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Faleiro, Wender; Farias, Magno Nunes
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Inclusion of peasant women in university: among dreams, challenges and struggles

Wender Faleiro^I
Magno Nunes Farias^I

Abstract

Education in the countryside emerges from social movements, and seeks to provide, in addition to specific and qualified training for rural schools, the inclusion of peasants in higher education. Thus, it has an affirmative action character, since it aims to reduce the historical inequality of access to education by rural people. On this study, the focus is on the rural women entering the first group (2014) of the teaching degree in rural education (LEdoC) of the Federal University of Goiás, Catalão Unit (UFG-RC), aiming to analyze whether the entry of these women into higher education contributed to the transformation and overcoming of patriarchal social relations. The research is qualitative, and 24 questionnaires were run. The profile of the women is above 30 years old, living in rural areas or rural towns, married, Afro- descendant or white, and mothers. Their insertion in LEdoC has caused great impacts on their lives and the consolidation of their identities, qualifying them and empowering them as women capable of transforming the patriarchal relations of the countryside. The process of insertion in the teaching degree, as well as making these women play other social roles and begin to recognize themselves as agents, from the appreciation of their knowledge and their ways of life, also contributes to the transformation of a cultural mark (the patriarchy) that plagues peasant culture. Therefore, there is a process of cultural appreciation in a critical way, breaking relations of domination, inferiority and subordination of these women.

Keywords

Popular education - Countryside education - Gender - Empowerment.

I- Universidade Federal de Goiás, Catalão,
GO, Brasil.
Contacts: wender.faleiro@gmail.com;
magnonfarias@hotmail.com

Inclusão de mulheres camponesas na universidade: entre sonhos, desafios e lutas

Wender Faleiro^I

Magno Nunes Farias^I

Resumo

A educação do campo surge a partir dos movimentos sociais, e busca propiciar, além de uma formação específica e qualificada para as escolas rurais, a inclusão de camponeses na educação superior. Assim, possui caráter de ação afirmativa, pois objetiva diminuir a desigualdade histórica de acesso à educação dos povos do campo. No presente estudo, volta-se o olhar às mulheres do campo, ingressantes na primeira turma (2014) de licenciatura em educação do campo (LEdoC) da Universidade Federal de Goiás, Regional Catalão (UFG-RC), com o objetivo de analisar se o ingresso dessas mulheres no ensino superior contribuiu para a transformação e superação das relações sociais patriarcais. A pesquisa é qualitativa, e foram aplicados 24 questionários. O perfil das mulheres é de idade superior a 30 anos, moradoras da zona rural ou municípios rurais, casadas, afrodescendentes ou brancas, e com filhos. A inserção na LEdoC causou grandes impactos na vida dessas mulheres e na consolidação de suas identidades, qualificando-as e empoderando-as como mulheres capazes de transformar as relações patriarcais do campo. O processo de inserção na licenciatura, ao mesmo tempo em que faz com que essas mulheres tomassem outros papéis sociais e comesçassem a se reconhecer com sujeitos, a partir da valorização dos seus saberes e de seus modos de vida, também contribui para a transformação de uma marca cultural (o patriarcado) que assola a cultura camponesa. Assim, há um processo de valorização cultural de forma crítica, rompendo relações de dominação, inferiorização e subordinação dessas mulheres.

Palavras-chave

Educação popular – Educação do Campo – Gênero – Empoderamento.

^I– Universidade Federal de Goiás, Catalão, GO, Brasil.
Contatos: wender.faleiro@gmail.com;
magnonfarias@hotmail.com

Introduction

Rural education comes from social movements, the main one being the Landless Workers Movement (MST), which, since the 1980s, has been pressing the state to offer quality education to rural people, that is, education that makes sense and dialogues with peasant ways of life, and whose principle is the struggle for the land of the countryside workers, opposing agribusiness and capitalist ideology. Countryside education has as its base the “democratization of access to knowledge, recognizing its strategic importance in the improvement of agents capable of building new popular alternatives for the country’s development” (Caldart, 2008: 82). Thus, it is closely linked to the countryside social movements and the struggle and resistance for access and production of knowledge, education and culture, developing a counter-hegemonic movement that destabilizes dominant ideologies that make rural people inferior.

In this context, the countryside education teaching degree (LEdoC) is created from Pro- countryside (Program of Support to Countryside Education Teaching Degrees), in order to graduate teachers in higher education to work in rural schools, respecting their ways of life, culture and struggles, specifically to act in the school and in the pedagogical work management of high schools and of the last years of elementary schools.

LEdoCs are structured in face-to-face steps, from the alternation regime (community time university time). This regime helps students not to need to leave the countryside to start university, strengthening the maintenance and appreciation of the cultural, identity, social and class ties of rural people. The curricular organization is distributed from multidisciplinary logic, based on four areas of knowledge: arts, literature and languages; Human and social sciences; Nature sciences; Mathematics, and agrarian sciences, which must be articulated in an interdisciplinary perspective,

overcoming the fragmented logic of knowledge production. In addition, LEdoC training takes place by area of knowledge, enabling a larger and broader domain of a given area, from an interdisciplinary conception, to deal with the multiple knowledge of the countryside (MOLINA, 2015; ANTUNES-ROCHA; DINIZ, OLIVEIRA, 2011). Thus, it is aimed

[...] to promote and cultivate a specific training process that would provide the future educators with solid theoretical knowledge that would provide the mastery of the contents of the area of qualification for which such teacher is entitled, however, extremely articulated to the domain of knowledge about the logic of the school’s functioning and social function and the relationships it establishes with the community around it (MOLINA, 2015, page 153).

Therefore, it aims to graduate rural educators capable of understanding the social, cultural and economic contradictions experienced by rural agents, with the potential to develop educational practices that empower these agents in overcoming those contradictions. Thus, there is a training of educators committed to the countryside development project, which values their conditions and ways of life, promotes peasant family agriculture, and causes tension to the hegemonic agribusiness model for the countryside. Hence “the meaning of the expansion of the offer of Countryside Education Teaching Degrees cannot be understood separately from the intense conflicts surrounding the model of hegemonic development in the countryside nowadays” (MOLINA, 2015, page 75).

Moreover, the teaching degree facilitates the entry of peasants into higher education, with the use of differentiated selective processes, with specific criteria, such as: a) being a teacher of rural schools without higher education; b) preferably residing in the countryside; c)

being a teacher, former student or employee of Alternation Centers or other experiences related to countryside education; d) being a professional who works in programs focused on the countryside; e) being a young or adult person who acts in countryside activities; f) being interested in acting in the education of rural people. Thus, the LEdoC has an affirmative action character in contributing to the transformation of the reality of the countryside and to the emancipation of men and women (peasants, settlers, river bankers, wage earners, traditional populations) who have secularly been oppressed.

Therefore, this study focuses on peasant women, students of the LEdoC of the Federal University of Goiás – Catalão Unit, in order to verify and analyze how their insertion in the teaching degree contributed to changes in their personal, family and social life, and in the transformation and overcoming of patriarchal social relations.

Methodology

It is a qualitative research, as this approach allows the investigation and understanding of the meanings that a given collective attributes to a social and human process (CRESWELL, 2010). A structured questionnaire was used with the purpose of retrieving in these women the aspects that would make it possible to reach the aims of this study.

The questionnaire was run to 24 students from the first group of the LEdoC of the Federal University of Goiás / Catalão Unit (UFG-RG), who enrolled in the first semester of 2014. The teaching degree in such institution was created from the Pro-countryside official notice, selective process number 2/2012 - SESU / SETEC / SECADI / MEC, and was approved by MEC / Secadi, through official order number 72, dated 21st December, 2012 from Secadi, and published in the Official Gazette edition number 249, dated 27th December, 2012.

Before running the questionnaire, all the students were clarified about the aims of the

survey and the use of the questionnaire for the research. The questionnaire was run to all those who, in a free and enlightened way, agreed to answer it. The questionnaire consisted of initial questions (age, residence place, race/color, marital status and number of children), which were aimed to verify the profile of these students, followed by the main question: What types of changes has your insertion in the countryside education teaching degree brought you as a student, in your relationship with your family, your colleagues, the society or as a person in general? All participants were kept anonymous, hence the names used are fictitious. All the ethical principles were respected in the accomplishment of this study.

Development

Before presenting the results, a brief discussion about peasant culture and patriarchy will be made, given that it will be important in discussing and understanding the results. Culture is a polysemous and dynamic concept, Tardin (2012) conceives culture as all production developed in the relationship processes among agents, and between them and the environment that surrounds them (nature), which ends up marking ways of life that characterize social groups. The author describes that this dynamic movement occurs in the act of the agents of transforming and (re-)transforming nature, in which women and men end up transforming themselves (collectively and individually), from experiences and modes of expressing in art, in their modes of production, ways of speaking, ideologies, modes of relation, customs, habits, religion, among others, always in a stream of collectivity, since it is not possible to develop individually. Many facets that mark this culture are fruit of cultural aspects constituted by the ancestors and acquired by present generations, from new perceptions. Thus, there is a change between present and future, which marks the (re-)creation of ancestral cultures according to contemporary social modifications (CRUZ; ARAÚJO; COSTA, 2015).

In the countryside a peasant culture is constituted, characterized by a diversity of social agents and cultural expressions, marked by modes of relation with nature, based on community and family relationships. Therefore, the agents become subjects, materially and spiritually, in a dynamic of humanization of nature and of themselves, in communion with ecosystems. Some aspects that characterize these peoples are: daily relations with nature (of preservation, sustainability and care), cooperation, family, community (mutual aid of neighbors) and territorial relations, practices, work, ways of speaking, modes of production (peasant agriculture), affective practices, gastronomy, spirituality, aesthetics, empirical knowledge, use of therapeutic resources, beliefs, traditional cultural expressions, relationship with social movements, struggle (for land, knowledge and other fundamental rights) and resistance (to the process of expropriation and exploitation of land and agents). All these movements mark and characterize the countryside life and its multiple ways of being and living in that territory, emphasizing that each community has its own particularities (TARDIN, 2012).

To that extent, the characteristic pointed out by Tardin (2012) will be addressed here, which conceives this culture with a *strong patriarchal predominance*. The concept of patriarchy arises historically to characterize two models of organization: a family one, in which the father is characterized as head of the family and, thus, has power over all the other members who constitute the family nucleus; And another one, in which the owner of large agricultural estates had power over all the agents living in his property. However, with the emergence of the feminist movement, this concept is established from a new angle, being used specifically “to denominate the unequal relations of domination of men over women” (ALMEIDA, 2010, page 22).

Patriarchy is a mode of organization of social relations whose logic of division of labor between men and women directs what each

gender must and can do, giving them specific spaces and activities, generally considered natural. These attributions end up affirming “social roles under frames of social functions and positions” (ALMEIDA, 2010, page 23). These relations are often extremely naturalized, especially in the contemporary world, which ends up causing this phenomenon to become invisible. Beauvoir (1970: 74) makes it easier to understand the emergence of those relations:

With the discovery of copper, tin, bronze, iron, with the appearance of the plow, agriculture extends its dominions. Intensive work is required to clear forests, to make the fields productive. Men, then, resort to the service of other men who are reduced to slavery. Private property appears; Lords of the slaves and of the land, men also become owners of the women. That is “the great historical defeat of the female.” It is explained by the disorder that has occurred in the division of labor as a result of the invention of new instruments.

The emergence of patriarchal relations is, then, related to a complex process between the emergence of private property and the relation of domination of men to property, slaves, land and women. In this context, social relations are redefined, and this structure reforms an appreciation of male labor and the disqualification of female labor, leading to inferior relations of women. They cease to be the agent who takes possession of family property, and this ends up being passed down from the parents to the male children: “It is the appearance of the patriarchal family based on private property. In this family the women are oppressed. Men, reigning with sovereignty” (BEAUVOIR, 1970, page 75).

Some authors criticize the use of the term in recent centuries, since women have been gaining rights (these authors conceive of patriarchy as a system in which women have no rights), thus justifying that what shapes

relationships is male chauvinism rather than patriarchy (BARBIERE, 1993 *apud* ALMEIDA, 2010). However, it is understood here that patriarchy remains in current contexts. Even with the achievements of women's rights in the democratic rule of law, it remains in different forms; The autonomy given to women was not enough to exterminate patriarchal relations. Particularly in the countryside, these relations have another form, since rural women have historically been excluded from social rights, what makes patriarchy even more intense in these relations. Cinelli and Jahn (2011) point out that, even living in a modern society, peasant women still do not have access to fundamental rights for the consolidation of a decent life. From this perspective, it is inferred that this aspect contributes to the rooting of a system of patriarchal-based relations, since the State itself does not yet provide these women with the possibilities for greater autonomy in their social relations.

Thus, peasants live in a society that shapes social beings and is marked by unequal and patriarchal power relations. They are shaped through their interaction with the environment, but they present different characteristics according to the cultural differences (CINELLI; JAHN, 2011, page 88).

Patriarchy in the countryside comes from those processes that conceive these relations of inequality in a socially hegemonic way. It is settled in the countryside in the same perverse way that plagues society as a whole, in male supremacy, in family relationships, and in its representation in public places. Its impact is the division of labor based on gender, which ends up giving women harder journeys, since women are responsible for caring for the family, maintaining the domestic setting (as central activities of their existence) and acting in agricultural production. It demands skills and multiple knowledge from women, which are "seen as obligations of a good woman and as a help to her husband" (TARDIN,

2012, page 184). Hence, there is delegation of functions to women, which is based on sexist and patriarchal aspects and ends up being stated as something natural. These functions, while featuring a good woman, are seen only as an aid, thus marking the devaluation of the activities performed by women. Therefore, there is an oppressive and repressive context of their dignity and of the appreciation of their actions, that is, their existence as a social agent does not have the recognition that is really appropriate, neither in family context nor in society in general.

This patriarchal relationship has manifestations in several spheres of the countryside, in episodes of psychological, moral and physical violence, establishing relations of domination and physical and subjective inferiority of peasant women. And in the organization of work itself, which has less participation of women in leading positions, as in management and organization of work, as well as in the division of the financial benefits of the work that has been performed (TARDIN, 2012). Thus, it is emphasized that in patriarchy

Through the role established by gender relations, women are responsible for the social reproduction of the group, such as: caring for the house, the children, and the husband. Regarding the work performed by them outside the domestic unit, they are seen only in activities considered as "help" (OLIVEIRA et al., 2007, page 04).

Women in the countryside struggle and resist against these paths. Its greatest example is the Peasant Women's Movement (MMC), in which

[...] women are reasoning about patriarchal culture as one of the "truths" instituted in society, which places women as incapable and inferior. Understanding this culture as constructed and unnatural, they assert that it can be deconstructed. Then, the militants begin to question the roles assigned to

men and women, [...] all in opposition to patriarchy (CINELLI, JAHN, 2011, page 89).

The MMC conceives its struggle against capitalism and patriarchy by fighting for a society with equal rights. Thus, its main struggles develop from four dimensions, according to the Movement of Peasant Women (MMC, 2016):

1) *Popular project of peasant agriculture*: a struggle for public policies that make it possible to exist in the countryside, with the production of healthy food, preservation of biodiversity and the environment, sustainable use of resources, appreciation of women's work and earnings, use of science for the interests of peasantry, changes in social relations (in the search for respect for the planet), respect for (ethnic-racial, gender, cultural and ecological) diversity, appreciation of art and culture, recognition of popular knowledge and guarantee of peasant autonomy in the production of labor and in the conception of their ways of life;

2) *Expansion of human rights*: for guaranteeing the right to public and universal social security, public health, documentation, access to public, transformable and emancipatory education, which encourages popular knowledge (at all levels, as well as access to public university), guarantee of housing, electrical energy and sanitation, social assistance, policies to combat violence against women, policies for the appreciation of peasant agriculture;

3) *Popular project for Brazil*: this aspect places the MMC in the struggle for national sovereignty and preservation of Brazilian biodiversity, based on the appreciation of Brazilian culture lifestyles, in search of autonomy for women and other Brazilian agents, from a social project on a popular basis. Thus, it is against policies designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), GMOs, discrimination and racism;

4) *Political participation of women in society*: to struggle for the participation

and autonomy of women in decision-making contexts on issues related to production, heritage, political and community relations, in order to direct the development of the countryside from a popular project. Moreover, to struggle against the commercial exploration of the female body, to end sexual and domestic violence.

Therefore, it is assumed that the MMC is established as a societal project based on the protagonist role of rural women, conceiving them as members of the working class in a feminist, class, popular and socialist perspective. Affirming "the struggle of women for equal rights and the end of any way of violence, oppression and exploitation practiced against women and the working class" (MMC, 2016, no page). This movement fights against the powers of patriarchy, capitalism, the state, landowners, family members, even against some rural movements, which often try to make women's organization not legitimate. It is understood that these oppressive relations are, thus, interconnected and strengthen the patriarchal structure, and it is necessary to fight against all these fronts that are manifested in several macro- and micro-social contexts.

Getting to know the students of the LEdoC of the UFG-RC

The outcomes of this study show that among 100% (24) of the students who participated in the research, 4.16% (1) were aged between 60 and 70 years old; 16.66% (4) between 50 and 60 years old; 25% (6) between 40 and 50 years old; 25% (6) between 20 and 30 years old; And the majority, 29.16% (7), between 30 and 40 years old. These data indicate that most of the women who attend the LEdoC in the UFG-RC are over 30 years old, that is, they show that the students enter higher education older than usual, and that the affirmative policy has managed to achieve its objective, since the profile of students entering this teaching degree is of teachers who have already taught in rural schools, peasants, family's mothers, etc.

Most of the students live in the municipalities near the university or in the rural area of Catalão - GO, with 58.22% (14) residing in Catalão and 37.5% (9) in small municipalities, such as Anhanguera, Campo Alegre, Goiandira and Ipameri. Thus, over half of the students live in rural areas or in rural municipalities. The concept of rural municipalities is used for municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants, and their residents are considered countryside agents, because they live intensely with the influences of the countryside (VEIGA, 2003). Hence, considering that Anhanguera has 1,020 inhabitants, Campo Alegre, 6,060, and Goiandira, 5,265 (IBGE, 2010), the residents of these municipalities are considered agents of the countryside. Therefore, the LEdoC is considered to have 58.33% of rural agents, coming from rural areas or from rural municipalities. Thus, it is concluded that the LEdoC is managing to reach women from the countryside, increasing their potential to act in their own contexts as countryside educators.

Regarding skin color, it was verified that 50% (12) of the students are white, and 50% (12), Afro-descendants (41.66% mixed-black and 8.33% black), for, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, mixed-black and black are Afro-descendants. Thus, an interesting singularity is found in the analyzed LEdoC, based on a racial equality. This contrasts with the net enrollment rate in higher education adjusted by skin color at the national level, which points out that in 2013, between the ages of 18 and 24, 29.4% of white/yellow people had access to higher education, whereas only 12.9% of Afro-descendants had access to this level of schooling, resulting in racial inequality at the national level (BRAZIL, 2015). Therefore, the addressed LEdoC is overcoming that inequality.

It was found that 37.5% (9) of the women are single and live with their parents, with children or alone; The vast majority, 62.5% (15), are married and live with a husband or spouse. Out the total, 87.5% (21) have children, and only

12.5% (3) do not. Thus, it is verified that the majority of the women who attend this teaching degree are married and have children. It may be related to the older-than-usual age, which also contributes to the establishment of a family, either by will or by the various social pressures that women suffer to be a mother and to marry, being related to other social and subjective factors. It may also be considered that these women have chosen, or had to choose, to consider the family constitution as a priority, leaving university admission as a long-term achievement, since the life course of rural woman carries Patriarchal values, which determinate that marriage, children and the maintenance of domestic life are synonymous with the possibility of having a good life or being a good woman (TARDIN, 2012; MELO, 2003).

Therefore, the profile of the LEdoC women is characterized by: being over 30 years old, countryside or rural municipalities dwellers, married, Afro-descendant or white and with children. This profile can be explained by the difficulties in the life paths of these peasant women, as well as by social impositions, such as patriarchy, that mark the culture of the countryside. These difficulties and impositions are related to issues such as: early marriage; The absence of public policies in the countryside that will make it possible for other women to live their lives; The very cultural and social imposition of a patriarchal family model founded on the relationship of subordination of women to male power; And the consolidation of gender roles, which makes it impossible for women to leave the domestic setting and explore other social roles, such as the one of being university students, because it removes the autonomy of women over their own existence and their roles (MELO, 2003; OLIVEIRA et al., 2007).

Among dreams, challenges and struggles

One of the main points in the responses of (future) female teachers in the countryside is the

fact that starting university is the fulfillment of a dream, as it is said in Maria's and Rosa's speeches:

I am very happy and my family is giving me the greatest support, thank God, for I can do what I have always dreamed of. (Maria).

Being in a college is the achievement of an old dream, being part of an institution of higher education is something important for my life, and for my family. I hope to help many people throughout my career as a teacher. (Rosa).

Historically, access to university has been denied to popular classes, such as the population of the countryside, since the European Middle Age that kind of institution has been working to produce a high culture, from the development of a domination-based knowledge, aiming to educate the elite as its function throughout the twentieth century in Brazil. However, since the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, with the process of re-democratization of the country and the strengthening of the Social Movements of the Countryside, there has been a movement of social and political demand for the democratization of access to university as a society's conquest, giving the rural classes the possibility of starting this level of education. The LEdoC is the result of this movement of struggle and state tensioning (SANTOS, 2006). Thus, the possibility of these women achieving this dream starts, lately, what had also been made unfeasible by patriarchal relations, which ruptures with their autonomy to explore other possibilities of life. It is clear, then, that being admitted to a university may be a possibility for these women to recreate their lives, having the autonomy to leave their homes and to have access to higher education, achieving a dream (MMC, 2016).

Despite advances in university access, the 2014-2024 National Education Plan shows that

this is still insufficient. The gross enrollment rate at university by location shows an advance from 21.7% in 2004 to 33.5% in 2013 in urban areas. In rural areas, these advances were lower: from 3% in 2004 to 10.9% in 2013. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify policies on access to education by rural people at all levels, so that they have the possibility of reaching higher education, since the supply of this type of education is still kept in great disparity when compared to the supply in urban settings (BRAZIL, 2015). This issue is not exposed by the plan through a gender clipping, but it is possible to infer that it affects peasant women, making it impossible for them to advance in the schooling process.

An important aspect refers to the impact of the admission to the teaching degree on students' self-esteem, which makes them more confident to place themselves in social relations, as it is seen in Ana's and Roberta's statements:

This course has brought my self-esteem back, even with all the difficulties I am facing. (Ana).

I have become a better and more reliable person. (Roberta).

Throughout the process of constitution of women as agents, their inferiority is built, founded by the patriarchy and the system of relations that it establishes, which is based on the hierarchies and power relations that historically place women as the great agents of the problem in the world. This leads to "decrease in all meanings: suffering and naturalizing ways of violence to the extent of not noticing them; legitimizing spaces of power, work and differentiated tasks for men and women; being denied the fundamental rights of the human being" (CONTE, 2008, page 1).

In addition to this process of inferiority, rural women are also tensioned by the processes that undermine their cultures, knowledge and ways of life. This is due to the establishment

of a knowledge-power pattern based on an economic, political and cultural subordination and domination that places the countryside as inferior, makes illegitimate its identities and historical pathways to the detriment of the urban, and denies its human condition. This way of thinking of the countryside considers its agents as uncritical, irrational, depoliticized and unconscious for not sharing values of the dominant urban and capitalist class (ARROYO, 2009). Thus, patriarchy and making rural culture inferior lead to processes that put peasant women aside, in a culture of obedience and subordination, both to men and to the very system that makes their existence illegitimate (which also has patriarchal basis). Thus, they are surrounded by many factors that prevent the construction and strengthening of their self-esteem.

Conte (2008) states that self-esteem is linked to the relationships and social roles among agents, as well as to their relationships with the context they are experiencing. Hence, the admission to the LEdoC may enable these women to overcome patterns of domination, either by patriarchy or by their peasant origins, since this teaching degree is established based on the appreciation of these women, developing their potential as agents of social transformation and, thus, valuing their knowledge and ways of life. Moreover, they leave the role of being invisible and establish new relations of respect and right, reestablishing an individual and collective self-esteem, so that they begin to look at themselves from a new perspective, acknowledging their potential *to be more*¹.

This fact is related to Vanda's narrative, who says that the process of expanding knowledge about her own environment generates an empowerment to express herself better in groups of society.

The changes were fundamental to expand my knowledge about the environment in

which I live, thus being able to [...] express myself better in groups of society. (Vanda).

It may be considered that the processes of making rural women inferior are destabilized, making them feel more capable of expressing themselves as agents of knowledge in social spaces. There is a rupture of the culture of silence that pervades the lives of these women, and that is generated in an oppressive mode of relationship. Their insertion in university is fundamental to establish new relations, which tension this silencing and place them in a movement of dialogue (FREIRE, 1981). Another narrative considers something similar:

[...] changing the way we look at the world, I believe it's for the best, I'm taking a more critical look at various pieces of knowledge and information. (Taís).

Taís reports developing a more critical look at knowledge and information around her. There is a disruption of silence and the establishment of a relationship of dialogue, which makes the individual itself an agent of action, now capable of a critical reflection on oneself, perceiving oneself as it is (FREIRE, 1981) in the world, being able of questioning what is set as natural, making it possible to notice issues that had not yet been perceived. This process makes possible an "ever more lucid insertion in the transforming reality" (FREIRE, 1981, page 30), as well as a critical engagement and recognition of its role in society, which goes beyond impositions and patterns of behavior. The individual becomes *agent* in his processes, with the ability to direct its own actions, and not just *objects* any more (MMC, 2016). Viviane's narrative also reflects that issue:

With my family, I comment about the lessons and what I learn every day, in different points of view. I talk more, I get more involved in family dialogue (Viviane).

¹- From Freire's perspective, according to which to be more is to make oneself human and struggle against the processes of domination, for an emancipation (FREIRE, 1987) that results in strengthening of self-esteem.

Viviane says she gets more involved in family dialogues. Thus, she becomes an agent in the family context, having more voice in the interactions and empowering herself from the consolidation of a new social role. These advances in dialogue make it possible to draw a path of liberation and to get a more critical view of the family reality. Freire (1987, page 45) points out that “at first it is necessary that those who are denied the primordial right to say the word regain this right, forbidding this dehumanizing assault to continue.” Therefore, through dialogue, the pronouncement of the word (in society or in the family environment), women gain meaning and value in relationships established in the world, break the patriarchal logic of making them inferior, and humanize themselves in a process of breaking free. About the changes in the family routine, Paula also reports:

It totally changed my routine, because, before I started the degree, I simply dedicated my time to home, husband and children. Today, this doesn't happen any more, because my time is devoted to studies. (Paula).

This shows how the insertion in this teaching degree transformed the lives of these women, who, from this opportunity on, became protagonists of their stories, leaving home and assuming other social roles that bring them recognition in all contexts and, above all, bring them empowerment to put themselves in relations. From the point of view of the MMC, which is stood as a movement to struggle for the autonomy of countryside women, it is possible to say that the LEdoC also consolidates itself as a strategy to strengthen this process of raising women's awareness of the structures that tension them (MMC, 2016). The movement states that it is necessary to attribute value and consolidate the countryside feminist culture, that is, based on the struggle against a patriarchal cultural logic and based on the struggle for emancipatory identities that

[...] they conquer and build their liberation, when they leave home to participate politically in society [...]. In the end, the feminist and peasant identity of women, among conflicts experienced in a patriarchal society, is being created: women face the contradictions in their own home and, when they want to get out of this inferiority and dependence situation [...]. Thus, it is stated that the identities of peasant women constitute the struggle for the construction of a new society (CINELLI, JAHN, 2011, pages 92-93).

Therefore, it is observed that, even if the women surveyed did not have contact with the feminist movement, they end up assuming feminist positions and identities, destabilizing the patriarchal organization collectively and personally, as they are allowed to leave the domestic environment, imposed by gender roles, and begin to settle down in other social roles that make them be seen as “human beings existing *in the world and with the world*” (FREIRE, 1981, page 53, italics added). It makes it possible to happen a process of awareness that allows them to look at the world and at themselves (their existence in the world) in a critical way, to observe the reality of oppression and to become women who act and transform the countryside (CINELLI; JAHN, 2011).

Final considerations

The process of insertion in the LEdoC has a great impact on the lives of those women and the consolidation of their identities, qualifying them and empowering them as agents capable of transforming the patriarchal relations of the countryside. The process of insertion in this teaching degree, as well as making these women take on other social roles and begin to recognize themselves as agents, from the appreciation of their knowledge and ways of life, also contributed to the transformation of a cultural mark, patriarchy, which plagues

the culture of the countryside. Thus, there is a critical process of cultural appreciation, which breaks relations of domination, of making these women inferior and subordinating them. There is a two-way empowerment: the cultural recognition of the countryside, of which these women are part, and the rupture of the oppressive logic that is incorporated in this culture. Hence, the positive aspects of the culture are appreciated and the negative aspects are broken down, modifying the cultural paths of the communities. Therefore, there is a movement of the culture of (re-)creation and (re)transformation under new conceptions.

Thus, there is a reorganization of the family structures of power, in which women follow paths to occupy new spaces, and their

companions (husbands or boyfriends) end up experiencing new relation dynamics. Therefore, studies that deepen and investigate the impacts of education on the family routine of these women matter.

The LEdoC, as a higher education degree with the social and political commitment to train rural educators with the capacity to act from a conscience and for the benefit of the rural working class (MOLINA, 2015), has been consolidating its role with empowerment of women, contributing to a new social organization based on the MMC, which aims at a countryside with more gender and class equality, breaking up capitalist patriarchal relations, and giving possibilities to fulfill desires and dreams.

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Wender Faleiro is a professor in the Post-Graduate Program of Education of the Universidade Federal de Goiás, Catalão Unit.

Magno Nunes Farias is a master degree student in the Post-Graduate Program of Education of the Universidade Federal de Goiás, Catalão Unit.