

When peasantry becomes a verb: peasantry the school!

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ABSTRACT. The main idea of this study is to discuss the relationship between peasantry, the educational process of peasant work and school. To handle this issue, readings about peasantry, Countryside Education and Pedagogy of Alternation were done, as well as the analysis of data from the doctoral research carried out in the northern territory of Espírito Santo, Southeastern region of Brazil, where rural pedagogy has been expanded to several public schools. Pedagogy of Alternation, one of the ways found by peasants to educate their children, brings out the rural voice and the productive and cultural practices to the formative process, being the land, labor and family triad the pillar of this experience. What we found in this research was a practice of the peasant movement and its attempt of including the school in the maintaining of this triad with the purpose of educating critically, involving an educational project that meets emancipation horizons collectively built - not only schooling.

Keywords: Peasantry, Countryside Education, Peasant School.

Quando campesinato vira verbo: campesinar a escola!

RESUMO. O objetivo deste artigo é discutir a relação entre o campesinato, o processo educativo do trabalho camponês e a escola. Para lidar com essa questão partiu-se de leituras sobre o campesinato, Educação do Campo e Pedagogia da Alternância, assim como da análise dos dados da pesquisa de doutorado desenvolvida no território norte do Espírito Santo, região Sudeste do Brasil, onde a pedagogia camponesa tem sido expandida para várias escolas públicas. A Pedagogia da Alternância, uma das formas encontrada pelos camponeses para educar seus filhos, traz a voz e as práticas produtivas e culturais campesinas para o processo formativo, sendo a tríade terra, trabalho e família o pilar dessa experiência. O que encontramos nessa pesquisa foi uma prática do movimento camponês e seu intento de incluir a escola na manutenção dessa tríade com o propósito de educar de forma crítica, implicando um projeto educativo que atenda horizontes de emancipação construídos coletivamente – não somente de escolarização.

Palavras-chave: Campesinato, Educação do Campo, Escola Camponesa.

Cuando el campesinado se convierte en verbo: ¡campesinar la escuela!

RESUMEN. El objetivo de este artículo es discutir la relación entre el campesinado, el proceso educativo del trabajo campesino y la escuela. Para lidiar con esta cuestión, se ha analizado la literatura sobre el campesinado, la Educación Rural y la Pedagogía de la Alternancia, así como el análisis de los datos de la investigación de doctorado desempeñada en el territorio norte del estado de Espírito Santo, en la región sureste de Brasil, donde la pedagogía campesina se ha expandido a varias escuelas públicas. La Pedagogía de la Alternancia, una de las formas encontradas por los campesinos para educar a sus hijos, trae la voz del campesinado, y sus prácticas productivas y culturales, hacia el propio proceso formativo, configurándose como pilar de esta experiencia la triada tierra, trabajo y familia. Lo que hemos encontrado en nuestra investigación es una práctica del movimiento campesino y su intento de incluir la escuela en la manutención de esta triada con el propósito de educar críticamente, involucrándose en un proyecto educativo que atienda no sólo horizontes de escolarización, sino también verdaderos horizontes de emancipación colectivamente construidos.

Palabras clave: Campesinado, Educación Rural, Escuela Campesina.

Introduction

When we talk about verbs in the infinitive form we refer to an idea of movement potencial, to the act or effect of doing something, an action image, as pointed out by dictionaries. This nominal form of verbs does not refer to a specific person, time or way, but rather to a word that can be conjugated in different ways. This way, when we propose to peasantry the school, we allude to the act that is linked to the idea of moving the school space from peasant knowledge, expanding the notion of education beyond school; dialectically, a denial and an incorporation of the idea of schooling the peasant class.

In this sense, in denial of a logic of schooling that distanced peasants' daughters and sons from their territory, a pedagogy that could consider peasant time in the school calendar was thought out: the Pedagogy of Alternation. It establishes relations between going to school without abandoning the dynamics of peasant life, which, according to Gimonet (2007), quoted by Begnami (2019), creates a pedagogy of relationships, alternating educational times and spaces, that is, periods of boarding school, called school-time, and stay or socio-professional environment, called community-time.

This pedagogy emerged in France in 1937 from the educational experiences of

Maisons Familiales Rurales (Chartier, 1986 *apud* Silva, 2012). In Brazil, this formative practice arrived in the mid-1960s, in Espírito Santo, converging with the needs of some peasant movements that were already dedicated to building alternating schools experiences in partnership with unions, associations, churches and public authorities (Andrade & Andrade, 2012). Such experiences, very plural, started from different political tones in each territory where they were initiated, influenced by local contradictions and the organized groups that encamp them.

In Brazil and in the world, this diversity of usages and abuses of the Pedagogy of Alternation is a reality. Therefore, our intention is not to generalize it as a peasant pedagogy in all contexts, but to affirm its fruits and developments in the northern territory of the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil, given that this experience may serve as perspective for other territorialities.

In this article, we seek to approximate the categories of peasantry (Martins, 1983), peasantry and peasant pedagogy to discuss Rural Education as a practice/movement/paradigm (Arroyo & Fernandes, 1999). This interlocution of the peasantry as a social class and as a lifestyle and of the peasantry as a peasant ethics unveils emancipatory elements in dialogue

with anthropological, ethnographic, pedagogical and educational issues.

In question, this theoretical movement that we followed was caused by the very reality, which combines a wide range of affiliations and perspectives, as we have seen in interpretations that helped us on the analytical path.

In the scope of schooling offered to peasant people, the verb to fixate was very much used in the sense of convincing them to stay in the countryside, that is, keeping men in the countryside was the initial proposal of alternating schools, since these were very much linked to the notion of subordination of the peasantry to urban classes under the justification that the departure of the countryside to the city wouldn't result in the populational swelling of the latter.

This project that we named Rural Education emerged in Brazil in the 1930s and brought ingrained to its principles a proposal that saw the rural end and the urban hegemony, also linking itself to the idea of the end of the countryside and the peasantry. It was a theoretical-political reading based on a partial analysis of reality, the result of our explosive and dependent urbanization process.

In the last century, Brazil has gone through this process of impacting urban growth in terms of lifestyle and in the

interpretation of the city over the countryside, although the country is mainly constituted by agrarian relations in production, habits and customs. As a result, the denial of its agrarian productive potential and the value of the peasantry was reinforced. Furthermore, this scenario, associated with industrialization, occurred in a relationship of dependence of central countries, resulting in the expulsion of peasants to urban centers in search of job opportunities. Accentuating the social inequality established by the agrarian issue and the presence of large landowners, there was an intense conflict between landowners and peasants.

In the meantime, according to Leonardo Boff (2016, p. 28), “we are, therefore, one of the most unequal countries in the world, which means a country that is violent and full of social injustices. This social inequality is one of the main causes of violence in the countryside and in the city”, - conflict that results, to this day, in daily massacres. The shadows that produced this inequality and violence, as the liberation theologian defends, have three historical roots: our colonial past, that creates dependence and appreciation of foreigners; the indigenous genocide, culminating in the absence of respect and discrimination; and slavery, which finalizes the dehumanization

process towards people of African ancestry, that is, the entirety of Brazilian people.

The fourth shadow that explains much of the violence in the countryside is the Brazilian Land Law, number 601 of September 18th, 1850. According to this law, the appropriation of the land would only be done through the purchase of the Crown, which owns all of them. As a result, the poor and Afro-descendants, due to lack of money, were totally excluded and left to the discretion of the large landowners, submitted to work without social guarantees (Boff, 2016, p. 28) (our translation).

The Land Law of 1850 structurally founds the Brazilian agrarian issue, officializing poverty based on inequality of access to land. This injustice persists in time and space, taking on contours that accentuate social segregation and the tradition of exploitation of male and female farm workers by large landowners, heirs of the colonialist, genocidal and slavery shadows.

In this context, the struggles of the peasant movements led to popular resistance throughout Latin America, ensuring that the protagonism of peasantry in social movements is a reality. In Brazil, the largest social movement for the fight for land was created, as a result of the need for an articulation that guaranteed peasant resistance against the violence of the

latifundium, which expropriated the collective wealth.

Agrarian reform has become a prominent banner, and land occupation has been constituted as an important instrument of affirmation of the peasantry, with the motto “occupy, resist and produce” enunciators of this process of building the fight for the land. This movement expanded, became more widespread and started to have several fronts, one of which is education, giving rise to Rural Education.

The historical denial of the right to school was among the denials of the State and the society to the peasant people, coming to be seen by the social movement as a very significant tactical and strategic achievement. It was initially led by the *MST - Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (Movement of Landless Rural Workers) and later articulated by different movements and social organizations, having, today, over two decades of organization.

Rural Education is, simultaneously, a movement, a practice and a theoretical methodological paradigm (Caldart, 2012). It is a movement, because the claims and political struggles constitute the central axis; a practice, because it morphs and becomes (re) builds daily in schools, forums, committees and higher education

courses; and it is a paradigm, because several formulations are dialectically articulated in this great front, which defends the thesis of the fight for an education from / in / for the countryside. And also, it articulates the peasantry in its various forms, associative, union, school, among others. We say, in this way, that it is a movement that aggregates without reducing and without losing identity, since this front does not occur as an autonomous organizational instance, but, rather, as a congregation of diverse groups organized and in struggle.

Among the communities that make up these guidelines are: *quilombola* communities, with its territorial struggles in the countryside and in the city linked to the ancestry and historical debt of Brazilian society; the *gerazeiros*, traditional people who live in the plateaus, biome of the *gerais* (generals) in the state of Minas Gerais, Southeast region of Brazil, which claim the *cerrado* (vegetation of the Brazilian interior) as a lifestyle, not as a means, as nature that is not separated from life, confronting agribusiness on a daily basis; and the *mangaba* (Brazilian fruit) pickers, in the state of Sergipe, Northeast of Brazil, who resist for a living *caatinga* and a solidarity economy, in addition to agroecological production. All of these are examples of

initiatives that meet up and nurture the Rural Education.

Contextually, the peasant movement does not only want to educate their sons and daughters, but to fight for the maintenance of the triad land, labor and family, always in search of territorialization through school. Since, the criticism of the rural school as a project hegemonic of the Brazilian State since 1930, precarious and discontinuous, made a long journey until the construction of an emancipatory bias of peasant populations, since it was a school that denied the culture of the countryside and affirmed the city as a unique and indisputable horizon.

Therefore, the peasant movement's contestation vein has always been associated with the proposition, to the struggle for Agrarian Reform and has taken place through the occupation of unproductive latifundios and the transformation of these lands into collective territory of life, production, resistance and of Education. Agrarian Reform and Rural Education are flags for the construction of the peasantry as a verb: to peasant the schools.

In this context, as presented, there is, under development, a representative experience of these actions in the northern territory of Espírito Santo, Southeast region of Brazil, that works to expand a

peasant pedagogy to various public, community schools and Agrarian Reform settlements. This pedagogy also known as Pedagogy of Alternation, brings out the voice and peasant productive and cultural practices to the formative process, also considering the triad land, labor and family as the pillar of this experience. One of the main pedagogical tools is the Studies Plan, which listens to the peasant families' demands to build and structure the school curriculum.

The practice developed by these schools refers to critical education, which implies the construction of an educational project that meets the demands of emancipation built collectively and in struggle. For this reason, a process of peasantry the school, bringing peasant work and culture to the landmarks of that space, as opposed to the precarious schooling offered hegemonically by the State in rural areas.

What we will discuss next will be the action of these rural schools in the north of the state of Espírito Santo as reaffirmer of the peasant practice and the territory as life project. To apprehend this reality and the concepts about peasantry constitute as central to understanding it as practice in the territory. Rural and Peasant Education mobilize the territory as a transforming and

reaffirming action of a school and of a peasantry project.

Peasant and peasantry

Classical understandings, involving the agrarian issue as theoretical and methodological, urge us to go further in order to discover a set of divergences put up by the various schools of Agrarian Geography thought. It is worth mentioning that we will only make a brief note on such studies. These concepts become relevant in this article because Rural Education is beyond school and seeks to build a process that considers work and peasant culture. Therefore, peasant and peasantry are founding ideas of the notion of building a peasant school.

First result of the primitive accumulation of capital, of private property of the land and, subsequently, of the land concentration and the maintenance of the latifundium - unproductive and productive - ,that is, of the capital contradiction, “the agrarian issue is the movement of a collection of problems relating to the development of agriculture and the workers resistance fights, which are inherent to the unequal and contradictory process of capitalist relations of production” (Fernandes, 2015, p. 30).

Fernandes (2015) systematizes and disseminates the existence of two

paradigms that explain the Brazilian countryside: the Paradigma da Questão agrária - PQA (Paradigm of Agrarian Issue) and the Paradigma do Capitalismo Agrário - PCA (Paradigm of Agrarian Capitalism). To the author, in the “paradigm of the agrarian question, the problem is in capitalism, and for the agrarian capitalism paradigm, the problem is in the peasantry” (Fernandes, 2015, p. 27). To us, supporters of the first strand, there is an agrarian issue, and capitalism creates a set of contradictions for the peasantry life, which, even circumvented, will only be overcome with the end of capitalism itself. The PQA is not homogeneous, and, to the author, it could be divided into two tendencies: a proletarian one and a peasantry one.

Inspired by Shanin (2008), we know that conceptualization and abstraction do not reach reality in its entirety, but the recognition of peasantry as a social class and lifestyle is fundamental for the construction of its emancipation.

We agree, in this context, with Marques (2008a, p. 60), who adds that this peasantry is made up of “a diversity of social forms based on the relationship of family work and different forms of access to land, as the squatter, the partner, the forester, the tenant, smallholder, etc. ”, and that the main role of the family in

production and in this lifestyle - along with the work of the land - leads to the constitution of “common elements to all these social forms” (Marques, 2008a, p. 60).

We observe a leading role of the peasantry in current social movements, in an emancipatory perspective in Brazil, as it happened in the 19th century, when peasant movements played a decisive role. And this is an educational dimension that educates even the school.

We emphasize that some analyzes, linked to the proletarian paradigm, made on the peasantry, tried to relegate it to subjects attached to the land, with precarious schooling, assigning them a subordinate role and out of political decisions. In this sense, Ribeiro (2010, p. 162) points out that “it could be that these were the most visible aspects; could also be, that this is a strong reason why the popular rural / peasant social movements along with the land of work, demand the education of the countryside that they thought, managed and evaluated”.

For all intents and purposes, the peasantry needs to be understood in a historical and dynamic way. It is through this perspective that we observe the significant changes on the understanding of peasants’ role throughout history in different geographic contexts.

The destiny of this social class is defined throughout its own history, from the positions that it occupies in the struggles field that are formed around the agrarian issue and the choices and strategies it adopts in face of possible historically determined (Marques, 2008a, p. 60) (our translation).

Thus, the fate of this social class cannot be predetermined, and the uneven geographical development of capitalism must be carefully observed, highlighting the importance of territorializing analyzes, without losing sight of the notion of entirety. Now, the peasantry is forged historically and geographically and is produced from the family work and use as value (Marques, 2008).

On the contrary, decampment is encouraged by a set of state actions, such as Rural Education, whose peasant perspective that proclaims it goes through production of new forms of life and, also, for the reproduction of existing forms. Therefore, thinking about the peasant territory is a condition for developing educational and school policies consistent with their subjects and actions. The field / city and rural / urban dialectic, without necessarily dichotomizing, based on arbitrary delimitations, becomes of fundamental importance. Both sides of the territory need to be analyzed, since there is

no field without a city and there is no city without a field.

In agreement with Ribeiro (2010), we observed the importance of the peasantry in composition of the historical subject that operates the processes of social transformation. According to the author:

The popular rural / field social movements are part of the historical subject of social transformation, still under construction, and which includes all categories of workers. Overcoming the antagonistic and, therefore, contradictory relationship between capital and labor, supposes overcoming the separation between city and countryside. (Ribeiro, 2010, p. 163).

In such a way, this overcoming requires a partnership between workers and political organizations in the countryside and in the city.

Under the same prism, in the intellectual effort to break with a dichotomous idea, there is a generic form of two definitions of countryside and city linked to the dichotomous and continuum approach. According to Marques (2002, p. 100), “in the first one, the countryside is thought of as a distinct social environment that opposes the city; in the second, it is argued that the progress of the urbanization process is responsible for significant changes in society in general, also

affecting the rural space ”. Both perspectives, however, present the suppression of the countryside by the city.

There is a very widespread notion of the spreading of the urban, at such a level that it occurs the limitation of the rural. This notion does not allow us to understand the Brazilian territory, since the preponderance is applied based on an urban-centric idea, which contributes little to the understanding of the contradictory and the complementation of the countryside / city relationship.

Along these lines, “it is necessary to examine the concrete social processes of alienation, separation, exteriority and abstraction in a critical way. Recovering the history of rural and urban capitalism” (Marques, 2002, p. 104), so that we can affirm that “the experiences of direct, reciprocal and cooperative relationships are often discovered and rediscovered under pressure. *Now, neither the city will save the countryside, nor the countryside the city*” (Marques, 2002, p. 104, emphasis added).

It is necessary to break through with rivalries and perspectives that divide the rural and the urban. Such a dichotomy, imposed by capitalism, only makes the struggle of rural and city workers more difficult. Instead of dividing, it is necessary to understand the interrelationship and

interdependence of these spaces. Thus, the reciprocity that exists in the field / city relationship is highlighted in a non-hierarchical way.

Camacho and Fernandes (2017) reiterate this contradictory dialectical unity, since, with regard to the field-city relationship, each day, the old and rigid characteristics used to differentiate the rural and the urban have been decreasing, given that the industry is, today, present in both spaces. Likewise, the wage worker lives in the city, but often works as a farm worker in the field.

These new relations between the rural and the urban give rise to what Ariovaldo Umbelino de Oliveira (1999), quoted by Camacho and Fernandes (2017), calls a dialectical or contradictory unit. That is, the differences in economic activities between the city and the countryside, between industry and agriculture, are being overcome. Thus, a dialectical unity is formed, therefore, combined and contradictory.

However, in our society, such opposition persists - even though, theoretically, it is incongruous to separate country and city -, which makes it difficult to overcome the subordination relationship of the peasant classes to urban financial capital.

Bombardi's research (2011, 2012) shows, in question, the use of pesticides by the Brazilian peasantry as evidence of class subordination to international financial capital. The peasant territory and the capital territory, in this context, are in permanent dispute and are (de) (re) territorialized in their dynamic of "intense process of subordination of the income of peasant land to monopoly capital: more than 1/3 small farms in Brazil use poisons" (Bombardi, 2011, p. 1). Thus, the expression "monopoly", in this case, appears more vivid than ever: the United States, Switzerland and Germany, together, through their companies, control 70% of the sale of pesticides in Brazil" (Bombardi, 2011, p. 2).

Camacho and Fernandes (2017) also explain the contradictions established and highlight the importance of the permanent struggle against the subordination imposed on the peasantry by capital.

It is obvious that we cannot generalize the analyzes regarding peasant agriculture, treating this problem from an idealistic and simplistic analysis, since the market logic itself imposes scale production on many peasants as one of the only alternatives for this production to reach the consumer market. So it is not uncommon seeing peasants engaged in a single commercial activity. However, this reality reveals the peasant subordination to capital and the territoriality of capital in peasant territory, which confirms the need to fight against capital, in order

to free the peasantry from this subjection imposed by capital". (Camacho & Fernandes, 2017, p. 61) (our translation).

And, in the school space itself, these contradictions are evident, once the use of poisons are keeping the sons and daughters of peasants away from farming due to an evident issue of non-poisoning. In agribusiness logic, therefore, there is a dehumanization of peasant work, given that the school has become the space for experimenting peasantry for many peasant children. That is, to enable the construction of this identity within the territory.

We see that the proper and the appropriated land by the peasantry has an ancestral wealth, because "permanently the peasants exercise and maintain their creativity and inventiveness and, more than that, express their rebelliousness!" (Ramos, 2015, p. 51). The peasants, therefore, dispute the territory with agribusiness and also express themselves, by the appropriation of the rural school and by the peasantry of the school space. There are different forms of this appropriation, and one of the guiding principles is agroecology as a movement / science / practice.

In turn, agroecology can be understood as a Latin American construction that is consolidated based on the characteristics of the peasants in the

countries on the periphery of capitalism, although it is based on all indigenous ancestry and the original people in general. It presents itself as a possible alternative, since, “in addition to purely conjunctural situations, the permanence of peasants on the land and their social reproduction, is today seriously threatened by the hegemonic technological model that is, worldwide, the support base for agribusiness” (Guhur & Toná, 2012, p. 58).

Petersen and Caporal (2012), in the same perspective, point out that a first approach to the concept of agroecology leads us to the teachings of Stephen R. Gliessman, who, already in 1981, wrote about “The ecological basis for the application of traditional agricultural technology to the management of tropical agroecosystems”. It is worth noting that his studies were even based on the diverse practices developed by the Mexican indigenous people (Gliessman, 2000 *apud* Petersen & Caporal, 2012, p. 65).

In this field of knowledge, another highlight is the author Altieri (2012), who presented notions of scientific bases of alternative agriculture.

There is also, at the University of Córdoba, in Spain, a research group that brings, from a reading of the agrarian question associated with peasant actions,

“the seminal book on European Agroecology, with the title 'Ecology, Peasantry and History', by Eduardo Sevilla Guzmán and Manuel González de Molina” (Petersen & Caporal, 2012, p. 65). From that moment on, “Agroecology would become a science that goes beyond the application of ecology concepts and principles to the management of agroecosystems, in the search for more sustainability in agriculture” (Petersen & Caporal, 2012, p. 65).

In Brazil, agroecology has been an alternative linked to agriculture, the environmental issue and the struggle for land of peasant people; thus, a movement of a contradictory character to the development of capitalism in the countryside. Conversely, the conservative modernization of the Brazilian countryside produces, simultaneously to crops with a central pivot, transgenic seeds and all types of pesticides; male and female workers see the abatement of what remains of their sovereignty and autonomy in peasant work, see their lands being usurped.

The agroecological movement has thus been forged as a dispute for structural changes in the countryside and in the city, allying itself with the historic struggle for land, such as the Movements of Small Farmers and Landless Rural Workers.

Note that this dispute takes place in a hostile environment, in which ‘the defense of the agroecological movement by the historical validity of peasant family farming is still very often interpreted as a trend of utopian idealism. But this validity is being built on a daily basis by the peasantry itself, through silent fights over control of fractions of the territory with the purpose of reducing the power of appropriation of the wealth socially generated by the industrial and financial capital linked to agribusiness’. (Petersen, Dal Sóglio & Caporal, 2009, *apud* Petersen & Caporal, 2012, p. 66) (our translation).

The various (re) existences of the peasantry are thus being constantly appropriated by capital logic. As stated in the work “The (mis)directions of the environment”, by Carlos Walter Porto-Gonçalves (1989), there are, in evidence, the directions of ecological speech and the capacity of capital to embrace everything with a capitalism dressed in green, as also mentioned by Marta Inez Medeiros Marques (2008b):

The countryside now includes new rural areas created, among others, from the use of the countryside for recreational and tourist activities, and for valuing the potential of rural populations to contribute to the development of sustainable ways of managing nature and conserving the environment - the proposal of agroecology is born in this context. New forms of resistance and fighting are also engendered (Marques, 2008b, p. 56) (our translation).

Capital constantly recreates and reinvents itself, but that is not its exclusive capacity; the movement also transforms the countryside, keeps certain essential characteristics and presents new forms of fighting and existence. Many urban workers face the challenge of returning to the countryside, fleeing rent in cities and becoming peasants. Therefore, we observe an increase in this class and its reproduction and recreation.

The tendency of contemporary peasant agriculture to assert its relative autonomy vis-à-vis the different fractions of capital, ... and move towards agroecology maintains the possibility of its social reproduction, given that it socially builds the bases of another paradigm. (Carvalho & Costa, 2012, p. 31) (our translation).

We see an encounter between agroecology and the different forms of peasant life, constituting itself as a proposal not only an alternative to agribusiness, but, essentially, as a movement of resistance and reconstruction of food agro-ecosystems, resuming productive and also ideological autonomy in the chosen ways of producing food, in addition on the field.

The head thinks from where the feet step. In order to understand, it is essential to know the social place of the viewer. It is worth saying: how someone lives, with whom they live, what experience they have, where

they work, what hopes cheer them. This makes understanding always an interpretation (Boff, 1997, p. 1) (our translation).

Agroecology presents practice as a criterion of truth and experiences, dares and proposes forms of relationship with the earth and with living beings, observing nature's responses to stimuli and necessary adjustments. But it is only possible when experienced, and not studied as something external. For this reason, we reiterate Leonardo Boff: “The head thinks from where the feet step” (Boff, 1997, p. 1).

To think of peasantry as a class, in this way, is not to think of it mechanically in its social dimension based on production - sometimes agroecological - but in its resistance to the maintenance of its territory and its lifestyle. To Marques (2008b, p. 63), “the fight for agrarian reform in Brazil involves the affirmation of a peasant project and has enabled workers who had previously been proletarianized or not to experience a peasant way of life and its conformation as a class”. And peasantry is a challenge also covered by the educational process.

In Brazil, against a set of analyzes, Oliveira (1999, p. 72) emphasizes that “the peasants, instead of proletarianizing themselves, started to fight to remain peasants”, showing the growth in the

number of squatters between 1960 and 1985 in the Brazilian territory.

The materiality of peasant life produces a subjectivity and a culture that is produced and produces the peasantry. Therefore, focusing on the “social place of the viewer”, we bring the notion of peasantry - term discussed by the anthropologist Klaas Woortmann (1990), which brings the debate with this category to the understanding of the peasant reality, contributing significantly to the reflection of the land-labor-family relationship, fundamental terms for the movement to peasant the school.

In his 1990 essay “With a relative you don't deal”, K. Woortmann states that peasant ethics is based on a moral order, which has implications for the way in which the peasantry is constituted and how the social group reproduces itself materially, anchored in a culture and in its own *modus operandi*.

According to the author, peasant society brings reciprocity as a peasant value, since “the land is not seen as an object of work, but as an expression of morality; not in its exteriority as a factor of production, but as something thought out and represented in the context of ethical values”(Woortmaan, 1990, p. 12).

The anthropological focus on the relationship of peasant subjects with the

land explains a movement of resistance that remains, materially, as a result of this relationship, as a moral order that becomes the principle for guaranteeing the autonomy of work. Emphasis is given to the role of the land in the constitution of this moral order, given that it does not appear as a commodity, or something for the business, but, rather, “as heritage, or as a gift from God, the land is not simply a thing or merchandise” (Woortmaan, 1990, p. 12). The land appears as a family heritage, a land of life, culture, production, and not merely merchant.

It is important to note that this peasantry is a quality, which Klaas Woortmaan (1990, p. 12) supposes “common to different places and times”. Thus, that peasant moral order would be in all territories that produce this subjectivity, since “in peasant cultures, land is not thought without thinking of family and labor, just as labor is not thought without thinking of land and family” (Woortmaan, 1990, p. 19-23). All elements of the triad are articulated in this moral order.

It is noteworthy that the influence of the market in the peasant order is presented as a domination over the peasantry, but that the market, nevertheless, does not organize this social group. The economic order often appears as an interference with peasantry, “it moves through the economic

order to realize, as an end, the moral order, and, with it, peasantry” (Woortmaan, 1990, p. 19).

Thereby, it is useless to understand labor in a Family Center for Alternation Training taking into consideration only the element of labor, given that land and family participate in this triad and explain the production and reproduction of alternation as pedagogy. Therefore, this whole aspect is directly associated with an educational project and influences the construction of the school and the schooling process.

Despite all the debate about the concept of peasantry as a social class and a lifestyle, this is the familiar character of labor. After all, what does peasantry have to do with alternation? Thus, go out and back again to study, and go out to study and never come back. As Martins (1983, p. 17) states, “the history of peasant-squatters is a story of wandering”, and this is not specific to squatters, but typical of most Brazilian families, since almost all of them, with their rural origin, needed to leave their lands in search of ways to survive.

It is also important to note the existence of a relationship between the elements faith, family and land as components of a triad that, as mentioned by Klaas Woortmann (1990) and

reaffirmed by Ellen Woortmann (2004), attributes the designation of peasantry. According to the author, “man's labor implies respect for the land (and nature, in general), expecting from it what it can and wants to give, that is, the food it is capable of producing” (Woortmaan, 2004, p. 133).

Another relevant element to think about peasantry is the relationship with nature. If there is a shift in the notion of individual property, this also includes the relationship with nature, not in the sense of an ecologized and preservationist relationship, but, as Porto-Gonçalves (1990) points out, in its socio-ecological dimension.

Under this scenario, Rural Education is essential, that is, an education that is linked to the life of the peasants and that happens in the communities where they live; where they live, work, play and celebrate their lives. That is, to think it over, from this, the contradictory policies of emptying out the countryside, which starts early, from the moment when children need to leave their homes, in the fields, to go study in the cities' core schools.

Now, Education begins by guaranteeing schools for all the people and for all levels, and should be a binding and aggregating link in communities (Görge, 2017). The idea of peasant education, from this point of view, constitutes itself as a reaffirmation of Rural Education itself, invigorating its class dimension, counter-proposal to the State project, of Rural Education.

As an educational practice, some actions emerge at school, however, these reflect the territorial context in which peasants live in that territory. One of these practices is marked by the panel authored by Jailson of the MST of Pinheiros, in Espírito Santo. It is an artistic experience exposed at the CEFFA Bley - Centro Familiar de Formação em Alternância Bley (Bley Family Training Center in Alternation) which presents us part of this context and highlights the territorial dispute between agribusiness and peasant agriculture, demonstrating the role of organized youth in this struggle.

Image 1- Organized Youth Panel (MST-Pinheiros).



Source: Authors' file.

The image highlights the peasant territory and features elements such as the school, the cooperative and the health center. At the center is the banner of the RACEFFAES - *Regional dos Centros Familiares de Formação em Alternância do Espírito Santo* (Regional Family Centers for Training in Alternation of Espírito Santo) and Via Campesina, both seen as organizational possibilities for peasant youth. The mystique, the cooperation and the values are the foundation, by means of notebooks in the left corner, next to the hoe, the guitar and the straw hat, the peasant cultural heritage. This youth, therefore, puts pressure on agribusiness (transgenic, monoculture of sugar cane and eucalyptus and pesticides, in the left corner) with another perspective on life. The image title “Organized Youth

cultivating freedom in building sustainability” brings a set of concepts; among them, sustainability, a term also associated with the Agrarian Capitalism Paradigm - albeit for a different purpose -, and also highlights the freedom of peasants as the process of building their stories.

The beautiful panel presents the scenery of peasant territory, of peasantry, in which the youth plays a leading role in the dispute over the territory instead of agribusiness, the land as a commodity and the space in its merely productive aspect. Finally, diversity, equally highlighted, is the mark of the territory's peasantry - diversity of cultures, people, colors and feelings. The territory is alive, dynamic and consists of aspects that value life.

Rural Education and Peasant Education

The notion of organization of this territory and its many dimensions helps us to think about the origin of the Rural Education movement as an outgrowth of Popular Education, linked to the denial of Rural Education. But, why deal with Peasant Education? Wouldn't that be the Rural Education project? Yes and no. Yes, because the Countryside Education aggregates exactly that social class, specifically in fight over its territory. No, because the Countryside Education, today, aggregates a much broader set of subjects: university, social movements, peasant schools and so many other experiences that make up Peasant Education.

The educational project of and at the Countryside Education territorially expands its actions, in order to account for relations in the territories, without, however, losing sight of the specificities that peasant class itself has. For the peasantry, education as a public policy is an essential condition to guarantee the continuity of life production, that is, it is linked to the peasant territory, but it is not restricted to the context of schooling.

For this reason, Peasant Education goes through the training of subjects in its territory, and the school integrates only part of this journey; life takes place, as well, in the daily work in the fields, in

games, at parties, in daily and occasional meetings, in the daily movement of peasants.

A fundamental aspect of peasants life is the relationship they develop with the land in their daily lives. In it, workers develop their specific knowledge that involves cultivation, sowing the land, harvesting. In these activities, their knowledge of nature and its cycles are mobilized, arising from the exercise of looking, reading the indications that it presents to them to interpret the signs of nature, essential for the management of the land destined for planting, the animal breeding that are the essential means to the life of the settlers. In these activities essential to the reproduction of material life, the peasants establish relationships with nature and with other men and women, produce culture, representations about life”. (Batista, 2018, p. 4) (our translation).

These ties and this dynamic of life refer to something genuine in peasant culture. Schools, in the meantime, often use experimentation, fieldwork and practical work activities as an instrument to elucidate the ideas printed in books, booklets and textbooks. Thinking, then, of Peasant Education, or even Rural Education, demands a systematization and work in the peasant territory itself, based on the desires and conceptions of this reality - including, also, the dialogue with the production of scientific knowledge, since “the existing science today is an active human and social effort and can

only be understood as such” (Shanin, 2017, p. 339), and, moreover, in the name of “progress”, it has encouraged the reading of the peasantry disappearance and, therefore, favored the oppression and decimation of these cultures.

The cultural violence experienced by peasant people in schools is notorious to this day, even with the advance in recognition of the countryside as a life space; it is about the urban-centric movement of the world and the commodification and pasteurization of habits, customs and its subjects. Thus, “simultaneously with this process of formation and territorialization of the peasantry, many peasant families are expelled, expropriated, that is, they are deterritorialized” (Fernandes, 2012, p. 746).

Peasant Education, on the other hand, strengthens and produces ways of making peasant territorialization feasible to carry out its great challenge of “maintaining its sovereignty by developing its territory through its relative autonomy and facing the hegemony of capital” (Fernandes, 2012, p. 746), in addition to contributing to the affirmation of family work as a viable and autonomous mode of production.

As supporters of the Agrarian Issue Paradigm, Martins (1983), Oliveira (1999),

Fernandes (2015), Shanin (2008), Marques (2008a), Ramos (2015), linked to the peasant tendency, claim that there is no definition or concept that fits the peasants, since their diversity and historical dynamics is immense - but, still, that does not prevent them from constituting themselves as a class.

In social terms, the peasant is not a person or a family, he is a collectivity, often a group and - when he puts his hands - a class. A social conglomerate based on a multi-active family economy, but also of those who are part of, and by their right, belong to it, having functions not directly agricultural, participate in community life and share the destiny of farmers. (Bartra, 2010, p. 11, our translation)ⁱ.

This collectivity has in common family work with multiple activities, so they are formed as a class with community and collective interests. Thinking about the peasantry implies thinking about its society project, which is diverse, but with principles that can be summarized in agroecology. Traditions and the collective way of being in the world of peasantry, and the peasant education that is configured as a process of self-recognition of the peasantry as a class, reverberates, in Brazil, in the formulation of Rural Education as a movement, as a practice and as a science.

Then, the notion of peasantry of school emerges, which consists of the

appropriation of the school by peasant logic, from the insertion of these collectivist interests, and also from the perspective of solidarity. That is, the peasant education school based on the demands of the peasantry.

The analysis of the practices and forms of organization of the agricultural families schools, in the north of Espírito Santo, indicated that the school practices in the territory pointed to an intrinsic articulation between school and the peasant way of life, which led us to inquire about the schooling of the peasantry, that is, a form of peasant school. This is what we will discuss next.

School the peasantry or peasant the school?

The peasantry, as a social class and as a lifestyle, followed, for many decades, in Brazil, away from schooling rights, very clearly directed towards urban social classes. And, even when this right was met, it was in a precarious way, added to the demerit that was made of the class itself.

This educational issue articulates itself with the problematization of the agrarian issue, and, looking at it through the peasantry bias, it is necessary to overcome the labor-capital contradiction for the consolidation of Rural Education. It

is a utopia, a horizon of collective construction, which, aiming at overcoming this contradiction, needs the bonding between urban unions, rural unions, associations, social movements in the countryside and the city, dismantling the dichotomy imposed by capital.

The emergence of the collective need of the peasant movement as a project of society allowed organized peasants to outline the social reasons for the need of school, in order to respect and value the peasantry lifestyle. The school project (teachers, structure, transport and management) that discriminates and devalues peasant knowledge is a cultural violence towards this class. Therefore, Rural Education aims at the appropriation and (re) signification of this reality.

It is not enough, therefore, to contextualize this school to communicate with the peasantry, but it is necessary to recreate it in order to think about the peasant world and its needs. A school must contribute to the construction of critical horizons and the emancipation of this perspective. Therefore, some experiences of Pedagogy of Alternation stand out as a possibility through pedagogical instruments, in particular the Study Plan, which organizes the entire school curriculum based on the articulation between the school and the family through

interviews with the family nuclei themselves, with the communities and with the peasant social organizations.

The peasant family, just like all working class families, has no constant physical presence at school, so, under the peasant pedagogy, the presence occurs in the representative councils and in the school daily life by the territorial articulation of the nearby families, as is the case with the ‘training contract’ instrument, which brings together, by territory, the set of families that decides their children’s direction of formation, committing themselves to participate in said processes.

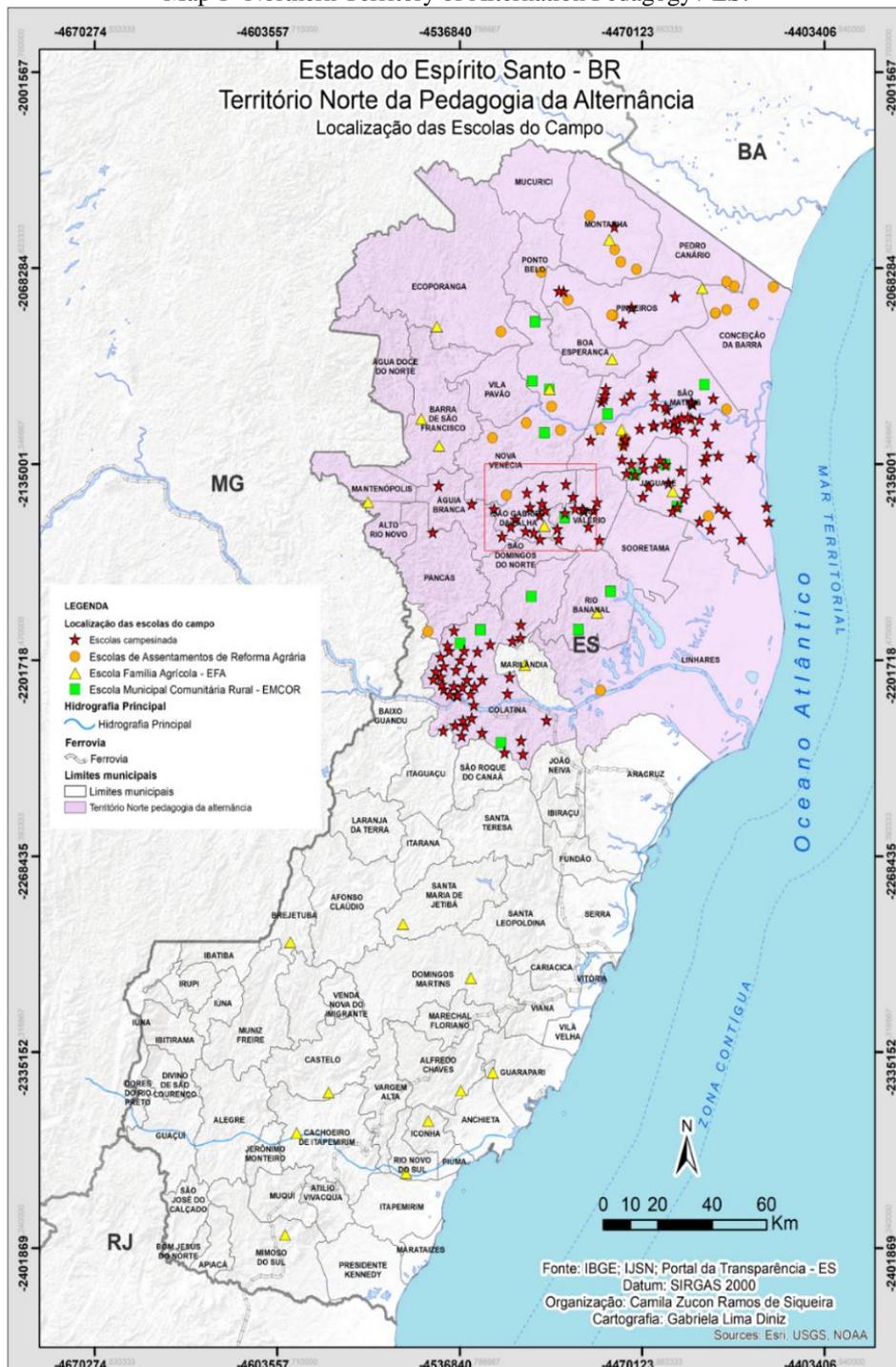
Pedagogy of Alternation in the state of Espírito Santo, initially linked to Agricultural Family Schools and to a religious network called the MEPES - Movimento de Educação Promocional do Espírito Santo (Espírito Santo Promotional Education Movement), it has been expanding, in a secular and committed way, in the north of Espírito Santo due to the work of social organizations there present.

Going further, this pedagogy has been inserted in public schools - municipal and state, associative, community and settlement schools. CEFFA Bley, linked to the MEPES network and RACEFFAES, has been a cradle for the dissemination of

this peasant pedagogy and has functioned as a territorial center for Alternating training in the northern territory of Espírito Santo, contributing to the process of peasant schools.

We organized a map (Map 1) in order to demonstrate graphically the existence of the northern territory of rural schools in the state of Espírito Santo. Although the usual designation is CEFFAs, EFAs are thus designed to differentiate from other CEFFAs (municipal, community and state), which are shown in the caption.

Map 1- Northern Territory of Alternation Pedagogy / ES.



Source: Adapted from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 2010.

One of the main guidelines for the expansion of Pedagogy of Alternation to the public network in the north of the state - as it is understood as a proper and appropriate pedagogy - is mainly to

prevent the closure of schools located in the countryside. In the same way, it is intended to insert the voice of the peasantry into the school through the pedagogical devices of Alternation, which

is why this peasantry has become a reality, as the map shows.

It is true that the strengthening of the triad land, labor and family faces several challenges in order not to weaken in the face of agribusiness constant advance, which leads to the dehumanization of peasant work. For this reason, the school has become the space to experience peasantry as a valuable experience.

Therefore, in the face of capital offensives in the countryside, the school can be an instrument to peasantry children, youth and adults, who, gradually, are forcibly distancing themselves from this territory, even though they live in it. Rural Education takes place in the countryside and in the city and fights for the self-affirmation of the people, because only a curriculum that meets the peasantry can, in fact, respect and critically defend their territories.

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ⁱ En términos sociales, el campesino no es una persona ni una familia; es una colectividad, con frecuencia un gremio y – cuando se pone sus moños – una clase. Un conglomerado social en cuya base está la economía familiar multiactiva pero del que forman parte también y por derecho propio quienes, teniendo funciones no directamente agrícolas, participan de la forma de vida comunitaria y comparten el destino de los labradores.

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