a day maybe...and another hut...just on the fringes without any crowd protecting them. I just tried to understand that life style. I have never been to anywhere quite so isolated before, although I have travelled a lot. I found that quite incredible as well.(Female campaigner, 30s, Greenpeace).

The variety of forest features discovered with surprise in the above passage might be also contrasted to the more homogenous landscape of maintained woods, and 'man made' parks, commonly found in Great Britain, and even in other forest areas in Europe, such as the Black Forest, in Germany. In contrast to the 'people' tendency, there is an absence of statements about some of the more 'negative' aspects of the forest, such as the heat, mosquitoes, and particularly the poverty of the people in the Amazon. Their emphasis on the isolation of small communities in little huts by the river could be identified by the other campaigners as being an 'emotional' and romantic view, or as the 'people' campaigner named it, 'a romanticisation of poverty'. This can be also implied by the 'trees' campaigner's comments on the poverty of the rubber tapper community visited, a topic that was introduced by me when she referred to the tappers' lives as being a very 'simple' and 'honest' way of living:

[They are] poor, but in a funny, different scale, really. Because they might be seen as poor, but on the other hand, they have as much forest as they like, you know. They have water, they have food and resources. And they have everything they need to live. It is not as they are short of food, or water, or anything.

¹³⁰Compare for instance, with the film-makers with a 'tree' orientation in the documentary *The Mahogany Trail* analysed in chapter 6, and also Mombiot (1991), in which film-makers and the writer are the main characters.

But from the natural, nature more point of view, they have everything they need to live. And they seem quite happy and content, and it is nice. It is a nice feeling that kind of simple happiness and respect for nature and living with nature without feeling you want more. (Female campaigner, 30s, Greenpeace)

This view can be sharply opposed to the remarks of the 'people' campaigner about the same rubber tappers, when he states:

...rubber tappers in the Amazon who may have a journey of a week in order to reach a health post. Who, in that sense, live very hard lives, and who are extremely vulnerable to illness and injury, things that can kill and cripple people...

Nevertheless, as he also states, this is not to say that these people want to live in towns, but that they want to have reasonable access to health, education and other services within their communities. It appears that the idea of a 'community life' for the 'people' campaigner would not exclude access to social welfare as it is conceived in the West. For the 'trees' campaigner, however, the concept of wealth is essentially related to unlimited access to natural resources. Nevertheless, it is interesting how the framing of the same topic can assume a totally different meaning when articulated by the 'trees and people' tendency, a tendency that also pursues the more complete intersection of biodiversity and social justice issues:

If you go to communities in other countries which are very poor, but which live a self-sufficient way of life, and then, that material wealth is enough. They don't have bad illness and they are quite healthy. And they have their basic necessities. I give Africa as a point here. Because 40 years ago most communities in Africa had that wealth. And they have been impoverished. They are suffering so much...they are struggling in their everyday - and that's the case of some areas in Brazil, in São Paulo, in the streets, and it is more to do with urban poverty. You don't find the same levels of poverty always in the rural areas. But even in the rural areas now, if you have a set up whereby rich landowners, or you have a rich company, plantation work or whatever, then he can control your life and you have nothing. *So, I am not talking about that. I am talking about those communities which still have control over their everyday lives. And they are getting fewer. And the fewer that they are, the more our politicians are telling us that they never existed. That there was this terrible poverty here and you need this, you need that, and you need to consume and have your television sets, your cars...which is a lie. Of course you need basic necessities, and in the past, in some cultures they were able to arrange those for themselves. And that got out of balance when other people want to exploit your labour, or your minds and your resources.* (Female campaigner, 40s, Reforest the Earth)¹³¹

¹³¹One can note in this quotation resonance of the critique of 'development discourse' as discussed by contributions in Sachs (1992).

The discourse of the 'trees and people' campaigner is more politically constructed against the hegemony of western, capitalist and consumerist society versus traditional ways of living that continue to coexist in post-colonial contexts. Her statements express a concern about the proletarianisation of local self-sustainable communities, their dependency, loss of autonomy and exploitation by vast economic interests acting in name of 'development', as already discussed in the previous section. What is interesting to stress here is the fact that the natural resources are related to the autonomy of local communities which are powerless, particularly on the expansionist frontiers of the capitalist society. It is the idea of the control of the natural resources by local populations that can provide possibilities for more potent articulations of social autonomy..

In reflecting on traditional ways of living found in the Amazon, an inevitable comparison to the western societies is made. Speaking about her own country and culture, the interest for landscape, animals, 'big things', and wilderness, the 'trees and people' campaigner states:

I think it comes from the fact that we have destroyed ours a long time ago. So, we became sentimental about it, you know. And it is always romanticised wilderness and things like that. But, I think that there is a value for the human psyche to have wilderness, to have areas where we are not in total control. We've gone down the route, in this country, of trying to control everything. Control nature, everything is tidy and neat. And, it is not, in fact. It is breaking down. Our society has been broken down because of that. People don't know how to be human properly anymore. When I go down the street here in this country, and I look at people, their eyes are dead, you know. They seem to be half dead. They are grey, you know. people can blame it on the climate. And the climate is hard, I agree. But it is not that. They have no joy in life anymore because they've been controlled from the outside. They are like domesticated animals. And I think that on some level we recognise this. That is why we want to protect wild spaces elsewhere. And, then, of course, the politicians in the Third-World countries will say: 'well, how dare they tell us what to do when they've done this there, and they're eco-imperialists'. It is not that. It is a desperate wanting to share what we are at and say to them: 'do you really want what we've got here? Because you've been fooled if you think that it's about material wealth'. Because quite frankly, it is better not to have that material wealth and to have something which you can't buy. Which is a joy of life. To be in control of your own, you know. And to have community spirit. Our community spirit has died. We don't have community anymore. (Reforest the Earth campaigner)

In presenting the ways in which British campaigners of different orientations speak about their personal experience of the Amazon, I discussed what was remembered, and what was forgotten by campaigners in different tendencies. For instance, some campaigners remembered forests and forgot cities, whereas others emphasised poverty over the wealth of the different ecosystems. Thus, the idea was not to discuss images that were more real or true than others, but to present the ultimate effects of meanings produced when different perspectives interact in a discursive field. .

Hence, in short, all three tendencies identified here do articulate 'trees and people', that is, issues of biodiversity, social justice, human rights and social development. Different positions arise from campaigners' specific personal and social trajectories, which lead them to participate in discourses that emphasise one aspect of the field or another. I have specified regularities and discursive patterns through discussing the campaigners' experiences as travellers, their professional training, generation, political awareness and involvement with the Amazon and Brazil. If the differences reveal a diverse and dynamic campaigning field, they also unveil some problems of communication and exchange to be overcome by campaigners amongst themselves in the UK, as well as with their Brazilian counterparts. In this sense, it seems that the technical expertise orientation of campaigners under the 'trees' tendency - a necessary element of the NGO work in their counter-arguments to policy makers and business interests - along with a global perspective mainly focused on biodiversity, and a sense of cultural distance from particular social and historical contexts in the Amazon, are the main problems to overcome. The Amazon is cut off from its historical, local and regional contexts and often projected into the global arena as a mere ecosystem, under the influence of global economic and political forces. Long-standing historical patterns of policies in the region, as well as different social systems in the Amazon, become invisible or subsumed in relation to technical punctual abstractions and definitions under global patterns. Although 'trees and people' campaigners may contribute with political input to campaigns generally run by the 'trees' tendency, their activities are restricted because of lack of resources, technical expertise and information 'from the ground'. On the other hand, a possible challenge for the 'people' tendency seems to be the incorporation of environmental issues more stringently into their own agendas while still encouraging the social component to be dealt with seriously by the others.

CHAPTER 5

ENGAGING 'TREES' AND 'PEOPLE': THE CAMPAIGNS

Gradually, the image of nature is shifting; even the unspoiled parts are no longer seen as 'commons' which nobody is allowed to cash in, or as a heritage endowed to all living beings, but as a commercial asset in danger. As a result, the widespread acclaim of 'sustainability' makes it harder to sustain an environmentalism which talks about earth and aesthetics, rather than about resources and economics (Sachs 1995 [1993]: xvii).

There have been effectively two major campaigns guiding the agenda of British-based NGOs in relation to the Brazilian Amazon in the 1990s. 'Trees' along with 'trees and people' campaigners active within the Forest Network-UK, have mainly been involved in the mahogany campaign - a campaign against the British imports of mahogany, a rare tree species which is predominantly found and illegally logged within Indian reserves. My analysis shall focus on the history, framework, dynamics and strategies of different organisations involved in this particular campaign, along with the responses it has generated from the Brazilian government and the British timber trade.

The second campaign mobilises mostly campaigners from the 'people' tendency who are active in the Brazil Network. They have been principally engaged in a campaign for land rights in Brazil as a whole. This entails not only the demarcation of indigenous lands, but a campaign for an overall land reform - such as an agrarian reform - since the concentration of land is at the core of social inequalities in Brazil.¹³² In this regard, support for the largest social movement in Latin America, the movement of the landless - *Movimento dos Sem-Terra* (MST) - has increased in the second half of the 1990s. Nonetheless, a long standing campaign for land rights and social justice in the Amazon region has particularly been concerned with the demarcation of indigenous lands. Hence, I shall focus my analysis on the issue of indigenous land rights, particu-

¹³²Brazil holds the record as one of the world's most unequal systems of land distribution, a problem deeply rooted in its historical colonial past. According to official statistics (IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística), in 1985 small farms (properties with less than ten hectares per family) accounted for approximately fifty-three per cent of the rural properties, but only possessed three per cent of the farming land. At the other extreme, large estates called *latifúndios* represented one per cent of the farmers, but owned forty-three per cent of the farming land. The situation remains pretty much the same in the 1990s (Armani 1996). In terms of population this means that four million peasant farmers share three per cent of the farming land in a country where forty-two per cent of the arable land remains idle, while thirty-two million people live in misery. See further Branford and Glock (1985), Martins (1988), Veltmeyer (1993).

larly as it interfaces with the mahogany campaign. Emphasis will be given to the relationship between ethnicity, environmentalism and social issues in the representation of indigenous peoples' interests to European constituency of supporters.

5.1 - The Mahogany Campaign

The mahogany campaign was launched in the early 1990s and became the most visible and relevant Amazon campaign in Britain during this decade. It has occupied the agenda of the majority of forest campaigners, and it is supported by different NGOs in this country and in Brazil, while impelling responses from the trade both in the UK and Brazil, as well as from the Brazilian government.

The strength of the campaign is due to a conjunction of factors from which I highlight the following: the momentum that it was launched with, along with the way the issue was framed in Britain, and the wide range of NGOs involved with different and combined strategies.

5.1.1 - Momentum and Framework

The mahogany campaign emerged when the 'Amazon issue' was undergoing a decline on the international scene, following the saturation of campaigns and media coverage, which reached its peak in the late 1980s. Putting it briefly, during that time, and as a development of the MDB (Multilateral Development Bank) campaign launched by the US groups in 1983,¹³³ attention was given to the issue of the burning of the forest, particularly by agents such as cattle ranchers and settlers under governmental policies and incentives.¹³⁴ Images of the burning of the Amazon inundated the media, and by the beginning of the 1990s, the Amazon was considered a topic already dealt with by the press.

The Brazilian economic crisis - which was responsible for subsequent reduced investments in the Amazon region at the time - and governmental cosmetic measures along with global initiatives, such as the Earth Summit in 1992, also contributed to the impression that environmental problems, particularly deforestation, were now being tackled and resolved by the established legal and governmental authorities.

In this context, the fact that mahogany became an issue in the UK was principally due to the manner in which it was framed: *i*) as *the new and real threat* to the Amazon; *ii*) with *clear links* identifiable on both sides of the trade, *iii*) and, particularly, for its component of *injustice* related to the plight of indigenous peoples.

As discussed above, a sense of injustice constitutes an important ground for the campaigners' political consciousness, identity and agency in the global realm. Hence, it is possible to identify in most discourses a moral indignation towards an 'unjust global economic and social order' which would be responsible for the 'destruction of the Amazon and the harm to its people'. It is against this broad framework that the Amazon is constituted as an issue for the campaigners I have studied. Yet, in order to become appropriate targets of collective action, broader abstract socio-economic as well as political and cultural forces must be connected to concrete human agents. Therefore, the targets of collective action must be clearly identified and able to bridge abstract and concrete (Gamson 1992).

In Britain, a significant reason for the endurance, and to a certain extent, success of the 'mahogany campaign' lies in the fact that it successfully articulates and connects the broad abstract and underlying dimensions held responsible for deforestation in the Amazon to a concrete situation, issue and actors. Mahogany is undoubtedly a powerful campaign symbol: it is a very rare and valuable tree species; forests are invariably associated with trees; and the image of trees being cut down is automatically related to the destruction of forests. Images and evidence of mahogany being cut down in the Amazon are associated with its commercial trade in the UK - since the dark wood is culturally and traditionally valued in Victorian-style furniture and bathroom fittings in Britain (Stonehouse 1995:3).

¹³³See chapter one, section 1.3.

¹³⁴See Cowell (1990) for an illustration of the main topics, framework and general atmosphere of the period, and also analysis of the documentary series broadcast by Channel Four, *The Decade of Destruction*, in chapter six.

Moreover, besides the bioiversity component, an injustice framework is accomplished when the situation underlines the significant damaging affects for the indigenous populations. The fact that mahogany is taken illegally from indigenous reserves, and that, therefore, indigenous peoples are faced with a situation of conflict, violence, suffering and disadvantage was crucial for the construction of such an ethnic and social injustice framework capable of generating *moral and ethical indignation*.

The final element is the fact that such timber is traded in the UK. British traders and consumers are eventually held to some responsibility for deforestation in the Amazon and the plight of indigenous people. It was deemed that these evil forces must be restrained, and so a British campaign was not only justifiable, but necessary. Thus, the abstract underlying structure, that is, the international economic and political order within which the Amazon has been destroyed, is concretely embodied by agents within the UK and in Brazil, particularly the timber trade.¹³⁵

I have over-simplified the general logic of the campaign to illustrate how the focus shifted from localised and far away agents of 'destruction' - previously mainly embodied by ranchers and settlers in the Amazon, despite governmental and World Bank connections - to agents within the British society associated with the bilateral trade. The Amazon was brought closer to attitudes at home in Britain. Clear messages could be sent out to the public in a consumers' campaign which undoubtedly reflected back on the timber business. Furthermore, the association of the timber trade with deforestation in the Amazon gained new emphasis because of its close connections with the plight of indigenous peoples. This link also made possible the alliance with Brazilian indigenous support organisations - such as CIMI, and former NDI and CEDI (which are now incorporated into ISA - Instituto Socio-Ambiental) - and other UK-based groups, such as Survival International.

¹³⁵For a general framing of this issue see further *UK-Forest Network Memorandum*. This is a collective NGO statement on issues related to national and international forests which was signed out by environmental, social and human rights organisations in 1994. Within the general framework described above, the document calls for the recognition of the underlying, and global, political, industrial and socio-economic causes of deforestation. The primary causes pin pointed by the document are the 'current consumption levels, human greed, inappropriate incentives and corruption as these affect the attitudes towards ecological and human resources' (p.13). Furthermore, it states that 'consumption thus impacts directly on forests: both directly timber and pulp requirements which encourage logging, oil drilling etc., and indirectly through such factors as forcing peasants into forests by the appropriation of the best farmland for export cash crops. Some of these impacts are now well recognised, such as the demand for rare tropical timbers such as mahogany that is causing widespread forest damage in Brazil' (p.15). The document then recognises that 'high consumption and debt-ridden society are both largely the result of particular *global trading patterns* that have developed over the past few decades...with underlying impacts in forests. The importance attached to the needs of trade has encouraged forests to be viewed primarily as sources of raw materials for commerce' (p.16-17). After relating the forest decline to 'more deeply rooted problems related to poverty, equity and bases of power', the memorandum calls for moves 'addressing underlying issues of over-consumption amongst the rich elite and of poverty, landlessness, debt and the inter-related problems of equity and population amongst the rest of the global population. Calling upon UK's international obligations the documents demand that the government should prohibit the import of timber unless it can be proved to come from legal sources (p.40). Furthermore, 'It should also prohibit the import of all tree species listed as endangered under the IUCN -World Conservation Unit - definition unless they come from certified sources or well-managed plantations. The UK should lobby for more timber species, including temperate timber species, to be listed in CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, and should implement CITES rigorously for timber species' (p.43).

Analysing the mahogany campaign's general history and framework in more detail, it is relevant to note in the first place that British NGOs dealing with forest issues were already targeting the timber trade in the 1980s.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, their campaigns were mainly focused on the trade with South East Asia rather than the Amazon. Colchester (1991:68) summarises the general understanding of that period as follows:

The proportion of forest lost due to logging varies regionally and locally. In South East Asia and Africa, logging is pre-eminent as a cause of forest loss while in Latin America the timber industry has not yet penetrated far into the Amazonian forests. These are being destroyed first and foremost from settlement along roads built to open up the forests to colonisation and to promote 'national integration' and 'development'.

Another aspect to highlight is that it was not until the late 1980s that the NGOs lobbying the ITTO - International Tropical Timber Organisation¹³⁷ - incorporated the defence of forest peoples, with emphasis on indigenous people, into their forest campaigns. Furthermore according to Colchester (1990:171):

The question was only raised for the first time in the ITTO's 1988 meeting in Rio de Janeiro, when FOE adapted language drafted by human rights group Survival International urging that the rights of the forest dwellers to their lands should be respected in the handing out of logging concessions. At the November 1989 meeting of the ITTO, Survival International argued that the ITTO must also include the concept of sustaining forest peoples' livelihoods in its working definition of sustainability...The issue of forest peoples' rights finally forced its way into the ITTO's agenda in 1989 as international indignation about the escalating conflict between loggers and native people in Sarawak became too heated to ignore.

It seems as though most of the forestry debate - with economic and political interests considered in primary position - was supported by a perspective of technical expertise which handled forests' problems in a *strictu sensu* environmental manner, whereby social and cultural elements remained in a very secondary position. Such a perspective - which is dominant regarding the trade's concept of 'forest management' - still remains as a legacy exacerbating some of the difficulties to be overcome by recent NGO-trade initiatives, such as the certification debate led by the Forest Stewardship Council - FSC - which I will discuss further below.

¹³⁶ I am using 'timber trade' in a broad sense, as NGOs use it to refer to any business relating to timber, from forestry operations to high street retailers selling timber and paper products. For an overview of the impact of the timber trade on global forest estate see Dudley, et al. (1996).

¹³⁷ International body originated through the workings of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to address the problems of forestry and the international timber trade. It has been a battleground between the trade and the environmental movement, as well as 'consumer' and 'producer' countries. See NGOs positions, for instance, in *The Ecologist*, 20 (5), Sep./Oct. 1990. For a concise overview of the ITTO see Dudley, et al. (1996: 121-123).

Nevertheless, as far as the tropical timber trade is regarded, it has been estimated that Malaysia and Indonesia supply together eighty per cent of the international market, whereas Brazil contributes only five per cent (Ricardo et al. 1996:82). However, with the exhaustion of South East Asian and West African forests, the trade has turned its attention to the tropical forests of South America, particularly the Amazon.¹³⁸

Indigenous support organisations in Brazil, such as the above mentioned NDI - Nucleus of Indigenous Rights - were already targeting the Brazilian timber companies that had been illegally extracting mahogany from indigenous reserves since the late 1980s.¹³⁹ They were aware of the fact that the best quality logs of this particular timber were directed to the markets of Britain and the US, the two major importers of mahogany.

Nevertheless, it appears that mahogany only became a bilateral issue attracting the major British NGOs when the journalist George Mombiot reported back from his journey to the Amazon in 1989. Mombiot's report was, thus, the historical and symbolic moment when the mahogany issue was brought to existence into the British NGO world, much due to the way in which the journalist framed it as *the new* threat to the Amazon in his book *The Amazon Watershed*:

While the rate at which the forests of the Amazon are disappearing has remained constant, *the reasons for its destruction and the means by which it might be stopped have shifted rapidly...*I set out in the summer of 1989 with the conviction that *people in the northern hemisphere were missing the real story of the Amazon...*Most of the reports reaching the North still concentrated on such threats to the forests as cattle-ranching, government-sponsored settlement and

¹³⁸ The 'invasion' of South East Asian companies in the Brazilian Amazon has been cause for great concern since the first news broke through the press in 1996. In September 1996, the Malaysian companies WTK and Samling Strategic Corporation had already bought at least two Brazilian timber companies and hundreds of thousands of hectares in the Amazon region. Since then, they have increased their presence in the Amazon, acquiring land and other Brazilian companies constituting the most recent logging threat to the Amazon. See *O Estado de São Paulo*, 1-5-96; *Parabólicas*, 20 (3) July 1996; *Folha de São Paulo*, 16-09-96.

¹³⁹ *Swietenia macrophylla* or Brazilian mahogany also popularly known as 'ouro verde' (green gold) is one of the most valuable timbers in the market. In the Brazilian Amazon, the targets of loggers and timber traders have been the states of Mato Grosso, Acre, Rondônia, Amazonas and particularly Pará. In Rondônia, former main producer of mahogany, the tree species is no longer found outside indigenous reserves and protected areas. The main focus of production has moved to the state of Pará, which is now responsible for 64% of the volume exported between 1985 and 1990. Also in Pará, the most targeted reserves of mahogany are in indigenous lands, those of the Kaiapó people (Ricardo et al. 1996:81-84). For case studies of the impact of logging on some of the indigenous tribes see Mombiot (1992) and Hering and Tanner (1998). The fact that mahogany grows in discontinuous areas and that most of the indigenous territories are not yet demarcated, as granted by the 1988 Constitution, results in the entanglement of the two problems. Stonehouse (1995:3) summarises the main technical argument: '...while mahogany cut for export is a small percentage of production, it is particularly responsible for deforestation, because of two specific characteristics of the species. First, because it is valuable, it is extracted at very low densities, being commercially exploitable at one tree per four hectares. Second, because it is scarce, wood cutters cover very large areas to cut it. The trails which this process leaves in the forest effectively lower the marginal cost of extracting other, less valuable species, the extraction of which further opens the forest until it is accessible to shifting settlers, who complete the destruction by agricultural clearance. These latter processes, the argument runs, would not happen but for the initial penetration of the forest for mahogany, because of its high value on export markets - particularly Britain.'

dam-building. While these remained important, *they were being overtaken by new developments...Timber-cutting, once an insignificant cause of the Amazon's destruction, was threatening to take over as the economic motor of deforestation.* (Mombiot 1991:1-2. Emphasis added here and in all subsequent quotes)

Moreover, besides pointing out the timber-cutting as *the new threat* to the Amazon, Mombiot attempts to *set the record straight* in terms of the *causes* of the problems:

...it seemed to me that *people were looking in the wrong direction* if they wanted to see why the forests of the Amazon Basin were still being destroyed. All I understood of the situation suggested to me that *the Amazon's problems were not*, as they had repeatedly been portrayed, *ecological... The problems, I felt, had their origin not in the Amazon itself, but elsewhere, in the political and economic hinterland of Latin America and the influential nations with which the continent deals.* (Mombiot 1991:3)

In this excerpt, Mombiot provides the broad political and economic framework whereby the causes of the Amazon deforestation should be considered. Furthermore, in the Amazon 'story' or 'drama' - the form of narrative mostly used by the media - victims and villains were also misplaced. According to Mombiot:

All I have witnessed in the last year now persuades me that Brazil is also the place in which the *victims* of the ecological destruction seem to have been blamed most comprehensively for the crimes. For the farmers, the miners and the other most visible agents of the Amazon's prostration also suffer from the fundamental problems affecting the forests. It is these that I shall be investigating in this book, in my attempts to find the *real villains* of the story of the Amazon, and to see how their destructive power might be restrained (1991:3).

Hence, it results from the above that the mahogany issue became singled out within a framework that presents it not only as *the new problem* of the Amazon, but also in a perspective that intends to *correct* previous 'misleading' explanations. Therefore, from a UK campaigning perspective, mahogany overtakes issues such as cattle ranching, settlement, mining and other economic investments in the Amazon.

In a personal interview with me, Mombiot recalled his feelings and motivations for setting out an investigation about deforestation in the Amazon. The influence of social and indigenous rights organisations were clearly referred to, illustrating the importance of the debate (and its tensions), between 'trees' and 'people' campaigners, particularly during the 1980s, within the new campaign perspective of encompassing biodiversity and social justice issues:

...I've spoken to a lot of the people involved in NGOs who had spent many years in the Amazon and other parts of Brazil. And what they told me seemed to differ enormously from the story that I was hearing in the media...everything I was hearing from my friends in groups such as Oxfam, and later on Cedi and Cimi and so all the rest of them was that the peasant was the victim of the process as much as the Yanomami Indian or anyone else like that. But *we were blaming the victim for the problem.*

Although identifying other underlying major problems in the Amazon, especially a domestic context of policies and, for instance, the issue of land concentration and industrialisation in the south of Brazil which drives the landless from other parts of the country into the Amazon region, Mombiot sees the mahogany issue as the most appropriate from the point of view of a British campaign:

I was also, of course, very interested in the *direct effects which British and US policies, either at the governmental level, or just at the consumers buying mahogany level, had on the situation in the Amazon.* I felt it was very important to point this up so, we wouldn't be so self-congratulatory. We wouldn't keep saying, you know: we are the ones who know what is best, you know. So, it is the Brazilians who are getting it all wrong and we are the ones who are right. Whereas, in actual fact, British consumers, even though they are five thousand miles away, are, in my view, far more responsible for the problems in the Amazon than the Brazilian peasants are...I tracked back mahogany taken illegally from Indian reserves there back to the most prestigious shops and even the Buckingham Palace here in Britain. And so, the link was very clear indeed.

However, it seems as though after Mombiot's return from the Amazon, the major British organisations - such as FOE and WWF, followed later by Greenpeace - only acknowledged the potential of the mahogany issue after the first of the protest actions were actually organised by small direct action groups and individuals based in Oxford.¹⁴⁰ This fact can also illustrate the process and dynamics involving small pressure groups and the mainstream environmental NGOs in constituting a campaign. Major NGOs, as professionalised and hierarchical groups, tend to respond to issues at a slower pace than smaller pressure groups. The latter, then, is sometimes responsible for feeding larger groups with issues and dynamism that they sometimes lack due to their bureaucratic features. On the other hand, major groups also compete for public support and funding, and thus, the potential of the mahogany campaign refers also to its high profile or capacity to involve the public and to generate financial resources for the organisations.

The first major environmental organisation that joined in and has kept a key role in the campaign - holding a special mahogany campaign officer within its structure - has been Friends of the Earth (FOE). Prior to 1992, FOE tropical rainforest campaign in relation to the Amazon was mainly focused on the aid issue, particularly through the support of the MDB campaign, because the imports of timber from the Amazon to the

¹⁴⁰ Personal interviews with George Mombiot in 03-08-95 and Richard Hering in 16-09-96.

UK were not considered as relevant as the imports from South East Asia and West Africa.¹⁴¹

It seems, thus, that beyond the actual changes and figures of the trade, the mahogany campaign related to the Brazilian Amazon represented also an important 'charismatic megaphone' through which rainforest campaigns underlying structural global problems with the timber trade could be addressed and highlighted. This results from the fact that the Amazon is the largest remaining tropical forest in the world, and that in addition to this, it symbolically appeals to the imagination of the British public. In more specific terms, the strength and success of the mahogany campaign in Britain has to do with the above mentioned social and ethnic injustice elements of the framework, and the clear links it could establish on both sides of the Atlantic. Furthermore, it was crucial that local and Brazilian NGOs were fairly organised and could back up the campaign,¹⁴² and that a wide range of organisations in the UK were involved in it with their different and combined strategies.

5.1.2 - The Different and Combined Strategies of British NGOs

CRISP-O and the Direct Action Strategy

As already mentioned, direct actions organised by small groups and individuals were the ones that first helped to raise the issue of mahogany in the UK. Combined with the broadcast of George Mombiot's documentary - *Your furniture, their lives* - by the *Open Space* series of BB2 in May 1992, *International Timber Day* involved a great number of organisations and individuals in direct actions at the yard of the major British mahogany importer company, Timbmet, in Oxford, and also at the Timber Trade Federation (TTF) in London. Since the direct actions attracted enormous publicity, they helped to put the mahogany issue on the map and created the conditions for a series of dialogues between individual campaigners and the TTF, dialogues amongst the UK campaigners themselves, as well as between these and the Brazilian officials.

The invasion of timber yards and blockades of docks receiving ships loaded with mahogany from Brazil received important additional input by a direct action strategy originating within the mahogany campaign by a newly formed direct action group called CRISP-O - The Citizen's Recovery of Indigenous People's Stolen Property Organisation - lead by Angie Zelter, a campaigner from Reforest the Earth who has played a key role in the mahogany campaign. CRISP-O's direct action approach consisted of

¹⁴¹ Interview with Simon Counsell, former FOE rainforest campaigner in 19-10-95. According to Dudley et al. (1996), environmental groups were in general very sceptical about campaigning for rainforests in the early 1980s. FOE initially argued that 'the subject was located too far from home, unlikely to catch the public imagination and so politically complex that outside interference would simply lead to charges of neo-colonialism. WWF was so concerned that tropical forests would not be a popular campaign with members, that first forays into the area were deliberately presented as mainly concerned with primate conservation.' (p.109). Tropical rainforests became a major pre-occupation for several large NGOs, and the authors recognised it even as a 'project that was likely to be a successful hook for fund-raising'.

¹⁴² In November 1992, 67 Brazilian NGOs collectively launched a campaign against the predatory mahogany trade in the Amazon. The *Manifesto to the Population: Predatory Logging Threatens Amazonia* demanding that the Brazilian government prohibit further mahogany logging was signed by wide spectrum of social movements from the Amazon region and other southern Brazilian states.

what was (and still is) called '*ethical shop-lifting*', activity focused on retailers selling mahogany furniture. The campaign started in July 1993, having as targets many shops in several different cities in the UK, such as for instance, Harrods, in London, on Human Rights Day, on December 1993.¹⁴³ Because the main argument of the mahogany campaign is that eighty per cent of mahogany coming from the Amazon to the UK is *stolen* from indigenous lands, CRISP-O's action consisted of removing mahogany goods from the shops, and thus, handing them over to the Attorney General's Office or the police with the request that they be returned to 'their legal and rightful owners, or to compensate the Brazilians adequately for this unfair trade and act of theft'.¹⁴⁴

'Ethical shop-lifting' direct actions are carefully planned and carried out in an organised and non-violent manner, and because CRISP-O's campaigners have no intention to permanently keep the goods for themselves, they have not been prosecuted for theft. This direct action strategy along with the backing of Brazilian NGOs - particularly the lawsuit proposed by NDI against the three major Brazilian exporting companies at the time¹⁴⁵ - put pressure on the trade and forged a space for a series of dialogues between individual companies and campaigners. Important in the initial stages of the campaign, this type of direct action gave way to a series of negotiations between traders and campaigners, although always remaining in the background as a possible threat in difficult moments of the dialogue.

The Women's Negotiating Team

One of the main dialogues was initially established between campaigners - FOE and Reforest the Earth on the leading - and Timbmet, the major British mahogany importer. It resulted in the company proposing in March 1994 the phasing out of the sale of all mahogany by the end of 1996. However, FOE was pushing a campaign for an immediate moratorium on the trade and did not accept Timbmet's proposal. The dialogue with this particular company seemed to have reached its end.

It was then that campaigners from the other groups, who incidentally were mostly females, decided to try to resume the talks with Timbmet and formed a Women's

¹⁴³Although major groups such as FOE, Survival International and WWF are not directly involved in direct actions such as CRISP-O's 'ethical shop-lifting', they can occasionally support such initiatives from an outside perspective, as it was the case of Harrods' direct action.

¹⁴⁴*Briefing Pack for the Mahogany Crisp-o Actions*, 1994. Part of the strategy is that each participant writes a statement explaining what s/he is doing, why, time and venue of action. Copies of these statements are sent to the police and the store manager at the very same time the 'seizing' is being carried out. A legal observer is assigned to each individual or small group taking part in the seize. Other people can participate to record or take photos during the event. Meanwhile, participants would be carrying a copy of their statements during the action for showing on request by shop keepers or members of the public. A careful study of the law with the possible charges is carried out by the direct action campaigners.

¹⁴⁵In 1993 the Brazilian highest court upheld an injunction sought by NDI since 1992, determining that Brazilian logging companies - Peracchi, Maginco and Impar - estimated to account for three quarters of British imports, cease logging in three indigenous areas in South Pará (NDI, *Lawsuits proposed by NDI Against Loggers*, 1994).

Negotiating Team.¹⁴⁶ Inspired by experiences within the peace movement, they adopted a strategy they call 'confidence building' which was underlined by the belief that the timber trade and forest NGOs had a 'common wish to preserve natural forests and old growth areas'.¹⁴⁷ In other words, there was a conviction that there could be a co-operative rather than a confrontational approach. The strategy consisted of combining in fact the approaches of peaceful direct actions and negotiations.

Thus, in order to resume the dialogue, drawing from experiences such as the Women's Peace Camp in Greenham, the group of women from Reforest the Earth, Gaia Foundation, Women's Environmental Movement, among others (Survival International and Greenpeace campaigners eventually joined in the negotiations) first communicated to Timbmet of their intentions of fasting for several days in their yards. Threatened by the bad publicity that such an event would bring to their company, Timbmet re-opened the dialogue with the women.

The negotiations seemed to have taken a gender biased approach - with the women from the NGOs on the one side, confronting the male Directors of individual companies and the TTF board about their timber sourcing policies. The ship agents, that is those responsible for bringing the timber to the UK, were also later involved in the dialogue. The strategy of negotiation relied on the diplomatic skills of the women and the principle that the traders were 'badly informed about the consequences of their business'.¹⁴⁸ Setting a 'pedagogical' tone to the campaign, the women were then sharing information with the traders, sending them copies of the *UK Forest Network Memorandum*, Amazon research findings from their own organisations, and bringing up the issue of timber certification through the FSC - Forest Stewardship Council.

Hence, the strategy of combining peaceful direct action and negotiations has helped to break through the trade and raised some sense of responsibility amongst it. It led to some punctual successes in terms of improving the environmental profile of individual companies.¹⁴⁹ However, it needs to be understood in the context of the other strategies and general campaign. Once campaigners are involved in negotiations and compromise, direct actions seem to become more less necessary, although they remain

¹⁴⁶ Here again, Angie Zelter played a key role in setting up the Women's Negotiating Team. Because of her personality and political beliefs and skills, Zelter has been able to tackle the issue of mahogany trade from several different fronts - such as radical direct action, negotiations with individual companies and the TTF, and she has also contributed towards the Forest Stewardship Council. She was also the organiser of the UK Forest Network. Zelter is acknowledged by the traders as 'the woman who masterminded the ethical shop-lifting strategy' and has also 'ability to find common ground with the industry' (*Timber Trade Journal*, 6/5/95, p. 18).

¹⁴⁷ Personal communication with Angie Zelter in June 1997.

¹⁴⁸ Personal communication with Angie Zelter in June 1997.

¹⁴⁹ For instance, Timbmet has appointed a full-time environmental manager - diplomatically, a female manager. A data base of all timber sources categorised against environmental criteria was set up. As a result, there have been changes in some sourcing policies, with increased pressure from British companies to their Brazilian suppliers. However, Timbmet has shown resistance in joining the FSC process and the WWF 1995 Plus Group (see below) under the argument that the exclusive commitment to the FSC is against the free trade premises of GATT - the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (Timbmet correspondence to Angie Zelter on 25 April, 1996). As for the TTF, after continued dialogue, it has recently agreed on the idea of a project for a log-tracking in the Amazon involving NGOs and the Soil Association in the UK, AIMEX (exporters from the state of Pará, Amazon) and NGOs in Brazil. However, the agreement towards this plan has progressed very slowly and with unclear proposals from the trade. Since it was first agreed in April 1997, the trade has only presented a rough draft proposal in November 1997.

as a powerful threat in the background. 'Co-optation' and 'compromise' are risks that campaigners are well aware of. For instance, negotiations are time and energy consuming, demanding research and monitoring from campaigners, and the team of women was informal, unpaid, untrained, though very skilful. Most importantly, this strategy relied on voluntary measures of companies, that is, changes in the 'culture' of the business, rather than changes in policies and in the business itself. Such strategy may be regarded as promoting *ad hoc* and piecemeal solutions by NGOs focusing on a broader framework, such as Friends of the Earth.

FOE's 'Mahogany is Murder' Boycott Campaign

As far as the mainstream NGOs are concerned, Friends of the Earth is the organisation which has taken the lead in the mahogany campaign, as an extension of its general boycott of tropical timber campaign.¹⁵⁰ In general, FOE standpoint is that there should be no logging in primary growth forest - due to the fact that it is virtually irreplaceable - whilst it also campaigns for legal and sustainable timber trade in all tropical and temperate areas.

The *Mahogany is Murder* campaign was launched with the publication of a booklet written also by George Mombiot in August 1992. It focused on the illegality of the trade and its negative impacts over some indigenous groups - including the murdering of fourteen Ticuna Indians in 1988. It furthermore highlighted the lack of resources and corruption within Brazilian governmental agencies such as IBAMA and FUNAI, and ended up with an open letter from Brazilian environmentalist and former state secretary José Lutzenberger pleading with the British public not to buy mahogany.

Since then, FOE has tackled the mahogany issue on several fronts calling for a moratorium on the mahogany trade until it can be guaranteed that mahogany is sourced legally and sustainably. The strategies involved a consumer boycott campaign, pressures on the retail and timber sectors, lobbying of local MPs to put pressure on the government for controls to be placed on mahogany imports. It has campaigned for tighter international control on the mahogany trade, for instance, the listing of mahogany in Appendix II of CITES.¹⁵¹ The organisation has also supported direct action protests: demonstrations outside the Timber Trade Federation and large mahogany retailers.¹⁵² In

¹⁵⁰See further Counsell (1988).

¹⁵¹CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Plants and Animals helps monitor and control wildlife trade. It is founded in three levels of regulation:

Appendix I - to strictly protect endangered species through a ban in trade of these species;

Appendix II - to prevent species from becoming endangered that are at increasing risk from international trade, so that the trade can continue, and

Appendix III - which includes any species that a member country identifies as being subject to trade regulation *within its jurisdiction* for the purpose of preventing or restricting exploitation.

An attempt to list Brazilian mahogany under Appendix II was defeated by six votes in 1994. Another proposal in June 1997 supported by the UK, the USA and the Bolivian government found strong opposition from the Brazilian government who eventually agreed that mahogany be listed in Appendix III. For an official Brazilian viewpoint see IBAMA's president interview in *Veja*, 2 July 1997, and further below.

¹⁵²In 1994, for instance, it organised a demonstration on a ship docked at Heysham, in Lancashire, which was bringing imports of Brazilian mahogany into the UK. See *Earth Matters*, N.25, Spring 1995, p. 12-13.

February 1995, FOE held the 'Mahogany Week' which was a country wide educational and public information campaign involving over 100 FOE local groups (see section 3.1), schools, celebrities and exhibitions around the country. Furthermore, the organisation has strengthened up its links with Brazilian NGOs and has set up an office with a special programme on the Amazon - Friends of the Earth International-Amazon Programme - in order to deal with the issue on the ground.¹⁵³

Hence, FOE is the organisation identified by both the trade and the Brazilian officials - particularly the Embassy in London - as their most hostile opponents. The organisation has built up a style of campaigning which is based on reports and journalistic investigations that has gradually granted it a role as a source of public information on the mahogany issue, forests, as well as environmental issues at large.¹⁵⁴ However, the high profile of the campaign has also been used as a successful hook for fund-raising, a fact that contributed to create some controversy over FOE's legitimate campaign claims, especially amongst its opponents, with some negative publicity.

One of the highlights of FOE's publicity over the mahogany campaign was a *Mahogany is Murder* cinema commercial. In this advert, a mahogany toilet seat is overtaken by a flow of blood which spreads in a gigantic tide across the floor, poignantly engulfing a cute monkey toy. Meanwhile, a background voice delivers the message: 'It costs a lot to have a toilet seat made from the world's last mahogany trees. If the Brazilian Indians, who own the trees, don't want to sell them, they can pay with their lives. The killing won't stop until you take action.'¹⁵⁵ This commercial raised a strong controversy and reaction from both the TTF and the Brazilian embassy in London who referred it to the Advertising Standards Authority, who in turn declared FOE's claims as unsubstantiated. This is a classic example of how fund-raising appeals might sometimes oversimplify an issue and overshadow legitimate campaigning claims.

Resembling the slogan *Meat is Murder* of animal welfare activists, the *Mahogany is Murder* slogan used by FOE for the mahogany campaign draws heavily on ethical and moral appeals concerning the lives of Indians who appear mainly as victims. FOE's *Mahogany is Murder. Don't buy it!* leaflet of December 1994 for the 'mahogany week' reads:

Could you kill another human being? Could you shoot a woman or child in cold blood? Of course not. But these things have happened as a result of the demand here in Britain for furniture and fittings made of mahogany. Every time we buy a piece of Brazilian mahogany, we help to fund the destruction of the Amazon rainforest and the people who live there.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³Issues concerning the dynamics of the relationship between British groups and Brazilian NGOs, as for instance, the demands for information from the ground, and the extent to which it poses difficulties for Brazilians dealing with a domestic agenda, were raised in chapter four and will be discussed further below.

¹⁵⁴For further analysis on NGOs as sources see different articles in Hansen (1993).

¹⁵⁵ See critical note on *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 June, 1995.

¹⁵⁶ The leaflet reports an incident occurred in 1988: over 100 Ticuna Indians were attacked and gunned down by timber cutters. Fourteen Indians, children included, were killed and twenty-two wounded. Further information about the massacre is found in Oliveira and de Souza Lima (1996:240-248).

The emotional appeal of the slogan, connects the 'murdering' of Indians to the destruction of the forest whilst raising a sense of moral responsibility in the British consumer. It creates a story of victims and villains while reducing the deforestation of the Amazon to the single issue of timber-cutting, particularly a single tree species, with its British connections. Furthermore, whereas 'people' oriented campaigners might have raised criticisms that the association of both slogans - *meat is murder* and *mahogany is murder* - by 'trees' campaigners relates the killing of animals and indigenous peoples in the same way, I would rather point to the productive possibilities of mutual references and influences of different social movements and fields. Hence, as the women's peace camp practices have inspired the Women's Negotiating Team in the mahogany campaign, animal rights campaigns might inspire forest campaigners as much as the political boycott campaign against the apartheid regime in South Africa may be related to the campaign for the mahogany boycott. For more than two decades boycott campaigns have persuaded the public not to buy products such as whale-based cosmetics and pet foods, ozone-eating aerosols, ivory jewellery, fur coats made from big cats, and in a more strict political sense, South African wines during the apartheid regime. In another but similar vein, the FSC - Forest Stewardship Council - may be understood as a development of the '*harvesting of forest products*' campaign ran by the 'fair trade' programmes of social NGOs.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in the Background

The FSC is not exactly a specific strategy within the mahogany campaign, but it has acted as an important background context setting up principles and criteria and overall targets for forest management world-wide, against which the mahogany campaign could relate to. Pushing individual timber companies and the trade as a whole to join in the FSC process has been one of the targets of campaigners, as it was the case of the Women's Negotiating Team.

Broadly speaking, the FSC has dominated the agenda of the main international forest NGO gatherings over the last few years (see section 3.3). In short, it consists of the development of an international certification scheme which involves close co-operation between NGOs and companies. Because it is a voluntary market tool, the FSC can be understood within the framework of a liberal regulatory approach.

The idea was developed in the UK by the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) which is the organisation pushing the FSC world-wide. The overall argument is that forests can be harvested, and therefore, it is possible for traders to make money from timber if the sustainability of its extraction can be guaranteed. Nevertheless, one of the major practical difficulties that this argument entails is the common understanding or definition of '*sustainability*' between parties with different interests such as industry and NGOs. The establishment of the FSC has not been an easy task, but despite all the political and procedural controversies, the process has kept underway since it was first conceived in 1990.

WWF-UK was already working in partnership with British companies aiming at certified sourcing of timber by the end of 1995, through an initiative called *WWF 1995 Group*.¹⁵⁷ The FSC provided, thus, the instrument for achieving WWF 1995 Group's target. The FSC general aim is defined as follows:

...To support *environmentally* appropriate, *socially* beneficial, and *economically* viable management of world's forests. The FSC hopes to accomplish this goal by evaluating, accrediting and monitoring certifiers, and by strengthening national certification and forest management capacity through training, education, and the development of national certification initiatives.¹⁵⁸

It is significant to highlight that it attempts to accommodate 'environmental', 'social' and 'economic' interests, a fact that places it as a classic and concrete example of a campaign initiative that exposes the articulation, with subsequent tensions, of what I am calling 'trees' and 'people' perspectives.

Public concerns about the impact of forest management has led to a proliferation of certification programmes and self-labelling initiatives in the marketplace. However, the integrity of such 'eco-label' claims on wood products is highly disputed.¹⁵⁹ Thus, the FSC is an attempt to accredit for the integrity of certification through a series of agreed standards, principles and criteria between private, environmental and social sectors.¹⁶⁰

The FSC was officially founded in October 1993 in Toronto, Canada. Its headquarters were later set up in Oaxaca, Mexico in 1994, with funding from the Governments of Austria and Mexico, and by WWF-Netherlands and the Ford Foundation.¹⁶¹ It is a membership organisation with the general assembly as the final authority of the association. An elected board is structured to achieve a balance between social, environmental and economic interests, as well as between 'Southern' and 'Northern' countries. The board is composed of nine members from which two represent the economic sector

¹⁵⁷The 1995 Group comprised forty-seven companies in partnership with WWF-UK with a total handling of wood product equivalent to eleven million cubic meters of logs cut from forests each year, an estimate of about a quarter of the UK trade in wood products (WWF, *The WWF 1995 Group - The Full History*, February, 1996). The 1995 Group further developed into the *WWF 1995 Plus Group* with the incorporation of ten new members by February 1996. The Plus Group is committed to the FSC and the phasing out of the purchase of wood and wood products within the FSC framework by 31 December 1999.

¹⁵⁸*FSC Notes*, Summer 1995, 1(1). Emphasis added.

¹⁵⁹ WWF-UK claims that from the over 600 different ecolabel claims on wood products in the market in 1991, 'only four of those were willing and able to substantiate their marketing claims' (Ervin, J. *FSC Notes*, 1(1), Summer 1995). See also Laschefski (1996), for a critical position from a German NGO in which it claims have found a false 'eco-label' in a product sold by the British B&Q shop, a member of the WWF 1995 Plus Group.

¹⁶⁰The FSC does not certify forest products itself. It proposes to ensure consumers that certification organisations have the highest level of credibility and integrity, by evaluating, accrediting and monitoring certifiers of forest products based on their adherence to the FSC principles and criteria and the guidelines for certifiers (*FSC Notes*, Summer 1995, 1(1)). On the launching of its trademark in February 1996, in London, four certification bodies had been accredited by the FSC: The Soil Association and SGS Forestry from the UK, and Scientific Certification System (SCS) and Smart Wood from the USA.

¹⁶¹FSC, *Making its Mark*, February, 1996, p.5. The organisation is funded by accreditation fees, membership subscription, charitable foundations and government donors, e.g. except industries. (FSC, *Briefing Notes, FSC Questions and Answers*, February, 1996)

and the other seven are meant to be represented by social, environmental and indigenous organisations. The general assembly was initially divided into two voting chambers: the economic chamber with twenty-five per cent of the voting power in one hand, and the social and environmental chamber with a combined seventy-five per cent of the voting weight. In its first general assembly in June 1996, the two voting chamber system was reviewed to be replaced in the future by three, whereby each one of the three sectors would equally have one third of the total voting weight.¹⁶²

The FSC's strength is that it involves environmental, social and human rights organisations, and that it attempts to be equally balanced as far as 'South' and 'North' representation is concerned. However, the partnership with industries is a total novel experience for many NGOs who traditionally hold the economic sectors as their opponents. Hence, their support to the FSC process has been dealt with caution and criticism (see section 3.3).¹⁶³ Thus, because a common ground has to be achieved between parties with different interests, particularly NGOs and companies, the FSC has still to overcome many difficulties. Besides technical, tactical and procedural disputes over definitions, standards, criteria and principles, concerns range from: the actual existence of a market demand for certified products, the cost and benefits of the process, to the more political and operational doubts related to representation and transparency of the FSC.

There is clearly a general concern and demand for 'greener' products in the market with the related proliferation of 'eco-labelling' which makes the FSC initiative timely. However, there is currently insufficient information to determine the extent of the market demand for certified products. Estimated figures of actual 'green' consumers suggests that they do not represent a big niche of the market. In Germany, for instance, one of the 'greener' countries in the world, this market accounts for an estimate of only five per cent, whereas in Britain it responds for approximately one per cent.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, the cost of a certification process and its 'chains of custody', which is the crucial monitoring and verification process on the ground, also raises doubts from the trade

¹⁶²This was the subject of many criticisms by NGOs which consider the change as a leaning towards the pressures of the economic sector; Laschefski (1996). Others considered it to be an attempt to strengthen the social representation. Nevertheless, the restructuring would only be institutionalised when each chamber was composed of at least fifteen members. Till May, 1997, there were nineteen possible members of the Northern social chamber against eleven of the Southern.

¹⁶³In the FSC's Founding Assembly, Greenpeace and FOE declined subscription to the process. They preferred to keep their positions as observers. However, in April 1995, an European NGO statement on certification of all forests supporting the FSC initiative was signed by the following organisations: Greenpeace International, World-Wide Fund for Nature, Friends of the Earth International, Forest Movement Europe, Soil Association-UK, ARA-Germany, Trees for People-Germany, Robin Wood-Germany and Reforest the Earth-UK. As also discussed in chapter three, the topic remains very controversial in NGO meetings, such as the last three Forest Movement Europe meetings held in Todtmoos, in 1995 (see section 3.3), Paris in 1996 and Hamburg, in 1997. Actually, British NGOs have been acting more at ease with the process of pushing NGOs from other countries to support the FSC. Whereas the German groups have shown more resistance. The Germans have held a more radical position campaigning for a boycott of tropical timber throughout the years. A critical statement in relation to the FSC and a call for consumers to continue to renounce tropical timber was signed in February 1996 by the following German groups: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Regenwald und Artenschutz (ARA), Artists for Nature, Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (BUND), Greenpeace Germany, Gesellschaft für ökologische Forschung, Institut für Ökologie und Aktionsethnologie (INFOE), Klima-Bundnis/ Alianza del Clima, Oro Verde, Pro REGENWALD, Rettet den Regenwald, Robin Wood, Urgewald.

¹⁶⁴ Brockmann et al. (1996), FOE (1992), TTT - Timber Trade Journal (1994).

point of view, since its ultimate interest and goal are to economically profit from the business.¹⁶⁵

In this sense, the high cost of the process concerns not only the trade, but poses also a problem for the achievement of the social targets claimed by the FSC.¹⁶⁶ It is not clear how small communities and stake holders in the Amazon Basin would cope with the high costs of a certification process. Although it planned to deal with all forest products - timber and non-timber - the FSC has been mainly focusing on timber. One of the main reasons for this is that the economic sector within the FSC only deals with timber. The other products in the market - such as rubber and nuts - are traded by smaller producers and communities which are not relevant in the world market. Thus, 'Southern-social' participation in the process has been very problematic. Most certifications by the FSC accredited certifiers have to date been of large-scale industrial forestry operations. Furthermore, the level of assessment of the social aspects involving forest management has been downplayed by a forestry dominated perspective, and thus, it has been debated by many environmental and social organisations.¹⁶⁷ In many cases to date, the lack of national forest management standards and certification processes leads to the direct application of international Principles and Criteria by 'Northern' certifiers with expertise in forestry, but not necessarily social concern or anthropological sensibility. The process results in lower standards and poor participation, whilst also reveals that local specificities cannot be accommodated on international levels, since the certifiers' emphasis on biodiversity and particular technical 'forest management' concepts tends to obscure social aspects. Significantly, these are some of the problems similarly faced by 'trees' oriented campaigners who hold a perspective on 'forest management' also underlined by a strict forestry expertise (see chapter four).

Notwithstanding, the FSC has acknowledged and attempted to address these problems, as in the first meeting of its Social Working Group held in April 1997, in Rio de Janeiro. Nevertheless, difficulties concerning the involvement and benefits of certification for small-holders and communities in tropical forests is very likely to remain and the process will continue to be better applied to large-scale industrial producers.

To sum up, the mahogany campaign has mobilised both 'trees' and 'trees and people' campaigners within a common framework, with their different and combined strategies regarding the effects of the timber trade between Britain and the Amazon upon the rainforest and the indigenous peoples. The different campaigning approaches presented here vary in a spectrum that ranges from a more 'transformative' perspective to a more 'reformist' standpoint, although each one of them may, to a certain degree, also accommodate immediate reformist needs for a long-term transformative target.¹⁶⁸ Their strength lies in the fact that they are not mutually exclusive, but they can co-ordi-

¹⁶⁵ See also Bruenig (1996), Schardt (1996), Brockmann et al. (1996).

¹⁶⁶ Its Principles and Criteria stress the need for legal recognition of land tenure rights, to recognise indigenous peoples' rights, the welfare of workers as well as the participation of all forest dwellers (particularly Principles 2,3,4 and 5).

¹⁶⁷ The controversial certification by an FSC accredited certifier from Britain of a major logging concession in Gabon, where local communities have no land rights and workers' conditions are very poor has been the subject of serious concerns by NGOs. See FME meeting report, Hamburg, April 1997.

¹⁶⁸ By 'transformative' I mean groups that fight for structural changes, as well as more radical changes in terms of consumption patterns, life style, land rights, political system and economic order. The 'reformist' groups act within a neoliberal approach lobbying and improving existing market practices.

nate, liaise and network within their common grounds and principles. Thus, direct action and pressure group campaigners can influence the FSC by lobbying it towards higher standards concerning forest management, including social considerations, meanwhile also pushing companies to submit to FSC Principles and Criteria. On the other hand, FSC benefits from the fact that direct action campaigners and pressure groups create public awareness and push the private sector towards more responsible practices. A concern is whether pressure groups and direct action campaigners might get caught up within the traps of the liberal agenda by traders and politicians willing to share and negotiate. For example, *Participation Overkill* is an interesting expression used by a German campaigner who tried to define the feeling of acting on so many different fronts as a result of traders and politicians' 'openness' to NGOs participation. Furthermore, a critical view concerning the FSC is whether, as a voluntary market tool, this initiative can serve politicians to conceal their lack of action on national as well as on international levels, such like in bodies as the United Nations.¹⁶⁹ Certification, for instance, has become a topic of UN conferences as a following up process to the Earth Summit in bodies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests within the Commission for Sustainable Development. FSC has dominated the agenda of campaigners in the Northern hemisphere and they may lose sight of it as a particular market tool and perceive it rather as *the* solution for the problems of deforestation. As far as FOE and the mahogany campaign is concerned, similar concerns can be raised. The exclusive focus on mahogany may lead campaigners to think that it is indeed the ultimate problem of deforestation in the Amazon. It may, thus, obscure a rather more complex reality on the ground, which is related to long standing sociological patterns and structures as well as policies and political projects driven by domestic agendas.

5.1.3 - General Outcome and Responses to the Mahogany Campaign

The mahogany campaign tackles a very specific problem related to the trade connections between the Amazon and the UK, with possible extensions and implications as far as international trade mechanisms as a whole are concerned. Thus, it is within this very peculiar context and dimension that it should be understood. In this sense, the British campaigners' combined strategies have promoted a few changes in the situation of the trade with drops in the mahogany imports since the campaign set off in the early 1990s. For example, as a result of the campaign, several individual companies have withdrawn from the trade, including major DIY stores, B&Q, Sainsbury's Homebase, Texas, Great Mills and Do-It-All. Furthermore, by 1994, twenty-four timber companies had already joined the WWF 1995 Group (Porritt 1994:55).

Hence, it is relevant to look more closely into the perspectives and responses from the British traders and Brazilian officials regarding campaigners' concerns about the tropical timber trade in general and the mahogany trade in particular.

The Perspective of the Trade

¹⁶⁹ See further Laschefski (1996).

The British timber trade has responded through different initiatives since environmental concerns and pressures about tropical rainforests mounted in the mid 1980s. According to the chairman of the National Hardwood Association of the TTF in Britain, 'in the late 80s the burning of the Amazon forest awoke the environmental consciousness of the public and the timber trade was deeply affected by those environmental concerns and pressure'.¹⁷⁰ This is further highlighted by another trade employee:

Boycott campaigns from the late 80s, early 90s, gave the impression to the public that timber was not an environmentally friendly material to use. The timber industry was faced with these restrictive clauses in contracts and losses of key markets. We had to do something to combat that.¹⁷¹

Hence, the Timber Trade Federation launched in 1990 a PR - Public Relations - campaign called *Forests Forever: a campaign for wood*. This campaign sought as a counter-argument to the environmental allegations and to promote wood as an environmentally friendly material.

The trade, in general, regards environmental concerns as 'emotionally charged campaigns'. A Forests Forever guide for architects states:

Emotionally charged campaigns, led by environmental pressure groups, have linked the timber trade to tropical deforestation, to the destruction of 'old growth' forests in temperate and boreal regions and the loss of 'bio-diversity' in forests. While there is cause for concern, these problems should be put into perspective. Environmental groups, in their legitimate desire to raise awareness of environmental issues, have a tendency to overstate the case and to ignore the positive progress that is being made in forest management around the world.¹⁷²

Although acknowledging the 'alarming rate of deforestation' in the tropics, the trade regards it as a 'local' or 'domestic' problem against the global structural framing of environmental campaigners. In short, their argument is that deforestation has to do with 'overpopulation' and 'economic difficulties' of developing countries, by contrast to the over consumption and production patterns of the 'rich nations' argument which is mentioned in Agenda 21. Hence, for the trade farming and cattle-ranching are still to blame

¹⁷⁰Interview with Michael James in 19-7-96.

¹⁷¹Interview with Graham Bruford from Forests Forever Campaign of the TTF in September 1996.

¹⁷²From Forest Forever, *Timber and the Environment*, an architect's guide to specifying timber and wood products. Also interview with Geoffrey Pleydell and Michael James in 19-7-96.

as the basic causes of deforestation in tropical forests, particularly the Brazilian Amazon.¹⁷³

Nevertheless, responses to the mahogany campaign launched by environmentalists in 1992 were given by individual trade initiatives, as mentioned above, and furthermore by the Timber Trade Federation itself. As a body, the trade has responded to the allegations of illegality of the mahogany trade with a voluntary non-binding agreement signed in September 1993 between the National Hardwood Association (NHA) of the TTF and the Association of Export Companies of the state of Pará (AIMEX), in the Amazon region. The trade acknowledges that 'problems of boundary identification in isolated and difficult terrain, makes it difficult to refute that some timber may be wrongfully extracted'.¹⁷⁴ The agreement states that NHA members would buy mahogany only from those AIMEX companies who voluntarily signed a declaration that their sources are legal under Brazilian laws. It is a provisional and non-binding accord, with no legal or disciplinary powers. It simply intends to ensure that Brazilian companies are obeying the national law by providing all the documentation required, something that they were supposed to do anyway.

The accord is heavily criticised by NGOs and it is also admittedly classified by the traders themselves as a 'gentlemen's agreement'.¹⁷⁵ It is restricted to the export companies from the state of Pará, and does not cover the issue of forest management plans. According to NGOs, it has no independent monitoring, nor mechanisms on the ground sufficient to ensure legality since governmental bodies such as IBAMA and FUNAI face problems of limitations of resources, limited personnel and even corruption, a local situation which finds documentation being falsified. Another aspect highlighted by NGO allegations has been that although AIMEX companies have no longer extracted mahogany from indigenous reserves themselves - something they have done in the past - they presently buy it from third parties, the 'middle man' who is actually the woodcutter.¹⁷⁶

The trade denies the allegations of illegal logging activities, although they have no mechanisms themselves to prove the contrary. Arguments raising concerns about foreign imposition over Brazilian affairs are always used to seek NGOs pressures and drive their attention to Brazilian responsibility. However, another practical response from the trade has been to pay annual visits to their suppliers in the Amazon, and in one

¹⁷³They support their argument by using plain figures of the trade. According to the Forest Forever representative, the UK imports over eighty per cent of its timber needs, from which eight per cent is tropical timber. These come mainly from the forests of Malaysia, Indonesia, Ghana and Brazil. From the Brazilian imports, eighteen per cent comes from tropical hardwood sources and the majority from softwood plantations from the south of the country. However, one of the NGOs' arguments is that mahogany is not the most destructive thing in itself, but it is the cutting edge of deforestation. The high price of mahogany makes possible the building of the road, which attracts the settlers from whom the cattle-rancher buys the land. Mahogany is thus the beginning of a process which ends in clear-cutting. Besides, the export quality mahogany comes from big old trees mainly found within indigenous reserves. See Mombiot (1992) and Hering and Stuart (1998).

¹⁷⁴Forest Forever, *Timber and the Environment*, p.10.

¹⁷⁵*The Mahogany Trail* documentary, *Dispatches* Programme, Channel Four, May 1996 (see further chapter six), and the *Timber Trade Journal*, 1 June, 1996, p.9-11.

¹⁷⁶This is the topic of Channel Four's *Dispatches* documentary mentioned above. It raised a series of mutual accusations between the TTF and the NGOs, particularly FOE. See further analysis in chapter six.

of their latest visits, they openly admitted the existence of problems.¹⁷⁷ As a result, they have agreed with a *Women's Negotiating Team* proposal for a 'chain of custody' project in partnership with Brazilian and British NGOs.¹⁷⁸ On the other hand, they denied support for FOE's proposal of listing mahogany under Appendix II of CITES preferring to ally themselves to the Brazilian government position in the matter. Hence, the trade seems to agree with individual, voluntary and punctual initiatives rather than changes in an overall situation of the trade, as in the case of tighter international legislation.

The same tendency is identified regarding certification. The TTF's position about the FSC process continues to be one of criticism. Because the trade, in general, regards deforestation as related to 'domestic' problems, it perceives the solutions to the problems of forest management as coming from local and governmental initiatives:

...the solutions to the problems of forest management will have to come from the producing nations and from national governments - through continual progress under the terms of commitments such as ITTO Objective 2000, and the Forest Principles signed at UNCED in 1992. This is because so many of the problems associated with forest management are outside the industry sphere of influence - issues such as land ownership, distribution of wealth in producing countries, and the allocation of resources to forest departments, can only be resolved at government level.¹⁷⁹

Moreover, this position implies that 'forest management' is merely about economic and technical forestry procedures and policies, dissociating it from social, environmental and ethical concerns. Thus, the TTF regards the FSC concept of responsible forest management as being 'too idealistic':

For some people, certification through the FSC is very difficult. And I think that the FSC makes its own problems...But our first priority is to ensure sustainable survival. And you can do that. There is no problem. If you can get hold of a little bit of forest, legally control it, you can put the system in place...*If you start adding some of the problems of human rights, some of the problems of workers' rights, whether they are getting the right level of wages...I think you begin to complicate the issue. I think the FSC has been too idealistic...If we start to deal with ethnic problems...those problems go on forever. While you are trying to*

¹⁷⁷According to their report, they found AIMEX companies considering pulling out of mahogany altogether because 'in addition to economic problems, the costs of extraction are high due to the increasingly remote areas from which mahogany is sourced, and markets in the UK are quiet. Besides, AIMEX also stated that the documents indicating a company has committed an offence 'were commonly cancelled on appeal because of the poorly qualified IBAMA personnel issuing them in the first place, and therefore did not constitute proof of illegal activity.' Meetings with Brazilian NGOs also confirmed allegations of illegal logging by third parties and cases of corruption in IBAMA and FUNAI as the main problem confronting the enforcement authorities. Dixon and Bruford unpublished *Report of the NHA visit to Brazil*, 6-18 July, 1996.

¹⁷⁸Meeting between the *Women's Negotiating Team* and the TTF in April, 1997.

¹⁷⁹Forests Forever, p.6.

solve that, the forest is going...if you can get certification, which is a way of looking at: are you managing the whole forest properly?...there is no direct link. It is a marketing scheme. It is a marketing scheme for the 1995 club to get the NGOs off their back.¹⁸⁰

The statement makes clear the distinction between a 'technical forestry' - *strictu sensus* environmental/economic approach, in other words, a forest without people - on the one hand, and on the other, an enlarged environmental concern that encompasses ethical and social considerations, that is an accommodation of 'trees and people', rather than the abstraction of social relations from 'nature'. It makes believe that NHA/AIMEX agreement, the trade's dialogue with NGOs, and its visits to their suppliers in Brazil, are part of the trade's public relations strategy with NGOs rather than a genuine concern about the effect of their economic activity for the forest and its people, as the Women Negotiating Team and others want to believe. Furthermore, pressure from the trade over WWF and the FSC to redefine their social and environmental standards might undermine the already difficult role of those parties supporting the FSC. In addition, the trade's position regarding NGOs initiatives demonstrates the contradictions and tensions of a debate whereby words such as 'sustainability' and 'forest management' are commonplace, but rather meaning different things and implying different and opposing goals by sectors occupying contentious positions in the field.

The Perspective of Brazilian Officials

The Amazon has been one of the main channels whereby Brazil is projected into the world. More precisely, since the 1980s it has been the most important 'political currency' in the relationship between Brazil and the Northern hemisphere. However, occupying a peripheral position in the world's economy - drowned by the external debt and economic crisis - Brazil's policies towards the Amazon have been ambiguous and ambivalent, maintaining historical patterns and mainly reactive to international pressure.

Hence, following a world-wide tendency, there has been more improvement in the environmental rhetoric rather than in concrete and substantial governmental policies. Thus, for instance, governmental co-operation initiatives such as the *Pilot Programme for the Conservation of the Brazilian Rainforests* launched in the early 1990s - although mainly focused in the Amazon and very limited in relation to the problems it seeks to resolve - involved compromise of investment funds of \$1.5 million million dol-

¹⁸⁰Interview with Geoffrey Pleydell and Michael James at the TTF on 19-7-96.

lars by the G7, from which only a small fraction of \$20 million was actually disbursed during the programme's first five years of implementation.¹⁸¹

Nevertheless, international concerns about the Amazon has placed it as a top priority in the Brazilian foreign office's public relations agenda. In the UK, the Brazilian embassy's website reserves a special site for the topic of rainforests and, significantly enough, another separate one for Brazilian mahogany. They share the same section, and therefore status, with the topics of street children, Brazilian economy and Brazil as an emerging market - the other country's images projected abroad, and particularly into the UK.¹⁸²

Enrolled in such a group of issues, the Amazon is presented as a 'problem' - environmental and social alike - to be resolved by Brazil with international co-operation. However, a more positive appearance of the Amazon is also found in the section about the general features of the country revealing the Brazilian ambivalence in relation to it. The text proudly describes the physical and human geography of the Amazon region with special emphasis on its 'natural exuberance', as though an important constitutive part of the Brazilian identity.¹⁸³ However, although this general presentation might correspond to the projection of the country's image in the global arena at large, the mahogany topic is certainly designed to respond to British NGOs' concerns.

Addressed to the European public at large, the embassy's statement about rainforests opens up with the following:

Tropical forests have economic value to the countries in which they are located. Above all, they are the habitat of indigenous and migrated populations wholly dependent on forest resources for their survival. Furthermore, they lie within national jurisdiction, and governments exercise full sovereignty over them. Nevertheless, the Brazilian Government understands that there is no contradiction be-

¹⁸¹For a critical analysis of the Pilot Programme and the participation of NGOs see Hagemann (1994) and Kolk (1996). For a recent NGO assessment and suggestions for the Pilot Programme see *Public Policies for the Amazon: paths, trends and proposals*, Briefing Document for the Meeting of Participants, Pilot Program for the Conservation of the Brazilian Rainforests, Manaus, October 27-30, 1997; *Third Discussion Paper from the series Mind the Gap!*, FOE-AP (Friends of the Earth-Amazon Programme) and GTA (Grupo de Trabalho Amazônico), 'Sound public policies for the Brazilian Amazon: the challenge of the Pilot Program', Briefing for the III Meeting of the Participants Pilot Program for the Conservation of the Brazilian Rainforests, Bonn, September 9-12, 1996.

¹⁸²Significantly, under the title of *rainforests*, the text is entirely focused on the Amazon rainforest, with not a single note, for instance, on the Atlantic Forest, an ecosystem by far more endangered than the Amazon, but with no similar international appeal. This has also been a limitation of the Pilot Programme which has been recently acknowledged and awaits addressing. On the Brazilian proposals for the second stage of the programme see *Parabólicas*, 30 (4) junho de 1997.

¹⁸³In general, Brazil's natural resources play a very significant role in the constitution of national identity. This is evident in the symbolism of the country's national flag, national anthem and most importantly, in historical cultural and literary movements. The abundance of natural resources and the overwhelming nature is the country's biggest asset. Paradoxically, remoteness and feelings of superabundance gives the impression of infinity and obfuscates the reality of destruction and plundering. The literature on this is already vast. See further, Arnt and Schwartzman (1992), Padua (1987,1989), Ortiz (1984), Ventura (1991), Sussekind (1991).

tween the full exercise of sovereignty over tropical forests and international co-operation as a mean to make possible their rational use and conservation.¹⁸⁴

This first paragraph establishes the framework in which the Amazon is debated with the 'developed world'. Firstly, the forest is presented as having an *economic value for the country*; second, it is the *home of people* who live from its resources; the third point refers to the sensitive topic of *Brazilian sovereignty* about it; and the fourth aspect opens up the possibility for *international co-operation*, setting up the limits whereby international 'intervention' is accepted. The emphasis is on the economic dimension. Environmental, symbolic, cultural, spiritual, scientific or aesthetic values are not mentioned, whereas the rest of the text gives the impression that even the economic value is rather reduced to the mere exploitation of raw material. Furthermore, as the statement follows: '...the settlement, economic development, and integration of the Amazon region to the rest of the country has been, and still is, one of the main goals of policy-making in Brazil.' This is clearly a legacy of the military geopolitics and 'development' views in the 1960s represented by the slogan: '*integrar para não entregar*', meaning 'integrate in order not to give it away to the foreigners', which depicts also an emphasis on territoriality as a significant element of the Brazilian culture. It underlined the Brazilian 'march to the west' initiated since the 1930s, and its intensification during the expansion of the capitalist frontier by the military in the 1960s, with the rapid and massive projects of infrastructure - the building of roads and hydroelectric dams - and incentives for agribusiness and settlement, within an overall geopolitical perspective.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, these were precisely the policies that originated most of the problems in the Amazon. They have made a comeback in the agenda of the current administration, this time within the context of the regionalisation of the market, as for instance the new concepts of axes for integration comprising the opening of new roads, waterways, and railroads with diverse routes aiming at reaching the markets of the Northern hemisphere.¹⁸⁶

In a seminar about the images of Latin America in the European media,¹⁸⁷ the Brazilian ambassador in London, Rubens Barbosa, presented his overall agenda for the UK. As a response to the increasing competition in the world market, the Brazilian government has adopted a strategy of singularisation of Brazil in relation to other Latin American countries. Latin America is understood as a totalising European construction whereby individual country idiosyncrasies are concealed. The new approach seeks the association of the country's image more accordingly to the regionalisation of the economy, which in the Brazilian case means the *Mercosur* - the economic co-operation treaty in southern South America.

¹⁸⁴<http://www.demon.co.uk/Itamaraty/ascfp.html>, *Rainforests: basic considerations*, 1995.

¹⁸⁵Velho (1972), Foreaker (1981), Souza Martins (1984, 1987, 1995), Branford and Glock (1985), Ianni (1979). See also chapter two.

¹⁸⁶A northern route to the Caribbean, characterised by highway BR-174, a route to the Atlantic, identified by the Madeira and Amazonas waterways, and the Araguaia-Tocantins, defined by the North-South and Carajás railways. These, along with axes cutting from the centrewest region in the direction at the Pacific, represent a massive spatial scope unique in its attempt and impact. See further in GTA and FOE, *Public Policies for the Amazon: Paths, Trends and Proposals*, Manaus, October 27-30, 1997.

¹⁸⁷ *Reflections of Latin America in the European Media*, Institute of Latin America Studies, Canning House, London, 13-14 February, 1995.

Following this standpoint, the Brazilian government has reserved a special place for London, and the NGOs, in its strategy for the European continent. London is considered as an 'opinion-maker centre' capable of influencing other nations in Europe, as stated by the ambassador:

If the perception that opinion-makers in London form about the area today is different from what they have already formed, there will be a big change and impact in other interested groups in other countries. In our case, we are concentrating in three areas of opinion-makers in London: the media, the city, and the NGOs. All of them, in their specific area of activity, form opinions which will reflect in other countries.

Thus, the relationship between the Brazilian embassy in London and the British NGOs has been characterised by a diplomatic dialogue, since they are believed to influence the decision-making of the British government, the British entrepreneurs, and by extension, the other European NGOs, governments and investors. According to the environment and human rights secretary at the embassy:

I dedicate eighty per cent of my time to the dialogue with the NGOs. There is a great demand from NGOs based in the UK, and also from those in Brazil, over our work here...they are well informed, but a problem that we struggle with here is the image that Brazil is a huge tropical forest. They are elements of a puzzle: street children, forest, Indians, football, carnival are put together, but they do not form a totality. There is a bond missing there, and this bond is the Brazilian reality and its billions of other things that form a whole, an organic totality.¹⁸⁸

Mainly focused on the demands concerning the Amazon, thus, the diplomatic responses to NGOs have comprised regular visits from the presidents of IBAMA and FUNAI for meetings with NGOs in London. In the agenda are the government's policies in relation to the mahogany trade and the demarcation of indigenous lands. Naturally, some NGOs are regarded as more preferable interlocutors than others, according to the criteria of their capacity and policy of developing projects in the region. Hence, for instance, from the environmental sector, WWF is perceived as 'more serious' than others because of its 'co-operation initiatives', by contrast to FOE which is regarded as 'more concerned with its own campaign and organisation'.¹⁸⁹

However, such diplomatic visits of IBAMA and FUNAI officials seem to be mainly used as means to soothing NGO pressures since mahogany is not regarded as a major problem in the Amazon.

¹⁸⁸From interview with Bruno Barth, environmental and human rights secretary at the Brazilian embassy in 7/11/95. My translation into English.

¹⁸⁹Interview with Bruno Barth at the Brazilian Embassy in 7/11/95.

Mahogany is a small problem in the universe of the Amazon. It was transformed into a campaign here because it provides a linkage capable of moving the British public: *your toilet seat has caused the death of three Indians*. This is not true. There was death of Indians in conflict with loggers, but this was an incident in 1988. But to make a campaign and say that mahogany is the motor of the murdering of Indians is not true. It is an exaggeration.

So, if the trade regards the 'mahogany problem' as a domestic matter, to be dealt with by Brazilian authorities, the latter seems to downplay its relevance by reducing it to matters of British campaigning dynamics and self-interests. On the other hand, there is no overall denial of 'problems' resulting from the illegal logging in the region, but reactions seem to be rather concerned with FOE's campaign strategies. As the secretary further states:

There are obviously problems of invasion of indigenous areas by loggers and also illegal cuttings. IBAMA has frequently apprehended huge quantities of timber cut illegally. But there is a lot of exaggeration in the campaign.

Following from this, FOE's campaign for a moratorium on the mahogany trade and the listing of mahogany under CITES is rejected with the following argument:

The demand for a moratorium on the exploration of mahogany is not feasible in Brazil, and would be a very stupid policy. If a moratorium is established and the exportation is prohibited, the price of mahogany goes down in the market. Then, we have the destruction of a sector and the invasion of the area by the predators, those who cut for smuggling without any control or environmental procedure. The exportation is subject to environmental regulations. Because they have to reach the international market, they have to enter this country, and here there are more concerns and demands for regulations. The smuggler cuts for the internal market, and they are not concerned about the environmental impacts. He is after the immediate profit.

It seems, thus, that despite initially disregarding the importance of the mahogany campaign, in a reversed way, his arguments focus on the relevance of the international trade as a form of regulating the exploration of mahogany. He appears to admit on the one hand, the failure of domestic regulations, policies and controls on the ground and, on the other hand, the role of international pressure and the arguments of NGOs, confirming, thus, the idea that policies have been mainly reactive to international pressure.

In 1996, Brazil's National Space Research Institute (INPE) released satellite data showing that deforestation had increased by thirty-four per cent, from 11.100 square kilometres per year in 1991 to 14.900 square kilometres a year between 1992 and 1994. In an agile strategic manoeuvre, simultaneous with the announcement of these figures, and before any negative national and international repercussions, the Brazilian govern-

ment responded with a package of measures, which were considered the toughest in many years.¹⁹⁰ The measures included two major points regarding mahogany: a two-year suspension on new permits to harvest mahogany and another rare tree called virola - which grows in the Amazon's flood plains - along with the revision of all authorised forest concessions; and secondly, changes in the legislation that increased the amount of land that farmers and ranchers must preserve from clear felling from fifty to eighty per cent of their property.¹⁹¹

In broader terms, the basic arguments of Brazilian officials involve matters related to development - the economic importance of the timber industry for the region as the second source of income tax for the Amazonian states, and also providing one hundred thousand jobs. The 'job' argument is indeed the most recurrent. In a meeting held in London between the NGOs and the new IBAMA president, Eduardo Martins - a former WWF campaigner in Brazil - the focus was on the governmental measures to deal with the increase of deforestation. Yet the mahogany issue dominated the agenda, despite claims that mahogany was only one in a series of problems in the Amazon.¹⁹² Ambivalent about his NGO background and his actual position in government, Martins made the following assessment about the mahogany campaign in the UK, which coincides with the position of the embassy's secretary mentioned above:

Mahogany is a good flag ship in many ways. It is a valuable species and involves very clear recognisable groups in the process, here and there. So, it is extremely positive. The problem is that it was too efficient in the work of NGOs, and therefore it obfuscates the rest. This is not only for NGOs here, but they have managed to transfer such a consistent and efficient perspective that the process back there in Brazil is sometimes confused. And this is complicated, because if one starts thinking that the problem is mahogany, then one is not able to resolve the problem. There are other 300 species being explored in the Amazon. The process of timber exploration has to do with the way of life of the colonist, and also the process whereby the big farmer arranges capital to invest in deforestation, for instance...and the same mahogany that is exported is - the rest of it - also consumed internally by the Brazilian middle classes. So, there are also other dimensions of the problem that are not identified...the issue of local communities is very complex. Indigenous communities, for instance, some of them, like the Kaiapó, want to explore their timber.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ For a positive impact of this strategy in the media see New Scientist, *Brazil acts on the incredible shrinking rainforest*, 3 August 1996, p.4; and Gazeta Mercantil, *A Amazônia no rumo certo*, 6 August, 1996; Parabólicas, *A guerra das motosserras*, 21(3), August 1996.

¹⁹¹ Yet, in practical terms, the two-year suspension of new mahogany concessions was not to affect the trade with the UK since the existing concessions are sufficient to maintain the trade for at least the following two years. From personal communication with Graham Bruford in August 1996 and Eduardo Martins in October, 1996.

¹⁹² José Lutzenberger was also present in the meeting representing the Gaia Foundation. He raised a series of other issues such as ranching, charcoal for steel, mining in the Yanomami territory, but the agenda was directed to British NGOs concerns, and as such, basically related to mahogany.

¹⁹³ Interview with Eduardo Martins on 2-10-96.

Martins assessment of some of the effects of international campaigning over local realities raises relevant concerns, although confirming the problems identified by NGOs. However, the actual problems are undermined and marginalised by statements and arguments centred on an analysis of 'how the NGO world works'. By focusing on the NGO dynamics, Martins gives the impression of speaking as an NGO person rather than as a governmental official. Nevertheless, with such a position, he ends up by reassuring and reproducing the overall governmental attitude of marginalising the issue whilst responding to it on international diplomatic grounds. The policies towards the Amazon, and the possible conflicts between notions of 'development' and 'environmental preservation', are de-emphasised. As mahogany is not regarded as a major problem in the context of the Amazon, but a major British concern, it is dealt with mainly by diplomatic *ad hoc* solutions.

On the other hand, NGOs have never fully addressed the 'job' argument. By focusing on human rights and social justice concerns mainly related to ethnic groups - the indigenous peoples - they render invisible the majority of the population related to the trade, who hold no visible marks of ethnic difference, but who are equally exploited by the trade. Hence, the issue of alternative modes of 'development' rather than the logging activity is either marginally addressed, or mainly tackled within the dominant market realm of a disputable framework of 'sustainable forest management'.

The same Brazilian ambivalence and reactive attitude to international pressure concerning the mahogany campaign in particular and deforestation at large, can be perceived in relation to the issues of lands rights associated to the demarcation of indigenous lands in the Amazon - a campaign topic run by campaigners within the 'people tendency' that keeps an interface with the mahogany campaign.

5.2 - The Campaign for Land

The campaign for the demarcation of indigenous lands is the other most relevant and long lasting campaign for the Amazon run by UK groups, particularly those campaigning within a 'people' perspective. As mentioned above, their dialogue with 'trees' campaigners has helped to bring up human rights and social justice issues into the lat-

ter's agenda, and vice-versa.¹⁹⁴ Hence, whilst a social perspective is accommodated into the 'environmental arena', an environmental perspective is also gradually incorporated by human rights and social groups, albeit their continued focus on people and, consequently, 'environmental' issues in a localised perspective (see chapter four). This tendency is well expressed in the campaigns run by the groups participating in the Brazil Network.

The Brazil Network was created in 1986 by individuals with a 'leftist' leaning and background history of involvement with Brazil and Latin America such as NGO campaigners, intellectuals, trade unionists, journalists, film-makers and other groups interested in Brazil, social justice and human rights.¹⁹⁵ One of the aims of the network is to facilitate links between groups in Britain and in Brazil. They do that by promoting contacts and providing information, organising workshops and meetings with visiting speakers. It is an independent membership organisation which receives the support of other British organisations with members such as Oxfam, Christian Aid, Survival International, Cafod, Amnesty International, among others, as well as Brazilian residing in the UK. A brief view of the general framework of campaigns run within the network can illustrate the common ground amongst 'people' campaigns.

5.2.1 - Framing People

¹⁹⁴Branford and Glock's book *The Last Frontier* (1985) and David Treece's *Bound in Misery and Iron* (1987) were publications that played a crucial role in this context. Treece's book is a report about the impact of the Great Carajás ore mining programme over indigenous peoples, with an environmental assessment by Charles Secrett from Friends of the Earth. This is an indication of the dialogue between human rights and environmental NGOs at the time. *The Last Frontier* was first published in 1983 and presents an overview of the process of occupation of the Amazon, with focus on the issue of land concentration, migration and violence. A comparison between Branford's and Mombiot's approaches, for instance, can illustrate the differences between a 'people' perspective and a 'trees' orientation. Whilst they are both journalists travelling in the Amazon, Branford throughout the 70s and Mombiot in the late 80s, the record of their personal presence in the Amazon is felt very differently in each case. Branford's presence in the field is felt, among other things, through the presentation of the voices of migrants, that is, the personal testimonies and life stories of people in their process of migration from other parts of Brazil to the Amazon region. Whereas in Mombiot's account, his field experience is narrated in most parts of the book as though an adventure in which he performs the main character, sometimes confronting big ranchers and state officials, other times escaping from death threat situations. See similar approaches on TV documentaries analysed in chapter six.

¹⁹⁵During the 70s and 80s, particularly under Margaret Thatcher's government in Britain, people became very disillusioned with the trade unionist movement's defeats and the general route of the left. They searched for other forms of political participation such as a solidarity movement towards social and political movements in Latin America, such as the Sandinista Movement in Nicaragua. An Oxfam campaigner identified this as one of the British romanticism in relation to Latin America: 'Latin America has been a very romantic image...especially for people who are interested politically....I don't know, but everyone who knows anything about it realises that it is not true...I mean, if you are left wing here, there is this big hero thing with Fidel Castro in Cuba...and there is this exciting romantic place where people were politically aware, and people really believed in things and it didn't really happen here. And so, that was my image, I think. And I begun to learn a lot about different countries and about Peru and Sandero Lumino-so, and these kind of things. I began to realise maybe it wasn't so quite romantic as I thought.' (Oxfam campaigner, female, 23). It is interesting to compare the above quote to the statements presented by another 'people' campaigner who ironically highlights her own supposed romanticism in section 4.1.3.

Similar to the mahogany campaign of the 'trees' tendency, the Brazil Network campaigns are also articulated around an injustice framework. Nevertheless, unlike the former, this is drawn on a perspective that highlights the historical processes that produce social and economic inequalities within the Brazilian society at large. As it is outlined in its call for affiliations:

Brazil is one of the richest countries in the world. It has vast agricultural potential, mineral reserves and industrial capacity. Yet the *distribution of wealth* is grossly unequal and the great majority of people are denied decent employment, housing, health and education. Much of the fruits of their labour goes to *service massive foreign debt built up by undemocratic regimes for their own ends.*(All emphasis added)

The focus is on matters of '*distribution*' and the implications of global economic processes upon local dynamics and features. The moral and ethical indignation in this case heightens the aspect of the 'natural wealth' of the country and its economic potential by contrast to the situation of deprivation in which the majority of the people live. The emphasis on distribution and the economic potential of the country, however, may lead to the misconception that this discourse provides no critical reference to the exploitation of natural resources, and thus it offers no contrast to the dominant 'development' discourse. Nevertheless, a further comment on the destruction of the rainforest is made, this time in the context of the British connections and 'responsibilities', a fact that unveils certain overlapping discursive elements with the 'trees' tendency and the possible concerns of a British constituency:

British multinational companies like shell, BP, Unilever, BAT, ICT, BTR, Midland Bank, Boat Viyella, RTZ and Lloyds Bank profit from this situation. The British government, through the European Community and the World Bank, has helped to finance infrastructural investments which are *destroying the homes and livelihoods of many and destroying the tropical rain forest vital to the region's ecology.*

However, the focus remains on the issue of social and economic distribution. Consequently, people remain as a central focus and the forest features mainly as the home of those, or as the environment from which people produce their livelihoods. Moreover, if people are presented as 'victims' of decision-making elsewhere, in the Brazilian centres of power and in the global arena that encompasses it - a general framework similar to the mahogany campaign - they are far from being passive observers of history, as the 'trees' campaign, which is mainly centred on the agency of campaigners themselves, may unwittingly imply. One of the main distinctive features of the 'people' oriented campaigns is the fact that 'local' people are presented as organised social and political actors, whilst British campaigners hold a position of solidarity forces and supporters. As the above mentioned document further states:

Brazil's people are challenging this state of affairs. *Indigenous peoples* and *peasant farmers* are fighting for the right to live in peace on their land. *Trade unionists* are fighting for better pay and working conditions and the right to organise as they see fit. *People living in the shanty towns* are fighting for clear water, electricity supply, other basic services and proper housing. *Black people's* and *women's organisations* are fighting against discrimination. *Together, they are seeking to create a fair and just society. They are seeking the support and solidarity of people organising in Britain against injustice.*

The emphasis is on organised social movements, that is, people organising themselves to fight for their rights. This is the basis for the call for 'support and solidarity of people *organising* in Britain against injustice'. Yet injustice is a broad frame, and can encompass people with different backgrounds and political leanings - from religious groups to other grassroots movements and intellectuals in Britain. The grounds for the 'international' connection, thus, varies enormously and leads to questions about the nature of the *support* and *solidarity* that is sought after and is actually offered. Despite a few trade union alliances, most bonds are constructed on an ideological basis, which makes the links sometimes precarious or temporary.

In this context, NGOs play the role of the intermediaries between an educated public in the UK and grassroots movements in Brazil. Some of them are connected to churches and the majority are registered in Britain as charities. According to the British law, this means that they are not allowed to do 'political lobbying', a fact that imposes restrictions as well as leads to the creation of alternative strategies for actions.¹⁹⁶ Support and solidarity varies also according to regional and local situations in the 'South', and in terms of funding, it can range from famine relief to organisational support, the latter being the most frequent approach towards Brazil. As a former Oxfam Brazil desk officer states:

The Brazilian reality is a little different than other places, say, for example Africa. There are even practical questions. For example, if the Oxfam office in Recife (Brazil) needs a computer, they go to a shop in Recife and buy a computer. It is different from a country like Zaire where we would have to send the PC from here. In Brazil, the support for the organisation of the civil society is more important. In Africa the work is different. Most of it is charity because of the lack of basic infrastructure. The Brazilian society is more sophisticated in the sense that we don't have to do for them. There are people there who know how to do things. The support they want is international solidarity and funding for the structure of the organisation, such as staff payment and so on. It is not money to buy flour, you see?¹⁹⁷

The above quote unveils a certain 'enthusiasm' about the mobilisation of social movements in Brazil. Within this context, one of the major campaigns carried out by indivi-

¹⁹⁶For further discussion on this issue see Edwards and Hulme (1992), Burnell (1991), Clark (1991).

¹⁹⁷Translated from a communication in Portuguese in 20-03-95.

duals and groups in the Brazil Network has been the campaign for land rights, both for indigenous peoples - a long standing campaign - as well as for non-Indian Brazilians.¹⁹⁸

Nonetheless, despite the increasing solidarity campaign for the *Movimento dos Sem Terra* (MST) in the last three years, it is the campaign for the demarcation of indigenous lands that has long occupied the agenda of 'people' campaigners in the UK, and the one that has influenced the 'trees' campaigners' incorporation of human rights and social justice issues into their campaign framework.

5.2.2 - The Demarcation of Indigenous Lands

Most often, popular global environmental discourses depict a generic construction of *Indianess*, whereby indigenous peoples are represented as 'custodians of nature' and 'victims' of the encompassing societies. Another more social and political tendency is caught up between such a generic formulation and the representation of indigenous peoples as agents of their own histories. Acting globally with a specific agenda implies, thus, a certain interpretation and translation of an *Indianess* to the global realm. Most frequently, this is represented by the reference to concerns with the 'preservation of the forest', as well as implying working with organised supra local indigenous representatives as delegates of various local and traditional organisations.

In this section, I will discuss the representation of indigenous peoples' interests beyond the local sphere, focusing on their supporters within the 'people' tendency in the UK. This is the case of groups such as Oxfam, Christian Aid, Amnesty International, Cafod, and above all Survival International - the main non-indigenous intermediary in the UK, and also the one that keeps an interface with 'trees' and 'trees and people' campaigners. My analysis shall thus be focused on some of Survival's publications, and in an ethnography of two public meetings held in London with indigenous delegates from Brazil and the Amazon in 1995, as part of the campaign against recent changes in the Brazilian legislation regarding the demarcation of indigenous lands.

Most invariably, the generic discourse about indigenous peoples' plights - the loss of their lands, cultures, lives, the dismantlement of their social and political organisations, to mention just a few aspects - is related to their confrontation to the 'Western society' at large, or the 'whites', all as generic encompassing categories. Frequently, but not always explicitly, this discourse refers to the long-standing historic process of exclusion of indigenous peoples since colonisation. It also refers more closely to the recent dynamics of the globalisation process with the intensifying and renewed 'encroachment

¹⁹⁸Indeed, the campaign for agrarian reform in Brazil led by the Movement of the Landless People (*Movimento dos Sem-Terra*, MST) has met recognition and support world-wide. The massive Sem-Terra march to Brasilia in April 1997 in which they protested the celebration of the anniversary of the murdering of 19 landless by the state of Pará police in 1996, gained a cover page story of *The Guardian-Weekend* magazine. They were portrayed as a 'barefoot army' and the report quoted Noam Chomsky's enthusiastic comments that 'Sem-Terra may be the most important grassroots social movement in a world where the left is deeply confused about direction and path'. Leftist euphoria apart, support for the organisation of the Sem-Terra has involved funding, publicity, direct and indirect political lobbying, solidarity and an educational campaign such as videos and presentation of Sem-Terra speakers in London. For an analysis of the Sem-Terra as the largest social movement in Latin America see Petras (1997), and Mark-off (1997).

into indigenous territories of transnational corporations, national and transnational agribusiness and cattle-ranchers, and particular national governments' policies and practices...' (Mato 1995).

In response to those processes, indigenous peoples have been organising themselves in the last three decades in local, regional, national and transnational organisations and networks. Networks involving indigenous peoples and non-Indian supporters and allies are therefore part of globalisation processes themselves. Such transnational relations most certainly forge new transnational identities and processes which in turn also reflect back on local and national relations and identities. The outcome of the interaction between indigenous peoples and those non-Indians who sympathise with their plight, and support them, only very recently has been the object of debate and research.¹⁹⁹ A current commonplace is to speak about the flow of people, information, goods, ideas, political agendas, and so forth. A non-uniform and non-homogeneous 'global constituency' (Beckett 1996:2) of indigenous people and correlated groups and sympathisers, including environmentalists, composes an important dimension of the global cultural flow (Appadurai 1990: 6-7). Indigenous peoples' identities and representation need to be understood as they constitute themselves in such processes.

According to Ricardo (1996), in Brazil, the representation of indigenous peoples interests beyond the local sphere can be only understood and assessed 'under a sociology of the non-indigenous intermediaries of all types with their different agenda, profile, and strategies'. This is the case of those representing indigenous peoples' interests in regional, national and international realms, as it is respectively the case of indigenous organisations such as CIR (Indigenist Council of Roraima), COIAB (the Co-ordination of the Indigenous Peoples of the Brazilian Amazon) and CAPOIB (the Networking Council of the Indigenous Organisations and Peoples of Brazil) on regional and national levels; support organisations in the national realm such as CIMI (The Indigenist Missionary Council), CCPY (The Commission for the Creation of the Yanomami Park), ISA (Instituto Socioambiental); and in the international arena, NGOs such as Survival International, Cultural Survival, Christian Aid, among others.²⁰⁰

In the peculiar Brazilian case where indigenous populations are so ethnically and demographically diverse and dispersed, by contrast to the situation in other Latin American countries, the local dimension is the primary realm of indigenous peoples' representation.²⁰¹ Nevertheless, in the past few years, particularly since the mid 1980s, the agenda set by the encompassing societies in the regional, national and international dimension has imposed circumstantial attempts at representing indigenous interests beyond the local sphere, pressing for a generic representation of *Indianness*. This agenda is represented by a series of processes and events from which Ricardo (1996) highlights

¹⁹⁹See for instance, Ramos (1994), and the debate in Beckett and Mato (1996).

²⁰⁰Without mentioning the representation in governmental bodies, such as FUNAI in Brazil and indigenous peoples commissions at the UN level.

²⁰¹ According to Ricardo (1996), a permanent indigenous polity is not only local (each village, community or family), but 'faccional' (in case of villages divided in two ritual halves each one with its own chief) and decentralised (with no recognition of a central power). The traditional political organisations of each people operating at the local level would have a regulatory effect over 'external' interventions. Hence, Ricardo points out that non-traditional organisations are perceived as 'service organisations' created to deal with supra local spheres in the society at large. For an account on indigenous peoples' populations in Brazil and in Latin America, see Wearne (1996), and also discussion in chapter two.

the following: the writing of the Brazilian Constitution (1987/1988), the Rio Summit (1992), the celebrations and anti-celebrations of the arrival of Columbus in the Americas (1992), the negotiations over the Statute of Indigenous Societies at the National Congress (1992/1994), the constitutional deadline for the demarcation of indigenous lands (1993), the revision of the Constitution (1993/1994), the presidential elections (1994), and the announcement in 1995 of a new decree changing the rules for the demarcation of indigenous lands. I would further add to Ricardo's list of events the mahogany campaign, drawn from the perspective of the UK-based environmental NGOs.

Nevertheless, it is indeed the announcement of changes in the legislation concerning the demarcation of indigenous lands in 1995 that mostly affected the agenda of indigenous organisations and their supporters in Brazil and abroad in recent years. The new decree, known by the number 1775, would open up spaces in the legislation for the contestation of indigenous lands demarcation by interested parties.

Such changes in legislation against indigenous peoples interests were a concession made by the neo-liberal agenda of Cardoso's administration to his right wing supporters from the northern regions of Brazil. It reopened the polemic about indigenous peoples' rights at national and international realms, and was received by indigenous groups and their supporters as a terrible setback jeopardising their achievements with the 1988 Constitution. One of the highlights of the reactions by UK support groups was the organisation of public and political meetings with Brazilian indigenous groups' representatives and organisations in London, and other cities in Europe. The Brazilian Embassy in London also reacted by bringing the author of the new decree, the Justice Minister, for a series of meetings with NGOs and politicians in Europe, particularly in the UK. I will next focus my attention on the NGOs reactions to Decree 1775 as a privileged standpoint whereby the 'local' is brought into the 'global' with the encounter of indigenous peoples' representatives and their British supporters. One of the aspects to be highlighted is the accommodation of a local dimension into the agenda of possible 'global' allies: a British public understood as concerned with environmental issues and the fate of the Amazon rainforest.

Decree 1775 Beyond The Local

At the same time that environmental groups have developed a language that brings them closer to social and human rights campaigners, the latter have also incorporated elements of the environmental discourse in their campaigning for 'forest peoples', particularly in the case of the indigenous peoples from the Amazon. At times, a more radical perspective seems to present indigenous peoples as the 'custodians of an alternative to modernity' (Beckett 1996) or 'custodians of nature' (Ramos 1994), albeit dispersed among the differentiated agendas that might be found amongst different indigenous peoples and organisations.

In a debate with *strictu sensu* conservationist groups, Survival International - the organisation in the forefront of the campaign for indigenous peoples' rights in the UK and world-wide - stated that: 'For the 21st century, Survival promotes a *new kind of environmentalism* which enhances *people's rights* rather than denying them'.²⁰² Implied

²⁰² From the booklet *Survival, a unique organisation for tribal peoples*, Survival International, 1995.

citly in this statement is Survival's criticism over an environmental perspective which is perceived as denying people's rights - an indication of elements of contention in the debate with those considered perhaps as 'old environmentalists'. With people in mind, Survival's general agenda consists of 'preserving human variety and cultural diversity'.²⁰³ Nevertheless, perhaps reflecting the problems and constraints of graphically representing 'cultural variety' on the globalised stage, Survival's philosophy depicts a rather ambivalent anthropological concept of culture - at times shifting from a synchronic 19th century perspective, and at other times tending towards a more diachronic interactive assumption.²⁰⁴ This can be noticed, for instance, when Survival states that it chooses to focus 'on *tribal peoples* who have the most to lose, usually those most recently in contact with the *outside world*'.²⁰⁵ As further stated:

In the same way that 'western society' has taken elements of indigenous cultures and integrated them seamlessly as their 'own' - for example, potatoes from Andean Indians and chocolate from Central America - so new goods can be accommodated by tribal cultures without necessarily threatening their *cultural integrity*...more often than not, *tribal peoples* live better when they are more isolated from *outsiders*. This is not a romantic yearning for a primordial state of innocence - it is the observable and verifiable reality as articulated by tribal peoples themselves...In fact, some *tribes* which have no contact with *outsiders* today, may well have had contact in the past, and may have fled into the 'interior' following attacks of epidemics. Several of them continue to hide from the *outside world*.²⁰⁶

This anthropological concept of culture as lodged within a shell, that is, with rigid and fixed boundaries - a legacy of Tylor - has rendered upon Survival a few criticisms by those with opposed or competing interests. The criticisms consist basically of accusations of romanticism and that the organisation wants to keep people in the 'stone age'. Such charges, for instance, were widely publicised by the cosmetic company The Body Shop.²⁰⁷ However, interestingly and ironically enough The Body Shop's ideas and discourse also depict an evolutionist 19th century notion of culture when the company states that it is dragging the Indians out of the 'stone age' with its trade programme.

²⁰³ From Survival International's publication, *Survival, 25 years of standing by tribal peoples*, The newsletter of Survival International, 33, 1994.

²⁰⁴For a further discussion on the shifting concepts of culture, see Clifford (1988).

²⁰⁵ *Survival, a unique organisation for tribal peoples*, Survival International, 1995. Emphasis added.

²⁰⁶ Survival International, *First Contact, Last Chance*, Survival newsletter 35, 1996. Emphasis added.

²⁰⁷ There is a debate between Survival International and the cosmetic company The Body Shop about its trade activity with indigenous peoples. It started in 1992 when the Body Shop initiated trade with the Kaiapó people in Brazil. This debate and the Body Shop's attempt at developing an NGO type of practice combined with its commercial interests is a very complex issue that deserves a further development beyond the limitations of this thesis. For a reference to the debate between Survival and the Body Shop see Corry (1992, 1993), Turner (1992), Dromme (1994) Entine (1994) and Survival International, *Fruits of the Harvest: the 'rainforest harvest', 'Cultural Survival' & the 'Body Shop'*, June 1992; *Survival International's contact with the Body Shop*, paper prepared at the request of the Ethical Investment Research Service (EIRIS), October 1994.

Nevertheless, a further analysis of Survival's publications and campaign activities reveals a more current, interactive and dynamic concept of culture co-existing with the former notion. It is most envisaged in Survival's representation of indigenous peoples organisations and movements to fight back for their rights. Such organisations are not composed of isolated '*tribal peoples*', or exclusively representatives of traditional political organisations, but they are an amalgamation of those forms of representation and current 'western' grassroots and social movements.

Thus, acting globally with an agenda that aims at 'preserving human variety and cultural diversity' at the same time as providing a 'platform for tribal representatives to talk directly to the companies which are invading their land',²⁰⁸ for instance, implies a certain interpretation and translation of an *Indianess* into the global realm. Most frequently, this implies a reference to the preoccupation with the preservation of the environment, as well as to the support of the organised supralocal indigenous representatives as delegates of the various local and traditional organisations. These issues can be graphically perceived through an ethnography of two public meetings with delegates from the CRI and CAPOIB, respectively, regional and national indigenous organisations from Brazil organised by Survival and other support organisations in London.

The Visit of the Macuxi

Survival's main overall campaign target has focused on indigenous land ownership rights.²⁰⁹ In the Brazilian case, it has mostly centred on the indigenous peoples in the Amazon region. Following the successful campaign for the demarcation of the Yanomami territory in the 1980s - a people and a campaign that gave Survival International a distinctive face²¹⁰ - the organisation has also systematically focused on the neighbouring Macuxi people in the 1990s.

As a consequence of the eviction of *garimpeiros* (gold prospectors) from the Yanomami lands in the 80s, a great number of them moved on to the neighbouring lands occupied by the Macuxi, Wapixana, Taurepang and Ingarikó peoples. Similar to the situation in the Yanomami territory, these lands are also in the Brazilian state of Roraima in the borders with Venezuela and Guyana. Conflicts between an indigenous groups' resistance movement led by the Macuxi (a movement that comprises direct ac-

²⁰⁸For a position about indigenous peoples' organisations and the employment of new technological tools and political engagement in society at large, see further *Survival - a unique organisation*, 1995. and also *A Worldwide Movement* in Survival's newsletter 35, 1996.

²⁰⁹The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 granted the Indians the rights to the lands they traditionally occupy. However, no indigenous lands ownership is recognised. It applies a 'reserve' system in which the land is owned by the state (see chapter two). Survival, along with other Brazilian support organisations, campaigns for the demarcation of all indigenous lands as granted by the Constitution. Nevertheless, less vulnerable to the reactions of Brazilian military, politicians, and economic interest groups than the Brazilian support organisations, it campaigns also more openly for land ownership rights and indigenous peoples self-determination.

²¹⁰As discussed in chapter two, the Yanomami lands were eventually demarcated in 1991, before the UN conference in Rio. Most of Survival's marketing material is related to the Yanomami. See for instance, the publication *Survival - a unique organisation for tribal peoples*, 1995. Alongside the headlines indicating ...*a unique organisation*, the face of a Yanomami child with its unique painting and ornaments connects the uniqueness of the Yanomami to the announced uniqueness of Survival as an organisation. Here, the Yanomami literally lend their face to the organisation.

tion against illegal goldmining on their land, road blockades, resistance to invaders such as gold prospectors, farmers, and also state police) have been particularly frequent and highly violent in the Raposa/Serra do Sol area.²¹¹ Although FUNAI had already identified the area and recommended the final approval of its demarcation by the Ministry of Justice, the state of Roraima authorities, responding for local economic interest groups, have consistently obstructed the demarcation process for many years. The apparent justification is the same geopolitical argument for national security since the area is located on the borders with other countries. As a result, Roraima hold the worst record of violence against indigenous peoples in Brazil, a situation already defined as a 'state of institutionalised violence'.²¹²

Although indigenous groups in this area have campaigned for its recognition since 1977, a national campaign for the demarcation of the Raposa/Serra do Sol territory was launched in 1993 by the Indian Council of Roraima (CIR) joined by Brazilian support indigenous organisations and the catholic church. Internationally, the campaign was joined in Europe by support organisations such as Survival International in the UK and the Italian 'Lega per i diritti dei popoli'. It reached its peak in January 1995, when Survival International delivered a petition with 27 thousand signatures at the Brazilian Embassy in London, also coinciding with the announcement of Decree 1775. A few months later, a delegation of three Macuxi from CIR visited Europe in order to seek support for their struggle. A public meeting sponsored by Survival International, Oxfam, and Brazil Network held in London gives an opportunity for graphically discussing some of the dynamics in the encounter between a very regional dimension and a global sphere, for instance, how environmental concerns are incorporated into the agenda of indigenous peoples presented to an European public.

The accommodation of a regional agenda and circumstance into a global framework can be noted directly from the leaflet that was used to advertise the public meeting. After a summary of the local situation confronting the Macuxi, with emphasis on the high degree of violence they face in their daily lives, an appeal to the British public highlighted an environmental dimension as follows:

Come and hear three Makuxi leaders from the Indian Council of Roraima talk about *their plans to save their forest* and savannah lands and support their international appeal to the Brazilian president. (Emphasis added)

It is interesting to note the use of the expression 'save their forest' and the separation between forest and land (technically speaking savannah is an ecosystem within the Amazon forest). The separation produces an effect of meaning whereby the social connotation attached to the notion of land is abstracted from the idea of 'nature' as implied by the category of forest. The 'naturalisation' of land by the use of the word forest, also might be seen to naturalise 'Indians' as part of this landscape.

The effect of abstracting the 'social' from 'nature' through the distinction between forest and land was furthermore observed during the meeting itself. With an audi-

²¹¹The population of Macuxi and Ingarikó is estimated to be eleven thousand people. From this total, only ten per cent had their lands recognised in the 1980s, the majority of which are spread out in small 'islands' and subject to invasions by gold prospectors, settlers and ranchers.

²¹² *Correio Braziliense*, 21/07/93 and Pereira (1996:166-8).

ence of around one hundred people, a video about the Macuxi was shown before the presentation of the three delegates - two men and one woman - took place. However, before the images of the video could be seen, the chairman, a member of the *Brazil Network*, in a similar style of a TV news report which is about to show some shocking or upsetting scene, advised the audience as follows :

I shall say you are going to see cattle in this video. One thing that I want to clarify from the beginning is that the cattle is grazed by the Macuxi on *natural savannah* land. So, contrary to images that you might be familiar with of *deforestation* - which is happening precisely to make way for commercial cattle ranching - this is not the case here. This is *natural savannah* which the Macuxi is using in a *sustainable way* to graze their cattle. (Emphasis added)

While addressing an European audience thought to be concerned with deforestation in the Amazon, the statement also reveals an underlying dilemma related to the use of a concept of culture that might contradict the complex reality and dynamics of the lived experiences. In other words, the notion that the image of cattle grazing could be contradictory to the image Europeans hold about the way of living of 'indigenous peoples', especially the idea of Indians as 'custodians of the forest'.²¹³ This assumption of a certain expectation from the British public reflects back on the way 'the Indians' represent themselves and feel the need to justify their way of living. As one of the delegates stated when speaking about the life in his community: 'Well, when we say *forest*, we don't have forest as such. We have a *guapó pequeno*, but we are preserving it'.²¹⁴

Besides the incorporation of an 'environmental' dimension addressed to a public thought of as concerned about it, it is also worth noting the initial 'ritual of difference' performed by each delegate. As though to state their authenticity and uniqueness, they initially introduced themselves with a few words in their indigenous language before exposing their plight. This was not, however, a ritual performed exclusively for this particular audience, but one performed in the political confrontation with non-Indian groups at large.²¹⁵ In their presentation, as well as speaking about their local culture, they presented the local reality of brutal violence, dissemination of diseases, unpunished crimes and disrespect from the authorities. The local condition was, then, transported into a global dimension when the links to Europe, and Britain in particular, were concretely established:

The president of FUNAI has already determined our land and has signed a decree saying it should be demarcated. It took us twenty-five years of fighting and

²¹³The video also explains that the Indians worked for the cattle breeders for many years, during which they gradually acquired some herds for themselves. As the argument goes, since in the minds of the *latifundiários* (big landowners) only cattle owners have the right to the land, this is a way the Indians found of counter acting the invasion and to occupy their lands. This conveys a political meaning to a practice which is not *originally* Indian.

²¹⁴ Survival's translation: 'Well, we don't have a lot of forest because it's natural savannah. But the bits of forest that we have we are conserving.'

²¹⁵See discussion on the politics of authenticity in Clifford (1988).

struggling and finally FUNAI has signed this decree. But the problem is that the Minister of Justice won't sign the decree. It's sitting on his desk, and that's why we are here today to pressurise the Justice Minister. So, the federal government now has to rectify this. We have all the time tried to speak to the government, but they won't see us. So, we are here because governments, like the British government, and other governments in Europe are giving huge amounts of money to Brazil and some of this money is to demarcate indigenous lands, but ours isn't included. So, that's what we talked about with the MP (British Member of Parliament) today. *So, we think that this money going from Britain to Brazil will in fact destroy the environment.*

Survival International operates, thus, as a double intermediary between local and global dimensions, whereupon final actions must result in national governmental initiatives. However, the nature of the mediation goes beyond a mere translation from one reality into another, but implies an active participation in a dynamic process of accommodation and generation of meanings which produce changes at all levels involved.

The responses from the audience were particularly indicative of these dynamics. The questions presented to the Macuxi ranged from inquiries about their spiritual beliefs to queries about specific detailed information to be used towards immediate global political pressure. These latter questions unveiled a more politically informed 1990s audience, eager to get involved themselves beyond the intermediation of the support organisations. Detailed responses to specific global inquiries about which multinational companies were active in the area, or to which European organisations lending money to Brazil they could write to in order to put pressure on them, go beyond the local sphere of articulation to be answered by Survival, in which its role has been defined. This is illustrated in the following example:

Question from the audience - Do you know any European organisation that funds projects in Brazil to whom we could write for the liberation of the money for demarcation, for example?

CRI's representative - We are asking our friend here (Survival International) to help with that. You can get this information from her.

Survival's representative - I mean, the European Parliament has just passed a very strong resolution against Brazil and its treatment of indigenous peoples...but the problem, I think, is that in all these governmental organisations you get some individuals who can do a lot, but as entities they are incredibly bureaucratic. But I think that by keeping pressure, particularly public pressure, and joining in Survival and Oxfam's campaigns, you know, if you want more information I would be very happy to give that to you, you know, ideas for writing.²¹⁶

²¹⁶From the public meeting with the Macuxi on 31 October, 1995, at the Quaker International Centre, London.

Presentations of indigenous peoples to an European audience, as well as seeking support for the indigenous plight also work as 'accountability' and fund-raising events for the support organisations themselves. The latter place themselves between 'local peoples' in Brazil and 'local peoples' in the UK, meaning in this case indigenous organisations and an educated European public. They are the ones decodifying and acting in global bureaucratic instances and processes on both sides of the line. Their support has been crucial for the representation of indigenous peoples' interests beyond the local context, that is, in policies and initiatives drawn from a transnational perspective, but which affects indigenous peoples' lives. The question that remains open is the extent of the effect of transnational relations upon indigenous peoples' traditional identities and local relations. In other words, by creating a generic representation of *Indianess* to a non-Indian European constituency, non-indigenous support organisations may in certain stances unwittingly contribute to a homogenisation they otherwise campaign against. In networking with indigenous peoples' organisations, they may transport their representation, vocabularies and concerns, which are in turn assimilated by those groups and end up competing with their own local agendas.²¹⁷ On the other hand, because indigenous peoples need to represent their interests in non-indigenous terms, and non-indigenous support organisations and environmental groups have as their set of values and ideas the respect for cultural diversity, indigenous peoples' representatives might be able to overcome the consequences of unequal social positions.

The case of the Macuxi meeting illustrates the process of accommodation of meanings, which belong to a very local sphere, into a global dimension. This was particularly represented by the incorporation of global environmental elements - such as 'forest' concerns - into the struggle for 'land' as a more social and local realm. Other meanings and levels of mediation operating between local and global spheres can be further illustrated through another public meeting held in London, this time with national indigenous delegates.

²¹⁷See further Beckett and Mato (eds.) (1996).

The Visit of CAPOIB

The meeting with the delegates of CAPOIB - the Networking Council of Brazilian Indigenous Organisations and Peoples - took place in May 1996, a few months after the visit of the CRI delegates. This time, the visit was part of a broader campaign concerned with the approval of decree 1775, which threatened the demarcation of all indigenous lands in Brazil. The delegation visited several European countries to put their case to donor governments involved in the *Pilot Program for the Conservation of the Brazilian Rainforests*, and to seek popular and political support for their campaign to overturn Decree 1775.²¹⁸

By the time of the CAPOIB visit, Decree 1775 was already signed out by president Cardoso, despite all the protests from indigenous organisations and their supporters in Brazil and world-wide. The reactions against the new 'anti-indigenist polity' of the government was widely divulged in the Brazilian press for many months involving debates between lawyers, anthropologists, progressive sectors of the church and political parties, as well as by several other social movements and organisations. Attempts at revoking the new decree involved legal suits filed in different spheres by CAPOIB at the Public Attorney's Office, and MPs from the Workers Party (PT) at the National Congress and the Federal Court.²¹⁹

Hence, it is the dynamics of the national agenda that imposes the representation of indigenous peoples interests in realms such as the national and international contexts. CAPOIB was created in 1992 during the III Assembly of COIAB (Co-ordination of the

²¹⁸ For an overview of the legal situation of indigenous lands in Brazil until March 1996, see Ricardo (ed.) (1996: 69). Decree 1775 was elaborated by the Ministry of Justice under a technical legal argument that it was providing a *correction of the vice*. In short, the argument was that the prior system regulating the demarcation of indigenous lands under Decree 22 of 1991, contradicted the 1988 Constitution for it did not contemplate the right of plaintiffs to challenge the demarcations or claim indemnity for the loss of land. The only possible indemnity was the right for compensation arising from improvements on the land made in good faith. So, as the government's argument was presented, the new legislation would correct that by making possible the legal contestation over demarcations. See further, Ministry of Justice, *Decree n. 1775*, of 8th January 1996. A summary of the argumentation presented by the Ministry of Justice is found in the document *Legal Framework of the Demarcation Process of Indigenous Lands in Brazil*, Ministry of Justice of Brazil, 27 February, 1996, and also *Indian Lands in the Brazilian Constitution System*, summary of the Minister of Justice's presentation at the *Symposium Sustainable Development in Latin American Rainforests and the Role of Law*, The University of Texas at Austin, 29 February - 1 March, 1996. For the counter arguments of indigenous peoples organisations see *Jobim Viaja a Europa e o CAPOIB Denuncia o Decreto 1775/96*, CAPOIB - Conselho de Articulação dos Povos e Organizações Indígenas do Brasil, 21 March, 1996.

²¹⁹ The basic counter arguments refuted the technical allegation of unconstitutionality of the prior Decree 22 and depicted the resolution as a political decision, that is, a compromise of Cardoso's neo-liberal government to the lobby of landowners and interested parties from the northern regions of Brazil. These counter arguments were based on the text of the 1988 Constitution itself which declared void all land ownership titles over indigenous areas. Moreover, because the demarcation of indigenous lands is an administrative procedure to be carried out by the state based in a technical assessment, it implies no conflict of rights nor plaintiffs, as it was stated by the Justice Minister to support his allegation of unconstitutionality of Decree 22. For further information about the 'anti-indigenist' lobby in Brazil and attempts at reviewing the Constitution and changing the law about indigenous peoples rights and demarcation of lands in particular, see Ramos (1996: 6-8). See further Brazilian Constitution, 1988, Article 231, Paragraph 6: 'São nulos e extintos, não produzindo efeitos jurídicos, os atos que tenham por objeto a ocupação, o domínio e a posse das terras a que se refere este artigo'. And also Dallari (1996), Viana and Miranda (1996), Ricardo and Marés (1996).

Indigenous Peoples of the Brazilian Amazon) with support of CIMI (Indigenist Missionary Council). The mandate of CAPOIB is 'to publicise, and denounce the violations of indigenous rights, to network with various indigenous groups and people, to accompany legislation going to Brazilian Congress which concerns indigenous peoples, and to network with solidarity organisations inside Brazil as well as outside'.²²⁰ Thus, CAPOIB is a Brazilian network of indigenous organisations and peoples created to deal with indigenous issues at national and international levels.

The delegation in London was composed by three men and one woman, including a Macuxi representative from the CIR who had participated in the previous visit. Furthermore, they were also indigenous representatives of three Brazilian regions, namely North (represented by the Macuxi leader), Centre-West (represented by a Guarani-Kaiowá) and North-East (with Xucuri-Kariri and Potiguara representatives). This is indicative of the amalgamation of ethnic local dimensions into regional and national forms of representation and action within the context of the Brazilian society as well as internationally.²²¹

The format of this meeting was similar to the one held with the Macuxi. A five minute video of a Channel Four news report about the new decree and the protests of indigenous peoples in Brasilia (Brazil's capital) was shown before the presentation of the speakers. However, no introduction in native indigenous languages took place, and very discrete distinctive ethnic marks were displayed beyond the very presence of the indigenous representatives and the agenda at stake - the legal and political situation of the demarcation of indigenous lands and Decree 1775.²²² What I wish to highlight with this case is the political atmosphere, framework and articulation of the problems stated by the delegation in national and international terms, by contrast to a more regional and local perspective as presented with the previous example. This can be illustrated by the following statement made by one of the delegates:

The fact that state governments and Federal organisations have challenged indigenous territories show us how serious, or not serious the Brazilian government is in obeying its own Constitution and recognising and demarcating all indigenous lands...*The problem in Brazil today is concentration of land in the hands of a few people. Fifty-nine thousand landowners occupy 160 million hectares. This situation represents a compromise against the demarcation of indigenous lands and the agrarian reform as well. Brazil is a very large country. There should be land for everybody. Brazil is not like Germany, Chile or England. There is land for everybody. The problem is that land is concentrated in the hands of a few*

²²⁰ Caboquinho Potiguara in the public meeting in London, 14 May 1996. A previous attempt at creating an unified indigenous organisation at national level was done with UNI - the Union of the Indigenous Nations, which played that role until the 1988 Constitution.

²²¹ A Guarani-Nhandeva leader accompanied by a lawyer from CIMI also joined the CAPOIB delegation. They were touring to present the situation of the Guarani-Kaiowa- Nhandeva area which has a very high rate of suicide, particularly amongst children and teenagers. For a recent report on the suicide situation amongst Guarani Indians see *The Sunday Times Magazine*, 'Staring Extinction in the Face', 20 March, 1998.

²²² With the only exception being the Guarani Kaiowá suicide case, which served as an illustration of what the delegation considered as a consequence of the problems with the non-demarcation of indigenous lands.

people. There are 180 million hectares. that nobody use. It is like three times the size of France, or six times the size of Germany...The government says it has no resources to demarcate the indigenous lands, but in fact the Brazilian government spent 6 billion dollars to save the banks in Brazil. With this money, they could have resettled 400 thousand landless families. So, the demarcation of indigenous lands is part of this whole policy that the Brazilian government has. There is no social policy, whereas it is for the indigenous people, the landless or the favelados (shanty town people). (Emphasis added)²²³

It is worth noting that the demarcation of indigenous lands is placed against a general political framework concerned with structural problems and the agenda of the Brazilian government which does not prioritise 'social policies'. Hence, issues of distribution and social justice are heightened and entangled in issues of ethnicity. The problem of 'concentration of land' is highlighted as concerning both indigenous peoples' plights and the struggle for agrarian reform. Other national references are raised in order to place the issue in a wider perspective of national policies. Comparison to other European countries are made in order to provide references to the European audience on the issue of scale and availability of land in Brazil. Furthermore, as a national indigenous organisation, they place themselves in a social category with a political identity associated to other excluded groups in Brazil - the landless and the shantytown dwellers.

The questions raised by the audience gives an opportunity to further highlight this framework, whereas they are also typically indicative of some aspects of the political awareness of this particular public and the dynamics between local, national and transnational dimensions. The political awareness of the audience can be depicted by the inquires related to, for instance, the articulation between CAPOIB and other indigenous groups from other countries, the extent to which a commercial boycott campaign would be of any help in this case, and also how to articulate pressure over any concrete commitments done in the Rio Summit. These questions also allowed CAPOIB to express itself as a political sector aligned with others in the Brazilian context, as mentioned above and in the following example:

Question from the audience - How is the decree perceived in Brazil? Because from here we can be seen as outsiders. Does it have a popular base at all?

CAPOIB delegate - On the contrary. The indigenous movements today are very well linked with other social movements, trade unions, the churches. Also some sectors of the government itself, as it is the case of the Human Rights Commission and the Commission of Environment and Minorities of the Federal Congress. There is the Movement of the Landless People. We also defend a policy

²²³According to CAPOIB, by the time of their visit, 179 claims against indigenous lands were presented, affecting a total of fifty-five indigenous areas. There were claims filed by public authorities, such as a number of claims filed by IBAMA - the environmental agency - that was, nonetheless, forced to withdraw them shortly. Claims were also filed by the governments of Pará, Mato Grosso, Rondônia, Roraima, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, as well as many municipalities. The delegation was asking European governments to bring pressure to bear on state governments which had claimed indigenous land in the area of the Pilot Programme for the Conservation of the Brazilian Rainforests, funded by the G7 and the European Union.

of agrarian reform for the landless. It's becoming very much a joint struggle. Because as well as calling for the demarcation of indigenous land, we call for land for the landless. We campaign for agrarian reform...for a social policy as well. But also, the Brazilian government is afraid of criticism from Europe. When there is criticism from Europe, they retreat.

The audience's concern about charges of interference into domestic affairs shows some awareness about the Brazilian sensitivity to the issue of 'international interference', at the same time that it also depicts an uncertainty concerning the degree of political organisation of the Brazilian society and the possible support to indigenous peoples within it. In this regard, the invisibility of a 'national' sphere of support can be further understood from the dynamics between transnational NGOs and national groups. An incident which unfolded in the meeting can illustrate this issue. During CAPOIB's presentation, only the indigenous delegates and 'host' NGOs were (the actors) composing the panel at the table. The CIMI lawyer - a Brazilian support organisation - was sitting as a spectator in the audience. However, due to particular inquiries about specific legal aspects of the new decree, the CAPOIB delegates requested, thus, the assistance of the CIMI representative, who was a non-Indian Brazilian. He was, thus, simply pointed out by the host and translator NGO on the table as 'we have *a lawyer* from Brazil here', without any references to CIMI as a support organisation from Brazil. This was later clarified by the chair of the meeting, but the incident is revealing of silences regarding a non-Indian stance in Brazil, as well as revealing of the importance of 'direct local contact' for NGOs campaigning in Britain or transnationally. Though indicative of the networking between CAPOIB and the Brazilian support groups such as CIMI, the episode also exposes, on another level, some of the features of the networking between national and international support groups. In such public presentations, global NGOs can reassure their constituency of the direct links they establish with specific local peoples. Hence, the mediation of national support organisations is sometimes downplayed by transnational NGOs in their messages to the general public.

Nevertheless, the identification of the indigenous peoples' rights with other struggles by organised social movements in Brazil, particularly the interface they keep with the movement of the landless, makes it possible to speak in a more generic sense of a 'land campaign' in the Brazilian society, which is supported by a transnational constituency. The placing of the issue in a transnational framework heightens and justifies the support of such a transnational constituency, as it was pointed out by another CAPOIB delegate:

There are several multilateral programmes, such as Planaforo, Prodeagro and the Pilot Programme. All these involve demarcation of indigenous lands. This money comes from tax payers here through the World Bank and Europe. This money will be used to reduce indigenous lands. And what we consider the most dangerous thing, the Brazilian government can use this money to demarcate some indigenous territories, particularly in the northern territory (the Amazon). So, it will be doing this to seem to be doing something, without demarcating all the land and the correct amount of land. So, they will use foreign money to de-

marcate some land and satisfy international opinion...regions outside the Amazon simply won't have the same luck.

As well as highlighting such transnational processes and possible channels of pressure upon national spheres, the above quote also reveals some of the unintended consequences of international pressure over specific areas or matters. The Amazon remains as a privileged area of attention in terms of the demarcation of indigenous lands very much in response to international concerns. The same unintended consequence of transnational campaigns was pointed out in the case of the mahogany campaign. As the governmental policies for the Amazon have been mainly reactive to international concern, sometimes a focus on a single issue can unwittingly provide a show-case for the Brazilian government to appear as dealing with the situation. Campaigners are not unaware of this, but an international agenda might obfuscate the realities on the ground. In this case, however, because the agenda of this meeting was produced in reaction to a national policy affecting the entire issue of indigenous lands demarcation, it is interesting to note that unlike the meeting with the Macuxi, no references or accommodations to environmental or forest concerns were made. The delegation presented itself as a national organisation, concerned with the new legislation affecting not only indigenous peoples in the Amazon, but in the whole country.

Nevertheless, besides the political articulation with other social movements in Brazil, feelings of despair and frustration with recurrent Brazilian anti-Indigenist policies, along with subsequent expectations for the immediate results of such European pilgrimages for support, could be perceived, such as in the following statements of the Macuxi representative during his second presentation in London:

Since last year we have been campaigning. Last year some of us came to Europe, we travelled through Italy campaigning against the revoking of the old regulation, Decree 22. But it was replaced by this 1775... We are here now because the Brazilian government sent representatives throughout Europe to justify its policies. We had to come later because we have less resources. We came to show what the government wants to do to reduce our areas...On our journey we went to Germany because Germany is the European country which puts most of the resources into demarcation in Brazil...And, in fact, the German representative said that what they want is that the land should be demarcated as it was originally planned before the decree. And if these lands are reduced, the responsibility will be with the Brazilian government, but also with European governments. We are not going to sit quiet in reduced areas because our population is also increasing. We don't want our children forced into prostitution or drug selling. This is a day-to-day struggle and we are going to fight to the end, even if we have to die.

At times, the urgency of local situations, and the feelings of despair over recurrent political setbacks, creates an atmosphere of insecurity, frustration and suspicion - a local sense of time and need that can afford neither bureaucrats' resolutions nor campaigners struggles in national and transnational dimensions.

CHAPTER 6

PARA INGLÊS VER: 'TREES' AND 'PEOPLE' **IN TV DOCUMENTARIES**

We all had to get out. They said that that part of the forest was an ecological area. The Police came and started attacking everybody at six o'clock in the morning.

The ones who destroy the forest are the ranchers. They destroy the forest to plant grass. We plant crops, rice, beans and vegetable to eat. (Testimonies of women expelled from the 'Carajás Ecological Park', in *Amazon Sisters*)

Para inglês ver, literally 'for the English to see', is a popular proverbial expression in Brazil. It is commonly used in relation to something that is done for appearance's sake. Apparently - and I say apparently because there is no accurate historical account agreed upon this - the expression has its origins as a response to British pressure in the mid-nineteenth century over an 1830 Brazilian law abolishing the transatlantic traffic of African slaves. In actual fact, this law had no effect, and the transatlantic traffic of African slaves was only abolished two decades later, in 1850, with a law called Eusébio de Queiróz.²²⁴ Nevertheless, as explained by film-makers Hering and Tanner (1998: 24), when the former law was first issued, 'the Brazilian landowners feigned compliance with anti-slavery laws of the British Empire by hiding their slaves from the view of the British traders. A well-run plantation without slaves would be shown to any concerned British party, "for the English to see".'

Fry (1982) adds another version of the origin of the expression '*para inglês ver*'. He was told that the expression was used by workers of the British-owned railway company in the city of Campinas, in the interior of São Paulo, when they feigned compliance with the bosses' working rules.²²⁵

Despite his doubts as to the stories' historical accuracy, I embrace Fry's argument that they should be understood as 'myths of origin'. Today, the expression *para inglês ver* is commonly used to describe anything that exists or is done for the sake of appearance, or 'to put up a front'. In any case, these myths of origin unveil embedded hier-

²²⁴On the abolition of slavery and the British trade relationship and influence in Brazil see Bethell (1970) and Manchester (1964), respectively..

²²⁵The writer Sue Branford was given yet another explanation: that gold exporters filled sacks with stones and then left a layer of gold at top '*para inglês ver*'. Personal communication in November 1997.

archies between the Brazilians and the British. The expression is, thus, very revealing of projected images and meanings constructed by the Brazilians in relation to the British: that is, 'Britishness' and 'Brazilianness'. On the one hand, this Britishness is composed of elements such as efficiency, strictness, austerity, correctness, organisation, and obedience to the laws and rules - in a word, attributes - historically and culturally associated with 'civilisation' and located in the 'old continent'. Whereas, by contrast, Brazil's image (and self-image) is constructed by suggesting a lack of those attributes, as characteristic of its 'non-civilised' features.²²⁶

However, in a paradoxical or ambiguous fashion, beyond possible derogatory or denigrating meanings conveyed by the expression, other more positive meanings are implied in those images. '*Para inglês ver*' also can be understood as a corollary of the '*jeitinho brasileiro*' (the Brazilian little way). As Da Matta (1981 [1978]) points out in his pioneering study on ambiguity and power in Brazilian society,²²⁷ the Brazilian '*jeitinho*' is a cultural and social institution that allows flexibility and 'social navigation' in a very authoritarian and hierarchical society, where rules and laws are effective in the 'punishment' of 'the poor', 'the disempowered' or 'the underclass', rather than existing for the protection of citizens on an egalitarian or universal basis.

Hence, underlying the expression '*para inglês ver*' is the '*jeitinho brasileiro*': the Brazilian way that implies ambiguity, the dialectic of mediation, the possibility of a third way or element, and the prospect of the coexistence of contraries. If on the one hand it implies the breaching of law or an opportunistic approach to any situation, on the other hand it equally holds the meaning of being 'smart', quick and creative in coping with adversity, and even further suggests resistance to the strict constraints of authoritarian institutions and laws. '*Para inglês ver*' is the '*jeitinho brasileiro*' against the inflexibility and predictability of the 'British way'. The British, on the other hand, epitomising the European way, perceive this as a lack of seriousness on the Brazilian side, and so the famous statement attributed to Charles de Gaulle during his 1965 visit to Brazil, that 'Brazil is not a serious country', is equally echoed in Brazil's self-image, and is often voiced when a situation does not fulfil expectations, or when the system does not seem to be working properly (as in situations of corruption and deceptive politics).

In this chapter, I am going to apply the expression *para inglês ver* in a rather literal way, in order to analyse certain British television documentaries about the Amazon. Nevertheless, in doing so, I am also using the expression in a more subtle way, that is, to shed light on some aspects of 'Britishness' discussed in my research as a whole.

A plethora of documentaries about the Amazon has been produced during the last two decades in Europe and in US.²²⁸ A more detailed analysis of them from the perspective of their production, reception, as well as theoretical and creative context,

²²⁶See further section 3.4.

²²⁷Published in English as Da Matta, R. (1991) *Carnival, Rogues and Heroes: an interpretation of the Brazilian dilemma*, translated by John Drury (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press). For a recent discussion on ambiguity and authenticity in Latin America see further Skurski (1994: 605-42).

²²⁸There are various genres of film-narrative about the Amazon - ones portraying wildlife, or those related to tourism and adventure, for instance - but I am considering as documentaries those discussing developmental and environmental issues associated to the topics of this research.

would no doubt prove a rewarding task.²²⁹ However, this is not the objective of this chapter. The documentaries discussed hereafter were selected as complementary ethnographic material to the campaigns analysed in previous chapters.²³⁰ In other words, they too are representative of the three major tendencies within the British campaigning field.

In this sense, understood as 'texts' that can be read, the documentaries reveal an intersection of ideas produced by campaigners and film-makers. Ideas, images, information, and knowledge produced by campaigners are transposed through the television media whilst such documentaries are furthermore used in campaigns and contribute to the construction of new meanings. However, beyond the campaigning universe, the meanings they convey are also embedded in society as a whole. They both encapsulate meanings and are also active in the production of the 'structure of feelings' (Williams 1961), ideas, and knowledge of a certain time period in British society and, to a certain extent, the Western world. As pointed out by Machado (1993: 239), the codifying instruments of western societies are deeply informed by cultural signals accumulated throughout history. Contrary to common sense belief, the act of photographing or filming is far from a simple and straight-forward reproduction of events, images and sounds, but is rather an act of introducing a 'principle of order'. There is an imposition of meaning attached to what is photographed or filmed.²³¹

As in previous chapters, special attention will be given to the dialogue and debate between different tendencies prevailing in the campaigning world, in particular those that place in opposition or juxtapose 'trees' and 'people'. Despite the fact that these documentaries were commissioned by a British broadcasting company, Channel Four, and conform to the modes of production within this medium, the personal life trajectory of each film-maker, including her/his social, political and cultural background, is also inscribed within each documentary. Hence, whilst the first two documentaries are representative of the two main tendencies prevailing in the early 1990s, when a debate about 'trees' and 'people' took shape, the third documentary is informed by the present stage of environmental campaigning that purports to integrate the two categories in an egalitarian way.

6.1 - 'Trees' and 'People' in Early 1990s Documentaries

The narrative form of news reports is constitutive of stories organised around the triad of 'conflict, problem and denouement' with 'rising action' building to a climax (Gamson 1992:34). However, this narrative form imposes certain difficulties upon an 'injustice framework' (see chapter five), since it focuses attention on motivated actors rather than on the societal structure within which they are situated.²³² Much of the med-

²²⁹For a general perspective on mass media and society see articles in Curran and Gurevitch (1991). An analysis of media and the framing of political issues is presented by Gamson (1992). For media and environmental issues see collaborators in Hansen (1993).

²³⁰For an example of analyses of media texts as ethnographic material and as a means of understanding the 'structure of feelings' or the expression of mentalities of a period (at the same time as it is a space where these are constituted) see Piscitelli (1996). And further, Pallares-Burke (1994: 676-701).

²³¹See further Bourdieu (1978).

²³²See further King et al. (1993).

ia discourse about the Amazon in the late 1980s focused attention on 'farmers and peasants burning down the forest'. As already discussed in chapter five, this fact was later drawn out by campaigners and journalists such as George Mombiot, who played a crucial role in shifting the emphasis towards some of the structural 'impacts of the world trade' in the region, particularly the timber trade. However, although Mombiot was greatly influenced by his conversations with campaigners from social NGOs, the news report approach still places the focus on motivated actors and on the creation of victims and villains, such as the Indians and the timber trade.

Nevertheless, the debate between environmental and social organisations in the late 1980s helped to change the ways in which both sectors perceived and framed the Amazon forest in the 1990s. This debate can be recognised in the following two documentaries: *The Decade of Destruction* and *Amazon Sisters*.

6.1.1 - *The Decade of Destruction* - a 'Tree' Documentary

One of the most important and influential British documentaries about the Amazon in the 1980s was *The Decade of Destruction*, by Adrian Cowell.²³³ It helped to raise awareness about the destruction of the Amazon rainforest at that time, and was used by the MDB campaigners to stop World Bank's funding of the Polonoroeste Programme - the advance of the frontier towards the north-western parts of the Amazon (see chapter one). This documentary, along with the others discussed in this chapter, was produced and directed by British film-makers in collaboration with Brazilians. They were all broadcast by Channel Four, which also commissioned *Amazon Sisters* and *The Mahogany Trail*.

Although presenting an original contribution to the documentation of the Amazon occupation, *The Decade of Destruction* was mainly concerned with the Amazonian 'environment' from a global perspective. As such, it inspired several environmental groups, and other documentaries, as well as feature films in Britain and world-wide. One can perceive traces of *The Decade of Destruction* in feature films such as *The Emerald Forest* - a pastiche of the first episode of *The Decade* which includes the kidnapping of a 'white' boy by an 'uncontacted tribe' - and *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* - with its aerial shots and mysterious dramatic music - and more recently *The Burning Season*, which was very likely inspired by the last episode of *The Decade of Destruction* on the death of rubber tapper Chico Mendes. Other feature films can be associated with documentaries and issues raised by environmentalists following *The Decade*. In this sense, it is worth mentioning *Medicine Man*, featuring Sean Connery, a former James Bond agent of 'capitalism' during the Cold War period. Ironically, in *Medicine Man* he appears as an agent of 'humanity', that is, a scientist researching the cure for cancer in the biodiversity of the Amazon forest, a role more in tune with the post-Cold War context. The Amazon is then referred to as the 'world's superdrugstore', a classification analogous to other popular clichés at the time, namely, 'world's lung', 'world's barn', and 'world's pharmacy'. *Medicine Man* suggests further parallels to different documen-

²³³See also the book published under the same title, Cowell (1990).

taries such as the *Jungle Pharmacy* by Herbert Girardet, and more recently *Gen Hunters* by Luke Holland.²³⁴

Nevertheless, *The Decade of Destruction* corresponded to a *tour de force* in the documentation of the Amazon, involving social and indigenous peoples' support organisations (that seemed also to have made use of it in their campaigns, for the series or its extracts can be commonly found amongst the video sections of their libraries). Moreover, as I discuss further below, *The Decade* also instigated a debate amongst social justice and human rights campaigners who contributed to the production of 'people' oriented documentaries.

The Decade of Destruction can be read as a classic example of a dramatic narrative organised around a sequence composed of conflict, problem, action developing into a climax, and finally resolution. In fact, it was produced as an epic drama in five episodes filmed over a whole decade in the Amazon, from 1981 to 1990.²³⁵ Typical of an alarmist, or accusatory politics of environmental activism predominant in the 1980s, each episode follows the saga of a character and its impact on the environment. It is mainly concentrated in the western, less populous part of the Amazon, which had become the focus of a massive migration scheme instigated by the Brazilian government.

The opening scenes of each episode are accompanied by a sad, haunting piece of music played over aerial shots of the forest, both mysteriously hidden underneath mist and clouds - an eerie or dreamlike forest - and dramatically pictured against a dusky, flame-red sky - a background of fire. This opening introduces the epic, catastrophic and apocalyptic atmosphere of the documentary, and, significantly, the viewpoint of the film-maker. Aerial shots, typically, reveal an outsider's standpoint. The forest is captured by the gaze of the camera positioned above, from a distance. Thus, the forest is framed as though it is a mysterious and alien totality, an immeasurable 'ocean of undifferentiated trees'. It is only the view from the ground that reveals a certain 'diversity', and inevitably, the 'problems'. These do not concern 'trees' themselves (viewed from a distance above) but 'people' (footage from the ground). Different people are classified with respect to their deleterious impact upon the environment, and portrayed as victims of ignorance and bad decision-making elsewhere.

Through the interplay of images and voices/sounds, several facets of the Amazon are portrayed. An analysis of this interplay unveils the production and dissemination of meanings dispersed through a world-wide network of information and signification. The opening call of the series provides a graphic example of this process.

²³⁴For an analysis of the capitalist mode of production constraints over the production of feature films about the Amazon see Franco (1993). Besides Franco's analysis, see comments on *The Emerald Forest* and *Fitzcarraldo* in Nugent (1990:11-22).

²³⁵Adrian Cowell, a former Cambridge history student, made his first journey to the Amazon as part of a student expedition in 1956. Eventually, he ended up leaving the expedition to follow Orlando Villas-Boas in his work to create the Xingu indigenous park in Brazil (personal communication in 9/7/96). An outcome of this experience is presented in a previous film shot in the Amazon from 1960 to 1970, significantly called *The Tribe that Hides from Man*, where *tribe* and *man* stand somehow as different or opposing categories. Filming over a prolonged time span in a particular area seems to be a typical feature of his work, which also includes a 1996 Channel Four documentary series on the South East Asia narcotraffic, shot over three decades. See further Cowell (1976).

Sound/Voice	Images
(A Channel Four male voice-over) The bizarre case of the tribal Indians who captured the small son of an Amazon colonist is the first part of <i>The Decade of Destruction</i> , the history of exploitation in the rainforests.	Channel Four's logo
(a male narrator) The Amazon, a vital element of the <i>world climate's</i> existence...	Mysterious aerial shot of the forest; dark shadowed forest underneath clouds lost on the horizon, where it meets a reddish sky. A sunrise or sunset followed by...
(sounds of thunder storm)	...a dramatic rapid movement of thick grey storm clouds.
The <i>world's largest</i> forest...	Aerial shot of an immense green forest meeting a blue sky line on the horizon.
...at the time of its <i>greatest destruction</i> ...	Camera spots a clearance and rapidly focuses in, followed by...
...(sound of a chainsaw)	...a ground shot of a tree falling, cut down by a chainsaw.
Ten years of increasing devastation ...	Camera travels along a burning forest. Dramatic red colour.
...until last month the Brazilian government launched its campaign to stop the fires.	Helicopter landing in a clearance.
An <i>epic series</i> about the battle for the Amazon filmed throughout the whole decade in the <i>jungle</i> ...	Footage shot from behind of armed men wearing waistcoats upon which it can be read <i>Polícia Federal</i> (Federal Police). They walk rapidly in the direction of a ranch that can be seen in the background. (It looks like a police raid).
...told in stories of <i>bloody feuds</i> for land...	A large procession of armed men wearing scruffy clothes, some with no shoes on. None of them wear police uniforms. They are walking on a path as though ready for combat (they are landless men).
...and gold...	A bearded man with a 'wild' and sweaty look (a gold prospector or <i>garimpeiro</i>) washes a nugget of gold whilst in a river.
...(bells ringing sadly) ...and through the tragedy of Chico Mendes.	A crowd of people carrying a coffin up high.
But tonight the series starts with a <i>strange</i> case of the <i>tribe</i> of Indians...	Voyeuristic shot from a distance; a hidden camera in the interior of a hut gazes towards the outside. By the door outside, a dressed

	man, talking and gesticulating, hands out metallic pans and bowls to a group of 'naked' Indians. A voyeuristic gaze at the moment of 'first' contact between a Brazilian man and the Indians.
...who kidnapped a 7 year old boy.	The camera closes in to focus on a tall and strong adult male Indian who has a knife strapped to his waist. The Indian looks curiously into the interior of the hut, directly into the 'eye' of the camera. The screen turns dark.
Dramatic, mysterious and haunting music...	Opening scene. The apocalyptic Camera travels through shadowy trees against a very red, smoky sky. The name of series is displayed: <i>The Decade of Destruction</i> .
...the music continues...	The screen is dominated by red flames of fire in close up. Some trees can be spotted in the background.
... ..	The red gives way to a yellowish colour. Blurred images of a windy storm with a mixture of yellow dust and smoke. Titles read: <i>Commentary by Adrian Cowell</i> .

There are claims here to objectivity and truth in the way the 'story of the destruction' of the Amazon is narrated, or rather, in the way it is 'contextualised' by Adrian Cowell, a male authoritative voice. With the frequent use of superlatives, the Amazon is framed as the 'world's largest forest', and 'a vital world's climate element'. This 'world asset' was facing the 'time of its *greatest* destruction'. The aerial shots of the forest attest to such superlatives. The aerial image of sublime immensity or the boundlessness of the Amazon is associated with another totality, namely the category of *world*. Hence, in a sequence of shots, a clearance is spotted down below, a tree is cut down, and the fire that follows comprises a dramatic image of devastation and loss. It is precisely this type of image that shifted world's attention towards the Amazon in the 1980s. According to Adrian Cowell, 'the world was concerned about global warming in the 1980s. So, the Amazon became a symbol for that concern. Although it was not, in fact, a major contributor to global warming, it did symbolise something 'crazy' that man was doing'.²³⁶ The generic category of 'man' going 'crazy' in the Amazon plays with ideas of adventure and irresponsibility, rather than offering an explanation about the sociological factors driving the destruction. Therefore, this is presented as senseless, random and wanton destruction.

But, if one was to give a face to those 'men' doing 'crazy' things, just what would they look like? Despite some footage of World Bank meetings, and interviews with the Bank's bureaucrats, US and Brazilian politicians and officials, the overall effect is to portray the settlers, landless people, and gold prospectors as if on the front line of the destruction. Further, claims to truth are reinforced by interviews with 'environmental ex-

²³⁶Personal communication in 9-7-96.

perts', satellite images of the burning of the forest, and its 'abandonment' by the settlers after realising the soil was exhausted. These images intersected with other social and environmental anxieties during the 1988 drought in the US, as well as with fears of global warming. The colonists, peasants and gold prospectors are portrayed as a mass of rootless puppets, moving around according to the determination of 'crazy' bureaucrats. They have no voice of their own, but simply appear as voices that support statements pronounced by experts and commentators.

Interestingly, the epic tale about the Amazon begins with a gaze into the most exotic of all 'others', namely the '*bizarre* Indians', and follows by naming the Amazon as '*jungle*', especially when the images are related to the landless fighting for land, or gold prospectors searching for gold. To enhance the claims to truth, the frontier story points to a happy 'make believe' ending, inferring that the destruction is over at the end of the decade and the filming itself. This is done with a praising of scientific and technological devices that would make possible the rapid detection of, and solution to, the problems; aided, ironically enough, with the assumed power of the police force to stop the crimes and 'save the forest'. The final footage of the arrival of a police helicopter 'to save the forest and the Indians' is a modern recreation in reverse of the 'salvation' role of the American cavalry in Hollywood Westerns, which usually arrives in the end to save the settlers from the 'dangerous' Indians.

Cowell's gaze upon the Indians plays on the ambiguous and paradoxical feelings of the westerner in relation to them. They are portrayed both as 'dangerous' and as 'innocent' creatures, nevertheless living in harmony with 'nature'. Franco's (1993:81) analysis of the portrayal of Amazonian indigenous peoples in feature films states that historically 'the cannibal and the noble savage stood on the other side of the boundary that defined civilisation, signifying both 'otherness' and origins'. Commenting on her analysis, King (1993:81) highlights that 'Brazilian geography and its indigenous population had been seen throughout history as both desire and threat. A desire for the noble savage, for a retreat from civilisation, for the promise of caste harmony; the threat of savagery, the barbarian, the cannibal'. In the search for 'authenticity' and the 'purism' of race and environment, the poor and 'mixed race' *caboclos* or *mestiços* represent disorder to a 'natural' order of otherness composed of innocent/dangerous Indians. *Caboclos* or *mestiços* wander around in the film simply having no place, literally, socially or culturally. Indigenous peoples and the forest can only be saved by the wisdom of enlightened western experts and the heroic exertions of the police force.

Significantly, the classic clashes between settlers and Indians in the frontier area is recreated by Cowell in the first episode of the series called *The Search for the Kidnappers*. This episode motivated the following ones. The idea was to show what became of the forest and the Indians after the encounter with non-Indians took place. It does so by telling the drama of a poor colonist family whose little boy was kidnapped by 'uncontacted' Indians. The crew travels with FUNAI agents throughout the immensity of the '*jungle*'. This word itself carries associations with the unknown, hazardous savages, and danger, as contrasted to a less harmful and more 'civilised' or cultured western image associated with the word 'forest'. They proceed by following clues to the presence of such a *tribe*, framed as *dangerous* and *elusive*, during which the arrival of migrants are also registered. With this event, problems are further aggravated.

The climax is reached when the Uru Eu Wau Wau Indians are 'first' contacted. Moments of tension are documented, and the camera 'freezes' the image when the 'first' Indian is spotted behind the bushes. The image is *frozen*, as though holding or suspending time, while the voice says: '*This is the first picture ever taken of an Uru Eu Wau Wau*'. The expectation of what an Uru Eu Wau Wau should be, 'a dangerous and elusive *uncontacted tribe*', makes the filming crew *forget* that an Uru Eu Wau Wau was actually not only photographed, but interviewed in previous footage. However, this Indian, called *Maria* - a remarkably Christian name - was married to a Brazilian who had captured her while she was still a little girl. Dressed in non-Indian clothes and speaking Portuguese, she had *forgotten* her 'Indian' past and claimed no interest in visiting her 'tribe'. This allowed herself to be *forgotten* as a 'contacted' Uru Eu Wau Wau Indian. The 'non-existing' Uru Eu Wau Wau Maria alludes to what is to be the conclusion of the film. It unfolds that a tragedy had taken place in which the kidnapped little boy died. His death was followed by that of his father (by malaria) and many of the Indians who succumbed to diseases brought in by and contracted through contact with non-Indians.²³⁷

The other four episodes follow the same formula of narrating a story through the construction of villains, heroes and martyrs. Thus, *In the Ashes of the Forest* denounces the burning of the forest by settlers and demonstrates how international campaigners fought to stop the destruction. José Lutzenberger, a Brazilian environmentalist (see chapter two), is raised to the position of an environmental crusader. He is presented as though a 'sole' environmental voice within Brazilian society during the 1980s, who in 1990 was to become an environmental minister, bringing hope of salvation for the Amazon. In this perspective, landless families are viewed as people 'hungry for land', who represent a 'literal *holocaust* for the forest' for '*...this was the start of a decade in which more living matter was to be destroyed than ever before in history*'.

Killing for Land and *Mountains of Gold* follow as the next instalments of the series. They present respectively the saga of land squatters and of gold prospectors. The last episode of the series, *The Crusade for the Forest*, tells the saga of Chico Mendes and the rubber tappers who seek to 'save the forest'. Rubber tappers are given the status of people with living habits very similar to indigenous peoples. They are depicted happily hunting and fishing in the river just as the Indians do. The episode and the series concludes with scenes of Chico Mendes's burial after his assassination by ranchers, but the tune is optimistic - Chico, a trade unionist, acquires the status of environmental martyr, whilst rubber tappers' extrativist reserves are created in the manner of indigenous reserves. Moreover, there is an interview with José Lutzenberger as environmental secretary, scenes of a police helicopter, police patrols, and a blitz on illegal logging areas, and the praising of technological devices, such as satellites, able to detect and therefore tackle the fires. The faith in science, added to the rhetoric of the newly elected populist 'right wing' president, Fernando Collor de Melo, effectively displaces any broader historical, sociological or political contextualisation. The time frame and per-

²³⁷In a feature film version of this story, *The Emerald Forest*, the kidnapped boy happens to be a blond and blue eye son of an American engineer who is building a dam in the Amazon. The boy grows up to become a leader of 'his' disappearing people. A later encounter with his white father raises in the latter the wisdom capable of preventing the dam destroying the indigenous habitat. As pointed out by Franco (1993) and Nugent (1990), this serves as a metaphor for the hopes that capitalist wisdom can save his children, and the 'savage children' of the civilised West, from complete destruction.

spective of the filming is taken as an objective picture of reality, and a '*deus ex machina*' appears from nowhere to 'save the region'.

The Decade of Destruction inspired environmentalists and film-makers across the environmentalist and political spectrum. Although it denounces the sheer destruction of the Amazon forest taking place in the 80s, it is entrapped in the narrative mode and within sets of cultural notions and expectations of an 'enlightened' western world, failing to acknowledge the historical, political, and governmental forces driving the destruction of the Amazon. Thus as a reaction to an environmental approach that lacked a sociological contextualisation, campaigners and film-makers of the 'social sector' produced a documentary in which 'people' would play the central role.

6.1.2 - *Amazon Sisters* - a 'People' Documentary

Amazon Sisters was also presented by Channel Four, in the year following *The Decade*, in 1991. It was broadcast as part of a series of programmes designed to portray *Global Images*. It is a 'people' oriented documentary directed and conceived by Anne-Marie Sweeney, in association with campaigners related to Oxfam.²³⁸ It also provided the catalyst for many environmental, social and political meetings across Britain, and particularly in Oxford, the city in which the first mahogany direct actions took place.²³⁹

The idea behind the film was to present a counterpoint to what was perceived as a lack of historical perspective which, although helping to raise levels of awareness with respect to the destruction of the Amazon, allowed no voice to the people whose lives were being affected by that process.²⁴⁰ This process was understood as grounded in social and historical conditions, not merely the result of bad or random decisions made elsewhere, but rather the result of the capitalist process implemented in Brazil, which was to bring long-standing transformations, altering the features of the Amazon. Hence, according to this perspective, it was not simply a case of exploitation of the Amazon by the arrival of 'external' interests and the subsequent abandonment of the region after its natural exhaustion. It was rather a case of a massive investment of capital and labour that would not leave the region, but would remain in the Amazon, transforming for instance a migrant population of rural Northeast workers into an industrial la-

²³⁸Adrian Cowell has a background history similar in many ways to the environmental campaigners. For instance, he has experience of travelling in expeditions to forests, whereas Sweeney's background bears many similarities to the 'people' oriented campaigners. Born to an Irish father and a Welsh mother, she perceives herself as an 'internationalist'. Trained as a sculptress, her career was a mixture of arts, campaigning and political work, particularly political street theatre and alternative video-making within the Oxford Video Makers Workshop. With a particular interest and personal experience in trade unions and women's movements, she made a video about the role of women on the trade unions' history on the occasion of the centenary of the Trade Union Council, in Oxfordshire. This video was seen by Pat Stocker, at the time working for Oxfam, who had the first idea of making a film with the women in the Carajás area, in south Pará. Sweeney had never been to the Amazon herself, but was further encouraged to make the film after a meeting in the UK with the rubber tapper leader, Atanagildo Matos (Gatão), whose wife was herself an active trade unionist, and later became one of the main characters in the film (Interview with Anne-Marie Sweeney in August 2, 1996).

²³⁹Richard Hering, Oxford-based video-maker and campaigner who made *The Mahogany Trail*, a documentary discussed in the next section, was apparently in contact with Sweeney during the preparations for the shooting of *Amazon Sisters*, and afterwards in the debates about the film.

²⁴⁰Interview with Anne-Marie Sweeney, August 2, 1996.

bour force. Thus, according to David Treece, who also took part in making *Amazon Sisters*, the documentary intended to show that this population was not made up of passive onlookers, but was made up of participating agents, with social and political forms of organisation and proposals which did not exclude or ignore environmental concerns.²⁴¹

Hence, embracing crucial questions of class and gender, the project chose to give voice to the women (not necessarily of indigenous origin) focusing on their role as workers and grassroots leaders in the Amazon, as though foregrounding the voices of those perceived as being marginalised in the more general global environmental discourses. As promotional and educational material further states, *Amazon Sisters* intended to be '*not another programme about the Amazon rain forest!*':

A surfeit of images of burning trees, suffering parrots and poor victims to the destruction have filled television screens of the North, while in the South workers, indigenous peoples and peasants notice little difference to the quality of their lives as big industry, landowners and the state take over their land in the name of rapacious so-called development programmes.

Many programmes have helped raise consciousness world-wide about the global impact of the root and branch attack on the rain forest. Quite a few, however, have reinforced the misconception that the peoples of the rain forest are helpless victims passively awaiting their trees to be saved by the kind concern that buys up bits of their forest to protect it and by external environmental experts holding forth on what should or shouldn't be done to save the forests.

Amazon Sisters was made in order to show a different picture. Focusing on how women in the Amazonia region of **Carajás** in **Brazil** are responding to the destruction of their environment, it reveals a level of organisation, courage and resistance that many campaigners in the North can only dream of.²⁴²

By choosing to focus on specific area of the Amazon region, contextualising it in Brazil, and in the *South* - the latter incorporating both significant geographic and political meanings - this approach contrasts to the framing of the Amazon as the undifferentiated, boundless territory of previous environmental perspectives. The photographs in the above literature feature strong women smiling with their fists up, and women working or simply posing proudly, heads up to the camera. By contrast to *The Decade of Destruction*, which portrayed the devastating impact of the advancing frontier towards the less populated and denser forest areas of the western Amazon, *Amazon Sisters* focuses upon the struggle of women facing the impact of industrialisation in the eastern Amazon, in South Pará. Various categories of workers in their local environments are interviewed. Hence, the film includes testimonies of women who were evicted and relocated from the Tucuruí hydroelectric dam area, charcoal workers in the timber town of Paragominas, and teachers and health worker leaders in the city of Marabá, most of whom were involved in trade unions.

²⁴¹ Personal communication with David Treece in 11 July, 1996.

²⁴² '*Not Another Programme About the Amazon Forest*' - *Learning from Women in South Pará*, p.1. Educational and promotional material for *Amazon Sisters*.

It seems as though in contrast to the 'god's eye' perspective characterising *The Decade of Destruction*, *Amazon Sisters* followed the more individualist tradition of 'cinema vérité'.²⁴³ By contrast to *The Decade*, there is no voice-over authority or helicopter views of scenes below, that is, there are no aerial shots of the Amazon forest, nor footage of Indians or individual tree cutters with their chainsaws. In fact, the majority of the scenes portray an 'industrial' and urban landscape. The viewer does not look safely down from above, but sees at the eye level, a deliberate attempt to express a more equalitarian relationship with the local women.²⁴⁴ Hand-held camera and interviews predominate. The interplay of images and sound/voices here too are expressive of the meanings created, and support the way the Amazon is framed right from the opening scenes.

Voice/Sound	Images
(Channel Four voice-over) <i>Amazon Sisters</i> is this week's Global Image	Channel Four logo
'Ethnic' jazzy composition	Rapid proliferation of 'ethnic' faces and names of countries on the screen such as Haiti, Poland, Bolivia, India, and Sudan, until the words Global Image closes the initial call for the programme.
Soft classical cello (intimate melody).	Still postcards of a dark bluish sunset from a river bank or a boat. A 'line' of dark shadowy forest on the horizon divides the screen in the middle, and the bottom half is taken up by the water of a river. The upper part of the screen shows a dark blue sky with a dark red sun in the middle. The words <i>Amazon Sisters</i> is written on the bottom.
(the same melody)	(Footage from the ground level. Tracking shot from a car or train running along a road) Green mountains passing on the screen.
(a soft female voice) In the Amazon region of south Pará, a <i>Industrial Revolution</i> is taking place...	...(still moving)...the mountains give way to a flatter scrub land with a few houses in the background. A solitary plume of smoke rises up in the air ...
...in an area bigger than Europe which until 10 years ago was the Amazon rain forest. <i>The Great Carajás Programme</i> is one of the biggest in the world, <i>funded by loans from Japan, the EC and the World Bank.</i>	...a huge factory with lorries loading sacks of charcoal passes by the screen...

²⁴³For a feminist and critical view of the 'god's eye' approach in ethnographic film, see Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989).

²⁴⁴From an interview with Anne-Marie Sweeney on 2 August, 1996.

<p><i>In Europe, industrialisation took many decades to complete, to establish areas like the Ruhr and South Wales.</i></p>	<p>Back footage of a lorry loaded with charcoal. It is entering a dusty unpaved street with very poor houses on both sides.</p>
<p><i>...But in less than 10 years, savage changes have altered the face of South Pará. In reaction to this rapacious advance of industry, and its often careless disregard for their lives and the forests...</i></p>	<p>Huge logs put in piles by a fork lift in what looks like a timber yard.</p>
<p><i>...women are fighting back, refusing to be victims of change and to passively accept the destruction of their environment.</i></p>	<p>Footage shot from behind of a group of people walking together on the street with women taking the lead. They are dark-skinned and are talking to each other with a certain embarrassed, but confident smile on their faces as though self-conscious of the filming.</p>
<p>Many lead <i>trade unions and popular movements</i> that are rapidly emerging in the frontier land to face constant battle against enormous odds.</p>	<p>Close up of the face of a black woman with a serious and reflective expression in her face. Other faces of different women with different skin-tones colour and ages are presented as they listen to a speaker in a meeting.</p>
<p>(Testimony). 'The region is one of the richest there is. It has all this iron, all this wealth. But, unfortunately, it's a region where the workers suffer hunger and where they're exploited and don't even have a place to live.'</p>	<p>Testimony of a black-haired woman, possibly in her thirties. The camera is positioned on a level lower than her chin. She speaks confidently looking straight ahead or downwards at the camera.</p>
<p>(a local female voice sings in Portuguese)...<i>'Amazonia, you are so very rich, but you only value the manager and the boss...</i></p>	<p>Black woman washing clothes by a river bank.</p>
<p><i>...Amazonia, start looking at your suffering people who are disillusioned, but can't turn back. The solution for the oppressed classes is to free themselves from this slavery, is in the strength and the unity of the trade unions to organise and get together as one...</i></p>	<p>A woman walks up a hill carrying a child on one arm while the other holds a bowl with water on top of her head. She is closely followed by a group of children. Other women appear lifting up barrels of water, carrying them on their heads.</p>
<p><i>...Amazonia, you are so very rich...'</i></p>	<p>The screen is filled with an immense and powerful movement of water...</p>
<p>(The soft female voice)...The Tucuruí dam was built in 1984 to power the huge Great Carajás Project, by the state company Eletronorte...with 500 million dollars loan from the World Bank.</p>	<p><i>...the camera moves slowly backwards and the hydroelectric dam can be identified.</i></p>

A historical perspective to the process of the destruction of the Amazon is given by framing it as an '*industrial revolution*' and comparing it as similar to the process that occurred in Europe. Hence, *Amazon Sisters* appears to be criticising the '*savage*', voracious and unjust nature of the industrialisation process, over the fact that perhaps it should not be happening at all in the first place. It could be seen as creating the problematic superimposing time over culture and space, whereby going to the Amazon would be similar to going back in time, to pre-industrial-revolutionary Europe.²⁴⁵ Nevertheless, there are no superlatives characterising the Amazon as the '*world's...*', but a focus on people and *their* environment. In other words, the focus is on how people cope with and respond to the adversities posed by an industrialisation process already taking place.

Elements of social injustice and class struggle are suggested from the opening scenes. The hardships of women washing in the river and carrying water on their heads contrasts to the powerful image of the abundance of water generating energy for the Tucuruí dam. Meanwhile, the melody sung by the female voice underlines the fact that such wealth does not benefit the Amazonian people who are '*oppressed classes*' and work in '*slavery*'. Thus, industrialisation, social injustice and class struggle provide the general themes of the documentary.

Testimonies of women narrating their stories of struggle against all odds, especially as they face big companies and state forces, are told with energy, humour and joy. Women tell stories of their work at sawmills, charcoal ovens, classrooms, health centres and agricultural fields. They seem at ease with the camera, and there seems to be an empathy between them and the woman-director. A sensitivity to the female universe is captured not only when women are shown in their work places, but also in the way they organise and decorate their homes, relate to each other, and construct their political participation. Above all, women are portrayed as strong passionate and heroic Latin American characters. Therefore, images of a Latin America that sings, dances, struggles and resists are models and myths which are revisited in *Amazon Sisters*.

Environmental issues are raised by the women themselves as they reveal the hazardous conditions of their working and living places and surroundings. For example, they discuss the increase of malaria by the construction of the Tucuruí dam, and the pollution derived from the charcoal ovens and sawmills: illustrations given by the women as they expose the effects of industrialisation on their own bodies and surroundings. By contrast to *The Decade*, there are no interviews with experts and officials, nor any displays of technological devices used for monitoring deforestation. Few messages about European environmental concerns are included in the testimonies of charcoal workers and teachers as they speak also of the aesthetic and spiritual value of the forest, such as in the following testimony:

We make the charcoal, but many of us here are against destroying the forest. All those dry fields, without a tree to be seen. And when it rains there is just that scrub, which dies again in the summer, and it leaves that bare land, so sad....It's so beautiful to be at the edge of a forest when the wind blows. It makes that noise, and you can really feel the wind. Where there are no trees, not even the

²⁴⁵For the imposition of time over space and culture, see Fabian (1983).

wind blows. It's sad, they're destroying the trees... The sawmill owner buys it from the landowner, and you can bet they sell it because they want the money. They think money is worth more than the forest. (Terezinha da Silva, charcoal burner in Paragominas, in *Amazon Sisters*)

Amazon Sisters represents the response of social justice and human rights campaigners to films and documentaries that, being oriented towards global environmental concerns, failed to contextualise other social and economic effects of deforestation. It registers the existence of a massive presence of 'non-indigenous' people in the Amazon. People who - lacking the special ethnic appeal of indigenous peoples - were underrepresented and largely ignored by developers, film-makers, and campaigners alike at the time.

However, *Amazon Sisters'* attempt to tell the untold story can also be seen as falling into the trap of over-stating 'political correctness' - over-politicising the 'local' - and ends up by reproducing a discourse which can be seen as parallel to 'development discourses'. In other words, by unproblematically drawing comparisons to the 'industrial revolution', it suggests a dangerous time over space distortion whereby Brazil and the Amazon can be seen as previous stages of an industrialising process in Western European terms, and that the forest's destruction is an inescapable and irreversible result of a growing global industry that originates in the West. In providing a counter-point to global biodiversity concerns, *Amazon Sisters* seems not to question 'development' as a totalising western evolutionist concept.²⁴⁶ Therefore, no alternatives to industrialisation are envisaged.

6.2 - *The Mahogany Trail* - Trees and People in the Late 1990s

The Mahogany Trail reflects the actual debate and campaign agenda, as well as the links between campaigners and the media. This documentary was also commissioned by Channel Four and screened in 1996, within the investigative popular journalism slot known as the *Dispatches* programme. Within this investigative genre, two British reporters, Richard Hering and Stuart Tanner, went undercover to the Amazon with a mission to prove that the mahogany coming to the UK was indeed extracted from indigenous reserves, as long-stated by campaigners in the UK.²⁴⁷ This was an attempt to go a step further than the previous documentary by George Mombiot - *Your Furniture, Their Lives* - broadcast by the BBC in the early 90s, in which Mombiot raised the maho-

²⁴⁶ For an archaeology of the concept of development, see Esteva (1992).

²⁴⁷ While Stuart Tanner has worked as a camera man for a mainstream television broadcast, Richard Hering, a former history student in Oxford, has a career in alternative video-making related to the Oxford Video-Makers Workshop co-ordinated by Anne-Marie Sweeney. Nevertheless, despite his alternative video-making experience, particularly amongst environmental and direct action groups in the UK, his academic and mainstream television influence prevails in the format of the *Dispatches* documentary. Speaking about this, Hering points out: 'The whole ethos of *Dispatches* is revelation. It is investigation. It is not an issue-based documentary series. I mean, often, they are sort of radical social justice subjects, but the reason that's on the prime time slot is because it is 'tonight *Dispatches* reveals', as I said absurdly on the front of that programme: '*Tonight we investigate one of the world's most scandalous trades*'. So, it is that kind of popular journalism, do you know? And it is all about how we did something that no one has ever done before'. Interview in August, 1996.

gany issue for the first time in a television programme.²⁴⁸ Furthermore, it reflects the present stage of the mahogany campaign in the UK, in which the timber trade and the NGOs dispute the allegation that mahogany coming to Britain continues to be illegally extracted from indigenous reserves, despite the court orders imposed upon logging companies in Brazil, and the trader's NHA/Aimex agreement (see chapter five).

Within a 'tree' tendency agenda, *The Mahogany Trail* suggests both similarities to and differences from *The Decade of Destruction*. It still focuses upon biodiversity and indigenous people, but unlike *The Decade* and other documentaries produced in the 1980s, the theme is less apocalyptic or catastrophic. Perhaps influenced in many respects by *Amazon Sisters*, there is no aerial footage of the forest and its 'uncontacted tribes'. As in the mahogany campaign, indigenous peoples are situated within an injustice framework, that is, they are victims of an illegal and unfair trade. Nevertheless, brief appearances in the beginning and at the end of the programme leave them playing the role of mere supporting actors in a script designed and enacted by campaigners and the journalists themselves.²⁴⁹ However, similar to *The Decade*, 'non-indigenous' Amazonians still appear as though on the front line of the destruction of the forest, as footage of individual tree cutters prevails over the action of companies, and no historical or sociological perspective is presented.

Hence, despite the awareness and legitimate allegations of the journalists, who echo the work of campaigners, the format of the programme as an investigative documentary ends up by producing a rather unintended effect. The overall theme is one that depicts the adventure of two British men in 'the jungle' - as in the tradition of a 'boy's own' story.²⁵⁰ They are filmed as they travel amongst 'locals' in loaded buses, trucks, jeeps and boats, on their journey from an urban site towards the 'jungle'. The penetration of the 'jungle' by motorcycles gives the final touch to the masculine aura of adventure. The motorcycle is a vehicle often associated with practicality, but it further and primarily conveys symbolic meanings associated with rebellious youth and a spirit of adventure.²⁵¹

Other cultural and symbolic references can be identified in relation to Hollywood feature films, particularly Westerns, and to the British James Bond series. During their investigations, the reporters work undercover, pretending to be researchers for the timber industry. In order to become acquainted and extract information from loggers, they film themselves speaking to people in a logging town. Clear references to Western films are recognisable, as in the scenes of the filmmakers playing pool in the atmosphere of a Western 'saloon' type of venue. The James Bond touch is added by their use of a technological device made in Britain - a conspicuous connection to the methods of the great British spy character. The satellite positioning device, certainly unknown in

²⁴⁸According to Hering, the BBC's massive production, which included a crew of seven people and heavy equipment, prevented Mombiot carrying out a proper investigation and eventually proving his point. The campaign needed proof and so, he believes, he has applied an 'alternative' workshop-based approach by using a small camera, and a crew of three people, including a Brazilian translator. Interview in August, 1996.

²⁴⁹See chapter four, section 4.1.1.

²⁵⁰On Victorian 'boy's own' stories of adventure and British imperialism, see Bristow (1991). Compare this perspective also to Mombiot's (1991) narrative in *Amazon Watershed*, and section 4.1.4.

²⁵¹For an interesting analysis of the history and symbolic meanings of one kind of motorcycle, the scooter cycle, and its differences in relation to the motorcycle, particularly as 'sexed object', see Hebidge (1988:77-115).

the 'primitive' world of 'the jungle', is advanced British technology, developed as an aid in the prevention of crime.²⁵²

Here too, in the opening scenes of *The Mahogany Trail*, the interplay of voices and images are revealing of the way the Amazon is framed.

Voice/Sound	Images
(female reporter voice) On <i>Dispatches</i> tonight, a journey to the <i>heart of the Amazon</i> ...	Footage of the front of a boat 'cutting' through a river. Wilderness.
...to penetrate <i>the world's most scandalous trade</i> .	Footage from behind of a man 'penetrating' a jungle-like place, carrying a chainsaw on his shoulders.
Tonight, <i>Dispatches</i> investigators Richard Hering...	A white, well-dressed man wearing a hat talks to a black man who is sitting on a lorry.
...and Stuart Tanner go undercover on a <i>year-long adventure</i> .	A white, red-haired man sitting on a trunk set down on the forest floor. He seems to be writing some notes and is closely observed by two darker men who are in a standing position.
Their aim, to prove what is so far only rumour.	Film of a 'local' non-white man cutting a tree with a chainsaw...
Tonight <i>Dispatches</i> goes in search of mahogany.	...the tree is falling down and the man runs out of the way...
Could any of the precious wood that reaches Britain be illegal, stolen from the Amazonian Indians?	...the huge tree slowly meets the ground.
Now, the official's denial is put to its severest test.	A plank is removed by a bulldozer in a saw-mill.
That's <i>Dispatches</i> tracking the evidence all the way along <i>The Mahogany Trail</i> .	An old lorry carries big trunks of wood through a small path in the jungle. It is assisted by two men in dirty trousers and without shirts.
(dynamic melody, suggesting suspense and action)	(the <i>Dispatches</i> logo surrounds the title of the documentary - <i>The Mahogany Trail</i>)
(background music... and a male voice like a police reporter) Brazil's vast Amazonian rainforest, scene of the <i>most terrible and continuing destruction</i> and a source of an even <i>greater mystery</i> .	Shot of a journey down or up a river, in the direction of a mountain which stands in the background.

²⁵²Interestingly enough, Jeff Geiger tells me that an IBM advertisement run a few years ago and set in Brazil used similar images to sell a personal computer with a satellite positioning system.

In large parts of the Amazon, the <i>prize</i> is mahogany.	A man, dressed in T-shirt, shorts and a cap, slashes his way with a machete through dense vegetation.
Today, it is almost extinct outside areas where it cannot legally be touched, such as Indian reserves. Yet, last year...	Back to the previous scene of the boat sailing down or up a river.
...Brazil exported mahogany from 30 thousand trees. <i>Dispatches</i> set out on year-long <i>investigation</i> to find out exactly where it was coming from.	Back to the same man dressed in T-shirt, shorts and cap cutting through the dense vegetation with a machete.
<i>Before leaving Britain, we armed ourselves with a crucial piece of technology. We've heard that this satellite positioning system...</i>	Image of a white male hand holding an electronic device the size and shape of a TV remote control.
...could prove exactly whether we were inside an Indian reserve	Three white men casually dressed with sports coats are standing talking in what might be a greenhouse. One of them holds the technological device.
"...So, this gives us an accurate position..."	Focus on the man holding the device, who asks the question.
"That's correct. That's accurate within 100 metres anywhere on the planet..."	Focus on one of them. A sign on the bottom of the screen reads: David Roberts - GPS consultant.
"...Here it's actually taking the five of the satellite in the Northern Hemisphere, and using it to get the best absolute fix.	Focus on the numbers displayed by the machine.
"...we are going to be working under a dense forest canopy. And will this machine still gives us a reading under these conditions?"	Focus on the third man who asks the question.
"Well, the receiver here was designed for use in the Northern European forests...we haven't actually tested it in the jungle canopies around the world....but I foresee no problem with that."	Focus on the expert.
"Is there any way that the figures can be false or faked?"	Focus on the first man holding the device.
(voice of the expert) No. Not in this position here. We are actually seeing here an arrow in the positioning side, which means that it is actually getting live information. This is live information..this cannot be changed.	Image of the machine with a focus on its numbers.
(voice of narrator) And to mark and track any illegal wood leaving the reserves we decided to use ultra violet ink, only visible with a special torch	A purple horizontal line crosses the black screen under which a letter M can be read.

One of the most striking features of this documentary, in contrast to the two analysed earlier, is the fact that the main characters of the film are not Indians, colonists or peasants, but the reporters themselves. While *Amazon Sisters* depicts industrial destruction through footage of factories and their mechanised impact on the environment, the agents of destruction here, as in *The Decade of Destruction*, are associated with images of individual persons and their chainsaws. These persons are presented as adventurous free-lance frontier characters in search of the big 'prize'. The focus upon adventure, the technical and the scientific prevails. It serves to obfuscate the historic and political context within which deforestation and the mahogany trade are set highlighting instead the noble adventures of two western reporters.

Besides references to *Heart of Darkness*, the Amazon is again invigorated by its superlatives. It is the scene of 'the world's most scandalous trade' and 'the most terrible and continuing destruction' and a 'greater mystery'. There are no aerial shots of the forest, yet the reporters are adventurous outsiders on an expedition to a mysterious and dangerous land. Although they succeed in deceiving naive tree cutters on the frontline of mahogany extraction, their identity is revealed in the city, when they try and fail to face timber exporters and Brazilian officials, people who they went to in order to denounce the illegally found timber in their investigations. Hence, the trail of wood concentrates on the image of the individual tree cutter. Framed as a criminal act, rather than a complex political and economic matter, *The Mahogany Trail* reflects the ethos of a campaign which revolves around the idea of victims, heroes and villains, and the promise of science and technology to save a modern 'enlightened' world. The documentary shows no sociological understanding of the forces driving ordinary people to cut down the forest. As a 'Northern' biased approach, there is a reinvention of the 'stupid latino' concept (Nugent 1990) which centres on the game between the 'villains' and the 'heroes', the latter of whom seem to be the journalists themselves.

6.3 - Visibilities and Invisibilities of the Social Landscape

In contrast to the 1980s, and after *The Decade of Destruction* and *Amazon Sisters* were broadcast in 1990 and 1991, there was a considerable falling off in the number of documentaries about the Amazon on British television. It was often stated by journalists, film-makers and campaigners interviewed during my research that the media now considered the Amazon as 'old news', or, in other words, a story that has already been told.

Besides this, the decline in interest can be attributed to a number of other factors. Firstly, both reduced media coverage and the decline in general public concern about the Amazon can be understood as a perverse effect of the alarmist phase of campaigns during the 80s. There was a saturation of news in the media, and this, combined with criticism from Brazil about the level of campaigning focused entirely upon the Amazon, made many campaigners move on to other forests and issues. Films like *The Decade*, with its apocalyptic images and, paradoxically, optimistic ending may have conveyed the assumption that the Amazon was nearly totally destroyed, and that the little left of it was to be preserved by the freshly informed initiatives of the newly elected

Brazilian government of 1989. This idea was corroborated by the effects of a Brazilian economic recession in the early 1990s, which led to a reduction of investment in the region and which, combined with focused government responses to international criticism, created the impression that the fires were under control. Finally, and more broadly speaking, the incorporation of environmental rhetoric within economic and political sectors, culminating with the Earth Summit in 1992, contributed to the general shifting impression that environmental issues and the forests' affairs had been effectively recognised at last and safely lodged within the official agenda.

As stated in previous chapters, British campaigners who were already campaigning against the British timber industry's impact upon other forests of the world, turned their attention towards the Amazon in the early 90s. Also sensitive to the social justice debate, the mahogany campaign proposed to address the issue by establishing links between 'trees' and 'people'. Nevertheless, although an 'injustice framework' was articulated by the mahogany campaign (chapter five), the people under consideration were restricted to the indigenous populations who were often presented as victims. *The Mahogany Trail* documentary presents itself as a political instrument of the campaigning world and was successfully used by the latter in their struggle with the British timber trade industry.²⁵³

However, if the act of filming imposes a 'principle of order' (Machado 1993), what is the order presented by the three documentaries regarding 'trees and people', 'global and local' relations, 'Britishness' and 'Brazilianess'? As a global concern, *The Mahogany Trail* represents indigenous peoples and their environment as the major focus of consideration, albeit in a different frame than in *The Decade of Destruction*. In *The Decade*, indigenous peoples are more explicitly portrayed in terms of their expected 'authenticity', in the sense that they are framed and technically, and ahistorically, 'frozen' as figures of the 'uncontacted tribes'. Following in the footsteps Douglas (1966), one could say that non-indigenous Amazonians were considered as outsiders whose presence caused disorder or pollution in the ordained forest world of indigenous people-living-in-harmony-with-nature. In any case, as villains or victims, people were objects in a story told from a distance - as objects of the gaze of a western director.

With *The Mahogany Trail*, indigenous peoples are still the objects of consideration, but are seen as victims of an unfair and exploitative contact with the world of trade. They remain far from being depicted as subjects of their own history, or the main characters of the mahogany story. Their voices are used as an appendix to an argument drawn elsewhere. The main characters are the reporters themselves, as they unveil the unjust situation. They recall thus, a situation in which the British campaigners are the major political actors of the mahogany campaign. In other words, there is an equivalence between the reporters' roles in the film and the British campaigners in the mahogany campaign. The campaign is therefore global. Nevertheless, the complexity of a global trade that would reveal the main villains as the British timber traders is undermined by a focus on small, individual loggers. Hence, despite an awareness of the complexities of the trade, what is portrayed is the 'non-indigenous' Amazonian as disruption to an order composed of Indians-as-custodians-of-the-environment. Finally, in both of

²⁵³Based on letters exchanged between Friends of the Earth and the Timber Trade Federation on 10 and 14 June 1996. For further reaction of the trade to the *Dispatches* programme see the *Timber Trade Journal*, 1 June, 1996.

what I would call 'trees' documentaries, scientific knowledge and technological devices are presented as the main instruments of global environmentalism. This device obscures a broader sociological and political analysis. The mahogany case is rather presented as a criminal act disconnected from its economic and political structures. The emphasis on motivated actors downplays the structural basis upon which they act. These global tendencies are aligned with specific British cultural meanings that relate to elements of adventure and mystery attributed to jungle exploration and expeditions.

In *Amazon Sisters*, the attempt was, by opposition, to portray a social landscape of the forest world focusing on 'non-indigenous' Amazonians as 'insiders' in the forest world, and as active subjects. In order to make this point, however, indigenous peoples were excluded from the frame, whereas the women in the Amazon were also portrayed as 'authentic' archetypes, as 'typical' Latin Americans, strong and passionate heroines. An unproblematised notion of industrialisation ends up by drawing uncritical and ahistorical parallels to Western European processes. Therefore, an alternative to the current model of development is not envisaged by the approach presented in *Amazon Sisters*. The affinity of gender prevails over historical differences, producing an effect of meanings that imply that going to the Amazon should be like going back to pre-industrial revolution Britain. In this sense, this perspective can resonate with the distinctive features of 'development discourse'.²⁵⁴ Furthermore, the *Sisters* of the title has a double meaning as it implies both the organisation of women in social movements in the Amazon, as well as the gender and political identity of women in the UK.²⁵⁵

The complexity of the reality is far beyond the grasp of any form of classification, representation, analysis or interpretation (and this is valid not only for the documentaries analysed here, but also for this research as a whole). Accounts and portrayals are informed by a series of circumstances located at a historical moment, and also by the personal, social, and political affiliations and trajectories of those who produce the accounts. If British and European accounts on the Amazon privilege indigenous peoples and their environment - a legitimate representation of an extremely marginalised segment - they do so by playing with stereotyped conceptions, in some cases undermining the agency of indigenous peoples themselves: leaving out of focus everything that complicates an over-simplified and self-serving scenario.

²⁵⁴See chapter two.

²⁵⁵ Local-local and 'global-local' relations are far from unproblematic. This debate appears not only in the final product of each documentary, but also in the process of their production, particularly in the relationship between the film crew members. *The Decade* and the *Amazon Sisters* were co-produced with Brazilians, whereas *The Mahogany Trail* had a Brazilian journalist as researcher and translator. The distancing of *The Decade* in relation to the local realities was further expressed when the director stated that the Brazilian crew was 'trained' in order to produce what would be expected by an international audience. No conflict was therefore presented. 'Other' views are simply subdued, whereas in *Amazon Sisters* and in *The Mahogany Trail*, clashes between British directors and Brazilian crew members are revealing of different types of engagement and the dynamics of co-operation. In *Amazon Sisters*, the power dispute between the female British director and the male Brazilian crew raised questions regarding the inequalities of North-South and the ways this intersects with gender relations. These same topics of dispute reappear in *The Mahogany Trail*, when clashes between the male British directors and the female Brazilian journalist end up in the withdraw of the Brazilian journalist from the project. (Interviews with Adrian Cowell on 9/7/96; Nina Simões in June of 1996, Richard Hering on August of 1996 and Anne-Marie Sweeney on 2 August, 1996.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

'Latin America's rainforests in the 1990s - the war goes on.' This was the headline of a leaflet for a meeting with indigenous delegates from Ecuador and Colombia by the Latin America Bureau in London, during the launching of a new book on environmental issues in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1996.²⁵⁶ Besides the fight against multinational oil companies in the Ecuadorian Amazon and the campaign against road-building on Colombia's Pacific Coast, the leaflet also mentioned the Brazilian Decree 1775 which was threatening 'to open up 57 per cent of all indigenous land in Amazonia to claims from outside interests, unleashing a renewed invasion by loggers, ranchers and miners of this fragile ecosystem'. Indigenous peoples and the 'fragile ecosystem' are inextricably intertwined, and equated under the same threat. It is this 'threat' that juxtaposes them in an equally meaningful way, and that also justifies the appeal for support amongst those located where 'the threat' is supposedly originating from, but who nonetheless oppose it.

It is as though the headline and the cases mentioned in the leaflet were trying to wake up a sleepy 1990s' English public, assuring them that the 1980s were not altogether over. In fact, the leaflet not only exposed an ongoing situation that confronts indigenous peoples in the Amazon as a whole, but it clearly illustrated a feeling that I found rather common amongst those campaigning for the Amazon in Britain. This feeling was that the Amazon, and particularly its indigenous peoples, were not given the same attention that they were once given by the global media, politicians, organisations and the public at large. According to campaigners, the stories in the media became more infrequent since the Amazon appeared to be *'a story already told'*.

Nonetheless, 'the story' has not only continued and globally evolved in terms of more specific issues - such as logging through the mahogany campaign - but it has also 'come back' in the late 1990s along staggeringly similar lines to the late 1980s. As I write this conclusive chapter, the fires in the Amazon have once again hit the front pages of the English mainstream press.²⁵⁷ This time too, the burning of the Amazon is said to be the biggest ever in history. Ten years after the international outcry about the burning of the Amazon rainforest reached its peak, *The Decade of Destruction* (see chapter six) has recreated itself in the most astonishing way, despite the well-publicised acclaimed advances in international awareness, official and voluntary regulations, programmes, agreements, and specialised campaigning.

²⁵⁶ Collinson, H. (ed.) (1996) *Green Guerrillas, Environmental Conflicts and Initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean*, London: Latin American Bureau.

²⁵⁷ See 'The flames are huge like sails - an ecosystem is being destroyed' in *The Guardian*, March 21, 1998; and 'Fire threatens Amazon reserve as Indians are left without a prayer' in *Financial Times*, March 21/22, 1998.

So, one might ask, why has the forest continued to be destroyed and burned down 'more than ever in history'? The briefest and most superficial response still blames the same old peasant practices - the slash and burn techniques²⁵⁸ - aggravated this time by natural causes, as for instance, the dry season prolonged by the El Niño global weather phenomenon, which hits the Pacific waters every five to seven years. However, the situation raises more deep rooted structural considerations, especially in the face of the indicative reactions (or lack of reactions) by the Brazilian government.

Although this is not the place to address the late 1990s government's plans and development policies for the Amazon (i.e. road building, incentives to industry and agribusiness: the ghost of the 1970s and 1980s policies returning in a more sophisticated version, which deserves further investigation in the light of transnational campaigning issues raised in this research), what the recent developments provide is a corroboration to the points I have discussed in this thesis, and which were particularly highlighted in chapter five: i.e. that governmental policies towards the Amazon have been merely reactive to international and transnational pressures. These have been, as in the case of the UK, mainly focused on very specific issues. As the latest and most catastrophic fire case in the western region of the Amazon shows, the flames which started with the dry season in August 1997, received official attention a full six months later, in March 1998. This was when the fires had already spread out within the Yanomami territory (people still referred to by the British press as living in the 'Stone Age')²⁵⁹ beyond any possible effective action, despite continued local appeals, and only after the 'international' outcry of NGOs reached the mainstream global media. Eventually, and ironically, the fires were controlled by natural forces, namely, the rains that fell in April. The sluggish reactions of the Brazilian government amidst the military's anxieties about international aid (see chapter two), once again confirms that the overall Brazilian official attitude and 'policy' towards *Amazônia* and indigenous peoples has not changed in the past decade. Hence, the recent events also heighten the importance of transnational campaigns and solidarity with Brazilian grassroots and indigenous movements, which have continued to struggle against the minority (but powerful) elite, and the same world-wide official 'development' ideology. Furthermore, beyond the British campaign strategy mainly focused on the logging trade, the situation also demonstrates that the specific Brazilian context and history, aggravated by its insertion into the global economic web - in other words, the socio-economic structural factors underlying deforestation - should neither be reduced nor downplayed by transnational specific and specialised, single issue campaigns.

Therefore, because transnational campaigning and support for the Amazon - as both 'environment' and 'society' intertwined and interdependent - has been so crucial, it is equally relevant to discuss its dynamics, as I have done in this thesis, focusing my analysis on the 'global/local' relationship represented by the British-Brazilian Amazon connections. From an anthropological perspective, I hope that the discussion presented in this thesis may have shed light on issues regarding 'global/local' dynamics and processes towards the construction of a citizenship beyond the boundaries of nation-state

²⁵⁸This is the position of the Brazilian government publicised in reports by the Brazilian Embassy in London. See Brazilian Embassy (1998), *Brazilian Amazon Region: New Data On Deforestation, Protection of Forests in the Brazilian Amazon Region*, and *Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon Region*.

²⁵⁹*The Guardian*, March 21, 1998.

frontiers (bearing in mind, nevertheless, certain locations and meanings that historical frontiers still convey).

Thus, throughout this thesis I have used the adjective transnational rather than international when referring to campaigners and campaigns, in order to disconnect the campaigning activity from specific nation-state representations. In other words, by and large campaigners do not 'represent' national constituencies, national 'imagined communities' or governments (as certain sectors within the Brazilian military once seemed to believe, although they still clearly fear that global environmental concerns may come to justify a US invasion and occupation of the Amazon). I have also preferred transnational over the adjective global, in order to state the relevant role and weight of certain national legacies and sites in the 'globalised' realm.²⁶⁰ The adjective transnational does not erase national characteristics and power positions on the globe (a globe imagined without political lines of demarcation) whilst also implying the existence of spaces in *between* the nation-state boundaries, the borders where cultural-political identities and agencies have increasingly taken place (this is clearly the situation of environmentalists who articulate a perspective of the 'globe-as-a-whole').

As suggested above, I do not entirely embrace the view that the 'North' exists everywhere and the 'South' exists only within itself (Shiva 1993b:152), because in my understanding these categories promote other simplified totalisations, beyond the actual dynamic and interaction of social and political forces in global processes. Although some positions in the field may be more global than others (there is indeed no Brazilian NGO campaigning for the Scandinavian forests, for example) - and the same may be true in reverse, i.e. some local positions are more local than others - nevertheless, the interaction between different positions in space and time highlights certain aspects and produces meanings in both local and global contexts. These meanings are debated, negotiated, contested and responsible for the emergence of new perspectives, agencies and trends (for example, campaigners in the Northern hemisphere have increasingly campaigned for the forests of the 'North', whilst the number of Brazilian and other 'Southern' campaigners within NGOs in 'the North' has slowly expanded, particularly within the social sector). Most importantly, actual interactive processes allow us to speak of a non-homogeneous transnational constituency or 'imagined community' of those concerned with issues of environment, ethnicity, social justice, human rights and other related topics on a world-wide scale. As processes, they are not merely made of fixed and juxtaposed positions, but they result in continued generation of new perspectives and mutually influential agendas. This is not to say that these processes take place in a void of history and power. Because different locations do comprise positions of power, it is the case that certain meanings about human relations and 'the environment' conceived within contexts of a 'Northern' perspective may endure and overshadow others producing rather unintended effects in the 'South' (for example, some 'global' perspectives might select and elect certain local perspectives as more 'local' than others within the 'South'). Nevertheless, these 'Southern' positions may also be able to negotiate meanings and agendas with those they consider their allies, since they are the source of information for those acting at a distance and, furthermore they may share a common ground and general principles. These, along with an ethical and self-critical perspective from 'Northern' campaigners may counter-balance power tendencies in this process.

²⁶⁰One of the first critical discussions on this matter, that is, about the 'global reach' as a political space, is found in Shiva (1993b), and also Lohmann (1993) and Gudynas (1993).

My ethnography of British campaigners and campaigns for the Amazon rainforest reveals a diversity of positions and perspectives in the UK regarding the Brazilian Amazon rainforest. I have identified three major tendencies amongst campaigners and two principal ongoing campaigns run in the 1990s (chapters four and five). My analysis was centred on the dynamics of 'global/local' relations through the intermingling of environmental and social justice issues. These aspects are said to be reconciled since the late 1980s, particularly with the Brundtland report and its concept of sustainable development, which was further consolidated through the Earth Summit in 1992.

Surely, since the time the UN conference was held (significantly enough, in Brazil) an official environmental discourse that had emerged after the previous conference in 1972 in Stockholm, has been firmly established. Nevertheless, this discourse also seems to inscribe society and development within a totalising and evolutionist concept of economic growth, whereas 'nature' appears to be merely as a variable to be 'managed' (Esteva 1993, Sachs 1993). The reconciliation of 'people' and 'the environment' is thus realised under the premises of economy. These global tendencies have imposed themselves upon peoples, societies and environments. The institutionalised environmental discourse preaches that growth can be pursued by resource-intensive means promoted by a technical and organisational intelligence concentrated on increasing the productivity of 'nature'. The 'development' ideology is thus revigorated by the concept of 'sustainable development', which also claims respect for biodiversity as well as cultural diversity. Development, thus, seems to have recreated itself through the concept of sustainable development, which appears as development with an environmental facet, further launching itself as the solution for 'poverty', and furthermore presenting a convenient framework for governments in the 'South' (Esteva 1992). In order to legitimise this official discourse, NGOs - which were long holders of a counter discourse - were invited into 'participation' and 'partnership' (Finger 1993). Within this general framework and trend, the mainstream NGOs seem to have thus accommodated their discourses into such an encompassing and institutionalised formation.

The idea of 'sustainable development' - vaguely meaning considering peoples' needs, beyond conservationist practices - has its general principles agreed upon, but it meets concrete obstacles when faced with practical initiatives and implementations. As far as forests are concerned, particularly the Amazon, different approaches towards sustainable development makes it difficult to uphold the simplified and common classification of NGOs into categories such as, for example, conservationist and environmentalist organisations. Working with 'local people' or 'local communities' has become a rather popular claim. Even the most 'conservationist' of the mainstream NGOs, such as WWF, speaks of working with 'the local people'. This is aimed for as a principle, but it seems to face many complications as part of practical strategies and the implementation of joint projects on the ground. In broad terms, for instance, WWF's overall target of preserving ten per cent of the world's forests, while serving to forge combined funding and actions involving the World Bank and the Brazilian Government in the case of the Amazon, nonetheless raises questions within a general framework of 'sustainable development'. For if eighty per cent of the Brazilian Amazon rainforest still remains 'intact', the preservation of ten per cent naturally leaves open the question about the fate of the other seventy per cent. Would preserving ten per cent of the Amazon mean allowing Asian companies and other major predatory economic enterprises to continue to destroy the other seventy per cent in the same way it has been occurring, with the blessing of the

Brazilian government, on behalf of 'development'? What is the meaning of sustainable development in this context?

In the name of 'sustainable development', however, another strategy launched by WWF, the Forest Stewardship Council (chapters three and five), appears to be a classic example of the 'managerial' approach 'within' development - the stewardship of 'nature'. It may be considered as an attempt at bringing together common grounds between environmental, social and economic sectors, but the actual implementation and the perspective of the timber trade, as discussed above, makes the process difficult, as well as time and resource intensive. As a market-oriented initiative, the FSC faces constant attempts at revaluation and redefinition of principles and criteria for forest management between sectors with competing perspectives and interests. Nonetheless, within the dominant global environmental trend, this initiative has also mobilised the majority of transnational NGOs dealing with forest issues in the last four years. As a result, there is a danger that they may lose sight of it as a market-oriented initiative, and start to believe in it (that is, in the 'green production and green consumerism') as the solution to 'save the Amazon'.

Other mainstream NGOs (such as Friends of the Earth, for example) might present different approaches, and sustainable development might bring them closer to other economic alternatives in the Amazon. Support of 'local communities' and minorities by transnational campaigners in this case stems from a general recognition that local communities, in particular traditional communities at the margins of the development hegemony, can offer alternatives to the dominant ways since they are the ones excluded from the practices of current global discourse. However, transnational support for these groups evolves amidst communication and tension stemming from different historical and cultural perspectives, such as a 'global' focus on biodiversity and a 'local' dimension composed of a diversity of societies and cultural positions, which are further mediated by other 'national' agendas.

Hence, the fact that I bring together diverse organisations under the same categories, which I have called *trees*, *trees and people*, or *people* (as for instance, WWF, FOE and Greenpeace campaigners, who are placed within the *trees* tendency) has less to do with their organisational aspects, different structures, goals and strategies, but rather with the ways campaigners have engaged in a debate for sustainable development in relation to the Amazon, which is a vague and widely agreed upon concept that seems to bring them closer together, forging very similar perceptions and discourses.

My analysis of the Amazon as a field of struggle displays the diverse positions in the field and the dynamics each one establishes with the other. The relationship between '*trees*' and '*people*' campaigners contributed to the new assessment and principles that arose in the conservationist and environmentalist arena concerning issues of sustainable development. Contrary to what is generally believed, however, the accommodation of social justice and biodiversity issues remains as an ongoing and unsettled debate in actual concrete terms and situations. Different positions in the field are influenced by campaigners' social and personal trajectories, leading to the three major tendencies I have identified and analysed (chapter four). For the '*tree*' campaigners for example, the 'partnership' with 'local communities' comprises tensions derived from a 'technical managerial' perspective and agency at times at odds with local cultures and societies. Technical forestry and strict ecological approaches still prevail within this ten-

gency. 'Partnerships' are established with Brazilian NGOs that can respond to the appropriate requirements, namely, technical expertise, computer and linguistic skills.

The 'global' and abstract definition of tropical forest circumscribed under the 'managerial' approach, combined with a lack of understanding of historical regional contexts and cultures, as well as the impositions and restraints of dealing with issues that make sense within their own countries, often makes transnational campaigns too particularised, while the reality on the ground may be rather far more complex. This is further aggravated when the possibility of tackling certain concrete actors may overshadow structural factors driving deforestation in a wider context (chapter five). The peculiarity of the British-Amazonian trade heightens connections between campaigners in England and in Brazil. The Amazon is projected into Britain through the fact of the exploitation and the trade of mahogany. The visibility of the trade problems and actors involved in them mobilises and focuses the agenda of campaigners in Britain. Thus, the practical possibilities and limits of the campaign may render other issues invisible in the context of the Amazon and Brazil. Moreover, these aspects reflect back on Brazilian and local NGOs who are selected as partners and suppliers of information for an agenda conceived from a 'global' perspective.

Responses from the Brazilian government have been merely cosmetic (chapter five). A real definition and implementation of environmental policies concerning the future of the Amazon is marginal in relation to a development agenda. So, policies continue to follow the same concept of 'development' forged in the 1960s by the military, namely: concepts of axes of integration with road building, infrastructure, settlement, transformation of forests into agribusiness for export, and military occupation.²⁶¹ While the Amazon seems to be reduced to the conditions of the mahogany trade in Britain, Brazil is also misconceived as a mere 'producer' country. The reality of the Brazilian society as an industrial and, therefore, 'consumer' society is ignored by the 'global' perspective. Due to the demand for information coming from NGOs in Britain, and the level of economic dependency of Brazilian NGOs upon their transnational partners, it is difficult to tell the scope and the role of Brazilian NGOs in effectively setting up the dynamics of the transnational agenda. For example, whereas a consumer boycott of tropical timber campaign has contributed to a drop and, most importantly, more transparency of the issues involved the mahogany trade in the UK, there is no indication of a similar campaign within Brazil - a country that consumes most of the timber it produces. Furthermore, it is not possible to firmly state the space Brazilian NGOs have allocated for effectively dealing with other issues and concerns equally affecting the Amazon.

Trees and people campaigners represent another perspective in campaigns for the Amazon. Campaigners within this tendency are less technical, more diverse and are spread out across various smaller organisations and networks in comparison to the dominant tendency (chapter four). They tend to be more politically committed to supporting local perspectives and alternatives. However, the situation of intermediation between 'local' and 'global' perspectives concerning these campaigners tends to be more

²⁶¹See for instance, Gonçalves (1998) and the opening of the road BR-174 from Manaus to Venezuela aiming at the Panama Canal as an exit for exports. This road cuts across indigenous peoples' lands, such as the Waimiri-Atroari, and conservation areas, besides facilitating access to the Yanomami territory. It is due to benefit entrepreneurs from Manaus's *Zona Franca*, mining companies, agribusiness associated to the export of Soya beans and timber companies, especially the Asian companies in the state of Amazonas.

pronounced. Most have less resources and depend on the information the larger groups can provide. Therefore they have in general a limited impact on setting the overall agenda in the UK, although they contribute valuable elements to the established campaigns. Sometimes, as in the case of long-established campaigners, they can influence the direction of the overall debate amongst campaigners towards positions more in tune with NGOs original principles, particularly when campaigners and campaigns seem to get too subsumed in negotiations with the private sector and governments.

Finally, support for 'local communities' in the Amazon by the *people* campaigners, the third tendency I have identified (chapter four), has shifted between a perspective informed by a concern with distribution and social justice on the one hand, and the campaign for indigenous peoples rights to self-determination on the other. Campaigners within this tendency come from a perspective of political engagement with Latin American issues and Brazil, rather than a professional training in forestry, or an environmental activism. Concerns with inequality, social justice and distribution in Latin America may appear at times to drive them closer to a discourse associated with an ideological perspective centred on 'development', though they are usually opposed to developmental projects which have long favoured local elites and transnational capital (chapter five). In the case of the Amazon, however, indigenous peoples remain as the central focus of attention, although support for the MST - Movimento dos Sem-Terra - has increased in the last three years within the UK through the work of the Brazil Network. Structural changes, such as the support for the campaign for agrarian reform and the demarcation of indigenous lands, are intertwined and combined with immediate aid projects. The ethical and political concern with 'people' - through attention to the inequalities between the 'Northern' and 'Southern' hemisphere - requires a practical approach to campaigning which makes them be perceived by the *trees* campaigners as less concerned with biodiversity and a 'global' environmental perspective that would more firmly question 'development' as a remedy for poverty (chapter six). Their agenda is, in fact, more concerned with the support for the organisation of grassroots and social movements in Brazil.

It is relevant to notice that environmentalism and ethnicity are intertwined as far as the Amazon is constructed in the UK, and in the transnational arena at large. The advance of the western economy over the rainforest and indigenous peoples' territories has led to the representation of indigenous peoples' interests beyond their traditional local sphere. This coincides with environmentalists' claims and concerns with biodiversity and the global environment. A powerful transnational and transcultural constituency composed of environmentalists, scientists, academics, indigenous peoples and their supporters has emerged and has been established in various networks across the globe. Specific technical considerations are thus aligned with political and ethical perspectives, whilst they also draw upon certain western values and desires. Hence, the fact that the Amazon and indigenous peoples have appealed to the European imagination over the centuries as their 'Other' is often played out by campaigners. Exoticism, 'new-ageism' and adventure can find validation in, and become reframed by, technical expertise and political engagement. These perspectives may collide with or either be accommodated by local perspectives in their interaction with 'global' views. These interactions do not necessarily lead to cultural homogenisation, but can mutually strengthen both perspectives. Self-criticism and self-reflexivity from environmental and indigenous rights advocates are imperative, while indigenous peoples, traditional communities, and further

Brazilian NGOs require autonomy and economic independence, so collaboration can be pursued in more balanced contexts.

Surely, certain 'global' positions are more 'global' than others, whereas some 'local' perspectives are made more 'local' than others, and paradoxically, they become more 'global' than other 'locals'. Indigenous peoples from the Amazon are more 'global' than indigenous groups from other Brazilian regions. The same can be said about the Amazon in relation to other regions or features of the Brazilian society. The Amazon has long become 'global' whereas São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, for example, are deemed as 'local' in comparison to London and New York. They are more invisible and are often overshadowed by the forest in the 'global' realm. Perhaps, in symbolic and allegorical terms, the continued burning down of the Amazon is the 'revenge' of the 'western Brazil' against an anonymous 'global' condition of invisibility. Perhaps still, a further campaigning challenge is to bring the Amazon to São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and other contexts within Brazil, as a movement in the opposite direction to those intending to expand into, engulf and consume the Amazon and its various societies.

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