

**A TERRA DOS “BRABOS”: EMPATES E DESEMPATES  
IDENTITÁRIO CULTURAIS NOS RECANTOS DO AQUIRI NA LETRA  
DA MÚSICA RIMADEIRA**

**The land of the “brave”: cultural-identity ties and unties in the Corners of Aquiri in the lyrics of the song Rimadeira**

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**RESUMO**

Este artigo tem como objetivo estudar um dos traços da cultura e da identidade acreana, concernente ao homem da floresta, conhecidos como seringueiros, a partir da letra da música Rimadeira de Álamo Kário. Por meio das imagens presentes na canção, podemos, através de uma abordagem bakhtiniana do discurso, analisar algumas ideologias que podem refratar uma das facetas da cultura, da identidade, como também alguns elementos paisagísticos que se tornaram pontos de referência da cultura acreana e que podem nos servir de subsídios para a compreensão de um dos traços historiográficos de um povo que lutou contra bolivianos por essa parte do solo amazônico e que ainda empenha-se para ter seu lugar reconhecido na história do povoamento, construção e desenvolvimento do estado que lutou para ser brasileiro.

**Palavras-Chave:** Cultura; Identidade; História; Acre

**ABSTRACT**

This article aims to study one of the traits of the culture and identity of the Acre people, concerning the man of the forest, known as rubber tappers from the lyrics of the song Rimadeira by Álamo Kário. Through the images present in the song, we can, through a Bakhtinian approach to discourse, analyze some ideologies that can refract one of the facets of culture, identity, as well as some landscape elements that have become reference points of the Acre culture and that can serve as subsidies for the understanding of one of the historiographical traces of a people who fought against Bolivians for this part of the Amazon soil and who are still striving to have their place recognized in the history of settlement, construction and development of the state that fought to become Brazilian.

**Keywords:** Culture; Identity; History; Acre

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## **1. Introdução**

It can be asserted that studies on identity treat it as a continuous, passive process of profuse and different constructions and/or reconstructions; meanings and/or resignifications; inventions and/or reinventions, a dynamic and moving construct of identity conformations, encompassing different scopes: historical, political, economic, social, urbanistic and also artistic (HALL, 2006).

Nowadays, it is correct to say that the identity constitution of socially organized individuals is linked to the construction of memories: individual or collective ones. They represent the constituent of social and collective phenomena, passive of oscillations and constant changes. The typical elements of individual and/or collective memory are particular and/or collective events, people and/or characters, and places, symbolic and reference spaces that end up influencing the identity construction of a people, (POLLACK, 1992, p.2). Supported by memories, the identity process begins, and throughout our existence, we compose our own image, characteristics of ourselves to be presented to society, (POLLACK, 1992, p.5).

With regard to the understanding of identity, a concept dear to the outlining of this work, we used the notion of identity formation advocated by the sociologist Stuart Hall. The author considers processes of construction and reconstruction of identities in the globalized context, asserting the dynamic process, typical of the social relations of individuals and groups in which identities are configured. Hall (2006) states that the conception of cultural identity is processed in the dynamics of sharing symbolic elements among themselves, throughout, and, in differences.

The aforementioned Jamaican thinker brings up an important notion about the identity formation of individuals or groups: multiculturalism. In his view, each identity is its own, constituted in a hybridization process; it is never complete or ready, but it is in constant construction, consubstantiating itself through shocks and clashes among different and varied cultural entities. Regarding this multiculturalism vision of identity established from a plurality of identity elements, the writer states:

Multicultural societies are not something new, as migration and the displacement of peoples have been more the rule than the exception, producing ethnically or culturally 'mixed' societies [...] in fact, multiculturalism is not a doctrine, it does not characterize a political strategy and does not represent a state of affairs already achieved. It is not a disguised way of endorsing some ideal or utopian state. Just as there are different multicultural societies, there are also very diverse multiculturalisms (HALL, 2009, p. 52-53).

Taking as a reference the perspective of understanding cultural identity highlighted by Hall, we can consider Rio Branco, capital of the State of Acre, a place possessing historical, geographic, identity, cultural and urban specificities, occasioned by a migratory movement made by different individuals, coming from different places, and these clashes of cultures merge to form a genuinely Acre culture, legitimized and praised by different discursive sources: literature, painting, theater, newspapers, including music, as in the case of the lyrics Rimadeira, object of this study.

In this sense, this work aims to offer insights into the culture and identity of Acre, highlighting the cityscapes of Rio Branco, brought to light through the speeches present in Álamo Kário's song, composed by the artist himself whose lyrics were written for participation in FAMP, – *Festival Acreano de Música Popular - Acre Festival of Popular Music*, being awarded the prize for best arrangement in 2018. The song, according to the author himself, in an interview given to a local talk show program in September 2019, “is a tribute to the city of Rio Branco”, that allows us to glimpse social, cultural, identity and landscape aspects of the capital of Acre when we observe more attentively the speeches and horizons present in the composition.

Moreover, from Bhabha's cultural perspective, we try to work theoretically on the discourses present in the lyrics of the song Rimadeira, taking into consideration the space of culture and identity formation of the people of Acre, specifically in Rio Branco, its capital, when this city went through a process of hybridization both in social, cultural, identity and landscape terms. In this sense, we intend to analyze from perceptions of events, historical entities, popular beliefs and symbolic environments denoted in the lyrics in question, precisely when the winding road of a certain development had already been paved with the sweat of the men of the forest, laying the foundation of the urbanist constitution of Rio Branco at the beginning of the 20th century with the boom of the rubber cycle.

Regarding city environments and their landscapes, Cauquelin (2007) ponders the creation of landscape sites. The landscape is the perception of what surrounds us, how we see and conceive a certain vision. Perceiving places and spaces as landscapes can reveal impressions about our own culture, and in this sense, the artist, from whatever angle, is the creator of reference environments, as is the case of the song to be analyzed in this research. Various spaces are resized and given new meanings through the horizons explored by the author. Highlighting considerations about landscape, the author emphasizes:

The social sensitivity to these landscapes is historically attested at certain times [...]. Beauty ‘is discovered’, places hitherto considered evil, terrifying

deserts are frequented. They become fashionable, first for the elite of society, then enter the vocabulary of natural ‘necessities’, they are a common good, available to everyone [...]. The visualization of a location, any composition made by the artist, attributes to what is represented a value of truth that the text does not yet offer: words can lie, the image, for its part, seems to fix what exists (CAUQUELIN, 2007, p. 92-93).

Therefore, within the perspective of re-signification of environments, what was previously considered the “green hell”, as Euclides da Cunha and Alberto Rangel denote, alluding to the Amazonian space, over time ceased to be the uninhabitable and hostile place to become the home to those who constituted and reconstructed these remote locations, and in this way, expanded horizons both in spatial, cultural, social and identity terms.

These immigrants built other landscapes, and the poet can give other meanings and/or resignifications to them. The big *gameleira* tree, portrayed in the lyrics of the song, was previously just a useful spot for the mooring of steamers that crossed the Acre River, bringing manpower and supplies for the promotion of the rubber extractive culture. Today, that same old *tree* is the place of contemplation and deference, becoming a symbolic landmark of resistance against Bolivian soldiers, an important place of Acre culture, explored by the artist's creativity.

It is in this sense that Acre can also be inserted in the intersection of hybrid cultures, since it received different people with different customs, beliefs and habits. Indigenous culture played a relevant role in shaping Acre's identity and in the hybridization with the culture of immigrants, especially those from the Northeast, identities fluctuate and unite to form a genuinely Acre cultural and identity, as we can see blended in various aspects of our everyday life.

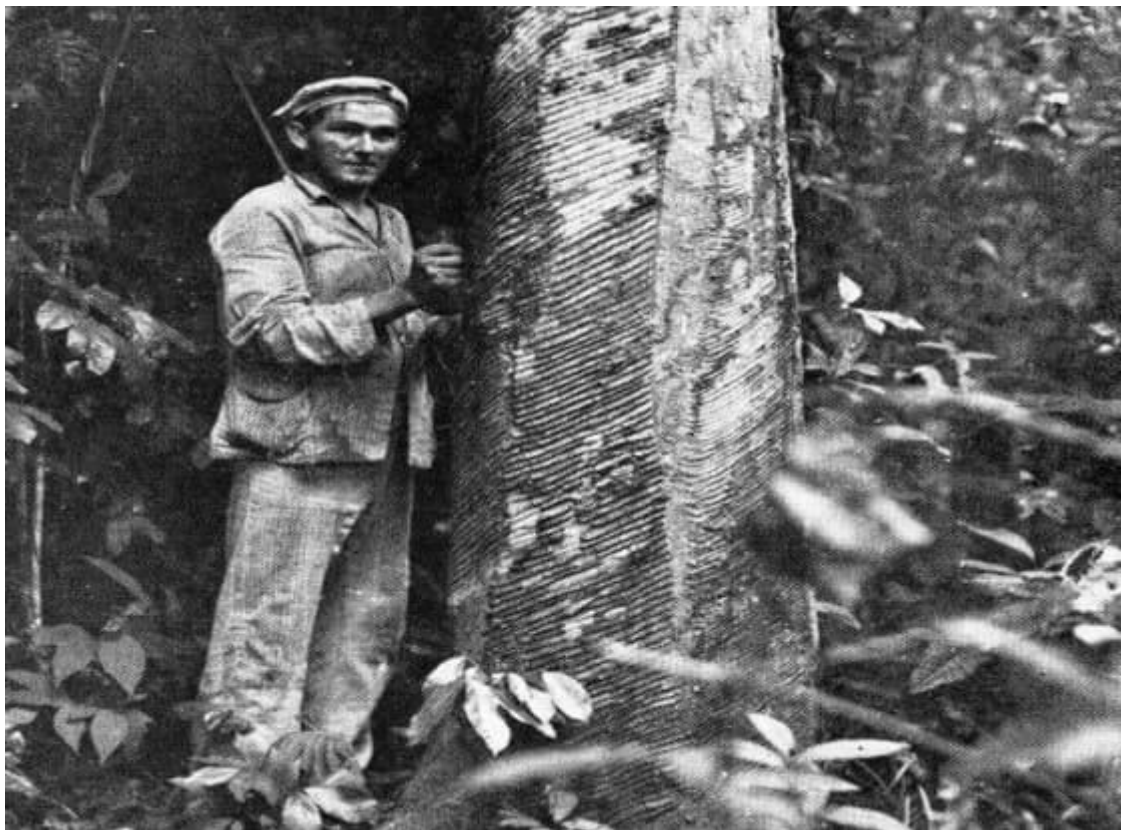
Within the assumption of intersection of cultures, Bauman (2008), assumes that identities are fluctuating, if some of them are thrown at us from when we are born, by the people around us; others are chosen and determined by the individual himself, according to his own social circumstances. Therefore, identity is not solid, but liquid, consubstantiated by the paths taken, by the relationships of belonging, and, above all, by the marginalized of globalization, involved in the disastrous consequences of a frustrated project of colonization.

Thus, identity must be understood as an incessant effort to signify or re-signify our own history, also valuing the identity trait of subjects that are often forgotten or marginalized, as in the case of the rubber tappers highlighted in the song under study who also helped to compose the history, culture and identity of Acre as a Brazilian state.

In this sense, within this context of cultural hybridization, symbolic images of places with their representative characters in a given historical moment are created, outlining identity traits of Acre people, bringing to light the fundamental role of this group of individuals, who in

a way, by least the majority, struggled to be Brazilian in the lands where rubber trees flourish, inserted in a globalizing context of fostering Brazilian cooperation with the allies of the First World War, through gum production in the middle of the remote and hostile areas of the amazon jungle.

It is worth noting that at the beginning of the 20th century, the extraction of latex from Amazonian rubber trees for international export represented one third of the Brazilian GDP, which demonstrates the great importance of this economic activity for the development of the country, confirming the importance of these individuals: northeasterners-immigrants, men and women involved in this endeavor, as well as blacks and Indians, and not just the “Portuguese rubber tappers” who had the means, money and ends for this enterprise in the remote areas of the amazon jungle (RANZI, 2008).



*An average unknown Rubber tapper extracting ‘the white gold’ in the Amazon forest, a trade that attracted a significant workforce from the Northeast | Source: The rubber plantation and the rubber tapper - Arthur Cesar Ferreira Reis (1953) [<https://www.unicamp.br/unicamp/ju/noticias/2017/09/20/critica-subestimou-literatura-sobre-economia-da-borracha-aponta-estudo>].*

Therefore, the immigrants together with the native inhabitants of the Acre Forest were of great importance for the promotion of this economic activity, generating foreign exchange for Brazil and specially for cities like Manaus and Belém, and in a way, Rio Branco, developed mainly or exclusively for the exploitation of Amazonian gum extractivism.

Belém and Manaus, were at the time the most developed Brazilian cities, mainly Belém, not only because of its strategic position - almost on the coast -, but because it hosted a greater number of residences of rubber tappers, banking houses and other important institutions. Both cities had electricity, piped water and sewage systems, having access to technologies that other Brazilian cities did not have, such as: electric trams, avenues built on swampy land, in addition to sumptuous and imposing buildings.

With Acre<sup>2</sup> it was not different, for the rubber enterprise on lands formerly belonged to Bolivia, it is that a certain development was triggered, even though it was distinct from what happened with the cities of Manaus and Belém, the cycle of rubber extraction represented the driving force for the creation of the Acre capital and other smaller city centers, transforming Acre into a federal territory, and eventually, its annexation to Brazil (WARREN, 1989).

From this perspective of Amazonian development, the rubber soldiers, as the rubber tappers who came especially from northeastern Brazil were called, even facing all kinds of misfortunes, paved the way for the “creation” of what today is the state of Acre, even that a large contingent of these pioneers succumbed to the ills and hardships of the region. Approximately 30,000 rubber tappers died abandoned in the Amazon, after having their strength extinguished extracting the “white gold”. They suffered from malaria, yellow fever, hepatitis and were attacked by countless animals in the jungle (WARREN, 1989, p. 15).

About this settlement, Napoleão Ribeiro praises the bravery of the northeastern people, notably the people from Ceará, without, however, mentioning even briefly, the indigenous relevance in such an enterprise; on the contrary, he expresses his colonizing and superior vision on the part of the so-called “pathfinders” in relation to the indigenous people, disregarding the significant role of the Indian in the development of the region, whether in terms of labor, geographic knowledge, and especially in cultural terms: their ways of living, expressing themselves and protecting themselves from the dangers of a treacherous place, and the knowledge of “jungle remedies”. The author then explains:

Unprotected by the Nation, left to the mercy of fate, harassed by diseases, decimated by beriberi and malaria, facing hunger and the forest's underbelly, amid fatigue and dangers, the people of Ceará overcame immense obstacles and with tears, with sweat, with blood and with countless lives, tamed the fearless Indian, subjugated the endemics, tamed the wild land, built Acre and defended it with heartfelt patriotism, organized a society with Christian morals and with a cult of honor (RIBEIRO, 2008, p. 39- 40).

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<sup>2</sup> Acre, for example, became the third largest tax payer in the union between 1910 and 1912, with the extraction of Amazonian latex representing a total of “40% of Brazilian exports, surpassed only by coffee, which reached a little more than that this percentage coming from the rubber extracted from the Amazon”, (Ranzi, 2008, 1992, p. 42).

However, contradicting this superior view on the part of the “Ceará heroes” in relation to other individuals who also contributed to the occupation of Acre lands, especially the Indians, Souza (2005) advocates that the Indians were “exploited and exterminated” (SOUZA, 2005, p. 26-28), within the process of settlement of new lands in the extraction of valuable latex. Ribeiro lacks to mention that only a few wealthy people made fortunes in this endeavor, since the majority: rubber tappers, Indians, women and black peoples, - those who really produced wealth in that pungent, but abusive economic system, died of starvation from so much work and from the most varied hardships.

When these “brabos” [tough guys] arrived in Acre to extract rubber, they were already indebted to the “coronéis de barranco” [ravine colonels], as the “owners” of the rubber plantations were called, dictating rules and orders in those disorderly corners, as Leandro Tocantins points out: “The boss or coronel constituted the most characteristic human revelation of the rubber economic system, and the rubber tapper was a simple extension of this very close ecological link enunciated by the relationship Seringa-Seringal, Seringalista-seringueiro” [rubber villages, rubber tapper bosses-rubber tappers] (TOCANTINS, 1960, p. 180). About this same scenario, Cleusa Ranzi writes:

The power of command and control was concentrated in the central shed where the colonel acquired the absolutist characteristics of a king in his palace, where the laws and decisions that regulated, individually and in the smallest details, the economic and social life of the indebted subjects (RANZI, 2008, p.83).

Therefore, the author of the lyrics of the song Rimadeira, based on a personal understanding of events that happened at a certain time, reinforces the relationship between culture, seen in a hybridized way, and the identity of the Acre people from symbolic environments highlighted in the composition. From this perspective, identities become moving and inconclusive, constituted in social interactions through language. Consequently, language not only refracts realities, but also produces and establishes them. According to Bakhtin’s concept of identity (2000, p. 137), even when they are not embodied in a character, they are concretized on a more or less objectified social and historical plan.

In this assumption, Bakhtin (2009) argues that, in the linguistic process, language is privileged in revealing ideologies, since words undergo transformations according to whom uses them or the relationships that words maintain with each other. In addition, the Russian thinker conceptually highlights heteroglossia that, in a speech, there is a set of voices established through the relationships maintained between speakers with contextualized and interconnected meanings and values. Thus, this Bakhtinian conception is the basis of this study,

since the lyrics in question encompass a series of voices processed through existing discourses, according to the enunciator's intentionality.

Thus, to study this composition is to understand how the guiding discourses of cultural aspects referring to one of the identity aspects of the Acreano subject are expressed, from constitutive elements of the landscape formation of the city of Rio Branco with its referential places and landmarks, notably located in the paths from the waters of the Aquiri.

Through these discourses we can denote possible insights from Acre's culture and possible elements that characterize cultural hybridization and its identity conformation, especially in Rio Branco, capital of Acre. In this perspective, we try to understand to what extent there was or is an oscillation in terms of identity, what constructions/reconstructions or meanings/resignifications happen with Acre's culture and identity, exploring the landscape paths focused on in the lyrics, capable of reveling some aspects of the history of Rio Branco from these reference sites.

We also highlight the landscape topic, the aforementioned concept of the writer Anne Cauquelin; the French writer Michel Collot offers us a parallel observation regarding the conception of the landscape as a revealing element of cultures. Collot understands that “the landscape is a space captured, apprehended, perceived, combined with a point of view” (COLLOT, 2013, p. 17); a hermetic phenomenon, involving at least three segments: a place, a look and an image. This means that, a place will be conceived from the keen eye of the observer, creating a subjective *frame* as Collot focuses on, understanding that “an environment is not susceptible to becoming a landscape from the moment it is perceived by an individual”, (COLLOT, 2013, p. 19).

Therefore, through the contemplative gaze of the author of the song Rimadeira, we can abstract the sensitivity of the observation generated, based on the landscapes explored in the lyrics in question, apprehending from these horizons, one of the many expressions of Acre culture and identity, connoted in the discourses underlying the lyrics studied.

**2. From river to river: Rimadeira song**

1	I'm going to sing it to rhyme with 'eira' Chestnut tree, rubber tree, it's to delight you I go through Capoeira By Praça da Bandeira to date you (2x)	4	Repeat [1]
2	I will cross the bridge to the other side I see the waters of Aquiri I wait for you there in Gameleira To eat tacacá and to see you smile	5	I remember the old times And stories that were heard around here The big snake, Caboquinho, Caipora Boy, go inside, watch out for the Mapinguari
	I will walk through the dawn		I miss people who had to leave



3	On the avenues of its heart Cadeia Velha, Quinze, Base, 6 de Agosto Sobral, Bahia, Bosque and Estação Bosque and Estação Bosque and Estação	6	And the nobility of fighting for dreams that have no end Thaumaturgo, Nazaré, Azul, Rodrigues Bararu, Fernando Galo, Omanso and Santim Lauriano, Garibaldi, Natureza, Hélio Melo, Sandoval, Mathias and Ibrahim,
		7	But now I have to leave To see the waters of Aquiri I will see the waters of Aquiri

The aforementioned passage of the stanza 6 is significant for us to better understand the discursive aspects of the lyrics in question, allowing us “one” glimpse of the identity, cultural and landscape intricacies that make up one of the identity traits of the people of Acre. Adventurers coming especially from Ceará occupied this state, fighting to be Brazilian in a hostile land, called by the writer Francisco Martins the “territory of the brave”. The Amazonian exploration, as portrayed by most authors on the subject, proved to be a herculean task, and in several cases, the downfall of many, in the search for better living conditions by extracting the so-called “white gold”.

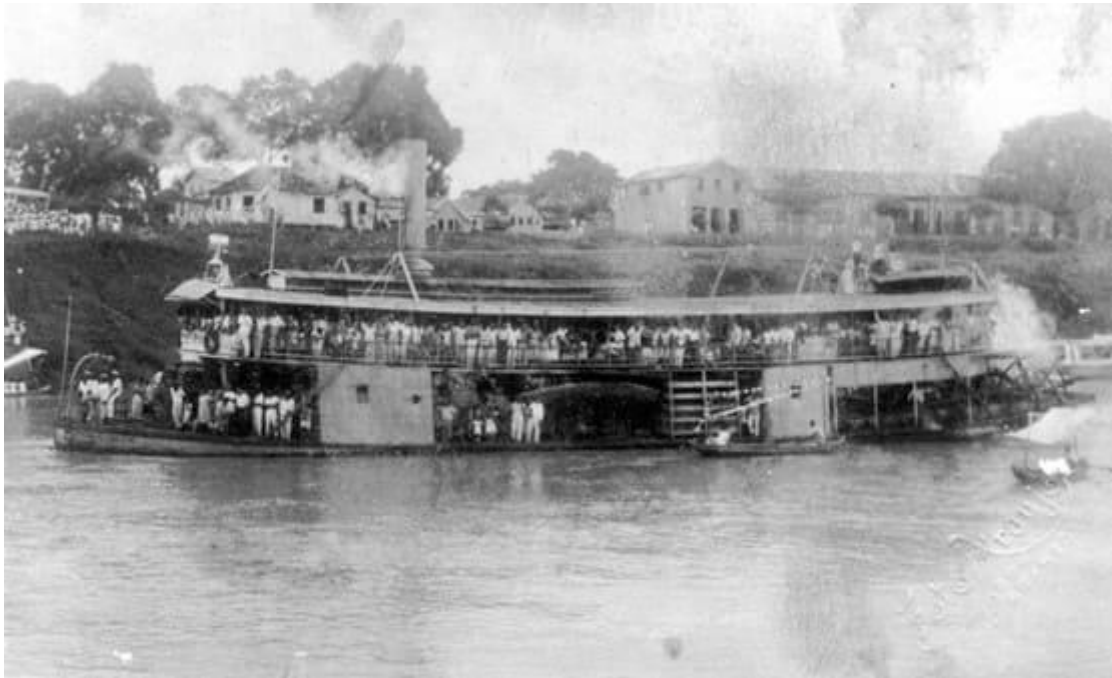
Since leaving the Brazilian northeast, these brave men faced the most varied difficulties. Everyone arrived already in debt with travel tickets, food, supplements etc. In placements, they were subjected to different forms of exploitation by rubber tappers bosses. The passage “but now I have to leave to see the waters of Aquiri”, refers us to two likely scenarios: the hope of thriving in those new lands, leaving a condition suffered due to the drought in the northeastern outskirts of Brazil; at the same time the sadness of leaving the beloved homeland, facing the unknown in the so-called “green hell”.

The waters of the Acre rivers played a relevant role in the settlement of the region inhabited by white men until the mid-nineteenth century. Before the arrival of these people, the majority from Ceará – the state that today is Acre actually belonged to the Indians, according to SOUZA (2012, p. 28-29), it was home to “about 150 thousand Indians”. By water, the Northeasterners left on steamboats, passing first through Belém, then Manaus until they landed in Acre.

From river to river the “outsiders” settled in the rubber plantations, controlled with an iron fist by the “coronéis de barranco”, the only ones to really make wealth. The rubber tappers, in turn, were only semi-slaves, responsible for generating foreign exchange for those in power in those corners. The waters of the Aquiri, or Acre River, in addition to serving as a transport for the arrival of these workers, represented the very survival of these individuals: they drank, fished and planted their subsistence, depending directly on these flumes. Acre’s culture, identity

and landscape are intrinsically linked to these waters and their floodplains. The first occupational sites were organized on its banks.

The first city foci appeared on the banks of these rivers, facilitating gum transport. The landscape of Acre was transformed from the fluvial geography of the region. The nuclei of rubber plantations formed the embryos of the first cities, bordered by the waters of the Aquiri. It was like this with Rio Branco City, formerly Seringal Empreza, on the banks of the Acre River; Cruzeiro do Sul City on the banks of the Juruá River; and smaller cities such as Xapuri, Brasília, all facing their rivers.



*Steamboat carrying rubber tappers along the waters of the Aquiri River.*  
Source: <https://www.ac24horas.com/2014/12/07/internautas-criam-um-acervo-digital-do-acre-antigo/>

In order to highlight the settlement on the banks of rivers, the lyrics of the song reinforce this perspective when the verse praises the floodplain as being the heart of his beloved city: “On the avenues of its heart, Cadeia Velha, Quinze, Base, 6 de Agosto”. These neighborhoods were the forerunners in the urban conformation of the city of Rio Branco; It is the heart, the place where the first inhabitants built their homes and began their journey in search of a new life in the Amazon rainforest, extracting the valuable rubber trees. It was in this place that the first referential sites emerged, such as “Praça da Bandeira”, “Gameleira”, “Avenues” etc., emphasized in the connotations of this song ‘Rimadeira’, all of these landmarks today with a historical value in Acre culture.

So, as advocated by Cauquelin and Collot, the landscape perspective abstracted by the people of the forest pointed to the banks of the rivers and in them the pioneers established the first city centers and their identity, starting from a process of cultural hybridization between

several entities, composing the social ‘acreana’ texture as conceptualized by Stuart Hall. These rubber plantations, later villages, became cities, precisely because they are strategic from a geographic and economic point of view, since they are located at the confluence of rivers, at relevant points of navigation and convergence of production. About this economic panorama and settlement of the cities on the banks of the Aquiri, Cleusa Ranzi ponders:

This unit – the rubber plantation village – constituted a nucleus, a kind of rural district formed in the interior of the forest [...] these units emerged in the Amazon, first near Belém and in the lower Tocantins, moving, little by little, through other rivers, to Alto Purus and Juruá. Thus began the exploration of the region that today forms Acre, whose conquest and occupation became possible due to the external appreciation of the gum product (RANZI, 2008, p. 81).

These rubber tappers, ‘caboclos-ribeirinhos’ [river locals], are the result of the confluence of different social individuals – Amerindians from the floodplains and/or ‘terra firme’ [firm land] and Northeasterners – inaugurating particular forms of social organization in the new territory. It is necessary to highlight the difference between these generational matrices, marked by unique dynamisms and syncretisms, the Amazonian social formation, as a whole, was based on different types of servitude and slavery.

It is worth emphasizing the importance of these waters and lands. Without them, the rubber tappers would inevitably not have succeeded in their endeavor if they depended only on the meager salary paid by their bosses. In order not to die of starvation, most planted their crops on the banks of rivers and in swiddens, in addition to hunting and fishing. About this form of work that guided the white gold exploration company, Euclides da Cunha calls it “the most imperfect organization that engendered human selfishness. The emigrant realizes, there, an anomaly which is never too insistent, he is the man who worked to enslave himself”, (CUNHA, 1941, p. 60).

stanza 1	I'm going to sing it to rhyme with ‘eira’ Chestnut tree, rubber tree, it's to delight you I go through Capoeira By Praça da Bandeira to date you (2x)
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After emphasizing one of the main points of this work, which is precisely the importance of rivers for the cultural and identity conformation of Acre, we now analyze in detail the lyrics of Rimadeira song. In the first stanza we perceive the exaltation of two elements responsible for the development of the region. Natural resources, among them, the rubber tree, – a tree of Amazonian origin, in addition to others such as the chestnut, now known as the Brazil nut, – have generated considerable wealth for the locals and for the national economy as well.

Directly responsible for the urban development of Acre's cities, these Amazonian products, notably the latex extracted from rubber trees, is considered one of the main symbols of Acre's culture and identity. Through the exploration of the tree revered by many, the process of population and progress of the locations mentioned in the song under study was triggered.

The lyrics studied initially emphasize two important places in the logic of the city's urban composition: Capoeira, the old central neighborhood in Rio Branco, and like most of the first neighborhoods in Rio Branco, it is located close to the bank of the Acre River; Praça da Bandeira [flag square], also central, close to the Rio Branco Palace, one of the architectural symbols of the capital of Acre.

The famous square is located in the first district of Rio Branco, and on the other side of the river is Gameleira, the main historic site of the capital. Praça da Bandeira, so named because it previously housed an Acre flagpole, was, and still is, a relevant shopping center. It is worth mentioning that most of the rubber produced in the 1900s was sold there, and was later sent by river to Manaus and Belém. Today, in addition to the existing shops, it is a tourist place where visitors meet to contemplate its beauty on the banks of the Acre River.



*An important part of the history of the city of Rio Branco, the Municipal Market, which over time became known as Mercado Velho [Old Market], was the first masonry public building in the capital of Acre. Built in 1929, under the government of Hugo Carneiro, the building was revitalized in 2006, under the management of Jorge Viana, where it came to be called Novo Mercado Velho [New Old Market]. The location works in the city center. in this photo we can see bronze statues in honor of the rubber soldiers, responsible for the creation and development of Acre as a Brazilian state. Source: <http://senildomelo.blogspot.com/2011/12/rio-branco-ac-em-uma-decada.html>.*

Stanza 2	I see the waters of Aquiri I wait for you there in Gameleira To eat tacacá and to see you smile
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We understand that the poetic subject of the lyrics behaves like a *flâneur*<sup>3</sup>, interacting with city spaces produced from reference horizons that portray the history, identity and landscapes of the city of Rio Branco. The *flâneur* travels first, possibly from his Capoeira neighborhood, passes by Praça da Bandeira and crosses the First District where the seat of government is located with the imposing Rio Branco palace, and when crossing the bridge he arrives at the Second District, up to Gameleira.

It should be noted that, for Acre locals in general, the gameleira represents a milestone in the history of this state. It is a solemn and expressive place, as it was at the foot of the imposing tree that this occupational endeavor began.

In this sense, it is important to emphasize that the establishment of the city of Rio Branco was founded at the foot of the great gameleira tree. In 1882, Neutel Maia “opened” the rubber plantation called Volta da Empreza, later becoming the capital of Acre (SOUZA, 2012, p. 79). The place saw the birth of the first street in Rio Branco, the scenes of clashes between Brazilians and Bolivians for the control of the land initially inhabited by Indians, the real holders of this land, (SOUZA, 2012, p. 24-25).

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<sup>3</sup> Flâneur, do francês *flâneur*, significa “errante”, “vadio”, “caminhante” ou “observador”. O flâneur era, antes de tudo, um tipo literário do século XIX, na França, essencial para qualquer imagem das ruas de Paris. A palavra carregava um conjunto rico de significados correlatos: o homem do lazer, o malandro, o explorador urbano, o conhecedor da rua. Foi Walter Benjamin, baseando-se na poesia de Charles Baudelaire, que fez dessa figura um objeto de interesse acadêmico no século XX, como um emblemático arquétipo da experiência cidadina moderna (SHAYA, 2004).



*Gameleira Port in the second district, former Seringal Empreza. the ground zero of the creation of the city of Rio Branco. Source: <http://ambienteacreano.blogspot.com/2006/09/fotos-antigas-de-rio-branco.html>.*

The majestic place for people from Rio Branco is currently called Calçadão da Gameleira, listed in 1981 as a historic monument. The landscape site that served as the initial horizon for the foundation of the city of Branco, where the river bends, making an extensive curve, keeps the feeling and symbology of Acre's identity. Specifically, in the gameleira right on the bank of the Acre River, the history of the Acre people has its dawn.

Nowadays, the site gameleira is a route for visitors eager to learn about the peculiarities of the state that fought to be Brazilian. The historic tree stands on the “curve” of the Acre River; the place where the city was born is a large straight segment that houses two bridges: the Juscelino Kubitschek, known as the Metallic Bridge, and the Coronel Sebastião Dantas bridge, also called the Concrete Bridge, both linking two districts; in addition to a footbridge called Joaquim Macedo, built in 2006; its lights contrast with the waters of the river and it serves as a route to contemplate the beautiful sunset of the capital of Acre.

The Gameleira boardwalk, where today the Acre flagpole is located, is a group of old bars, typical old houses, hotels, sale stalls and restaurants where various dishes, typical of the Acre cuisine are served, including *tacacá*, – a delicacy originating in the rich region of Acre indigenous cuisine highlighted in the song studied. There, it is tasted: *rabada no tucupi*, *tapioca*, *baixaria*, – typically

*Acre dish, pirarucu fish a casaca, sun-dried meat with baião de dois, fish moqueca, shrimp bobó, creamy açai, natural juices from various fruits of the region etc.*

Acre's cuisine demonstrates how cultures intertwined, providing a diverse range of riches that make up one of the traits of Acre's identity. The cuisine attests to one of these cultural prisms. As the passage “that is to see you smile” possibly expresses, conveying the idea of happiness for those who walk and taste typical foods in these pleasant places that portray a little of the history of Acre, as is the case of the boardwalk of Gameleira.

Stanza 3	I will walk through the dawn On the avenues of its heart Cadeia Velha, Quinze, Base, 6 de Agosto, Sobral, Bahia, Bosque and Estação Bosque and Estação Bosque and Estação
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Once again, the poetic being disguises himself as a *flaneur*, and then wanders through old neighborhoods, many formed on the banks of the Acre River, such as Cadeia Velha, 6 de Agosto, Base and Quinze. These places were occupied mainly by former rubber tappers and/or their children, “repelled” from their land positions by landowners coming from the south and southeast, occupying neighborhoods without any structure. However, they were the places available to these workers marginalized by the old *aviamento* gum system.

Walking around these places, the *flaneur* feels at ease, probably because he is in a hospitable and familiar environment. Many say that Acre people carry a friendly attitude in their essence. Most of these men of the forest supposedly bring in their identity an air of welcome, perhaps because they were accepted, despite all distress and hardship, in this new land.

However, it is worth emphasizing that the welcoming and hospitable face of the forest individuals denotes only a trait of their identity, as Sergio Buarque de Holanda explains in the book, *Raízes do Brasil* (1995) [Roots of Brazil], about the concept of the “cordial man”, at the same time that there is a friendly and gentle feature within the identity fabric of Acre inhabitants, there is the reverse of this same medal: the man of the forest is also rustic, passionate, and often violent, sometimes behaving more instinctively than rationally.

Within that social context where public power was not present, intrigues and disagreements were almost always resolved by the machete of the most “valiant”. The essence of the concept explored by Buarque de Holanda can be exemplified in the behavioral duality of forest peoples: on the one hand, friendly and welcoming people; on the other, men who carry

out extreme and passionate behaviors, a very peculiar ambiguous characteristic of the “cordial man” advocated by the Brazilian sociologist, (HOLANDA, 1995, p. 147).

It is cultural, for example, the invitation for a coffee and even the sharing of a plate of “boia”, – as meals were called in the placement of rubber trees; in many cases food was scarce, but the genuine invitation was real. In this case, nothing is more pleasurable than exploring places where one feels welcome and homelike, as in the case of the poetic self, wandering through the first neighborhoods of Rio Branco.

Stanza 5	I remember the old times And stories that were heard around here The big snake, Caboquinho, Caipora Boy, go inside, watch out for the Mapinguari
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This verse reiterates another cultural facet of Acre when it lightly touches on popular belief and some myths about the men of the forest. These legends coming from concrete facts or not, inhabit the imagination of the jungle explorers, revealing, in a certain way, a little of the material and spiritual culture of the “lost” rubber tapper in the remote areas of the Amazon jungle, once called by Euclides da Cunha “the green hell”.

Thus, this set of myths and legends passed from generation to generation nurtured and still nurturing even if it is cooling down, as the lyrics under study suggest, in the memory of a good part of locals from Acre. In this assumption, there is a nostalgia and a certain concern on the part of the poetic self with the distancing of the “stories that were heard around here”, “fantastic tales”, gradually forgotten by the new generations, probably diminished by new technologies and mass culture, mainly the American one mediated by cinema and the internet.

These “stories” such as the legend of the *Mapinguari*, – a tall and hairy strong creature with one eye on its forehead responsible for protecting the forests from distracted hunters, as well as the *Caipora*, *Cobra Grande*, *Caboquinho da Mata* etc, are being left aside by the new generations, unfortunately. All these entities that supposedly inhabit the forest have the allegorical and didactic value of making people aware of the preservation of our ecosystem.

Thus, through the lyrics, the author evokes a certain dissatisfaction as the new generations increasingly distance themselves from the culture of their grandparents, rubber tappers whose respect for the forest expresses the core of the occupation of Acre lands. And as advocated by Rajagopalan (2003) on the identity of any people: sociopolitical and economic factors guide the identity formation process. Therefore, valuing the history of forest peoples based on their indispensable role in socioeconomic terms means taking a political position based on the discourses present in the lyrics in question.



So, to discuss the culture of these rubber tappers with their legends, beliefs, habits, customs, is to recognize the relevance of these anonymous heroes in the transformation of what was once just a rubber plantation in the middle of the forest, in a state with its difficulties, but with natural and human resource wealth. These men also deserve a prominent role in Acre's history, not just the “European nobles”, as argued by most writers who deal with the history of Acre's population, these made a fortune, whereas those were excluded and relegated to their own fate on the margins of those rivers.

Stanza 6	I miss people who had to leave And the nobility of fighting for dreams that have no end Thaumaturgo, Nazaré, Azul, Rodrigues Bararu, Fernando Galo, Omanso and Santim Lauriano, Garibaldi, Natureza, Hélio Melo, Sandoval, Mathias and Ibrahim
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After the apogee of gum extractivism, the rubber tappers had to provide for their livelihoods in another way. To them was left again the waters and the earth. However, even fighting the dangers of the jungle, taming an inhospitable territory, in addition to fighting battles against the Bolivian army, led by Acre's greatest hero, Colonel Plácido de Castro, the rubber soldiers were forgotten by the government and had to face yet another war: the struggle for one's own survival and protection of their own soil. Preserving the forest meant defending their own existence as human beings (Ranzi, 2008, p. 54-55).

The unfolding of this scenario begins when the rubber tappers are expelled from their positions with the arrival of the *Paulistas* in order to implement agriculture and livestock. These, mostly from the South and Southeast, had the endorsement of the Brazilian government to occupy the Acre lands for cattle raising. The new policy encouraged large-scale cutting of trees to clear pastures. In most cases, the use of force through weapons was the keynote in these corners, with the true owners of this land: Indians and rubber tappers, forced to leave their lands (SOUZA, 2012, p. 99-100).

However, ranchers forgot that in the veins of the descendants of Indians, blacks and Northeasterners ran the courage of those who chose the forest to live and make a living out here. The possessors of the south ignored the sense of heroism present in the identity of these peoples, who, first, fought as rubber soldiers, collaborating with the allies in the Second World War, and later, as true soldiers of the homeland, fighting to make Acre a national state. Certainly, they deserved another treatment on the part of cattle ranchers, mainly, from the Brazilian government.

Defending the preservation of a standing forest, without surrendering to the fire of the new “lords of the land”, the rubber tappers often paid with their own lives, as was the case of

Chico Mendes, – the greatest symbol of the fight for the protection of nature, brutally murdered for embracing the cause of a sustainable practice of exploiting the forest without destroying it, contrary to what cattle ranchers in the south did, clearing acres of land for the implementation of their cattle pastures.

In this passage of the lyrics, the author emphasizes the scenario of clashes and dreams on the part of the rubber tappers, in the sense of being recognized as relevant individuals for the constitutive process of Acre's history. The author mentions some names of rubber tappers and activists, converging their struggles showing the completion of an identity sedimented in courage and dignity, even fighting to become Brazilians, suffering the exploitation of the owners of traditional rubber plantations; then the threat of the cattlemen of the South and Southeast, never bowed down to injustices, dangers and intimidation from so many opponents.

This is undoubtedly one of the traits that make up Acre's identity conformation: despite being rude or impulsive, they also carry a hospitable, friendly, and above all, hardworking attitude. These people still seek their deserved important role in Acre's history. In this way, we understand that the various arts, including music, as in the case of the song study on screen, are instruments capable of providing opportunities for other views and other understandings of themes that reveal neglected stories, and sometimes even forgotten by hegemonic discourses as it is the case of the relevant role played by the rubber tapper in shaping the cultural, identity and landscape formation of Acre as a national state of Brazil.

And as Bakhtin (2000) argues, it is in the linguistic process that language reveals itself and its ideologies, and thus, through the analyzed song composition, it is possible to comprehend some discourses present in it, denoting some ideologies that constitute the narrative of the forest peoples. From river to river, from margin to margin we were able to understand one of the identity traits of these pioneers revealed in the verses of the song *Rimadeira*: some cultural aspects which illustrate some features of the beliefs, habitude and customs of these forest inhabitants whose role was of great important for settlement, construction and development state whose people fought literally to be Brazilians.

### **3. Some considerations**

The present study, developed from the analysis of the speeches of the lyrics of the song *Rimadeira*, composed by the artist Álamo Kário, allows us to understand some ideological aspects present in it, directing us to possible insights about one of the identity traits of people who live in Acre, based on cultural and landscape elements versed in the song.

In this sense, the author of the lyrics, based on a particular view of facts and events that took place in a given time and space, reinforces the relationship between Acre's culture, seen in

a hybridized way, and the identity aspect, connoted in the discursive lines of the song. This connection can be better perceived when we look at the landscape conformation of the symbolic environments that delineate the urban formation of Rio Branco and its close relationship with the layout of the rivers in Acre.

It was on the banks of important watercourses that the first city spots flourished in Rio Branco. At the foot of the big gameleira tree, one of the symbols of the Acre revolution, the tombstone of the formation of the city capital was placed, where the first rubber plantation was opened. From river to river, part of the title of this article, anonymous heroes ventured across dangerous river courses to “tame” the Amazon jungle and make Acre, in fact, Brazilian soil.

The peoples of the forest: Indians, caboclos, riverside dwellers, rubber tappers, men and women, whites and blacks, all were key elements in the formation of Acre as a state of the federation; individuals who, due to the strength of capital, economic, social and strategic importance within the scenario of the second World War, were transformed into rubber soldiers, led to work hard in the extraction of rubber in the far corners of the “green hell”.

Therefore, through the song studied, we can glimpse insights about one of the traits of the identity and culture of a group of individuals usurped by a cunning scheme of exploitation: the Amazonian rubber trimming system. In short, we consider that these workers were used as semi-slave labors, bringing wealth only to a privileged caste. Relegated to the margins, these rubber tappers had to give up their lands, fleeing the shotguns of the agricultural lords. Many of them were unable to survive the attacks, as was the case with Chico Mendes, the greatest symbol of the struggle to preserve nature.

Thus, within the assumption of understanding some ideological aspects present in the discourses of the various arts: literature, poetry, painting, cinema etc., we also perceive songs as a very rich vehicle in which we can learn about the narratives, history, events, landscapes and characters of certain peoples.

From this perspective, taking song lyrics as a means of understanding various aspects of reality, these readings are capable of connoting parts of a whole, in the case of this study, they allow us to comprehend a little of the landscape, culture and identity of the Acre people, notably the rubber tappers, anonymous heroes who helped to compose the rich and peculiar history of Acre, portrayed in the beautiful lyrics of the song *Rimadeira* by Álamo Kário.

#### 4. References

SONG: **Rimadeira** by Álamo Kário. The song was written for participation in FAMP, – *Festival Acreano de Música Popular - Acre Festival of Popular Music*, being awarded the prize for best arrangement in 2018.

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Chico Mendes. Source: <https://blogdaboitempo.com.br/2013/11/27/a-heranca-de-chico-mendes/#prettyPhoto/1/>