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Ethnoecological Analysis of Bacuri (*Platonia insignis* Mart.) Extractivism in the Chapada Limpa Reserve (Maranhão, Brazil)

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Abstract

A central issue of agroecological research is the combination of scientific and traditional knowledge, within a pluralistic perspective and covering both natural and social sciences. This way it is possible to optimise agroecosystem functioning and maintain harmony between society and environment. The rural ‘territory’ is key within this context, and those production techniques should have priority that are capable of providing a future closely connected with the societies in which they live and the ecosystems in which they produce. In Maranhão State, eastern periphery of Amazonia, there are 5 extractivist reserves, one of which is the Chapada Limpa Reserve, located in Chapadinha county, central Maranhão State. This project strives to gain an understanding on how local population interacts with local environmental resources, based on their traditional knowledge, and how their management affects the natural resources in the environment. For this purpose, we mapped the most significant areas of occurrence of the bacuri fruit tree (Clusiaceae – *Platonia insignis* Mart.) in 4 communities of the reserve: Juçaral II, Chapada Limpa I, Chapada Limpa II and Chapada do Riachão. We established our selection of these 4 areas as main areas of bacuri extractivism based on informal interviews with local population at initiation of this project. We subsequently applied semi-structured questionnaires, as well as participative observation, botanic sampling of vascular plants at flowering, plant physical parameters (height, diameter, thickness and weight of bark, seed weight, pulp weight, number of seeds per plant) and chemical indicators (pH, total acidity, titratable acidity and degree brix) of fruits, as well as the quantification of plant population structure based on phytosociological methods. Our preliminary results confirm the prominent role of *Platonia insignis* in our study area and thus confirms its ecological and cultural importance. However, management does impact the biodiversity of the associated vegetation.

Keywords: Extractivism, Maranhão State, *Platonia insignis*