



LIVED EXPERIENCE, TERRITORY, AND RESISTANCE: TERRITORIAL MEDIATION PROTOCOLS AND PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH IN THE TURURUKARI-UKA INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY (AMAZONAS, BRAZIL)

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Abstract: Relations between researchers, institutions, and Indigenous communities pose challenges to the construction of knowledge and to intervention processes that are sensitive to sociocultural specificities, different knowledge systems, and power asymmetries. This article aims to propose a methodological framework to guide territorial mediation processes with Indigenous communities in the Western Amazon, grounded in Participatory Action Research (PAR). The qualitative and participatory research was conducted with the Tururukari-Uka community of the Omágua/Kambebe people, in Manacapuru, Amazonas, Brazil. The empirical research comprised two in-person visits and one online activity, involving approximately 30 participants, including community leaders, a pajé (Indigenous spiritual leader), an Indigenous teacher, young people, and other community members. Data collection involved interviews, collective conversations, active listening, observation, and territorial reconnaissance, complemented by audio recordings, photographic records, and field notes. All activities were discussed beforehand and conducted with the community's consent, incorporating validation and feedback into the research process. The results demonstrate that territorial mediation constitutes a relational and situated process of building interfaces among subjects, institutions, knowledge systems, and projects. The experience enabled the systematization of a protocol structured around territorial engagement, listening, intercultural dialogue, recognition of Indigenous knowledge, negotiation, participation in decision-making, and cycles of reflection–action–reflection. The study concludes that articulating territorial mediation with PAR contributes to less hierarchical research and intervention processes. Its main contribution is an open and adaptive protocol designed to build research with territorial actors while recognizing their autonomy, agency, and participation in knowledge production.

Keywords: Territorial mediation; Participatory Action Research; Indigenous peoples; Omágua/Kambebe; Regional development.

VIVÊNCIA, TERRITÓRIO E RESISTÊNCIA: UM PROTOCOLO DE MEDIAÇÃO TERRITORIAL FUNDAMENTADO NA INVESTIGAÇÃO-AÇÃO PARTICIPATIVA NA COMUNIDADE INDÍGENA TURURUKARI-UKA (AM)

Resumo: As relações entre pesquisadores, instituições e comunidades indígenas desafiam a construção de conhecimentos e processos de intervenção sensíveis às especificidades socioculturais, aos diferentes sistemas de saberes e às assimetrias de poder. Este artigo objetiva propor uma estrutura metodológica para orientar processos de mediação territorial com comunidades indígenas da Amazônia Ocidental, fundamentada na Investigação-Ação Participativa (IAP). A pesquisa, qualitativa e participativa, foi desenvolvida com a comunidade Tururukari-Uka, do povo Omágua/Kambebe, em Manacapuru (AM). O percurso empírico compreendeu duas visitas presenciais e uma atividade on-line, envolvendo aproximadamente 30 participantes, entre lideranças, pajé, professora indígena, jovens e demais integrantes da comunidade. Utilizaram-se entrevistas, conversas coletivas, escuta ativa, observação e reconhecimento territorial, complementados por gravações, registros fotográficos e caderno de campo. As atividades foram dialogadas e realizadas com anuência da comunidade, incorporando validação e devolutiva ao processo investigativo. Os resultados demonstram que a mediação territorial constitui um processo relacional e situado de construção de interfaces entre sujeitos, instituições, saberes e projetos. A experiência possibilitou sistematizar um protocolo estruturado pela aproximação territorial, escuta, diálogo intercultural, reconhecimento dos saberes indígenas, negociação, participação nas decisões e ciclos de reflexão–ação–reflexão. Conclui-se que a articulação

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entre mediação territorial e IAP favorece processos de pesquisa e intervenção menos verticalizados. A principal contribuição consiste em um protocolo aberto e adaptativo, orientado à construção da pesquisa com os sujeitos do território, reconhecendo sua autonomia, capacidade de agência e participação na produção do conhecimento.

Palavras-chave: *Mediação territorial; Investigação-Ação Participativa; Povos indígenas; Omágua/Kambeba; Desenvolvimento regional.*

1 Introduction

The history of Indigenous peoples in Brazil has been marked by processes of territorial dispossession, cultural invisibilization, and the restriction of rights. In contemporary Amazonia, these historical processes are compounded by pressures associated with deforestation, illegal mining, and invasions of Indigenous territories. Against this backdrop, Indigenous peoples and communities have strengthened strategies of resistance, political organization, and identity affirmation, seeking to preserve their ways of life, knowledge systems, and territorialities.

This context also calls for a rethinking of the ways in which researchers, universities, and other institutions engage with Indigenous communities. Rather than merely producing knowledge *about* Indigenous peoples, it is necessary to develop approaches that recognize their knowledge systems, autonomy, and capacity to participate in decision-making processes concerning their territories. Although the literature on Participatory Action Research, knowledge dialogue, and research conducted with traditional communities provides important foundations for this perspective, a significant challenge remains: translating these principles into concrete territorial mediation strategies capable of fostering less hierarchical relationships among researchers, institutions, and Indigenous communities.

In light of this context, the present research is guided by the following question: How can the principles of Participatory Action Research guide the development of a territorial mediation protocol with Indigenous communities in the Western Amazon? Based on this question, the study seeks to understand how methodologies grounded in knowledge dialogue, active listening, and the collective construction of knowledge can strengthen Indigenous communities' autonomy, cultural appreciation, and territorial preservation, taking as its empirical reference the experience of the Tururukari-Uka community, belonging to the Omágua/Kambeba people.

The central objective of this article is to propose a methodological framework capable of enhancing intervention and mediation processes in Indigenous communities in the Western Amazon. To this end, an action protocol was collectively and participatively developed, grounded in listening to community members, intercultural dialogue, and the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR). The protocol seeks to recognize the community's knowledge, practices, and distinctive forms of organization as constitutive elements of the research and mediation process. The study draws empirically on the Tururukari-Uka Indigenous community, belonging to



the Omágua/Kambebe people, whose groups are currently distributed across different territories in the Amazon region.

The choice of this community is particularly relevant given the still limited body of academic research on the Omágua/Kambebe people. As Silva (2012) points out, relatively few studies have focused on this Indigenous people, a condition that also affects the intergenerational transmission of knowledge related to ancestry, ways of life, subsistence practices, cultural expressions, and rituals. In this regard, the research seeks to move beyond an external and unilateral intervention perspective by prioritizing mediation processes constructed with the community, rather than merely about it. In doing so, it aims to foster recognition of their knowledge systems, territorialities, and forms of sociocultural reproduction.

In addition to this introduction and the concluding remarks, the article is organized into six sections. The first contextualizes the Western Amazon and the municipality of Manacapuru, in the state of Amazonas, and provides a historical, territorial, and sociocultural characterization of the Tururukari-Uka Indigenous community. The second examines the traditional subsistence practices, community organization, and sociocultural diversity of the Omágua/Kambebe people, highlighting the relationships among territory, knowledge, identity, and social reproduction. The third discusses Indigenous knowledge, intercultural dialogue, and the foundations of a participatory approach, critically examining the epistemological asymmetries embedded in relationships between researchers and Indigenous communities.

The fourth section conceptually develops the notion of territorial mediation, understood as a relational process involving the construction of interfaces, negotiation, and articulation among different actors, institutions, forms of knowledge, and projects, relating this process to the agency of territorial actors. The fifth presents the methodological approach adopted, grounded in Participatory Action Research, and details the stages involved in developing the protocol through dialogue with the Tururukari-Uka community. Finally, the sixth section systematizes the protocol as a territorial mediation framework, outlining its guiding principles and discussing its potential to foster research and intervention processes that are less hierarchical, more dialogical, and more responsive to the sociocultural specificities of Indigenous peoples.

2 Indigenous Communities in the Western Amazon: The Municipality of Manacapuru and the Tururukari-Uka Community

The Brazilian Western Amazon comprises the states of Acre, Amazonas, Rondônia, and Roraima and constitutes one of the regions of greatest socio-environmental diversity in the world. In addition to its ecological importance, associated with biodiversity, water resources, and climate



regulation, the region is characterized by the diversity of peoples, territorialities, knowledge systems, and ways of life historically constituted in close relationship with Amazonian ecosystems. Indigenous peoples such as the Huni Kuin, Ashaninka, Yawanawá, and Yanomami, among others, have developed their own systems of knowledge, social organization, and natural resource management, demonstrating the relationship between biodiversity conservation and the ways in which territories are occupied, used, and culturally understood.

It is within this context that Manacapuru is situated. The municipality is located in the state of Amazonas, approximately 100 km west of Manaus, on the banks of the Solimões River, an important axis of circulation and territorial articulation. Its historical formation is associated with the presence of different Indigenous peoples, including the Mura and Torá. The name Manacapuru itself refers to this Indigenous presence and, according to Silva (2012), derives from Tupi-origin words related to *manacá*, meaning flower, and *puru*, associated with the idea of being variegated or multicolored.

The socioeconomic dynamics of Manacapuru remain closely connected to regional environmental resources and conditions. Fishing, family farming, and extractivism constitute important livelihood and social reproduction strategies, interconnected with commercial activities, services, and tourism. Historically, jute production has also been significant. In the cultural sphere, events such as the Cirandas Festival express identities and practices constructed through territorial relations. This diversity points to a conception of territory that extends beyond its physical and natural dimension, encompassing relationships among social actors, knowledge systems, productive practices, identities, and forms of appropriation and meaning-making in space.

It is within this territory that the Tururukari-Uka Indigenous community is located. Composed of members of the Omágua/Kambeba people, the community serves as the empirical reference for this research. According to Silva (2012), the Omágua/Kambeba are an important Indigenous people historically established in the Solimões and Negro River regions, whose trajectory is closely related to the socio-environmental conditions of the floodplain areas of the Upper Amazon. This relationship does not merely represent adaptation to the natural environment; rather, it encompasses knowledge systems, productive practices, forms of social organization, and historical processes of territorial construction.

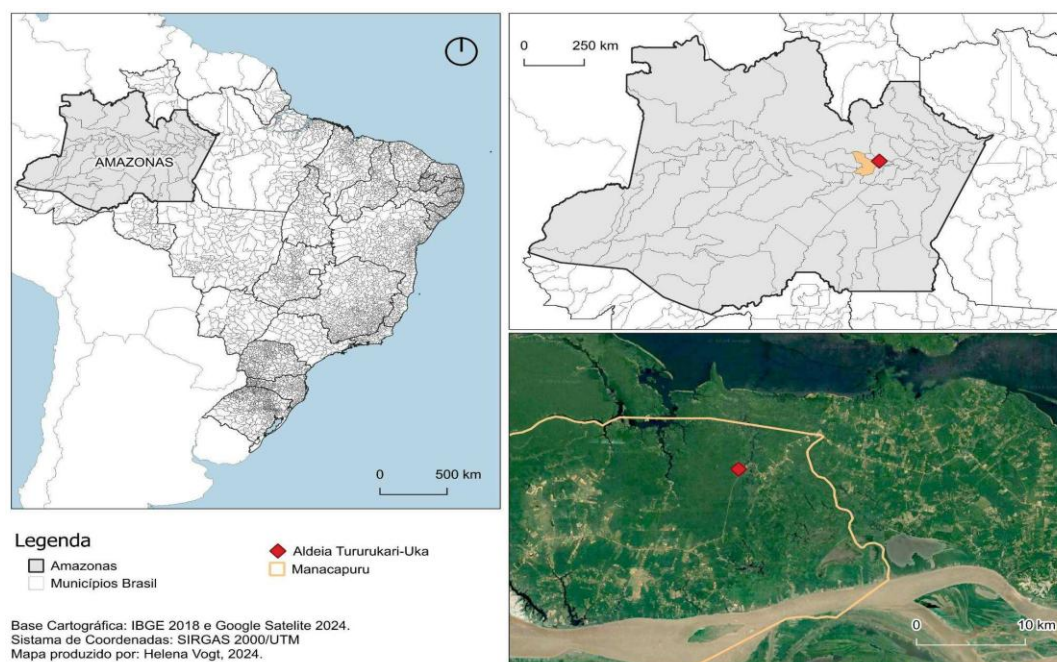
The trajectory of the Omágua/Kambeba has been profoundly shaped by colonization, epidemics, conflicts, and successive pressures on their territories and ways of life. Non-Indigenous occupation and Indigenous policies resulted in displacement, population dispersion, and transformations in forms of social and territorial organization. Throughout the twentieth century, policies initially implemented by the Indian Protection Service (*Serviço de Proteção aos Índios* –

SPI) and subsequently by the National Indian Foundation (*Fundação Nacional do Índio* – FUNAI) involved strategies of tutelage, territorialization, and control over Indigenous populations, producing different consequences for distinct peoples and communities.

For the Omágua/Kambeba, these processes contributed to experiences of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, with repercussions for cultural practices, the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, and relationships of belonging. In certain contexts, the silencing and concealment of Indigenous identity became strategies of protection and survival. According to Silva (2012), however, the recovery and reaffirmation of songs, dances, narratives, myths, and other cultural references are part of a broader process of identity reconstruction and of overcoming the historical invisibility experienced by the people.

It is within this process of ethnic and territorial affirmation that the Tururukari-Uka community is situated. Its name conveys elements of Omágua/Kambeba collective memory: *Tururukari* refers to an important leader recognized for defending the people and their territory, while *Uka* means “house.” The name therefore carries a meaning that extends beyond the geographic identification of the village, evoking ancestry, belonging, memory, and resistance.

Figure 1 – Location of the Tururukari-Uka Community, Manacapuru, Amazonas, Brazil



Source: Vogt (2024)

Understanding the Tururukari-Uka territory as a space of life and sociocultural reproduction also requires recognizing that contemporary pressures on the Amazon extend beyond the environmental dimension. Deforestation, fires, mining, and the expansion of agricultural



activities intensify disputes over the appropriation of natural resources and may undermine ecosystems and the material and symbolic conditions necessary for the reproduction of Indigenous peoples. The degradation of spaces traditionally used by these communities affects subsistence practices, food security, the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, and the preservation of cultural references, and may be understood as a contemporary expression of processes of deterritorialization.

These pressures are compounded by climate change, which alters rainfall patterns, hydrological cycles, and periods of flooding and low water levels, affecting practices such as agriculture, fishing, and extractivism. In this context, traditional knowledge becomes particularly relevant, as it results from historical processes of observation, experimentation, and interaction with ecosystems, constituting an important component of communities' capacities to respond to socio-environmental transformations.

The conservation of the Amazon should therefore be understood as inseparable from the protection of Indigenous territories and the conditions that sustain the social and cultural reproduction of the peoples who have historically shaped them. Preserving the forest also means ensuring the continuity of ways of life, knowledge systems, identities, and territorialities. This perspective reinforces the need for research and interventions involving Indigenous communities to be developed through participatory and intercultural processes that recognize local actors as knowledge producers and as active participants in decisions concerning the conservation and development of their territories.

3 Traditional Subsistence Practices, Community Organization, and Sociocultural Diversity

Continuing the discussion on territory, territoriality, and sociocultural reproduction, the Tururukari-Uka community demonstrates that the Omágua/Kambebe relationship with the Amazonian environment extends beyond the use of natural resources for subsistence. It is a historical and multidimensional relationship in which productive practices, traditional knowledge, social organization, spirituality, identity, and territorial belonging are closely interconnected. Shifting cultivation, fishing, extractivism, and handicraft production constitute not only strategies for material reproduction but also practices through which knowledge and values are produced, renewed, and transmitted across generations.

The social organization of Tururukari-Uka is grounded in family and community relationships, giving central importance to the collective dimension of social life. *Caciques*, *pajés*, and other community leaders perform roles related to guiding decision-making, representing the

community, and preserving and transmitting knowledge, thereby articulating social, cultural, political, and spiritual dimensions. This organization reflects distinctive systems of authority and community governance that have been historically constructed and legitimized by the group.

Among these leaders, Wuika Kambeba, known as Dona Teca, stands out as the community's *pajé*. Her trajectory highlights the importance of women leaders in preserving traditional knowledge. According to her account, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism constituted an important source of income, complemented by the sale of handicrafts, herbal teas, and preparations associated with traditional knowledge. Fishing, hunting, and other activities linked to the territory, together with public income-transfer programs, form part of the community's contemporary strategies for socioeconomic reproduction, demonstrating the coexistence and articulation of traditional practices, market relations, and public policies.

Figure 2 - Wuika Kambeba (Dona Teca), *Pajé* of the Tururukari-Uka Community



Source: Marie Claire Magazine (2021).

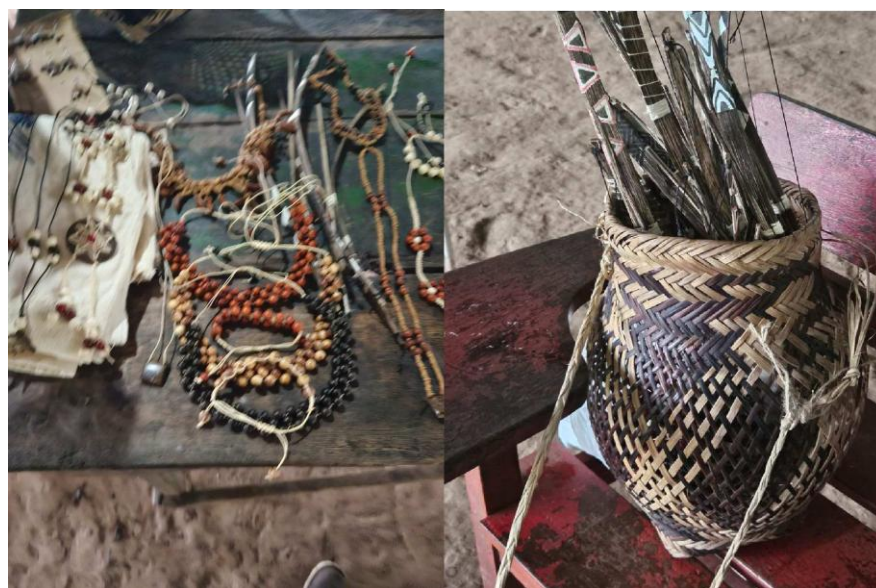
Language constitutes a fundamental dimension of Omágua/Kambeba identity and collective memory. The use of the Indigenous language, belonging to the Tupi linguistic stock, together with Portuguese, reflects processes of cultural continuity and interaction with the surrounding society. More than a means of communication, language enables the transmission of knowledge, narratives, myths, values, and distinctive ways of understanding the world. Likewise, songs, dances, rituals, clothing, and spiritual practices constitute important references for cultural reproduction. In Tururukari-Uka, spirituality maintains a close relationship with nature, reflecting a worldview in which society and the environment constitute interdependent dimensions of existence.

These cultural references should be understood within the historical trajectory of the Omágua/Kambéba people. As Silva (2012) observes, in response to processes of invisibilization, displacement, and transformation experienced over the centuries, the valorization of language, songs, dances, agricultural fields, handicrafts, and traditional clothing constitutes an important strategy of identity affirmation. This does not imply isolation from non-Indigenous society. The Kambéba have developed different forms of engagement and dialogue, including access to formal education and higher education, as well as claims for territorial rights and ethnic recognition. Tradition and contemporaneity therefore constitute interconnected dimensions of ongoing processes of identity reconstruction.

Subsistence practices embody the articulation among knowledge, territory, and social reproduction. Shifting cultivation is based on accumulated knowledge of natural cycles, soils, species, and planting and harvesting periods, involving crops such as cassava, maize, and bananas. Fishing in the Solimões River and nearby waterways requires knowledge of aquatic environments, species, and hydrological cycles. Complementarily, extractivism provides fruits, seeds, nuts, plant fibers, and plants used for food, handicrafts, and traditional health care. These practices reflect ecological knowledge developed through sustained interaction with Amazonian ecosystems.

Handicraft production articulates economic, cultural, and identity-related dimensions. Produced from seeds, palm leaves, plant fibers, and other materials available within the territory, handicrafts constitute an expression of Omágua/Kambéba material culture and a means of transmitting knowledge, while their commercialization provides an additional source of income.

Figure 3 – Contemporary Handicrafts of the Tururukari-Uka Community



Source: Authors' fieldwork (2026).



The relationship between Tururukari-Uka and the forest can thus be understood from a perspective of socio-ecological interdependence. Forests, rivers, and biodiversity provide resources that are essential for material reproduction, but they also constitute spaces of memory, learning, spirituality, and identity. Reciprocally, knowledge accumulated and transmitted across generations guides practices of cultivation, fishing, gathering, and natural resource management. This perspective makes it possible to move beyond interpretations that position Indigenous communities merely as beneficiaries of conservation policies, recognizing their knowledge systems, forms of organization, and capacity for agency as integral components of biodiversity conservation and territorial production processes.

This understanding has methodological implications for research. If productive, cultural, and environmental practices are grounded in historically constructed and territorially situated knowledge, external interventions cannot presuppose solutions previously defined by researchers or institutions. It is therefore necessary to construct territorial mediation processes grounded in listening, intercultural dialogue, and Participatory Action Research, capable of bringing academic and Indigenous knowledge systems into dialogue without establishing a hierarchical relationship between them in advance. It is on this premise that the methodological proposal for territorial mediation developed in this study with the Tururukari-Uka community is structured.

4 Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Intercultural Dialogue, and Territorial Mediation: Foundations for a Participatory Approach

The Tururukari-Uka community, like other Indigenous peoples and communities in the Amazon, constitutes a space for the production, transmission, and ongoing re-elaboration of knowledge historically constructed through relationships with the territory. As discussed above, these knowledge systems are not limited to practices of agriculture, fishing, extractivism, and forest management, but also encompass distinctive ways of understanding natural cycles, aquatic and forest environments, plant and animal species, plants used in health care, as well as strategies for organizing collective life and ensuring social reproduction. They therefore constitute a territorially situated knowledge system, transmitted across generations and continuously updated in response to the environmental, social, economic, and cultural transformations experienced by the community.

These knowledge systems are particularly relevant in light of the contemporary pressures affecting Amazonian territories. As highlighted in previous sections, deforestation, climate



change, natural resource exploitation, and various processes of deterritorialization affect not only ecosystems but also the conditions necessary for the reproduction of Indigenous ways of life. In this context, the knowledge historically developed by the Omágua/Kambeba concerning forests, rivers, species, and natural cycles constitutes a fundamental resource for interpreting environmental transformations and developing strategies for resource management, adaptation, and sociocultural reproduction. The conservation of Amazonian biodiversity is therefore closely connected to the protection of Indigenous territories and to the recognition of Indigenous peoples as knowledge producers and as agents who develop socio-environmental management practices.

This understanding has important implications for the ways in which scientific research engages with Indigenous communities. If those who inhabit a territory are producers of knowledge, research cannot regard them merely as sources of information or objects of observation. It is necessary to critically examine the relationships established between researchers and communities and, particularly, the epistemic asymmetries that may shape processes of knowledge production.

In this regard, the contributions of Viveiros de Castro (2002) are particularly relevant. For the author, anthropological knowledge constitutes a social relationship, insofar as it emerges from the relationships established between the one who knows and the one who is known, generating transformations among the subjects involved in this interaction. By problematizing the privileged position traditionally attributed to the researcher—as the person who interprets, translates, contextualizes, and assigns meaning to the discourse of the other—Viveiros de Castro draws attention to the asymmetries between academic and Indigenous knowledge. The issue, therefore, is not limited to the need for a respectful attitude toward cultural difference; it also involves recognizing that knowledge produced through research is relational and that research participants possess their own systems of interpretation and meaning-making.

This reflection is particularly important in research conducted with Indigenous peoples because it challenges approaches in which the researcher occupies the exclusive position of authorized interpreter of the reality under investigation. Rather than transforming the community and its knowledge systems into external objects of analysis, this study proposes a relationship of interlocution in which different ways of knowing can enter into dialogue. This does not mean erasing the differences between academic and Indigenous knowledge, nor assuming an automatic equivalence between them. Rather, it entails recognizing their legitimacy, specificities, and potential for the shared construction of interpretations and actions.

In the case of the Tururukari-Uka community, this perspective guided the development of a territorial mediation approach grounded in respect for the community's own forms of organization, knowledge systems, values, and decision-making processes. In this study, mediation



is understood not as the simple transfer of knowledge, technologies, or solutions provided by external actors, but as a relational process of engagement, dialogue, negotiation, and learning among subjects who possess different forms of knowledge and experience. From this perspective, the mediator does not assume the role of determining the community's needs in advance or providing ready-made solutions. Rather, the mediator contributes to creating conditions in which problems, interests, capacities, and possibilities for action can be identified and discussed collectively.

5 Territorial Mediation: From Intervention to the Co-Construction of Action

The discussion of territorial mediation proposed in this article is grounded in the understanding that research, outreach, public policy, and development projects do not constitute neutral or exclusively technical processes. Every intervention brings together subjects, institutions, knowledge systems, interests, resources, and different ways of interpreting reality. Therefore, rather than focusing solely on objectives previously established by external actors, it is necessary to understand how actions are interpreted, negotiated, appropriated, transformed, or rejected by the subjects involved.

Deponti (2010), in analyzing intervention processes aimed at rural development, challenges their understanding as a linear sequence of planning, implementation, and outcomes. Intervention constitutes a social process marked by encounters among different systems of meaning, worldviews, knowledge systems, interests, and strategies. Local actors do not passively receive external proposals; rather, they interpret them based on their own experiences and frames of reference, and may appropriate, modify, reinterpret, or resist them. This perspective is particularly relevant in Indigenous contexts, where external interventions enter territories historically constituted through their own social, cultural, political, environmental, and symbolic relations.

In this sense, mediation cannot be understood as the simple transfer of knowledge from an agent supposedly possessing knowledge to subjects regarded as its recipients. According to Deponti (2010), the mediating function entails constructing interfaces among different forms of knowledge, experiences, and interpretations of reality. Mediation therefore involves establishing relationships of reciprocity, dialogue, translation, and negotiation, while recognizing the agency of the subjects involved.

From this perspective, this article proposes extending the notion of social mediation to that of territorial mediation. Here, territorial mediation is understood as a relational, situated, and



continuous process of constructing interfaces among actors, institutions, knowledge systems, and projects that interact within a given territory. This process involves listening, translation, negotiation, and recognition of differences and power asymmetries, seeking to foster the co-construction of action without disregarding the knowledge systems, identities, capacities for agency, and visions of the future held by territorial actors.

The qualifier *territorial* broadens the understanding of mediation beyond the interpersonal relationship between mediator and mediated subject. Territory is not merely the physical space in which mediation takes place; rather, it participates in shaping the mediation process itself, insofar as historical relationships, territorially situated knowledge, social and institutional networks, identities, conflicts, forms of resource appropriation, and power relations condition the possibilities and limits of mediating action. Qualifying intervention in this way therefore requires understanding it within the socio-vital space of the subjects involved, recognizing the different meanings attributed to actions and the interfaces produced through encounters among different worldviews.

This perspective also requires acknowledging that mediation does not eliminate power asymmetries. External actors may mobilize technical knowledge, financial resources, institutional connections, and differentiated access to public policies, while local actors possess territorially situated knowledge, social networks, their own strategies, and capacities for agency. Therefore, the adoption of participatory methodologies does not automatically produce horizontal relationships. As discussed by Deponti (2010), even processes guided by democratic and participatory principles remain shaped by power relations. This dimension is particularly important for avoiding an idealized understanding of territorial mediation.

From this perspective, the mediator should not assume the position of spokesperson for the subjects involved or speak on their behalf. In Indigenous contexts, this precaution is particularly important, since speaking for others may reproduce precisely the silencing that mediation seeks to overcome. The mediator's role therefore shifts from identifying needs and providing solutions to creating conditions for dialogue, enabling subjects to express themselves, facilitating the circulation of knowledge, negotiating differences, and co-constructing possibilities for action. In the case of Tururukari-Uka, this means recognizing that researchers, universities, and partner institutions do not replace the community in defining its priorities, but may contribute to strengthening interfaces for dialogue, articulation, and decision-making.

Territorial mediation is therefore configured less as a specific technique than as a theoretical-methodological and ethical-political stance toward intervention processes. Its quality should not be assessed exclusively according to whether initially planned actions have been



implemented, but also according to its capacity to construct interfaces, recognize different knowledge systems, make asymmetries explicit and subject them to negotiation, expand actor participation, and strengthen their capacity to make decisions concerning matters related to their own territory. Territorial mediation contributes to the field of Regional Development precisely because it challenges exogenous and homogeneous approaches to development and places actors, knowledge systems, territorialities, and capacities for agency at the center of the process. From this perspective, regional development is no longer conceived as the outcome of an intervention carried out *on* the territory, but rather as a process constructed *with* the subjects of the territory. This conception recognizes territorial diversity and the agency of actors as constitutive elements of development processes.

It is at this point that territorial mediation converges with Participatory Action Research (PAR). Both approaches challenge unidirectional relationships between external actors and local subjects and recognize that knowledge and action are produced through interaction. In the present study, PAR constitutes the methodological pathway through which the principles of territorial mediation are operationalized in the experience with the Tururukari-Uka community. The following section presents this operationalization, detailing the construction of the protocol, its stages, techniques, and mechanisms for participation, validation, and feedback.

6. Territorial Mediation and Participatory Action Research: Developing a Methodological Protocol with the Tururukari-Uka Community

This is a qualitative, participatory study conducted with the Tururukari-Uka Indigenous community in Manacapuru, Amazonas, following the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR). The empirical engagement developed gradually, initially through the establishment of a network of interlocution with organizations and institutions working in the territory and subsequently through two in-person visits to the community, complemented by an online activity with young people. During the first visit, an interview was conducted with a community leader, accompanied by a collective conversation to present, discuss, and adapt the research proposal. During the second visit, interviews were conducted with the Indigenous schoolteacher, who belongs to the community, and the new community leader. Conversations were also held with the *pajé* and three other Indigenous community members. In addition, a virtual activity was conducted with the participation of young people from the community. In total, approximately 30 people participated in the different stages of the research, including community leaders, young people, and other members of Tururukari-Uka.



Participation was voluntary and mediated through the community's own organizational structures, respecting the decisions, pace, and priorities of the participants. Data were generated through interviews, collective conversations, active listening, observation and territorial reconnaissance, as well as photographic records, audio recordings, field notes, and a field diary. The materials produced were subsequently organized and qualitatively systematized to identify aspects related to the community's history, ways of life, knowledge systems, sociocultural practices, forms of organization, territorial relations, and demands expressed by participants. Validation constituted a transversal principle throughout the research: all activities were previously discussed with and authorized by the community, while the objectives, decisions, and interpretations arising from the research were submitted to the consideration of those involved, allowing for additions, questions, and revisions throughout the process. Thus, feedback was not conceived merely as a final stage, but as part of the continuous reflection–action–reflection process characteristic of PAR.

Based on the assumptions presented in the previous sections, engagement with the Tururukari-Uka community was conceived not as a previously defined external intervention, but as a process of territorial mediation progressively constructed with the subjects of the territory. To operationalize this perspective, a methodological protocol was developed based on the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR), with listening, intercultural dialogue, recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems, participation in decision-making, and respect for the community's forms of organization, pace, and priorities as its guiding principles.

The protocol should not be understood as a rigid set of instructions or as a linear sequence of procedures. Rather, it constitutes an open and adaptive methodological framework, subject to revision throughout the research in response to collectively expressed demands, assessments, and decisions. This characteristic derives from the very conception of PAR, according to which knowledge and action are produced through a continuous process of engagement, reflection, intervention, evaluation, and reformulation. Accordingly, the stages described below represent interconnected moments within a process that seeks to reconcile methodological rigor, ethical commitment, and the agency of the subjects involved.

6.1 Preliminary Assessment and Engagement with the Territorial Context

The first stage consisted of reviewing and analyzing bibliographic and documentary materials on the Western Amazon, the Omágua/Kambebe people, and, particularly, the Tururukari-Uka community. The aim was to develop an initial understanding of the historical, territorial, and sociocultural dimensions associated with the community, avoiding an empirical approach that would be disconnected from its broader context.



In parallel, theoretical and methodological contributions, particularly from Latin American scholarship, concerning Participatory Action Research and work with communities and territorial actors were examined, with particular emphasis on Fals Borda (2008), Ramírez (2020; 2024), Pestaña and Alcázar (2000), and Moreno and Espadas (2002). This stage made it possible to establish the epistemological foundations that subsequently guided engagement, listening, and the co-construction of actions with the community.

6.2 Establishment of an Institutional Network for Mediation and Support

Before the first direct contact with Tururukari-Uka, efforts were made to establish a network of interlocution with institutions and organizations that have an established presence and relationships within the territory. These included the Coordination of Indigenous Peoples of the Middle Solimões and Surrounding Areas (COPIME), the Kambeba Association (ATK), the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), and public agencies working in the fields of science and technology.

The establishment of this network proved relevant in avoiding a decontextualized entry into the territory and in facilitating engagement mediated by pre-existing institutional relationships. EMBRAPA played a particularly important role in establishing initial contact between the researcher and the community leaders. Institutional mediation, however, was understood solely as a mechanism for facilitating initial engagement and did not replace the community's necessary consent, participation, and decision-making regarding the development of the research.

6.3 Territorial Engagement, Reconnaissance, and Active Listening

The first visit to the community was exploratory in nature and focused primarily on engagement and listening. Conversations were held with community leaders and other members of Tururukari-Uka to understand their perceptions of the territory, forms of organization, subsistence practices, cultural expressions, knowledge systems, demands, and expectations.

The community's spaces were also explored, including residences, cultivation areas, and collective-use facilities. Rather than producing merely a physical inventory of the territory, this engagement sought to understand the meanings attributed to spaces and practices by the subjects themselves. Active listening therefore constituted a fundamental methodological principle, seeking to shift the starting point of the research away from questions previously formulated by the researchers and toward the experiences and interpretations produced by the community.

6.4 Presentation, Negotiation, and Co-Construction of the Research

Following the initial engagement, the research proposal was presented to the community at a meeting organized in coordination with local leadership. This represented a decisive stage of



the protocol, as it made it possible to collectively discuss the objectives, possibilities, limitations, and forms of participation involved in the research.

It was established as a guiding principle that subsequent actions should be discussed with and validated by the community, respecting its pace, organizational forms, and priorities. Participation was therefore not conceived merely as the subjects' agreement to engage in activities planned in advance, but as their possibility of influencing the course of the research itself.

This principle is consistent with Moreno and Espadas' (2002) understanding that social participation does not simply involve mobilizing subjects, but entails collective reflection on the processes that shape social life and on the possibilities for transforming them. PAR thus assumes both an investigative and political dimension: it produces knowledge about a given reality while simultaneously strengthening subjects' capacity to interpret that reality and act upon it.

6.5 Documentation, Systematization, and the Construction of Collective Memory

Based on the initial listening process, the importance of systematizing knowledge, narratives, and records related to the community's history and practices was identified. Interviews, oral narratives, photographic records, historical documents, and field notes constitute sources through which aspects of Tururukari-Uka's social memory can be organized.

Systematization, however, is not understood merely as a technical procedure carried out by the researcher. From the perspective adopted here, it should constitute a shared process of organizing, interpreting, and validating information, through which the community can recognize, complement, question, and assign meaning to the knowledge produced. In addition to supporting the research, this material may contribute to educational, cultural, and collective-memory initiatives, subject to criteria established by the community itself regarding the recording, circulation, and use of such knowledge.

6.6 Intergenerational Actions with Children and Young People

Based on demands expressed by the community, the protocol incorporated activities with children and young people aimed at strengthening identity, memory, and Indigenous knowledge systems. The inclusion of this dimension highlights the importance of intergenerational transmission for cultural continuity and recognizes children and young people as active subjects in processes of reproducing and transforming territorialities.

The activities should be jointly defined with the community, avoiding the exclusive determination by researchers of content, formats, and pedagogical strategies. The aim is thus to create spaces in which different generations can participate in the production and circulation of knowledge concerning Omágua/Kambeba history, territory, cultural practices, and identity.



6.7 Techniques for Generating and Interpreting Information

The protocol provides for the combination of qualitative techniques compatible with the principles of PAR, including interviews, focus groups, life histories, participant observation, documentary analysis, field diaries, photographic records, and in-person and online meetings. The techniques employed at each stage are determined according to the specific objectives and conditions established jointly with the community.

The use of these instruments is not an end in itself. Their purpose is to create different possibilities for expression, listening, documentation, and interpretation of reality, adapting languages and procedures to the subjects and contexts in which the research takes place. Particular attention must be given to knowledge and information whose circulation may be considered restricted by the community, recognizing that not all knowledge shared during the research should necessarily be recorded, systematized, or disseminated.

6.8 The Reflection–Action–Reflection Cycle and Feedback as a Methodological Principle

The dynamic connecting the different stages of the protocol is grounded in the continuous movement of reflection–action–reflection. Each stage of the research produces knowledge that is discussed with the subjects involved and may generate new interpretations, redefine priorities, and lead to the reformulation of subsequent actions. The methodological process is therefore recursive rather than linear.

Within this process, feedback should not occur only at the end of the research. Rather, it constitutes a transversal principle present throughout the different stages, allowing partial interpretations and findings to be discussed, complemented, or revised by participants. The aim is to strengthen the community's agency in the production and validation of knowledge.

This perspective is supported by Pestaña and Alcázar (2000), for whom PAR is structured as a cyclical process of reflection–action–reflection and presupposes a subject-to-subject relationship, in which actors cease to occupy exclusively the position of research objects and instead participate critically in knowledge production and in possibilities for transforming reality.

7 The Protocol as a Territorial Mediation Framework

The stages described above can be summarized into a set of guiding principles for territorial mediation processes in Indigenous communities. Table 1 presents these elements, adapted from the contributions of Ramírez (2020) and articulated with the experience developed with the Tururukari-Uka community.



Table 1 – Guiding Principles of the Territorial Mediation Protocol Based on Participatory Action Research

Principles and Actions	Methodological Strategies
Establish clear, ethical, and transparent communication	Prioritize the dialogue of knowledges and create conditions for subjects to express their perceptions, knowledge, and priorities
Jointly define relationships and responsibilities between researchers and community	Adapt languages, procedures, and interaction strategies to the sociocultural characteristics of the subjects
Recognize socioproductive, cultural, and territorial characteristics	Build participatory records and systematizations, which may result in inventories, memorials, or other collectively defined products
Foster a multidimensional understanding of the territory	Utilize contextualized methodologies capable of articulating social, cultural, environmental, economic, and political dimensions
Understand previous experiences and studies	Build relationships of trust and avoid repeating interventions that are disconnected from the community's trajectory
Identify potentialities, demands, and integrating axes	Collectively elaborate possibilities for action and establish priorities from the subjects' perspective
Avoid decontextualized practices and external judgments about ways of life	Exercise alterity, listening, and respect for epistemological and cultural differences
Provide feedback throughout the process	Submit records, interpretations, and proposals to community discussion and validation

Source: Authors, adapted from Ramírez (2020).

The choice of Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the foundation of the methodological proposal therefore stems from the understanding that strategies aimed at valuing sociocultural and socio-environmental diversity cannot be developed without the effective participation of the subjects who constitute territories. Knowledge is thus understood as the outcome of a relationship among different subjects and knowledge systems, in which researchers and social actors interact in interpreting a complex reality and constructing possibilities for action (Ramírez, 2020).



Fals Borda (2008), Ramírez (2020), Pestaña and Alcázar (2000), and Moreno and Espadas (2002) converge, although through different formulations, toward a conception of research in which social actors play an active role in identifying problems, producing and interpreting information, making decisions, and engaging in processes of reflection and action. From this perspective, the dialogue among knowledge systems does not mean incorporating local knowledge merely as supplementary information to scientific knowledge, but rather establishing conditions for a less asymmetrical relationship among different ways of knowing.

The notion of *vivencia*, developed by Fals Borda (2008), contributes particularly to this understanding. The author emphasizes the need to construct relationships characterized by empathy, engagement, and the pursuit of greater symmetry between researchers and social subjects. *Vivencia* makes it possible to listen to discourses produced from different intellectual and cultural matrices, recognizing them as constitutive of the knowledge-production process itself. This perspective converges with the principle discussed above that conducting research with Indigenous peoples requires shifting away from the traditional relationship between the one who interprets and the one who is interpreted.

From an epistemological perspective, PAR also challenges the rigid separation between knowledge production and the transformation of reality. According to Balcázar (2003), participation can foster processes through which subjects develop a critical understanding of their own reality, value their investigative capacities, and recognize themselves as agents capable of participating in processes of change. Research therefore does not end with the production of diagnoses or the publication of findings, but incorporates a dimension of collective learning and the strengthening of actors' capacities.

In the case of Tururukari-Uka, the proposed protocol seeks to materialize these assumptions through the articulation of listening, intercultural dialogue, participation, shared systematization, action, and feedback. Its methodological contribution does not lie in claiming to establish a universal model for interventions in Indigenous communities, since each people and territory has its own histories, institutions, knowledge systems, and forms of organization. Rather, its contribution lies in systematizing adaptable principles and procedures that may assist researchers and institutions in constructing processes of engagement and territorial mediation that are less hierarchical, more reflexive, and more sensitive to sociocultural specificities.

Thus, the methodological framework developed with the Tururukari-Uka community seeks to shift research *on* subjects toward research constructed *with* subjects. The reflection–action–reflection cycle constitutes the organizing element of this process, enabling diagnosis, interpretation, action, and evaluation to continuously inform and reshape one another. More than



a research technique, Participatory Action Research is understood in this study as the epistemological and ethical foundation of territorial mediation, guiding the co-construction of knowledge and recognizing Indigenous actors as subjects of knowledge, decision-making, and transformation within their own territories.

The development of the territorial mediation protocol constitutes one of the main outcomes of the research. Its configuration did not result from the application of a previously defined model; rather, it was progressively developed and adjusted through engagement with the Tururukari-Uka community, interactions within the territory, and demands identified throughout the process. The two in-person visits, the online activity with young people, and engagement with approximately 30 participants made it possible to understand that territorial mediation required procedures sufficiently flexible to incorporate the community's own pace, forms of organization, knowledge systems, and decision-making processes.

A first outcome was the establishment of an institutional mediation and support network involving Indigenous organizations and institutions working in the territory. This articulation preceded field entry and contributed to ensuring that engagement did not occur in a decontextualized manner, facilitating prior knowledge of local dynamics and the establishment of relationships of trust. The experience thus demonstrated that entering the territory constitutes, in itself, a stage of mediation and should be developed through recognized interlocutors while respecting local forms of organization.

Institutional and community engagement represented a second relevant outcome. During the first visit, the interview with a community leader and the conversation with community members made it possible to present and discuss the proposal rather than simply communicate activities defined in advance. During the second visit, engagement was expanded through an interview with the Indigenous schoolteacher and the new community leader, as well as conversations with the *pajé* and other community members. The change in leadership during the process also demonstrated the need for the protocol to incorporate the capacity to adapt to internal transformations within the territory, avoiding an exclusive reliance on a single interlocutor.

Territorial reconnaissance and listening to community members made it possible to identify knowledge systems, practices, forms of organization, and demands that would have been difficult to apprehend solely through bibliographic or documentary research. Interviews, conversations, observations, and field records demonstrated that the territory could not be treated merely as the location in which the research was conducted, but rather as a constitutive dimension of the methodological process itself. Thus, knowing the territory also came to mean understanding the social, cultural, environmental, and symbolic relationships that shape community life.



Another outcome was the incorporation of an intergenerational dimension into the mediation process. The online activity conducted with young people broadened participation beyond the leaders and adults initially involved, making it possible to incorporate additional perspectives on identity, memory, knowledge systems, and the community's future. This experience reinforced the need to include different generations and social positions in the construction of actions, avoiding reducing engagement with the community exclusively to its formal representatives. The participation of young people also highlighted the potential of future actions focused on the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and the valorization of Omágua/Kambeba memory and identity.

The experience also resulted in a redefinition of the logic initially envisaged for the actions. Engagement with the community demonstrated that a proposal conceived externally could not simply be implemented according to a predetermined plan. Activities had to be discussed, authorized, and adjusted in accordance with participants' demands, possibilities, and decisions. Flexibility therefore ceased to represent merely an operational characteristic of the research and became a principle of the protocol: objectives and instruments may be revised whenever interaction reveals new demands or when the community considers reformulation necessary.

These results made it possible to systematize the guiding principles of the territorial mediation protocol: gradual and contextualized engagement; the construction of relationships of trust; community consent; active listening; recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems; intercultural dialogue; participation of different subjects and generations; respect for local forms of organization; ongoing negotiation of actions; methodological flexibility; shared documentation and systematization; feedback and community validation; and continuity of the reflection–action–reflection process. The protocol therefore constitutes not merely an instrument designed to guide future stages of the research, but also an outcome produced through the research experience itself and the relationships established with Tururukari-Uka.

In this regard, the main lesson arising from the process is that territorial mediation does not precede relationships with subjects, nor can it be fully planned outside the territory. It is constructed through relationships, as researchers and the community establish interfaces, recognize differences, negotiate possibilities, and jointly redefine the pathways of the research. The protocol systematizes these lessons without seeking to transform them into a rigid or universal sequence. Its contribution lies precisely in offering guiding principles that can be adapted to the sociocultural, political, and territorial particularities of each context, while maintaining as its fundamental premise the construction of research *with* the subjects of the territory rather than merely *about* them.



8. Final Considerations

The analysis of the experience developed with the Tururukari-Uka Indigenous community in Manacapuru, Amazonas, demonstrates that understanding development processes in Indigenous contexts in the Amazon requires moving beyond interpretations that treat territory merely as physical space, a reservoir of natural resources, or a setting for external interventions. Territory simultaneously constitutes a space of life, memory, ancestry, identity, knowledge production, social relations, and material and symbolic reproduction. In the case of the Omágua/Kambebe people, this dimension is particularly significant given a historical trajectory marked by processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, invisibilization, and, simultaneously, strategies of resistance, identity reconstruction, and territorial reaffirmation.

The Tururukari-Uka experience further demonstrates that Indigenous knowledge systems cannot be understood as static elements belonging to the past. Knowledge related to agriculture, fishing, extractivism, plants, natural cycles, spirituality, handicraft production, and forms of community organization is continuously transmitted, reinterpreted, and updated in response to social and environmental transformations. In this sense, the community is not merely a repository of traditional knowledge, but an active subject in the production, reproduction, and re-signification of territorially situated knowledge. This finding has important implications for the ways in which universities, public institutions, and other external actors establish relationships with Indigenous peoples.

It is in this regard that the main contribution of this article lies: the proposal and systematization of a methodological framework designed to guide territorial mediation processes in Indigenous contexts, developed from the experience with the Tururukari-Uka community and grounded in the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR). The protocol developed does not seek to constitute a universal model or one that can be automatically replicated across different communities. Rather, its contribution lies in systematizing adaptable principles and procedures—territorial engagement, the establishment of support networks, active listening, intercultural dialogue, negotiation of actions, recognition of local knowledge systems, shared systematization, feedback, and reflection–action–reflection cycles—that may contribute to less hierarchical relationships among researchers, institutions, and territorial actors.

The experience analyzed makes it possible to understand territorial mediation not as the transfer of knowledge, technologies, or previously formulated solutions, but as a relational process in which different subjects, knowledge systems, interests, and capacities are brought into



interaction. From this perspective, mediation means creating conditions for dialogue, recognizing differences and asymmetries, fostering processes of reciprocal learning, and enabling needs, potentials, and alternatives to be defined together with the subjects who inhabit and produce the territory. This understanding shifts the logic from intervention *on* the community toward the construction of processes *with* the community.

Participatory Action Research proved consistent with this perspective by challenging the rigid separation between researcher and research participant and recognizing territorial actors as subjects in knowledge production. However, the experience also demonstrates that the use of PAR alone does not guarantee horizontality, agency, or social transformation. Participation must be constructed throughout the process and depends on the quality of the relationships established, trust, the community's own pace, the concrete possibilities for participants to influence decisions, and, above all, the researchers' willingness to reconsider initially formulated objectives, procedures, and interpretations. PAR is therefore configured less as a predetermined set of techniques and more as an epistemological, ethical, and political stance toward the shared production of knowledge.

This discussion has implications for the field of Regional Development. The Tururukari-Uka experience reinforces the need to understand development from the perspective of territorial diversity and the capacities of territorial actors, moving away from approaches that assume homogeneous trajectories or solutions formulated externally to territories. In Indigenous contexts in the Amazon, development cannot be separated from autonomy, territorial protection, sociocultural reproduction, the valorization of knowledge systems, biodiversity conservation, and the capacity of Indigenous peoples to participate in decisions affecting their ways of life. From this perspective, sociocultural and socio-environmental diversity ceases to be a peripheral element of development strategies and becomes one of their structuring dimensions.

Likewise, the conservation of Amazonian biodiversity cannot be separated from the protection of the peoples and territories that have historically contributed to its production and maintenance. The practices and knowledge systems of Tururukari-Uka demonstrate the existence of interdependent relationships among territory, culture, nature, and social reproduction. Recognizing this relationship means moving beyond approaches that position Indigenous peoples exclusively as beneficiaries of environmental policies and recognizing them as territorial actors who possess knowledge systems, capacities for action, and their own ways of managing and assigning meaning to nature.

The results achieved should nevertheless be considered in light of the study's limitations. The period of immersion in the community was constrained by necessary ethical and institutional



procedures and by circumstances that affected the implementation of in-person activities, limiting the scope of some actions initially planned. Activities with children and young people, particularly relevant for understanding processes of intergenerational knowledge transmission and identity strengthening, require greater continuity. Furthermore, the current stage of the research does not yet allow for a longitudinal assessment of the effects of the protocol and mediation processes on the community's individual, collective, and institutional capacities. For this reason, the results presented should be understood as emerging from an ongoing process rather than as conclusive evidence of social transformation.

At the same time, these limitations open an agenda for continued research. Future studies may longitudinally follow the processes initiated through this experience, examining how mediation actions are appropriated, transformed, or potentially rejected by the community itself. The participatory construction of a community memorial, involving particularly children, young people, and community leaders, may contribute to intergenerational memory transmission through resources such as oral narratives, audiovisual materials, written production, social cartographies, and heritage education, provided that these are defined and authorized by the community. Likewise, expanding networks of interlocution with other Indigenous communities, representative organizations, universities, and public institutions may enable comparative learning about different forms of territorial mediation in the Amazon.

Finally, the Tururukari-Uka experience demonstrates that there can be no territorial mediation without listening, nor effective participation without recognizing the capacity of subjects to produce knowledge and make decisions concerning their own territories. The methodological challenge lies not only in developing better tools for researching Indigenous communities, but also in rethinking the very relationships through which academic knowledge is produced. In this sense, the main contribution of the protocol presented here lies less in establishing stages to be replicated than in proposing principles capable of guiding a reflexive, intercultural, and territorially situated research practice. By bringing together territorial mediation, dialogue among knowledge systems, and Participatory Action Research, the study points toward a perspective on Regional Development in which Indigenous peoples are not regarded as objects or recipients of development actions, but as subjects of knowledge, decision-making, and the construction of their own visions for the future.

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