

The odyssey of Vanessa Lea's images of the Mẽbêngôkre: steps towards creating a digital multimedia archive¹

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Abstract

This article analyses some of the difficulties inherent in the use of photography in research conducted by social anthropologists in the twenty-first century, focusing on the specific case of research undertaken by Vanessa Lea with the Mëbêngôkre (Kayapó) since 1978. Brazilian legislation concerning the use of images of Indigenous peoples is both ambiguous and problematic. The potential for the use of photography for pedagogic purposes is hampered by the lack of incentives and the poor conservation of existing materials. Snap shots of today metamorphose almost instantly into historical documentation and provide a dimension that cannot be replicated or substituted by the written word.

Keywords:

Photographs;
Mëbêngôkre;
Archives; Legislation;
Rights.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa algumas das dificuldades inerentes ao uso de fotografia nas pesquisas realizadas por antropólogos sociais no século XXI, enfocando o caso específico da pesquisa feita por Vanessa Lea junto com os Mëbêngôkre (Kayapó) a partir de 1978. A legislação brasileira referente ao uso das imagens dos povos indígenas é ao mesmo tempo ambígua e problemática. O potencial que existe para o uso de fotografias para fins pedagógicos é dificultado pela falta de incentivos e pela má conservação dos materiais que existem. Uma foto tirada hoje se transforma quase instantaneamente em documentação histórica, e fornece uma dimensão que não pode ser replicada nem substituída pela palavra escrita.

Palavras-chave:

Fotografias;
Mëbêngôkre; Acervos;
Legislação; Direitos.

It is important to emphasize at the outset that this text is directed towards a future project rather than making a balance of something already achieved. Its aim therefore is to initiate a dialogue with similar projects concerning the use of photography in anthropological research.¹ I open with a picture of the fire that destroyed the Museu Nacional in 2018.

One image can communicate a thousand words, as the adage goes. It sums up the undervaluation by the Brazilian far right-wing State and a percentage of its citizens of the legacy of Brazil's first peoples. The only record, in the form of artefacts, of an unknown number of extinct Indigenous groups went up in flames, eradicating all that was left of them except for their genes, in some cases incorporated into the non-indigenous Brazilian population.



figure 1. Fire at Museu Nacional, 2018³. Source: Image by Ricardo Morães, Reuters.

The main official concern in relation to the museum has been to restore the architectural splendour of this former royal palace, as if that could compensate for the irremediable loss of the indigenous collections it once housed, including the anthropological collection of Mëbêngôkre artifacts donated to the museum by the anthropologists Terence Turner and Joan Bamberger in the 1960s. For years I had been planning to travel to Rio de Janeiro to photograph it, especially one or two specimens of crystal lip disks, an artifact I never came across during my fieldwork with the Mëbêngôkre, which begun in 1978, in the state of Mato Grosso.

When I was a doctoral student at the museum in the late 1970s and early 1980s, all that was left of the feather-work, when I visited the

1. A version of this text (Who's afraid of PUCK) was presented at the online conference of SALSA (Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America), 2021, organized in Virginia, USA, in the panel "Objects and Voices in a Virtual World." The author is grateful to Genner Llanes Ortiz and Leandro Matthews Cascon, both from the University of Leiden, for hosting this paper in their panel at SALSA. In this version, the PUCK program ended up being left aside, contrary to my initial intention, exemplifying that the social anthropology of Lowland South America has not yet mobilized interest in integrating Kinship software into its research. In sum, there was nothing on kinship at the SALSA conference.

2. After having written this text I found an article by Clarice Cohn (2020) about returning her ethnographic material to the Xicrin (another northern Jê people), with various points in common with the present article. It is noteworthy that at a time of much talk of transparency, the Kamayurá of the Upper Xingu, who obtained finance for a project of theirs with Itaú bank, instructed their anthropological mediator (Luísa Valentini) not to allow others access to their project. I was eager to compare it with my project.

3. To me this image, from the internet, evoked spirits of Indians jutting out defiantly above the flames from within the building.

Mêbêngôkre collection, was the central shaft of the feathers. This makes it clear that neglect of the indigenous heritage, due to lack of funding, is nothing new in Brazil.



figure 2. Map of Terras Indígenas (TIs) Mëbêngôkre. Source: Lea (2012), inside cover.

The collection of publications and other documents related to the Mẽbêngôkre language was also destroyed in that fire, as was the original copy of my doctoral thesis, previously digitalized by the IFCH library at UNICAMP. When I arrived at the museum in 1977 there were cabinets containing skulls in the corridors. One day they disappeared so I know not what became of them, nor whose they were. It is ironical that anthropology labelled other peoples as head-hunters.

Around 2020, the Wenner-Gren Foundation held a seminar concerning projects committed to the peoples that social anthropologists work with. In Brazil, that commitment is taken for granted, as is collaborative research with indigenous interlocutors.

The Mẽtyktire subgroup, with whom most of my research has been carried out, frequently request me to send them images of their relatives, especially those deceased, to allow their children and grandchildren to see, and thus in a sense get to know their grandparents and other dead relatives. People used to ask for printed photographs, ideally framed, but plastification was a good alternative as it was impossible to travel to the field with glass frames, and paper never lasts long in the village setting.

In 2011, I copied a selection of photographs onto a computer at the NGO Instituto Raoni, Colíder, Mato Grosso, but they were soon lost. Nowadays people store such images on mobile phones or memory sticks, and occasionally on computers. Memory sticks are owned individually being considered “*particular*”, hence not shared with other people, something that is cumbersome when distributing images to all interested parties.



figure 3. Book cover. Source: Lea (2012).

My monograph (Figure 3), published in Portuguese in 2012, which contains some of my images of the Mẽtyktire, divided the author's rights equally between the aforementioned NGO and myself, in the attempt to dissipate the illusion that anthropologists grow rich with the immaterial property acquired during the course of fieldwork. A considerable number of books, sent by the publisher, Edusp, was supposedly distributed to all the Mẽtyktire schools, besides individuals involved in my research, but as tends to happen in such circumstances, many people complained that they had not received the book, and the

teachers requested me to send more copies, each one weighing a kilo, as if it were analogous to plucking lemons off a tree. The university editor can take me to court if I distribute the book digitally; such contradictory interests seem irreconcilable.

The saga of my photographic collection (slides and photographs) demonstrates that a digital archive is not a project for the faint-hearted. In 1983, I had a photographic exhibition together with my fellow doctoral student, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, at the museum of art (MASP) in São Paulo and the modern art museum (MAM) in Rio de Janeiro. Since then, my images have rarely seen the light of day for reasons which will become apparent in the following narrative of their wanderings.

In 1998, when asked for an image for a book cover on ethnomathematics, I discovered that my slide collection, composed of around 776 images, had fungus. There was no payment for the image on the cover, relating to a chapter of mine on geometric patterns in that book, nor was I given any say in how it was edited. When I broached the issue of remuneration for the indigenous people involved, the publisher, Global, informed me that it would ditch the image if I were to insist on payment to the Mëtyktire or to myself. Consequently, the boy in question was “decapitated” – his face does not appear in the image (nº 4) as an obvious strategy to avoid payment.

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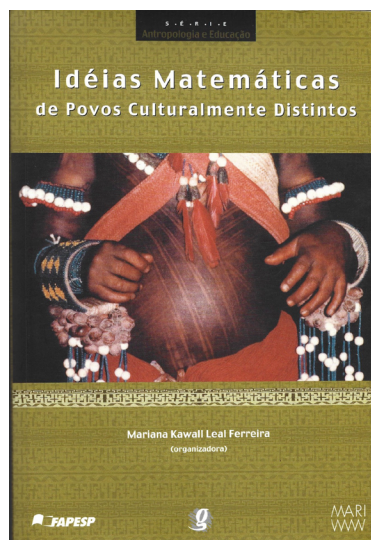


figure 4. Cover of a book on indigenous mathematics with the image of the person's face removed. Source: Lea (2002).

Lacking the means to climatize and store the slides in adequate conditions I decided to donate them to the Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth

(AEL), UNICAMP. I made my own contract, thinking I did not need a lawyer, nor did I have the resources to pay one. I did manage to obtain resources for digitalizing this material, some of it dating back to 1977. The AEL contract permitted the public consultation of the slides; established that they could not be reproduced for use on the internet; that my authorization was necessary if any were to be published; and that they could not be used for commercial ends.

In December 1913, I consulted to the Director of the Museu do Índio, José Carlos Levinho, in Rio de Janeiro, about the possibility of donating my remaining negatives (totalling around 1.397 images) to the museum to be digitalized in high and in low resolution, so that the Mëtyktire could receive copies of all the material without needing a large amount of storage space. Despite the museum's collection being of national importance, leaving the originals there would require me to travel to Rio de Janeiro from São Paulo, at my own cost, if needing access to my own material.

In 2014, I had a meeting at the AEL archive to discuss the possible donation of these negatives, to accompany the already existing slides. I was then informed that the university required a new contract as it wanted the archive to make all its collections available online, because people no longer wanted to incur the costs of travel, accommodation, and meals to consult material in the university archive. When refusing to comply I was asked at AEL why I had allowed some of my images to be published in my book (2012). I explained about the shared author's rights with the Mëtyktire.

To my surprise, the AEL archive had no knowledge of the legislation (Portaria 177, 16/2/2006) relating to the protection of indigenous rights concerning images, drawings and recordings, and demanding a written contract, adding that the indigenous community can subsequently cancel authorization at any time if it generates conflict. This legislation was transmitted to the university Attorney general which replied (18/6/14), concerning the possibility of an additional donation, reiterating the requirement of public access to all archive material, stating that it lacks mechanisms for controlling the reproduction of images by those who consult the archive, and of subsequent use by third parties. I was asked whether I had a written authorization from individuals, the community and FUNAI for having made the images and for using them. I have been attempting to obtain an

audience with the attorney's office to discuss this matter ever since, without success.

I considered contacting the Moreira Salles Institute in São Paulo to see if they would be interested in the material. It possesses high quality equipment and abundant staff. However, that plan was abandoned upon discovering that one must abdicate all rights to material donated or sold to them.

Despite having abandoned the idea of approaching the Instituto Moreira Sales, it was clear that conditions there are very different to those of AEL, UNICAMP. AEL lacked staff to digitalize the collection, informing me that I would have to apply for money elsewhere to do that. The impoverishment and dilapidation of Brazilian public universities has been an ongoing process for decades by the lobby striving to privatize them.

Sill in 2014, considering the distance of about 100 km from the university to my home, I approached the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), in São Paulo, as the ideal place to store the material, that until then had been kept in a metal cabinet at my home. The material had already been digitalized and copied to DVDs, but when I got around to accessing the DVDs one of them was blank, and the firm that had digitalized the images had already removed the collection from its computer. The plan was for ISA to redigitize the material, in return for permission to use the images in its publications and online.

As it seemed desirable to have all my material in one place, I considered cancelling the donation of the slide collection to AEL, but I was informed that this would probably be unacceptable to the university. It then became apparent that I had been naïve and rash to write a contract without legal support. In a conversation with my fellow anthropologist Viveiros de Castro, after a photographic exhibition of his at SESC, São Paulo, he recommended not reaching an agreement with any institution without consulting a lawyer.

ISA wanted me to use their standard contract and they did not wish to be responsible for the permanent storage of the original 35 ml negatives. Their contract specified that material in its archive would continue to be used by ISA for an indefinite period, even after the death of the donator. ISA would not be responsible for the illegal use of images, or for the violation of the rights of images by third parties. In the view of this NGO, it would not be wise to have duplicate copies of

the collection at the Museu do Índio, because if any image were to be used improperly, it would be impossible to discover where it had been obtained, and ISA had already suffered legal action.

I decided to consult a lawyer independently before signing the contract, wanting to ensure the rights of my daughter to my material after my death. The first lawyer consulted, in 2015, who turned out to be one of the main specialists in author's rights in São Paulo, was so expensive that I went to a second lawyer. She insisted on the need for a clause relating to a definite time-period, like five years, that could be renewed indefinitely. She was preparing two contracts, one for UNICAMP, concerning the slides, and another for ISA, concerning the negatives, with the preliminary drafts going backwards and forwards, to ISA and to me, without finalization.

In May 2017, I was informed that ISA had decided that it did not need any more photographs and it was reorganizing its space so I should immediately withdraw my collection. I quickly turned to the Laboratory of Sound & Images (LISA) at USP, and informally entrusted it with 1.586 items, signing a letter stating that the material was to be withdrawn by the end of November that same year. Years later I was reminded about the time limit, having forgotten.

During the month of July 2019, I spent considerable time at LISA trying to match up the digitalized images with their respective negatives, noting which had been overlooked in the digitization process, changing some of the material in which they were stored and beginning the process of cataloguing. It was much more time consuming than I had planned.

I was greatly aided by one of LISA's staff, Leonardo Rovina Fuzer, who made me contact copies of the negatives to facilitate identifying and organizing them. I agreed to leave a digital copy of the collection at LISA, having decided to store the originals at AEL together with the slides. I was offered a contract at LISA, organized by the USP's attorneys, that recommended conceding full rights to the university. I was unwilling to sign a contract without consulting a lawyer on my behalf. One who I contacted informally suggested that the best option was to concede custody, with permission for use, exclusively for educational purposes, without abdicating my rights to decide how the material was to be used, as one of the sample contracts had mentioned.

In the last meeting at AEL, before the pandemic, a further attempt was made to organize a meeting with the university attorney,

once more to no avail. The attempt to have a look at my digitized images also failed because AEL was unable to open Apple files, the format in which they had been stored on an external disk at LISA for my personal use. The deadlock prevails, but I was informed by AEL that it accepts custody rather than an outright donation, something which I had not been informed of previously.

The consultations with lawyers did provide some information that may be significant for social anthropology. The legislation is retroactive, despite being a “portaria”, rather than a law.

Upon enquiring how a colleague in Rio de Janeiro was able to publish photographs in one of her publications (Lagrou, 2009), I was informed that the grounds of the Museu do Índio, where the photographs were taken, are considered public space and as such, not susceptible to the subject's rights. One may then ask whether the same logic applies to photographs taken in the patio of an Indigenous village. Another colleague published outside of Brazil various richly illustrated books of images (Verswijver 1992a; 1992b; 1995; 1996), and more recently (2020) published in Geneva a beautifully illustrated anthropology book on the history of the Kararaô, a Mëbêngôkre subgroup. Supposedly each country follows its own jurisdiction, a conundrum that requires better understanding.

Upon retiring from UNICAMP in 2014, a plan was discussed with a cultural producer, concerning a book of my images, to be produced with Mëtyktire women as curators. After learning of two books of images already in the pipeline (Stuckert, 2022; Albarello, in preparation), besides Demarchi and Oliveira (2015), it seemed excessive to produce another book. The one by Stuckert was published in 2022; the other is at a standstill.⁴

According to an informal legal consultation, wherever my images end up it should be specified that I do not assume responsibility for the clearance of the subject's rights, something that I do not possess, them having been made prior to the existing legislation. The institutions with which I have negotiated have refused to assume responsibility for rights of the subject of the images, despite them enjoying far more legal support than myself as the author of the images.

AEL wanted to make use of some of the images in its publications, blithely suggesting that I should consult the subjects of the images to obtain consent. Not only do I lack contact with people in Gorotire, a

4. Antonio Guerreiro and I each wrote texts for the Stuckert book, without remuneration.

village I visited in 1983, to write a text that accompanies the photographs taken by Miguel Rio Branco for the *National Geographic* magazine (1984), but the Mëtyktire themselves have now split up into numerous villages, and many individuals and families have since moved away to other Mëbêngôkre areas.

In 1995, I made a series of images of a child being painted, to exemplify the geometric art created exclusively by Mëbêngôkre women. Shortly afterwards a scandal arose in the USA or UK concerning a woman who had photographed her own child naked. The phenomenon of paedophilia has made me avoid using this series after their partial publication in 2002 (in the above-mentioned chapter on geometrical designs).

A member of ISA informed me that some indigenous peoples are becoming averse to images of nudity because it is increasingly associated with primitiveness. One must add that the evangelical tsunami in Brazil also has a significant part to play in what could be termed neo-puritanism. It is noteworthy that according to James Banner (the son of the late missionary Horace Banner), Robin Hanbury-Tennison, one of the founding members of Survival International in London, criticized Banner for blacking out the genitalia on some of his photographs of the Mëbêngôkre. According to James, his father was unconcerned by nudity, but he “censored” some of his material due to the shock it incurred among his parishioners in north-west England.

This dilemma raises interesting questions. If some indigenous peoples increasingly reject the nudity displayed in former times, then



figure 5. Beriberi (now deceased) spinning cotton. Source: Lea, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth (AEL).

what are we to do with images taken in the past, paint in fig leaves? Furthermore, is nudity an issue from birth onwards, from adolescence, or from adulthood? I have even thought of blurring out faces to express my frustration as the author of images condemned to a legal limbo.

I was not infrequently requested to take photographs of people during fieldwork, but only after they had prepared themselves as they thought fit. UNICAMP's attorney office stated in a document that I should know in what circumstances I took photographs; I obviously do, but the current legislation does not take that into account.

Many of the people I photographed have since died, like Beriberi, seen here spinning cotton. I carefully avoided showing photographs of two of my deceased Mëtyktire "brothers" to their parents. However, during the latter's absence from the village in 2011, my other siblings were quite adamant about seeing images of their dead brothers, such as Tedje, Ropni's closest son and potential successor (boy on left of image 6).



figure 6. Group of boys prepared for the maize ritual. Source: Lea, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth (AEL).

A digital archive for use in the villages would entail the Mëbêngôkre deliberating over who should have access to what in order to avoid upsetting the relatives of the dead. The administrative and financial coordinator of the Instituto Raoni, in Mato Grosso, Edson Araceli Santini, told me that one family had requested a monthly minimum wage if a dead relative's photograph was to remain on display; it was promptly removed.

When a person dies, who are his/her legal successors – children, siblings, nephews and nieces, grandchildren? The Mëbêngôkre's kinship terminology is classified as Omaha, whereby the logic is totally

different to the Esquimo type that characterizes hegemonic Brazilian society (more details in Lea, 2012).

A buzzword during the SALSA conference in 2021 (where this paper was first presented) and elsewhere is currently “decoloniality”, but I have heard no one extend this to combating the enforced use of the national kinship terminology in indigenous schools. Most non-indigenous teachers think it is a mere matter of translation, as in the equivalence between “tree” in English and “árvore” in Portuguese. The Brazilian press customarily interprets every death of a Mëtyktire as concerning a “grandson” of Ropni, when it is untrue. Similar lack of mutual comprehension occurred during the visit of Mëtyktire elderly men to identify images taken by the late photographer Jesco Puttkamer, at PUC, Goiânia, as could be inferred from the preparations for the ensuing publication (see Lea, 2017).

The lawyers consulted told me that I had raised complex issues which would require further investigation, because specialists in authors’ rights generally deal with images of celebrities, the infringement of the rights of songwriters and such like, not cases like mine. The main institution for financing research in the state of São Paulo, FAPESP, does not include lawyers’ fees among its standard items, despite this being increasingly necessary for social anthropologists, many of whom have simply given up taking photographs.

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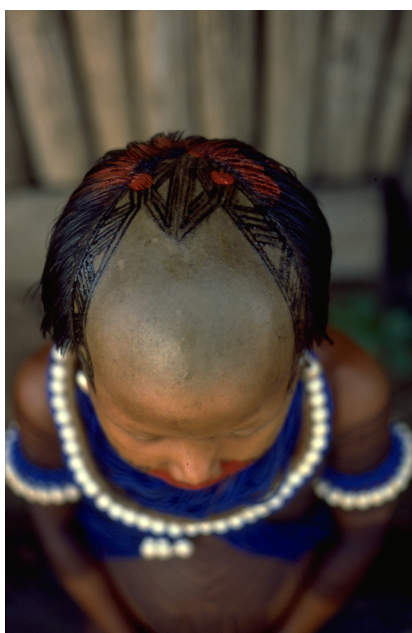


figure 7. The decorated head of a child. Source: Lea, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth (AEL).



figure 8. Pekan seen from behind, wearing a feather adornment that constitutes one of his prerogatives. Source: Lea, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth (AEL).

Talking to the lawyers it became clear that what constitutes a portrait is somewhat nebulous, as is the frontier between public and private space. Strathern (1999: 29 and *passim*) once described a feather Hagen headdress, in Papua New Guinea, as a portrait of its owner, mapping the relationships that enabled the making of the headdress.

The legal interpretation is linked to the possibility of identifying the person photographed, but this differs according to the viewer. I have wondered whether omitting the eyes, as in image 7, still constitutes a portrait, thinking of the eyes as the doors to the soul in Euro-American thinking.

There is not space here to do justice to the literature on images in anthropology (as do LISA researchers and others). Images can



figure 9. Iretjtx (who died years ago). Source: Lea, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth (AEL).



figure 10. Non identified woman carrying wood. Source: Lea, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth (AEL).



figure 11. A group of women in the *kwàrà kangô* ritual around 1995. Source: Lea, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth (AEL).



figure 12. One of the candidates in the Miss Kayapó beauty contest in the village of Kôkrajmoro in 2019. Source: Lea, personal archive.



figure 13. Boy diving into the river Xingu from a tree in the 1970s. Source: Lea, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth (AEL).

be used for a range of purposes, including pedagogic ones. Which images have value is evidently not merely an aesthetic question; they can be informative, even investigative. In a way somewhat analogous to Paulo Freire's key words (1967, 1970), images could stimulate discussion of a variety of issues, such as increasing obesity, something practically absent in the past (as exemplified in image 8); gender issues; the division of labour (images 5, 9 and 10) etc. The range of topics seem infinite.



figure 14. Area for bathing and for fetching water in the village of Gorotire, 1983. Source: Lea, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth (AEL).

5. More information concerning this issue is available in the online video at (https://youtu.be/Yzi_5Ay8kk4 consulted 24/11/22).

Things are changing rapidly as images can demonstrate and as the Mëtyktire keep telling me.

In the 1970s and 1980s the children used to spend hours playing in the river Xingu, such as the image of a boy at jumping off a tree branch into the water (nº 13). This image is followed by that of a group of women at a water point in the village of Gorotire, 1983 (nº 14), with barbed wire for keeping away the cattle, introduced by FUNAI to promote “development”. It was a health hazard to bathe in the river Fresco next to the village of Gorotire due to mercury contamination from nearby goldmining. Nearly four decades later, Dr. João Paulo Botelho Vieira Filho, from UNIFESP, continues to find heavy metal among the Xicrin of Cateté (close relatives of the Gorotire-Mëbêngôkre), from the Onça-Puma mine in the Vale do Níquel.⁵

The following image (nº 15) is a portrait of a Mëbêngôkre taken by Horace Banner, harking back to the theme of the destruction, this time of photographic collections.

Neither James Banner, nor I have resources or personnel to digitize Banner's photographic archive, or his diaries. I appealed to Daniela Peluzo, an ethnologist at the University of Kent at Canterbury, UK, where James worked and continues to reside. She contacted the audio-visual department, but nothing ensued.

Banner was not just any old missionary but one largely responsible for preventing the Gorotire Kayapó from dispersing and being transformed into wage labour. He published myths at UCLA, USA,



figure 15. Unidentified portrait photographed by Horace Banner, no date. Source: James Banner, Horace Banner's archive, UK.

besides various articles (1952; 1957; 1978, 1961), and was cited by Lévi-Strauss (1964). His archive is doomed to further decay and eventual extinction if no one can be found to research and preserve it, and soon there will be no Mëbêngôkre left alive who is able to identify those in the photographs. Many of my own slides are considerably damaged, an apt metaphor for the lack of institutional support in Brazil once the researcher has obtained the doctoral diploma. The fire at the Cinemateca in São Paulo, in 2021, is another reminder of the fate of Brazil's cultural heritage.

Anthony Seeger (my ex-doctoral supervisor) asked at the SALSA presentation what I would recommend to young students going to the field today. I noted that one of my doctoral students refrained from using images of individuals who were non cisgender, one of the themes of her study, due to prejudice in the community where the research was carried out.

It is fascinating to compare Rattray's books on the Ashanti (1923, 1927), containing a wealth of images, with ethnographies being published today. Film footage does not make photography obsolete; more discussion is needed concerning the outcome of the present day relative photographic abstinence by social anthropologists.

At the aforementioned SALSA conference, in another panel, the anthropologist Beth Conklin showed an image from the Magazine *Cruzeiro*, of the Wari (Paaka Nova) when first contacted around 1961 (nº 16).

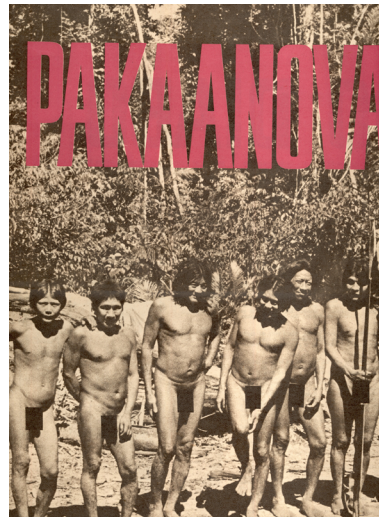


figure 16. Image from the magazine *O Cruzeiro*, 1961. Source: Courtesy of Beth Conklin.

The analysis of images such as this goes beyond the limits of the present text but deserves to be undertaken, and it seems to me that the effect produced by black rectangles covering penises makes the latter appear more menacing than in natura.

The main conclusion of this article is that the increasing judicialization of the use of photography has abandoned social science researchers to their fate; they must face this issue without any legal support or even advice. It is problematic to project Euro-American ideas of the divide between the public and private spheres onto other peoples, and the issue of inheritance rights concerning images is equally complex. The question of nudity also raises a host of questions.

The aesthetic quality of images from fieldwork is not necessarily what is most important; their documentary and historic value may be uppermost, depending on the context. During a recent visit of two Mëtyktire to my home they were particularly interested in my images of men wearing beeswax headdresses, as they regretted that they were no longer being made, and a Mëtyktire woman recently phoned me requesting images of ceremonies that took place when I was in the field, with a similar concern over what is being lost.

In the future I hope to be able to integrate my published database (2020) with genealogies (image 18), and images of the layout of the villages where my research was done (image 19); digital images of the occupants of each house (image 20); images and recordings of people.

[illegible]

6. Here and in the following two images each colour corresponds to a specific matrihouse, or to simplify this in the present context, to a matrilineal descent line.

figure 17. Excerpt from Lea's dataset publication, 2020. Source: Lea, personal archive - names anonymised in the online version.

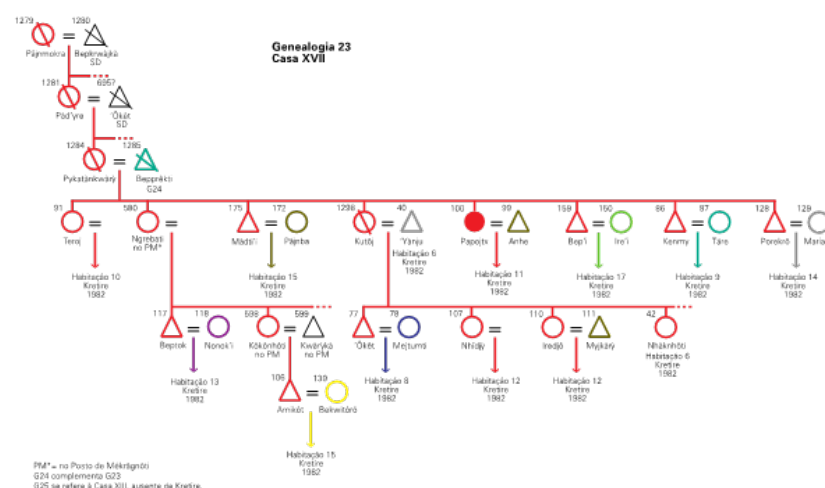


figure 18. Partial genealogy of Papojtx, ego of a matrihouse⁶. Source: Lea, 2012: 458.

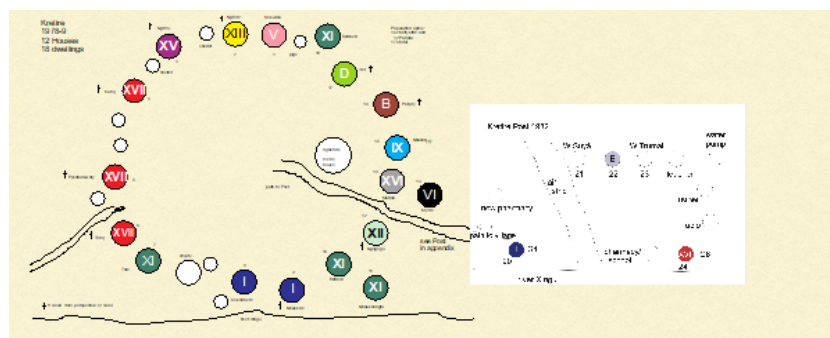


figure 19. Village layout in Kretire and administrative Post 1978-9. Source: Village, Lea, 2012: 56; Post Lea's personal archive.

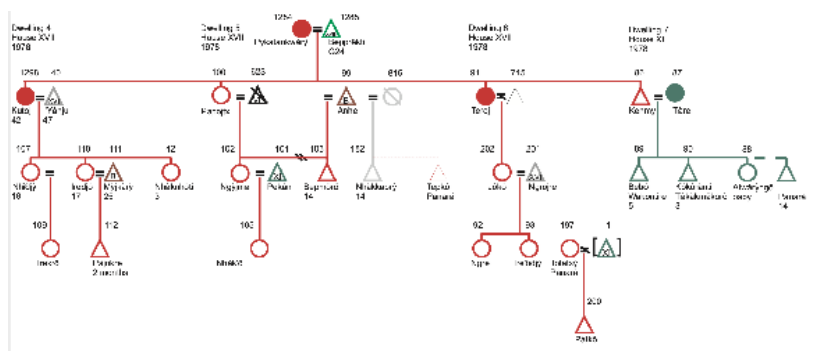


figure 20. Diagram of the inhabitants of four dwellings in the village of Kretire, 1978. Source: Lea, personal archive.



figure 21. Raoni carving a pipe in the men's house. Source: Lea, Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth (AEL).

If these items could be used to construct pedagogical and digital material, it could be used in Mëtyktire schools as a window into their post-contact past and a portrait of some of their ancestors, besides living and deceased relatives. I end with a portrait of the now world famous leader Raoni, my host and adoptive father during fieldwork (image 21). The deadlock at UNICAMP over the slide collection continues. The last news that I received via email, on 31/1/2020, from Humberto Celeste Innarelli, was that AEL had contacted FUNAI, and was informed by the attendant there that:

in order to sort out the situation it would be necessary to send a document to the FUNAI attorney's office. After having sent the document proceedings would begin (reckoned to take a long time), and they would then contact the tribe (sic), (or rather each person who appears in a photograph), requesting their authorization. If the holders [of rights] to

the images give their authorization then FUNAI will produce a contract, but they [those photographed] will probably want some payment. My parenthesis.

It is a perfect ontological conflict, taking into consideration that FUNAI is totally discredited politically, whilst feigning to maintain control, leaving AEL paralyzed. In 2022 I began a dialogue with the first Mëtyktire to take control of the Instituto Raoni, previously administered by whites, and I thus hope to arrive at an agreement that is beneficial to all parties, the Mëtyktire, myself and AEL.

For the time being I await the outcome of this odyssey.

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