

## CHILE “IN” THE AMAZON OF RONDONIENSE: ARPILLERAS AND ARPILLEROS, STORIES, PLOTS AND EXPERIENCES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TEACHING INITIATION PROGRAM - PIBID<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The present study focuses on reflection on migration stories from the 1970s onwards, narrated and (re)written by students of the Degree in History and Rural Education, at the Federal University of Rondônia, also interspersed with the memories of a higher education teacher. It derives from a participant-research project, its scope is the dialectic present in thinking-performing-thinking during the activities undertaken within the subproject of the Teaching Initiation Program at the Federal University of Rondônia, 2022 edition. While the scholarship holders studied, read, listened to songs and performed “embroidery” inspired by the Chilean *arpilleras* technique. The stories were those that emerged from their own experiences and those of their ancestors (parents, grandparents, and other relatives). In the intertwining of the threads of memories, narratives were stitched together and deposited on the fabrics and with them, they began to explore one of the many possibilities for teaching and thinking about history. Theoretical premises Freire (1997) and Rama (2015) were adopted. We also chose to write the author's past experiences, interspersed and associated with the resistance of Chilean women during the period of General Pinochet's dictatorship and a Brazilian woman (from Santa Catarina) made embroidery her livelihood, her light and beauty that the pain of excess transformed into temporary insanity.

**Keywords:** Education; Teaching history; Military dictatorship in Chile; Resistance; *Arpilleras*; *Arpilleros*.

### How to cite

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## O CHILE “NA” AMAZÔNIA RONDONIENSE: ARPILLERAS E ARPILLEROS, HISTÓRIAS, TRAMAS E EXPERIÊNCIAS NO ÂMBITO DO PROGRAMA DE INICIAÇÃO À DOCÊNCIA – PIBID

**Resumo:** O presente estudo tem como foco a reflexão sobre histórias de migrações a partir da década de 1970, narradas e (re)escritas por estudantes de Licenciatura em História e em Educação do Campo, da Universidade Federal de Rondônia, também entrecortadas pelas memórias de uma docente do ensino superior. Deriva de um projeto de pesquisa-participante, tem como escopo a dialética presente no pensar-realizar-pensar no decorrer das atividades empreendidas junto ao subprojeto do Programa de Iniciação à Docência da Universidade Federal de Rondônia, edição 2022. Ao passo que os (as) bolsistas estudavam, liam, ouviam canções e realizavam “bordados” inspirados na técnica das *arpilleras* chilenas. As histórias foram aquelas emergidas das experiências próprias e de seus ancestrais (pais, avós, e outros parentes). No entrelace dos fios das memórias foram alinhavando narrativas e depositando-as nos tecidos e com eles iniciando-se em uma entre tantas possibilidades para ensinar e pensar a história. Adotou-se pressupostos teóricos Freire (1997) e Rama (2015). Optou-se também pela escrita das experiências e vivências passadas da autora, entrecortadas e associadas as resistências das mulheres chilenas no período da ditadura do General Pinochet e uma mulher brasileira (catarinense) fez do bordado seu sustento, sua luz e beleza que a dor do excesso transformou em insanidade temporária.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação; Ensino de história; Ditadura militar no Chile; Resistência; *Arpilleras*; *Arpilleristas*.

## CHILE “EN” LA AMAZONÍA DE RONDONIA: ARPILLERAS Y ARPILLEROS, HISTORIAS, INTRIGAS Y EXPERIENCIAS EN EL MARCO DEL PROGRAMA DE INTRODUCCIÓN A LA DOCENCIA - PIBID

**Resumen:** El presente estudio se centra en la reflexión sobre historias de migración a partir de la década de 1970, narradas y (re)escritas por estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Historia y Educación Rural, de la Universidad Federal de Rondônia, intercaladas también con las memorias de un profesor de educación superior. Deriva de un proyecto de investigación participante, su alcance es la dialéctica presente en pensar-realizar-pensar durante las actividades realizadas en el marco del subprojeto del Programa de Iniciación a la Docencia de la Universidad Federal de Rondônia, edición 2022, mientras las becarias estudiaban, leían, escuchaban canciones y realizaban “bordados” inspirados en la técnica de las arpillerías chilenas. Los relatos fueron aquellos que surgieron de sus propias experiencias y de las de sus antepasados (padres, abuelos y otros familiares). En el entrelazamiento de los hilos de los recuerdos, se cosieron narrativas que se depositaron en los tejidos y con ellas comenzaron a explorar una de las tantas posibilidades para enseñar y pensar la historia. Se adoptaron las premisas teóricas de Freire (1997) y Rama (2015). También optamos por escribir las experiencias pasadas de la autora, intercaladas y asociadas a la resistencia de las mujeres chilenas durante el período de la dictadura del general Pinochet y una mujer brasileña (de Santa Catarina) hizo del bordado su sustento, su luz y su belleza que el dolor del exceso transformó en locura temporal.

**Palabras clave:** Educación; Enseñanza de la historia; Dictadura militar en Chile; Resistencia; Arpilleras; Arpilleristas.

## Introduction

That the importance of a thing is not measured with a tape measure, nor with scales, nor barometers, etc. That the importance of a thing must be measured by the enchantment that the thing produces in us" (Manoel de Barros)

In the cold winters of Santa Catarina, Lydia embroidered, embroidered, and embroidered. To support her three children. When choosing the fabric for her work, if she had such a choice, she adopted leftover cloths and scraps from the embroideries produced for the local elite, mostly from Santa Catarina, from the surroundings of the city of Concórdia – SC, in their “bridal trousseau-like<sup>3</sup>” orders between the years 1950 and 1960.

For herself, the fabric adopted was almost always the so-called raw cotton, which, when bleached, became white. Seated in front of her simple sewing machine, more than sewing or embroidering, she wrote stories. By handling threads, scissors, needles, and thimbles in deep exercises of concentration, meticulousness, memories, stories, and inventiveness, she embroidered, but not only that, she created arts, kinds of canvases over oil where there was no paint or brush, only threads and more colored threads.

Little by little, beauty stamped the “raw cottons” that became cloths that were fixed to the wooden walls of her house. In contrast to the wall smudged by the wood stove, it was tinged with an almost bluish green tone, long faded and denouncing a distant time. Certainly, there were drawings of love, flowers, and childhoods. Arabesques intertwining and connecting everything to everything were not lacking. The house was beautiful. Full of Lydia. Of Lydia's times.

A poor woman who, it is not known at what cost, managed to learn to read, did so with mastery, routinely, by the light of a kerosene lamp, with its small light and striking smell, illuminating the books for her moss-green eyes to transpose to the place, the farm that had been given to her to live. So, whether in embroidery, books, or the vegetable garden and cornfield, this was how the woman with a body taken by time transited the countryside. Through her hands and eyes passed William Shakespeare, used novels from magazine stands, photonovels, and even a children's book was in her small circulating collection. Perhaps she also heard of Arseni Tarkovsky, as one son was named Romeu and another was named after the poet<sup>4</sup>. Hours and

<sup>3</sup> I take poetic license to transform a word into a verb to dialogue with the text.

<sup>4</sup> Of Russian origin, he wrote poems and was a translator. He died in the late 1980s. His work was recurrent in the cinema produced by his son Andrey Tarkovsky. Father and son meet through the hands of art.

hours occupied in the zigzag of life and the machine or in the dexterity of the needle in her hand.

The woman worked so much, so much, and so much that she fell ill, with those head illnesses as the “old ones” used to say. Between the years 1970, she “lost” her reason. The whispers in the corners of the house and the neighborhood announced in a low voice that she had gone mad. She was admitted to a psychiatric hospital that at the time was only called Hospice. Nothing was detailed. There was no talk of diagnosis. There was no talk of treatment or cure, instead, silence reigned. The taboo around non-tangible diseases was immense, and in the continuities of history, its course continues, bordered by misunderstandings. What the frail woman, who weighed little more than fifty kilos, lived and suffered there, it was also not possible to recover. One day she was discharged. Everything on the subject remained silenced.

The scissors were hidden in the house, the knives too, and even the needles. Her pain afflicted her in such a way that self-harm was refuge or despair. She kept such signs tattooed on her body, until her hair, already in a cotton tone, gained prominence on her head. The tattooed scars of a time that never had total family understanding remained on display on her arms. They spoke of the unspeakable.

Lydia carried on the backs of her hands, wrists, and arms the scars of the cuts. In the eighties, when she was asked why she no longer embroidered, an absolute silence stopped time. Did Lydia choose not to remember? Did she stop remembering? Or could she no longer remember? The silence spoke that the subject was inopportune or hurt her too much. Only silence about the past befell her, without tears, narrated dramas, or anything of the kind. She kept the pains inside her, closed the chest, but the chest was on display to every visitor.

She returned to sanity, abandoned the embroideries. She returned to consciousness and abandoned her two dead sons, one by a tragic accident and the other by suicide. She did not abandon the books, on the contrary, she watered the family and whoever wanted with the benefits of reading. Almost as a rite, she put her granddaughters to read with her, never ordering, just sitting down, and in those moments the granddaughters did, in those ways that only very special people with little or much study can do, crossing rivers, taking people with them, acting only as a boatwoman.

In the time of “sanity,” Lydia already lived in Paraná and hung embroidered stories on the walls, those who visited stretched their eyes, and with each new visit, they saw other narratives blurred by time. The humble house was rich in cultures. Lydia kept such cloths adorning her house almost as an art of veneration of a time that was only known in silence. No

story of her time as an embroiderer. From her silence and probable pain emerged to visitors perhaps the freedom to look and recreate other stories.

The protagonist of this story was not an arpillera in the proper sense of Chilean art, it is likely that she never even heard of such women, suffocated, scourged, and oppressed from the time of General Pinochet. There is, however, something that unites such stories: transforming scraps, cloths, threads, and fabrics through needles and gathering intelligence, skill, resilience, and certain desires into something beautiful, even in times of ugliness and violence of dictatorial regimes. The first in a life surrounded by poverty and an exhausting workload, the others, many also insurgents from the scarcity of everything, including the whereabouts of their own. The Chileans metamorphosed pain, transformed it into hope, resistance, and confrontation to live and (re)exist the horrors of Chile in the 1970s in particular.

From the memories of the author of this essay, intertwined with the activities carried out by students of the History Degree course in the Rondonian Amazon, the doing-feeling-experiencing of the arpilleros and arpilleras of a small-great place in the Rondonian Amazon: Zona da Mata, was investigated through participant research. The term arpillera is known to designate Chilean women who used embroidery to express situations experienced during the dictatorship of General Pinochet, and in doing so, they intended and managed to resist. Human inventiveness transcends realities, including the most cruel, and the arts in all their variables are capable of promoting the “cry” against the absurd, even a “silent cry” due to censorship and violence, yet potent both in terms of the senses of those who carry it and when received by those who hear and see its aesthetics: that of pain.

In the case of embroidery, an art or technique as old as humanity is taken up from time to time. In Brazil, people from the Movement of People Affected by Dams – MAB have an urgent and necessary agenda, both regarding the right to housing and the respect and preservation of biodiversities affected by dams and plants. The confrontation by those involved in this movement occurs through awareness of the cause, occupations, pressure movements with the public authorities, and many other collective struggles. In its meanders, a form borrowed from the Chilean arpilleras and diffused among the subjects affected by anti-environmental policy agendas is the use of the arpillera technique.

The state of Rondônia, located in the northern region of Brazil, has a bovine population six times larger than the human population; the advance of agribusiness is estimated and even advertised by many as a generator of wealth; in fact, it produces it, however, not for the people

who live in the state. Capital does not leave the forest standing. Capital in Rondônia yearns for soybeans for export, as well as beef cattle that have the same destination as the legume.

In the 2010s, there was a whole movement for the construction of hydroelectric plants; despite the efforts, denunciations, and pressure from the populations affected by dams, capital won. Large plants were installed and generated social chaos. The MAB continues to fight for compensation, denouncing and confronting new ventures, and found in art a way to draw attention to the cause. The movement is active in the state and joins other social movements such as, for example, those of indigenous peoples, peasants, quilombola remnants, and extractivists. Let us see what the author says about dams:

The construction of dams is part of the economic-productive dynamics of commodities, providing spatial and infrastructural support for the installation of mega-enterprises, whether for energy purposes – as is the case of Santo Antônio Energia in Rondônia – or for the retention of tailings originating from the ore beneficiation process, which dominate landscapes, as in Minas Gerais" (Muniz, 2020, p. 1).

Regarding hydroelectric plants, the concern with issues related to the sustainable use of the environment has not been and still is not a real problem to be faced. The media conceals the impacts and seeks to impose the idea that the current energy model (via hydroelectric plants) of the country is adequate. The justification used is that in the long term it is cheap, with another strong argument being the fact that Brazil is abundant in hydrographic basins, totaling 12, and therefore, there would be a "natural vocation" for the implementation of such forms of energy capture, without considering the local populations that live or lived in flooded spatialities or, still, the effects for society in general, as well as the fauna and flora of the affected biomes. About 10 years ago, the Public Ministry of Rondônia had already manifested itself, however, the weight of its force proved to be small in the face of the advance of capital interests, observe:

The Public Ministry of Rondônia, in a matter sent this Monday, confirms what everyone already knew, that the responsibility for the floods that plague Porto Velho, Guajará-Mirim, and the districts is that of the Santo Antônio and Jirau plants. The body sent, along with the matter, a 14-page retrospective, showing dozens of actions that questioned the licensing that had been given by IBAMA and environmental agencies. See the MP's matter: Porto Velho is facing the biggest flood in its history due to the high rainfall index, combined with the opening of the gates of the Santo Antônio Hydroelectric Plant. The environmental impacts that could be caused by the Madeira Complex – Santo Antônio and Jirau Hydroelectric Plants were already alerted by the Public

Ministry of the State of Rondônia even before the start of the construction of the projects, in 2007" (MP confirma [...], 2015, p. 1).

If on the one hand the months of May to October have become hotter, drier, and with very low air humidity, in the so-called "Amazonian winter" or Rondonian winter, on the other hand, in the "rainy" period, summer, several floods have occurred. The MAB does not tire of denouncing the intentional negligence regarding the environment, and one of the forms of denunciation is the art of arpillerias that draws attention to the cause.

By proposing the study and work based on Chile, it was intended to present and investigate historical similarities and differences regarding the dictatorial process, continuities and ruptures, as well as strategies of resistance and/or resilience, especially in the dictatorial period and continuities that reach the Rondonian Amazon.

In the participant research, the teaching initiation fellows were presented in a priori superficial way about Chilean history, gradually being provoked, so as to seek to know such history on their own, to then deepen their knowledge. From the proposal, possibilities of investigation and reflection were being designed based on the centers of interest, to then start the process of telling stories through embroideries and, subsequently and in parallel, to encourage the authorial writing of embroideries from the experiences lived within the scope of PIBID regarding Chilean history, musicality inspired by Violeta Parra, cinema (with two appreciated works) at the same time studied as documentary sources, preserving and provoking students to the exercise of reflective and authorial protagonism in their texts. Thus, between plural readings about dictatorial Chile (articles, lectures, songs, films, and documentaries), the students and the teacher became arpilleros(as) of local stories with the borrowing of fragments of Chilean culture and art emerged from the times of tanks and boots authorized by the country's elites and General Pinochet.

At the end of 2022, students had access to literary works, the proposal was to "wet" spirits with literature, to let flow another way of narrating life, the past, and the present through feelings, something abandoned or little incorporated into historical narratives. The focus was to minimally know the production of Manoel de Barros (1916 – 2014), the South Mato Grosso author who operates with "trifles" and subverts rigid and established logics, transforming them into intelligible and essential words that over time people lose and that by losing so much, they cage themselves in a kind of being and being so rigid and mechanical that they do not realize what really matters, for him what matters are the things of nature, childhood, and essences, he is a collector of trifles, so we can say.

In this world, robotic, Cartesian, square, and monitored by cell phone and computer screens, it is easier to introduce the hydroelectric plant in place of the river, the dammed water in place of houses and communities, the ox in place of the peasant, the "planted forest<sup>5</sup>" in place of biodiversity, soy, poison, and fertilizer in place of bees and insects. Manoel de Barros shows another aspect, and it was for this reason that he was chosen for initial study by those involved in PIBID. For the poet, things are more or less like this:

#### Painting

I always understand the things I do after I've already done them. What I do is not an application of studies. It's always a discovery. It's nothing sought. It's found indeed. As if walking in a swamp and finding a frog. I think it's a birth defect, this. Just like if we were born with four eyes and four ears. One day I tried to draw the shapes of Morning without a pencil. Have you ever thought about it? First, I had to humanize Morning. Make it biological. Make it a woman. Before, I had tried to objectify people and humanize things. But humanize time! A part of time? A dose. However, I tried. I painted Morning with her legs open to the sun without a pencil. Morning was a woman with her legs open to the sun [...] I had learned that images painted with words were to be heard [...] (Barros, 2006, p. 4).

It was opted to cause strangeness, admiration about the diverse, restlessness, and perception of the simplest and at the same time complex things that make up living and that, by all indications, only poetry in its written, sung, or imagetic version is capable of translating.

The History and Rural Education subproject of PIBID has 24 teaching initiation fellows, 3 supervisors (basic education teachers), and 1 subproject coordinator. The students, in their vast majority, are of humble financial origin, the family income in many cases does not reach three minimum wages, something common in the state of Rondônia, the per capita income is very low compared to other states.

The job market, due to the advance of agribusiness, is not very encouraging or still with job offers that revolve around a minimum wage and exhausting working hours. Most jobs are in the incipient local commerce or in the slaughterhouses, and these last ones have a logic in which the cattle that go to slaughter seem to be more important than the workers of the production lines, accidents and the lack of compensation are not few. Thousands of young

<sup>5</sup> With each passing day, a somewhat distorted view has been accentuated that eucalyptus, teak, or other monoculture is a forest, in this case, planted and not a monoculture of one species, there is an attempt to insert a veneer by merging two words: forest and planted. One of the premises of biology and ecology is that it is not possible to plant a forest, except to recover or reforest, which already means something else.

people spend their days confined to these workspaces, in front of the production line conveyor belts, among them, students of the History Degree course that works in the night shift.

To welcome and strengthen the permanence in the graduation course, the activities of PIBID are carried out most of the time in the interval between the end of the afternoon 4 or 5 pm until 7 pm because several participants work and could not compose the project if there was no schedule flexibility.

Their eyes and bodies often denounce fatigue and managing a project with the protagonists in these conditions, young bodies and minds require a lot of attention and sensitivity, not observing the reality that surrounds the graduation students would be another form of oppression. Starting from their stories or their ancestors proved to be a way to operate with something that is significant to them and at the same time dialogues with the local and Latin American history, given this, the central theme was chosen for the teaching initiation works.

Texts were selected and consulted, both about the military regime in Chile and in Brazil, differences observed, and similarities found. Although they were not totalitarian regimes in the classic sense, they share similarities because in dictatorial processes, they want to impose the force of the State even by violent means and similar steps, on the subject let us see what the philosopher says about movements of authoritarian nature:

The machine that generates, organizes, and disseminates the monstrous falsehoods of totalitarian movements also depends on the position of the Leader. To the propagandistic affirmation that every event is scientifically predictable according to natural or economic laws, the totalitarian organization adds the position of a man who has monopolized this knowledge and whose main quality is the fact that 'he has always been right and will always be right'. For the member of the totalitarian movement, this knowledge has nothing to do with the truth, just as the fact of being right has nothing to do with the objective veracity of the Leader's affirmations, which cannot be contradicted by reality, but only by future successes or failures. The Leader is always right in his actions, and, as these are planned for centuries to come, the final examination of what he does is inaccessible to his contemporaries" (Arendt, 2013, p. 520).

Military regimes gained prominence and established themselves in Latin America as a whole thanks to the subservience of local elites linked to international interests. Keeping the specificities of each country, it is necessary to raise a common point among others: censorship. The persecution of artists and intellectuals was notorious, and even after the "democratic" opening processes, remnants of fear haunted and still haunt these countries, after all, the history

of these dictatorships has not yet been fully understood, digested, and healed, whether in Brazil or Chile.

When thinking about Chile, the students also thought about Brazil in the past-present. Art as a tool to understand the past was used, especially that of Violeta Parra, a fierce and militant artist, who expressed in a unique way feelings of Chilean daily life in a songful tone. Once again, the meeting between Brazil and Chile, Violeta Parra inspired, among others, Chico Buarque, Milton Nascimento, and Caetano Veloso, icons in Brazil who, like Parra, used their art to denounce the oppression of the 1960s and 1970s in particular. The PIBID members were invited to research songs by Violeta Parra, then listen to them, translate them, and feel them in light of the issues related to the forms of oppression installed during the Pinochet dictatorship, remembering that Parra also dedicated herself to denouncing and associated herself with the work of the arpillerias:

It is also worth mentioning the embroidery works of the Chilean artist and folklorist Violeta Parra (1917 – 1967). From 1953, she began to embroider arpillerias, a traditional work from Isla Negra in Chile that uses, as a base, burlap sacks for transporting potatoes or flour (BACIC, 2015). In April 1964, Violeta held an exhibition of her paintings, oils, arpillerias, and wire sculptures at the Marsan Pavilion of the Museum of Decorative Arts of the Louvre. Violeta was the first Latin American artist to have a solo exhibition at the Louvre. For Violeta, 'arpillerias are like embroidered songs' (BACIC, 2012), a language that transmits stories and ideas in a very peculiar way. This tradition, resumed and disseminated by Violeta in the 1950s and 1960s, remains to give voice to the oppressed. Chilean women embroidered their own history, the social and political conflicts they experienced during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet" (Gehrke, 2021, p. 69).

Each with their song tried to explain art and reality. They encountered the past through lyrics, melodies, rhymes, and stories: they were enchanted and did so together with the teacher. Highlight for the excerpts below from Mercedes Sosa's song that honors Violeta Parra and dialogues with the theme of this article and also with the student experiences:

Que viven los estudiantes  
Jardín de nuestra alegría  
Son aves que no se asustan  
De animal ni policía  
Y no le asustan las balas  
Ni el ladrar de la jauría  
Caramba y zamba la cosa  
¡Qué viva la astronomía!

Me gustan los estudiantes  
Que rugen como los vientos  
Cuando les meten al oído  
Sotanas y regimientos  
Pajarillos libertarios  
Igual que los elementos  
Caramba y zamba la cosa  
¡Qué vivan lo' experimento'!  
Me gustan los estudiantes  
Porque levantan el pecho  
Cuando les dicen harina  
Sabiéndose que es afrecho  
Y no hacen el sordomudo  
Cuando se presente el hecho  
¡Caramba y zamba la cosa!  
¡El código del derecho! (Me gustam [...], 1971).

Following the work, a lecture was held with Dr. Leomar Rippel, a specialist in military history, who sought to historicize the Chilean dictatorship while seeking to decipher the origins of the military influence adjacent to the 1970s. A difficult task because the military has always been on standby and lurking in search of opportunities to launch themselves into the exercise of power and according to the professor, the newly established regime intended to completely end political and social movements in Chile. Below are representations of the lecture and the participation of the students:

**Image 1 - Lecture on the Military Dictatorship in Chile**



**Source:** The author herself (2023). **Note:** Students at the lecture.

**Image 2 - Pibidanos at the lecture on Chile**



**Source:** The author herself (2023). **Note:** Students attending and participating in the lecture.

All parties were abolished, both left-wing, right-wing, and center-wing, the latter being supporters of the coup. The participation of civilians in the dictatorship was through businessmen and technocratic economists in the Council of State. As in other Latin American examples, the Pinochet dictatorship sought to legitimize itself through an entirely new economic policy. In the Chilean case, the monetarist neoliberal ideals of Milton Friedman, a professor at the University of Chicago, resorted to authoritarianism to be implemented" (Rama, 2015).

Regarding the same theme, it is possible to highlight that:

The political dictionary of Latin America is loaded with terms such as cuartelazo, pronunciamento, golpe de estado, and the most recent, pinochetazo, to designate a particularly violent coup d'état like that of General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte in Chile in 1973. The recourse to arms characterizes an act of counterrevolution to keep the people away from power, even at times when there was no revolution in sight, but rather simply attempts to expand democratic frontiers" (Pinsky et al., 2019, p. 155).

Rondônia is relatively young in terms of its emancipation and political-administrative configuration, the creation of the state dates back to 1981, which was previously the Territory

of Guaporé. Regarding the original or indigenous peoples, it is immemorial, this ancestry is revealed in the existing ethnic plurality, as well as in cultural and linguistic diversity. These populations have been suffering from the expansion of the agricultural frontier from the South and Southeast since the 1960s towards part of the Midwest and North, some of them since the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, in the latter it was accentuated with the invasion of original territorialities, under the command of Marshal Cândido Rondon under the pretext of installing telegraph lines when the country already knew the telephone. Rondon was a military man who in turn followed the steps of another, through the primer of Couto Magalhães who undertook "efforts" to explain how to "civilize the indigenous" in his well-known and quite questionable work "O Selvagem."

It was also during the military regime, in the late 1960s and 1970s, that the largest waves of migrants occurred, mostly very poor people who migrated with the purpose of getting land to plant. This chimera moved people through processes of (re)occupation of lands considered "empty," but which were largely occupied by indigenous populations and quilombola remnants. This was ignored by the public authorities, but in the reality that presented itself, the conflicts were latent.

The distribution of land was not egalitarian, planned, and organized, on the contrary, people with possessions and goods were left with the most productive pockets in front of the Amazonian soil that has different characteristics from those of the south or southeast. The poorest were forced to open trails with machetes, to walk dozens of kilometers on foot with few belongings on their backs, they were encouraged to knock down the forest, considered an obstacle to progress, to burn the forest to overcome it because the mentality was that the forest is the enemy. This culture was widely disseminated during the military regime and accentuated in the 1980s. It continues to this day even though there is a whole legal body that prohibits deforestation and burning.

Stories like the ones described above with variations in each family were narrated by the PIBID scholarship students, they are bearers of memories borrowed from parents and grandparents, but also active subjects of the continuity of this story that continues to devastate, oppress, exploit, and exclude people at a rapid pace. By narrating such stories and composing allegories for the production of embroideries, everyone asked themselves about their origins, local history, and the present. In groups, they gathered to learn to sew and embroider to print on fabric perceptions about their own past and that of the place.

After searching in the corners of memories for their intertwined stories with the regional past, they built a narrative proposal in groups, something to tell. Fabric scraps were presented, many colors, prints, and textures, just leftover cloths. They drew on paper and gradually transferred to the black base where they would recreate an artistic expression inspired by the experiences of the Chilean arpillerias and their ways of printing art while narrating, hiding in the background of the embroideries small letters and messages about disappeared children and spouses.

A challenge soon arose, little or no skill existed among the PIBID members to sew or embroider. The vast majority had never even picked up a needle and thread. Both male and female or non-binary students faced the challenge, fear bordered on the desire to experience something. Although we have overcome the experience of the craft of embroidery as something of the female gender, it is known that the theme is bordered by prejudice, due to the sexist society in which we find ourselves and that embroidering is a woman's thing, an affirmative that disregards the very historicity of such experiences, let us see:

The feminization of textile means, as well as the association of gender with less intellectualized activities within the artistic field (such as crafts, for example), should not be naturalized. Its genesis lies in the way the 19th-century capitalist society, through diverse practices, successively stripped work in the textile sector of its condition of creation, reducing it to a mechanical task, to labor. In the General History of Economy, published in 1919, the opening period of Bauhaus, the sociologist Max Weber described the difference between ‘male’ professions, such as medicine, in which work would have a spiritual or magical component, and ‘female’ works such as silk weaving, or textile production for domestic industries, considered pure forms of ‘labor’. In his theory, textile factories – which, as is known, employed predominantly female labor – constituted the first concrete historical example of alienated labor. In them, the workers (or female workers, it would be more appropriate to say) were definitively stripped of the ability to design the final objects and of the possession of the instruments of production, being responsible for the simple manual execution of repetitive tasks. On the opposite margin of this emblematic figure of alienated labor was, precisely, the potent (and male) margin of the artist, subject in all stages of his own work, from the conception of the idea to the final object of his creation, passing through the ownership and free use of the means of production" (Simioni, 2007, p. 95-96).

Among the PIBID members was a woman in her 50s. She abandoned her studies decades ago to raise children, to be a wife in the molds desirable to the Western-centric roles attributed to women. She, who will be called Maria Flor here (fictitious name), often shy and not very

confident in herself as she was entering the academic universe with rare experience in reading and writing, proved to be the great teacher in the craft of sewing and embroidering.

She became the "workshop facilitator." From the size of the thread, the thickness of the needle, the characteristics and the detailing of the stitches, everything was taught by her. She caused astonishment when she said: - What I liked the most were the crooked stitches! She was not concerned with the perfection of the metrics in the stitched point. She was enchanted with the crooked stitch, the one that emerged from the hands of the less skilled in an inattentive look. The reason she offered was simple: - They were trying! She was right. Learning requires trying and launching oneself into the new, the unknown, the strange and the diverse. The result is another thing. The perfect stitch matters less than the stitch born from the attempt.

Maria Flor felt important and she was. In the embroidery learning circle, she swirled, encouraged without ever criticizing. The student seamstress felt privileged and was loved by everyone. Paulo Freire has long taught that mediations are more important than the established roles of the one who teaches and the one who learns, it would then be a teaching-learning process, in which the exchanges of knowledge govern the pedagogical doing, therefore, there is no more and less knowledge, but exchanges, Maria Flor practiced that.

The workshop ran in a circle, on the floor of the Fernando Pessoa Library, one of the few spaces available for collective work, sitting on the floor, with needles and threads, they understood and practiced the blanket stitch. A silence and construction took place. Concentration, fear of making mistakes, doing and undoing were the keynote, a colleague looked at the stitched point of the friend and reflected on their own work and thus gradually appropriated the act of embroidering with scraps from points that unite fabric, shapes and perspectives.

At another moment, they began to cut fabrics and compose stories. The therapeutic silence of making art was noticed. Many students began to say that the experience was enjoyable, in a way they transcended reality and forgot about the daily grind, while they were proud of the prints that were sprouting and that announced local stories and also of themselves. At various times, they turned to research about the arpilla technique and made comments of approximations and distances from Chilean stories.

A student who masters the Spanish language and is a quilombola remnant read and translated to the others, reports of women who experienced the horrors of losing their children and having no news. In the Spanish language, a unique power of narrative. The beauty of the language reached the ears that soon longed for translation and the student soon did it. The

strength and pain of those who lived the loss of their own was felt, it caused sadness and indignation.

Other students went to seek the origin of embroideries, what was the surprise when they realized that embroidering is as old as the first civilizations, it is in almost all cultures in different ways and with varying techniques, telling something by the woven and joined threads is something that borders several cultures, from classical antiquity and not only among Westernized peoples.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that all cultures produced both textile art and types of embroidery, from East to West, from Africa to the Americas, regarding embroideries in their amplitude of variations, it is notorious that in recent years they have not gained the status of art, or are considered "minor" art compared to other expressions, however, if we strip ourselves of the official canons of what is art, certainly the embroideries created and recreated are among those that transit through an infinity of people, telling beauty, joy and pain. The doubt whether it is art or craft persists, even more due to the fact that it derives from the hands of impoverished people, in elitist art it is chosen to point out embroideries and weavings with scraps not as art but as craft, which does not correspond to what is perceived by those who practice arpillera.

Below I present some of the results of the participant research bordered with photographs of the realization process to the partial results of the collective constructions that will be transformed into banners and will be donated to the Fernando Pessoa library of the Rolim de Moura Campus of the Federal University of Rondônia – UNIR.

Choosing what to tell and how to tell about local history was challenging, one thing is to write a text or narrate verbally, another is to transpose such communicational dimensions and express through art. Among the scholarship holders there were choices, negotiations, evaluations about what would be pertinent or not, at first after the choice of keywords about which story to tell began the process of building a sketch for the configuration of allegories and the "motives" of the art to be produced. Below we see students in this process of choice and transposition to the imagetic form of the elected themes. It is worth mentioning that everyone was occupied with treating the theme migrations, difficulties, confrontations and challenges, as well as the pains of leaving family members and support networks in the south or southeast and moving to the north, to the unknown, which caused fear, however, nurtured by government propaganda of land for everyone. Let us see:

Image 3 - Students producing



**Source:** The author herself (2023). **Note:** Choice and representation on paper of the artwork to be transferred to arpillera production

The group is composed of five students, each with common personal and ancestral trajectories, but at the same time specific regarding family issues, origins, challenges, and perspectives on the past-present. Autonomy in the choice requires negotiations to alleviate tensions and narrate the past, this was observed throughout the process, until they reached a consensus on what was most viable.

The autonomy advocated by Paulo Freire (1997) refers to fostering processes in which students are not receptacles of ready-made knowledge, or containers, far from it, they are able to make decisions and substantiate them by seeking knowledge in exchanges with the other, only in this path are we able to recognize ourselves, by the other and like them, mediated by the teacher.

Throughout the productions, the fears, the choices, and how to print on fabrics something that is thought and imagined were the keynote. Between what is thought, projected, and imagined and what is produced in a certain materiality there are distances, imagining seems to be easier than practicing. Gradually the scholarship students were loosening up and losing their fear. They dared to try and accomplish. A pair of scissors in the hand, a cloth on the table, the glue and the needle, after the cut the materialization of the imagined, the representation below demonstrates a little of that:

**Image 4 - Manual labor**



**Source:** The author herself (2023). **Note:** Cut from scraps.

**Image 5 - Initial version of the harrowing proposal**



**Source:** The author herself (2023). **Note:** Embroidery.

**Image 6 - Students involved in embroidery**



**Source:** The author herself (2023). **Note:** Teamwork.

**Image 7 - Students assembling the embroidery**



**Source:** The author herself (2023). **Note:** Collective work.

**Image 8** - Partial panoramic view of the embroidery



**Source:** The author herself (2023). **Note:** Partial result of the embroidery.

Among the partial results of the participant research, one can present the elements chosen by the students to narrate stories and produce art. Almost all groups, collectively, elected the centrality of the difficulties experienced by the ancestors, in the journey from their cities of origin, the trips that lasted more than seven days in the 1980s, the fears due to the forest seen as an impediment and something to be removed from the path.

The trips in buses, trucks, or the so-called "Paus de Arara" were the object of attention, perhaps due to the narratives of parents and relatives. That which marks and is remembered and told from generation to generation. Rural life and agriculture were also presented as a constituent element of the colonization process. The difficulties with agriculture that in essence little dialogued with the experiences of the first settlers. There were also insistent mentions of the forest, they brought the fauna and flora, the exuberance of the Amazon and the advance of agribusiness and burning in the present that affect everyone. The culture of forest destruction, seen as an enemy of development and progress, as already announced, was forged over the decades.

Among all the scholarship students, future history teachers, there is a recognition of the abuses in relation to the environment, a certain indignation and in some way they transit and dialogue with environmental history, something that gives hope to future generations of teachers trained on Campus.

This study is partial, the project is not over and at the moment teachers and students are theorizing about nuances of the experience. Writing is now another challenge they face, but that is another story to be told. Below is the representation of a moment of socialization and motivation for the written production that, it is worth saying, is at a rapid pace, with each pair of students electing an element within what was worked to narrate about, in the format of experience report.

**Image 9** - Conversation about embroidery



**Source:** The author herself (2023). **Note:** Experience report.

### **Final considerations**

The Teaching Initiation Program – PIBID in the area of humanities and especially in History has just over a decade. The temptation to launch students into school spaces in continuous observations or even in direct actions related to teaching is something seductive. To the coordinator, it would remain to follow from afar what already occurs in school spaces, however, as it is dedicated to higher education students who are in the first two years of the undergraduate course, it is found that it is essential to prepare them to understand the foundations and didactic-pedagogical possibilities in a more grounded way.

By proposing readings and discussions, the listening of songs and provocations regarding feelings and senses, the reading of poems and cine-debates, the scholarship holders are inserted into the variables regarding addressing themes, in this case the Chilean and Brazilian dictatorship. The use of other languages to understand is significant because it

provides the understanding of teaching beyond the textbook, chalk, and teacher's voice. Similarly, the art of arpillerias provokes and does, more than saying what should be said, thus, they perceive the possibilities, delights, difficulties, and beauty of the process and the result.

With Chile and the arpillerias, another universe was entered without leaving Rondônia, a state scoured, whether by abandonment, by agribusiness policies, or by being peripheral if the analysis perspective is the north-south axis. In many embroideries, the issue of environmental history was latent, which demonstrates the concern of the generations that will assume education, a concern, and interest in the defense of the Amazon.

Finally, it is worth noting that the project and the participant research engendered sensitivities, stories of oneself intertwined with the micro and macro, making spiral movements of past-present, that is, Chile is far but is here, Brazil is far from Chile, however, they are very close when it comes to the regimes of historicity, but especially when we think that what unites the two countries is something greater: Latin Americanity and its strength, something that pulsates and can be seen in the exuberance of Ney Matogrosso's interpretation:

I swore lies  
And I walk alone  
I take on the sins  
The north winds  
Don't move windmills  
And what's left for me  
Is just a moan My life, my dead  
My crooked paths  
My Latin blood  
My captive soul I broke treaties  
Betrayed the rites  
I broke the spear  
I launched into space  
A cry, an outburst  
And what matters to me  
Is not to be defeated My life, my dead  
My crooked paths  
My Latin blood  
My captive soul (Latin Blood [...], 1977).

If on the one hand the history of Latin America is marked by exploitation, violence, and arbitrariness, on the other hand, we cannot forget that the processes of resistance and struggle have always been evident. The forms found to rebel came from armed struggles, protests, electoral attempts, or aborted revolutionary movements, in the field of art and culture, Latinos are full of expressions, since colonization when exploitation is installed, traces, tracks, and

evidence of the use of artistic tools to denounce, support, or rebel against what is constantly being tried to impose are shown.

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