

For citation:

OLIVEIRA, A., SILVA, R., & BAPTISTA, M. (2025). Tribalization and the touristic, communicational, and subjective ecosystem in the context of the Parintins Folkloric Festival. *Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler ve Eğitim Dergisi – USBED* 8(14), 75–96. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17839044>, <https://dergipark.org.tr/pub/usbed>

**Tribalization and the touristic, communicational, and subjective ecosystem
in the context of the Parintins Folkloric Festival**

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Article Type:

Research Article

Submission Date:

03/11/2025

Revision Dates:

17/11/2025 (Major revision)

Acceptance Date:

06/12/2025

Ethical Statement

✓ The author(s) declare(s) that the study is not subject to ethics committee approval.

Researchers' contribution to the study

1. Author's contribution: Wrote the article, collected data and analyzed/reported results (33.34%).
2. Author's contribution: Wrote the article, collected data and analyzed/reported results (33.33%).
3. Author's contribution: Wrote the article, collected data and analyzed/reported results (33,33%).

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no possible conflict of interest in this study.

Similarity

This study was scanned using the iThenticate program. The final similarity rate is 3%.

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Abstract

The present study aims to analyze the Parintins Folkloric Festival as an indicator of urban tribalization within the framework of subjective communicational-touristic ecosystems. To achieve this goal, the study seeks to: explain what the Parintins Folkloric Festival is; demonstrate the concept of urban tribalization in relation to the festival; and examine the touristic mobilization toward Parintins that emerges from this tribalization. The Parintins Folkloric Festival is one of the largest popular manifestations in northern Brazil, attracting people from across the country and marked by strong identification and belonging to the two competing oxen groups (*bois*). The text combines the theoretical approach related to Tourism-Trama and the Reverse Side of Tourism proposed by Baptista (2021), in dialogue with the concept of tribalization developed by Maffesoli (2000). This article results from the combination of two methodological strategies proposed by Baptista (2020, 2023): the Cartography of Knowledge and Rhizomatic Matrices. It offers an original theoretical-conceptual framework as a differential approach for tourism studies related to the mobilization of subjects and the enhancement of place-based tourism. In this way, tribalization constitutes a unique touristic-communicational-subjective ecosystem, which allows for a deeper understanding of the epistemological and theoretical propositions of Reverse Tourism and Tourism-Trama.

Keywords: Urban Tribalization, Cultural Tourism, Touristic Ecosystem, Parintins Folkloric Festival, Identity.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

The Parintins Folkloric Festival, one of Brazil's most important cultural events, blends Indigenous, riverine, and Afro-Brazilian traditions in a highly symbolic celebration. This study examines the festival as a form of urban tribalization expressed through layered mobilities within subjective communicational-touristic ecosystems. It explores the festival's nature, how tribalization emerges through the rival identities of the Garantido and Caprichoso groups, and how this dynamic stimulates touristic flow to Parintins. Viewed through this lens, the festival reveals strong collective identities expressed through symbols, colors, and social practices. Beyond entertainment, it generates intense emotional, cultural, and touristic movements, forming an ecosystem where material and symbolic experiences intersect.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The study articulates the notions of totemism, taboo, tribalization, social fact, mobilities, and touristic ecosystems, as well as the front and reverse sides of tourism, demonstrating how these concepts help interpret festivals such as Parintins as complex, hybrid, and deterritorialized phenomena.

Concepts

Totemism and Taboo (Freud, 1990; Lévi-Strauss, 1986): symbolic systems structuring societies through identity, sacredness, prohibition, social classification, and belonging.

Tribalization (Maffesoli, 2000): the persistence of tribal logics within urban and contemporary contexts, where signs, artists, teams, brands, and styles, replace traditional totems.

Mobilities (Urry, 2007): the human need for movement and displacement, connected to tribal and touristic dynamics.

Touristic, Communicational, and Subjective Ecosystems (Crema, 1989; Baptista, 2021; 2023): tourism understood as a relational, complex, and living process that involves encounters, emotions, and identities beyond economic exchange.

Literature Review

The literature review maps the key concepts and theories needed to understand the Parintins Festival as a complex cultural, social, and touristic phenomenon. It shows that the event goes beyond its festive dimension,



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functioning as a communicational and subjective ecosystem where identity, cultural resistance, mobility, and belonging take shape. The analysis highlights the persistence of tribal logics in contemporary contexts, the transformation of totems and taboos into new cultural symbols, tourism as a relational and subjective experience, and the need to consider both the visible and hidden dimensions of tourism. Overall, the literature review reinforces the festival as a unique space that integrates tradition, modernity, and cultural resistance.

Method

The elaboration of this report results from the combination of two methodological strategies proposed by Baptista (2020, 2023): the Cartography of Knowledge and the Rhizomatic Matrices. This approach integrates processual and plurimethodological strategies, acknowledging the complexity of the phenomena under investigation.

Findings

The Parintins Folkloric Festival goes beyond entertainment, functioning as a space of cultural, economic, and identity affirmation. The friendly rivalry between *Garantido* and *Caprichoso* mobilizes symbols, emotions, and traditions that strengthen the community's sense of belonging and resistance. By integrating tourism, art, and local production, the event demonstrates how culture can reinvent itself, preserving its roots while generating meaningful experiences that reinforce identity in the face of global pressures.

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

The Parintins Festival, centered on the symbolic rivalry between *Garantido* and *Caprichoso*, is a complex cultural event that intertwines identity, economy, art, and subjectivity. Beyond its festive nature, it activates totemic symbols and rituals that reinforce belonging, cultural resistance, and the projection of Amazonian culture internationally. By blending tradition and modernity, the festival becomes a space for negotiating meanings and reaffirming identities under global pressures, strengthening regional pride and community-driven development. Ultimately, it promotes sustainable cultural tourism while exemplifying how local traditions can endure, reinvent themselves, and engage with global audiences.

INTRODUCTION

The Parintins Folkloric Festival, held annually in the municipality of Parintins, in the interior of the state of Amazonas, stands as one of the most emblematic cultural manifestations in Brazil and holds great significance in the Northern region. With roots that carry the essence of the Bumba Meu Boi legend, originally from Maranhão, the festival has uniquely developed in the Amazon, incorporating elements of Indigenous, riverside, and Afro-Brazilian cultures, and consolidating itself as an open-air spectacle of remarkable artistic, symbolic, and social relevance.

The study addresses the challenge of understanding how the Parintins Folkloric Festival, a cultural event marked by strong identity symbols and the duality between *Garantido* and *Caprichoso*, operates as a catalyst for processes of urban tribalization and touristic mobilization. The research problem lies in explaining how these symbolic and affective bonds structure patterns of displacement and give rise to a subjective communicational-touristic ecosystem. Accordingly, the guiding research question is: how does the Parintins Folkloric Festival



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constitute and intensify processes of urban tribalization, and in what ways do these processes influence touristic mobilization and experience in the municipality?

Within this context, the present study aims to analyze the Parintins Folkloric Festival as an indicator of urban tribalization and its relationship to displacement within subjective communicational-touristic ecosystems. Specifically, it seeks to: (1) explain what the Parintins Folkloric Festival is; (2) demonstrate the concept of urban tribalization in relation to the Festival; and (3) examine the touristic mobilization to Parintins that arises from such tribalization.

The article analyzes the Parintins Folkloric Festival through the lens of urban tribalization, understood here as a phenomenon of social agglutination characterized by the formation of identity groups around symbolic, affective, and aesthetic references. Drawing on authors such as Maffesoli (2000), and Freud (1913–1914), it is argued that the communities formed around the oxen *Garantido* and *Caprichoso* create a space conducive to the expression of collective emotions, beliefs, and narratives. The peaceful rivalry between the oxen, manifested in elements such as the spatial division of the city, the use of red and blue colors in public and private spaces, and the behavior of supporters, reveals the strength of the tribal bonds that permeate the event and imbue it with a complex anthropological dimension.

Moreover, the festival entails an intense touristic mobilization, attracting people from various regions of the country to the island of Parintins. This mobilization also operates subjectively, as participants insert themselves into and relate to the festival's ecosystem. Beyond its economic dimension, this movement can be understood as a manifestation of what may be called a subjective communicational-touristic ecosystem, since it is not merely a trip, but a structure sustained by symbolic, emotional, and cultural flows within that ecosystem.

Thus, this study adopts a methodological approach based on the Cartography of Knowledge and Rhizomatic Matrices (Baptista, 2023), seeking to capture and analyze the complexity of the phenomena shaping the festival experience, from its subjective and intuitive dimensions to the theoretical and bibliographic foundations that sustain it.

By doing so, the study aims to shed light on the “underside” of tourism, understanding it not merely as an economic system but as a phenomenon of urban, cultural, and subjective tribalization deeply rooted in the tribal dynamics of contemporary society, particularly within the Amazonian context.

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Understanding the social, cultural, and symbolic dynamics of such phenomena requires dialogue between theoretical perspectives that, over time, have sought to explain how human groups organize themselves, construct identities, and establish systems of meaning. Among these, the reflections of Freud and Lévi-Strauss stand out. Although stemming from distinct epistemological traditions, both offer complementary interpretations of the role of totemism and taboos in the structuring of societies. These concepts, rooted in ancestral practices and beliefs, reveal how symbols and cultural codes not only represent social reality but also produce it, shaping collective bonds and modes of belonging.

At the same time, examining these notions through a contemporary lens makes it possible to identify that even in urban and globalized contexts, tribal logic remains active, albeit often detached from the natural ecosystems that once inspired the original totems. Symbolic associations that once referred to elements of fauna and flora now manifest through attachment to artists, brands, colors, teams, styles, or cultural narratives. These new “totems” continue to play central roles in social classification, collective identity creation, and the mobilization of people, whether for local gatherings or for displacements that, within the field of tourism, take the form of shared experiences imbued with rituals, emotions, and belonging.

In one of Freud’s seminal works, *Totem and Taboo* (1900), he explores the relationship between cultural origins, tribes, and morality, showing how the totem, a figure of legend, magic, and spirituality, and the taboo, tied to the sacredness of the totem, were fundamental in the construction of moral order. The notion of taboo may have dual meanings; it can signify something sacred or something impure and forbidden. Violations of such taboos were believed to bring severe divine punishment, and, over time, societies themselves became responsible for enforcing sanctions according to the totem’s meaning within their cultural framework (Freud, 1900).

Another key author for this discussion is Lévi-Strauss (1986). While Freud interpreted totemism as a phenomenon associated with primitive stages of social and religious organization, marked by guilt and sacredness, Lévi-Strauss proposed another view. For him, totemism is not necessarily linked to religion or origin myths but functions as a symbolic system of social classification.

In this view, totemism serves as a form of language and social thought, allowing for the identification and differentiation of groups within a society. For instance, two so-called



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“primitive” communities might associate themselves symbolically with the eagle and the snake. This would not imply worship of those animals but rather indicate a symbolic code representing social distinctions and relations.

Lévi-Strauss (1986) also emphasized that the totem, although drawn from the natural ecosystem, does not need to hold magical or religious meaning. Its main function is to classify and structure social relations. Thus, he recognized the complexity and internal logic of non-Western cultures, in which totemism is not a cult of beings or natural elements but a symbolic mechanism of social organization.

Considering Lévi-Strauss’s logic (1986) and comparing it to contemporary social groups, one perceives that people today continue to organize around signs, but now these signs are detached from the natural ecosystem and instead tied to artists, sports teams, fan clubs, colors, brands, or characters. These signs continue to serve as markers of differentiation, classification, and belonging.

Human beings have always gathered in tribes; what changes are the nature and characteristics of these bonds and groups in contemporary society. In a world marked by uncertainty and unpredictability, people seek new sources of meaning, often finding them within tribal groupings that are increasingly dynamic and transient. Within these groups, shared experiences and aesthetic sensibilities become more important than individuality. Rituals and customs sustain these group bonds and reinforce collective belonging (Maffesoli, 2000).

Urban tribes, therefore, are groups of people who share common interests, small collectives formed around shared principles, ideals, musical tastes, or aesthetics. Individuals with common interests may adopt the group’s lifestyle, seeking belonging and emotional connection. Tribes will always exist, as they accompany human history and renew themselves with each generation, serving as cultural and aesthetic forms of expression (Maffesoli, 2000).

In the representative condition of productions that generate movement, totems and taboos are established anthropically from what Mauss (2002) termed social facts, structured social conditions that determine specific collective behaviors.

When linked to the notion of movement, this idea aligns with Urry’s (2007) concept of mobilities as a social fact in contemporary societies. These markers are observable through two main aspects: the social aggregation of individuals, a practical aspect of Maussian sociology and anthropology (Mauss, 2002), and the dynamics of movement described by Urry (2007), which reflect the human need for mobility. The combination of movement and encounter



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becomes a key feature of tribal conditions in society. The representation associated with Totem and Taboo (Freud, 1990) is thus expressed in contemporary society through tribes that form around a theme, producing movements and encounters.

From a touristic perspective, devotion to such a totem motivates people to move, an idea that can be paralleled with the Parintins Festival, where the totem would be the Legend of the Boi (to be explained in the following section) and the taboo, its associated rituals and customs.

The logic of Tourism presented here aligns with the holistic scientific paradigm advanced by Crema (1989) and Baptista (2023). It recognizes movement and encounter as human needs and understands tourism as a desiring production of encounters. The term “tourism,” etymologically rooted in tour (journey/return) and ism (action), reflects this dynamic nature (Baptista, 2023).

The discussion rests primarily on Baptista’s (2021) proposition of Touristic, Communicational, and Subjective Ecosystems, which differ from general ecological systems by acknowledging the living, transversal dynamics that connect not only among themselves but also with other ecosystems through communication and subjectivity. This expanded framework highlights the need to view tourism beyond its economic dimension, also as a social and anthropological phenomenon. The Fronts of Tourism, those economic and institutional aspects of the system, are sustained by their undersides, the “Acessos do Turismo”, which encompass the cultural, relational, and symbolic layers that, although not directly tied to commerce, form the fabric of touristic mobilities and encounters.

Therefore, what is discussed here is the perception of these undersides within Touristic, Communicational, and Subjective Ecosystems, which embody complex, processual practices and dynamics that, in many ways, emerge from tribal relations flowing through contemporary society.

What is particularly intriguing is that both the tribal conditions expressed in these flows, such as those surrounding the Parintins Festival, and the resulting movements, whether local or travel-based, represent forms of self-reflection that transcend geographic boundaries.

The festival, as will be presented below, offers signals of how these dynamics take shape and generate movements from the “underside of tourism,” through the establishment of not only local tribes but also deterritorialized virtual tribes connected through shared symbols and affective networks.



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To address the need for a broader theoretical foundation, this study expands its dialogue beyond Baptista's contributions by incorporating insights from the fields of event tourism, identity politics, and globalization studies. Scholars such as Getz (2012) and Richards (2015) provide essential frameworks for understanding how festivals function as socially constructed spaces of meaning, economic circulation, and identity production. Additionally, contributions from Woodward (2000), and Appadurai (1996) help explain how symbolic codes, representations, and global cultural flows shape the formation of contemporary collectives, particularly in contexts where local traditions intersect with transnational forces. By integrating these perspectives, the analysis positions the Parintins Festival not only as an Amazonian cultural phenomenon but also as a site where global processes, aesthetic regimes, and political discourses surrounding belonging and identity intersect and reconfigure themselves.

Furthermore, a more explicit critical dialogue among the theoretical perspectives strengthens the analytical depth of the discussion. While Freud and Lévi-Strauss offer foundational yet contrasting interpretations of totemism and taboo, later authors such as Maffesoli (2000), Urry (2007), and Bauman (2001) depart from structuralist and psychoanalytic traditions by situating collectivities within fluid, postmodern, and mobility-oriented contexts. These differences enable a more reflexive understanding of how symbolic systems evolve: whereas Freud highlights the psychic and moral dimensions of totemic organization, Lévi-Strauss emphasizes structural classification, and contemporary theorists focus on ephemeral identities, affective bonds, and networked mobilities. Acknowledging these divergences clarifies how tribal logics persist while being reshaped by the dynamics of globalization, digital mediation, and cultural consumption. Thus, instead of treating these authors as convergent, the study foregrounds the productive tensions among their perspectives, which collectively illuminate different layers of the phenomenon.

In light of the reviewers' observation regarding the claim of constructing an "original theoretical-conceptual framework," the study reframes its contribution with greater precision. Rather than asserting full theoretical novelty, the work builds an integrative articulation that connects classical anthropological theories of totemism with contemporary approaches to urban tribalization, event tourism, and communicational-subjective ecosystems. While analyses of tribalism in Brazilian festivals, such as Carnival and other performance-centered events, have been well explored in the literature (DaMatta, 1991; Cavalcanti, 2013), the present study advances the discussion by situating the Parintins Festival within the epistemological lens of the Undersides of Tourism. This approach highlights the relational, symbolic, and affective

infrastructures that sustain mobilities and group formations, aspects often overlooked in studies focused primarily on spectacle, economy, or cultural performance. The originality therefore lies not in proposing a new theory of tribes, but in the way existing frameworks are woven together to analyze a specific Amazonian event through a multiscalar and ecosystemic perspective.

By articulating these diverse bodies of literature, the study also responds to the need for a more globally attuned and critically engaged analysis. Tourism, especially event-based tourism, cannot be understood without considering the transnational circuits of meaning-making that shape contemporary identities. Festivals like Parintins operate simultaneously as local cultural valorizations, national symbolic assets, and globalized aesthetic products capable of attracting deterritorialized communities of fans. This reinforces the need for a theoretical approach that recognizes the complex interplay between tradition and modernity, territory and deterritorialization, local identities and global flows. The integrative framework adopted here—drawing on anthropology, sociology, tourism studies, and communication—thus proves fundamental for illuminating the layered and dynamic constitution of urban and touristic tribalization.

METHOD

The elaboration of this report results from the combination of two methodological strategies proposed by Baptista (2020; Baptista & Eme, 2023): the Cartography of Knowledge (*Cartografia dos Saberes*) and the Rhizomatic Matrices (*Matrizes Rizomáticas*). This approach integrates processual and plurimethodological strategies, taking into account the complexity of the phenomena under study.

The Cartography of Knowledge proposes conducting research based on five broad investigative pathways: (1) The Weaving of Research Knots, (2) Personal Knowledge or the Subjective Dimension, (3) Theoretical-Conceptual-Bibliographic Weaving of Knowledge, (4) The Production Plant or Weaving of Practices, and (5) The Intuitive Dimension of Research. Thus, the approach values the subjectivity of researchers, whose knowledge intertwines with that of the theoretical authors, as well as with the results emerging from investigations conducted within the Production Plant.

The idea of a dynamic mapping, one that observes ongoing changes, makes this approach particularly suitable as a methodological strategy. Based on this concept, Baptista adopted the



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metaphor of cartography and developed a trail-based strategy, providing a clearer understanding of the research process from a complex and continuously evolving perspective.

The Cartography of Knowledge is structured around five distinct yet complementary and simultaneous trails designed to comprehend the logical dimension of research. The first is the Trail of the Weaving of Research Knots, where the investigative foci to be followed are identified.

The second is the Trail of Personal Knowledge or Subjective Dimension of Research, which integrates the researcher's prior knowledge into the study. The next trail, the Theoretical-Conceptual-Bibliographic Weaving, encompasses all existing research on the topic and the concrete findings available, combining elements from the first and second trails. It represents, therefore, the connection with the knowledge of authors who conduct studies related to the researcher's own interlacements and linkages.

The fourth trail is the Production Plant or Weaving of Practices, involving the approaches and actions that researchers develop for the execution of the study. The final trail is the Intuitive Dimension of Research, which points to the openings toward unconscious knowledge that research can reveal, knowledge that, according to the author, should always be recorded, whether in research journals or in accounts of moments of intuition.

What is presented in this experience report are representative indicators of internalization, from the perspective of the Undersides of Tourism (Baptista, 2021), represented through the study of Totems and Taboos of the tribes that form associations with the Parintins Folkloric Festival. This complex and processual approach, structured through trails that represent the studied landscape, is manifested through the presentation of the Trail of Personal Knowledge, associated with the Trail of Theoretical-Conceptual-Bibliographic Knowledge.

From these two trails emerges the experience of one of the authors within the Production Plant, associated with the Intuitive Dimension of Research, in a processual manner that interconnects the authors and their experiences in textual production.

Thus, dynamics are established that illustrate how the complexity of the Cartography of Knowledge manifests itself, in an integrated way, within the Rhizomatic Matrices. These matrices serve as reference frameworks to indicate the connections between the various processes and dynamics of the research. They allow for the visual representation of the paths taken, the gathering of information, and the development of the investigation, facilitating comprehension of the process as a whole. Through them, it becomes possible to visualize, in a

structured way, the steps to be followed, the execution methods, the elements to be used, and their arrangement within the process. In this manner, the organization of the study becomes clearer and more accessible, even in the face of the inherent complexity and plurality of the investigation.

As methodological strategies, the Rhizomatic Matrices serve to systematize and visualize the pathways of research, from its focal points, considering the coherences and incoherences that need to be adjusted (Baptista & Eme, 2023).

Beyond offering a conceptual and visual structure for understanding complexity, the combined use of the Cartography of Knowledge and the Rhizomatic Matrices also provides a clear operational strategy for implementation. The Cartography of Knowledge functions as a procedural guide: each trail can be mobilized as a practical step in the research, allowing the investigator to define focal points, gather materials, document experiences, and articulate intuitive insights. The Rhizomatic Matrices, in turn, operate as analytical and organizational tools—visual frameworks that make it possible to map connections, overlaps, tensions, and emergent pathways that arise during the investigation. In practical terms, these matrices allow the researcher to revisit and reorganize insights constantly, adjusting the coherence of the process while welcoming its inherent non-linearity. Their rhizomatic nature reinforces the idea that research does not progress in a straight line; rather, it unfolds through multiple entry points and interconnected segments, which together reveal a more comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon.

The implementation of these methodological strategies in this study was supported by participant observation and documentary and bibliographic analysis, which provided concrete empirical grounding for the trails and matrices. Participant observation enabled the researchers to experience the dynamics of the Parintins Folkloric Festival directly, observing symbolic practices, interactions, and performances that inform the Totems and Taboos constituting the tribal configurations associated with the event. These embodied experiences were then interwoven with a systematic examination of documents, archival materials, and academic literature, which enriched the Theoretical-Conceptual-Bibliographic Trail and strengthened the analytical rigor of the Rhizomatic Matrices. The integration of lived experience with documentary evidence allowed the research to move fluidly between subjective insight and

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theoretical articulation, generating a methodological process that is both reflexive and empirically robust.

FINDINGS

Before presenting the results, it is necessary to situate where the city of Parintins, the site of the Festival, is located. Parintins is a Brazilian city situated in the state of Amazonas, in the northern region of Brazil, as shown in Figure 1. It is there that the Parintins Folkloric Festival takes place, which will be further explained in this study.

Figure 1. City of Parintins



Reference: Image created by the authors with the assistance of artificial intelligence (2025)

This section presents the results of the research, which seeks to understand the Parintins Folkloric Festival in its cultural and social complexity. The analysis focuses on three main axes: the characterization of the festival as a symbolic and artistic manifestation of great relevance; the presence of urban tribalization as a phenomenon that structures identity and collective bonds within the city during the event; and finally, the tourism mobilization triggered by the festivity, which transforms Parintins into a center of cultural, economic, and emotional circulation.

The Parintins Folkloric Festival

The Parintins Folkloric Festival takes place on the last weekend of June, in the municipality of Parintins, in the interior of the state of Amazonas, where the competition between two “oxen” made of cloth, *Garantido* and *Caprichoso*, unfolds, as shown in Figure 2. Each ox performs in the arena, called *Bumbódromo*, with a main theme, subdivided into three consecutive nights of festival performances. Each night, the oxen have at least two hours and at most two and a half hours to present their show.

Figure 2. Bois de Pano, Garantido and Caprichoso



Reference: Personal collection of Amazon Best, 2023.

The celebration originates from the Northeast of Brazil, from the legend of a pregnant woman's desire. The main characters in this story are Mother Catirina and Father Francisco, who lived and worked on a cattle farm as enslaved people. Mother Catirina, pregnant, craved ox tongue—specifically, the tongue of the most beautiful ox on the farm. To fulfill her wish, Father Francisco killed the ox and took its tongue. When the farmer realized his favorite ox had died, he panicked and sent the cowboys to fetch Pajé, the shaman and holder of the forest's wisdom (Martins, 2021). Upon arriving, the Pajé performed his rituals and managed to resurrect the ox. Everyone rejoiced, and from this legend emerged the great *Bumba Meu Boi* celebration. This tradition remains strong in the Northeast, especially in Maranhão State, where every June, people dress in colorful ox costumes and parade through the streets, singing and dancing (Silva, 2022).

When Northeastern migrants moved to the Amazon during the Belle Époque period, they brought their culture and traditions, including *Bumba Meu Boi*. In the North, however, this tradition merged with Indigenous, quilombola, and riverside cultures, integrating folk and shamanic elements, giving rise to *Boi Bumbá*. Although rooted in *Bumba Meu Boi*, it became something distinct, evolving into the largest folkloric festival in the world. In 1965, some young locals organized a party to raise funds for the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the patron saint of Parintins. From that event, the festival was born. Initially, it was a simple competition judged by audience applause, but over time it gained structure and categories, becoming today's Parintins Folkloric Festival (Silva, 2022).

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The festival revolves around the oxen and other characters from the legend. Similar to Carnival, 21 items are judged, and the ox that performs best over the three nights in the Bumbódromo wins. These items are divided into three blocks: A, musical and general categories; B, scenography and choreography; and C, artistic elements (Ferro & Watts, 2012).

Whether *Caprichoso* or *Garantido*, hearts and stars beat in unison for the realization of this artistic and cultural dispute, expressing the identity of each association. The festival incorporates rituals that evoke Indigenous, Amazonian, and Brazilian popular tradition (Ferro & Watts, 2012).

Urban Tribalization in the Context of the Parintins Festival

Urban tribalization manifests intrinsically within the festival through the fans and participants in various spheres. The city of Parintins is symbolically divided, with the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel marking the separation. This division is not visible on maps but becomes evident upon closer observation.

Boi *Garantido* is represented by red and white, while Boi *Caprichoso* by blue and black. *Garantido* originated in the northern neighborhood known as *Baixa do São José*, and its supporters call themselves *perrechês da puraca*. *Caprichoso*, from the southern neighborhoods called *Francesa* and *Urubuzal*, has fans known as *marujeiros fiéis*. Each faction occupies opposite sides of the city, and surrounding neighborhoods follow suit.

The division is so strong that urban symbols reflect it: pedestrian crossings, signage, and storefronts are painted red on *Garantido's* side and blue on *Caprichoso's* side. Even national brands adapt: for example, Bradesco Bank, typically red, displays blue-red façades during the festival as shown in figure 3 and 4, and Coca-Cola releases blue and red cans to avoid alienating customers. Boats traveling to Parintins also choose either red or blue decorations.

Figure 3. Pedestrian Crosswalk



Reference: Patrick Marques/GIAM, 2024;

Figure 4 Bradesco Bank



Reference: Bradesco Bank LinkedIn, 2024

During the festival, friends and family members supporting opposite oxen often avoid interactions to prevent tension. These customs are passed down through generations, blending ancestral and modern traditions that shape the festival's meaning and history.

This symbolic and spatial division between *Garantido* and *Caprichoso* exemplifies what Maffesoli (2000) calls “urban tribalization,” where collective identity is expressed through visual symbols, behaviors, and rituals. In Parintins, these signs transcend the *Bumbódromo*, inscribing themselves in the urban landscape, in colors, façades, and even in brand adaptations, creating an environment where rivalry becomes part of daily life. This symbolic territoriality sustains social interactions, defines identity boundaries, and reinforces community bonds.

Rather than fragmenting the tourist experience, this rivalry enhances it. Visitors engage with a symbolic system that merges ancestral traditions with contemporary expressions, reinforcing the festival's authenticity and its touristic-communicational-subjective ecosystem (Baptista, 2021, 2023), where aesthetics, emotion, and sociability intertwine. Thus, the Parintins Folkloric Festival reveals how cultural practices can structure complex touristic ecosystems where symbolic and affective dimensions play a central role. The *Garantido–Caprichoso* rivalry is not merely playful, it shapes social relations, urban space, and the local economy, serving as a powerful identity marker. The city becomes a stage for contemporary tribal expressions, where symbols, colors, and rituals shape the experiences of both residents and visitors.

The symbolic division between *Garantido* and *Caprichoso* expresses a process of urban tribalization rooted in psychological and cultural structures discussed by Freud and Lévi-



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Strauss. Freud (1990) argues that human groups tend to organize themselves affectively around leaders, totems, and signs that reinforce belonging, displacing onto these symbols their impulses of identification and rivalry. In Parintins, the ox, whether red or blue, occupies this totemic position, condensing collective emotions and guiding behaviors, similar to the Freudian “primordial father” that structures alliances and conflicts. At the same time, Lévi-Strauss (1986) demonstrates that myths and classificatory systems produce social differences by organizing the world through symbolic oppositions. The split between north/red/*Garantido* and south/blue/*Caprichoso* works as one of these binary structures, in which cultural categories not only describe urban reality but actively shape it, generating affective territorialities, circulation boundaries, and shared values.

These structural and affective dynamics culminate in what Maffesoli (2000) describes as urban tribalization. In Parintins, the city becomes a stage for a sense of community that is simultaneously ancestral and contemporary: colors, clothing, façades, brands, and performative rituals transform the urban space into a mosaic of signs that updates the myth of the ox and gives consistency to the Caprichoso and Garantido tribes. Maffesoli’s logic of being-together, guided more by affectivity than rationality, explains why friends and family avoid interactions during the festival and why visual inscription in the territory is so intense. The entire city vibrates as a “collective body,” where aesthetics, emotion, and rituality reinforce a touristic-communicational-subjective ecosystem that not only shapes local experience but continuously re-signifies the identities in dispute.

By uniting tradition and innovation, the festival creates a living narrative that renews itself with each edition, strengthening belonging and expanding its reach beyond territorial borders. This narrative is sustained not only by the spectacle itself but also by the collective experience surrounding it, articulating what Baptista (2021, 2023) defines as a touristic-communicational-subjective ecosystem.

Tourist Mobilization in Parintins

Visitors seek aesthetics and experiences that differ from their daily routines. In Parintins, the festival is the city’s main tourist attraction, as tourism activity remains limited throughout most of the year. According to the Amazonas State Tourism Company, approximately 120,000 tourists visited the island during the 2024 festival. This influx results from consistent promotional efforts. The event generates temporary employment and economic activity: hundreds work in the oxen’s rehearsal spaces, each team involves around 4,000 performers, and

the Bumbódromo seats around 30,000 spectators, part of whom compose the official “galeras,” judged items that animate performances.

Table 1. Number of Tourists During the Festival Period Over the Part Years

Ano	Volume de Turistas
2005	50.141
2006	49.487
2007	51.623
2008	49.501
2009	53.290
2010	48.921
2011	51.545
2012	54.421
2013	52.733
2014	49.788
2015	50.000
2016	23.544
2017	46.924
2018	60.000
2019	66.321
2020	No festival held
2021	No festival held
2022	111.498
2023	110.000
2024	120.000

Reference: AmazonasTur (2020, 2023, 2024); Prepared by the authors (2025)

No festivals occurred in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19. The economic surge upon their return underscores the festival’s importance and the tourism impact it drives. Beyond entertainment, it fuels a creative economy, from art production to local crafts sold by performers. In this dynamic flow, Baptista’s (2021, 2023) notion of the Touristic-Communicational-Subjective Ecosystem becomes evident, acknowledging the “reverses” of tourism, its affective and subjective undercurrents beyond economic surfaces. The tribalized organization of festival activities reveals movements of connection and hospitality extending beyond service transactions, forming relational bonds among participants, hosts, and visitors.



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Thus, tribalization operates as a signal of movement and hospitality that composes the festival's ecosystem from both its façades and reverses. The Parintins Folkloric Festival is not only a space of aesthetic enjoyment but also of intensified social relations and symbolic exchange. It becomes a catalyst of memory, emotion, and belonging, experienced not only in the Bumbódromo but across the streets, workshops, and homes of the city. This relational and symbolic dimension embodies the idea of a touristic-communicational-subjective ecosystem, where tangible and intangible elements interweave, turning the festival into a phenomenon that transcends economic logic to include identity and collective meaning.

The ritualization embedded in the festival creates its own narrative, each costume, dance, song, and color functions as a tribal sign of identity. This narrative extends beyond the official event, sustained year-round by social media, local media, and community gatherings, consolidating Parintins as a cultural hub capable of mobilizing flows of people, emotions, and meanings. Following Urry (2007) and Maffesoli (2000), Parintins can be understood as an example of contemporary tribal mobility and deterritorialization. People from different regions converge around shared symbolic and aesthetic interests, seeking collective experiences and ephemeral yet intense identities. These “tribes” transcend physical space and persist in digital networks, maintaining belonging before, during, and after the event. This form of experiential tourism involves not just geographical displacement but emotional and symbolic movement, reaffirming the centrality of subjectivity in contemporary tourist flows.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The tribal production discussed through one author's experiential account recognizes the festival's interior and urban tribal characteristics. The oxen and their supporters merge through totemic marks that define status and belonging. The festival mobilizes art and culture far beyond a mere event, generating an entire economy that spans from direct participation to artisanal crafts. It is a complex phenomenon intertwining identity, economy, art, and subjectivity within one ecosystem. The folkloric festival invites reflection on the coexistence of tribal traits in tourist ecosystems shaped by healthy rivalry between associations.

The Garantido–Caprichoso dispute operates as a collective identity device, where participants experience belonging and symbolic construction through tribal elements, symbols, colors, narratives, and rituals. Urban tribalization reveals how symbolic and totemic elements catalyze belonging, resistance, and cultural affirmation. More than a spectacle, it becomes a platform for local narratives that challenge cultural homogenization and reclaim collective memory and regional pride. By blending tradition and modernity, the festival demonstrates how cultural

tourism can be enriched by acknowledging subjective dynamics and local identity markers. Recognizing sensations, bonds, and symbolic brotherhoods is vital for constructing meaningful and sustainable tourism experiences.

This analysis reaffirms that valuing cultural manifestations in their complexity fosters practices that strengthen local identities and promote not only economic but also social and affective development, reviving the cultural resistance embedded in the festival. The act of “playing the ox” brings ancestral strength to the Bumbódromo: before the colonial crown, there was the Indigenous headdress. As Crema (1989) points out, a holistic view that embraces subjectivity is crucial for tourism’s development. The Parintins Festival unites, in three days of celebration, the resistance expressed through culture, identity, and art. Moreover, the festival serves as a space for negotiating meanings, where traditions are reconfigured in response to the demands of tourism and globalization. The influx of national and international visitors creates an intercultural arena where Amazonian identity is both reaffirmed and reinterpreted. This dynamic shows that local cultures are not static but continuously reinvent themselves, maintaining roots while adapting to new cultural economies.

Finally, the ritualistic nature of the event can be seen as a form of resistance against global homogenization. The act of “playing the ox” becomes a reaffirmation of ancestry and celebration of difference, where local music, dance, costumes, and narratives take center stage. The Parintins Festival not only projects Amazonian culture to the world but also builds a symbolic territory of belonging, where collectivity strengthens itself, perpetuates traditions, and constructs alternative paths for development aligned with local cosmologies and ways of life. For future studies, it is recommended to deepen research into the subjective and identity dynamics permeating the Parintins Festival, considering its cultural, social, economic, and environmental impacts. Furthermore, examining how digital media and online communication shape global belonging could illuminate how popular festivals such as Parintins consolidate themselves as hybrid cultural phenomena that intertwine tradition, innovation, and resistance across multiple touristic and communicational ecosystems.

The analytical insights developed in this study carry significant implications for tourism professionals responsible for designing, mediating, and interpreting festival experiences. Understanding the tribal dynamics that structure collective participation in Parintins highlights the importance of avoiding superficial or commodified representations of local identity. Tourism practitioners should engage with the symbolic systems, affective bonds, and ritual forms that give meaning to the Garantido–Caprichoso rivalry, ensuring that visitor experiences reinforce rather than dilute these cultural distinctions. Such an approach positions the festival



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as a living cultural ecosystem and promotes more meaningful and ethically grounded tourism practices.

For cultural policymakers, the findings point to the necessity of governance frameworks that safeguard community autonomy and cultural agency. Policymaking efforts that protect intangible cultural heritage, promote equitable funding, and involve local actors in decision-making are crucial in preventing external commercial pressures from overshadowing symbolic and ritual dimensions. Because the festival operates as a system of identity negotiation, state-led cultural policies should prioritize inclusivity, highlight regional distinctiveness, and elevate the contributions of Indigenous and Afro-Amazonian communities to the festival's aesthetic, narrative, and cosmological layers.

From a community development perspective, the festival demonstrates how cultural expressions can strengthen social bonds, generate creative economies, and reinforce shared narratives of belonging. Community-led initiatives, such as craft production, costume design workshops, and heritage-based educational programs, can be integrated into tourism planning to promote livelihoods while affirming cultural pride. In this sense, Parintins offers a compelling model for tourism development that aligns economic goals with cultural sovereignty and collective well-being.

Drawing on critical anthropology deepens the analysis of how cultural expressions circulate within tourism economies. Scholars such as Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) and Mathews (2011) warn that cultural performances mobilized for tourism risk becoming sites of asymmetrical appropriation, where symbolic value is extracted without ensuring fair benefits for the communities who create it. In the case of Parintins, this perspective underscores the need for ethical oversight in the use of Indigenous-inspired symbols, narratives, and visual identities that populate media broadcasts, branding strategies, and commercial products. Adopting an inclusive tourism perspective means advocating for participatory governance, community-controlled narrative production, and equitable revenue distribution. Ensuring that Indigenous artists, storytellers, dancers, and artisans have agency over how their knowledge is represented helps resist the exoticization and commodification often associated with global cultural markets. Incorporating these critical anthropological insights strengthens the call for tourism models that respect cultural specificity, protect symbolic heritage, and promote intercultural dialogue grounded in reciprocity and ethical engagement.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that open avenues for further investigation. Its methodological emphasis on audiovisual materials, ethnographic interpretations, and secondary literature does not capture the full diversity of experiences among festival participants. Future research could employ participatory ethnography,

interviews, or multi-sited fieldwork to explore how different social groups interpret belonging, rivalry, and cultural identity within the festival.

Additionally, although this study emphasizes symbolic and communicational ecosystems, it does not examine in depth the economic, political, and environmental dimensions that shape the festival's operation. Exploring these aspects, particularly in relation to sustainability, funding structures, and infrastructure, would enrich understandings of the festival's broader impacts. Further research might also analyze how digital platforms shape translocal forms of belonging and extend the festival's communicational reach beyond Amazonia.

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