



Education for rural dwellers: the formation of female rural teachers and the Teacher Training Centers (1950 - 1963)¹

Educar os habitantes do campo: a formação de professoras rurais e os Centros de Treinamento de Professores (1950 – 1963)

La educación de los pueblos del campo: la formación de los maestros del campo y los Centros de Formación de Maestros (1950 - 1963)

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Abstract

I present some reflections from bibliographical and documental research regarding the formation offered to female rural teachers in training centers for rural teachers and assistants based on the National Campaign for Rural Education (*Campanha Nacional de Educação Rural* – CNER), which advanced in Brazil between 1950 and 1963. A key point of inquiry is how the female rural normal school teachers were certified. In this investigation, I compare the discourse and the practices of formation and training of these teachers, examining the political and ideological profile, the main intention of which was to establish the rural population on the "healthy and productive land". Allied with the formation of lay (non-certified) teachers, who were responsible for most Brazilian schools, the main purpose of the formation offered in training centers and in rural normal school courses was to instruct teachers who would work in rural areas, so as to contribute to avoid the exodus of farmers and the flight of young and energetic people from the countryside to the cities.

Keywords: Rural education. Training Center for Rural Teachers. *Campanha Nacional de Educação Rural* – CNER.

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Resumo

Apresento algumas reflexões a partir de pesquisa bibliográfica e documental sobre a formação ofertada às professoras rurais nos centros de treinamento de professores e de auxiliares rurais, a partir da Campanha Nacional de Educação Rural - CNER, no recorte temporal entre os anos de 1950 e 1963. Entre as indagações destaco: como foram formadas as professoras normalistas rurais? Cotejo o discurso, as práticas de formação e de treinamentos de professoras, evidenciando o perfil político e ideológico, cujo principal intento era fixar a população campesina na “gleba saneada e produtiva”. Aliada à formação do magistério leigo, sob cuja responsabilidade se encontrava a maioria das escolas brasileiras, a principal finalidade da formação ofertada nos centros de treinamento e nos cursos normais rurais era instruir docentes que fossem atuar no meio rural, de modo a contribuir para evitar o êxodo de lavradores e a fuga de elementos jovens e animosos, do campo para as cidades.

Palavras-Chave: Educação Rural. Centro de Treinamento de Professores Rurais. Campanha Nacional de Educação Rural – CNER.

Resumen

Presento algunas reflexiones basadas en la investigación bibliográfica y documental sobre la formación ofrecida a los maestros rurales en los centros de formación docente y auxiliares rurales, a partir de la Campaña Nacional de Educación Rural - CNER, entre 1950 y 1963. Entre las preguntas que destaco: ¿cómo se formaron los maestros normalistas rurales? Recopilo el discurso, las prácticas de formación y capacitación de los maestros, destacando el perfil político e ideológico, cuya principal intención era fijar a la población campesina en la "tierra sana y productiva". Aliada a la formación de los maestros laicos, bajo cuya responsabilidad estaban la mayoría de las escuelas brasileñas, con la finalidad principal de la formación ofrecida en los centros de formación y en los cursos normales rurales era instruir a los maestros que trabajarían en las zonas rurales, para contribuir a evitar el éxodo de los campesinos y la huida de los elementos jóvenes y vivaces del campo a las ciudades.

Palabras clave: Educación rural. Centro de Formación de Profesores Rurales. Campaña Nacional de Educación Rural – CNER.

Introduction

In this text, I present a bibliographical and documental study with a historical approach regarding the educational formation of female normal school (teacher-training school) teachers to work in the Brazilian rural area. In the investigative process, a note of caution is in order: “[...] how can I know what to say to you? “[...] documents do not arise, here or there, as an effect [of unknown cause] from a mysterious decree of the gods” (BLOCH, 2001, p. 83).

Far from the idea that documental sources are not easily found, in a period of time immersed in complex debates regarding the conception of society in a predominantly rural Brazilian population, I impart reflections regarding the formation offered to female rural teachers².

During the research that would give rise to this manuscript, I began a genuine “hunt” for artefacts, in search of signs or indications to compose records and plots, writings I produce in the daily life of my work as a research professor in fertile paths and ways. Even though these writings are full of contradictions and some mistakes, they include, at the same time, findings that inspire me and join together to compose a mosaic of sources that lead me to create narratives that I catalogue and record, consistently, from details and traces. Nevertheless, “[...] when the causes are not reproducible, they can only be inferred from the effects [...]” (GINZBURG, 1992, p. 169).

What I expressly manifest is that the formation of female rural teachers contributed to reinforce the role that was designated by capitalist society to women. The curriculum offered in the training centers reinforced responsibility for determined activities reserved to them, including to attend the teacher training courses that were offered in vacation time, leaving their homes, without any financial compensation for that. These data are confirmed in the different course subjects offered, for example, notions of home economics, household and agricultural practices, and hygiene and sanitation knowledge.

The analysis I make is therefore about the formation of female teachers in the rural normal school courses and in the training centers from 1952, when the National Campaign for Rural Education (*Campanha Nacional de Educação Rural – CNER*) began, to 1963, when the CNER was terminated to begin the Three-Year Plan for Education in Brazil. For that reason, I examine some legislative documents, reports from the CNER, prepared by the Ministry of Education and Health - MEC, and some publications from the magazine of the National Campaign for Rural Education. I highlight, above all, what differentiated the conception of training/formation in accordance with gender. In this respect, I thus formulated the inquiry: How were female rural normal school teachers certified? Where were these centers and courses located and how was this formation for rural teachers organized?

An analysis of this formation can be undertaken from different points of view, for after all, the “[...] head thinks based on where the feet tread. To understand, it is essential to know the social space of the one who is observing” (BOFF, 1997, p. 9). Therefore, I chose to analyze specifically the magazines published by the CNER (stemming from the teacher formation policies established by the federal government) from 1954 to 1959 and the curricular aspects that were addressed in the courses offered in the training centers. The documentation I compiled bears unique information for understanding and analyzing this formation, both in a historical and cultural/practical manner.

² I specifically discuss female rural teachers, given that there was no mention of the training of male rural teachers in the documentation consulted. In fact, training female teachers (*professoras*) and/or training of women from the community, female leadership, and other such terms were always mentioned.

Based on these principles, I essentially examine information from a historical, legislative, and educational perspective. Upon considering the perspective of gender, I use the concept of teacher formation created by the CNER, in which the structure and the offering of these courses not only revealed different political, social, and ideological forces, but also bore the consequences of federal public authority that affected and conditioned the activity of teachers in the rural area. Clearly, these forces are deeply influenced by those who occupy public office. This finding, in the face of what the documents tell me, redirected the object of my attention, that is, I investigate “[...] much more ardently what it allows us to understand, without having intended to say it.” (BLOCH, 2001, p. 178).

With that, I structured the analysis in three main sections. In the first, I analyze the situation that was the setting for the teaching and formation of rural female teachers in the rural area from 1950 to 1963. I summarize how the formation and training of rural teachers was organized. In the second section, I focus on analysis of the plan carried out for formation of rural teachers in the Brazilian rural normal school courses. In the third section, I discuss the rural teacher training centers. Both the rural normal school courses and the formation offered in the training centers have the Organic Law of Normal School Education and the Organic Law of Agricultural Education, both promulgated in 1946, as a general framework. Throughout the sections, I highlight the implications of these laws on teacher formation. Finally, I conclude the text and indicate that the pedagogical practices that were directed to the rural teachers had a technical and pedagogical character that aimed to satisfy certain interests of the elites that governed the country.

Formation and training of rural teachers (1950-1963)

In the 1950s, practically no formation was offered to rural teachers in Brazil. The few schools that offered the normal school course were urban, in the most highly populated areas, and nearly all in the Southeast and South regions of Brazil. In those years, an exclusionary and discriminatory educational system prevailed as a result of the hegemonic understanding of the dominant Brazilian elites. According to that, the formation of teachers should contribute to reinforce the role of women in Brazilian society following traditions and customs, condemning and disparaging women that lived or behaved in a manner different from those considered acceptable.

In the data made available by the IBGE, in reference to 1950, Brazil had 51.944.397 inhabitants. Of this total, among those of 5 years of age or more, according to level of formal education, 12.957.543 inhabitants lived in urban areas, 5.825.348 in small towns, in small groupings of scattered and rural populations, in villages, and in agglomerations of inhabitants on properties near the city, and 33.16.506 lived in rural areas. Only 17.675.504 people knew how to read and write and another 18.882.486 people did not know how to read or write. The illiteracy rate of the Brazilian population was 51,65% (IBGE, 1954).

According to pedagogical specialization in Brazil in 1950, normal-school-trained teachers in activity totaled 59.966, and those not trained in normal schools were 52.533. A total of 55.811 normal school teachers taught in the urban areas, 10.391 in the districts near the cities, and 40.932 teachers were working in classrooms in the rural area. There were 3.709.887 students enrolled in primary school in 1950 in Brazil. Of these, the urban municipalities and their districts gathered 2.102.828 students and rural education gathered 1.607.059 students enrolled (IBGE, 1956). The statistical data clearly showed the need to place education to be carried out in the rural areas on the agenda of public authorities.

In this context, Getúlio Vargas, President of Brazil, instituted the National Campaign for Rural Education – CNER with the purpose of implementing a true educational mission for “rural folk”. Vargas restructured the Ministry of Agriculture, with the main interest of conferring to the Brazilian agrarian classes the minimum necessary for a better life in the rural area. For that reason, there was an effort to “[...] combine resources, join forces, coordinate plans, among specialized divisions of the Ministry of primary production and its divisions with other ministries equally interested in the solution of questions essential for progress in the country” (VARGAS, 1951, p. 103).

Specifically for rural education, Vargas considered that a basic education program that would include new work processes and better living conditions in the countryside should be created by the Ministries of Education and of Agriculture, whose efforts, plans, and financial and human resources should accommodate “[...] the farmer with his family and the community social institutions themselves [...]” (VARGAS, 1951, p. 103).

Vargas considered educational progress as a task that must be encouraged and created with different measures able to resolve the problems within Brazil, promoting an increase in living standards and “[...] correcting deprivations of every sort, arising both from our crisis of growth and from the disturbances arising from the world situation” (VARGAS, 1951, p. 209). For the Brazilian governing leader, the educational process was an instrument of renewal and of progress that could, therefore, modify the deprivations of the states, considered the main matrix of social disorganization. It was thus necessary to promote order and progress in the states and municipalities through “[...] a community of men with strong capacity of individual initiative and a vibrant spirit of cooperation” (VARGAS, 1951, p. 209).

For educational progress, the school was indicated as an “[...] irreplaceable instrument in the formation of these two qualities, above all, the school that goes beyond simple literacy training and prepares men for solving the problems of the environment in which they live” (VARGAS, 1951, p. 210). As one of the alternatives, Vargas proposed multiplication of elementary schools, normal schools, rural schools, and urban schools, which constituted, in his view, unquestionably, the basis of popular education (VARGAS, 1951).

This educational perspective, adopted in the 1950s, aimed at eliminating the disparity in the treatment of country dwellers, given that the government placed blame for the rural exodus, in large part, on lack of education. Thus, the public educational policies were directed at “rationalization” and systematization of activities of promotion of health, of education, and of direct assistance to men and women in the rural areas, especially interested in the direct repercussion that these educational policies would achieve in agricultural productivity and in the general structure of the national economy. The main purpose of providing education was to make conditions of social well-being available, as well as to increase the purchasing power of the working masses so that rural men and women would remain in the rural locations and in labor on arable land “[...] objectively facing problems related to urban enormity, food, habitation, clothing, the domestic economy, settlement, the progress of small communities” (VARGAS, 1951, p. 242).

In those years, the few Brazilian school institutions that were directed to normal school teaching were attended nearly exclusively by women. Therefore, the educational practices enshrined a formation for women that determined a place, a way of being, and the execution and fulfillment of certain attitudes and actions. The norm was to educate them to serve, to take responsibility, to care for needs. In relation to formation of female rural teachers, upon considering the spirit of giving of oneself, what should be done was “[...] to prepare lay teachers, so that they give the utmost they are capable of” (SOUZA, 1956, p. 89).

In March 1951, the Brazilian National Department of Education held a series of meetings to debate the problem of rural education. One of the conclusions of the technical team gathered by MEC, which assembled representatives from other Ministries and from the community, explicitly emphasized the prevalence of an “[...] abstract, rigid, and uniform character of administrative methods – formulated by an urban elite bureaucratically standardized for all regions of Brazil [...]” (MEC, 1952, p. 5).

In fact, the extreme conclusion they came to in these meetings is that in the rural area, the population did not find reasons for improvements or for progress. Stimulation would have to come from outside. For that reason, the sole institution considered apt to assist would be elementary school. The only agent of culture that lived in the countryside was “[...] the primary school teacher. The primary school teacher should therefore be made an effective element of local leadership, and the school should be the center of community life” (SOUZA, 1956, p. 89).

The normal school or lay teachers that worked in the rural classrooms or schools were considered to be persons that “[...] soon put themselves to work [...] they prove to be understanding and enthusiastic [...]” (SOUZA, 1956, p. 90). Lay and normal school teachers were therefore described as people that were integrated in a life of mission and that became collaborators of their communities and of the government in the task of educating. Even so, since they were women, they were criticized: lay teachers “for their lack of culture” and certified teachers for considering themselves “masters in the occupation” because “[...] they believe they are doing, and doing well, everything they are responsible for [...]” (SOUZA, 1956, p. 90).

Among the aims emphasized for the education campaign of rural populations, the procedures habitual to Brazilian educational policies prevailed: modernize, civilize, and “recover” men and women rural dwellers by means of education. Thus, it was fitting to awaken the sense of community. These rural women teachers were urged to “[...] choose educational techniques that would give men of the rural area a sense of self-worth, together with a sense of independence and responsibility [...]” (MEC, 1952, p. 6).

Brazilian public authority, in this context, through MEC, sought to undertake extensive action on rural communities, uniting education with reforms in agrarian structure in a complex general plan of intervention, and it began a work of gathering information on the educational initiatives in operation in rural areas, for the purpose of joining them in a “[...] single organism and, furthermore, carry out experiments in strictly limited areas, whose results could be generalized to identical regions in the country [nation]” (MEC, 1952, p. 6).

The importance assumed by the manner of activity of the female rural teachers lay in the belief that this would be the sphere that would pave the way for construction of a concept of responsibility, of individual and civic rights and duties. This would lead to formation of a nationality, understood in terms of territorial, moral, cultural, and political unity, that would lead the country population to take responsibility and voluntarily participate in the economic and social progress of the community to which it belonged.

This strategy of the federal government rested on two pillars. The first of them was the policy of instructing rural men and women workers through training sessions and courses conducted by the CNER team. In this direction, a minimum of general education should be administered to children, adults, and youth, simply in the direction of understanding the environment in which they lived, so as to construct a “national consciousness”, an often-used expression at that time.

The second pillar, considered key, involving the CNER, was education. The school establishments and rural teaching proved to be the main niche of coopting the community, whose pedagogical practices should be managed, mainly by the female, rural, normal-school, lay teachers. The rural teachers’ adoption of the plans of the CNER linked well with the interests manifested for acculturation of rural dwellers. Rural teachers constituted an

extensive advance force. They held the ability of guiding the communities of which they were part, which extended to the fate of the nation, molding the farm masses, achieving permanent results through education. Undoubtedly, rural teachers were the point of reference in the regimentation of the rural masses, and were therefore indispensable to the political interests of modification of the rural environment.

The choice of the National Campaign for Rural Education – CNER for that purpose was not by chance, but constituted a strategy of the Getúlio Vargas government for the purpose of advancing in the social and political transformations that his government intended to implement. For that reason, it was necessary to settle and establish the Brazilian population in the countryside. From this perspective, schooling represented the notion of creating an established national consciousness. Both rural schools and rural teachers emerged as one of the main strategies to make the project undertaken by the federal government feasible for rural education. Schools and teachers, in themselves, constituted one more instrument to urge men and women to remain in the countryside.

The school came to be seen as the ideal place to adapt and settle people in the rural environment. Likewise, it was imperative that the formation of rural teachers establish criteria and content for them to be able to deal with the realities of the countryside. With a view toward this preparation of teachers specialized for teaching in the rural environment, the creation of what were called rural “regional schools” or “normal schools” spread.

Teacher formation in the Brazilian rural normal schools

Upon proposing the creation of rural normal schools and courses, the Brazilian federal government equipped itself with a terminology that “[...] expressed not only the placement of the school in agricultural and pastoral zones, but above all the aim of transmitting knowledge of agronomy and rural hygiene [...]” (TANURI, 2000, p. 75).

These normal schools followed the standardization emerging from two laws: the Organic Law of Normal School Teaching, dictated by Decree-law no. 8.530 of 2 Jan. 1946, which established the structure of two levels or cycles for formation of primary teachers who would work in Brazilian urban and rural areas; and the Organic Law of Agricultural Teaching, Decree-law no. 9.613 of 20 Aug. 1946, which stipulated in Article 4 that, for agricultural teaching, teachers were to be trained in subjects appropriate for this teaching and administrators were to be trained in services related to this teaching, and it determined the direction of the courses for continuing education, and the knowledge and skills of the teacher training courses.

The existence of two organisms, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture, that managed urban and rural education, as well as two decrees that also regulated the offering of teacher formation for the rural environment, ended up generating a structural duality. The duality between urban and rural in teacher formation for primary education was explained by differences of an economic and cultural nature between the various regions of the country, and this generated the coexistence of the offering of teacher formation in different formats and levels.

One of these levels corresponded to the initial cycle of the courses of secondary education, instituted in four years of studies that would train regents of primary education. However, it was necessary to complete another cycle of studies, the second cycle of this same secondary education, in three years, to acquire certification as a rural primary teacher (LOURENÇO FILHO, 1953).

In relation to the courses, the first cycle, with a duration of four years, was aimed at the formation of regents of primary education to work in urban or rural primary schools, and it was offered in what were called regional normal schools, in which a requirement for enrollment was a minimum age of 13 and the conclusion of five years of primary studies. The minimum curriculum to be completed is shown below.

Table 1 – Subjects offered by the Courses of the First Cycle / Regional Normal Schools, according to the Organic Law of Normal School Teaching (1946).

Regional Normal School Courses (1st Cycle – Formation of Rural Regent Teachers)	
1st year	Portuguese, Mathematics, Geography of Brazil, Natural Sciences, Drawing and Writing, Manual Labors and Home Economics, Choral Singing, and Physical Education.
2nd year	Portuguese, Mathematics, Geography of Brazil, Natural Sciences, Drawing and Writing, Manual Labors and Economic Activities of the Region, Choral Singing, and Physical Education.
3rd year	Portuguese, Mathematics, Concepts of Anatomy and Human Physiology, General History, Drawing, Manual Labors and Economic Activities of the Region, Choral Singing, Physical Education, Recreation and Games.
4th year	Portuguese, Psychology and Pedagogy, Concepts of Hygiene, History of Brazil, Didactics and the practice of teaching, Drawing, Choral Singing, Physical Education, Recreation and Games.

Source: Created by the author.

The second cycle was related to formation of primary teachers to teach in urban or rural schools, and it was offered in rural or urban normal schools or in educational institutes.

The Organic Law of Agricultural Teaching furthermore foresaw that the agricultural pedagogical courses aimed at the formation of teaching personnel to act in the teaching of subjects specific to agricultural teaching or to administrative personnel of agricultural teaching would be performed in the following manner: a course for teaching rural home economics, with a duration of two years, and courses of didactics of agricultural teaching and of administration of agricultural teaching, both with a duration of one year (BRASIL, 1946).

The requirement for enrollment, both in the training courses and in the rural normal school courses, was conclusion of the first cycle of agricultural teaching or of the course of the first cycle of secondary education or of normal school teaching, and a minimum of 15 years of age, as well as other documents that should be presented by the interested party in the act of enrollment, such as a certificate of good conduct and of vaccination.

In relation to questions of gender, the Organic Law of Agricultural Teaching stipulated equal rights for men and women for enrolling in the courses of agricultural teaching. However, it carried the following special prescriptions: a) it recommended that the courses of agricultural teaching for women be given in teaching establishments exclusively attended by females; b) women would not be allowed work that would not be suitable for them from the perspective of health; c) programs in all the courses should consider the nature of the female personality and the role of women in home life; d) in any of the formation courses of the first cycle, the teaching of rural home economics should be included (BRASIL, 1946b).

Both in the legislative plan and in practice, a differentiated formation model prevailed for female teachers, above all in the aspects that favored the offering of subjects in accordance with the sexes. The difference in curriculum applied to the objectives that circumscribed the contents considered typically female: tasks that were attributed according to sex, as well as the roles delimited and defined due to the private sphere. The curriculum offered was, therefore, a sign of sexual division, even among those in the teaching profession in the rural environment. The female rural teacher was a homemaker in the school and, therefore, the sole person responsible for the cooking process [and for student lunch] and for cleaning and maintenance of the classrooms.

To put the formation offered in the rural environment into practice, formation courses or training courses were offered for women that worked in agriculture, and brief teaching of an agricultural skill. These courses were offered as extension courses or as

courses in the “rural week” programs. In the establishments of agricultural teaching, women were also to be trained for housework in quick and practical courses that would deal with the jobs common to rural domestic life.

The plan for formation of rural normal school teachers had a duration of three or two years of intensive studies, depending on the school and the location that offered the course, as well as a minimum curriculum that included specific subjects. Although in the years under study there was no unified curricular plan for the subjects to be offered in the rural normal school course, each one of these institutions could determine, at their criterion, the subjects and respective course loads based on the standards emerging from the organic laws and from Decree no. 38.042 of 10 Oct. 1955, described below, in a table that contains the subjects described in these regulations for the rural normal school course offered in three years.

Table 2 – Subjects offered in the formation course for primary teachers

Rural Normal School Course (2nd cycle – Formation of Rural Normal School Teachers)	
1st year	Subjects of General Culture: Portuguese, Mathematics, Physical and Natural Sciences. Specific subjects: Drawing and Applied Arts, Music and Singing, Physical Education, Recreation and Games.
2nd year	Subjects of General Culture: Portuguese, Mathematics, Physical and Natural Sciences. Specific subjects: Applied Drawing, Culinary Arts, Agricultural Activities, Hygiene and Nursing, Concepts of Childcare, Concepts of Educational Psychology and Rural Sociology, Methodology, School Administration, Recreation and Educational Games.
3rd year	Subjects of General Culture: Portuguese; Mathematics; Physical and Natural Sciences, Psychology and Sociology Applied to Education, Concepts of History and Philosophy of Education, Hygiene and Childcare, Methodology and Practice of Primary Education, Drawing and Applied Arts, Music and Singing, Physical Education, Recreation and Games.

Source: Created by the author

The difference between the curricula, in both courses, were the subjects of an agricultural, technical, sanitary, health, and hygiene nature. In other words, the concern was not only teacher formation, but also promoting conditions so that once these people were certified, they could drive progress, both in the schools and in their surroundings, especially among the rural population. This involved changes in the habits of the rural population, in hygiene, and in health care, and improvement in sanitation of rural areas. That is, the formation of “[...] rural instructors thus came to join with greater preparation in hygiene and prophylaxis [...]” (LOURENÇO FILHO, 1953, p. 66).

Recognizing this Brazilian cultural and economic mosaic, legislation gave the prerogative for the states to define, in the form of complementary legislation, the specialized aspects of these courses for teacher formation in accordance with the social, economic, and living conditions of the region. Furthermore, they could limit the operation of these courses to some regions or to a determined region. However, this flexibility was limited because the courses remained subordinated to national coordination, aiming at ensuring that the minimum curriculum was offered. Thus, an even more diverse systematic arose in the diverse Brazilian states and regions, and various manners of providing teaching occurred, depending on the location in which the rural normal school course was offered.

In short, I show that the social defense of the rural normal school resided in offering the farming population a minimum education “fitting” with the reality and with the rural environment of the regions. Through teaching and learning school subjects, teachers would use auxiliary techniques and educational methods of life and of work in the community. These techniques and methods should have reflections in the daily activities of the students, giving priority to the dominant occupations of the region (FERREIRA; LIMA, 2020).

Training Center for Rural Teachers

The Training Center for Rural Teachers aimed at preparing and continuing teacher formation, including pedagogical practices and knowledge of the rural environment. The purpose of these teacher formation centers was to transform “[...] the mentality and habits of the rural families and communities through female youth, awaking in them the community meaning of knowledge and individual and common solution of their problems” (RCNER, 1959, p. 286).

The rural school, in the period under study, was viewed as a location that should participate in raising the economic levels of the rural population and the common good through introducing the use of advanced techniques of organization and of labor among rural dwellers.

The rural teacher should be trained to contribute to improvement of the educational, sanitary, assistance, civic, and moral standards of the populations, according to the aims and purposes of the CNER, namely, a) to improve the technical levels of teachers that work in the country areas of the states; b) to expand the ways of preparation of rural teachers so that they perform the role fitting to them as natural leaders in their communities; and c) to provide them with the ability to develop educational activities through their schools, with a view toward improvement of the hygiene, social, and economic conditions of the communities (LOURENÇO FILHO, 1956).

In these training centers, rural teachers that were already working in classrooms could be trained as regents of rural education. The aim of these centers was a) to train municipal and state rural teachers in intensive courses of 4 months duration; b) to certify regents for teaching in municipal and private schools of the region in courses of 16 to 18 months; c) to prepare supervisors for municipal and state education to guide the activities of the rural schools; d) to supervise the activities of the Municipal and State Teaching Services that existed or were set up in the region; and e) to develop and spread knowledge and techniques related to rural education in the region (LOURENÇO FILHO, 1956).

The purpose of the rural teacher training courses therefore aimed at providing rural teachers with knowledge that could promote improvement of their work in the school, as well as prepare them for extending their influence on the community, since the foremost mission was “[...] to set up educational projects in the rural zone and the development of the communities in the countryside through the creation of Training Centers” (LEITE, 1999, p. 32).

In 1962, Maximiro Nogueira de Medeiros, Coordinator of the CNER, reported that most Brazilian rural schools and classrooms were under the responsibility of lay teachers without knowledge, and that the task of the CNER was to involve schools in the program of work directed to the communities through special training for “[...] every lay teacher it comes upon, understanding the extreme need for improving this material of considerable usefulness and dedication since these elements are rooted and fixed in the very zone in which they work” (MEDEIROS, 1962, p. 5).

In respect to the words of the coordinator of the CNER, as contained in the report prepared in 1962, I can clearly make at least two considerations. The first is in regard to the statement regarding the relevance and dedication of the teachers, most of them lay (untrained) teachers, for rural education in Brazil at that time. The second reflection deals with the fact that the CNER judged that these rural teachers were “material” with usefulness and dedication, and that they could be used as a preponderant factor for changing the reality in the countryside, given that they resided, lived, and worked there.

The purpose of these centers was therefore to train leaders to promote changes in the country communities as the federal government desired. To achieve this intent, the CNER intensified the educational work and the offering of teacher training courses in all Brazilian states. In addition, it offered the course for regents of rural primary education and prepared and disseminated audiovisual educational material, such as leaflets, posters, films, and publications of every sort. It also promoted courses for review of the materials of the primary course, in which rural teachers of the course were trained with “[...] knowledge that enables them to fulfill the role of leadership in the community, such as concepts of hygiene and prophylaxis of endemic diseases, home nursing skills, social and civic education, home economics, childcare, crafts, and concepts of agriculture” (MEDEIROS, 1962, p. 5).

The CNER likewise established agreements with other entities and implemented and consolidated diverse activities that would influence the change of habits and customs of the country communities in which there were normal schools or urban regional schools or in which they were created. These activities included meetings, debates and lectures, culture weeks, rural missions, intensive courses, and others. The main purpose of these actions was rural-based education and the creation of programs for changing the life of rural dwellers, conducting the transformation of Brazilian country communities.

Imbued in the educational formation offered was a concept not only of certifying the teacher to exercise activities in the rural schools, but the offer of a formation that would awaken consciousness and a taste for rural life and an interest in modifying the daily life of rural communities.

The activities in the formation of rural teachers presupposed “[...] reform in the sphere of educational policies, establishing measures of development of rural education [...]” (FERREIRA; LIMA, 2020, p. 953). Consequently, a process of imparting civilization to the country population was underway, which was, in the understanding of the elites that ruled in Brazil, essential for the progress of society as a whole. This was an educational process and had to emerge from the classrooms in the rural environment to promote widespread and intensive social and cultural work.

Teacher Formation in the Rural Normal School Course

The CNER recorded that since its beginnings in 1952, confirmed by the census data already indicated, that 60% of the Brazilian rural teachers were lay teachers and that in the rural environment, school and classroom conditions were lacking, as well as decent accommodations and housing for normal school teachers. In regard to rural primary school, it highlighted that there were a) a lack of schools; b) schools closed in the communities and surrounding areas from lack of normal school teachers; c) overcrowded municipal schools in the rural communities directed by lay teachers; d) one or more urban normal schools with a contingent of certified graduates that did not want to teach in the rural area, and when local legislation obliged them to go and teach in a rural school upon entering their career, normal school teachers felt dismay and panic upon being moved to the rural school and “[...] instead of understanding what the community expects of them, they become exasperated and never are the true instructors of the community because it is completely unknown to them, with rare exceptions [...]” (MEDEIROS, 1962, p. 5).

In fact, what is clear is that these were allegations so that popular educational formation, with deep penetration in the communities and with explicit interests, would be created and offered to rural teachers, with a view toward the organization and development of the communities. The processes applied; the selection and preparation of teachers; work in, adaptation to, and experience in rural areas; and the complementary material used in educational formation, in short, all of this contributed so that there would be results in the teaching processes and in establishing instruction in teachers and communities. After all, the school was the “[...] bridgehead for the great advance against ignorance, disease, conformity, and thus all backwardness and abandonment [...]” (RCNER, 1959, p. 284).

In the report of 1962, it was indicated that various training centers spread across the country “[...] convey results of modified situations in homes, in the school, in the community, including health, social life, work, production, and individual and community economics” (MEDEIROS, 1962, p. 8).

Broadening this understanding that a reform of the mentality of rural communities was necessary, the rural normal school course could be concluded in only 18 months of study. This reduced time aimed at certifying the largest number of teachers with awareness and knowledge of the rural environment in the shortest time possible. These courses were not largely different from the training courses administered with a duration of 3 or 4 months; there was, however, a larger number of course hours for performance and development of pedagogical activities, which allowed deepening of the content offered. In the environment of the CNER, the rural normal school course certified normal school teachers to work in rural education, aware of and along with the pedagogical principle of “learn by doing”.

This form of education was incorporated by the CNER as of the first experimentations carried out in the first Regional Center of Basic Education of the CNER in Colatina, Espírito Santo, that had “[...] the main function of training, preparing teachers of rural schools, the teachers of the courses and Training Centers themselves that the CNER is expanding to the civilization of Brazil[...]” (RCNER, 1959, p. 196).

As I show, curricula, planning, courses, and methods were structured and applied for the purpose of providing essential knowledge and techniques to the normal school students to “guide them” in their activities in classrooms as persons knowledgeable of the teaching profession and aware of their responsibility as educators of the rural masses, of the objectives of agricultural education, and of the environment in which they worked; after all, their activity was an “[...] imperative of national salvation [...]”, as stated by Rios (1952, p. 60). They had the responsibility of encouraging social, economic, and cultural progress of the communities in the countryside.

For that reason, the curriculum of the rural normal school courses was composed of teaching content of a theoretical nature, of practical activities, and of specific areas of knowledge that included topics such as Rural Hygiene, Childcare and Nursing, Culinary Arts, Home Economics, Recreation Techniques, School Organization and Administration, Concepts of Agriculture, Rural Industries, and others (RCNER, 1959, p. 196).

What is noteworthy in the subjects offered was the endeavor to inculcate women with responsibility for preparation and efficiency in the tasks of housework and family support, where “[...] school activities focused on domestic or economic problems, health, lifestyle, parties and pleasures, housing, and the daily life of the rural dweller and worker” (FERREIRA, 2014, p. 249). This, therefore, ended up influencing educational tasks by clearly making implications regarding the activities in which these teachers were involved and/or would be involved in their communities. A schematic table indicating the locations in which the training and formation courses in Brazil were set up, as described in the CNER Magazine, is shown below. This is followed by a synthesis of the aspects analyzed in this text.

Table 3 – Teaching Training and Formation Courses (1953-1959)

Year/publication consulted	Formation Courses	Location
1952 RCNER, n. 6, vol. 5, 1958, p. 83	Training Course for Rural Teachers	Colônia de Vaz de Melo, Viçosa (MG), Fazenda Rosário, Betim (MG), Colônia Francisco Sá, Teófilo Otoni (MG), Conselheiro Mata of Diamantina (MG).
1952 RCNER, n. 8, vol. 6, 1º sem. 1959, p. 57-58.	Training Course for Rural Teachers and for Teaching of Home Economics (DF)	Ceará (CE), Distrito Federal (DF), Rio Grande do Norte (RN), São Paulo (SP).
1953 RCNER, n. 8, vol. 6, 1º sem. 1959, p. 59-84.	Training Course for Rural Teachers and Assistants	Barra (BA), Messejana (CE), Sobral (CE), Mecejana (CE), Coroatá (MA), Granja da Conceição (AL), Fazenda Ponta Negra (RN), Santos (SP), Barreiros, Ilha Bela (SP), Distrito Federal (DF), Fazenda Rosário (MG), Buritizeiro (MG), Colônia Francisco Sá (MG), Colônia Vaz de Melo (MG), Conselheiro Mata (MG), Fazenda Florestal (MG).
1954 RCNER, n. 1, vol. 1, 1954, p. 17 RCNER, n. 8, vol. 6, 1º sem. 1959, p. 95-98.	Training Center for Teachers and Assistants	Palmeira dos Índios (AL), Granja da Conceição (AL), Cruz das Almas (BA), Messejana (CE), Coroatá (MA), Fazenda Ponta Negra - Natal (RN), Fazenda Rosário - Betim (MG), Diamantina (MG), Pará de Minas (MG), Viçosa (MG), Pirapora (MG), Teófilo Otoni (MG), Santa Maria (RS), Cruz das Almas (RS), Alegrete (RS).
1955 RCNER, n. 2, vol. 2, 1955, p. 7. RCNER, n. 8, vol. 6, 1º sem. 1959, p. 99-120	Training Center for Rural Teachers	Alagoas (AL), Cruz das Almas (BA), São Luís do Maranhão (MA), Floresta (PE), Colatina (ES), Ibirité – Fazenda do Rosário (MG), Teófilo Otoni (MG), Viçosa (MG), Conselheiro Mata (MG), Buritizeiro (MG).
1955 RCNER, n. 4, vol. 3, 2º sem. 1956, p. 26.	Bahia – Training Course for Supervisors of Normal School Education.	Bahia
1955 RCNER, n. 8, vol. 6, 1º sem. 1959, p. 109.	Vacation Course for Rural Teachers	Colatina (ES)
1956 RCNER, n. 3, vol. 3, 1º sem. 1956, p. 15-30	Formation of Rural Teachers	Alagoas (AL), Espírito Santo (ES), Maranhão (MA), Minas Gerais (MG), Pernambuco (PE), Sergipe (SE).
1956 RCNER, n. 4, vol. 3, 2º sem. 1956, p. 26-27.	Vacation Course	Ipiaú (BA), Ibicaraí (BA), Itajuípe (BA), Coaraci (BA), Barra (BA), Feira de Santana (BA), Senhor do Bonfim (BA), Santo Amaro (BA), Serrinha (BA), Ibicaraí (BA), Itabuna (BA).
1956 RCNER, n. 4, vol. 3, 2º sem. 1956, p. 16-17, 26-27.	Vacation Course (training) 1st Training Course for Rural Teachers – Colatina (ES)	Sapeaçu (BA) CREB, Colatina (ES)
1956 RCNER, n. 10, vol. 8-9, 1961-1962, p. 13.	Vacation Course – Colatina (ES)	Colatina (ES).

1957 RCNER, n. 5, vol. 4, 1957, p. 34-35.	2nd Training Course for Rural Teachers	CREB, Colatina (ES).
1957 RCNER, n. 5, vol. 4, 1957, p.38	1st Continuing Education Course for teachers	Cruz das Almas
1958 RCNER, n. 6, vol. 5, 1º sem. 1958, p. 83, 84, 87, 99-100. RCNER, n. 7, vol. 5, 2º sem. 1958, p. 57-59; 62-63; 72-75. RCNER, n. 8, vol. 6, 1º sem. 1959, p. 193. RCNER, n. 8, vol. 6, 1º sem. 1959, p. 190	Training Course for Rural Teachers	Colônia Vaz de Melo, Viçosa (MG); Fazenda Rosário, in Betim (MG); Colônia Francisco de Sá, in Teófilo Otoni (MG); Conselheiro Mata of Diamantina (MG).
	2º Training Course for Rural Teachers	Cruz das Almas – BA
	Training Course for Rural Teachers	Taquara, Rio Grande do Sul
	Course for Rural Teachers	Escola Agrotécnica Diaulas de Abreu Barbacena, Minas Gerais.
	3rd Training Course for Rural Teachers	CREB – Colatina (ES)
	1st Certification Course for Teachers (Farmers' Daughters)	CREB – Colatina (ES)
	4th Training Course for Rural Teachers (4-month duration)	CREB – Colatina (ES). (course conducted together with the 1st certification course for rural teachers)
	3rd Training Course for Rural Teachers of Cruz das Almas, BA.	Cruz das Almas (BA)
	Training of Rural Teachers of Diamantina	Diamantina (MG)
	Training of Rural Teachers of Viçosa	Viçosa (MG)
Vacation Course for Rural Teachers	Taquara, Rio Grande do Sul (RS)	
1959 RCNER, n. 8, vol. 6, 1º sem. 1959, p.43, p.264, 265,	Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers	Fazenda Rockefeller, Rio Grande do Norte (RN)
	Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers	São Luís do Maranhão (MA)
	Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers	Jarandragoeira, Ceará (CE)
	Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers	Alagoas (AL)
	Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers	Rio de Janeiro (RJ)
	Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers	Lagoa Grande, Paraíba (PB)
	Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers	Pernambuco (PE)
	Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers	Cruz das Almas (BA)
	Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers	Leopoldina (MG)

	of the National Campaign for Eradication of Illiteracy	
Training Centers for Rural Teachers		Colônia Francisco Sá (MG)
		Colônia Vaz de Melo (MG)
		Conselheiro da Mata (MG)
Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers		Cascavel (PR)
Regional Center for Training of Rural Teachers		Herval d'Oeste (SC)
5th Training Course for Rural Teachers of CREB		Colatina (ES)
1st Certification Course for Rural Teachers		Colatina (ES)

Source: Created by the author

The data presented above show that the theme of the training centers for rural teachers and rural normal school courses would lead further than the limits of this article allow. A great deal still needs to be investigated in the period discussed. In fact, these courses and centers were set up in nearly all Brazilian states.

The federal government would give even greater impetus to these centers for formation of rural teachers in the Three-Year Plan of Education (1963-1965), which created the Training Centers for the Teaching Profession, maintained by the federal government, as well as institutionalization of continuing education for the primary and secondary educational profession, in 1963 (MEC, 1963).

To conclude, I show that in the rural training centers, training courses were offered with a duration of 4 to 5 months to instruct rural lay teachers or teachers without specific certification to work in rural classrooms and schools. In the rural normal school courses and schools, with duration of 18 months, rural normal school teachers were certified. Over the years, the CNER trained and graduated more than 1,500 rural teachers through offering isolated courses or courses in Training Centers for Rural Teachers (RCNER, 1959).

Conclusion

Modernization of the rural environment and of farming traditions and customs was conducted by the federal government and by Brazilian elites and was applied in the midst of the family, as in teaching of agricultural practices, culinary arts, home economics, hygiene and nursing. Concepts of childcare, concepts of educational psychology and rural sociology, music, singing, and educational games came to be part of the curriculum of the schools and rural normal school courses. These subjects introduced in the curriculum of these courses were considered essential by the Ministry of Education and Health in the processes of teaching and learning in the secondary school. This thus required rural teachers with certification to administer basic concepts of hygiene, food, clothing, and other content to be offered to a population that needed to be schooled in these areas considered to be basic knowledge for life in Brazilian society in that period.

The CNER acted strongly in the rural school, investing against ignorance, abandonment, diseases, and “rural miseries”. However, it also imposed an intensive march toward a modifying emergency plan, against any energetic reactions of the country populations, and formed an authoritarian social behavior called a “rural salvation system”. The Brazilian educational plans, projects, programs, and policies applied specific formation to the rural teaching personnel,

carried out in training centers with the extrinsic aim of “improvement” of the cultural and pedagogical levels of the rural teachers.

The programmatic content of the formation had an adjustable structure that considered not only agricultural practices and management processes, but also a formation that encompassed the social and cultural aspects of the country communities. Regulations and agreements arising from the CNER reflected the interest in applying certain actions and interventions for solution of rural problems and implementation of projects, both in the rural schools and in the homes of the persons enrolled in the school and, by extension, in the communities of which the rural schools were part.

Through the engagement of lay, rural, and course-attending teachers, together with the community, the practical activities to be developed would make the solution of innumerable problems possible, promoting the engagement of rural dwellers in caring for their own needs. “Rural weeks” and “rural missions”, which were nearly always developed in the schools or in the community hall of villages and districts, were organized and conducted by rural teachers, with formation in the training centers, and with the support of CNER teams. They encouraged various experiences and actions to be presented, lived out, and felt that would be meaningful in the pedagogical, social, and cultural formation of students, and that would modify the manner of being and living in those locations.

In this specific formation offered to rural teachers, the attempt was made not just to provide simple formation for work in the rural area, but to modify the scope of the teaching to be applied and intensify the understanding that it was necessary to “enhance” the educational, sanitary, hygiene, welfare, moral, and civic standards in the rural area. To achieve these interests, the federal government united states, municipalities, and other private and religious institutions through the campaign undertaken by the CNER. It used educational processes and techniques to promote the organization and development of the communities for the purpose of obtaining better performance in labor and production.

At the same time, the campaign coopted the country dwellers to become integrated with its aims and purposes: an educational effort that would accelerate the process of “evolution” of women and men of the countryside and would awaken a “sense of community”, given the surge of industrial development in Brazil and the dizzying progress of the urban environment, which occurred in the years under study. This formation and the activity of rural teachers was expected to contain the widespread migrational flow from the rural to the urban areas.

Those active in the rural area were mostly women and mostly lay teachers, as described in the text. In the CNER magazines, rural female teachers (*professoras*) were always mentioned, which indicates that there were not male teachers attending the regional normal school courses and rural normal school courses.

I therefore conclude that the teaching profession was the means found likewise by rural women to enter the public space of labor and have a profession recognized in the community. Even though they assumed responsibility for the activities of their homes in a double work load, they also acquired a certain autonomy and freedom from the functions and norms imposed on them. Furthermore, for some women, the rural teacher profession was the way they found to support their families. At the same time, a teaching position was a guarantee for their subsistence and it represented a form of freedom from certain shackles imposed on them. These are considerations that still require deeper research.

From the perspective of gender, it is noteworthy and perceptible that the way for formation of female rural teachers was especially arduous. For years, this formation contributed to reinforce the roles attributed by society to woman, maintaining distance from the education and from the formation for men. In any case, the curriculum applied to women always prepared them for the social role attributed to them: teaching and formation for caring for the household

and for activity in the private sphere. For men, it was political and civic education for activity in the public sphere.

A certain “prohibition of mixed education” (prohibition of mixing male and female) was still the usual situation in practice, including in the period under study, even though it was not mandatory, but “recommended”. Both in the normal schools, whether urban or rural, and in the training centers for rural teachers, the approach regarding what should imply the creation of a new framework of educational relationships did not bring about a significant change in the stereotypes of gender. It has always been women who have had to “adapt” to an environment of apparent equality in which their conceptions and realities, including in the home and in the work world outside the home, were absent or were not taken into consideration. The same value as men simply was not [and still is not] attributed to them.

Finally, in formation for work in the rural area, the dominion of cultures interconnected with males prevailed, and this was reproduced in the education of daughters and sons. Therefore, I highlight that even when identified as leaders in their communities, in spite of the good intentions sometimes shown in the campaign undertaken for the formation of Brazilian rural female normal school teachers, women continued to be unequal and to have unequal rights and responsibilities in the rural teaching profession.

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