



## Challenges and Perspectives for Teacher Education in the Rural Education With a Degree in Arts and Music in the Northern Context of Brazil\*

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### ABSTRACT

Rural Education has been a very problematic topic in Brazilian education in recent years. Although it has made significant progress in recent years through the creation of programs such as PRONERA and PROCAMPO, it has been facing numerous challenges regarding the access and retention of young and adult peasants at university. From a bibliographic and empirical perspective, this research aims to present an understanding of Rural Education as an education focused on the specificities of the people who live and work in the countryside, having as parameter the experience with UFT LEDOC in Tocantins. For data analysis, the study followed the perspective of Historical and Dialectical Materialism. The indigenous, the *quilombola*, the riverside, the settler, those affected by dams, the family farmer, the extractivist, among others who live and produce their material survival conditions in the countryside, go to the university not because they are obliged, but because they have an interest and need to learn. To access and attend university is to study in a place that was historically denied to them. It is facing a reality that excludes them, in order to overcome it. Finally, we consider that the materiality of the LEDOC courses at the Federal University of Tocantins configures a recent reality in the Brazilian educational reality and constitutes a new modality of graduation conquered from the demands of the social movements, whose expansion took place primarily in the governments of presidents Lula and Dilma.

### KEYWORDS

Rural education. Course degree. Arts. Tocantins.

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## Desafios e Perspectivas para a Formação Docente na Licenciatura em Educação do Campo com Habilitação em Artes e Música no Contexto Norte do Brasil

### RESUMO

A Educação do Campo tem sido tema bastante problematizado no Brasil nos últimos anos. Embora tenha conquistado avanços significativos por meio da criação de programas como o PRONERA e o PROCAMPO, vêm passando por inúmeros desafios quanto ao acesso e à permanência do jovem e do adulto camponês na universidade. A partir de uma perspectiva bibliográfica e empírica, esta pesquisa tem como objetivo principal apresentar uma compreensão da Educação do Campo enquanto uma educação voltada às especificidades dos povos que moram e trabalham no campo, tendo como parâmetro a experiência com as LEDOC da UFT em Tocantins. Para as análises dos dados, o estudo seguiu a perspectiva do Materialismo Histórico e Dialético. O indígena, o quilombola, o ribeirinho, o assentado, os atingidos por barragens, o agricultor familiar, o extrativista, entre outros que vivem e produzem as suas condições materiais de sobrevivência no campo, vão para a universidade não porque eles sejam obrigados, mas porque têm interesse e necessidade de aprender. Acessar e frequentar a universidade é estudar num lugar que foi negado historicamente para eles. É enfrentar uma realidade que os exclui, com o objetivo de superá-la. Consideramos, enfim, que a materialidade dos cursos da LEDOC da Universidade Federal do Tocantins configura uma realidade recente na realidade educacional brasileira e constitui-se como uma nova modalidade de graduação conquistada a partir das reivindicações dos movimentos sociais, cuja expansão se deu prioritariamente nos governos dos presidentes Lula e Dilma.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Educação do campo. Licenciatura. Artes. Tocantins.

## Desafíos y perspectivas para la Formación Docente en el Grado de Educación Rural con Calificación de Artes y Música en el Norte de Brasil

### RESUMEN

La Educación Rural ha sido un tema muy problemático en Brasil en los últimos años. Si bien ha logrado un progreso significativo en los últimos años a través de la creación de programas como PRONERA y PROCAMPO, se ha enfrentado a numerosos desafíos con respecto al acceso y retención de campesinos jóvenes y adultos en la universidad. Desde una perspectiva bibliográfica y empírica, esta investigación tiene como objetivo presentar una comprensión de la Educación Rural como una educación centrada en las especificidades de las personas que viven y trabajan en el campo, teniendo como parámetro la experiencia con UFT LEDOC en Tocantins. Para el análisis de datos, el estudio siguió la perspectiva del materialismo histórico y dialéctico. Los indígenas, la *quilombola*, la orilla del río, los colonos, los afectados por las represas, el agricultor familiar, el extractivista, entre otros que viven y producen sus condiciones materiales de supervivencia en el campo, van a la universidad no porque estén obligados, sino porque tienen interés y necesitan aprender. Acceder y asistir a la universidad es estudiar en un lugar que históricamente les fue negado. Se enfrenta a una realidad que los excluye para superarla. Finalmente, consideramos que la materialidad de los cursos de LEDOC en la Universidad Federal de Tocantins configura una realidad reciente en la realidad educativa brasileña y constituye una nueva modalidad de graduación conquistada por las demandas de los movimientos sociales, cuya expansión tuvo lugar principalmente en los gobiernos de los presidentes Lula y Dilma.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

Educación rural. Grado. Artes. Tocantins.

## Introduction

In recent years, rural education has been the subject of much discussion in Brazil. Although it has achieved significant advances through the creation of the National Policy for Rural Education no. 7. 352/2010 and programs such as the National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform - PRONERA and the Program to Support Higher Education in Rural Education - PROCAMPO, among others, it has been facing countless challenges regarding the access and permanence of rural youth and adults in the university, in the expansion and qualification of the offer of Licentiate's Degrees in Rural Education (LEDOC) in Brazilian education, in the guarantee and continuity of education to these students who live and live in rural areas, besides an education that is effectively focused on their reality and specificities, that transforms both the student and the teacher, because we understand that the class has a character of intentionality and is a practical action that should change both student and teacher.

According to Basconzuel (2019), thinking about rurality as a dynamic process implies reflecting on the continuities and changes that society goes through, and issues pertinent to Rural Education that constitute its materiality, such as agrarian reform<sup>1</sup>, countryside schools, and LEDOCs, which motivates to review this theme in educational research. With this thought, the author emphasizes that the studies about Rural Education should involve not only general issues but also particular and interdisciplinary ones, so that the debate about this theme can be expanded in Brazilian and international academic research.

In this sense, this article does not intend to answer the epistemological challenge of describing the history of Rural Education in Brazil, but to propose some reflections concerning the challenges and perspectives pointed out in this area based on the experiences in a LEDOC and the analyses built in the theoretical review developed in this article. With this direction, we intend, therefore, to complement studies on LEDOC in Brazil, having as a parameter a context in the northern region of Brazil.

From a bibliographic and empirical perspective, developed from an extensive bibliographic survey about the theme, the analysis of the Pedagogical Projects of the researched LEDOC and the direct observations made by the authors of this research in these courses, this study has as main aim to present an understanding of Rural Education as an education focused on the specificities of the people who live and work in the countryside, having as parameter the experience with the LEDOC in Tocantins. For the data analysis, the study followed the Historical and Dialectical Materialism perspective, because we understand that education is a social and political practice that produces contradictions in society. In this way, the analysis of the data collected in this research only made sense from the understanding of the totality of the socio-historical process in which the young and adult peasants are inserted.

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<sup>1</sup> For Welch and Sauer (2015), although agrarian reform is a priority for social movements such as the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST), its advocacy has fueled the political struggle for land in Brazil.

It is important to point out that studies on Rural Education in Tocantins are still incipient in Brazilian scientific literature, especially regarding the Graduates in Rural Education with majors in Arts and Music (Universidade Federal do Tocantins – UFT Campus of Tocantinópolis) and in Visual Arts and Music (Universidade Federal do Tocantins – UFT Campus of Arraias), being the only LEDOC in the country with these majors, which reinforces the relevance of this study for educational research.

In the first section, we present a brief historical overview of rural education based on the theoretical matrix that underlies the reflections built in this article (ARROYO, 2012, 2007; CALDART, 2012, 2011; FERNANDES; MOLINA, 2017; HAGE; MOLINA; SILVA; ANJOS, 2017; SOUZA, 2020) among others, that dialogue rural education with LEDOC and the Pedagogy of Alternating Cycle, important for the analyses developed in this article, in order to contextualize the object of this research. Next, we discuss the education of the countryside in Tocantins, and in the analyses of the Pedagogical Projects of the Courses (PPC) of these undergraduate programs. In the sequence, we reflect on the Pedagogy of Alternating Cycle in the light of the scientific literature that supported this study, important to understand how the LEDOCs work in the UFT. Finally, we present some considerations of the study carried out, important to broaden the debate about rural education from the context of the northern region of Brazil.

## Rural Education in Educational Research: a Necessary Dialogue

The strategic role attributed to education in the panorama of a world in the process of globalization tends to be expressed by educational reforms, defended as alternatives to achieve economic development and cultural transformation. Thus, the school institution plays an important role in rural and urban areas as a space for access to formal knowledge.

Several initiatives have been taken in order to build an educational policy that recognizes the specific needs of the subjects, the diversity and the particularity of the rural reality, which can be seen in the vast legal basis for the institution of public policies directed to the school attendance of people who live and work in the Brazilian countryside. In this direction, the Law of Directives and Bases for Education (LDB) no. 9.394/96 determines in its 5th Art:

Access to compulsory basic education is a subjective public right, and any citizen, group of citizens, community association, union organization, class entity or other legally made up entity, and also the Public Prosecutor's Office, can sue the public authorities to demand it. (BRASIL, 1996, p. 11).

As we can see in this law, there is a search for the consolidation and regulation of individual guarantees, such as the right to education for all Brazilians, reinforced by the 1988 Constitution. These legal milestones contributed to the opening of legal and political precedents for including the rural population in the Brazilian educational policy as a condition for the construction of an educational project, linked to a national, sovereign, and fair development project.

According to Hage (2006), in the last decades the popular social movements of the countryside undertook important achievements: the right to land and the strengthening of family agriculture, and the constitution of the Movement for a Countryside Education, whose efforts are directed to avoid the re-edition of the traditional policies of precarious maintenance of rural schools of a welfare, compensatory, and compassionate nature. Hage (2006) also states that, contrary to this conception of education, a rural education is claimed based on the principles of equality, with an affirmative character of the countryside and the forest as lived territories, as a space of the subjects' culture, production of life, democratization of social relations, and solidarity.

In Tarlau's (2015) view, this movement for a Rural Education that lasts until today is not a typical story of political reform, but of resistance from social movements, especially the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST), to promote reforms in educational policies that meet the interests and specificities of the populations that live, study, and work in the countryside. For the author, this movement is important because it helps to combat, among other factors, the closing of rural schools and to strengthen the struggle to create new educational programs aimed at these populations by the Federal Government.

It is clearly noticeable that this movement developed in the last two decades, besides completing 22 years in 2020, clarifies that there is a persuasive and authoritative discourse on young people and adults in rural education, with a predominance of the latter: those who know speak for those who don't know. But deep down, the rural youth and adults know, because they have interesting concepts about topics related to their experiences in the countryside, built from their life experiences, reported in research in the area (ARAÚJO, 2018).

In this analysis, it is necessary to consider the contribution of Bakhtin (2002) in this segment, because in his work "Questions of Literature and Aesthetics" he highlights two categories that help to understand this problem: the discourse of authority and the persuasive discourse. The first refers to the absolute truth, which reinforces the discourse linked to some authority, such as the teacher's own in the classroom, for example, which does not open possibilities for the students' questioning, imposing itself as an absolute authority. For this theorist, this category is characterized as a rigid, singular, and immobile discourse; therefore, unquestionable. The second category is more dialogical, loaded with the word of the "I" in relation to that of the "other". That is why we realize, in Rural Education, this authoritarian discourse of people linked to agribusiness, large landowners, among others, which is more similar to the interests of capital, to the generation of profit, than being a counter-hegemonic discourse.

It is essential to point out that there is a significant diversity in peasant subjects. They are part of different ethnic groups, genders, religions, communities, and present different ways of living and producing their livelihoods. Characterized as "[...] small farmers, quilombolas, indigenous peoples, fishermen, peasants, settlers, resettled people, river dwellers, forest people, country bumpkins, plowmen, farmers, landless people, aggregates,

Caboclos, sharecroppers, rural wage earners, and other groups [...]. (CALDART, 2011, p. 153). They fight to transform the reality of which they are part, a reality marked by great social inequality and contradictions. However, by transforming it, they are able to critically insert themselves into society, because it is in the transformation of reality that the process of humanization of these people is resumed, and education is the means to achieve this.

To expand this discussion, Caldart (2012) and Fernandes and Molina (2017) state that the term “Rural Education” was initially outlined at the First National Conference for a Basic Rural Education, held in Luziânia, Goiás, in 1998, within the movement known as “National Articulation for a Rural Education” and concretized in the First National Meeting of the Educators of Agrarian Reform - I ENERA, at the University of Brasília - UnB in 2002. Since then, its concept has been expanded, because of the participation of social movements, especially the MST, the Family Agricultural Schools (EFA), the Family Centers for Alternating Cycle Education (CEFA), and other entities engaged in the struggle for public policies that favor the peasant population and that respect and consider the reality of the countryside, and its work, culture, and education. In current times of resistance, it is possible to say that “Rural Education is an educational paradigm with theoretical production, educational projects, and public policies in a *praxis* of transformation of reality from the struggle against capitalism”. (FERNANDES; MOLINA, 2017, p. 541).

In Caldart’s (2012) view, the 2001 Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in Brazilian rural schools were fundamental to merge the term “Rural Education” and expand the peasant movements involved in the struggle for a quality education for rural youth and adults. In this perspective, it highlights that in the last decades the attempt to consolidate itself as an educational modality in order to fight for public policies that make possible for peasants the right to an education in the countryside and their access and permanence in rural schools, made the following question arise: why isn’t rural education included in the discussion about the universalization of basic education?

This question still seems to be very current, even more so in a context marked by cuts in the educational budget, in health and science mainly, among other important areas for the development of a nation. In other words: it is not in the interest of the capitalist system to invest in rural education. Consequently, it affects not only a large part of the Brazilian low-income population, but also the peasant populations, who live and work in the countryside and have, in this space, the source of their main sustenance.

From 2004 until today, the practices of Rural Education have been moved by the contradictions of the current framework, sometimes more, sometimes less conflictive, of the intertwined relations between countryside, education and public policies. There have been advances and retreats in the dispute of public space and the political-pedagogical direction of practices and programs [...] the confrontation of neoliberal policies for education and for agriculture continues as a survival challenge. (CALDART, 2012, p. 262).



The fragment above is revealing: The State should not deny young and adult peasants access to and permanence in rural schools, much less close the schools in rural areas in Brazil. It is no use defending the universalization of Basic Education, creating rural schools and closing them, with the justification that there is a need to cut investments, which results, among others, in a lack of school transportation in rural areas. This can imply, among other problems, the absence of many peasant youth and adults in schools and universities to study. Those who do not do this, end up staying in the countryside and, leave their studies. This makes clear the contradiction existing in the Brazilian countryside.

In this regard, Costa and Cabral (2016) point out that when the rural subject does not have the right to education, their values, cultures, traditions, and life experiences are denied. In turn, they are silenced; therefore, they are not heard by society, and a dominant education that defends a single, absolute knowledge and truth, foreign to the peasant reality, is imposed on these subjects.

However, Costa (2014) calls attention to the fact that in recent years, much due to the expansion of the debates about Rural Education promoted by social movements in educational and political arenas, this area started to have a strong presence in the Brazilian university, both in research and extension projects and, of course, teaching, represented by the Graduates in Rural Education – GRE

Rural Education permanently provokes the university to respond to the demands of teaching, research and extension, in permanent dialogue with subjects and social movements of the countryside and with the different instances of public policy. (COSTA, 2014, p. 32).

Based on these reflections, we understand that the adequate formation for the rural teacher or educator is the one that considers in its educational programs and projects themes, issues and contents related to the land, to the contradictions between countryside, school and city, to agribusiness, to family agriculture, to agrarian reform, to social movements, to the several rural subjects, to peasant culture and art, their traditions and diversity, in short, that defends an educational project for the countryside (ARROYO, 2007).

Following these reflections, it is also necessary to observe that the lack of programs aimed at the peasant population is recognized by the State as an aggravating factor to increase social inequalities and the peasant evasion to the city. This need for programs, projects, and actions that favor the rural population and that assure them the right to education has made possible the proposition of specific public policies for the countryside, which, among other issues, “aim to overcome the illiteracy still present in the Brazilian countryside [...] besides actions oriented to the extension of young and adult schooling”. (CASTRO; SILVA, 2014, p. 90).

The discussion proposed here allows us to understand that programs such as PROJOVEM Campo, created in 2005 by the Federal Government/MEC and the National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform - PRONERA, created in 1998 by the Federal

Government and linked to the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform - INCRA were fundamental for the struggle of rural workers to expand in recent years regarding the right to continue their studies. Arising from the demand of a set of organizations and social movements, along with groups of teachers and university researchers, they sought to consolidate a new conception of education in rural areas, expressed in the concept of Rural Education (SOUSA, 2017).

According to Brazil (2010) and Ribeiro (2013), the main objectives of PRONERA are to offer resources to be applied in actions and projects that are linked to rural education, such as youth and adult education, *sensu lato* courses, continuing education courses, professional education, community activities, and improvements in the development of rural settlements. Besides this statement, Freitas and Silva (2016, p. 174) point out that this program was “pioneer in implementing pedagogical strategies for training in Rural Education”, besides supporting projects, practically, in all levels of education - EJA, High School, Vocational and Higher Education (MACHADO; VENDRAMINI, 2013).

An interesting aspect to be mentioned refers to Decree no. 7352/2010, which established the National Policy for Rural Education and PRONERA. As it was a milestone for Rural Education, it represented a breakthrough in public policies for this area. Its main objective is to expand and qualify the offer of Basic and Higher Education to peasant people, through continued and initial training, besides offering infrastructure and school transportation, as well as teaching materials, laboratories, libraries, and sports, according to the local reality and specificities of the countryside. The Union, States, Federal District, and Municipalities are responsible for developing this expansion and offer.

Based on this theoretical framework, some principles of Rural Education became more clear in this scenario and can be summarized: a) respect for diversity; b) expansion of political-pedagogical projects for rural schools; c) development of teacher training policies for the countryside; d) valuing the identity of the school and peasant subjects; e) flexibility of the curriculum and the calendar of schools in rural areas; f) social control of the quality of school education. Indeed, by having these principles linked to a transformative education, it can have in science, art, culture, and technology means to overcome the capitalist world and its contradictions (CALDART, 2012).

In this context, Ribeiro (2013) also highlights the National Program for Rural Education - PRONACAMPO, which offers financial resources and technical support for the realization of actions that serve the peasant populations, as an offer of teaching in Basic Education. This program has as its main objective to support the creation of undergraduate courses in rural education, both face-to-face and in undergraduate studies, offered in public universities in the country, so that they can train teachers to work in rural schools of Basic Education, in the last years of primary and secondary education, supporting the implementation of the national policy of rural education and supplying the lack of educators who work in rural areas (RIBEIRO, 2013; MOLINA, 2015; HAGE, MOLINA, SILVA, ANJOS, 2018; MACHADO, VENDRAMINI, 2013).



In the cycle under discussion, this phenomenon made up a historical milestone in the provision of teacher training at the higher education level for the population living in the countryside, with a view to training teachers to work in the final years of elementary school and high school, in addition to bringing as a methodological principle the Alternating Cycle, which favors a training process experienced and through different times, spaces, and practices, articulated between spaces of University Time and Community Time (MOLINA; SÁ, 2011).

It should be noted, however, that this achievement resulted from initiatives undertaken by various segments of society, concerned with the social inequalities that are so present in Brazil, especially in rural areas. Among these, we highlight the inclusion of the theme in the research agenda of Brazilian public universities and the deepening of the articulation between different social movements and institutions through the creation of the National Forum of Rural Education (FONEC). In this sense, the discussions about territoriality and place occupied a central space, reaffirming the right to land, work and dignity (SANTOS, 2011).

In addition to this discussion, the General Coordination of Rural Education was created within the Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity (SECAD), later named Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI), with the purpose of developing and conducting a National Public Policy of Rural Education, besides the stimulus to the creation of Committees, Forums and Municipal and State Coordination of Rural Education in Brazil. It is essential to emphasize that SECADI was recently extinguished by the MEC, in restructuring the portfolio, in line with the conservative project of the current government.

Given this scenario, Molina, Antunes-Rocha and Martins (2019) state that the production of knowledge in rural education has been marked, mainly, through the social practices of its subjects (quilombolas, settlers, river dwellers among many others) related to their social and cultural contexts from which they produce their material life. In this sense, for these authors, a good part of the production of knowledge produced by these subjects has been done in courses promoted by PRONERA (National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform) and by PROCAMPO (Program to Support Higher Education in Rural Education).

With the support of PRONERA, approximately 320 courses focused on rural education were held, with the participation of 82 educational institutions and 38 social organizations, besides the presence of over 160 thousand students from all over the country (MOLINA; ANTUNES-ROCHA; MARTINS, 2019). For the authors, these productions originated from these courses can be synthesized in monographs, dissertations and theses.

In a recent publication, Souza (2020) asserts that the production of knowledge in rural education and about the MST in recent years is also related to the increase in the number of graduate programs in Education and research groups in this area in Brazil. However, the author points out that themes such as public policies, literacy, literacy training, professional training, youth and adult education, early childhood education, and social movements are the

most commonly found in these productions, since they seek to problematize, as a whole, the contradictions present in the countryside. It also highlights that these researches analyze educational policies, educational practices, and teacher training, among other topics.

With this debate built, Rural Education goes beyond the walls of the school and the university. It is an education that, besides respecting the diversity of its subjects, enables them to create conditions to acquire scientific knowledge, based on their experiences (REICHWARD JR, 2006). It is in this perspective that LEDOC seek to develop their work, which will be discussed below.

### Challenges for the Consolidation of the Degree in Rural Education and the Experience in Tocantins

The offer of Graduates in Rural Education completed 13 years in 2020 and until 2008 and 2009, the calls launched by the Ministry of Education (MEC) for universities to offer the LEDOC were single class projects. Only in 2012, through pressure from social movements in the countryside, the 42 public universities could offer this new degree permanently. The Federal University of Tocantins (UFT) is among these universities, offering the course in the campuses of Arraias and Tocantinópolis, with a qualification in Visual Arts in the first, and with a qualification in Arts and Music in the second (GOMES, 2015).

Following the example of other public institutions, the UFT implemented the degree course in Rural Education in response to the Public Call Notice 02/SECADI, of 08/03/2012, paying attention to the demands of social movements and the identity inclination of the populations served by the campuses in the interior of the State, in the aforementioned municipalities (GOMES, 2015).

Regarding the State of Tocantins, for having a significant heterogeneity in its population (mainly indigenous peoples and rural population), it is characterized by being multicultural, which leads the Federal University of Tocantins to have the challenge of proposing and developing educational practices that promote the development of its population. The different territorialities of this state were occupied by indigenous people, afro-descendants, among other groups. In Tocantinópolis, just to know this diversity, over 3000 indigenous people live, most of the *Apinaye* (Apinajé) ethnicity, distributed in several villages, in the rural region of this municipality (ARAÚJO, 2018).

Admission to the course in Tocantinópolis occurs through the vestibular, and the vacancies are distributed through the universal system, but with a quota for indigenous people, quilombolas, and for those who completed high school in public schools. Entrance to the vestibular occurs annually, and the first entrance to the course occurred in 2014 with 120 students. Currently, there are 40 students per year. On the other hand, in Arraias the entries, as in Tocantinópolis, occurred for the first time in 2014 with 120 students and, in the last 4 years, had a significant decrease in the amount of students enrolled in this LEDOC, as can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Number of students enrolled in the Degree courses in Rural Education of the Federal University of Tocantins in the period from 2014 to 2019.

Degree courses in Rural Education / UFT	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
The Arraias Campus	120	120	120	59	40	40
Tocantinópolis Campus	96	103	83	44	54	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>80</b>

Source: Araújo (2018)<sup>2</sup>, adapted from Silva (2018).

According to the data revealed in the table above, we believe that this reduction occurred due to 4 main factors: a) the cut in student scholarships offered by the UFT, via the Ministry of Education (MEC) in the year 2017, such as, for example, the permanence scholarship, culminating in the decrease in the offer of these scholarships by the UFT from 2018 to 2019, important to keep them in the class period (University Time); b) the absence of university restaurants in the two campuses; c) the absence of transportation that helps the student to move from the community (usually far from the campuses) where he lives to the cities of Arraias and Tocantinópolis to take the course; d) the approval of the Constitutional Amendment Project - PEC no. 55/2016 that freezes public investments in education, health, science, among others, for 20 years.

With the approval of the PEC, the National Education Plan lost strength in the Brazilian educational scenario, because, if before it was destined an increase of percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country for education in up to 5 years of 7%, being able to reach 10% in 2024 (BRASIL, 2014), with this PEC, it became increasingly difficult to concretize this PNE in the country, negatively affecting Brazilian education in its different levels. Moreover, it is clear that with the approval of this project, the capitalist system was more interested in the profit generated in the contingency of funds for education, than in the development of Brazil (ARAÚJO, 2018).

When we mention this current situation, it is clear that there is more interest in proposing measures and ideological positions that aim to decrease and weaken educational achievements (such as the creation of LEDOCs), than to raise the expansion of new possibilities for investment in Brazilian education, especially regarding initial and continued training of teachers, fostering for research among other important factors for educational development.

This hegemonic position that aims to serve the interests of the country's elites should not restrict the participation of the civil society in the debates and reflections about the decisions that involve education, health, security, among other fundamental aspects for the development of a nation. In the same way, the public authorities should not omit to propose public policies that are consistent with the population living in rural areas, and to review those already in place that stimulate the improvement of education, culture, and other sectors that need improvement in the country.

<sup>2</sup> With updates to this article.

However, as Molina (2015) warns us, the expansion of LEDOC should not be unrelated to the intense conflicts generated by the hegemonic development model in the countryside today, since the rural education movement understands that the rural school should be allied to the social subjects of the countryside, in their struggles to ensure the material reproduction of their existence and their close relationship with the territory they inhabit. In this context, it is necessary to consider the need for solid training of educators who work in rural areas and that “considers, above all, that the existence and permanence (both schools and of these subjects) passes, necessarily, through the paths that will be taken from the unfolding of the class struggle. (MOLINA, 2015, p. 149).

In this analysis, it is necessary to bring the contribution of Wieczorek and Manard (2018) regarding the rural school, when they defend the proposition of new and better practices can contribute to the improvement of the way teachers and managers of rural schools’ act, especially in what concerns the attendance of the specificities and needs of rural communities, such as their knowledge and cultures. But for this, as we argue in this study, teacher training programs are needed to prepare and qualify them in their pedagogical and managerial practice.

However, in the current context, we must be aware of the fact that one of the challenges of LEDOC and its subjects is to face at the same time the “offensive of the part of the State that defends the end of conquered rights, considered ‘privileges’, and to face the institutional weaknesses of the initiatives operated by the State, within the scope of public policies”. (SANTOS, 2009, p. 96). In fact, the materialization of LEDOC should be an important object of study and monitoring by researchers in the field of Rural Education.

This helps us understand that the proposal to train teachers to work in schools in the countryside, by observing the particularities and potentialities of the working subjects of this territory, bring in this degree a differential mark from the others, explained by Molina (2017, p. 590): “the LEDOC are planned considering the class struggle in the Brazilian countryside and placing themselves as part and side of the labor pole, assuming and defending education as a right and a public and social good”.

In this sense, its consolidation constitutes, at this historical moment in our country, an immense challenge, since the current public policies propose structural reforms, through contingencies of resources in education, which affect everything from early childhood education to graduate studies, which reinforces the conservative liberal ideology currently in force. Consequently, this requires that LEDOC teachers exercise a pedagogy of resistance, from a new form of knowledge, which in the conception of Arroyo (2012, p. 15) can be understood as:

[...] other ways of thinking linked to ways of reacting and intervening so different from the logic of official thinking [...]. Their thinking is another constructed from the multiple oppressions and the social, political consequences of their struggles, reactions, and resistances. Other subjects, other pedagogies.

This resistance presupposes to think that schools in the countryside need teachers that value the local culture and identity, but also provide their students to develop diverse knowledge needed to understand and intervene in social, political, economic, and cultural processes, through the articulation between the content taught and the students' social practice, important for their emancipation, whether to live in the countryside, or anywhere else they wish. In this direction, Molina (2017, p. 590) points out that “raising the levels of instruction of workers without simultaneously increasing their awareness and understanding of the many social contradictions that maintain the system of capital requires an ever-increasing control of schooling processes.”

In this discussion, it is essential to point out that the curricular matrix of the courses of Rural Education at UFT was structured thinking about the interdisciplinary among the 4 areas: Arts (Visual Arts, Music and Theater), Education (Pedagogy), History and Sociology, in dialogue with Rural Education and according to the needs and demands of each course. Thus, the Pedagogical Projects of the Courses (PPC) were structured in three cores, namely: the contents referring to the educator's training (common core); the contents referring to the areas, specifically the Arts (specific core); and the contents related to complementary activities, such as extension, research, internships, participation in academic events among others (complementary activities core).

Miranda and Cover (2016) argue that the choice for the area of languages with majors in Arts and Music for the UFT's courses in Rural Education is justified because it meets the demand in the area in schools located near Tocantinópolis, especially in the area of arts, quite incipient in the state, and also in Arraias. In a brief diagnosis conducted by our research groups, we found that most Basic Education schools in Tocantins do not have teachers trained in Arts (ARAÚJO; OLIVEIRA; ALMEIDA, 2019).

It is important to highlight that art accompanies the development of society itself. It is manifested by different means and has in education a way for young people and adults in Rural Education to develop their skills, learn about the different artistic manifestations around them, expand their cultural knowledge, form concepts, create ideas, foster criticism of reality, and have an aesthetic sensibility. Thus, “as an essentially human creation, art is produced in a certain time, context, culture and society”. (ARAÚJO; OLIVEIRA, 2015, p. 686); therefore, the social and cultural context in which it is produced and analyzed must be considered.

In a theoretical approach very close to the previous one, Duarte Júnior (1981) states that art, as an epistemology, enables the individual to dialogue with the world around him, producing meaningful interpretations of reality, which provides to expand his field of understanding, in such a way that by other means would be impossible. Thus, the individual communicates with reality through verbal and non-verbal signs, and language is the main mechanism for this understanding. In this way, language enables this individual to interpret his reality, to give meaning to it, because it is fundamental for him to think, reason, feel, and act in the world. This sense of humanization allows us to make the following statement: “man and culture are indissolubly linked: culture only exists through man, and man only exists through culture”. (DUARTE JÚNIOR, 1981, p. 46).

In effect, art provides knowledge of lived experiences and allows the individual to meet the world (DUARTE JÚNIOR, 1981). As the author points out, as knowledge, art is fundamental for the individual to organize his actions, because the cultural and social environment is not only physical, but also symbolic, and art is a relevant means of guiding the actions developed. In this way, “by finding symbols that allow us to ‘visualize’ (in the sense of “objectify”) our feelings, their understanding becomes easier, and knowledge extends to regions inaccessible to discursive thought. (DUARTE JUNIOR, 1981, p. 94). In other words, the individual uses art to situate himself in the world and, in this process, he appropriates culture.

As it was possible to notice, art is important in LEDOC’s curriculum. With this thesis, having a pedagogical project that is structured based on the learning needs of the student, having his context as a source of study and research, articulated with social movements, is a way to propose a project that is, at the same time, articulated with the demands and needs of the course and that is emancipating, democratic and inclusive (VEIGA, 2001). That is, in the author’s view, it is necessary to overcome the conservative and centralizing conception of the traditional curriculum, not being a mere instrument of control. Besides having the participation of the community in its elaboration, as it happened in the courses of Rural Education at UFT, when social movements participated in the creation of the Pedagogical Projects of Courses (PPC), this project should conceive theory and practice in a dialectical way, by understanding that in this document there is, on one hand, “the action that subsidizes the thought for the construction of new ideas [...] and on the other hand, the theory represented by a set of ideas, systematized from the pedagogical practice”. (VEIGA, 2001, p. 57).

In the context analyzed, it is a challenge to the UFT’s rural teacher educators the resistance posture and the counter-hegemonic fight against the capitalist system, represented in the countryside by agribusiness, the predominant means of production in the rural territory of the state of Tocantins. This requires confronting the adversities resulting from these conquests, in each epoch and historical moment.

However, the LEDOCs of the UFT have in alternation an educational system that allows the peasant youth and adults to study in the university without having to move to the city, which is important to respect their knowledge, cultures, and identities built in the countryside. In this regard, we will see below how Alternating Cycle is made up in the context of Rural Education in the analyzed LEDOCs.



## The Process of Knowledge Mediation in Rural Education: Alternating Cycle Education in the LEDOCs of the UFT

Education through Alternating Cycle, having its origin in human formation in higher education, represents in the courses of Graduates in Rural Education in Brazil one of the main means for a significant part of the working class, especially those who live in the rural areas, to have access to a higher education course.

However, when we analyze the working class in terms of access to education, there are many factors that make it impossible for young people and adults from the countryside to study in a higher education course. Among several factors, we can mention some that are quite relevant, such as: work, material conditions to survive; family, distance from the city where the university is located, among other elements. In this way, Education through Alternating Cycle as a category designed for the formation of working class subjects brings benefits for their entry and permanence in higher education.

Thus, it is important to emphasize that “[...] the mode of production of material life conditions the process of social, political, and spiritual life. (MARX, 2008, p. 49). That is, the human being does not act according to his will, but according to the conditions given, for example, by the Alternating Cycle Education, which provides the subject access to higher education and the continuity of his studies. It seems to us that if such conditions were not offered for the formation of these educators, many of them would not have the opportunity to have an initial or continued education.

In this sense, the licentiate degree courses in rural education are regular in nature and are based on two dimensions of integrated formative alternation: The University Time (TU) and the Community Time (TC): during the period of university classes (TU) the students attend classes, do research, and receive guidance from teachers, among other academic activities. To explain how this alternation works, we will cite an example: In one of the subjects that one of the authors of this article teaches at the UFT in Tocantinópolis (Visual Arts Laboratory), students attend theoretical and practical classes of this subject at the university (University Time), and when this educational time is over, they return to their communities (in their cities, towns, settlements, riverside communities among others, starting Community Time) to continue the activities started at the university, such as the production of visual arts works, internships, researching artists from the communities, developing articles for the subject, among other activities. Then, when they return to class in the next University Time, they bring these works they have produced and the information they have gathered to be discussed, analyzed and tested in the Visual Arts Laboratory classes. Finally, at the end of this course, an exhibition of all the artwork produced by the students in TU and TC is held.

In other words, students develop teaching, research and extension activities also when they are on Community Time. Therefore, they are not left idle. It is important to emphasize that this distribution is made based on the agricultural production cycle of the countryside. Therefore the alternating cycle is an educational system adequate to the peasant subject, for it

respects his culture, life and work in the rural environment. In effect, it is a way to enable this student to remain in the countryside, without the need to move to the city to take the course (FALEIRO; FARIAS, 2016).

In this theoretical-conceptual framework, the articulation of the training process of educators for the countryside is characterized by alternating the academics' training between learning moments in the universities and in the communities where they live according to each of their realities. For LEDOC at the Arraias campus:

The proposal is to develop a continuous teaching-learning process in which the student travels from community to university to community. Initially, in his own reality, the student turns to observation, research, and description of the socio professional reality of the context in which he finds himself. Then, the student goes to the university, where he socializes, analyzes, reflects, systematizes, conceptualizes, and interprets the contents identified in the previous step; and finally, the student returns to his reality, this time with the contents worked on in order to experience and transform the socio professional reality, so that new contents emerge, new questions are asked, and they can be worked on again in the school context. (TOCANTINS, 2014, p. 32).

In a similar way, besides having Alternating Cycle as the educational system from which the method of the two UFT's Rural Education courses is developed, LEDOC of Tocantinópolis positions itself this way:

The objective is to promote alternative education, training and professionalization, more appropriate to the reality of the countryside, in order to encourage young people to remain in their own region, creating alternative work and income. Education in the countryside, traditionally, does not contemplate the specificities and needs of the population living in rural areas. (TOCANTINS, 2019, p. 32).

Based on this understanding and to fulfill the objective of the courses listed in these excerpts, the LEDOCs seek to materialize their work based on Alternating Cycle. This system enables the interlocution between scientific and empirical knowledge in the formation process of peasant subjects in the state of Tocantins, besides also contributing to those who are already teachers to improve their teaching practice.

However, Molina (2017) argues that in addition to being fundamental for teacher training, alternance has great relevance in the mediation between teaching and research, because it considers considerations of socioeconomic aspects in the educational act. Thus, as a theoretical perspective, the Alternating Cycle Education presents favorable characteristics for the formation of educators living in the countryside, which need to be put into practice. About this issue, Molina (2015) makes an important observation:

If, on the one hand, Alternating Cycle maintains an immense potential to give new meaning to the processes of knowledge production, in situations in which an intense exchange of learning times and spaces is truly promoted, in which the different dimensions of life are integrated in the processes of knowledge production, on the other hand, if the assumptions of valuing the knowledge of the subjects and integrating material production in the teaching-learning processes are disregarded, and of the non-presence of the University in different types of activities in the Community Time, Alternating Cycle in Higher Education loses a relevant part of its meaning. (MOLINA, 2015, p. 157).

Based on the author's thought, the Alternating Cycle proposal is an interesting way that provides the teacher with an articulation of knowledge in his pedagogical work, which should involve scientific knowledge and the knowledge of the communities so that it can be materialized as it is evidenced in the Pedagogical Projects of the two LEDOCs in the state of Tocantins.

In this relation, when we talk about Education through Alternating Cycle we cannot think only of alternating learning spaces, but of a formation that enables the integration of knowledge among those involved in this process. This, in a way, assures us we will not contribute to the precarious formation of teachers for rural education.

Thus, it is evident that the Alternating Cycle Education allows the subjects involved in the teaching and learning process an interaction with the university context and with their communities, which is important to reveal the unique knowledge socialized there, which can contribute to human formation. In this way, the idea of Education by Alternating Cycle in the LEDOCs of the UFT dialogues with the proposal of schooling for the working class that lives in the countryside, because it propitiates the involvement of the students' knowledge and the communities in the mediation of the educational act. In other words, the students, teachers, and community are co-adjuvants in this process of knowledge construction and recognition of the countryside as a place to live, work, and study.

To broaden this discussion, Molina (2016) mentions that the practices of Education by Alternating Cycle in LEDOC have different ways of working this proposal in the spaces of universities and communities. But he emphasizes that the search for these attempts is about learning in the sense of building a strategy that better serves this formation, that is, "[...] that approximates the contradictions experienced by peasant subjects in the Community Time to the contents shared in the University Time". (MOLINA, 2016, p. 816).

Therefore, the relationship between the activities of University Time and Community Time cannot be dichotomous, but rather dialectical, especially because these two moments represent the whole, whose objective is to analyze the parts of all organicity in the historical and social formation of the individual. Thus, to think the activities of the UFT courses dialectically, according to Saviani (2000, p. 18), "arms us with an instrument, that is, a rigorous (critical) method capable of providing us with the adequate understanding of radicality and globality in the unity of philosophical reflection".

To conclude this article, we highlight that one of the greatest contributions of Alternating Cycle for the UFT's LEDOC is the viability of rural people to study in a university, especially those who work, since this proposal is not only restricted to alternating educational moments of formation but also defends the contextualization of rural knowledge beyond the university, which allows a greater interaction between students, teachers, and people from the community and the various knowledges socialized and constructed there. In other words, the alternating cycle represents a fundamental instrument in the formation of the working class individual, by allowing this subject to build knowledge at various moments of his life. In effect, it contributes to the peasant population studying and working from the reality in which they are made up as historical subjects.

The reflections built in this article are particularly important to understand the phenomenon of Rural Education in Brazil and, specifically, in a context of the country's northern region, by complementing studies about this area in educational research, since reflecting about the reality of young people and adults from the countryside is to understand them as subjects of social practices (COSTA; ROSA; ALCÂNTARA, 2016), by considering their life experiences, their doings and knowledge that many men and women have built throughout their lives.

## Final Considerations

In this research, we wanted to reveal that it is possible to get important findings based on the methodological procedures adopted and through the revised theoretical matrix that underpinned this investigation, even with a limited data set for this article, because of its length. In this sense, this research can complement studies about the degrees in Rural Education in Brazil from different contexts, contributing to understand the relevance of these LEDOC for the training of teachers for rural areas. In fact, this study can open new research possibilities for other international contexts, important to expand the production of knowledge in the area.

Rural Education struggles to take its leading role in Brazilian higher education through LEDOC, by trying to articulate popular knowledge, that is, the knowledge and experiences of many rural youth and adults with scientific knowledge, by creating other forms of research and new objects of study, besides involving subjects such as quilombolas, indigenous people, river dwellers, among others in graduation and post-graduation, which is of utmost importance to propose new public policies that contribute to the advancement of rural education in Brazilian society.

The indigenous, the quilombola, the river dweller, the settlers, the people affected by dams, the family farmer, the extractivist, among others who live and produce their material conditions of survival in the countryside, go to university not because they are forced to, but because they have an interest and a need to learn and, therefore, they learn what is interesting to them. To access and attend university is to study in a place that has been historically denied to them. It is to face a reality that excludes them, with the objective of overcoming it.

Based on the research carried out, it seems fundamental to us to consider that it is up to the Union - or States, Federal District, and Municipalities in collaboration with the Union - to create and implement means that guarantee the maintenance and development of Rural Education in public educational policies, such as, for example, reducing illiteracy, offer EJA to young people and adults who live and work in the countryside, ensure the provision of electricity and drinking water in rural schools, as well as basic sanitation and expand access to the internet and computers to these schools (BRASIL, 2010), since the LEDOCs train educators to work in these institutions located in rural Brazil.

The research also concluded that the Alternating Cycle Education in the LEDOCs of the UFT has contributed so that peasant subjects, especially those from the working class, have access to the university not only to have a higher education that meets their needs and specificities as educators for the countryside in various school contexts in the state of Tocantins, but a human formation that allows them to develop pedagogical activities from their local community to a global scope.

We consider, finally, that the materiality of the LEDOC courses at the Federal University of Tocantins is a recent reality in the Brazilian educational reality and is constituted as a new graduation modality conquered from the demands of social movements, whose expansion occurred primarily during the governments of presidents Lula and Dilma.

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