
III Visiting the Amazon

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MONOGRAPHS OF PEOPLE

TERRITORIAL AGENCY

The monographies of people analyse each individual (as per their role in the tourism economy) as per their agency and discourses. The diagram on the right will be the assessing tool to indicate the reach of actions.

DISCOURSE

The lexicon analysis is used to transpose their understanding or desires on the landscape using their own words, while being able to categorize topics, interests, agents, etc.

The first interaction that any tourist has with a local member in Alter do Chão is on the shore of the river. To be able to cross from one side of the river to the other (specially during wet season), tourists need to take a canoe drive of 2 min to the other side. During wet season, the river is deep enough so people can not cross by foot and depend on the services of canoe drivers to help them reach the other side. This canoe driver is one of the many who spend the day at this point waiting for people to be crossed. The cost of the crossing is 2 BRL (in 2023, equivalent to 0,30 EUR). Usually, tourists are taken on traditional boats the catraias, made on-site by locals and baptised under the river's water for blessings.

Valdilson is a boat driver and tour guide in Alter do Chão. During the site visit, I met him at the main port of the village of Alter do Chão with a poster which portrayed postcards from all the famous spots around the river. He tried to sell me a package to do the whole low river in a day, guaranteeing that I would be able to see the most in the least time.

During our encounter, he later told me about how he started in 2009, helping with the production of Tainá (a renowned Brazilian movie that tells the story of an indigenous girl and the mysteries of the jungle). That was the first time Alter do Chão had been in any national TV channel.

He confessed his appreciation for making the movie and regretted now working only as a tour guide.

On a mission to cross the river to visit the community of Anã and meet the appointment I had made with a local manager, my path crossed with Adailton. Through the recommendation of the local manager (Aldair, further introduced in this thesis), Adailton borrowed a fast boat to cross me for an hour and a half until arriving at Anã.

Born in the business, Adailton is a young worker engaging on social media to publish his services and stand out from the many boat services there are in Alter do Chão. Although not from the community of Anã, Aldair was knowledgeable towards the common practices and rituals of the Tapajós region. After crossing the river, Adailton crossed the local trails in the forest until we reached the community of Anã. It was a pleasant surprise to see his connection to the land that I believe, so far, was not his.

Idelfonso introduced us to Enchanted Forest, where the springs meet the river. During the wet season, the river tides go up 6m and end up flooding the forest. One can literally see old-growth trees completely sunken. This part of Alter do Chão holds a religious and mystic background and it is the original land of Idelfonso. His community adapted to receiving tourism and touring them around, as also to host them on a common structure (a restaurant) upstream on the community firm ground (*terra firme*).

The land has been under assault by relatives of the Major, who have been constructing holiday houses at the shore of river. He is the president of the Indigenous Association Borari and coordinates the legal report to the municipality, trying to resist the oppression of tourism speculation and land assaults.

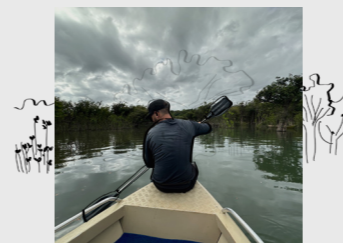
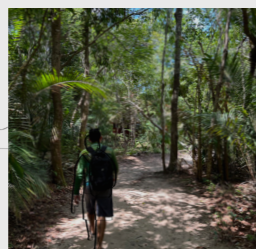
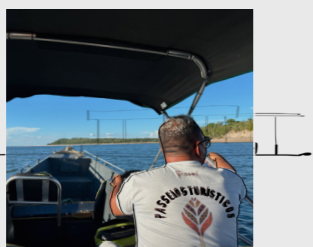
Tomas had been recommended as an experience-oriented guide, which avoids the mainstream touristic bubble offering an authentic experience. On my initial contact, I disclaimed that my interest was related to fieldwork for this thesis, and we progressed in creating a specific and individualised route to touch upon and illustrate the issues which Alter do Chão have been facing. Tomas, although being foreigner, is married to the leading representative of the Feminist Indigenous Association - which opens up a new narrative for miscegenation of foreigners and locals, but also, the gender equality reached. He was not only known and familiar with the whole territory but was a true voice of causes and social movements of Alter do Chão.

Tomas, despite his high consciousness, had little effective influence over the territory, as had no total relation to land practices. However, he was one of the main reasons of the critical reading that I managed to do during my site visit, with insightful, conscious, politicized discourses.

Marivaldo is a tourism host in São Domingos and one of the first residents of the Conservation Unit to experiment with tourism hospitality, creating a precedent for the coming economy that now tourism is on the Reserve. Marivaldo and his family coordinate and own the production of andiroba oil (medicinal seeds) and won the Competition for the creation of a Factory building inside their territory. Marivaldo, still holds all the production of its goods (vegetables, fruits, grains, animals, seeds, honey) while educating its visitors with long stays and tours in the forest and river. He exemplifies the capability of tourism hosting while prioritizing land practices and control.

Seu Cari is a tourism host in Maguarí, a community 20 minutes away (by car on an unpaved road) from São Domingos. He holds the Prize for best Hammock Stay of the Conservation Unit and receives hosts from all over Brazil and the world in his community. He employs his family to carry lateral jobs and roles in the tourism chain. Although touring in the forest and river, tourism in Maguarí has become an important economy and land practices are becoming increasingly extinct, requiring imports and dependent on the city market for food supply.

Aldair was the last community member I spoke with during my site visit. He introduced me to Anã Community, known for being a reference in the model of community-based tourism. Aldair, officially the manager of the community and also works part-time at a school. He is proud to say that the local school only hires indigenous people and their aim is to transmit indigenous knowledge without interference of modern school learning systems. Aldair presented me the 3 entrepreneurial projects that the community develops. All of them, bridged the relevance of the community to upper scales. Produced goods are sold in the capital Santarém, knowledge and techniques are being researched and revealed in academic papers and the young inhabitants are participating in international school exchanges, as well as, documentary competitions abroad. Their work has been not only acknowledged by them but admired and reproduced basin-wide and internationally discussed. Their community became, for this thesis, the model of agency.



Unknown canoe driver

Valdilson

Adailton

Idelfonso

Tomas

Marivaldo

Seu Cari

Aldair

Unknown canoe driver
Canoe driver of Ilha do Amor



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Valdilson
Boat driver and guide of Alter do Chão



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Idelfonso

Canoe driver of Comunidade do Caranazal
and president of Indigenous Association



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Marivaldo

Tourism host and guide of São Domingos



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Seu Cari
Tourism host and guide of Maguari



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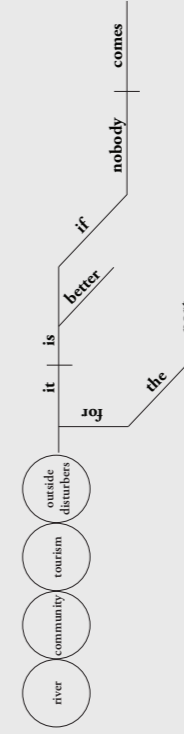
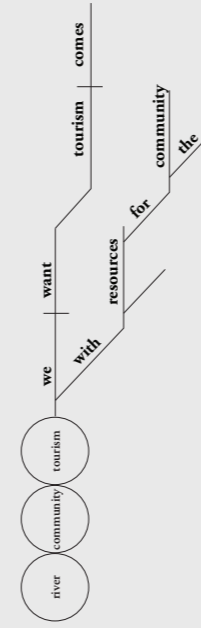
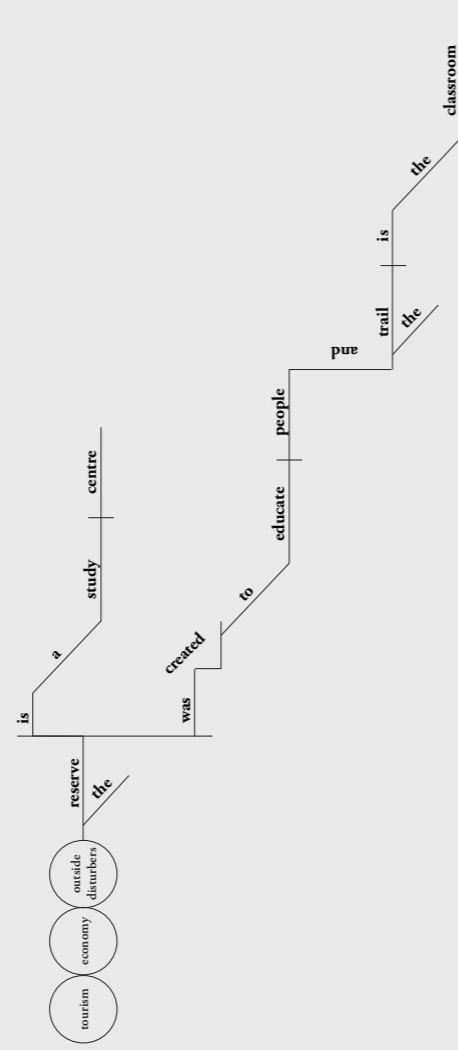
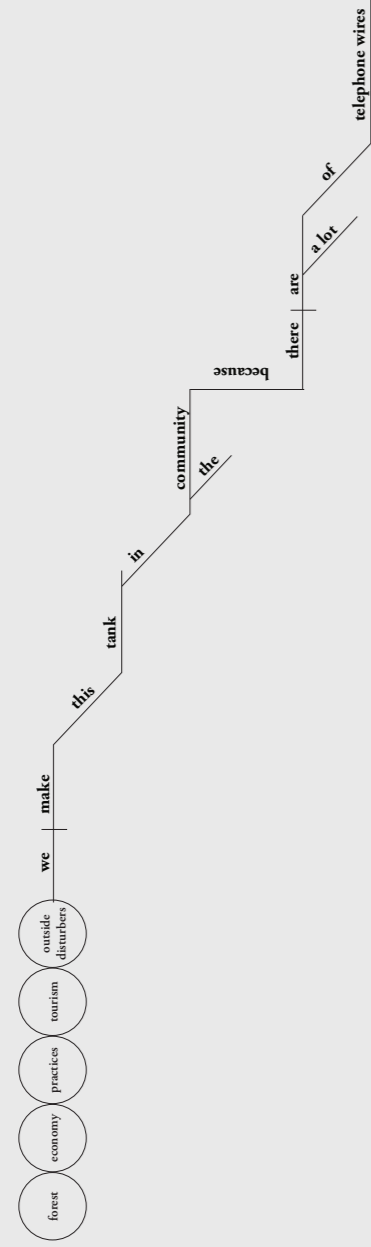
Seu Cari specifically advocated the inconvenient competition that tourism has caused, due to the magnetic marketing that promotes situated landscapes to be tourism spots. As an example, tours leaving from Alter do Chão travel 2h by boat to see the Sumaúma tree (the biggest tree trunk in this region) while having numerous Sumaúmas dispersed on the territory.

Aldair
Community manager of Anã Community



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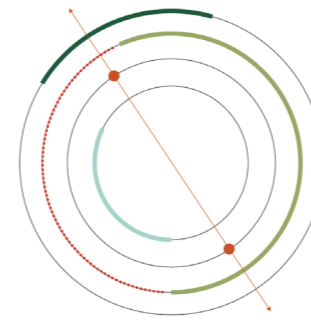
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MONOGRAPHS OF CRAFTS

The analysis follows the understanding that practices are landscape-conditioned. The following pages will divide the crafts into river, land, forest and community, and will graphically analyze the abundance and scarcity of each landscape through the lenses of the crafts.

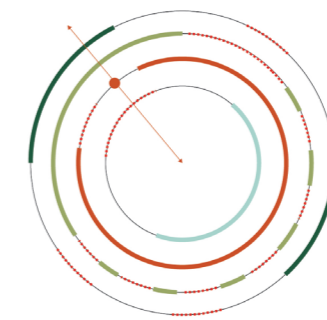
More on that, the monographies analysis takes in consideration the understanding (Peruvian Pavillion, 2023) that communities through time introduced tools, materials, process to tweak natural cycles into year-round abundances. In that sense, the graphics try to read: What is naturally afforded by the landscape? What are innovative additions from communities?



clear cycles

traditional communities

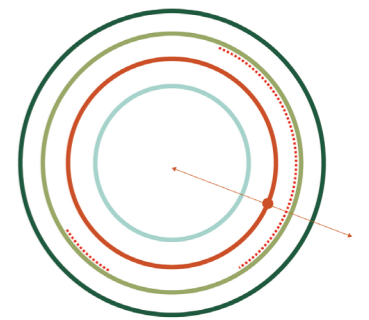
tools and techniques
limited products



rotational cycles

traditional communities
that extended cultivation practices

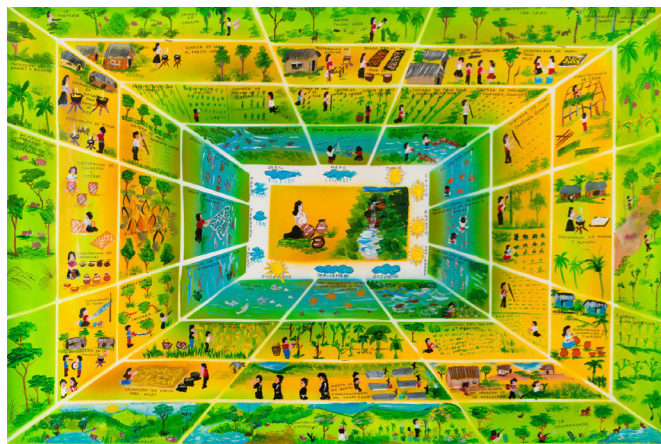
tools and techniques
varied products
agroforestry
forest management



year round cycle

traditional communities
that implemented innovative techniques

varied tools and techniques
limited or varied products
honey cultivation appliance
fib cultivation appliance



Walkers in the Amazon, Peruvian Pavillion. Venice Bienalle, 2023. Community calendars.

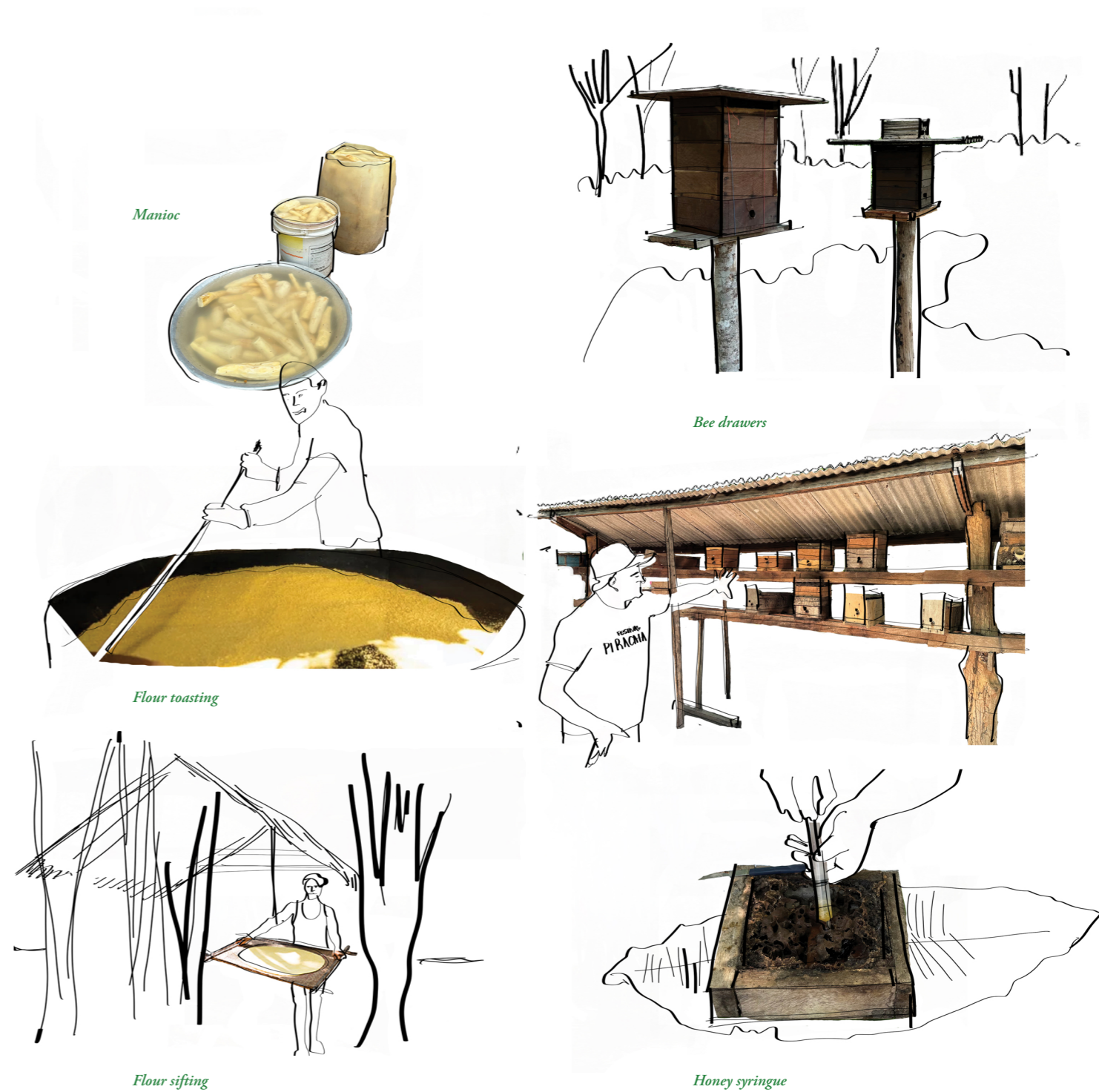
Cycles of time



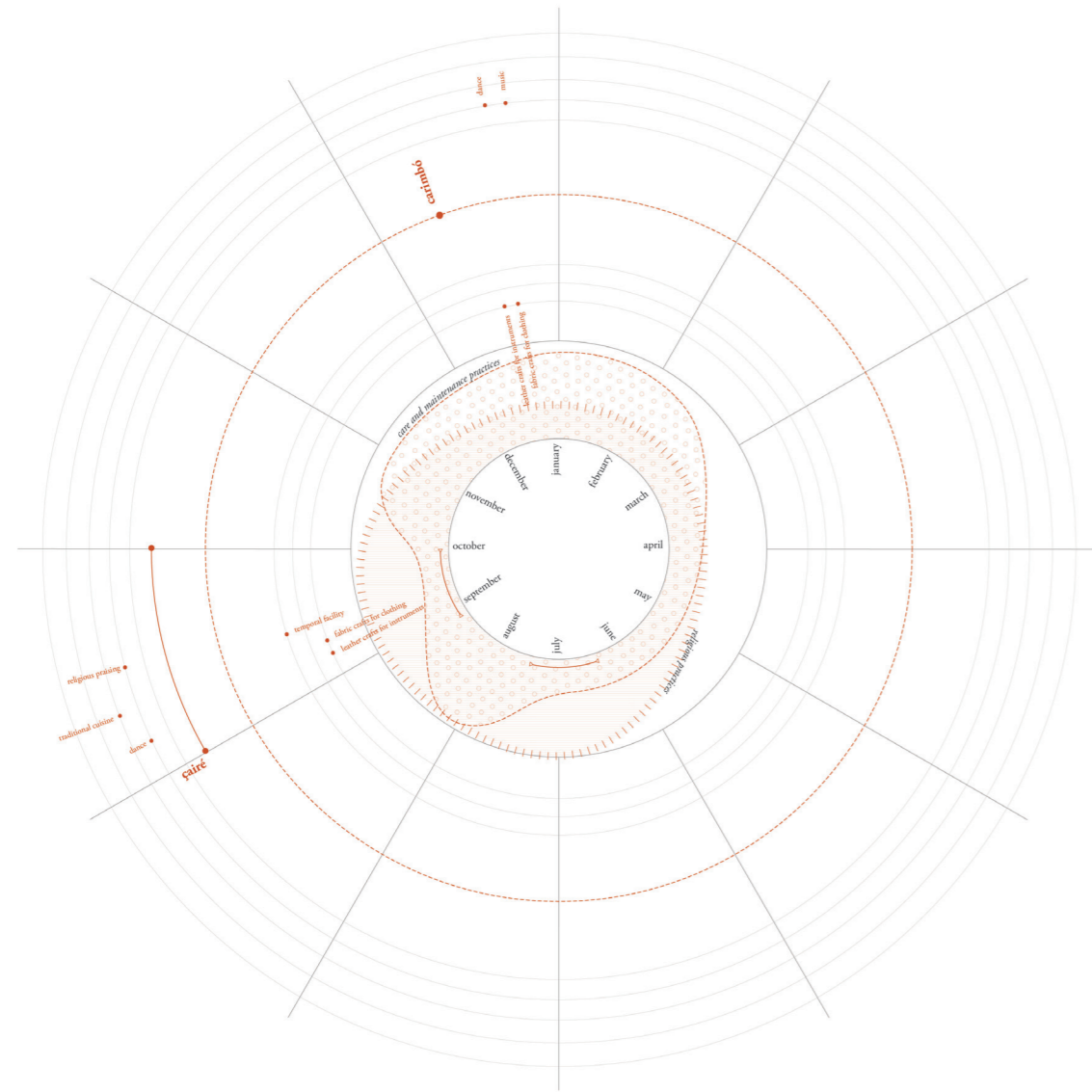
Practices of the Soil relate to processes of cultivation, harvest and control of the land surrounding the communities. These practices behave as domesticated techniques, in which, insightfully, communities withdraw from Nature's abundance. The main examples are cassava cultivation and honey production.

These practices highlight the clear distinction between the footprint of the practice and the territorial reach that it performs. Honey cultivation, for example, is 0.5m² intervention in the forest that needs at least 1km² of healthy and thriving ecosystem to be sustained.

Soil
Matter, objects and processes



Cycles of time



The documentation of community practices aims to address the landscape of society without a productive assessment, but rather leisure, belief-oriented. Noticeable practices of the communities are dancing events, political and institutional gatherings and the use of common transportation methods to commute on the river.

Community
Matter, objects and processes

Carimbó music and dance events



Community centres and assembly points



Community boats

MONOGRAPHS OF TERRITORY

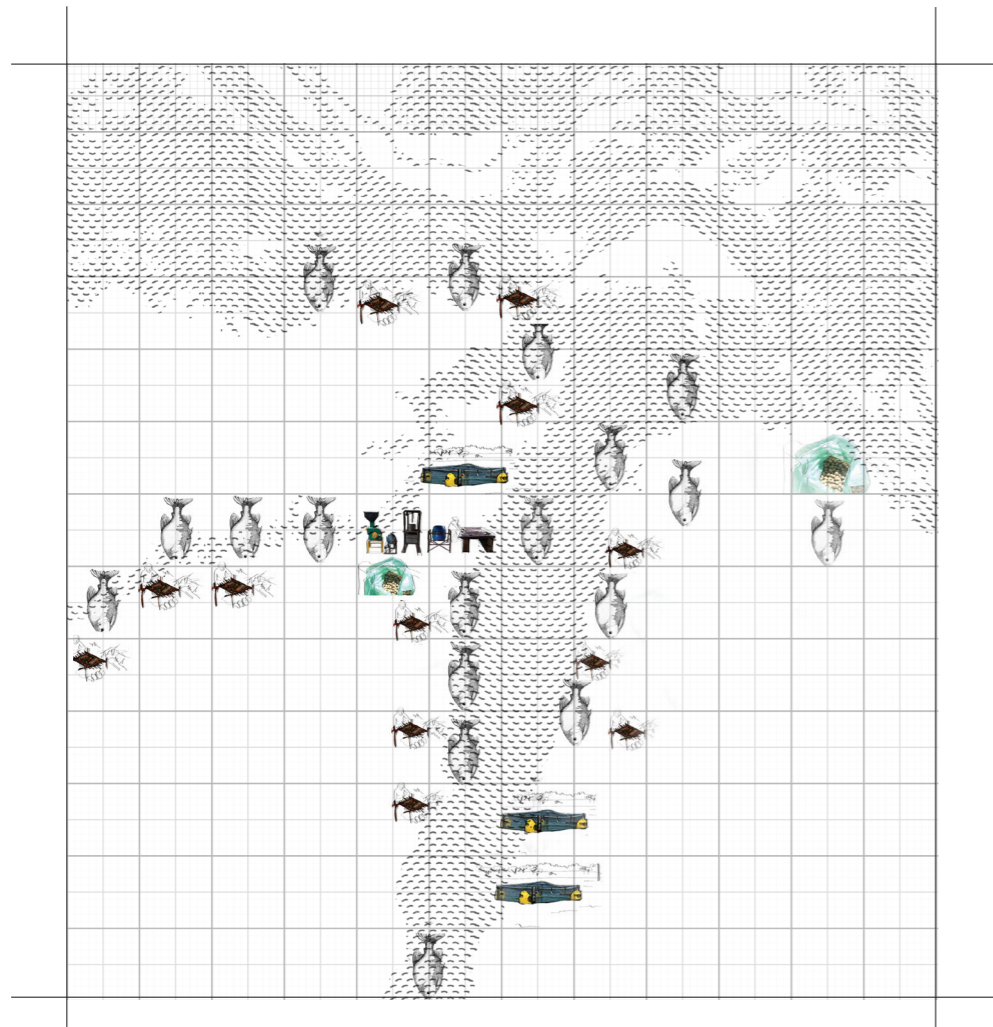
As part of the colonisation process of the Amazon, cartography was a turning point into understanding and reading this biome as a resource. Indigenous communities tend to create edited-abstracted mapping which represent their iconographic reading of this landscape: through plants, waterbodies, constructed elements.

The next pages aim on transferring the knowledge learnt from each craft and actor and illustrate their bodies of actions.

Moreover, the edited-abstraction mapping, when overlaid, indicate that a cosmologic approach observed in the situated scale not necessarily translates into a territorial dominance.



Territory



Body of the river Situating

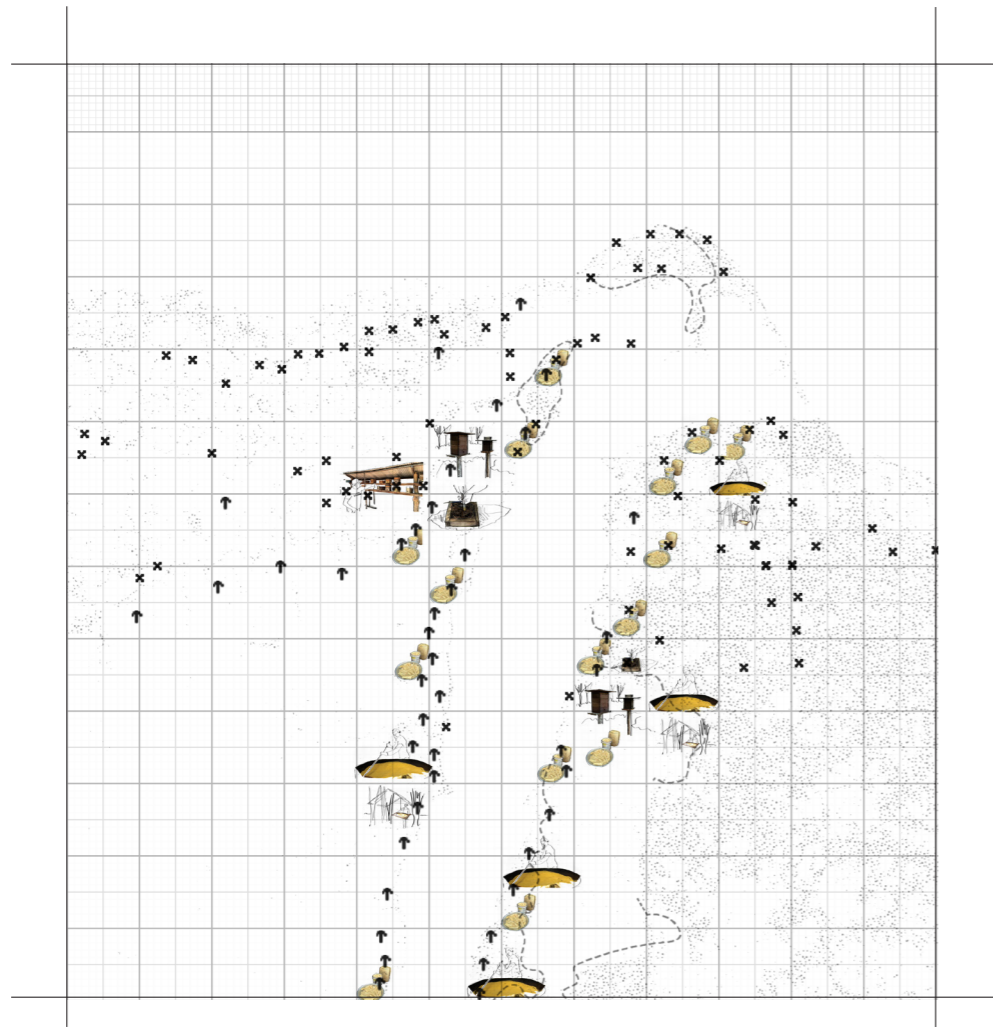


The body of the river landscape relates to an intangible and scaleless line of influences. The practices carried out in the river respond to the tides, temperature, and toxicity and do not have a defined border, limit or contention. The river behaves as a liquid, fluid and dynamic body that allows the practices to have linearly, dispersedly.

On the map above, the practices are abstracted into the common locations, in which they take place.



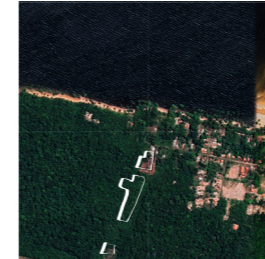
Territory



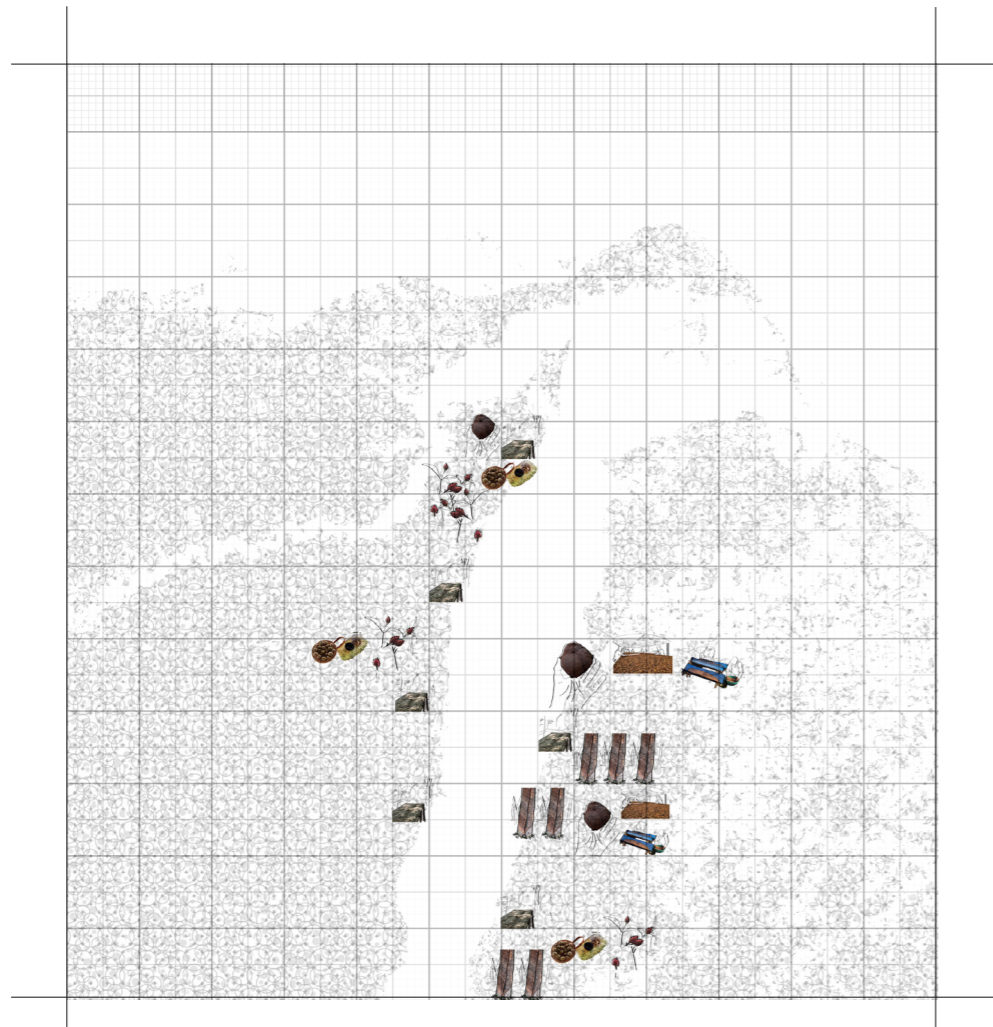
Soil practices occur in the territory in a patch spatialisation. They relate to the process of time and the rotational cycle of planting, burning, slashing and replanting. This process is conscious and guided by ancestral knowledge. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, practices of soil demonstrate the best relation of situated actions-territorial reach. Adding up on that, it also gives perspective into the control of time.

On the map above, the practices are abstracted into the common locations, in which they take place and their correlation with presence of local communities.

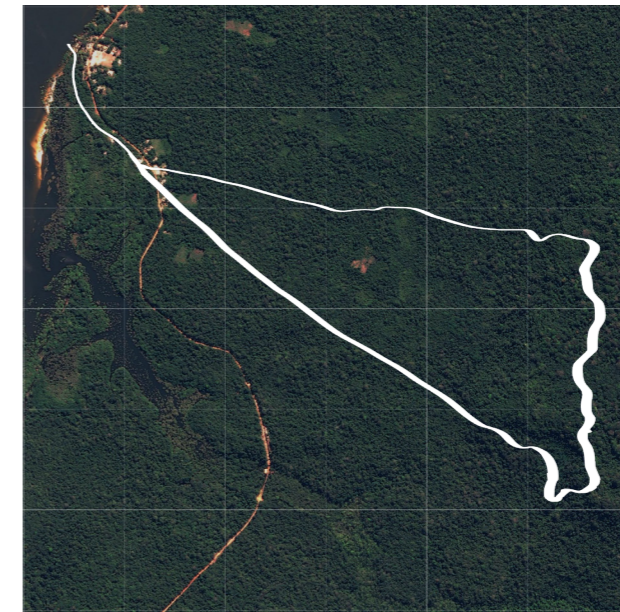
Body of the land Situated



Territory



Body of the forest Situated

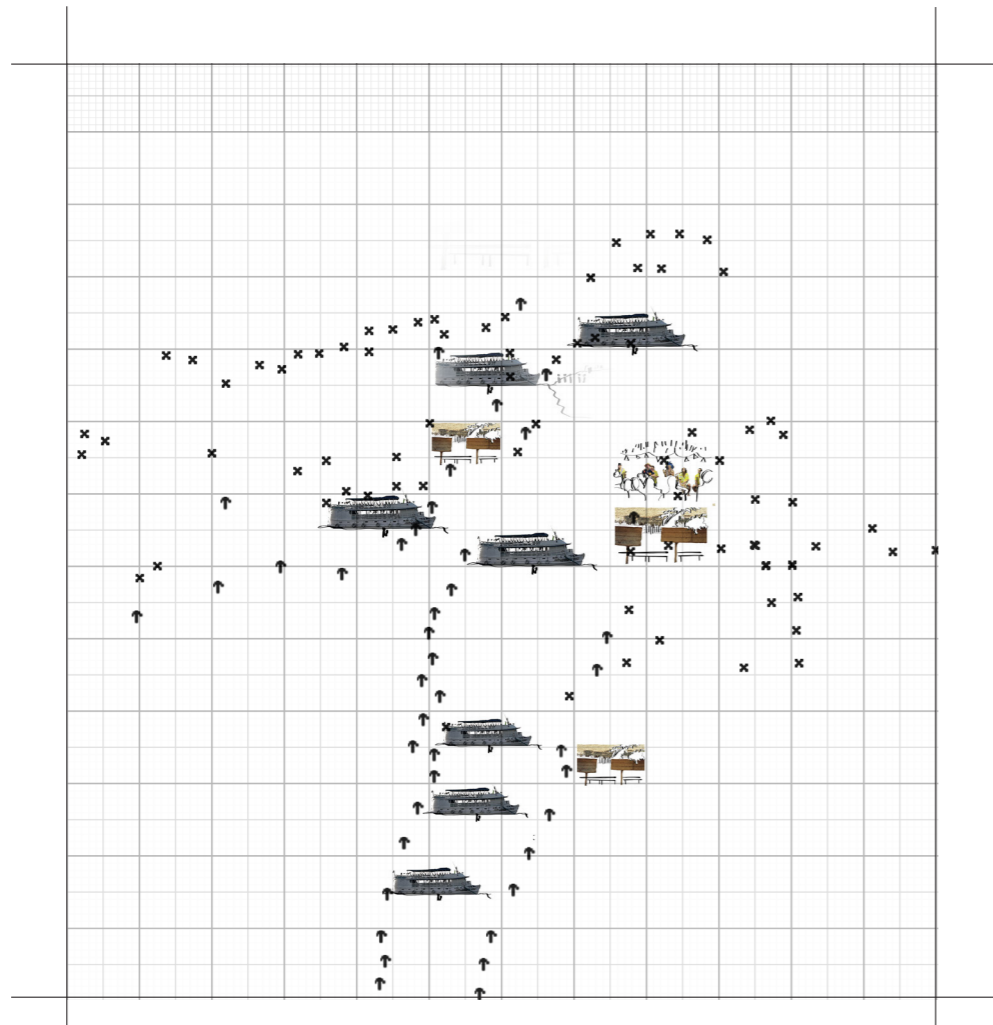


Practices in the forest are intangible when it comes to mapping them. Firstly, because the Amazon Forest has out-of-proportion scales, which great an illusive thought of capability to map it. Secondly, the forest is a dynamic one-body that offers uniformly resources. In that sense, the maps and satellites above, try to bring to tangible dimensions the human-scale accessibility to these goods (departing from local riverine communities)

Above, common areas of forest extraction practices are pinpointed.



Territory



The communal landscape is commonly spatialised into squares that converge most of the plots of the community and aim to gather its inhabitants. Parallely, smaller communities, present an interpretation of gathering spaces in their own plots, being common to see clearing aside familiar houses.

On the map above, the locations of the main gathering places and points of departure of communal boats are abstracted.



People and community
Bodies



