

Education and resistance: educational practices of the Basic Education Movement (MEB) in the context of southern Pará Amazon (1962-1985)

Educação e resistência: práticas educativas do Movimento de Educação de Base (MEB) no contexto do sul da Amazônia paraense (1962-1985)

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Abstract

This paper is an excerpt from a doctoral thesis that investigates the educational practices of the Movimento de Educação de Base (MEB) in the southern region of Pará, under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Conceição do Araguaia, between 1962 and 1985. It analyzes the advances, setbacks, and resistances in the context of the military dictatorship, highlighting the role of the MEB in the political and social formation of rural workers. This paper explores how radio schools and collective experiences empowered rural populations to enhance their critical thinking skills and assert their rights in the face of State power structures and large estate owners. This history-based study employs Thematic Oral History, historical documents, and testimonies from former educators as sources for analyzing the subject. It is based on Certeau to interpret everyday practices and tactics and on Chartier to understand cultural representations. It is concluded that the MEB acted as an instrument of resistance and social transformation in the Amazon region of Pará.

Keywords: Movimento de Educação de Base; Diocese of Conceição do Araguaia; educational practices; military dictatorship; rural trade unionism.

Resumo

Este artigo é recorte de uma tese de doutorado¹, que investiga as práticas educativas do Movimento de Educação de Base (MEB) na região do Sul do Pará, sob a jurisdição da Diocese de Conceição do Araguaia, entre 1962 e 1985. Analisa avanços, retrocessos e resistências no contexto da Ditadura Militar, destacando o papel do MEB na formação política e social dos trabalhadores rurais. Discute como as experiências das escolas radiofônicas e de grupalização permitiram que homens e mulheres do campo fortalecessem sua capacidade crítica e reivindicassem direitos frente às estruturas de poder do Estado e do latifúndio. A pesquisa, de natureza histórica, utiliza História Oral Temática, documentos históricos e relatos de educadores como fontes para análise do objeto. Fundamenta-se em Certeau, para interpretar práticas cotidianas e táticas empregadas, e em Chartier, para compreender representações culturais. Conclui-se que o MEB atuou como instrumento de resistência e transformação social na Amazônia paraense.

Palavras-chave: Movimento de Educação de Base; Diocese de Conceição do Araguaia; práticas educativas; ditadura militar; sindicalismo rural.

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INTRODUCTION

The Movimento de Educação de Base (MEB) originated in the early 1960s from an agreement between the federal government, under the presidency of Jânio Quadros, and the Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil (CNBB), made official by Decree No. 50,307 of March 21, 1961 (Brasil, 1961). The program was designed to provide educational opportunities via radio broadcasts in the most disadvantaged regions of the country. It facilitated the dissemination of best practices that had been established in the dioceses of Natal (RN) and Aracaju (SE), particularly the initiative initiated in 1958 at the *Serviço de Assistência Rural* (SAR), under the direction of D. Eugênio Sales (Wanderley, 1984; Fávero, 2006; Kadt, 2007).

The Church was influenced by the new guidelines adopted in Rome, marked by Pope John XXIII's encyclicals *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963) (Papa João XXIII, 1961), which proposed concrete responses to social problems (Fávero, 2006).

According to Mainwaring (2004), this model advocated for the political involvement of laypeople in religious ceremonies and diocesan decisions.

In the context of Brazil, this transformation occurred amidst the ideological polarization that preceded the 1964 military coup. During this period, the Church experienced a schism between conservative factions and those who advocated for greater social engagement from the laity (Souza, 2006). In this particular context, the rural community was regarded as a pivotal space for social transformation. Consequently, MEB schools were directed to adhere to the directives outlined by the CNBB, which emphasized the promotion of education and the cultivation of popular organizations.

During the initial years of the MEB (1961-1963), laypeople experienced a period of relative autonomy in their activities, which subsequently led to significant political and ideological conflicts with Church authorities. Direct contact with the rural population, facilitated by studies of reality, has been demonstrated to strengthen autonomy and encourage political, pastoral, and professional engagement (Souza, 2006).

In this context, radio schools constituted the foundational structure of the MEB for an extended period, as they were posited as instruments of social transformation. They operated in a symbolic context, wherein everyday practices and appropriation tactics fostered multiple representations of the educational process (Maciel, 2019). The establishment of a radio school necessitated a "reality study" to analyze the local cultural, social, political, and economic context, including interviews and documentary research. Local communities were encouraged to assume responsibility for the management of the schools and to appoint local monitors (Movimento de Educação de Base, 1961).

The organization adhered to explicit guidelines. The supervisory staff, who had received training in both technical and administrative functions, were responsible for coordinating the activities. Literate monitors were assigned to assist in the control of students and attendance, following instructions transmitted by radio. Schools operated in adaptable spaces, such as community rooms or residential buildings, equipped with basic furniture, blackboards, radios, and, if necessary, lanterns (Movimento de Educação de Base, 1961).

Notwithstanding the political and financial pressures confronted during this period, the MEB functioned as a resistance movement, concerned with social injustices and committed to the dominated classes, without explicitly adopting class struggle as a strategy. In the aftermath of the 1964 military intervention, the organization reinforced its support for the subordinate social classes while maintaining its Christian commitment to social and political issues. In this scenario, popular enthusiasm promoted awareness and politicization, thereby transforming sectors of the MEB into effective forces of resistance (Fávero, 2006).

The educational concepts of the MEB were disseminated throughout the country on the basis of the notion of a Brazil divided between a more developed South and a socioeconomically more vulnerable North (Souza, 2006). Pereira (2013) asserts that southern Pará was distinguished by its low population density, extensive unused land, and federal development policies. In this context, the region became a meeting point between the Movement's emancipatory pedagogical proposal and ongoing capitalist expansion projects.

After 1964, while radio school systems underwent a period of decline in other regions of the country, they experienced a period of growth and development in the North (Kadt, 2007). The daily practices of the MEB were significant in terms of their actions, which were marked by the local context, the discourse surrounding them, and the actions of the agents who coordinated them in a process of mutual influence (Souza, 2006).

The first MEB system in the Amazon region of Pará was established in Bragança in 1961, followed by Conceição do Araguaia (the focus of this investigation) in 1962 (Wanderley, 1984). The southern region of Pará was also referred to by MEB agents as the “Araguaia Region.” The primary objective of the initiative was to oversee the functioning of radio schools in communities situated along the Araguaia River and its tributaries (Andrade, 1991).

The region known as Araguaia in Pará has gained notoriety both nationally and internationally as one of the most conflict-ridden areas in Brazil, particularly due to social and land issues (Pereira, 2004)². The mobilization of rural workers, with the support of trade unions, political parties, and progressive segments of the Catholic Church, proved to be a pivotal element in this process. The researcher posits that the reputation in question is rooted more in social conflicts and the mediation of actors such as the Church, the Rural Workers’ Unions, and state agencies than in geographical characteristics.

In this context, the objective of the present study is to analyze the educational practices of the MEB and their resulting social impacts. These practices will be examined through a comprehensive review of relevant documents and oral reports from supervisors. The findings will be linked to the concepts of emancipatory education developed by Freire (2022), Certeau’s notion of “place practiced” (2014), and Chartier’s theory of cultural representations (2002).

METHOD

In order to interpret the MEB in the southern Amazon region of Pará, this study investigated the traces of its educational culture, including literacy practices, the activities of rural unions, and popular representations. The research utilized oral sources and documentation from national repositories, private archives, and diocesan curias. The present study is grounded in the field of Cultural History, which, as Chartier (2002) asserts, involves the analysis of the construction of social realities. Additionally, it draws upon the principles of oral history, a method that utilizes collective testimonies to capture the past. This process establishes a connection between history and identities (Delgado, 2010).

In the context of document analysis, the survey of the state of knowledge yielded studies on the subject, with analyses based on documents found on university websites, diocesan curias, and private collections. A thorough review of documents related to the national MEB was conducted, with relevant materials being sourced from prominent repositories such as the *Centro de Experimentação e Divulgação Científica* (CEDIC (PUC/SP)), the *Centro Memória Viva* (UFG/GO), the *Memorial Cesar Moraes Leite* (SNI), and the *Centro de Referência e Memória da Educação Popular e da Educação de Jovens e Adultos* (CRMEJA).

The initial phase of the search for documents on the MEB in Conceição do Araguaia was conducted in the local Diocese, where archives were discovered in the Diocesan Seminary of Nossa Senhora do Rosário. A substantial number of documents were found to be damaged by humidity and moths, having been stored in plastic and cardboard boxes. In light of their significance, it was imperative to arrange them in an appropriate archive during the course of our research.

The research was further conducted at the Diocesan Curia of Marabá, where documents from the MEB of Marabá and Conceição do Araguaia were accessed and organized into plastic folders with typed labels. In both dioceses, a process of organizing and classifying the materials

² Pereira (2004) uses the expression “Araguaia region” to examine agrarian conflicts, in line with the designation adopted by the MEB in Conceição do Araguaia. According to the researcher, this area corresponds to the boundaries of the local Diocese and includes 11 municipalities that were separated from the former municipality of Conceição do Araguaia (until 1961), totaling 52,569.07 km² and 266,098 inhabitants (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2000). Among them, Conceição do Araguaia, Santana do Araguaia, Xinguara, and Redenção stand out, having been established between 1908 and 1995.

chronologically and thematically was initiated. The objective of this process was to identify those materials that were most relevant to the research. This procedure was in accordance with Bacellar's (2005) guidelines for the preservation of historical sources in archival collections. The research highlighted the fundamental role of archives in the practice of historians, as they enable the articulation of events and the elaboration of narratives. In this perspective, Farge (2009, p. 23) asserts that archives constitute a "[...] fragment of captured time; only later are themes separated and interpretations formulated."

In the "archival" phase, the sources were classified by thematic categories, without ranking them, following the guidelines of Bacellar (2005), who emphasizes the importance of analyzing the context and subjectivity of the documents. Following a thorough evaluation, it was determined that oral sources would be accorded equal relevance.

The pivotal function of lay individuals in the coordination, supervision, and monitoring of MEB initiatives was emphasized. As Delgado (2010) asserted, oral sources proved fundamental in revealing multiple dimensions (factual, temporal, and spatial) and recording the experiences of educators. For the purposes of this study, three educators who had acted as MEB supervisors during the period under analysis were interviewed, as shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1. Research Participants.

Instrument/Form	Participant	Period of Activity at MEB
Interview (in person)	João Carlos Ramalho	1962 to 1964
		1967 to 1970
Interview (in person)	Marilza Santos Lopes	1968 to 1989
Interview (Via Meet)	Heloísa Schmidt de Andrade	1976 to 1992

Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

The selection criteria employed to identify MEB supervisors who were active during the specified research period resulted in the identification of only three individuals. This decision was made to ensure that the information collected was both relevant and aligned with the context and period under study. The narratives reflected individual expectations, perceptions, and contributions to the history of the MEB and education. As Portelli (1997, p. 31) has observed, oral sources are capable of conveying factual information as well as elucidating the intents, convictions, and contemplations of the narrators concerning their trajectory.

Following the approval of the study by the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Tocantins (Decision No. 5,465,476) and the completion of a Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF), the interviews were conducted according to a predetermined script. These interviews were subsequently recorded, transcribed, and incorporated into the study to historicize the socio-educational practices of the MEB in southern Pará. The oral history approach was founded on the works of Portelli (1997) and Alberti (2005). Underscores the contemporary nature of oral sources, emphasizing that historians must engage with these sources actively to construct a narrative space.

In the southern region of Pará, the MEB, which was associated with the Diocese of Conceição do Araguaia, was responsible for the monitoring of radio schools throughout the area. The process of municipal restructuring has resulted in the establishment of new municipalities, with small communities formerly belonging to the municipality of Conceição do Araguaia becoming independent entities. Heloisa Andrade (personal communication), a participant in the research, draws attention to the fact that MEB is widely recognized for its initial work, but its educational practices, especially those developed in the southern Amazon region of Pará, receive little attention. The historical narrative, by addressing the human questions that are pertinent to each era, facilitates reflection on the present. As Pasavento (2004) contends, history is subject to constant rewriting and reinterpretation. The past is revised to develop new projects for the present and the future.

THE ARAGUAIA MEB AND ITS EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE OF RESISTANCE

Since its establishment, the educational practice of the MEB in the Diocese of Conceição do Araguaia has been centered on popular education, in accordance with the principles of the National MEB. This pedagogical approach is predicated on two fundamental tenets: the study of reality and the cultural appreciation of students. However, agrarian conflicts in southern Pará led to an escalation in repression and military surveillance of the Movement. The Dominican nuns, who were responsible for implementing the MEB and creating Rádio Educadora, played an important role in local educational and social development. Despite having engaged in negotiations with the military to expand the radio school systems until the late 1960s, beginning in 1970, they were regarded as enemies of the regime. Subsequent assessments determined that all activities carried out by MEB agents met the criteria for subversive behavior.

The military's actions had a detrimental effect on the MEB, as evidenced by its failure to register Rádio Educadora and its subsequent impact on radio schools. As Raposo (1982) has noted, from 1961 to 1967, there was an increase in both popular awareness and organization, which was facilitated by the support of intellectuals. However, the concept of "mass politics" faced repression due to its capacity to disrupt the prevailing order. The MEB played a pivotal role in the dissemination of knowledge, which was particularly significant in challenging the prevailing ideologies of the state and the church during that period.

Notwithstanding the repression that transpired during the late 1960s and 1970s, the agents of the movement in Conceição do Araguaia sustained a progressive stance. This included the involvement of laypeople and members of the clergy, the mobilization of rural workers, and the contribution to the establishment of the Rural Workers' Union.

Therefore, the spatial dynamics of the MEB in the Araguaia region during the 1970s and early 1980s can be interpreted through the lens of Certeau (2014, p. 184), who conceptualizes space as a "practiced place." In a context marked by the Civil-Military Dictatorship and the expansion of large-scale capitalism, MEB agents sought to understand their role and the political, economic, and social dimensions of the territory they occupied. The initiative was guided by a popular education approach that centered on human rights.

According to Marilza Lopes (personal communication), in 1967/68, rural communities did not yet fully realize the consequences of the military regime, and Rádio Educadora stood out as the only means of communication between the city and the countryside, bringing innovations that transformed everyday life. The monitors played an essential role, functioning as both educators and entertainers, and serving as conduits to communicate community demands to the MEB. Fávero (2006) underscores that the educational approach proposed by the MEB is designed to foster both individual knowledge acquisition and collective problem-solving. Consequently, the monitors were responsible for the operational maintenance of the radio schools, the facilitation of student participation, and the promotion of community integration through Rádio Educadora do Araguaia.

In the initial phase of the MEB in Araguaia, the teaching materials encompassed the booklet "Viver é Lutar" (1963), which complemented the radio lessons, followed by "Mutirão" (1965) and, subsequently, locally produced materials for instructing young people and adults. According to Fávero (2006), "Viver é Lutar" denounced injustices and exploitation, proposing a new model of society, while "Mutirão" offered materials for literacy and pedagogical training. In 1964, during the period of Brazilian military regime, 3,000 copies of the text "Viver é Lutar" were confiscated by the authorities. The military regime accused the text of being a "communist booklet" and labeled the MEB "subversive." Notwithstanding the absence of governmental endorsement, the *Conselho Diretor Nacional* (CDN) opted to persist in its operations (Fávero, 2006).

The educational program "Mutirão" (1965) was meticulously designed to address critical competencies, including literacy, arithmetic, cultural awareness, and health. The program placed particular emphasis on rural work, positioning it as the overarching theme of the curriculum. In contrast to "Viver é Lutar," however, it did not implement an approach focused on raising awareness and facilitating transformative change (Fávero, 2006; Kadt, 2007).

According to Marilza Lopes (personal communication), the Araguaia MEB demonstrated a notable resilience in its use of "Viver é Lutar" even in the aftermath of its confiscation, a

practice that ultimately culminated in the adoption of the “Mutirão” set (Lopes, personal communication). During this period, there was an escalation in the repression directed towards educators, particularly coordinators and supervisors. These individuals were regarded as subversive elements.

In the early 1970s, the radio system was closed due to its limited reach, although the MEB's problematizing approach was a source of concern for the ruling power. The organization's regional meetings facilitated the interpretation of local realities by its agents, thereby overcoming the national MEB's homogeneous view of rural communities. The training sessions encouraged pedagogical debates, promoting theoretical and methodological reflection and political positioning in the communities. Lopes' (personal communication) report emphasizes the resilience demonstrated by educators in the face of adversity, aligning with the survival and transformative strategies outlined by Certeau (2014).

During this period, the Amazon Development Plan resulted in intensified conflicts between small farmers and large landowners in southern Pará, while INCRA's colonization policies did not serve rural workers (Pereira, 2013). In light of these developments, MEB agents provided support to the settlers and defended progressive educational practices, promoting the regionalization of the Movement to more effectively address local realities.

João Ramalho, who has served as the supervisor of the MEB since its inception, has stated that the separation of the Amazon Regional Office was attributed to its geographical distance from Rio de Janeiro and the unique characteristics of the local context. The meeting included an election for the coordinator position, with candidates including Roberto Farias Mendes of the National MEB, João Ramalho, and a representative from Guajará-Mirim. Following his election, Ramalho relocated to Manaus, where he assumed responsibility for the coordination of the recently established regional office. Ramalho's endeavors also encompassed extensive travels throughout the Amazonian states, with the objective of monitoring the systems.

From this perspective, Fávero (1982, p. 5-7) observes that the MEB endeavored to regionalize its operations in the North and Northeast. In the aftermath of the 1967 restructuring of the National Secretariat, the bishops began to wield more authority in 1968, coinciding with a period of political turbulence that witnessed the institution of the AI-5. In response, the Movement redirected its efforts toward promoting literacy and the evangelization of the popular classes.

According to João Ramalho (personal communication), his visit to São Paulo signified a significant change in his political engagement, thereby strengthening his role as an educator in the MEB and contributing to progressive educational practices in the Araguaia region. These practices emerged as a means of mediating rural conflicts, thereby articulating culture, politics, and social representations, particularly between 1962 and the 1970s. Ramalho's report also includes his arrest by the Federal Police in Manaus on charges of association with an armed group in the Amazon. He was subsequently imprisoned for a period of ninety days in Belém. The 1971 investigation report accused the MEB in Conceição do Araguaia of engaging in subversive activities in northern Brazil, allegedly linked to the National Liberation Alliance. These activities were purportedly intended to establish communism and seize power by force of arms. According to the document, João Ramalho is alleged to have facilitated the allocation of positions within the MEB to other members, thereby fostering an environment conducive to extremist activities. The document also indicates that, in the latter half of 1968, Ramalho engaged in meetings that were considered subversive, and in 1969, he is believed to have recommended three individuals for the MEB in Conceição do Araguaia. Additionally, correspondence was intercepted from members of the National MEB, as well as from priests and other individuals who were classified as “leftists” and with whom the MEB supervisor was in communication (Brasil, 1971) (Inquiry No. 2438/82).

The MEB confronted pervasive repression, impacting both clergy and lay people, as well as those with affiliations to its agents. The arrest of João Ramalho and other agents in the northern region and other parts of the country where the MEB was active revealed to the military regime the “subversive” potential of the Movement, which challenged the established order and the hegemony of the landowning elite, especially in the southern Amazon region of Pará.

The educational initiatives spearheaded by the MEB have been instrumental in fostering awareness among the rural populace, thereby prompting introspection regarding their living conditions and the aspiration for transformation in the face of land rights deprivation.

These educational practices, consistent with the concept of “doing with” articulated by Certeau (2014), aimed to effect tangible transformations for rural workers. During the dictatorial regime, the MEB confronted significant challenges and persecution, experiencing a “*via crucis*” and a profound sense of adversity.

MOBRALIZATION, DYNAMIC SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION, BAIXO ARAGUAIA: EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND THE NEW CARTOGRAPHY

In the context of territorial transformations and intensifying disputes for land in southern and southeastern Pará, it is essential to analyze the specific dynamics of the region. Pereira (2013) challenges the prevailing interpretations of the agrarian issue in the Amazon, which attribute land violence in this region exclusively to the expulsion of settlers by businesspeople and landowners from the south-central region of the country. The author posits that between the mid-1970s and the mid-2000s, there was a notable increase in the frequency of confrontations between rural workers, businesspeople, traders, and landowners. These confrontations primarily stemmed from disputes over the control of newly recognized lands, which were predominantly situated in proximity to highways that were constructed during this time period.

The region also served as the setting for the *Guerrilha do Araguaia* (1970-1975), a period that witnessed an escalation in social tensions. In the context of land expropriation and rural labor, the Catholic Church played a pivotal role in defending the interests of rural workers. This initiative was facilitated through the *Comunidades Eclesiais de Base* (CEBs), the MEB, and, beginning in 1976, the *Comissão Pastoral da Terra* (CPT), as highlighted by Pessôa (2019), Pereira (2013), and Feitosa (2011).

In this sense, the analysis of the historical context cannot be dissociated from the territory where events unfold. As Certeau (2020) asserts, the nexus between history and geography is indispensable for comprehending societal dynamics. Given the geographical and social context, it is imperative to avoid idealized or irrelevant interpretations. The disregard of a region’s distinctiveness has the effect of transforming discourse into ideology. This, in turn, hinders history from reflecting on society and the events that mark it.

Consequently, between 1967 and the early 1980s, the MEB adopted a more cautious stance due to the repression and censorship of the military regime. This period is referred to as the “mobralization” of the MEB. The *Movimento Brasileiro de Alfabetização* (MOBRAL) was created by the dictatorship through Law No. 5,379/1967 (Brasil, 1967) with the aim of curbing educational initiatives focused on social awareness, including those pioneered by Paulo Freire and the MEB itself. In this particular context, the Movement began to place greater emphasis on functional literacy and elementary education, thereby diminishing its emancipatory perspective (Gomes; Morais, 2021).

During the early 1970s, MEB Araguaia experienced a period of significant financial hardship, a phenomenon referred to as the “mobralization” phase. This period is in stark contrast to the substantial resources allocated to MOBRAL (Andrade, 1991). During this period, as reported by Heloísa Andrade (personal communication), the first Bible Circles and community experiences were implemented in Conceição do Araguaia, while adult literacy began to take place through an agreement with the government program. Marilza Lopes’s (personal communication) work also documents elements of this moment:

[...] the national Mobral program arrived in the region. It was a way for the government to “mark its presence.” At that time, literacy programs in the MEB were still functioning. Then Mobral arrived, with a different approach. The mayor invited me to go to the Baixo Araguaia to provide training to implement Mobral in the guerrilla region. When we got there, we saw what the situation was like [...]. The teaching staff were convened and indoctrinated with political ideologies and subsequently instructed to implement literacy techniques. Of course, that wasn’t my approach; I didn’t even know about Mobral. Next to me were the Federal Police, the Army, the Military Police, and the monitors in

the room. So I spoke, right? The teachers were all silent, in absolute silence [...]. It was during the guerrilla period, when Mobral was being implemented. We interact with them, but we don't adhere to Mobral's proposal; we continue with our own proposal.

Marilza Lopes (personal communication) posits that during this period, the MEB reoriented its activities towards urban areas, moving away from the rural countryside. Consequently, the dynamic supplementary education program was expanded to rural areas, particularly in the Baixo Araguaia region. Notwithstanding the abandonment of literacy and radio work, the MEB maintained the fundamental principles of its educational practice. Lopes's analysis also highlights a notable distinction in the mobilization process between regions, noting that the MEB in Conceição do Araguaia did not undergo the process of "mобralization" observed in other regions.

In the 1970s, MEB initiated its involvement in supplementary education, administering exams in accordance with the directives established by the Federal Council of Education (CFE) and the State Council of Education (CEE), as delineated in the "Community Action Project" (1981-1983). The document rationalizes this modification by considering the heterogeneity of the beneficiary communities and the paucity of human resources, factors that impeded the delivery of training in rural areas and the certification of monitors. To address the aforementioned limitations, the project proposed the implementation of supplementary courses that have been adapted to local needs and that utilize flexible methodologies.

The document emphasizes that the supplementary education program was designed to develop reading skills, text interpretation, mastery of fundamental mathematical operations, and grouping techniques. As illustrated in Chart 2, the curriculum encompassed a range of educational offerings, including Functional Literacy and Supplementary Education, which correspond to the initial four years of elementary school education during that period.

Chart 2. Dynamic Supplementary Curriculum – Systematic Supply.

	AREAS	DISCIPLINES
GENERAL EDUCATION	COMMUNICATION AND EXPRESSION	- National Language
	SCIENCES	- Natural Sciences
		- Health Program
		- Health Campaigns
		- Mathematics
	SOCIAL STUDIES	- Geography
		- History
		- Moral and Civic Education
		- Brazilian Social and Political Organization

Source: Community Action Project for the Development of Educational and Cultural Activities in Rural Areas 1981-1983. Adapted by the authors, 2022.

The document reveals that General Education disciplines were universally available to all students, while the organization of Supplementary Education disciplines was tailored to the distinct requirements of each group. This approach was informed by a curriculum structure analogous to that employed in elementary schools during the 1970s.

In this context, the disciplines of Brazilian Social and Political Organization (OSPB) and Moral and Civic Education (EMC) were integrated into the educational strategy of the civil-military regime, functioning as instruments for legitimizing its principles. The state and military institutions were

strengthened to ensure the preservation of order and the advancement of the regime's objectives. The population was encouraged to adhere to the regime's principles (Veloso; Torrentes, 2016).

In light of the standardization of the national MEB curriculum, a pertinent question emerges: What methodology was employed to implement this standard in practice? Marilza Lopes (personal communication) posits that, despite the predefined nature of the programs, adaptations to the local reality, characterized by intense conflicts, were imperative. Consequently, the educational practice of the MEB sought to address the specific conditions of each community while also recognizing the challenges of the context.

In this sense, Chartier (2002) emphasizes that cultural objects, such as the MEB curriculum, involve symbolic and material disputes, being reinterpreted in the educational context. Maciel (2019) underscores the significance of collective representations and identities, meticulously crafted by individuals within the academic environment, in shaping the adoption of curricular elements. This, in turn, exerts a profound influence on the prevailing organizational dynamics and the social relations that are forged among diverse groups. In southern Pará, these disputes reflected power dynamics in which the national MEB established formal guidelines, while agents from Araguaia adapted their practices to the local reality. This adaptation influenced the social and cultural organization of the school environment.

"The MEB curriculum guidelines are indicative of the influence of civil-military government policies, incorporating moral and civic values and developmentalist ideas, especially in "Supplementary Education." A notable shift in the discourse of the national MEB was observed following the military coup, as evidenced by the adoption of terms such as "psychosocial adjustment" and "basic rudiments of knowledge."

The document under review reveals an effort to regulate the educational practices of the MEB, as it references Popular Animation (AnPo) and awareness raising. However, it does not explicitly address the transformation of social conditions. This perspective diverges from the approach advocated by Freire (2022), who proposed that the pedagogy of the oppressed should be self-constructed and oriented towards the transformation of reality by the oppressed themselves.

A comprehensive examination of this era necessitates a meticulous evaluation of the discord between the Church and various pastoral models, which exerted a profound influence on the educational practices of the MEB in southern Pará. Father Ricardo Rezende Figueira, a member of the team until the mid-1970s, offers a concise summary of these disputes:

It is interesting how two models and conceptions of the church coexist within the same prelacy. While one sector was impressed by the decisions of Vatican II and began to change the type of pastoral action in the early 1960s, breaking with the military regime and being persecuted, another sector seems to have a different conception of the church and pastorals. Until 1977, the Dominican nuns had excellent relations with the FAB (Brazilian Air Force), and the bishop was prohibited from using their planes. The Basic Forest Regulations, written in 1973 by members of the pastoral team, violate ecumenism and even go against the country's Constitution. The summary of the Regulations prohibits access to these lands by "sorcerers, Terecô practitioner, superstitious people, and suspects (terrorists). Cabaret clubs are abolished." Not satisfied, he lists 16 other conditions. It is interesting to note that "suspects" or "terrorists" for the government were the bishop, priests, pastoral agents... It is clear that neither the people respected such regulations, nor did the government build roads or provide services for that population. (Figueira, 1993, p. 9).

According to Father Ricardo Rezende, the internal tensions within the prelacy were the primary factor in the relocation of its headquarters to the municipality of Marabá. At that juncture, Dom Estevão relocated to Marabá, while Dom Luís Palha, already advanced in age, remained in Conceição do Araguaia.

The scenario elucidates an ideological schism within the prelacy. While conservatives, as represented by Dominican nuns, defended established traditions, progressives, including priests and laypeople, sought greater involvement with communities, aligning themselves

with a more active pastoral vision supported by the bishop. The Prelacy's regulations were in direct opposition to the tenets established by Vatican II, which advocated for spiritual renewal and the promotion of ecumenical unity. Furthermore, the Prelacy's regulations indicated a certain degree of proximity to the Civil-Military Government, a regime that regarded certain members of the clergy and laity as subversive elements. Therefore, in addition to facing political repression, MEB agents confronted resistance within the Church itself.

According to Chartier (2002), these collective representations encompass the thoughts, beliefs, and values that are shared within a given society. In the case of the MEB, its actions in a context of political repression and internal conflicts within the Church demonstrate that these representations are not merely common ideas, but social constructs that reflect specific historical and cultural conditions, evolving as the context changes. Collective representations possess the capacity to both legitimize and question authority, thereby impacting both individual and collective identities. Souza (2006) has observed that the MEB's actions have transcended the realm of education, thereby exposing latent internal conflicts within the Church and discord regarding its pastoral initiative.

It is imperative to provide historical context: in 1976, the occupation of the Baixo Araguaia intensified amid conflict, repression, and persecution of clergy and laypeople, accompanied by arrests and torture. Dom Estevão Avelar (Conceição do Araguaia) and Dom Alano Maria Pena (Marabá) were interrogated, and the Church broke with the State after growing tensions since the Araguaia Guerrilla, which ended in 1975. Notwithstanding this context, the MEB persisted in its operations within both urban and rural communities, centering its efforts on adult education. Nonetheless, the institution discontinued the implementation of Paulo Freire's pedagogical approach, a methodology that would subsequently be formalized and further developed over the ensuing years (Andrade; Rodrigues, 1993).

In 1976, coinciding with shifts in the political environment, the MEB of Conceição do Araguaia underwent a restructuring of its operations, aligning itself with national directives and prioritizing the "Dynamic Supplementary Course," which corresponded to the initial stage of elementary education. During this period, the Church's stance on agrarian conflicts led to a schism with the Municipal Education Secretariat. Consequently, the Movement centered its efforts on the promotion of supplementary education, while adult literacy, aligned with the MOBREAL framework, came under the domain of the municipal government (Andrade, 1991).

During this period, radio schools experienced a decline in popularity, while face-to-face activities demonstrated a growth in strength. This "methodological evolution" was driven by new literacy methods, popular culture movements, and references from foreign educators, leading the MEB to reformulate its approach (Movimento de Educação de Base, 1983, p. 7). Despite constant state surveillance, the MEB of Araguaia maintained its commitment to raising awareness and promoting freedom and emancipation among the rural population, albeit in a less explicit manner than in its early years. Nonetheless, the movement continued to function as a front for resistance.

The region's policies regarding land occupation and incentives for large landholdings had a significant impact on the educational practices of the MEB. As Andrade (1991) has noted, this period placed significant value on the local reality and cultural knowledge of the communities, prioritizing practice over theory. Consequently, the instructional materials and guidelines of the national MEB were adapted to align with local requirements. In his Memorial, Andrade (1991) provides a comprehensive account of the evolution of this educational practice (Figure 1).

The proposal for "Didactic Programming Training" (July 1976), as illustrated in Figure 1, provided the foundation for the actions of the Basic Education Center (CEB). The objective of the initiative was to provide a framework for educators and students to navigate their pursuit of "Integral Liberation of Man" in alignment with the principles articulated in the Gospel.

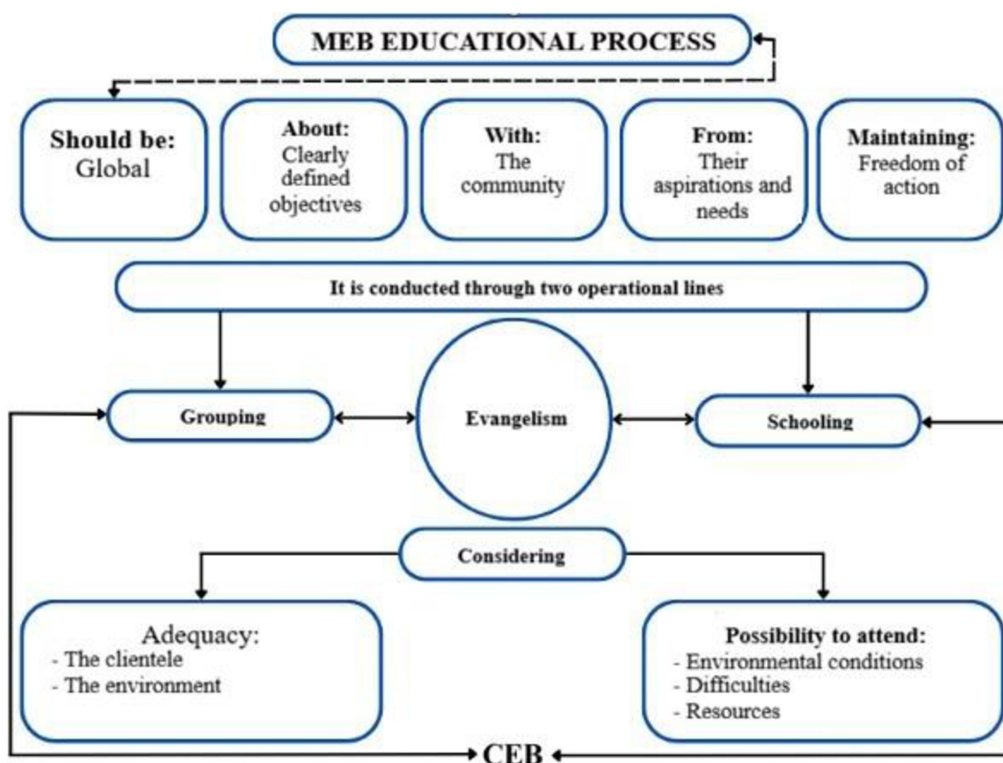


Figure 1. Schooling of Basic Ecclesial Communities.
Source: Prepared by the authors (2022), adapted from Andrade (1991).

At the time, the Prelacy of Conceição do Araguaia encompassed three municipalities, comprising approximately 100,000 inhabitants within a geographical area of 55,000 km². According to Andrade (1991), the MEB, which initially provided services to 15 riverside communities, expanded to 45 in 1977 and more than 60 in 1978.

Heloisa Andrade (personal communication) has noted that planning was often confused with programming, while evaluation focused on quantitative results. The adopted model exhibited a developmental bias, with the community serving as the foundation for the educational process and supplementary centers functioning as spaces for integration. This model placed a high priority on schooling and group formation. Evidence of this approach is apparent in documents such as teaching planning sheets and reports of meetings with monitors, as illustrated in Chart 3.

Chart 3. MEB - Teaching Program for the Dynamic Supplementary Course – Conceição do Araguaia System.

1st Phase "A"		1st Phase "B"	
Unit Name: Entertainment		Unit Name: Our Traditions	
Location of source text: Pages 101 to 119 – Book "O Camponês" – MEB Caicó/ Natal – RN		Location of source text: MOBREAL – Pages: B2, B3, B4, B7	
Date: August 1978		Date: July 1978	
Objectives	Teaching materials	Objectives	Teaching materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Understand and appreciate the region's folk art; -Recognize the importance of fun as a factor in the community; -Correctly understand the content of the text; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Book: "O Camponês"; -Cards with representations of fractions; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Define what tradition is; -Identify some of our traditions; -Distinguish between religious and civil festivities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Textbook – Mobreal; -Teacher's handbook; -Student's handbook; -Civic and folkloric calendar;

Source: Prepared by the authors (2022), adapted from MEB – Conceição do Araguaia, 1978. Seminário Diocesano Nossa Senhora do Rosário.

Chart 3. Continued...

1st Phase "A"		1st Phase "B"	
Unit Name: Entertainment		Unit Name: Our Traditions	
Location of source text: Pages 101 to 119 - Book "O Camponês" - MEB Caicó/Natal - RN		Location of source text: MOBREAL - Pages: B2, B3, B4, B7	
Date: August 1978		Date: July 1978	
Objectives	Teaching materials	Objectives	Teaching materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize definite and indefinite articles; -Understand how to use personal pronouns; -Understand how to graphically represent and read fractions; -Understand how to solve problems involving subtraction; -Understand the parts of the human body and their formation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Figure of the human skeleton; -Blackboard and chalk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interpret texts: main themes and ideas; -Distinguish between masculine, feminine, singular, and plural; -List synonyms and antonyms; -List important dates on the calendar; -Skillfully perform exercises with fractions and whole numbers, involving the four operations; -Demonstrate respect for popular celebrations; -Name religious celebrations that exist in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supplementary texts; -Brochure "Bible Circles" CF/78 -CNBB; -Blackboard and chalk.

Source: Prepared by the authors (2022), adapted from MEB – Conceição do Araguaia, 1978. Seminário Diocesano Nossa Senhora do Rosário.

The analysis of the teaching programs focused on specific objectives, revealing a subtle political and instrumental tension in the content, despite the absence of references to authors. In phase "A," the objectives were more open, encouraging the active participation of students and addressing subjects such as Portuguese language, mathematics, art, and science. The book "O Camponês" by MEB of Caicó/Natal (RN) was used in these classes. In phase "B," the content was more structured and conclusive, including religious and civic education, texts from Mobral, handouts for monitors and students, the civic calendar, and materials from Bible study groups. It is evident that the organizational structure of the institution aligns with the educational dynamics delineated by Heloisa Andrade.

At this point (1978), we reached the peak of the implementation of the supplementary course, with a total of 65 schools spread across this vast area of 55,000 km². The speed with which the supplementary education centers spread forced six members of the team to focus on developing their own teaching materials adapted to the reality of the region for Phase "B," since the only materials available were those used by Mobral, whose programmatic and ideological curriculum we disagreed with. Thus, we developed "Araguaia I and II" for Phase "B" since for Phase "A" we had "Camponês" adopted by the MEB of the Northeast. (Andrade, 1991, p. 10).

According to Heloisa Andrade (personal communication), the national MEB documents disseminated to the regions contained ideological guidelines that placed a strong emphasis on a practical and utilitarian character. Conversely, the "Araguaia"³ teaching material was developed in closer alignment with the educational concepts of local agents, thereby reflecting the actual conditions of the region.

In addition to the documented presence of Movement agents in the region known as "Baixo Araguaia," it is crucial to acknowledge the MEB's ongoing operations in other rural areas, including villages along the PA-150 highway, which have been characterized by violent agrarian

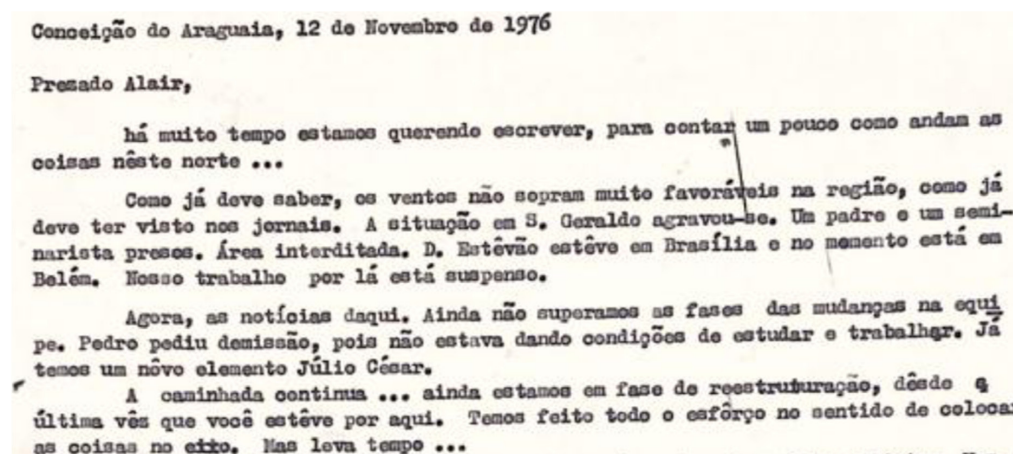
³ Area where the district of São Geraldo do Araguaia was located, then linked to the municipality of Conceição do Araguaia.

conflicts. In collaboration with the recently established CPT local, the MEB furnished a defense for rural workers and landowners.

As Andrade (1991, p. 8) observes, the Church maintained its social activities in the region, sustaining a presence on the radio, in the hospital, and in schools. From 1976 to 1978, the institution underwent a period of pastoral reorientation, marked by a shift in focus from the administration of sacraments to the investment in the strengthening of Basic Ecclesial Communities (CEBs).

The Baixo Araguaia region is distinguished by its history of intense agrarian conflicts, which have garnered national attention, including the Guerrilha do Araguaia and the episode known as the Perdidos conflict. According to Pessôa (2013, p. 37), the latter occurred in October 1976, resulting in the death of two military police officers and injuring security agents and squatters. This was followed by a period of severe repression, which included the arrest and torture of more than forty rural workers. The confrontation was ascribed to the actions of “subversives” in the region.

According to Pereira (2013, p. 77), during this period, Dom Estevão Avelar and Dom Alano Maria Pena, bishops of Conceição do Araguaia and Marabá, respectively, were interrogated and prosecuted under the National Security Law for supporting the squatters. The local MEB team documented this context in their written correspondence, reporting on the situation in Baixo Araguaia, as illustrated in the excerpt in Figure 2.



Conceição do Araguaia, 12 de Novembro de 1976

Presado Alair,

há muito tempo estamos querendo escrever, para contar um pouco como andam as coisas neste norte ...

Como já deve saber, os ventos não sopram muito favoráveis na região, como já deve ter visto nos jornais. A situação em S. Geraldo agravou-se. Um padre e um seminarista presos. Área interditada. D. Estevão esteve em Brasília e no momento está em Belém. Nosso trabalho por lá está suspenso.

Agora, as notícias daqui. Ainda não superamos as fases das mudanças na equipe. Pedro pediu demissão, pois não estava dando condições de estudar e trabalhar. Já temos um novo elemento Júlio César.

A caminhada continua ... ainda estamos em fase de reestruturação, desde a última vez que você esteve por aqui. Temos feito todo o esforço no sentido de colocar as coisas no eixo. Mas leva tempo ...

Figure 2. Situational context of the MEB – Correspondence 1976.

Source: Movimento de Educação de Base (1976). Archive of the Diocesan Curia of Marabá.

The document meticulously chronicles the inaugural interactions with the respective communities and the intricate process of reorganizing the MEB, which successfully revived connections with the Prelacy of Conceição do Araguaia following its separation from Marabá. In this movement, Dom Estevão Avelar provided support for the recomposition and integration of the team.

The coordination of the aforementioned agents was found to be lacking, which also had an impact on the MEB. As part of an initiative to enhance integration, two meetings were convened. The document alludes to initiatives aimed at the systematic organization and planning of actions, as well as the challenges encountered in vocational courses due to local crises. As demonstrated in Figure 2, the socio-political instability of the Baixo Araguaia region is evident, as are the interruptions in the work of the MEB and the repression of the clergy and lay agents.

In this context, the MEB can be understood in light of Certeau's reflections (2014, p. 41-42), for whom “ways of doing” represent practices through which subjects reappropriate and transform space, attributing new meanings to it. Consequently, despite the presence of imposed structures and orders, MEB agents devised methods to redefine their actions, thereby maintaining the proposal of raising awareness and emancipating the rural population in the south of the Amazon region of Pará.

In 1978, the foundation of 25 supplementary centers located in Baixo Araguaia was established (Andrade, personal communication). During this period, the team engaged in its inaugural

interactions with French priests Aristides Camio and Alain Michel Le Moal (Father Miguel), as well as MEB supervisor Inês de Freitas and residents. According to Andrade, the reception was marked by a degree of caution, indicative of the stringent repression experienced in the preceding period. However, he also reports that,

the collaborative efforts of the French priests and the lay people from the MEB resulted in the establishment of a more liberating and engaged pastoral approach, with the CPT and all associated matters being accorded a high level of priority. Following the arrival of Bishop José Patrick Hanrahan⁴, a significant increase in morale and support was observed [...] the pastoral sisters also demonstrated a high level of sensitivity and provided substantial support for the pastoral work, while also showing a positive response to the activities of the MEB. (Andrade, personal communication).

The appointment of Dom José Patrick Hanrahan as Bishop of the Diocese of Conceição do Araguaia in 1979 was met with great anticipation due to his perceived progressive stance. Despite the pervasive atmosphere of repression and persecution, he maintained unwavering support for the most impoverished members of society (Almeida, 2011, p. 64). In a text requested by Father Ricardo Rezende, Father Aristides Camio (2010) reports that before his arrival in the Diocese in 1978, the local Church had already advocated that “the land should remain with those who worked it” (Camio, 2010, p. 123). It is this author’s opinion that the parish team did not instigate the process; rather, they reacted to circumstances without having a comprehensive understanding of the broader context.

During the period of military dictatorship, the Diocese of Conceição do Araguaia, under the leadership of Dom Patrick Hanrahan, was classified by the government as part of the so-called “red axis,” alongside the dioceses of Goiás Velho (Dom Thomas Balduino), São Félix do Araguaia (Dom Pedro Casaldáliga), and Marabá (Dom Alano Pena). Dom Patrick Hanrahan, of Irish origin, had been exposed to the struggle against English occupation in his family history, and upon experiencing the local reality, became an ally in the struggle for land.

According to Father Aristides, the Baixo Araguaia region became a destination for migrants from the Northeast due to government policies for the Legal Amazon. However, the development process disproportionately benefited large landowners, financial institutions, and corporate entities, who demonstrated a greater interest in leveraging tax incentives than in fostering regional progress. Upon their arrival, migrants discovered that the land had already been appropriated by ITERPA or INCRA, and they were classified as invaders without the benefit of legal protection (Camio, 2010).

In this particular context, the MEB in Baixo Araguaia gave rise to tensions with local leaders and the military government by addressing issues that were pertinent to the community, including union organization, as illustrated in Figure 3.

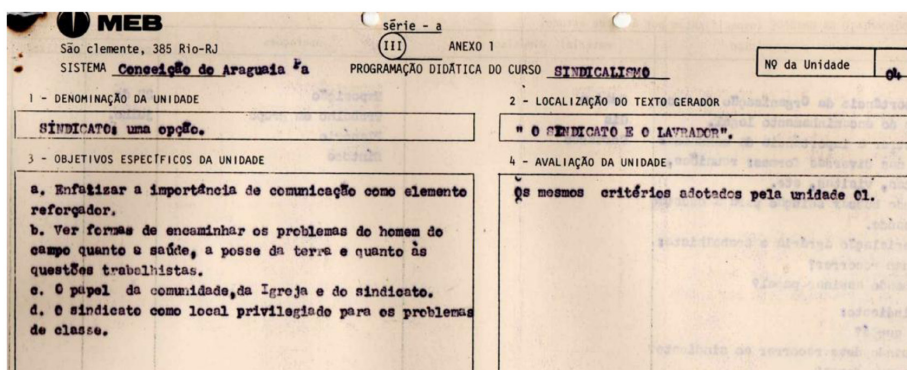


Figure 3. Teaching Program – Trade Unionism 1978 (Teaching planning sheets, MEB) – Conceição do Araguaia. **Source:** Movimento de Educação de Base (1978). Archive of the Nossa Senhora do Rosário Diocesan Seminary, Conceição do Araguaia/PA.

⁴ According to Fr. Ricardo Rezende, the bishop of the Prelacy of Conceição do Araguaia was transferred to Uberlândia (MG), and Friar Manoel Borges served on an interim basis. In 1979, Dom José Patrick Hanrahan was appointed bishop and, upon arriving, supported families evicted by the mayor’s brother (Figueira, 1993, p. 9).

The extant data demonstrated the development of training activities by the MEB that addressed issues such as health, access to land, labor relations, and community organization. The training activities appear to have focused on the political dimension of education and worker awareness. According to Souza (2006, p. 227), the objectives of the Movement encompassed the training of local leaders and the promotion of union organization, including the establishment of new rural unions.

A critical component of the formation and fortification of rural unions was the introspective examination of the Church, community, and unions. Andrade (personal communication) posits that “the struggle for land consumed people’s time [...] and its discussion in class was inevitable, as it impacted people’s lives.”

The problematization of MEB in Araguaia led students to recognize their oppression and become involved in the struggle for land (Andrade, personal communication). According to Freire (2022), this problematization is not confined to education; rather, it fosters emancipation, thereby empowering individuals to become agents of transformation within their communities.

The MEB’s approach to resolving tensions entailed a reconciliation of educational and unionistic endeavors, achieving a balance between pedagogical and political imperatives. In accordance with its foundational principles, the institution adopted a contextualized educational approach, whereby the language was adapted to align with the local reality, thereby avoiding the creation of a sense of distance or the imposition of ideas (Fávero, 2006, p. 110).

Confronted with repression by the civil-military government, MEB agents adopted strategies to maintain their alignment with the national MEB, despite internal conflicts within the Church of Conceição do Araguaia. To understand these practices in rural southern Pará in the 1970s and 1980s, it is necessary to turn to Certeau (2014), who emphasizes the significance of tactics and strategies in the relationship between individuals, space, and power:

I define “strategy” as the calculation of power relations that becomes possible from the moment that a subject of desire and power can be isolated from an “environment.” It posits a concept of a place that can be circumscribed as one’s own, thereby rendering it capable of serving as the basis for managing one’s relations with a distinct exteriority. [...] Conversely, the term “tactics” is employed to denote a calculation that does not rely on a self or a boundary that distinguishes the other as a visible totality. It is imperative to acknowledge that tactics are merely a component of a broader framework. [...] The entity in question lacks the fundamental elements necessary to capitalize on its profits, effectively prepare for expansion, and ensure independence in the face of adversity. The concept of the “self” can be understood as a triumph of place over time. (Certeau, 2014, p. 46).

Certeau (2014) emphasizes the inextricable linkage between strategies and tactics and the intricacies of daily life, thereby highlighting the inherent tensions that characterize these elements. This dynamic can be observed in the region under study: while the repressive apparatus activated control mechanisms to supervise the content of Rádio Educadora and intervene in the guidelines of the national MEB, coordinating with sectors of the Church linked to the interests of large landowners and local oligarchies, MEB Araguaia agents mobilized tactics of resistance. The educational practices of the aforementioned group fostered critical analysis of reality, compelling men and women to reflect on their social position and the conditions of their existence.

According to Andrade (personal communication), the school was conceptualized as a nexus for community engagement, fostering the establishment of diverse groups, including youth, women’s groups, sports teams, and Bible study groups, among others. In a similar vein, Certeau (2014, p. 45) asserts that tactics enable the transformation of events into “opportunities” by leveraging external forces in the favor of the less powerful. Accordingly, the educational practices delineated by Andrade, through the promotion of group formation, enabled the community to redefine the space as a tactic of subversion.

In her 2023 study, Heloisa Andrade meticulously delineates the structural characteristics of the Araguaia MEB during the specified historical period:

I arrived in 1976, and we noticed the expansion (of the MEB) to São Geraldo do Araguaia and Xinguara. In 1978, when the French priests arrived in the region, we became very focused on the rural area of Conceição do Araguaia. We also worked in the Redenção region. São

Geraldo was a very significant experience in the period between 1978 and 1980 because of the presence of the French priests. Dynamic supplementary schools spread throughout the rural communities of São Geraldo. Access was very difficult, as there were no roads at that time, so travel had to be by the Araguaia River. An MEB agent, Inês, stayed there with the French⁵ priests, which greatly helped to implement the dynamic supplementary courses [...]. In the early 1980s, the land issue intensified. [...]. A strong characteristic is that despite the split between the MEB and the CPT, the two were very closely linked, always had a forceful interaction, and this distinguished the MEB of Conceição and Marabá from the MEBs in other regions. (Andrade, personal communication).

Andrade's narrative delineates a period of profound political and economic transformation in southern Pará, underscoring the intricacies of the region and the strategic reconfiguration of the MEB to sustain its operations and address emerging challenges. The text emphasizes the growth of dynamic supplementary education in Baixo Araguaia, which was facilitated by the contributions of French priests.

The decentralization of activities and operations across various locations served to reinforce the MEB. According to Heloísa Andrade (personal communication), the division between the MEB and the CPT did not signify a rupture but rather a systematization of the work, facilitated by coordination between the teams. This configuration is particularly salient in the context of the MEB in Conceição do Araguaia and Marabá, given their direct connection to agrarian disputes in the region. Andrade's recollections align with Nora's perspective (1993, p. 18), who conceptualizes memory as a catalyst that prompts individuals to re-examine their experiences and reaffirm their sense of belonging, a fundamental component of identity.

Pereira (2013, pp. 168-169) posits that the *Comissões Pastorais da Terra* (CPT) of Marabá and Conceição do Araguaia were established in 1976 with the objective of organizing and coordinating the political and educational actions that were already being carried out by pastoral agents and the MEB in the context of the struggles for land. In its nascent years, the CPT operated in conjunction with pastoral initiatives, attaining administrative autonomy only in the early 1980s. It is within this process that the division between the MEB and the CPT, as referenced by Heloísa Andrade (personal communication), emerged.

Consequently, the daily practices redefined the act of teaching. The implementation of dynamic supplementary education programs resulted in Rádio Educadora's diminution of its leading role, while face-to-face activities led to the strengthening of ties with rural communities. Despite its emphasis on evangelization, its educational practice maintained emancipatory approaches, as indicated in the following excerpt (Figure 4).

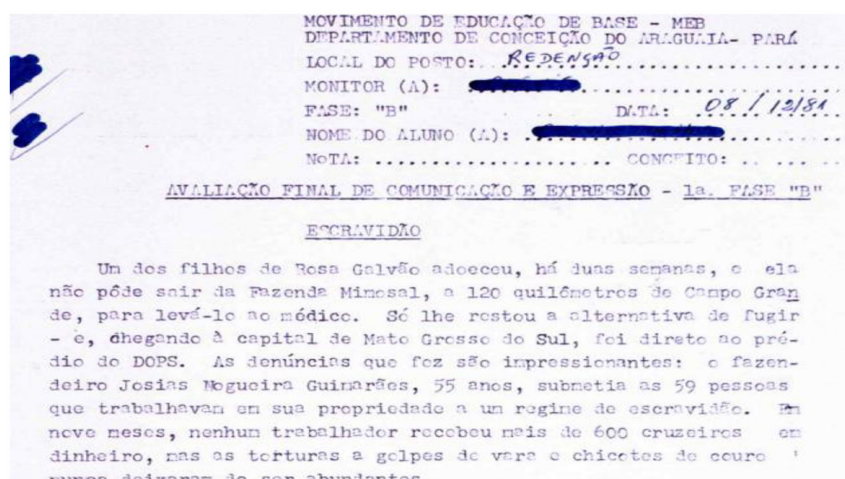


Figure 4. Final Evaluation of Communication and Expression – 1981.

Source: Movimento de Educação de Base (1981). Archive of the Nossa Senhora do Rosário Diocesan Seminary - Conceição do Araguaia, Pará/PA.

Figure 4 illustrates the daily lives of rural workers in southern Pará, emphasizing the absence of adequate medical care, constrained mobility, and the negligence of public authorities in addressing

⁵ Fathers Aristides Camio and Alain Michel Le Moal.

reports of slave labor and torture. Those occupying land illegally were forcibly removed, and agricultural workers sought to avoid the hazardous working conditions prevalent on cattle ranches. MEB agents confronted analogous situations of violence but developed educational practices of resistance, utilizing texts as a means of denunciation and awareness raising. As posited by Certeau (2014), this approach can be conceptualized as a pedagogical strategy of “bricolage,” entailing the adoption of tactics of survival and resistance within systems of power.

The reports from the supervision of MEB Araguaia (1978-1979) (Movimento de Educação de Base Conceição do Araguaia, s.d) highlight pedagogical challenges, such as long distances to monitor schools, lack of preparation of monitors, disengagement for various reasons, and difficulties in replacing these professionals. Concurrent with this period was a substantial increase in the rate of high school completion, accompanied by concerted initiatives to construct schools, organize folk art exhibitions, and engage in community actions. Andrade (personal communication) posits that, notwithstanding the encountered challenges, the outcomes were favorable, with a noted strengthening of grassroots communities and facilitation of access to formal education through the MEB's supplementary program, culminating in certification upon course completion. In the subsequent years, a series of modifications were made to the MEB's trajectory.

A subsequent evaluation by the MEB team determined that the supplementary courses demanded a substantial investment of time and resources, yielding results that were disproportionate to the investment. In urban areas, the impact was reasonable, especially among young people, promoting learning and school integration. However, the initiative encountered limitations in its capacity to enhance community awareness and integration. In rural areas, there was a high rate of school dropout, and the literacy programs conducted by MOBREAL attracted more interest than the supplementary courses (Andrade, 1993, p. 22).

In this context, the number of MEB agents was inadequate to meet the demands of the region, while popular and union movements were growing stronger. Andrade (1993) emphasizes the team's inability to effectively cover the entire expanse of the Diocese. Consequently, MEB agents collaborated with the CPT, despite the division of territories, to execute initiatives that delineated the trajectory of both entities.

Beginning in 1979 and persisting throughout the early 1980s, the MEB in Conceição do Araguaia concentrated its endeavors on providing counsel to women's movements, rural unions, and nascent organizations associated with the pursuit of redemocratization. The organization expanded its operations to peripheral regions of the cities that were part of the Diocese.

In the early 1980s, the MEB in Conceição do Araguaia initiated a program of support for popular organizations and movements, including rural unions, teachers' associations, residents' groups, and health and women's movements. This program furnished training, contextualized materials, and coordination of local, regional, and national struggles around issues such as land, health, and education (Andrade, personal communication).

Notwithstanding the adversities imposed by the military regime and financial restrictions, MEB agents demonstrated a remarkable capacity for adaptation, employing contextualized teaching materials and promoting an educational approach that was attuned to the realities of rural workers. The MEB's involvement in social conflicts in the region, as well as its interaction with popular movements and the Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT), reinforced its political and emancipatory dimension.

CONCLUSION

The present study focuses on the daily practices of men and women who worked in the educational activities of the MEB, understood in light of Certeau's reflections (2014). Set in a context marked by the proliferation of prominent landowners and economic development initiatives in the southern region of the Amazon in Pará, the Movement solidified its position as a social and political entity, fostering practices and representations that contributed to the formation of its identity as a site of resistance (Chartier, 2002).

The objective of this study was to examine the trajectory of the MEB in Araguaia, based on cultural history and memories recorded in documentary and oral sources. The analysis focused on the role of education as an instrument of emancipation for ordinary men and women (Certeau, 2014). The relevance of preserving and transmitting the collective memory of the Movement was also considered, according to Nora (1993), who linked the research results to discussions in the field of study.

The research demonstrated that MEB played a fundamental role in popular education and the organization of rural communities, especially during a period marked by repression under the military dictatorship and intense disputes over land in the region. The educational practices developed by MEB were influenced by a variety of historical and political contexts. Initially, radio schools served as the primary pedagogical instrument, facilitating access to education for populations dispersed throughout regions that were otherwise inaccessible. Nonetheless, as political repression worsened during the 1970s, the radio model underwent a gradual replacement by alternative educational strategies. These included Dynamic Supplementary Education and face-to-face education within basic ecclesial communities.

The study also highlighted the presence of internal tensions within the Church, reflecting the different pastoral concepts that coexisted in the Diocese of Conceição do Araguaia. While certain sectors advocated for a more conservative evangelism strategy, others aligned themselves with the progressive guidelines established by the Second Vatican Council. These progressive sectors promoted a liberating education that centered on social issues.

The educational practices of the MEB played a fundamental role in democratizing knowledge and raising awareness among rural workers about the power structures of the state and the economic dominance of large landowners between 1962 and 1985. These initiatives manifested in two distinct ways: firstly, within the experiences of community groups, and secondly, in the support for the establishment of rural trade unions. The aforementioned actions contributed to the consolidation of rural movements and functioned as a form of resistance against the prevailing social order.

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