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Territoriality and Space Among the Hupd'äh and Tukano of the River Uaupés Basin

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Translated from Portuguese by Sarah Bailey

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this text is to present a vision of the territorial occupation of the indigenous groups that live in the Uaupés Basin, focusing on inter-ethnic relations and the models of spatial occupation of the Maku and Tukanoan (Oriental) indigenous groups that inhabit this region. The idea of this exercise is to indicate elements for a possible analysis of the concept of territoriality used by the Indians that live in this region. The basis of this work is the hypotheses on the indigenous presence in the Uaupés basin, presented by Nimuendajú [1927,1950] and which are, albeit with a number of reservations, accepted by the majority of the anthropologists working in this part of the Amazon. Ideally, archeological studies would be made to prove these hypotheses, but both the mythology and the oral tradition of these populations appear to ratify them.

As a result of their spatial situation of their villages, the Tukano have been described as the river-Indians; while the Hupdë as the forest-Indians, or simply Maku. The word *maku* is Arawak in origin and means "without speech or without [our] language" [*ma* = possessive prefix, *aku* = speech/language]. This term was initially used by Indians from the Arawak group and, subsequently, has been used in the entire region with a meaning of backward, wild, dirty... etc. Today the term has a pejorative connotation, at

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times being even offensive. It has been incorporated into the regional Portuguese. The spatial model of the Tukano groups, and also the Arawak groups, as has already been emphasized by other studies [Goldman, 1948; Chermela 1983], has the river as its pivotal centre. The life cycle of these groups revolves around the activities developed along the river; they therefore possess canoes and fishing technology, which has an essential role in the economic activities of each of them. Contrasting with this model, are the adaptable ways of their neighbours, known as the Maku, and in the particular the Hupd'äh, Yohupd ah, and Kakua (Bara-Maku), since these Indians prefer to occupy the small rivers and streams within the forest. The focus of their lives, therefore, is the forest, and the technology they use has been developed around forest resources, prioritizing hunting as the main activity.

The discussion and analysis to be developed in this paper are exclusively restricted to the River Uaupés Basin (Amazonas, Brazil), in the Northeastern Amazon, on the Colombian border. It should be said that in the traditional areas of other Maku groups, like the Dow, the Nadöb and the Nukak, for example, there is not the presence of the Tukano or the Arawak groups, since these are not inhabitants of the hydrographical basin of the River Uaupés. The population data presented in this study comes from information obtained in FUNAI [1974], the population census I carried out in 1984 and 1988, during visits made to the region, data from the field trips of the Association *Saúde Sem Limites* Health team in 1994 and 1996 and, more recently, reports from the Rio Negro's Special Indigenous Sanitary District (*Distrito Sanitário Especial Indígena do Rio Negro*).

The Hupd'äh-Maku and Tukano groups, linguistically distinct, share the same territory. The former live within the forest and the latter build their villages and communities on the banks of the big rivers and their tributaries. They have age-old relations of interchange, most visibly expressed through the exchange of goods and services, which lead these relations to be characterized as symbiotic, asymmetrical and hierarchical or even similar to those of patron-client [Jackson 1972, Reid 1979, Silverwood-Cope 1980, Ramos 1980, Pozzobon 1982, Athias 1995]. Bearing in mind the current spatial composition of the various villages of these Indians, it is initially difficult to see the frontiers. It is known, however, that these frontiers exist and they are revealed in the speech of both the Tukano and the Hupd'äh; if they exist it is because each of the indigenous groups possesses a notion of territoriality that is shared by all in the region. Where then are the frontiers that each linguistic group obeys? This model, in operation in the Uaupés, seems different from other areas, where there is the co-habitation of distinct indigenous groups within the same territory.²

2 For example, the territory of the Parque Nacional do Xingu, shared by various ethnic groups.

The anthropologist Reichel-Dolmatoff [1989], analysing the various available versions of the Jurupari myth³, presents 6 phases related to the occupation of the region, without, nonetheless, contradicting the essential concept presented by Nimuendajú [1927]. I relate below these six stages to which the author refers, incorporating in them observations from my own filed notes, seeking to provide an overview of these peoples' myths of creation.

1. The sedentary⁴ and farming Arawak groups lived in the region, being referred to in the bulk of the Jurupari myths as the "Tapir People"/*Yeba Mahsa*⁵ and came into contact with the Tukano groups, the "pre-farmers", and with the "incipient farmers", although non-nomads, known as Maku. The question of who were the first to arrive in the Uaupés Basin, according to the analyses of the various versions of the myth, still remains a mystery to be unraveled. Nonetheless, Reichel-Dolmatoff states that the "*Yeba Mahsa*", that appear in various fragments of Jurupari myths are indicated as being the first to occupy the region. In the Tukano versions of the myth these people would be hunting and gathering groups that preceded the Tukano. However, *Yeba* may be the Arawak term that means "land", in the sense of territory. This word is also found in other Tukanoan-based languages, in Desana (*yeba*) and in Tukano itself (*yepa*), with the same meaning. We know, however, that the occupation of the Uaupés was not pacific. There were wars and a long process of negotiation among the different groups over the territorial issue. Oral tradition has it that several battles occurred between Arawak and Tukano groups. For example, the Battle of Buopé, certainly the most famous, is today part of a number of oral traditions of groups that lived around the confluence of the Uaupés with the Papuri. One hears that the Kubeo⁶, in turn originally Arawak, though now "tukanised" [Nimuendajú 1927: 160], organised

3 The first version of the Jurupari Myth was translated by the Italian, Conde Ermanno Sradelli (1890). Versions of this myth may be found in: S. Hugh-Jones [1979], E. Bolens [1987], and lastly the version translated from Italian by Padre Acionilio Bruzzi Alves da Silva [1994].

4 Amorim [1928:50] presents a version of the myth in which the Tukano talk of their migration to the Uaupés.

5 In reality, *Yeba* (Desana), *Yepa* (Tukano) or *Dyepa* (Tatuyo) are terms that mean «the land», world, universe, and can always be associated with the term „*mahsa*” that means «people». Certainly the «tapir» are part of the „*Yepa-mahsa*”, as we shall see later.

6 Goldman refers to this hostility in the following way: „The allusion to a fighter training for a match is not as old friends coming together but rather as jealous, aggressive, and fiercely independent segments who have resolved to be friends” (1963:207).

campaigns against the Tukano. The penetration of the latter in the Uaupés would have occurred via the River Aiari, tributary of the left bank of the River Içana.

Amorim [1928:51] states that the Uanana (Kotyria) occupied the Uaupés even before the Tariano (one of the Arawak groups), against whom they also warred.⁷ The Uanana, also according to Amorim, climbed the river coming from a place that lay in the middle of a range of hills on the banks of a lake called Katiana and, shortly after the war with the Tariano, the majority of the Arawak groups left for their old place of origin. Furthermore, to demonstrate just how old they are in the region, the Uanana affirm that the figures that can be seen on the stones of the Uaupés (near the Caruru falls) had been made by the predecessors of *Tan Mahsa* (stone people).

2. The Tukano groups: hunters, fishers and gatherers, continued to arrive in small bands from the west, with a reduced number of women and with a “weak” material culture, compared to that of the Arawak. However, they possessed several kinds of tobacco and specific knowledge about hallucinogenic plants (*caarpi*). In this period the first exchanges of women occurred between Arawak and Tukano facing difficulties, due to the fact that the early inhabitants practiced linguistic endogamy⁸. Among the Tukano groups⁹, nobody marries within their own linguistic group, in general; as they would be seen as “half people” and incestuous. This phenomenon in itself represents a significant element in the model of interethnic relations throughout this region: the practice of endogamy being repudiated in all mythological tales, including those of the Hupd’ dah-Maku. This practice is a sensitive question in the entire region. To this day it represents an important element for further study.
3. The Tukano’s insistence in establishing themselves in the area in their search for women would have provoked conflicts with the Arawak. The Maku established contacts with the Tukano and even exchanged women, sharing an economy based on the exchange of game and fish.
4. After several conflicts, the Arawak finally accepted the Tukano as husbands for their women, imposing upon them their laws of matrilineality,

7 See Chernela, 1983 on wars involving the Uanano.

8 Marriages between people speaking the same language.

9 See Jackson, J., 1983

in addition to uxori-locality. At this time, through the Arawak women, the Tukano also received manioc. In other words, they gradually became farmers, and therefore more sedentary, using a technology imported from the Arawak. Having lived in small groups during the migratory period, the Tukano developed strong feelings against endogamy.

5. The Arawak and the Tukanoan groups (not all of them, nor at the same time) reached an agreement over patrilineality, the linguistic exogamy (expressed in the laws of *Jurupari*) and developed a series of exchange rituals (*Dabucuri*) in which the Tukano occupy a major role. The Arawak women introduce manioc among the Tukano and organize the large communal dwellings (*maloca*).¹⁰
6. After a considerable time, a number of Arawak are "tukanised"; among them the Tariano and a few clans currently Kubeo. The other Arawak groups prefer to migrate to the Içana and its tributaries. Conflicts still persisted between Tukano and Arawak.

These stages described here suffice, in a resumed way, to show the profound process of negotiation that these peoples experienced in this region. On pointing out these stages, Reichel-Dolmatoff [1989] offers no dates or historical information on the contact of these populations with the agents of colonisation that certainly represented an impact on the occupational process and organisation of the existing social environment. The region's entire mythological *corpus* suggests the Tukano's penetration in areas previously considered Arawak and their interference in the rules of kinship: endogamy to exogamy accompanied by changes of the matrilineal system to the patrilineal.

In relatively recent studies [Wright, 1981] on the Arawak of the River Aiari, the information can be found that the Baniwa were never in the Uaupés but had close ties with the Uanana. However, the Tariano, of the Arawak linguistic trunk, always inhabited the Uaupés. In Kuripako (Arawak), the *taria* is the name of a fish, (*aracu*, in Portuguese), well known in the Uaupés region from many stories because of the stripes on its skin. The place where the Arawak emerged into the world is found in the Içana-Aiari basin. Depending on who tells it, there may be variations in this tale.

It would seem to be a characteristic of Arawak myths of the region that the emergence, or appearance of these peoples into this world occurs through the holes in the stone of a stretch of falls (rapids) in the river. These natural holes also known as «pans» in

¹⁰ The relation between Jurupari, Dabucuri and Maloca was my own concept. A deeper analysis of this relation can be found in Athias, 1995.

regional Portuguese, can only be seen when the river's waters are at their lowest. Each of them appears in the mythology and has a specific story told by each of the clans, be they Tukano or Arawak. They were the falls of the Aiari, in the version of the myth of creation of the Hohodene (a phratry of the Baniwa), where humanity appears. In other Baniwa versions, however, the place of appearance was the Tunui falls, on the Aiari River. One can observe that the Tukano, as a result of their permanent contact with the Arawak, have "incorporated" this element into their myths of origin.

Currently the Tukano are the majority among the populations that live in the Uaupés. Two aquatic places are important in the tales of the Tukano peoples. In mythological narrative there is a place called Opekō-Ditara (Milk Lake¹¹) where the whole of humanity existed in the form of small beings that were gradually transformed into people (*Mahsã*) in the great journey of the anaconda canoe (*Pa'muri-Yukisire*) as far as the holes at the Ipanoré falls, in the middle Uaupés, the place where humanity appeared. From there, they all emerged: Tukano, Maku and even the "whites". It is interesting to note that these sites in the river Uaupés are currently inhabited by the Tariano. The variations of these tales are many and they are remembered at almost all the waterfalls of the Ipanoré.

The myths of the creation, for the majority of the Hupd'äh clans, state that they also were underwater and came to the world above the waters, but do not refer to any specific waterfall. The figure of the anaconda-canoe does not exist in the Hupd'äh mythology. Neither is Ipanoré remembered as the place from which the Hupd'äh came out. In the versions of the creation I had access to, the place from which the Hupd'äh emerge into this world is not identified. Each clan considers it as being in the proximity of their area of perambulation.

All the Tukano sibs have a recent story where the various periods of migration are told. In many cases, this historical record is confused with the great journey of the anaconda-canoe bringing the peoples to the Uaupés River. What is certain is that there was an occupation of all the rivers and big streams by the Tukano groups. The «interfluvial» areas are considered by the majority of the Tukano a space traditionally belonging to the Maku. In almost all the tales about the occupation of a certain area, one hears that the Hupd'äh Maku were involved. In the narrative of the Buu-ponã¹² sib of the Tukano that currently live in the Bela Vista village (one of the oldest occupations of the River Tiquié) the Hupd'äh appear since the beginning already as workers in the vegetable plots of the Buu-ponã [see Athias, 1997].

On talking with the Desana, of the River Tiquié, or even with the Tukano, about the lands that they inhabit today on the Tiquié, and asking them specifically about how they arrived in their current territory, the most common answer is that they all came from

11 The Tukano identify Rio de Janeiro as being the place where this lake exists.

12 See Athias, 1998

the River Papuri in the distant past¹³ and the causes for the migration are described as being diseases and shortage of food. Almost all the Tukano and Desana groups say they had been through the Macu stream, a tributary on the left bank of the Papuri, to reach the Tiquié. When one hears, for example, the narrative of a certain clan, these sites are more precise and can be found in the local geography.

In the Uaupés region one can also see that the Tukano live on the banks of the big rivers, while the Desana are located mainly beside and at the sources of the smaller ones (*igarapés*¹⁴). Today, this entire region is completely «mapped». All the groups there are aware of where their ancestors came from. However, when we asked in Hupd'äh about where *they* came from, they replied that they had always been there and that they had come out of the waters. The fact is that the Tukano seem to have a more specific memory that in the past, they (= their ancestors) did not live in this region.

Here we are interested in arguing that the peoples who live there have the limits to their territories clear, and the way in which they maintain this unity is found in the myth of the origin of each of the linguistic groups and in the specialized knowledge of each sib/clan. There is not a continuous territory where a specific linguistic group lives. They are spread over the entire region. And this characteristic, already observed by Jean Jackson [1972] seems important for the exchange of women and the ceremonial exchange of goods known as Dabucuri. There are Tukano villages on all the rivers, in addition to Desana villages. In the case of the Waikhana (Pira-Tapuia), that are mainly on the Papuri, we can see that they are in an “almost” continuous territory, as is the case with the Uanana and the Kubeo.

THE HUPD'ÄH MODEL AND THE CONCEPT OF TXAA

On referring to their space, where the Hupd'äh villages are located, they call it *nu txaa* (our land); for them it was *Kagn'té* (bone-child/son) that created it. On telling the myth in which the events of the creation (*hibah' ten re*) appear, the Hupd'äh distinguish two phases. In the first, they all lived in a house within the water (*deh moi kora*); they were all there together including the non-Indians (*teng'hoidé*). They worked and lived together like siblings. In the tale I heard in Boi'deh/Boca da Estrada, Mehtiu/Chico speaks of the first clans that lived in the *deh moi kora* (house under the water) and in the list of the tribes, he includes the Tariano (Arawak) today living in the Uaupés [Athias, 1995]. The other phase of the story of the creation happens on this land and contains all the *Kagn'té'* deeds. In

13 See for example Diakuru & Kisibi, 1996 and Umusin & Tolaman, 1980.

14 Smaller river or stream (TN)

this phase the creation of the night, and how manioc, tobacco, curare etc appeared are related, representing the legacy of *Kagn'te* for the Hupd'äh of today.

For the Hupd'äh, *nu txaá* represents the area or territory in which they can move about, explore, hunt. In this case, within the forest, the rivers are part of this realm, but inhabited by other people, other owners. The idea of belonging to one territory exists, and they are linked to this space, to this land, being able to take advantage of everything that is found within the forest. This space I have referred to as the «interfluvial» area, not on the banks of the big rivers. Each Hupd'äh clan uses one common area and in this territory may be found the sites to which *Kagn'te* came to during the creation of the world. The Tukano even state that the Hupd'äh do not have their own territory, and live in areas considered Tukano. "It was this land that our grandfathers left for them to live in" say the Tukano. However, contradictorily, they actually «identify» the "place" of the Hupd'äh as being the interior of the forests, at the heads of the *igarapés*.

A few years ago, during the negotiation process with the government (FUNAI) over the demarcation of indigenous lands, no Hupd'äh-Maku took part in the discussions on the Rio Negro region that were, in reality, conducted by Tukano leaders. Reading the documents presented by the Tukano, one can see that the Maku are noticeable by their absence. They are omitted as though they did not exist.

The Hupd'äh identify a specific place where a local group (village with members of one or two clans) is located. They call it *haiã*, which may be translated as village (*aldeia* in Portuguese), although this concept refers specifically to the Hupd'äh; and they do not mention the name of the clan that lives in a particular *haia*. In their language *haiã* may be translated as town. São Gabriel, for example they classify as *haiã*. In the entire region only Serra dos Porcos (Santo Antanasio) is called *haiã*. In this sense, when this term is used, it also informs that there are at least two other clans living together in that specific village. In reality the term is used after the topographical name that defines it precisely, for example: Ton Haiã (Serra dos Porcos Village), Pungdeh Haia (Cucura-Igarapé Village). It is a social space inhabited by Hupd'äh. A few geographical places are already enough known, within a single regional group (consisting of various local groups) for the term *haiã* to be omitted in conversation. Only the topographic name is used: *Boidehet ah hamité* (I am going to Boideh), already informs that the speaker will meet the people in Boideh. On a parallel with the notion of *haiã*, that is broad and encompassing, the term *moi* or *moi'ot* is also used, which is literally translated as «house», with reference to a village, and it may correspond to a domestic, or fire, group. However, it is never used together with a topographic term. It is generally associated with a man of reference for a specific clan. It could be compared with the Tukano term *wi'i*, when closely linked to a specific place. Above all it is a social unit where the notion of space is fluid.

It is within the forest – the «interfluvial» forest between the Papuri and the Tiquié that the entire Hupd'äh system of orientation is located. Each piece of this area is recognized and the specific site of a certain local group (village) may not yet be identified within it. These areas are of common knowledge to all the Hupd'äh. On the other hand, these frontiers would seem not to be rigid, there being possibly a certain mobility among these local groups to other sites along their stream of reference. It could be said that a village will always be associated with an *igarapé*, and their zone of perambulation along this stream or river, without this affecting the group. A final analysis shows an identification and acceptance of criteria for all the Hupd'äh over the occupation and free circulation of diverse clans in *Hup* territory.

While the Hupd'äh myth of creation gives no emphasis to a specific place for their appearance, merely stating that they came out of the waters to this land/ *nup txaa*, the main frontiers are defined – the interfluvial region of the Tiquié and Papuri – but the notion of *txaa* (land/territory) does not seem to cross these frontiers. The Hupd'äh manage to identify, for example, members of the *dehpuh'tenre*'s clan living in Belém¹⁵, at the mouth of the Amazon. In discussions with the Hupd'äh, on various occasions they stated that they arrived first in their current territory, before the Tukano. Others say they arrived together with the Tukano. It is certain that the Hupd'äh are completely linked to the Tukano in this region and have always lived inside the forest. Nonetheless, when we talked with their neighbours (Desana or Tuyuka), we heard several opinions, amongst which the Desana (from the Cucura *Igarapé*, for example) say that all these Hupd'äh belonged to their grandfathers and now belong to them and that the lands belong to the Desana, and so the Hupd'äh do not have defined lands. They are the ones who decide where a local Hupd'äh group should settle.

I spent a certain time, during one of my visits to the area [1984], with Dui from the Kagn'tenre clan in *Baba'deh* and, in one of our conversations, I was very surprised by what he told me about the lands. He told me at the time that he would get a lot of money to buy the lands from the Desana, their neighbours, as he no longer wanted to work for them. It was difficult to understand this statement and I thought that perhaps because he had traveled, and spent a long time working away from his people, he might be using non-indigenous ideas, such as “buying land”. Above all, I was disconcerted by the fact that this man from *Baba'deh* – and how many others? – did not consider the ownership of land by natural mechanisms, on the level of awareness feasible for an inhabitant of this region, but through the “purchase” through “civilised” legality, in an attitude which inevitably removed him from a whole cultural tradition and historic learning

15 Belém is one of the places that the Hupd'äh identify outside their area. They all know it is located at the mouth of the Amazon and generally ask what it is like.

process. For a number of months his phrase stuck in my mind and whenever possible, I checked with some Desana in the surrounding area to find out how close to reality Dui's wish was.

The Hupd'äh model is closely associated to the forms of mobility and relations maintained with Tukano groups, there being potential for a great variety of forms of territorial occupation. Currently in the Tiquié, for example, there are three Hupd'äh villages on the banks of the river. In all the ethnographic literature on the region we had always seen that the Hupd'äh do not inhabit the banks of the main rivers, but the heads of the smaller ones as a general rule. How then can one explain the case of *Yoyudeh* (Barreira), *Paind'deh Nu* (Mouth of the Umari River) and the most recent case of *Paya'deh* (São Luis). I will mention these cases specifically later on; what we are interested in here is to state that the notion of ownership and the use of a specific territory depends almost exclusively on the relations maintained with the Tukano. And for the Tukano, the Hupd'äh's place continues to be within the forest.

THE TUKANO MODEL AND THE CONCEPT OF YEPA

In this part we are interested in presenting in a succinct manner how the Tukano perceive the land, and their relation with the territory. The observations contained here are the result of reading the available mythology, in addition to observations made during field research.

In Tukano mythology¹⁶ from the Uaupés there is a tremendous consensus over the representation of the world. All the linguistic groups share a single idea of the world and territory. The term *yepa* is used in all the Tukano languages to designate our world, the land¹⁷. One presumes that this concept, or at least the word, is of Arawak origin, as previously mentioned. The term is much broader than one might imagine. It refers to the land, (but not to the soil), the territory, the world, and the universe, and translates a physical and/or geographical reality, and may also encompass "everything organised/created". In other words, it is a spatial, social, economic, linguistic and symbolic place. *Yepa-mahsa* are the people that inhabit this land, without linguistic distinction: all those on the earth. The notion of *yepa* is dissociated from the *mahsa* concept. To sum up, the concept refers to "this land" or to "our land", where we live, and cannot be confused with the "land" of the myths: even if the *mahsa* have existed in that mythical land, they live there with another form, another body, distinct from the form they currently take on the earth.

16 See Kenhiri & Umusin [1980], Hugh-Jones [1979], Bidou [1980], Silva [1993], Buchillet [1983], Saake, Bordigger.

17 To designate earth = soil the Tukano use another term: *di'ta*.

In current language, *yepa* can be restricted to the concept of territory: Tukano Territory, without, however, there being a strong idea of ownership as exists in the *wi' i/maloca*/house concept. Therefore an unlimited territory: everything that exists on the earth, hence the difficulty of many Tukano in understanding the concept of land being reduced as in the example of “indigenous reserves” for them. *Yepa* belongs to the *Yepa-Behkko* (Grandmother of the earth). It was she who gave birth to *Yepa Oan'ke* (land/bone) the creator, the demiurge, the organizer, he who made the things the Tukano possess on the *yepa*. The notion of *yepa* is furthermore brought together with the concept of *wi'i*, which can be translated simply by *maloca*, house. However, the latter is broader and also incorporates the notion of a specific territory, with a particular name. Each *wi'i* is above all a geographical space, delimited and negotiated among the various linguistic groups and amongst the sib of the same linguistic group. It was also a space/territory won through wars. Each linguistic group can tell of the wars (and of the negotiation process) that took place prior to the occupation of a specific site.

In the myth of the origin of the Tukano groups are told a specific number of houses (*wi'i*) and all of them located and nominated throughout the River Negro basin. In other words, each of these houses is associated with an event during the process of transformation and the great journey of the anaconda-canoe. In each of the houses there were episodes, happenings in a mythological time that is related to the present day, explaining the current conditions of existence. In the tale of Umusin & Kenhiri [1980], both Desana from the Tiquié River, they even specify and locate 66 more *wi'i*/houses, all with their own name and referring to an episode with Oan'ke. These houses can generally be found on geographical accidents, a river, stream, or range of hills. One *wi'i* corresponds to a Po'na, in other words, a specific sib, there not being, therefore, a sib with various *wi'i*. Each *wi'i* is also a grouping of people on the *yepa*land. Each *wi'i* possesses a *wi'ioge*, a chief and the first in the hierarchy, who, together with others (*Kamu, Baia*), looks after the box of adornments, the tradition, the knowledge and specialities of each sib. However, *wi'i* is not a simple topographic concept; it contains the idea of a social space, contemplating the inhabitants of a specific geographical place. The designation of a *wi'i* is accompanied by a particular name of a place to mean that that place “has people”.

Since 1984, in the proximities of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, on the road that goes to Cucui, there has been a mixed village where Tukano, Desana and Pira-tapua live. I had the opportunity to talk to a Tukano, Casimiro, an old inhabitant and *wi'ioge* of São Francisco village (*oxta-ti-tha wi'i*) on the Tiquié. For him, the reference point of all his history, not just his personal history, but that of his sib, is linked to São Francisco, the place where he will spend his whole life, even having lived elsewhere for decades, as is the case. There is a deep connection with the site of his old *maloca*. It is common to hear

among the Tukano the memories and stories about the *malocas*. Casimiro also told me that the chief, the *wi'ioge*, was buried in the centre of the *maloca* and the others in the internal compartments where they had their fires.

The current villages of the Tukano groups on the Uaupés, Papuri and Tiquié Rivers are located, in the majority of cases, in the old sites, where the original *malocas* were built.

Today these villages scattered along the rivers follow a pattern, encouraged by the missionaries, of the construction of houses similar to those of the *caboclos*: small, of adobe or wattle and daub, with little ventilation, and accommodating nuclear families or a domestic group. The layout of these houses in the physical space of the village seems to obey the same criterion as the old *maloca*. The difference, then, from a *caboclo* village to a Tukano one, resides mainly in the hierarchical layout of the houses by order of birth (of the men). And also in a symbolic relation associated with the myth of origin of each sib and each linguistic group. Apart from this, there is no noticeable distinction between the method of house construction used today in a *caboclo* village in the lower River Negro and the current Tukano villages on the riverbanks of the Uaupés basin.

Each *maloca* is co-extensive to a single sib, having delimited space. There are certainly formal frontiers, though since these frontiers depend on the interpretation of the creation myth, they can be easily established and removed. They always say that all these lands belong to the inhabitants of the River, which means: to all the *Tukano* [Beksta, 1980]. And the Tukano can live exactly where they want, implying that there is no geographical frontier that delimits the territories, although I have witnessed internal negotiations over the construction of Desana sibs in a place traditionally taken to be that of a Tukano group sib.

If, at one level, at least in their speech, the Tukano say that everything is theirs, at another moment one can perceive a real impediment when members of a certain sib build houses on another sib's site. This helps us to affirm that there are frontiers and rules for the occupation of a place that are still observed to this day; there is a formality, a ritual to be followed. The narration of the territorial occupation of the *Buu-pona* sib, for example, shows us all the procedures for a new occupation. What can be seen is that this model is closely linked to the formation of the sibs, and therefore to the system of descendance and that of hierarchy of the sibs and linguistic groups. One can observe that this model reflects the sibs' hierarchic scale due to the fact that the occupation of more abundant areas, in a given territory, will be under the control of a sib higher up in the hierarchy. The lower sibs, considered servile, are settled in less abundant areas without fish or other natural resources [Goldman 1963]

In 1984, I accompanied the move of the family of a Desana teacher from the mission, from the River Umari, a tributary of the Tiquié, to Pari-Cachoeira, a traditional settlement of the Tukano themselves (the sib Yupuri-Parensipona). This Desana told me that he

had had to negotiate and ask formal permission from the Tukano in Pari-Cachoeira in order to build a house outside the neutral place¹⁸ that exists in Pari-Cachoeira. This type of move, accompanied by the construction of a house, is becoming more and more frequent around the missionary centres in Pari-Cachoeira and Iauaretê; there are even loud complaints from the women, who are obliged to walk for several hours to reach their plantation. In other words, around these missionary centres one can observe a growing number of dwellers from other localities and their plantations are further and further away from their houses.

The Tukano's entire system of orientation functions around the river and it was via the rivers that the occupation of the region took place. In general, the villages are located on the riverbanks at one or two hours walking distance between them. The larger *igarapés*, which are navigable all year round, are also inhabited by the Tukano groups. On the River Umari, below Pari-Cachoeira, on a tributary of the left bank of the Tiquié, for example, there are four Desana villages and one Tukano. It is known as the "river of the Desana". The River Castanho, a tributary of the right-hand bank of the Tiquié, is inhabited mainly by the Tuyuka and – like all the others on the right bank – is thinly populated and provides access to the villages of the YoHupd'äh-Maku. The River Cabari, tributary of the left bank of the Tiquié also has Tuyuka villages and has close ties with the Yohupd'äh-Maku groups.

It is worth observing that the majority of the indigenous population live on the banks of the Tiquié and along its tributaries on the left bank. Also on the Papuri, the concentration of the population occurs on one side, in this case on the tributaries of the right-hand bank. In comparative terms, this «interfluvial» region of the Papuri and Tiquié is more densely populated than the other areas of the hydrographical basin of the Uaupés. The fact that the *igarapés* of the right-hand bank of the Tiquié are thinly populated corroborates the hypothesis that the inhabitants of the Tiquié came down via the *igarapés*, coming from the Papuri. The Tukano occupation of the right-hand bank of the *igarapés* has not in fact happened. One can imagine, for example, that the occupation of the Castanho is the most recent. In conversations with the Tuyuka, from Santa Maria do Castanho, all the Tuyuka from the Wohsediputiro sib, state that they have come from the *igarapé* Cabari, located on the left-hand bank of the Tiquié above Pari-Cachoeira. They also say that their relatives live in that *igarapé*. On the other hand, in conversations with the Tukano from the Thuropona sib, they said that the lands along the Castanho belonged to them. The implication is that they had "authorised" the Tuyuka to occupy that river.

18 Near Pari-Cachoeira there is an area where each village on the Tiquié has a hut where their inhabitants can lodge when they come for the religious celebrations promoted by the Mission.

We can see that the territory used by a certain Tukano clan, and therefore a village, is delimited by natural frontiers, such as an *igarapé*. These frontiers are respected and I never came across incidences of the invasion of territories by other clans. Nonetheless, I have heard many complaints about the invasion of fishing territories. According to the information obtained from the Tukano themselves, the layout of crop-planting areas does not follow any particular criterion, other than belonging to the first to burn the land for planting. No doubt there are other criteria that were not available to me at the time. In reality, the lands that are found behind this village are inappropriate for planting, as they are too low-lying and swamped for a good deal of the year. Each Tukano village occupies a territory composed of forest and rivers. The clearing, where the houses lie, is close to the river bank. Each domestic group's plantations are between a half and one hour from the village. In 1988, climbing the Tiquié from São Gabriel, I stopped in a number of villages of the Tukano groups of the lower Tiquié. During this trip, I discovered, through my wife, who was traveling with me, that the Tukano women were complaining about the distances they had to walk to carry manioc home. I observed, during this same visit, that many Tukano had moved to the other bank of the Tiquié in search of lands for their plantations. I found families in Tukano villages, Boca da Estrada and Barreira, for example, that have their vegetable plots on the bank opposite their village. In fact this kind of complaint made me realize that, with the population growth and the integration of the Tukano in the regional market, there will be a need for more appropriate land for plantations. In that same year of 1988, the region was full of *garimpeiros*, or gold-diggers, Indians and non-Indians, climbing the Tiquié in the direction of the River Traira. As a consequence, the consumption of manioc increased significantly in this same part of the river, making it necessary for the number of plantations to increase.

Information gathered in the region indicates that each village uses an area for planting during a period of two to three years. This use is through the slashing and burning method (*coivara*). After this period, another area is occupied. A Tukano will generally exploit three plantation areas simultaneously, in different stages of maturity. Manioc is the main product that is planted, followed by fruits such as pineapple.

Since the region's indigenous groups have no centralised authority, [the question of] their concept of territoriality becomes an important element for the comprehension of the interethnic relations and their relation to this shared social space. The social and political systems of centralized power have the land as the territory closely linked to the form of exercising power. The land, therefore, is seen as sacred, thus legitimating a specific relation between power and the realm where this power is exercised.

TERRITORIALITY AND MOBILITY: DIMENSIONS AND CONCEPTS

The concept of mobility in ethnological literature has always been associated, in analytical terms, in order to define the characteristics of the movements of hunting and gathering peoples. The works that deal with this question emphasise(d) the hunters and gatherers' movements, using the concept of mobility without, however, giving a more accurate definition of the term that, above all, goes beyond the typological character of movements. The debate posed by Kelly [1992] alerts us about the concept mobility and should receive new elements to clarify the various approaches. The Hupd'äh case could be another case to be incorporated into this discussion that also incorporates the concepts of nomadism, sedentarisation and aspects of movement. This case is illustrative, in the following aspects:

1. Commercial relations between communities where the Hupd'äh serve as casual workers for the neighbouring Tukano;
2. Hunting and the gathering of fruits and other extractivist products as chief economic activity, both for exchange and for subsistence;
3. The maintenance of farming, minimally, for consumption.

These elements are important to understand Hupd'äh mobility, they're not being considered a strictly sedentary group, but maintaining characteristics of sedentary villages, such as their use of vegetable gardens. The Hupd'äh represent, in fact, a special case in studies of mobility. Here we are interested in illustrating how the Hupd'äh movements occur within their territory.

Lee [1968:11] actually states that hunters and gatherers "move around a lot", though without specifying what he understands by "a lot". Ethnological literature from the region also refers to the Hupd'äh as the ones who move around a great deal. We are keen to identify the pattern by which this mobility is oriented, to show that this movement is linked to interethnic relations, a characteristic specific to the Uaupés basin. Through statistic data, now available, it can even be said that groups considered hunters and gatherers move less frequently than some societies considered "sedentary" and crop-growers. Thus to associate mobility as a characteristic of hunting and gathering people would be to narrow the concept in the light of the variety of dimensions present in the day-to-day movements of ethnic groups.

Marcel Mauss [1906], one of the first to use the term mobility to determine movement, associates it, supported by data on the Inuit, with the moral and religious dimension of life. Sahlins, also uses and conditions the concept of mobility to the attitudes of the group in relation to material goods. In the archeologists' analysis [see Kelly, 1992:43] of the settling (or sedentarisation) process, it is emphasized that the reduction of mobility is the result of substantial changes that have been introduced, such as the stocking of

foodstuffs, commerce, internal gender relations and demography that end up redefining the concept of territoriality. The fact is that these notions and concepts¹⁹ require more precision on the meanings of the movements when dealing with ethnic groups of the Uaupés basin, and specifically with respect to the Hupd'äh-Maku.

In the analysis presented by Maurice Godelier on Mbuti Pygmies, three factors are listed that make up the Mbuti system of mobility, that he denominates [1] the “dispersion” of the local group in smaller groups as big as their efficiency in the search for resources permits; [2] “cooperation” among the individuals of the group, according to ages and sex that maximizes potential in the production process; and lastly what he calls [3] “unity”, here also making use of Turnbull’s definition, that affects the composition of the local group at certain moments [Godelier, 1974:1831]. Concluding that these are social conditions, among the Mbuti, that guarantee the reproduction of the production process. One can see that the factors noted by Godelier, from my field observations, are also present in Hupd'äh production. And the movements that the Hupd'äh make are based, mainly, on adaptation to the eco-system, i.e. a better way to exploit the natural resources necessary for their survival. In this sense, mobility necessarily has to do with production. The three elements listed above can be observed within the same Hupd'äh regional group as well as in a local group.

In previous texts on the Hupd'äh, the concept of mobility is also used without, however, more parameters about its utilisation. Howard Reid [1979:96] also adds the dimension of fluidity [from Turnbull, 1966:100-109] to characterise the social system that incorporates a high level of mobility within and between social groups. The author questions the need to distinguish between mobility and fluidity. Reid distinguishes initially two kinds of mobility among the Hupd'äh: what which he calls “long term mobility” and “short term mobility”. For the first he associates the movements of a local group as a whole, that is, when the entire local group moves to set up residence in a new area. The second comprises all the movements made by individuals and/or smaller groups from a local group, in search of resources, production activities. Perhaps the most indicated in the case of the Hupd'äh is to use the terms “residential mobility” and “logistic mobility” according to Binford’s arguments [1990], since it is not the duration of the movements that is at stake but the motives behind each move in their territory. Binford divides the hunting and gathering groups between “foragers” and “collectors” as alternative forms of environmental adaptation. According to the author’s arguments, “collectors” can apparently be considered more sedentary than “foragers”, from the fact that they practice less residential and more logistic mobility.

¹⁹ We have recently seen in discussions on this topic a significant improvement in the specification of these concepts. [Kelly, 1992:43-66]

In summary, a group of hunters-collectors emphasises residential or logistic mobility according to their structure and relation with natural resources and to their forms of adaptation. And here in our case study, the adaptive forms are closely associated to the relations that the Hupd'äh maintain with the Tukano. As a tool of analysis, even without believing that the Hupd'äh can be classified among the classic hunters and gatherers, I prefer to use the concepts of logistic and residential mobility to illustrate the case of the Hupd'äh. Logistic mobility is closely linked to the understanding of the concept of territoriality, the group's internal relations and interethnic relations, in particular with the Tukano groups. The second is connected with the entire group's change of residence, in the case of the Hupd'äh, necessarily linked to better exploitation of natural resources, the question of diseases, sorcery and less to social relations that they maintain with neighbours.

It is interesting to note that the Hupd'äh use two distinct verbs for the actions that denote the search for resources: i) *ko'ai* in the case of seeking food inside the forest, game, gathering or even fishing and ii) *bu'ai* that is closely linked to a certain contractual obligation, working in a Tukano plot, for example. In other words, seeking products previously planted. The two terms can also indicate directions of movement, the first is to the forest and the second indicates the direction of the river bank where the Tukano live or where a vegetable plot is situated.

Traditionally, the Hupd'äh groups, in fact also the Tukano, did not contain more than 100 people in a village. On the Tiquié, for example, among the 64 villages of the Tukano groups, only three have more than 100 people: Pari-Cachoeira, the mission base, Bela Vista and Cunuri. It would seem an ideal number for the exploitation of resources around the village. A community of over 100 gives rise to problems and the over-exploitation of the adjacent areas. The territorial occupation system in the entire Uaupés basin, owing to the state of the land: the poor soils and high acidity of the rivers, occurs with local groups with a small number of inhabitants, generally forming a sib. Thus survival is guaranteed and the optimum exploitation of resources. Verifying the population status among the Tukano groups, as much on the Papuri as the Uaupés, it can be seen that there are virtually no big villages.

Thus incentivating the creation of large villages (as has always been the practice of the missionaries) places at risk the survival of these populations. In the large villages, there is generally difficulty in obtaining food for all in a larger population and contagious diseases spread quickly. The exploitation of land for vegetable plots, close to the villages is faster and the protein reserves disappear in the radius of perambulation from the village. In other words, hunger is more evident in the villages where a population of over 100 people can house at least three different clans, thus favouring internal tensions and disputes. During my periods of field research I have observed that the search for proteins in the form of several kinds of termites, such as the *manivalal kokao* have increased in

recent years. What was previously a supplementary food item is today a necessity, since game and fish have become scarcer in the region.

HUPD'ÄH TERRITORIAL OCCUPATION AND MOBILITY

In order to facilitate comprehension of the forms of spatial organisation among the Hupd'äh, we divided their traditional area into three regions, that we call regional groups. Each regional group has for its frontiers the tributary rivers of the Tiquié, Papuri and Uaupés. However, in this regional division the main factor is existing relations between the various local groups of one region and the relations that they maintain with the Tukano. The division in three units proves more efficient for a closer look at the relations of exchange among Hupd'äh villages and their close neighbours on the river banks. The criterion used for the division in regional groups was mainly preferential relations and the exchange of women among the local groups of a given region. An additional factor is the way in which the Hupd'äh distinguish the variations in dialect among the regional groups. In spatial terms, the majority of villages in a regional group are situated at a distance of between one and three hours' walk from each other. This distance becomes considerable, and may reach even more than 12 hours when a "frontier" of a regional group is crossed, however, in general these paths are known but little used.

In terms of the analysis, the regional group is observed as a unit, a delimited space where local groups interact and move logistically within the same area, thus obeying a model connected to the forms of utilisation of resources. News arrives through the individuals that come by to visit relatives. A regional group is always well informed over the movements of the members of a neighbouring regional group, as well as another local group. The paths (*hup-tiu*) necessarily go through all the Hupd'äh villages and interconnect all the local groups. The majority of local Hupd'äh groups are situated at a distance of between 15 minutes and 2 hours walk from a Tukano village. To arrive at a Hupd'äh village by river, one inevitably uses a path of access that runs from a Tukano village, or along an *igarapé*. Since the Hupd'äh do not use canoes, the latter option is not common. Moreover, these streams are so small that the use of canoes becomes virtually impracticable during the summer months when they may even dry up. The Hupd'äh are distributed in small production and consumption units that constitute *kaka'a*, or fire groups. This concept cannot be associated with a nuclear family, since generally there are other people present who are in some way related. The fire used for cooking their food, is the visible focus of each "fire group". Several fire groups may be housed «under the same roof».

The relation of a given member of a regional group with another effectively occurs through the exchange of women. The tendency is for marriage to occur within the regional group, although there are exchanges among the three regional groups. Even though the ideal model is that of patrilineal and patrilocal descent, where marriages are

prescribed as bilateral crossed cousins, generally the *FZD*, this model is far from being the general rule and other marriages are accepted consensually by the Hupd'äh. Nonetheless, I found several men who have been living for years with their fathers-in-law, in the wife's village. The rule of patrilocality is not so rigid and is easily accepted in almost all the local groups. Here we enter the discussion of models proposed by Lévi-Strauss, in his modelistic scale, of Wienerian inspiration (Norbert Weiner in Cybernetics), where he joins, in two groups – mechanical and statistical – the scale of phenomena that involve social structures and relations, giving priority to the tool for experiencing reality (the model itself) over the empirical reality itself, for the purposes of methodology. He is moreover, the very anthropologist who alerts us over the existence of forms of an intermediate nature that escape from the mechanical pattern (and here the Hupd'äh's patrilineal and patrilocal form of organization(al) is included) and reach the statistical variant, as is our specific case, in the flexibility of accepting an organizational form where the graduation from what is utterly forbidden goes through levels of cultural rationalisation to become general consensus.

Their traditional territory exercises a role of infinite importance for the Hupd'äh, and all the movements occur in or around the three social spheres, or instances, closely linked to their cosmic vision and to social relations, where these three worlds can seem distinct from each other: i) the forest, where the various hunting spots and sites where resources are extracted are situated; ii) the clearing, where the houses of a local group are built: the village, and iii) the banks of the rivers where the Tukano villages are. These three distinct areas represent, in reality, for the Hupd'äh, three ways of life, three distinct forms of behaviour.

The world of the river, where the Tukano take on the role of leading actors, is where external resources can be found, in exchange for work. These are commercial relations. For a Hupd'äh it is from this direction that all illnesses and ills also come. The behaviour of a Hupd'äh in this social space is almost always of total submission to every, and any, order. They have a place in this world, given by the Tukano: that of servants; the "Pohsa (Hupd'äh) were created to serve", the Tukano say. There is a door in the houses that they use, a place to sit, a place to sleep, a formal social etiquette, followed by both Tukano and Hupd'äh. Irrespective of the person's age, in this space where these two apparently antagonistic groups interact the scenario is defined and the dialogues are short and learnt by all.

It is rare that the Hupd'äh visit a Tukano village without an invitation or work contract. The opposite is not true. The Tukano go to a Hupd'äh village whenever they want, at times merely for an outing or to collect things, such as smoked meat or fish. During my field research, I was able to observe the behaviour of the Tukano in both contexts. When a Tukano approaches a Hupd'äh village, the message is passed amongst them (*woh'deh nenen!*: "the Tukano are coming!") On many occasions, I saw men or

women running into the forest, either to hide, or to conceal some piece of meat that they didn't want the Tukano to take. I never saw a Tukano leave a Hupd'äh village empty-handed. On occasions my knapsack served to hide smoked fish or meat.

Relations of the Hupd'äh with a specific Tukano village are long-term, if not permanent. It is a working relationship, potentially considered as [part of] the patron/client model. These relations occur at an individual level or with the fire group. When literature identifies the Maku as the Indians of the forest and the Tukano as the Indians of the River, it must be said that these oppositions correspond, above all, to two ways of utilising the forest based on two different technical and economic systems. From this opposition between the two ways of perceiving and representing the same means, experiencing opposite operating pressures and they exercise distinct and contrasting effects on nature. On the one hand, the Hupd'äh's work is one of exploitation and of benefiting from natural resources, without major transformation, as distinct from the Tukano, farmers who transform, or make prior use of nature, creating the big manioc plantations. This also implies saying that the Tukano's practical needs are much greater than those of the Hupd'äh. From there, one can go on to see that the Hupd'äh's strategic needs are much greater than the Tukano's. The social relations between them can also be inferred as being, to some degree, complementary, of dependence and interdependence. One side needs the other to guarantee the survival of both in this particular eco-system.

In the forest, the Hupd'äh feel very much at home. That would appear to be the environment where there are no external threats, where they find all the resources necessary to go for long periods without having to return to the banks of the main rivers. Near the waters, they feel outsiders, which is understandable since it is on the riverbanks that the Tukano live. Therefore, there, they do not feel at home, staying for the minimum time possible. Generally, their main fear is of contagion with some disease. In the clearing, where their houses are, behaviour has its own rules. The clearing is the privileged place for the ceremonies and social exchanges with the other Hupd'äh. In 1984, when I went with several Hupd'äh to Tukano villages, I could see that my traveling companions changed their attitude when we approached one. And, very often, this malaise was visible.

The field studies indicated various kinds and shapes of Hupd'äh villages. The temporary character is always present. In all the variations there is a repeated pattern: access to the Hup trails, and proximity to a small stream where water for domestic use can be obtained. Basically, there are three types of organisation of their space:

1. **INSIDE THE TUKANO PLOT.** These camps are erected when a local Hupd'äh group works for a local Tukano group. This means that they will stay for months and there are work commitments that we could consider semi-permanent;
2. **AWAY FROM THE TUKANO.** The majority of local Hupd'äh groups build

their villages well away from Tukano villages. We can see virtually permanent houses, though the majority of the dwellings are so precarious that they give the impression of being much more a camp than a village. Some villages conserve the houses in the style of the big *maloca*, though without walls. In this case, one or two houses unite several fire groups. The behaviour of these Hupd'äh, who stay totally distant from the Tukano groups, is much freer and they maintain a cycle of festivals and ceremonies. It is in these villages that the big celebrations are generally held. And countless fire groups will pass through them, for sometimes more than seven days, working, collecting *coca* leaves and joining in the festivals.

3. MISSION-VILLAGES/VILLAGES-MISSION. These are the local groups that maintain permanent contact with the missionary activities in the region. These villages also exceed the population average of a local Hupd'äh group. Ton Haia (Serra dos Porcos), the largest in population of all the mission-villages, in 1996 sheltered around 300 people. This number of inhabitants also exceeds the average of a Tukano village. I heard, on several occasions, both through the missionaries and from the Indians themselves, that in these villages there was a lot of fighting, and disputes ending in death. The attempt to agglutinate this population forming unreal villages, joining in the same group antagonistic clans and separate families is a potential stage for inter-clanic fights. Disputes in varying degree caused by the pressure of populations over resources is the result of competition among local populations, and can explain the greatest characteristic of social life, in addition to the size, their remaining in villages and political models, alliances and wars, having divided those who seek an ecological/environmental explanation.

Julian Steward [1949] argues that the small size of indigenous communities in the Amazon reflects the situation of the lands that, in this case, are poor, not sustaining extensive agriculture. And that these kinds of communities were the form discovered that truly guaranteed resources, with the use of wars. Meggers [1971:18] also stresses the poverty of the soils in the tropical forest. The pressure of the local population could be felt even in low population density, unless people were to live in small, moveable communities.

It is worth arguing that the opposition farmers/hunters seems to us to be the principle of the hierarchy, to the point of being confused with the opposition superior/ inferior. The forms of adapting to the eco-system are also favourable in the symbolism in which they involve social relations in this context of hierarchy. In indigenous societies, social inequalities are at any rate the organisation(al) method for an economic equality. Hence the Hupd'äh's strategic need to exchange their labour in order to import means of

production necessary for their subsistence, such as: manioc, chilies, salt, manioc graters, ovens, cartridges, lead, gunpowder, clothes. The exchange of their labour does not constitute a marginal activity or an occasional appendix to Hupd'äh functioning, but a strategic element in their social, political and economic structure. At the extreme, we can state that this society cannot subsist without this kind of exchange.

The occupational model of the indigenous peoples in the Uaupés basin cannot, as I stated earlier, be explained simpler through forms of adapting to the environment. This model, present throughout the region, has its explanation mainly in the social and political organization(al) of these peoples and this is what determines the forms of exploiting natural resources. The different ethnic groups, with distinct technologies, themselves established the rules for living together in this shared territory and, in our understanding, this operational model for exploiting the different environments (for example: forest and riverbanks) obeys precisely - not only the different cosmic and mythological visions of this territory - but the hierarchical and specific relations of each of this region's indigenous groups.

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