



Article

Pronera and the production of knowledge in Educators and Agricultural Science training courses: theory and practice facing Bolsonaroism

Mônica Castagna Molina^{*1}, Clarice Aparecida dos Santos^{*2}, Márcia Mariana Bittencourt Brito^{**3}

*Universidade de Brasília (UnB), Brasília-DF, **Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA), Belém-PA, Brazil

Abstract

The rights of the peasantry are a target for the attack of Bolsonaro's project. Part of these attacks attempt to destroy the National Education Program on Agrarian Reform - Pronera. It is assumed that this attempt is associated with the results achieved by this policy, which are going against the political-economic interests that sustain Bolsonaro's government. This work aims at reflecting on possible differentials in the knowledge production processes generated in higher education courses, training of educators and agricultural sciences linked to Pronera, as well as the potential of this process to intervene in the transformation of social reality, contributing to the materialization of the peasant's territorial project, centred on land decentralization, agro ecology and food sovereignty. Reports from the II National Survey of Education in Agrarian Reform were analyzed and bibliographic research was carried out in the Coordination of Improvement of Higher-Level Personnel (Capes) Thesis Catalogue, between 1998 to 2019. Out of the 48 researches on educator training and 24 on agricultural sciences linked to Pronera found, 12 studies on the performance of graduates in schools and 5 on their performance in organizing the production of settlements were selected for analysis with the intention of capturing the relationship between theory and practice. The researchers found relevant insertion of the graduates in the schools of the settlements, with considerable changes in their school organization and pedagogical work, as well as changes in the productive processes towards an agroecological transition linked to the social struggles to transform the countryside.

Keywords: Pronera, Higher Education, Knowledge production, Praxis.

Introduction

The objective of this work is to reflect on possible differentials in the knowledge production processes generated in higher education courses linked to the National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform (Pronera), in Educator Training and in Agrarian Sciences, and on the potentialities of this process to intervene in the transformation of social reality, contributing with the materialization of the peasant

¹ Professor at Universidade de Brasília (UnB). E-mail: mcastagnamolina@gmail.com ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9901-9526>.

² Professor at Universidade de Brasília. E-mail: claricesantos61@gmail.com ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000.0003.3643.6909>

³ Professor at Universidade Federal do Pará. ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9966-8534> E-mail: marciabit@ufpa.br

territorial project, focused on land deconcentration, agroecology and food sovereignty (TARDIN; GUHUR, 2017). This article also aims to present the advances of Bolsonaroism to destroy the Program through attacks against its operational structure within the State and cutbacks in funds, making its operation unfeasible and hindering the exercise of the peasants' right to Higher Education.

This article intends to bring an understanding that education as a public good (DIAS SOBRINHO, 2010), social right and obligation of the State, which head-on rejects the idea of education as a good, is the foundation of the indispensable need for maintaining fights for democratization of the access to Higher Education.

This reflection is centered on the consequences of the destruction of this education policy, having as a background the debate on the relationship between university, social movements and knowledge production, establishing a dialogue with issues about the social function of university contemporarily that have been raised by Roberto Leher (2015; 2019). The author stimulates readers to think about what the social function of university at the present historical time should be, emphasizing that, in the current context of dependent capitalism, the debate on university cannot be kept in conceptual theoretical frameworks of the past.

Leher raises what is considered to be a pivotal question in the debate that this article intends to ask, by inquiring: "Are social movements strategic subjects for the future at public universities?". In connection to this, he raises two other questions: "How do movements interact in the production of knowledge? And what particularizes, at the present time, the activity of movements in the future of university institutions?" (2015, p. 9, our translation).

The above-mentioned author highlights that since the 1990s, in Latin America, with the consolidation of neoliberalism and takeover of a new power bloc composed of financial capital, agribusiness (OLIVEIRA, 2011) and commodity-exporting companies, the role that universities had reached until then in their nations' development projects has been shifted. This new power bloc, which was consolidated amidst the structural crisis of capital, plays this role through an accumulation pattern very well summarized by David Harvey (2004) as "accumulation by dispossession", in which natural resources are extracted to the maximum extent and human labor force is also exploited with maximum intensity.

Reflecting upon the consequences of this pattern of accumulation by dispossession, Leher (2015, p. 9) presents the current university dilemmas in Latin America, identifying inconsistencies to be faced by it in its productions from the structural crisis of capital, imposing new forms of partnerships and agreements that,

[...] far from being virtuous agreements that may contribute to strengthening university autonomy, omnilateral education, and original research, which is compromised with the great problems of the peoples, these contracts and agreements imply that the university must have a supporting role, a role of material service provider and, not less importantly, a symbolic role, related to governability of social order. [...] Economic induction of corporations and governments, through invitation for bids, for projects of interest to agromineral industries in universities increases conflicts of the model known as neodevelopmentalist model with social movements. (our translation)

Along the same lines, Oliveira, Ferreira and Moraes (2015, p. 160) underscore that the "biggest link between universities and companies is part of a wider

movement of control and exploitation of the production of knowledge itself as a good which, along with the financialization and deregulation movement" (our translation), has collaborated with the capital reorganization. Still in dialogue with this core question, regarding the necessary and indispensable critique to the transformation of knowledge production in Higher Education into a good at the service of capital, Mancebo, Silva Júnior and Schugurensky (2016, p. 219) state that, in this process, the "economic relevance clearly overrides the cognitive, social and cultural relevance of knowledge" (our translation).

Summarizing this debate, Leher emphasizes that an increasing control of academic life by capital is being experienced more and more often, and that university needs to react to such attacks, underscoring that the reversal of the heteronomy setting will not be possible in strictly university-related spaces, nor will it be possible only by the direct protagonists of universities, that is, professors, technicians and students, precisely warning that the protagonists of social struggles are the ones who may change this setting, "as they are the current anti-systemic social movements that may resignify the social role and function of universities contemporarily" (LEHER, 2015, p. 11, our translation).

Concurrently with the destruction process it generates, accumulation by dispossession also places peasant and indigenous socio-territorial movements (FERNANDES, 2005) at the center of resistance and emancipation struggles. Such resistance movements have taken on access to university as part of their claims, which represents great epistemological challenges for academic institutions.

Opposing this destructive logic of maximum appropriation and dispossession of nature, peasants have historically fought and experienced secular practices of intense interaction with nature, living off of it and with it, without promoting its destruction. There is already a significant number of studies and research papers showing, for example, its role in preserving creole seeds and genetic heritage of communities in the care of water resources and mainly in passing on pedagogical heritage of the lifestyle of their communities (TARDIN; GUHUR, 2017).

Seeking to face the intense deterritorialization process (FERNANDES, 2005), which the new mode of capital accumulation in rural areas imposes them in a voracious and accelerated way, the organized and struggling peasants pursue, through the access to knowledge, new resistance tools. From these struggles, Rural Education and public policies obtained therefrom arise, being Pronera one of these main policies.

Although this policy encompasses different education levels, this article aims to present the results produced by Pronera within the scope of assurance of the right to Higher Education to peasants, with emphasis on the advances made by the Program in knowledge production, especially in the subject of Agrarian Sciences and Educator Training. The choice of these areas is due to the relevant effects that the actions led by peasants who were former students of these courses have been producing in the settlements and schools located in them, which have been materializing the contribution to the development of a peasant territorial project based on agro ecology and food sovereignty.

Such effects were systematized through the reports of the 2nd National Research on Agrarian Reform Education [*II Pesquisa Nacional de Educação na Reforma Agrária*] (II PNERA), coordinated by IPEA (2015; 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016d; 2016e; 2016f), as well as those of dissertations and theses on the results of the actions of Pronera former students. In order to expose a summary of the

analyses here, a search in both the Catalog of Dissertations and Theses of Capes (period: 1998-2019) and the Digital Library of Dissertations and Theses was made using the following descriptors: Pronera; Former Students; Educator Training; Pedagogy of the Land and Pronera; Former Students, Agronomy; Agrarian Sciences; Agroecology. Based on these works and their bibliographical references, a search was also made in the repositories of Brazilian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The research was carried out between March and April 2020. Forty-eight dissertations and theses about Pronera and Educator Training and 24 research papers about Pronera and Agrarian Sciences were found. After reading the abstracts and conclusions, the analysis of 12 research papers addressing more directly the performance of former students of these courses in rural schools and 5 research papers on their performance in the organization of the settlements' production was prioritized with the aim of capturing the theoretical and practical relationship promoted by these training processes.

In the first part, this article brings the main results of the Program in the Higher Education scope based on data of II PNERA and recent works published by Inca [National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform] employees allocated at Pronera (DIAS, 2020; SOUZA, G. R., 2020; GUEDES, 2020). It also presents the results found in dissertations and theses written on the Program's courses in the above-mentioned knowledge fields, with an emphasis on epistemological questions raised by the courses in terms of possible changes in the knowledge production in Higher Education, due to the presence of peasant subjects who participated in the courses.

In the second part, reflections on what is understood as Bolsonaroism are presented so that afterwards the actions triggered by such project in an attempt to revoke Pronera from the state structure can be introduced. Integrating the reflections on the consequences of Bolsonaroism for the destruction of the Program and the preclusion of the peasants' right to education, the history of data related to the funding of this public policy is presented.

Finally, in the conclusion, reflections are made about the advances found in the theory-practice relationship provided by Pronera courses and their contributions to the change in the social role of universities, as well as the setbacks that may stem from the destructive practices of Bolsonaroism towards this policy.

Pronera in the exercise of the peasantry right to Higher Education

On April 16, 2020, the National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform completed 22 years. The achievements of this education policy shaped by the struggle led by the organized peasantry in the country, especially by MST [Landless Workers' Movement], have been registered by different research studies produced throughout its history, conducted both at a national level, such as in editions I and II of the National Research on Agrarian Reform Education, and in hundreds of master's and doctoral research papers (SOUZA, M. A., 2020) carried out on the courses offered by the Program at different education levels and knowledge fields.

II PNERA, which occurred from 2011 to 2014, collected data regarding Pronera actions during the interval from 1998 to 2011 and was carried out in an articulate manner, involving two phases: a quantitative phase, which occurred using a census and involved data collection in all Brazilian states, and another qualitative phase, which occurred using samples.

During the qualitative phase of II PNERA, the effects of the Program were evaluated in seven different scopes: in the personal lives of subjects who participated in it; in their families and communities; in schools; in settlements; in universities; in public agencies and legal frameworks of Rural Education. As in the quantitative phase, the qualitative phase covered all Brazilian regions and was performed in the following states: Pará, Maranhão, Paraíba, Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais and Paraná. The selection of states for the qualitative phase occurred according to a conjunction of several factors, among which the following factors are highlighted: a high number of projects carried out in the state, connected with the offer of different education levels and a significant diversity of associated social and union movements.

Pronera has already provided access to education to more than 190 thousand young and adult students in the Agrarian Reform and quilombola areas who have graduated in courses that range from literacy to graduate studies. The Program is linked to more than 100 education institutions, among universities and federal institutes involved in the offer of courses in more than 1,000 cities in the country. From 1998 to 2018, according to data from Incra, Pronera guaranteed the offer of 512 courses, graduating young and adults' students in different fields of knowledge (DIAS, 2020). Most courses comprehended literacy and education of early grades of Primary School. In Secondary Education, the Concurrent Technical and Integrated modalities are highlighted. Within the Higher Education scope, 100 undergraduate and 89 graduate studies courses in different graduate specializations and a professional master's degree course have already been offered by Pronera, guaranteeing the graduation of a total of approximately 5,347 students at the higher education level. Higher education courses were offered in several knowledge fields: Pedagogy of the Land; Pedagogy of the Water; Teaching Degrees in History, Languages, Geography, Social Sciences and Arts; Journalism of the Land; Agronomy; Agroecology; Law; Nursing; Social Service; Veterinary Medicine and Zootechnics.

Data collected by II PNERA indicated that during the research period, 260 master's theses, 63 doctoral dissertations, and 174 monographs about Pronera were registered, in addition to 51 books, 10 collections, 94 book chapters and 469 articles (IPEA, 2015). It is important to emphasize that these numbers were nationally systematized until 2011, according to II PNERA interval at that time. Although substantial, the current quantities are already larger due to the absence of new nationwide data, as nine years have elapsed since the completion of the second national research and no data update has been made.

Pronera and knowledge production in Educator Training and Agrarian Sciences

Although all courses conducted by the Program are significant so as to materialize the human right to education for peasants, in this article, given their central role for the rural project sought by peasants, questions will be presented about knowledge production in two specific scopes of higher education courses offered by the Program: Rural Educator Training and Agrarian Sciences, which involve agronomy, agro ecology and technological courses.

As previously informed, the analysis of 12 research papers addressing more directly the work of former students of these courses in schools of the settlements

and encampments. These courses, which guarantee the training of peasant educators for them to work in the early grades of Basic Education of schools in the Agrarian Reform areas, gradually built a specific identity, which became known as "Pedagogia da Terra" [Pedagogy of the Land] (CALDART, 2002, our translation), and there are also research studies on the training of rural educators for the final grades of Primary and Secondary Education, made by Pronera through, for example, Teaching Degree courses in Geography, History or Social Sciences.

From the perspective of emphasis on knowledge production generated by Pronera Educator Training courses, which have been able to indicate the contribution of this knowledge for the peasant development project, it is relevant to highlight the results of different research papers, among which, doctoral and master's papers about the courses, which had as study object the analysis of the work developed by their former students in settlement schools and in rural communities from which they came.

Dissertations and theses about former students of Pronera's Educator Training courses were found indicating that the contributions of their actions are included in different scopes. There are studies on former students of the Pedagogy of the Land courses conducted in different Brazilian regions (REZENDE, 2010; SIMPLÍCIO, 2011; MORAES, 2011; LIMA, 2013; SILVA, 2013; AMARAL, 2014; SANTOS, 2015; TEIXEIRA, 2015; FERREIRA, 2018; ALMEIDA, 2019). In some states, such as Pará, Paraíba, Minas Gerais, São Paulo and Paraná, there is more than one research on former students of the same course, carried out within varied periods of time, but with results that dialogue a lot among themselves.

Besides having in common the documentary and bibliographic research work about such courses, these academic productions carried out field research with varied techniques, including semi-structured interviews, free interviews, round-table discussions with members and former students of schools where they are inserted, and, in some productions, managers and community leaders from the places where these schools are located were also interviewed.

Before presenting the results about the action of former students in the above-mentioned states, it is necessary to emphasize a very peculiar situation found in the state of São Paulo. Dissertations and theses about former students of the Pedagogy of the Land courses report that, when working in the state of São Paulo, it was very difficult for them to be included in schools, and most people who participated in the research are working elsewhere, although being in positions related to jobs in the education field, for example, working in the coordination of Projects in the Education Sector of the Landless Rural Workers' Movement. Very similar results about the low inclusion of former students of the Pedagogy of the Land courses in São Paulo are repeated in the works of Almeida (2019), Amaral (2014), Teixeira (2015) and Rezende (2010). Those are theses and dissertations written in different periods, but with similar results among each other and that considerably differ from those found in other states, both in Northeast and Center-West and South.

The results of the research studies indicate a high rate of inclusion of former students of the Pedagogy of the Land courses in schools of settlements and encampments, and there are schools with the inclusion of many former students, such as Paraíba settlements (LIMA, 2013; FERREIRA, 2018), Ceará (SIMPLÍCIO, 2011), Paraná (MORAES, 2011) and other states. In those schools, not without many difficulties, struggles and disputes with municipal and state governments, new logics for School Organization and Pedagogical Work are being implemented, in which new

strategies are sought in order to associate the teaching-learning processes experienced by children with the struggles and challenges of maintaining the settlement as a whole and the fight in defense of Agrarian Reform and the construction of a rural and development project.

The results found in the research studies on former students indicate a relevant set of positive impacts of their work in schools in the Agrarian Reform areas in which they are included. The following are examples of these effects: changes in pedagogical practices that aim to bring schools closer to communities; more dialogues between the contents addressed and the students' reality; introduction of activities that promote the students' self-organization into the pedagogical processes of schools; practices of interdisciplinary and agroecology-stimulating collective works, among others. It is relevant to emphasize that these findings dialogue, to a great extent, with results that were also found by the action of former students in the IPEA Research Reports about their work in rural schools in the settlements researched in the states of Pará, Maranhão, Paraíba, Ceará, Minas Gerais and Paraná (IPEA, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016d; 2016e; 2016f).

It should be also stressed that such transformations do not occur simply due to the knowledge obtained by these educators by virtue of their presence in Higher Education, but they occur mainly due to the way they experience the learning processes provided by the access to this education level. In addition, reports stating how tense the encounters of groups of Pronera courses with the universities that receive them, with a heterogeneous teaching staff, with different conceptions of education and society projects, are recurrent in the research studies.

As most students of the Pedagogy of the Land and Teaching Degrees courses linked to Pronera, when they start doing the courses, come from a background strongly connected with social movements, especially MST, the largest entity demanding Educator Training courses from Pronera, they already arrive with a significant practice and experience in collective struggle and self-organization processes, which reflect into the organizational process of groups in the courses. In the work of Santos (2009, p. 120), there is a summary of the process that seemed to reoccur in several courses:

While, in the students' methodological organization process, there are possibilities and signs of a practice that has references connected with omnilateral training, with the aim of forming humanist and socialist values for revolutionary praxis, the course's pedagogical proposal has multiple references, which are not consistent with the historical socialist project. Another important element must certainly be considered: students of the Pedagogy of the Land course come from a human experience that has already established them as activist educators; experience in social struggle and political-pedagogical education and teaching in schools of the encampments and settlements, which work within the scope of the Movement, such as 'awakening' instruments for critical consciousness, for the organization, as well as the understanding of the historical project of the Landless Rural Workers' Movement. The work in the Movement, as an educator and activist, becomes an educational praxis, which also enables training and education of self-consciousness as a class. Therefore, the identity of these activist educators has its roots in the social practice they develop in MST encampments and settlements

and was not exactly constituted in the training process developed in the course, as demonstrated in the statements of the students. Effectively, teaching training was connected with the practices of social struggles and activism of students of the Pedagogy of the Land course, contributing to reinforce the role of the educator within the scope of the social Movement as an activist educator, able to develop an organic relationship with the base. (our translation)

The reflection of the above-mentioned master's thesis brings an important element that reinforces the central argument of this article: a new type of scientific knowledge is produced in those courses exactly because it is produced in connection with concrete fights for social transformation and change in socio-economic conditions and social relationships. This is a knowledge connected with the fight for land and school transformations, seeking to overcome the hegemonic logic of capitalist schools, that is, exclusion and subordination of the working classes (FREITAS, 1995).

In other works (CORREIA, 2016; SANTOS, 2015), this contradiction also appears among formative proposals brought by the university and contents brought to classrooms by students who experience this training process in a way that cannot be dissociated from their struggles and activism in the social base where they come from, whether in encampments or settlements linked to MST or in other social movements that had students in Pedagogy of the Land courses, such as MAB, MPA, PJR, members of Via Campesina (GHEDINI, 2007). They all reinforce the argument, defended in the work, of the importance of the connection between universities and social movements from the perspective of the necessary recovery of an ethical sense for the knowledge production processes, as Leher states: "the interaction of movements with spaces in university, requiring more attention to the problems faced by the people, strengthens the critical sectors in the co-modified academic space, which thus have their research legitimated by social demands " (2015, p. 12, our translation).

This training process that connects access to scientific knowledge with social struggle produces a new type of knowledge, which is integrated into the transformation of these subjects' reality. The dissertations and theses read clarify that the training processes triggered by Pronera, as they promote an intrinsic link between university and social movements, elicits changes in both poles that are reflected in science itself. The teacher training that occurs in this complex process involving the University Times and Community Times with socio-territorial struggles led by lawful collective subjects who come from rural areas actually materializes a training based on the Praxis Philosophy. Based on Marx, such conception understands that thinking and acting cannot be separated, nor can the material world be separated from the sphere of ideas. According to Gramsci (1999), there is also a homology between the formation of the individual's willingness and the construction of a society project. For the Italian philosopher, Philosophy of Praxis is the

[...] political-theoretical and social-historical activity of "subaltern" groups that seek to develop a global world perspective and a precise action program in the context they live in with the means they have available, aiming to construct an alternative hegemonic project of society (SEMERARO, 2005, p. 31, our translation).

Still in dialogue with the idea of centrality of Pronera courses, of promoting a critical education with the goal of transforming teaching action, Vásquez's understanding is herein resumed, when he states that the praxis has the dimensions of knowing (theoretical activity) and transforming (practical activity), that is, theory and practice are not dissociable: "[...] out of it stands the theoretical activity that is not materialized [...] on the other hand, there is no praxis as a purely material activity, without the production of purposes and knowledge that characterizes the theoretical activity (VÁZQUEZ, 2007, p. 108, our translation).

Emphasizing the knowledge that has been generated in these courses and that helps building a new field project is considered relevant because the conception of knowledge production that supports them combines theory and practice, understanding them as an inseparable continuum in the actions of subjects graduated in the courses, and they are not only able to think critically about the practices they produce, but also essentially able to come back to theories, reformulating them, indeed transforming themselves into praxis subjects.

Therefore, according to Sá and Molina (2010), students who participate in Pronera courses have the intentionality of breaking the positivist scientific logic, as the knowledge demanded in the connection between theory and political action is eminently praxical in nature, imposes a new way to construct knowledge. In this respect, it is necessary to face the existing tension between academic knowledge and the knowledge of rural subjects from an objective perspective on who is producing knowledge in Higher Education, subjects in the courses and in the research, and how they appropriate and reorganize knowledge. This is not about translating other people's thoughts into scientific language, this is not only a matter of acknowledging the importance and respecting, these are different dimensions of construction of the real that go through different languages and practices, these are subjects with different activisms and life perspectives. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the knowledge produced in the lifestyle of rural people and social movement praxis. The clash between society projects requires that workers not only dominate the knowledge of science, but also that they do not abandon other knowledge production references constructed in their own practices and social struggles (SÁ; MOLINA, 2010).

Along the same lines, the analysis of the process of production of knowledge generated in the courses in the Agrarian Sciences field requires the observation of the "phenomenon in its entirety, in its contradictions and in the new elements it announces, in what constitutes its unity and gives it a programmatic character" (SANTOS, 2017, p. 30, our translation).

The research studies aimed to understand how the processes were developed and sustained by a theoretical framework to support a conception of human education linked to productive processes, that is, linked to work processes with a view to an emancipatory rural and development project, although it is known that any and all processes will be subject to the antagonistic contradictions inherent to a system whose interest is limited to the necessary training for production and reproduction of the order of capital (SANTOS, 2017, p. 30).

The research entitled "O campo, entre arame e o arado: contribuições do Pronera-IFMA para o desenvolvimento socioespacial no município de Arame-MA" (The field, between the wire and the plow: PRONERA-IFMA contributions to socio-spatial development in the city of Arame - MA [our translation]) (COSTA, 2017), about a course of the Program, implemented by the Federal Institute of Education,

Science and Technology of Maranhão (IFMA) for 240 young students settled from the state of Maranhão, from Agrarian Reform areas, aimed to identify the main practices and actions adopted by Pronera-IFMA, with the purpose of training them as important subjects in strategies of sustainable development of rural areas.

The research has found strong evidence of how a training process can contribute to a rural project with significant transformations, even though they are always limited, changes with a structuring potential for new practices and new consciousness about the conscious use of the land and the promotion of the autonomy to families, in order to enable new agriculture knowledge, such as the planting of fruits and vegetables in their communities. These changes, made with an agroecological approach, started to positively affect people's lives, especially with regards to the environment and the need to protect and preserve it, promoting family agriculture.

The research entitled "Pronera, educação técnico-profissional e Reforma Agrária Popular: um estudo na perspectiva do projeto formativo vinculado aos processos produtivos dos camponeses" (Pronera, technical-professional education and popular agrarian reform: a study on the perspective of the formative project linked to the productive processes of peasants [our translation]) (SANTOS, 2016) analyzed the results of 6 Technical-Professional Education and Technology in Agroecology Courses offered by the Federal Institute of Paraná (IFPR) for settlers of the Cantuquiriguaçu-PR Territory. It is concluded that a technical peasant base was formed there with a high level of knowledge and organizational capacity that had as a result profound transformations in the settled communities and, consequently, in the economic and social development of the region.

The pedagogical projects of the courses were co-developed with the Education and Production Sector of the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST). The effects were observed in multiple dimensions of life and work organization, such as: agroecological milk co-operative; women-managed bakery co-operative; insertion of co-operatives into governmental programs for institutional purchases, such as *Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos* [Food Acquisition Program] (PAA) and *Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar* [National School Feeding Program] (PNAE), in addition to the strong integration of these processes into the schools achieved in the region. Besides, there was the achievement of a *campus* of the Federal University of Southern Border (UFFS), built within a settlement area in the city of Laranjeiras do Sul.

Projects like these cause tension with the dominant project, especially when created and led by peasant themselves and their organizations, because they act on elements that organize the overcoming of the order of capital based on a "formative project of peasants around a rural project where the very way of organizing work and productive processes form a new order" (SANTOS, 2017, p. 33, our translation).

Vasconcelos (2015) developed her doctoral research entitled "Desafios da educação crítica nas Ciências Agrárias: possibilidades e limites na versão Residência Agrária UFPB" (Challenges of critical education in Agrarian Sciences: possibilities and limits in the UFPB's Agrarian Residence course version [our translation]), on the Graduate Specialization Course in Peasant Family Agriculture and Rural Education at UFPB – Agrarian Residence, seeking the conception of education and the training processes of professionals for working in peasant family agriculture in the region. Among other objectives, the research aimed to analyze the perceptions of former students on the educational processes of the course and their

work in the field, carrying out a total of 16 interviews. All interviewees are working in peasant family agriculture, for NGOs or rural schools, developing work methodologies that acknowledge and value farmers' knowledge. The course contributed to a critical education and reasserted the commitments of educators and technicians to the strengthening of peasant family agriculture, contributing to the development of their territories.

In the doctoral dissertation entitled "Diálogos e aprendizagens na formação em agronomia para assentados" (Dialogues and learnings in agronomy training for settled communities [our translation]), Scalabrin (2011) investigates the Agronomy Course in settled communities' training at the Federal University of Pará, Marabá Campus, by demand and partnership with social movements from the Northern region of the country, with the purpose of understanding learnings (knowledge production) developed in the organization and acquired in the course.

With the participation of 60 students from a territory marked by conflicts over the land, with approximately 80 thousand settled families, the mobilization of social movements towards university was based on the reflection and understanding that it took a long time for technical assistance professionals who came from other regions of the country to understand the biome, climate, hydrography, demands, specificities and reality of the mesoregion, causing tension and conflicts between them and the communities, jeopardizing development projects. The course was challenged to build with peasants a deeper knowledge of a suitable production system for Southeastern Pará.

Zart (2012) investigated the process of interaction of the university with Rural Social Movements and the possibilities of social production of knowledge in the doctoral dissertation "Produção social do conhecimento na experiência do Curso de Agronomia dos Movimentos Sociais do Campo (CAMOSC): interação da Unemat e de movimentos sociais do campo" (Social production of knowledge in the experience of the Agronomy Course of Rural Social Movements (CAMOSC): interaction of Unemat and rural social movements [our translation]). Using references about the concepts of action research and knowledge ecology, Zart investigated the interrelationship and dialogicity between different knowledge (scientific knowledge and knowledge of peasant experience) from the perspective of suitable epistemologies for peasant societal relationships.

The course was implemented to meet the demands from Rural Social Movements (MSC) from Rondônia, Goiás, Distrito Federal, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Tocantins and Minas Gerais, which comprise the cerrado biome, a clearly promising region for farming, vast arable areas, thousands of families in hundreds of Agrarian Reform settlements and an enormous biological diversity. The challenge of the course was the necessary conjunction of socio-economic development combined with environment protection and conservation. Its emphasis on agroecology and solidarity socioeconomics based on the needs brought by MSCs was the object of a long and tense internal process at the University itself.

Among the results of these research studies, it is possible to identify some common structuring elements among them all, which comprise what is referred to as a new mode of knowledge production that is centered around an emancipatory project of rural development, led by peasants according to the struggles and achievements of the Agrarian Reform.

This new mode of knowledge production is based on the principle that peasants bring to the university a load of work experiences with the land and its

management, and, during the academic training process, they could focus on practices with technical ability, developing scientific explanations to better intervene in their reality. The foundation of agroecology, the appreciation of peasant culture integrated into intellectual, technical and scientific development, challenged peasants to develop experiments with a view to consolidate the suitable agroecological scientific-technical matrix to the characteristics of each region. Thus, in the projects, the principle of praxis was materialized, in the intrinsic relationship between work and culture, which are ontological elements for human beings.

2.1 Attempts to destroy Pronera by Bolsonaroism

The results of Pronera show the robustness of a public policy that brings together the wide capillarity and capacity for insertion in the national territory through educational institutions, involving the subjects of Agrarian Reform and popular social organizations historically excluded from the widest spectrum of the educational policy, as the peasants and quilombolas. Such results, however, do not carry the sufficient power so that Pronera does not suffer severe threats to its continuity in the context of the current government.

It is only possible to understand the present context of disruption of Pronera by looking at the recent history to understand how this destructive logic has been demarcating all public policies that dialogue with categories such as law, diversity and social control, structuring concepts of a democratic society. The perspective of analysis here is that of the totality of complex processes and phenomena that make up reality, in order to coherently understand the phenomenon analyzed.

In the period between 1988 (promulgation of the Federal Constitution) and 2016 (media-legal-parliamentary coup), the foundations were founded on which it was possible to reconstruct and weave, albeit contradictorily, a solid network that we call democratic society based on those structuring categories, because all the political processes of the most different societies, including totalitarian ones, also carry equally the category of contradiction in their own nature.

The 2016 coup took office to Vice President Michel Temer (2016-2018), succeeded in 2019 by Jair Messias Bolsonaro, representative of the Brazilian extreme right and whose government plan is to strengthen agribusiness to the detriment of the constitutional right to a policy for Agrarian Reform in Brazil. In this regard, since the Bolsonaro government took office, there has been a dismantling of management instruments, such as the extinction of the Ministry of Agrarian Development and the subordination of Incra to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (Mapa, in Portuguese). The Decree 10.252/2020⁴ profoundly changes the competences of Incra, canceling them in the political formulation in relation to inspection, selection of families for settlements and destination of public lands for Agrarian Reform.

Disassembly and deconstruction are the two terms that summarize the political regime that Brazil has been subjected to since the election of Bolsonaro. Dismantling of policies instituted based on dialogue and consultation that lasted for decades, crossed by legitimate conflicts between the interests of organized civil society, representations of the pole of work and the pole of capital, agents of the State and governments (CARVALHO, 2008).

⁴ Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2019-2022/2020/decreto/D10252.htm. Accessed on: July 1, 2020.

Dismantling of civilizing conquests with the central intention of deconstructing people's social and political rights. Dismantling the institution of the Presidency of the Republic and transforming it into an institution of hatred against the people and their organizations, to divide it and make it manipulable and vulnerable to the action of persecution, fear and terror that are evident in the actions of right-wing groups coordinated by the President himself and his family (MARTINS, 2020, p. 3).

Deconstruction of the legitimacy of the existence of popular organizations, social movements, unions, political parties and the State institutions themselves, such as the National Congress and the Judiciary, from the frenetic hijacking of the country's political agenda by digital means that guide debates around real and unreal battles that are born forged and become real. The Brazilian people are daily invaded by issues arising from this "rationality", and its rapid spread radiates a false power to an idea or a cause that, in fact, they do not have, but forge.

They are real and everyday threats to democracy, which are consolidated with the assumption of an alliance made up of conservatives, neoliberals and the military, with the addition of a relevant fact of Brazilian political history: the crystallization of an extreme right electorate that imposed a devastating defeat of the center and the left in the 2018 elections.

Freitas (2020) names the regime based on this alliance of authoritarian populism. In this, according to the author, "the populist leaders act in a way to overthrow the restrictions on the action of the occupiers of the Executive Power [...] and only they have the capacity to reestablish the security of the 'people', a people that comes down to in their 'tribe' - that is, those who support them". (our translation)

Authoritarian values mixed with populist rhetoric can be seen as a dangerous combination to fuel the cult of fear. Populist rhetoric directs tribal complaints "upwards" against elites, fueling distrust of politicians, whom they consider "corrupt"; from the media, accused of "fake" and judges, seen as "biased", as well as traditional parties "out of reach", attacking the truth and eroding the faith in liberal democracy (NORRIS; INGLEHART, 2019 *apud* FREITAS, 2020). (our translation)

In view of the fact that consolidated studies on the regime instituted by Bolsonaro are not (yet) available, although approximations about its nature are elaborated, the literature of political science and political economy is used for a broad understanding of the phenomenon of Bolsonaroism, once that embraces its political nature, but also its social project and its rationality.

Levitsky and Ziblath (2018, p. 79), when studying a series of countries that have undergone processes of erosion of their democracies, suggest that the democratic rupture does not need a plan, but may result from a sequence of events, such as "an escalation of retaliation between a demagogic leader who does not obey the rules and a threatened political establishment" (our translation). The leader considers his critics as enemies that must be eliminated, which tends to polarize society, "creating an atmosphere of panic, hostility and mutual distrust" (our translation). This is what Brazilian society lives on.

The process of building and consolidating this type of power in Brazil is also in line with the metaphor of a football match, according to Levitsky and Ziblath (2018, p. 81). "Potential officials have to take at least some of the stars of the opposing team out of the game and rewrite the rules of the game for their benefit, inverting the field

and turning the game around against their opponents" (our translation). Here is an adequate illustration of what happened in Brazil with the Lava Jato (Car Wash) phenomenon and the consequent condemnation and ineligibility of Lula, excluding him from the 2018 electoral championship.

The authoritarian escalation of the current Brazilian regime is related to an economic rationality that, as analyzed by Freitas (2020), includes the liberal component of the current power alliance, which is why it is sustained. Not classical liberalism, but neoliberalism, which is necessary to understand, as it is not a matter of simple continuity of the former.

For Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 16-17),

[...] neoliberal rationality has as its main characteristic the generalization of competition as a norm of conduct and the company as a model of subjectivity [...] imposes on each one of us that we live in a universe of generalized competition, [...] orders social relations according to the market model, obliges to justify increasingly deep inequalities, changes even the individual, who is urged to conceive himself and behave like a company. (our translation)

According to the authors, this is a system of norms that "today are deeply inscribed in government practices, institutional policies and management styles" (p. 30) (our translation), which can be inferred from the practices of the current government in relation to educational policies in this case.

The dismantling and deconstruction of policies to eliminate social and political rights of the people are manifested in the current disruption of Pronera. Its nature and its participatory management model directly involving the subjects of the Agrarian Reform Program are proving to be a contradiction from the point of view of the new system of rules instituted, and should, therefore, be eliminated. If not eliminated, reduced to the maximum in its objective operational conditions.

One of the first measures of the current government was the revocation, through Decree No. 9.759/2019⁵, of all ordinances that instituted commissions, councils and other mechanisms for the participation of society in government bodies. By this Decree, the Pronera National Pedagogical Commission was extinguished, a decision-making body on projects to be supported by the Program and which brought together educational institutions, social and union movements from the countryside and Incra.

Decree 10.252/2020⁶, which altered Incra's structure, extinguished the General Coordination of Rural Education, Pronera's management body. It ignored that the Program, in its 20 years of existence, was instituted in the legal system of the Brazilian State by an ordinary law approved by the National Congress and by Presidential Decree 7.352/2010⁷, which instituted the National Policy for Rural Education and the National Education Program in Agrarian Reform.

⁵ Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2019-2022/2019/Decreto/D9759.htm. Accessed on: June 14, 2020.

⁶ Available at: <http://www.in.gov.br/en/web/dou/-/decreto-n-10.252-de-20-de-fevereiro-de-2020-244585036>. Accessed on: June 14, 2020.

⁷ Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/CCIVIL_03/_Ato2007-2010/2010/Decreto/D7352.htm. Accessed on: June 14, 2020.

A powerful mobilization coordinated by the National Forum of Rural Education (FONEC), with the support of parliamentarians and the Federal Prosecutor for Citizens' Rights, of the Federal Public Ministry, imposed a retreat from the government. The latter published a new decree, reinserting Pronera in the Incra regimental structure, but lowering it to a lower level, which brings together the residues of settlement development policies and the inclusion of peasant populations in the country's social and political life, such as technical assistance, agroecology and documentation programs of rural workers.

In addition to the dismantling within the state structure, another strategy that has been used by Bolsonaroism to destroy Pronera and what it means in terms of democratization of the right to education for peasants and quilombolas has been the strangulation of the Program due to the lack of public funds that guarantee its continuity. Since financing is a central dimension of the existence itself and, at the same time, of the analysis of a public policy, it is considered extremely relevant to recompose the Pronera's financing history so far, to have more elements of analysis of the consequences of Bolsonaroism on such a policy.

2.2 Financing the National Agrarian Reform Education Program

In terms of financing, it is necessary to highlight and reinforce that Pronera was born and built from the demands of the people of the countryside, against neoliberal compensatory policies, with a specific budget, that is, not linked to the mandatory 18% of resulting revenue of taxes, to be applied by the Union in the Maintenance and Development of Education, as recommended by art. 212 of the Federal Constitution of 1988 (BRASIL, 1988).

The public funds obtained for the execution of Pronera are part of the movements' struggles to make public policies that contribute to the materialization of the Brazilian field in terms of the Agrarian Question paradigm (FERNANDES, 2003, p. 337), policies aimed at the development of territories peasants in an autonomous perspective. Thus, the struggles to carry them out, from the construction of the Program's pedagogical thinking to the use of financial resources in its projects, are permeated by processes of counter-hegemonic disputes in the Brazilian education scenario.

To highlight these disputes, this section focuses on analyzes in relation to Brazilian Higher Education, which has been undergoing a growing privatization process in the last 25 years, since the administration of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2003), with the "neoliberal model" conceptualized by Sader (2008) as the phase of capitalism in which "everything is sold, everything is bought, everything has a price" (our translation). The Education sector suffered strong consequences from the economic reform to adjust to this model, whose actions are described in the Master Plan for the Reform of the State Apparatus⁸, 1995, a document that recorded the various proposals for changes understood by Bresser-Pereira, reducing the State's responsibility to promote economic and social development to just regulate these actions.

In the case of Brazilian Higher Education, just look at the statistical data to see the impact of privatizations on the expansion of this level of education in the last 25

⁸ Available at: <http://www.bresserpereira.org.br/documents/mare/planodiretor/planodiretor.pdf>. Accessed on: June 14, 2020.

years. Brazil jumped from 690,450 enrollments in the public sector and 970,584 in the private sector in 1994 to 2,077,481 in the public sector and 6,373,274 in private institutions in 2018. It is an exponential growth of more than 600% for the private sector, which currently, according to Mancebo (2019), it concentrates more than 75% of the number of enrollments in Higher Education. Silva Júnior and Sguissardi (2011) point out that, in a society with the model of capitalist development, producer of a high degree of inequality, the concentration of service offerings in the private sector further increases inequalities. Brazil, throughout its recent history, has denied access, massification and universalization of Higher Education, especially for the population in the middle and low income brackets.

In his doctoral thesis, Kuhn (2015, p. 72) presents an analysis of Pronera as a public policy, in which budget data from 2001 to 2011 indicated low execution in view of the real needs of the Program. However, when analyzing these data, even if it does not meet the expectations of the National Agrarian Reform Plan prepared for the Lula government, it is essential to highlight that it is these first 10 years that initiate and structure all policies that foster Rural Education.

Following on from that historical series of the Program budget, data related to Pronera financing in the last 9 years have been collected for this article. The table below shows the estimated amounts and those actually paid to Pronera in the Annual Budget Law (LOA) for the years 2010 to 2019.

Table - Amounts provided in LOA and actually paid to Pronera (2010-2019)

Year	Law + authorized budget credit (R\$)	Paid (R\$)
2010	28,154,912	8,833,323
2011	31,000,000	8,174,538
2013	30,600,000	16,695,280
2014	34,500,000	17,941,377
2015	32,550,000	11,809,261
2016	27,027,196	13,128,960
2017	14,800,000	5,727,838
2018	19,675,812	4,450,627
2019	8,350,000	2,677,575

Source: Available at: <https://www2.camara.leg.br/orcamento-da-uniao/leis-orcamentarias/loa>.

As you can see, in the column "law + authorized budget credit", in the period from 2011 to 2016, during the Dilma Rousseff government, the largest budgets for Pronera's actions were authorized, being also the period in which the budget was "paid", that is, paid in the highest proportion. In 2017, right after the coup, this authorized budget fell by almost half, from R\$27,027,196.00 to R\$14,800,000.00, with only R\$5,727,838.00 being executed, that is, 39% of what had been authorized.

In 2018, the authorization was R\$19,675,812.00, but the amount actually paid was only R\$4,450,627.00. Finally, in 2019 this authorization was cut by more than 60% and only R\$2,677,575.00 was paid.

The budget execution of Pronera in the last 9 years reveals a sharp drop in investments, which translated into a significant pause on the offer of new courses and great difficulty in the functioning of those that were being executed, further intensifying the obstacles to the reduction of social and regional inequalities of Brazilian Education. The country has wealth to promote this leap, but with enormous challenges to think about the quality of education (AMARAL, 2010), which causes a deep concern, since investment in this area is fundamental. When one looks at this perspective in the field of Rural Education, one realizes that the objective of the current government is to make it infeasible, not only by reducing its space and functioning in the public machinery, but above all by the scarcity of public funds destined to it.

Final considerations

According to data from Incra, in 2020 Pronera has 40 courses underway, with 2,644 students: 34 have higher education, of which 29 are graduations and 5 are specializations. The resources necessary for the maintenance of the courses that are in progress for the current year are R\$11,391,660.07, but the RDA for Incra is only R\$2,942,131.00, which imposes a deficit of Pronera on R\$8,449,529.07. There is a clear intention to financially strangle universities that challenge themselves to maintain partnerships with social movements, creating immense difficulties so that they can follow the offer of these training processes.

The coordinators of these courses at universities, in partnership with the social and union movements, have been bravely facing the situation, searching for all possible alternatives, through partnerships with other courses, with departments and faculties of the HEIs, so that the courses are not totally interrupted. Parliamentary amendments have also been used to seek continuity in the financing of classes in progress. The partner movements are looking for alternatives to jointly guarantee the accommodation and meals of the students, assuming the commitment of not interrupting the continuity of graduations, even without resources. The action of the movements indicates the clarity they have of the importance of maintaining partnerships with universities and of continuing to stick to their project of guaranteeing access to scientific knowledge and Higher Education as necessary tools for the construction of the peasant territorial project.

The reading of theses and dissertations, both in the Educators Training and in Agrarian Sciences, explains two differentials that have had a significant influence on the modes of knowledge production carried out by the Pronera courses in Higher Education. The first concerns the subjects who participate in it: they are peasants who arrive at the university with previous experiences of struggle and social organization, integrated with the training processes of construction of another rural project, linked to the very struggle for Agrarian Reform and for transformation of society. The second differential is the formation processes of these higher education courses, carried out through pedagogical alternation, integrating university time and community time, with the potential to bring the contradictions and concrete challenges experienced by students to the learning processes carried out in the courses. The theses and dissertations show the potential to bring the reality and materiality experienced by the students of Pronera to the knowledge production

processes that develop in the courses, expanding such processes, requiring their connection with the reality experienced in each territory, community and school by peasant subjects in training.

The common characteristics of the courses, linked to the peasant subjects who participate in them and their previous experiences of insertion in processes of collective struggles for social transformation, impact the processes of production of scientific knowledge that they develop, as they end up privileging the apprehension of the materiality of real life from a relational perspective. This avoids a reading of the reality determined by structures without a subject or fragmented into multiple agents in disconnected action. In addition, in many cases these relationships express fundamental theoretical and historical determinations in the search for the construction of the totality placed as the horizon of the knowledge production process developed in the courses linked to Pronera.

According to Molina *et al.* (2017), this conception of knowledge production, which favors relational readings for the construction of totality, allows us both to identify the fundamental determinations that explain it and to capture its contradictory movement as a general trend that deepens the understanding of each of these constituent relationships. In this way, the totality does not appear as a homogenizing synthesis, but as the articulating expression of a heterogeneity of processes and of subjects that compose and transform it permanently. Therefore, it reinforces the possibility that the courses can produce knowledge for the critical interpretation of contemporary reality, especially the training processes in the field, both the educational and those linked to the very material production of life, being able, through these processes, to simultaneously recognize and politically strengthen subjects capable of transforming this same reality.

Leher (2015, p. 5) highlights that social struggles against the effects of agribusiness and its corresponding energy matrix are giving national and international visibility to the problems that, because they happen in certain territories, are thought of by relativistic and positivist approaches as local and punctual problems. He states that the "fine dialectic between the particular and the general, between the whole and the part, is revitalized by social struggles". The theses and dissertations read confirm Leher's hypothesis, because it is exactly the local issues that affirm in practice and theoretical production the struggles against agribusiness and the brutal deterritorialization processes that its expansion in different forms produces in agribusiness, in mineral business, in hydribusiness, among others.

In a book released in 2019, Leher reaffirms these issues:

The social function of universities in contexts favorable to good living, democracy, economic and social development in favor of the dignity of work and social equality requires the interconnection between basic science, applied science, technology and research and development. [...] it is necessary to differentiate positive and virtuous interactions - agriculture, health, drugs, environment, education, energy - in which research on production processes and the creation of social goods and rights in favor of life govern the complex interactions of universities with the material production of life of those interactions that exacerbate the commercialization and commodification of knowledge in favor of expropriations, exploitation and the conversion of nature into businesses aimed at the destructive accumulation of capital (2019, 102). (our translation)

The organization and social struggle of peasants for access, guarantee of permanence and completion of Higher Education materialized by Pronera demonstrate that they are carriers of a social project and social and cultural development for the field based on the principles of agroecology and food sovereignty, opposing to the logic of the market focused on the agribusiness model. The actions of Bolsonaroism in order to prevent the realization of such courses, trying to make their execution unfeasible by blocking access to public funds will bring serious consequences to the peasantry, which will face even more difficulties to guarantee their right to education, but will also bring consequences to public universities, which will lose a lot with the end of these rich partnerships, letting go with them an important part of the resistance to "knowledge-merchandise" and the maintenance of the social function of public universities and their historical role in the construction of a sovereign and autonomous nation project.

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