

ARTICLE

FROM THE ABSTRACT TEACHER TO THE CONCRETE TEACHER²

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ABSTRACT: The article aims to present the results of theoretical-methodological and documentary research that aimed to gather multiple determinations of what educational work has been in the Brazilian social formation. Highlighting the complementarity and difference between the theoretical notions of abstract and concrete within the framework of dialectical materialism, the article makes a case for the direction of teacher education, beyond the concept of educational work, guided by the concrete ways in which it occurs in the Brazilian social formation. The theory of surplus value presented by Marx in “The Capital” is revisited, theoretically showing how, in capitalism, educational work occurs in a contradictory and dialectical integration into the processes of labor force formation, subordinated to capitalist interests aimed at the production of surplus value. Under this theoretical orientation, it is evident that educational work composes the productive chain of the workforce necessary for the development of the processes of extraction of surplus value that occur, from the Brazilian social formation, in an intimate, contradictory and dialectical articulation with the international division of labor.

Keywords: teacher, concrete, abstract.

RESUMO: O artigo tem por objeto a exposição de resultados de pesquisa teórico-metodológica e documental que teve por objetivo reunir múltiplas determinações daquilo que o trabalho educativo vem sendo na formação social brasileira. Evidenciando a complementaridade e a diferença entre as noções teóricas de *abstrato* e *concreto* para o materialismo dialético, o artigo argumenta pela direção da formação de professores, para além do conceito de trabalho educativo, orientada pelas formas concretas em que ele ocorre na formação social brasileira. Revisita-se a teoria da mais valia exposta por Marx em “O Capital”, evidenciando teoricamente como, no capitalismo, o trabalho educativo ocorre contraditória e dialeticamente integrado aos processos de formação da força de trabalho subordinados aos interesses capitalistas voltados à produção de mais valia. Sob essa orientação teórica, evidencia-se que o trabalho educativo compõe a cadeia produtiva da força de trabalho necessária ao desenvolvimento dos processos de extração de mais valia que ocorrem, a partir da formação social brasileira, em íntima articulação contraditória e dialética com a divisão internacional do trabalho.

Palavras-chave: professor, concreto, abstrato.

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DEL PROFESOR ABSTRACTO AL PROFESOR CONCRETO

RESUMEN: Este artículo tiene como propósito presentar los resultados de una investigación teórico-metodológico y documental cuyo objetivo fue reunir múltiples determinaciones de cómo ha sido el trabajo educativo en la formación social brasileña. Al poner de relieve la complementariedad y diferencia entre las nociones teóricas de abstracto y concreto para el materialismo dialéctico, el presente artículo aboga por la orientación de la formación docente, más allá del concepto de trabajo educativo, guiada por las formas concretas en que él ocurre en la formación social brasileña. Se revisita la teoría de la plusvalía expuesta por Marx en “El Capital”, resaltando teóricamente cómo, en el capitalismo, el trabajo educativo se da de manera contradictoria y dialécticamente integrada con los procesos de formación de la fuerza de trabajo subordinada a intereses capitalistas y centrados en la producción de plusvalía. Bajo esta orientación teórica, es evidente que el trabajo educativo constituye la cadena productiva de la fuerza de trabajo necesaria para el desarrollo de los procesos de extracción de plusvalía que ocurren, a partir de la formación social brasileña, en una articulación íntimamente contradictoria y dialéctica con la división internacional del trabajo.

Palabras clave: docente, concreto, abstracto.

INTRODUCTION – OBJECT, OBJECTIVES, THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL AND PROBLEMATIC MATRIX

Teacher formation faces the “problem of pre-professional formation of teachers' subjective conditions for professional practice” (Peixoto, 2021, pp. 110-129). This issue is evidenced within the broader debate on the Brazilian social formation, which emphasizes the need and relevance of expanding the duration of in-service teacher formation through teaching internships, supervised internships, and pedagogical residencies. In addition to concerns related to the exploitation of undergraduate labor in the various internship contracts, both within and outside the national higher education system, issues that cannot be addressed in this article, we encounter a real problem of the theoretical and methodological foundation underlying the belief that “knowing what reality is” requires “entering into a relationship with this reality.” There are two possibilities for theoretical-methodological approaches, each carrying substantial pedagogical implications: the empirical-analytical approach, which asserts that mere presence in a study or work environment is enough to know this reality, based on the observation, experience and reason (Locke, 2010); and the materialist and dialectical approach, which starts from the assumption that “all science would be superfluous if there were an immediate coincidence between the appearance and the essence of things” (Marx, 2008, p. 1080). This latter approach conceives reality as a “synthesis of multiple determinations” (Marx, 2011a, p. 246-258) and knowledge requires a totality approach, enabling conscious action aimed at transforming reality, which in turn generates new knowledge and new transformation (Marx, 1989a, p. 202).

A broad critical debate about this “excessive emphasis on empirical and accumulated experience” (Moraes, 2003, p. 13; Freitas, 2002; 2007; Freitas et al., 2006; Kuenzer and Rodrigues, 2007) took place in Brazilian social formation; unfortunately, we are unable to even cite it here, given the demands and norms that limit the scope of this text. This debate interests us in a very particular aspect—in our view, an underdeveloped one—of the potentialities and possibilities of the theoretical and methodological approach based on dialectical materialism, as studied through a direct reading of the works of Marx and Engels. We consider the problem of knowledge and the transformation of reality posed by Marx in the Theses on Feuerbach, and deeply captured by the philosopher and translator of the works of Marx and Engels, José Barata-Moura:

The question of whether objective truth is inherent in human thought is not theoretical, but a practical one. Human beings must prove in practice the truth—that is, the actual reality and power, the ceteriority—of their thinking. The dispute about the actual reality or unreality of thinking—of thinking that is isolated from practice—is a purely scholastic question (Marx translated by Barata-Moura, 2018, p. 17, translator's emphasis).

Between the 1940s and 1950s, Marx and Engels engaged in debates within the group of young German idealists (Young Hegelians) about the ontognosiological foundation that distinguishes reality from thought about reality. These debates are already recorded in the youthful writings of both authors, but are particularly explored in the Theses on Feuerbach (1845), *The Holy Family* (1845), and *The German Ideology* (1845–1846). In Marx's particular case, concerns about the path to understanding reality appear in an “Introduction” outlined for the work *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (2011a, pp. 246–258), published in 1859 (a fragment of a set of studies conducted by Marx, which would later come to be known as the Grundrisse). In this “Introduction”—which Marx claims, in the “Preface” to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, to have suppressed because he considered “that to anticipate conclusions from what must first be demonstrated is incorrect” (Marx, 2011b, p. 3)—Marx works to develop the theoretical-methodological foundation of the method of political economy (the title he gave the text), which, in critical dialogue with Hegelian idealist dialectics, he develops as a materialist dialectic. This brief outline, later published by the curators of Marx's work as an “Introduction,” addresses precisely the problem of transposing—truthfully—that which lies outside consciousness (the concrete) into consciousness (as concrete thought).

This article aims to establish a critical perspective in the ongoing debates about the most effective approaches to teacher formation, which seeks to address the dilemma of the correspondence (true) between the subjective formation of teachers and the objective reality in which they will operate. From our perspective, rigorously, this matter is particularly relevant in discussions about practical problems in Brazilian social education. This critical perspective will involve (i) revisiting, based on the work of José Barata-Moura, the appropriation and overcoming of the categories of the abstract and concrete as articulated in classical German idealism; (ii) highlighting the limitations of grounding teacher formation in an abstract concept of “educational work.” We argue that idea, as defined by Hegel (in an idealist sense) and Marx (from a materialist and dialectical perspective) define it as an abstract concept; (iii) finally, we seek to bring contributions to a perspective of totality in the recognition of some of the determinations that underpin the objective conditions in which teachers act, which define what may come to be, ontologically, the concrete teacher, in a condition given by the contradiction between the subjective formation of these teachers and the diversity and complexity of the reality in which they will act in the anarchic National Education System that the stage of development of the class struggle in the Brazilian social formation makes possible.

Throughout the text, we aim to demonstrate theoretically and empirically the need to advance from a teacher taken in abstract (based on partial determinations of their ontology) to teacher formation that considers the concrete teacher. The concept of concrete teacher comprehends multiple determinations that constitute the teacher in the complex national education system typical of the Brazilian social formation. For example, formation, generation context, stage of development of professionalization in relation to the social division of labor, working conditions, gender, age, socio-economic class position by salaries, job security or lack of it, degree of development of work intensification, and degree of development of union organization, among other aspects highlighted in this manuscript. Our research leads us to conclude that the ontological definition of what a teacher is requires us to recognize the real conditions in which they effectively operate, and this recognition is not feasible exclusively with this “excessive emphasis on empirical and accumulated experience” (Moraes, 2003, p. 13), precisely because reality cannot be captured solely by the senses and the immediacy of our subjective interpretations. What a teacher is a historical process in continuous movement and change, and is formed in the conjunctural relationships determined by the stage of development of the educational policy effectively implemented in each location of the Brazilian social formation.

From the perspective of dialectical materialism, which is a reference to delimit the object and problematize the ontognosiological dimension of teacher formation practice, the multiple determinations that define the concrete teacher can only be fully understood within the production relations inherent in Brazilian social formation. These relations are, in turn, determined by the international division of labor established within capitalist production systems. We believe that the pathway to understanding these production relations was developed in the 1940s and is summarized in the “Preface” and “Introduction” to the work *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Marx, 2011a). However, since Marx and Engels

did not produce a systematic text focusing on the method, the final form of this method is only recognizable through careful study of the process of expounding the critique of political economy carried out in “Capital.” In this article, we explore the reference made by Marx, in the “Introduction” (August 29, 1857), to the movement of knowledge as an effort to transpose the concrete (external to consciousness) as concrete thought, precisely, by way of grasping multiple determinations.

The text is based on a broad literature review that includes: (1) the founding thought of dialectical materialism for the study of the question about the possibility of knowledge and the path to achieve it, effectively read in the source of the works of Marx and Engels; (2) the thought of a translator into Portuguese and a careful scholar and interpreter of German idealism and the development of dialectical materialism in the process of criticizing German idealism, Professor José Barata-Moura, on which we rely to clarify the understanding about the notions of abstract, concrete and multiple determinations; (3) the critical debate on teacher formation in Brazil, particularly in the aspect of criticism (i) of the emphasis on in-service formation, highlighting especially the ontognosiological problem denounced in this debate (among others, Moraes, 2003, p. 13; Freitas, 2002; 2007; Freitas et al., 2006; Kuenzer; Rodrigues, 2007) and (ii) the adoption of an ideal type of what a teacher should be based on an abstract definition of what a teacher is (Saviani, 2008); (4) the collection of data on the situation of teachers in Brazil in articles, censuses, and statistics (Afonso et al., 2021; Catini, 2023, Kuenzer; Rodrigues, 2007; Evangelista et al., 2022; FENEP, 2022a, 2022b; Fernandes, 2023; IBGE/CONCLA, 2023; Seki, 2021; Matijascic, 2017; Lima 2022; Jacomini; Gil; Castro, 2019); (5) the careful recovery of the concepts and categories coined by Marx to argue that teachers' work is productive work because it directly produces surplus value and indirectly creates a workforce. We do not intend to exhaust this debate, which would be impossible within the scope of a single article, and it is a collective task. Our goal is simply to outline the challenge we face when adopting consistent dialectical materialism to identify the objective conditions under which the concrete teacher is produced, as a process. In this regard, it may not be a bad idea to take the founders of dialectical materialism at their word—to this we attribute the need for lengthy verbatim quotations, in which we explore the categories of ontology, epistemology, abstract, concrete, multiple determinations, productive labor, and surplus value.

ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE IN KARL MARX'S MATERIALIST DIALECTIC – THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CRITICISM OF THE LIMITATION OF FORMATION THAT STARTS FROM THE ABSTRACT TEACHER

José Barata-Moua³, a translator and scholar of Marx's work, analyzes the complex “Introduction” outlined for the work *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Marx, 2011a, pp. 246-258), explaining that it is the outlining of a referential framework “that is not static, but a moving picture” in which dialectics is set in motion on a materialist basis (Barata-Moura, 2016, p. 330). The professor at the University of Lisbon explains that the problem of materiality in Marx goes beyond, on the one hand, its reduction to “empiricism,” “positivism,” “mechanicism,” or “economism”; and on the other hand, it is not an idealization of what reality should be, it does not refer to “untamable contingencies” nor to a “blind necessitarianism” (Barata-Moura, 2016, p. 328). It is a new concept of materialism (Barata-Moura, 2016, p. 326), whose synthesis Barata-Moura explains:

The materiality of being is not confined solely to “bodies,” to “tangible discrete entities,” to “forces”—in the rigidified *immediacy* of its appearance to an instantiation in consciousness, whose phenomenal manifestations are readily acknowledged by sensory certainty.

In its materiality, being is always a *process of becoming*—in the context of which things and situations, representations and behaviors, positivity and its practical transformation, gradually, in a plastic but determined form, take shape and acquire station.

In its materiality, *being*—even when objectified (objectified) in this or that phenomenon—is always a system of unfolding relations, a dynamic texture of relationships. In this sense, an *identity*

³ José Barata-Moura was part of the translation team at Editorial Avante, overseeing the translation of over 30 works by these authors, pillars of dialectical materialism. As a translator from German to Portuguese, he explored the studies of Marx and Engels, revisiting the 19th-century debates in which they both participated.

[...] [that] transcends the simple abstract monotony of an enduring constancy, is always a dialectical unity of the “same” and the “other”: that is why it is *concrete*.

In its materiality, *being*—as a complex of relationships and developing realities—is *not limited to the existing*: it encompasses a determined range of real *possibilities* that each existence projects forward, weaves, and interweaves with negation and contradictions (which fuel its movement). It encompasses *within itself* (precisely, as materiality) the daily *work* of history itself by human collectives in the production and reproduction of their lives (Barata-Moura, 2016, p. 328-329, author's emphasis).

In the course of developing the explanation (which remained unfinished and unpublished during his lifetime) in the “Introduction,” particularly in the section titled “The Method of Political Economy,” Marx (2011a, pp. 246-258) articulates in materialist and dialectical terms what is meant by the concrete to which thought refers: a synthesis of multiple determinations, embodying unity within diversity in continuous movement. Below, we present an excerpt from a careful translation by Barata-Moura, accompanied by commentary:

The *concrete* [of *Konkrete*] is concrete because it is the gathering together [*Zusammenfassung*] of many determinations [*vieler Bestimmungen*] – therefore, [it is] the unity of the diverse [*Einheit des Mannigfaltigen*]. In *thinking*, it [the concrete] therefore, appears as a *process of gathering*, as a *result*, not as a *starting point* [*Ausgangspunkt*], although it is the [actually] real starting point and, consequently, also the starting point of intuition and representation. [...] the method of rising from the abstract to the concrete” – that is, *from the different, singular aspects detected to the whole they form* – “[...] is, for thinking, merely the way of appropriating [*aneignen*] the concrete, of reproducing it as a spiritually concrete. In no way [is] it, however, the process of genesis [*der Entstehungsprozess*] of the concrete itself” – fundamentally, because, in its materiality, and not only in its subjective reconstruction in a knowledge that accounts for it, *being is concrete* (Barata-Moura, 2016, p. 334, author's emphasis).

The decisive step that Marx is demanding and following concerns, in the process of knowledge, the distinction between the need for *abstraction* (a provisional separation of fragments of reality for their analysis) and the indispensable return to the concrete whole from which it was momentarily detached, exclusively, for study. Once again, we turn to Barata-Moura to analytically expound Marx's thought process:

[...] categories – as tools of thought – are part of the *abstract* order, insofar as they denote a universality (or generality) that brings together and unifies a multiple determined in its articulation.

However, as we have seen, in terms of materialist dialectics, they must be the *abstract* expression – namely, in the realm of knowledge – of a *multiplicity* that is *concrete*, in the very content of its becoming: [...].

In this framework, *abstraction* is a theoretical device for *separation* – based on a concrete set of determinations – and for the *refinement* of a set of traits common to the multiple that identify it with a (thought) unity that it materially possesses (Barata-Moura, 2016, p. 336-337, emphasis added).

In our pursuit of understanding of what has been the teachers' concrete work, the concrete teacher, we reach for that significant reference in the sense of Marx's dialectical materialism regarding the possibility of knowledge (of the concrete in its multiple determinations), to emphasise the requirements of this task. In that process, we highlight the relevancy (in terms of emphatic defense of the historical responsibilities of school education, in the face of the ongoing denial of scientific knowledge) and, contradictory, we put on debate the insufficiency (in terms of collecting of the multiple determinations of the possibility of doing the educational work) from the concept of “educational work” made by Dermeval Saviani on the occasion of the delimitation of “the nature of specificity” of education in relation of his contribution to the understanding of human ontology:

[...] what is not guaranteed by nature must be produced historically by men, and this includes men themselves. We can, therefore, say that human nature is not given to man, but is produced

by him based on his biophysical nature. Consequently, educational work is the act of producing, directly and unconditionally, in each individual, the humanity that is produced historically and collectively by all men. Thus, the object of education concerns, on the one hand, the identification of the cultural elements that need to be assimilated by individuals of the human species for them to become human and, on the other hand, and concomitantly, the discovery of the most appropriate ways to achieve this objective (Saviani, 2008, p. 11-13).

We understand that this conceptual delimitation, in a time of denial of science and reason and the affirmation of relativism, politically disputes the centrality of the socialization of erudite culture and science as an essential task of the school (Saviani, 2008), and herein lies its relevance. However, the challenge of teacher formation extends beyond orienting formation toward the ideal of educational work should be, demands reference to the objective, historical conditions in which educational work, it needs a consideration of the objective historical conditions under which educational endeavors have historically synthesized multiple determinations that precede their feasibility. In this context, education transforms into a complex process deeply intertwined with the evolution of productive forces and relations of production. To effectively engage in teacher formation while emphasizing the importance of educational work for humanity (Leontiev, 2004; Saviani, 2008; Saviani; Duarte, 2012), it is essential to acknowledge the various determinations that, by their situational influence on educational practice, reshape it into a process that contributes to a broader project of humanization. Employing a rigorous materialist and dialectical approach to human ontology requires us to recognize that, in the historical context in which we currently understand it—one that is wholly subsumed under capitalist relations of production—it has evolved into a form whose comprehension necessitates “discovering in the material facts” (Engels, 2018, p. 78) what defines it and what it has ultimately become.

The recognition of this historical contradiction needs to explore the multiple determinations that produce the concrete forms of being a teacher in Brazilian social formation, which are determined by and dependent on capitalist relations of production. If “abstracting something corresponds to retaining and fixing only some determination, or some of the determinations, with which it is invested (leaving aside the others)” (Barata-Moura, 2016, p. 339, author's emphasis), it is urgent that we recognize that these other determinations left aside are fundamental to understanding the totality within which teachers' educational work operates, particularly in the transformations that are pushing education toward the status of a private business induced by the Brazilian state (Seki, 2021).

In this article, we aim to gather further determinations of what educational work has been in Brazilian social formation. We begin by analyzing the Brazilian Classification of Occupations (CBO-*Classificação Brasileira de Ocupações*), as a reflective expression of the deepening social division of educational labor in Brazilian social formation, amid the complexification of the labor force production chain, severely subordinated to the limits of its conversion to commodities. We then present data on the situation of teachers in Brazil, which results from efforts by public authorities and international organizations to characterize these segments of the education workforce. In this regard, the composition of the teaching staff stands out, seeking employers of this workforce and, essentially, their interests, establishing the links between teachers' work and the political economy. We advocate for formation through the method of multiple determinations so that the working conditions that exist in Brazilian social formation are reproduced in their consciousness (concrete thought).

IN THE CAPITALIST PRODUCTION RELATIONS OF THE BRAZILIAN SOCIAL FORMATION – EDUCATIONAL WORK AS PRODUCTIVE WORK

In this exposition, we seek, in its multiple determinations, the effective form—concrete, in the materialist and dialectical sense of the term coined by Marx (2011a, p. 246-258)—in which educational work transforms into productive labor. We seek the particular form in which educational work appears as an activity that is performed in the social division of labor characteristic of Brazilian social formation, in the same process of development of the concentration and centralization of capital that configures the core of financialization in this cycle, in which educational oligopolies (Seki, 2021) direct educational policy.

In this sense, despite the vast Brazilian debate about the concept and classification of what is or is not productive work (Secco, n.d.; Frigotto, 2006, p. 144-162; Marini, 2012), we are considering

here only the defining criteria established by Marx (1989a and 1989b) for the recognition of the fundamental traits of capitalist production relations:

[...] In the production of commodities, our capitalist is not driven by pure love of use-values. He produces use-values simply because they are, and as long as they are, material substrates, holders of exchange-value. He has two objectives. First, he wants to produce a use-value that has an exchange-value, an article destined for sale, a commodity. Second, he wants to produce a commodity of higher value than the combined value of the commodities necessary to produce it—that is, the sum of the values of the means of production and labor-power, for which he advanced his good money in the market. In addition to a use-value, he wants to produce a commodity, in addition to a use-value, value, and not only value but also surplus value (surplus value) (Marx, 1989a, p. 210-211).

This means that we recognize, with Marx, that *productive labor* is useful labor (or concrete labor, determined by the particular type of activity that generates a type of product). In the process of commodity production, this labor *crystallizes value*, that is, in which the worker expends, in a given interval of time—under the control of the capitalist—a “quantity of socially necessary labor” for the production of a given use value. This labor time crystallizes in the form of *value* (Marx, 1989a, pp. 45, 58, 96, 589). In our view, what defines productive labor is its objective form of being a means of extracting more value, as Marx points out in two other instances:

The value of labor power and the value it creates in the labor process are, therefore, two distinct magnitudes. The capitalist had this difference in value in mind when he purchased labor power. Its useful property, such as making yarn or shoes, was merely a *conditio sine qua non*, since labor to create value must be expended in a useful way. But what was decisive was the specific use-value of labor power, which consists in its being a source of value and of more value than it possesses. This is the specific service the capitalist expects from it (Marx, 1989a, p. 218).

While the labor process is purely individual, a single worker performs all the functions that later become dissociated. By individually appropriating natural objects to provide for their livelihood, they control themselves; later, they will be under the control of others. [...] Later, they separate and eventually become hostilely opposed. The product ceases to be the immediate result of the individual producer's activity and becomes a social, common product of a collective worker, that is, of a combination of workers, each of whom may participate directly or indirectly in the manipulation of the object on which the labor is performed. The conceptualization of productive labor and its executor, the productive worker, is expanded by this cooperative nature of the labor process. *To work productively, it is no longer necessary to perform a task of manipulating the object of labor; it is enough to be an organ of the collective worker, exercising any of its fractional functions.* The previous conceptualization of productive labor, derived from the nature of material production, remains valid for the collective worker considered as a whole. But it no longer applies to each of its members considered individually.

Furthermore, the concept of productive labor is restricted. Capitalist production is not just the production of commodities; *it is essentially the production of surplus value.* The worker does not produce for himself, but for capital. Therefore, it is no longer sufficient for him to simply produce. He must produce surplus value. Only the worker who produces surplus value for the capitalist, thus serving the self-expansion of capital, is productive. Using an example outside the sphere of material production: a schoolteacher is a productive worker when he works not only to develop the minds of children but also to enrich the school owner. Investing his capital in a teaching factory instead of making sausages does not change the situation. *The concept of productive labor encompasses not only a relationship between activity and useful effect, between worker and product of labor, but also a specifically social relationship of production, of historical origin, which makes the worker the direct instrument of creating surplus value.* Being a productive worker is not happiness, but misfortune (Marx, 1989b, p. 584, emphasis added).

We understand that formation for educational work requires recognizing the conditions under which it effectively operates, contradictorily and dialectically articulated with the capitalist relations of production inherent in Brazilian social formation, which are deeply integrated into the international division of labor. In this sense, the C.B.O. emerges as an expression and reflection, within the scope of formal logic, of an effort to map a chaotic whole that cannot be grasped solely by characterizing the limits of what can be defined as a profession (in its unity of diversity—the teacher). On the path to locating

educational work as a producer of surplus value (productive labor in the sense that Marx reveals as the form of labor that interests the capitalist), it is necessary to revisit the C.B.O. as an expression (albeit within the limits of formal logic) of the concrete forms that educational work assumes as a specialized activity, directed towards the production of a determined use value – the labor force – within the limits of those criteria that capitalists (as they move in the capitalist relations of production typical of the Brazilian social formation) define as what the working class can be.

CONCRETE FORMS OF EDUCATIONAL WORK – CBO, SOCIAL DIVISION OF EDUCATIONAL WORK AND DISPUTE OF INTERESTS AROUND ITS CONTENT AND FORM

Recognizing that it is not the concept of educational work (this is only a horizon of possibility, when the objective conditions are given), but how it is objectified that will determine what educational work can be – since the historical processes of production of existence are the determining factors in explaining the economic, political and ideological hegemony of a class (Marx; Engels, 2007) –, we understand that it is in the study of these processes of production of existence (always in the international division of labor) that we will understand the situation of teachers in Brazilian social formation.

Recognizing that human labor “must reach a certain level of development to be used in multiple ways” (Marx, 1989a, p. 49). Let us begin by recognizing the CBO⁴ as an objective expression that the social division of educational labor has advanced toward perfecting the complex national education system that actually exists in Brazil as a productive chain of labor insofar as it is relevant to the capitalist system. In this development process, the social division of labor has specialized and promoted the very function of educational work performed by the teacher within the different divisions of the national education system, characteristic of Brazilian social formation.

In Brazil, the advanced privatization of public education means that labor production occurs in the same way as the production of other commodities, guided by the principle of production and circulation of value and the extraction of surplus value (Marx, 1989a; Marx, 1989b). Labor production will fluctuate according to the greater or lesser need for the type of labor the capitalist requires at a given stage of the development of productive forces and relations of production. The advent of information technology and robotics significantly reduces the need for skilled labor and will require basic formation to operate the communication tools immediately considered relevant for a given type of work imposed on workers (Antunes, 2020; Kuenzer, 2002; 2007). This involves reducing formation to “simple labor” (Marx, 1989a, p. 51), lowering the costs of production and reproduction of labor.

Considering the CBO (MTE, 2010), we have found 27 occupational families and 138 “teacher” occupations related to:

- the levels and modalities of education (early childhood education, elementary, middle, and higher education, youth and adult education, special education);
- the type of formation received for teaching (layperson, high school, and higher education);
- the areas of knowledge (languages, history, geography, mathematics, physics, physical education, biology, architecture, administration, mathematics, and chemistry, among others) or theories, methods, and techniques specific to professional practice (architecture, physical education, economics, administration, engineering, nursing, dentistry, physical therapy, nutrition, veterinary medicine, pedagogical formation, languages, among others);
- the type of population served (physical, hearing, mental, visual, or multiple disabilities);
- or the administrative and pedagogical roles that teachers perform in schools (pedagogical coordinator, educational advisor, educator, psychopedagogue).

We must recognize that identifying teachers' work in Brazilian social formation has become more complex due to the internal development of the social division of labor, which separated education by (i) branches of production that required rapid qualification for a specific productive segment; (ii) the

⁴ About CBO: Nozoe, Bianchi e Rondet (2003); MTE (2010; 2023); IBGE (2023); (Nozoe, 2022).

need for general qualifications for diverse job positions in municipalities and states in a country of continental dimensions; and, more recently, as a result of (iii) the decentralization of public sector education, with its distribution among the most unusual⁵ fractions of capitalists (Freitas, 2018; Seki, 2021; Catini, 2023). Furthermore, the development of productive forces (particularly IT and robotics, and especially after the pandemic cycle) has enabled the emergence of information and communication technologies that are penetrating educational work and profoundly transforming the way teachers are, making teaching planning, the act of teaching and the evaluation of teaching/learning operations increasingly complex and distant from the education worker, being transferred to various IT, robotics and Artificial Intelligence tools.

In the contradictions of this ongoing transformation process, the search for justifications for the creation of the CBO by the Federal Government (exposed on government websites and HR guidance in different companies mediating the relationship between workers and available vacancies in the job market) highlights: (i) the expectation of control of work processes and formation; (ii) the control of employment statistics; (iii) the control of job deviations and prevention of problems with labor rights; (iv) the monitoring and control of remuneration; and (v) the control and projection of work and employment policies.

Together with the concern of mapping teacher occupation in the CBO and the intensive studies on teacher formation and professionalization carried out over the last 60 years, it is possible to infer an intense dispute surrounding (i) formation policies and (ii) the control of teacher occupational processes (especially the basic education teachers) in Brazilian social formation. This dispute between fractions of capital and organized segments of the teacher workforce involves, among other aspects resulting from the commodification of education,

- a. The recognition of the role of the teaching profession in the development of productive forces and relations of production, and project competition for the direction of higher education for basic education teachers;
- b. The professional recognition and the profession's desire to gain value in the competition for positions and status among professional bodies vying for the right to work in a class society, mediated by self-organization in defense of labor rights and professional practice (Jimenez, 2014);
- c. the precision and delimitation of professional functions to “circumscribe a domain of specific knowledge and skills” to delimit the area of professional practice and prevent its invasion by other professional categories (Weber, 2003, p. 1127-1128);
- d. the official effort to recognize the diversity of the teaching role, to redirect, reconfigure, delimit, and control the social role of the school (and, consequently, the teacher) and directing and inducing public formation and employment policies (Matijascic, 2017);
- e. the mapping of the labor market and inducing changes in market trends in the hiring of this workforce (Matijascic, 2017);
- f. the fight to guarantee labor rights;
- g. competition to set prices for different types of teaching workforce.

The CBO—teacher role—identifies 138 occupations that highlight and formalize the complex relationship between capital and labor. This list, however, is not exhaustive of the various teaching roles that exist. In a previous article (Peixoto, 2023), we examined the existing national education system and considered the diverse fields of work relevant to Brazil's position in international relations. We proposed the potential existence of teaching workforce categories that have yet to be cataloged. These alternative forms of the “teacher” occupation exist in segments of professional formation not traditionally identified as teaching roles. They (i) do not rely on conventional teacher formation systems and (ii) are not directly linked to the processes of public and private schools across different levels and modalities. Despite effectively performing the duties of a teacher—equipping future generations with essential knowledge for social interaction and the specific codes necessary for professional work in various fields—these roles are not recognized as teaching functions by the organized professional sector.

⁵ For the composition of *Todos pela Educação* and its interests, read: Catini (2023) e ‘TODOS...’ (S. d.).

For instance, based on our survey, we can cite formation programs in the transportation sector and the formation of military personnel, police officers, and firefighters (Peixoto, 2023).

From a materialist and dialectical approach, we understand that the struggle for the precision of what constitutes educational work within the school context encounters the inherent contradictions of the capitalist production relations (Marx, 1989a; Marx, 1989b). The concentration of all means of production in the hands of capitalists enables them to control the means of life of the entire society. Under this condition, the working class can only access the means of life and the means of production of life if it establishes relations with capitalists, with whom it exchanges labor power for wages. Only after working in the service of the capitalist does the worker receive a given number of wages that allow them to acquire the means of life (Marx, 1989a, pp. 187-197; Marx, 1989b, pp. 828-882).

When seeking labor, the capitalist's selection criteria are determined by the type of production they engage in. They know that operating on the productive forces under their controls requires a certain type of professional qualification. For the working class to set their labor, they must first qualify itself. In other words, the working class needs access to the knowledge that allows it to operate a very limited set of productive forces. Capitalists recognize this crucial need for labor quality and, to guarantee it, they sometimes undertake labor formation and sometimes demand that the state fulfill the role of qualifying it. The qualification of the labor force is in the interests of both workers and capitalists. This means that, in the interests of both workers and capitalists, education exists at a level of quality essential for the operation of the productive forces at their current stage of development. But here, too, a difference of interests operates: capitalists are interested in this qualification being as cheap as possible to reduce labor production costs—formation remains limited to simple labor. Within the limits of the relationship with the capitalist, however, the working class is interested in having its qualifications raised to provide the means of subsistence necessary for the reproduction of itself and its family. But not only that! To serve the interests of workers, the qualifications it receives must allow for recognition of the degree of development of the productive forces and the relations of production within which it establishes the exchange relationship with the capitalist, so that it can recognize the disadvantage it finds itself in and organize itself to overcome this disadvantage.

In the Brazilian social formation, this conflict of interests drives the development of the national education system, which the CBO reflects in its social division of labor. The categorization of professional educational work within the CBO occurs within the contradiction between (i) the pressures and tensions from capital's struggle for political and economic control over the education of the working class, which is turning part of education into a private business, and (ii) the degree of organization of education professionals, who—in an increasingly limited way—control the prerogative to self-define and delimit their functions (primarily for job security in public service). In this contradiction, the corporate activity of education professionals competes for—and does not always achieve—a minimum reference for what constitutes educational work. However, this struggle for control over educational work does not extend to all places where it takes place (nor can it prevent its further propagation), either by disregarding these different fields or by lacking the strength to address them. It is possible that where capital pressures to lighten formation, educational work is less defined and controlled, as occurs in the police and fire departments, in driver formation, among other segments.

The battle to increase the levels of extraction of more value in cycles of accumulation crises expands to all human needs, deepening the conversion of the workforce's formation into a commodity (Harvey, 2011). The current stage of development of the productive forces (IT and robotics), under the control of capitalists (with neoliberalism and ultraliberalism⁶ as its ideological and political expression and orientation), promotes work processes that require fewer qualifications from the workforce in general, resulting in intense pressure to change teacher formation.

⁶ We find liberalism in its classical form, which sustained the bourgeois revolution; neoliberalism talking about the form that liberalism took on from the 1960s and 1970s onwards (in Latin America, with dictatorships, and, in Europe, with the withdrawal of rights and the dismantling of the welfare state). Recently, since Bolsonaro/Guedes/the military, this right-wing advance has been called *ultraliberalism* (ANDERSON, 1995; BEHRING, 2023; CASTRO, 2019; RAICHELIS, 2022).

A DISSECTED CATEGORY – THE SITUATION OF TEACHERS

The bibliographical and documentary survey and the chronological study of this collection reveal a long cycle of investigations into Brazilian education. It began in the 1970s and, in our view, was determined – in the advance of neoliberal solutions to the crisis of capitalist accumulation (Harvey, 2011) – by the interest in converting the formation of the workforce into a commodity.

State entities (*Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira – INEP* and *Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada – IPEA*) and international organizations (International Labor Organization – ILO, World Bank, International Monetary Fund – IMF, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – OECD) carried out an exhaustive and continuous survey of data on education. They pay particular attention to the recognition of the situation of teachers in the development of productive forces and relations of production in Brazilian social formation, consolidating the warning of Evangelista and Triches (2009, p. 6):

There seems to be a consensus among international agencies that teachers are absolutely necessary; that if not adequately prepared, they become an obstacle; that they can be a danger. Conclusion: if we want to bring about substantive changes in the population's mindset, teachers must be retrained, since they are considered an important link between dominant interests and the population. Reeducating them means reforming teacher formation projects and formation agencies. In short, the aim is to reach the intellectual and political forces that determine the “soul of the teacher” and teacher formation in Brazil—and the pedagogue—by urging them to retrain their “spaces,” “functions,” and “mind.” [...] It should be noted that this work is not finished, and in its development, many new avenues have been opened.

In our view, this movement must be situated within the overall projection of capitalist interests, which, by combining business with pleasure under the guise of valorization, devalues public education and pushes all teacher formation into the private sector and distance learning (Brasil, 2023c). A complex process of economic and political control over teacher formation is at work, determined simultaneously by the need to (1) “find more places to store surplus capital” (Harvey, 2011, p. 32) in the cycle of financialized capital, and (2) to control and contain the working class (Seki, 2021). In this cycle of capitalist accumulation, the projection of the amount of labor force they will occupy and the fate of the unemployed working class, in our view, determines labor/employment policies, and the formation of the teacher workforce.

Taking the Discussion Text Notebook No. 2304 “Basic Education Teachers in Brazil: Living Conditions, Insertion into the Labor Market, and Remuneration,” produced by IPEA in 2017, Matijascic's (2017) analysis reveals the interest of the Brazilian State (and of institutions linked to the private education sector). The document calls for inclusion in debates on public education policies, and particularly in the “efforts” to monitor the PNE 2014-2024 in the specific aspect of GOAL 17, which deals with the “valuation of teachers” (Matijascic, 2017, p. 7-8) based on data from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD)⁷. Aiming to “appropriately understand the economic and social situation of basic education teachers,” the document aims to reflect on the “basic characteristics of living conditions,” the “basic description of working conditions,” and the “remuneration of basic education teachers” (Matijascic, 2017, p. 8-9), considering the general location of households—metropolitan, urban, non-metropolitan, and rural. Within the universe of the “employed population,” it aims to recognize “how teachers are situated as professionals, when compared to the rest of the Brazilian employed population,” as a criterion “to verify their basic living conditions” (Matijascic, 2017, p. 9).

Regarding gender, most are women (white, 47.2%; Black, 35.9%). Regarding geographic region, most of the black female teachers in basic education are in the North, Northeast, and Central-West regions, and most of the black female teachers in basic education are in the Southeast and South regions (more than 60% of basic education teachers in the South region are white women). The research

⁷ Given the data sources adopted, the document warns (in constant criticism) about the limitations of the PNAD database that was selected by the PNE as a reference (Matijascic, 2017, p. 8).

also highlights that the per capita income of teachers ranges from 0.5 to 2.9 minimum wages, which leads the analyst to highlight the “significant presence of teachers in households with per capita income below 0.5 MW [minimum wage],” which results in “difficulties in attracting professionals due to the existing low-income level” (Matijascic, 2017, pp. 14-17).

Details are presented on the “characteristics of the occupational insertion of basic education teachers” (Matijascic, 2017, p. 18), with special attention to their situation in social security. The existence of 3,112,167 (three million, one hundred and twelve thousand, one hundred and sixty-seven) salaried teachers is reported, with a rate of 94.1% of them participating in the construction of the social security fund. Regarding the type of employer:

Table 1: Distribution of employed basic education teachers by region, place of residence and employer in main job, in % (2015)

| Region and place of residence | | Federal | State | Municipal | Private |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------|-----------|---------|
| North | Metropolitan | 3.9 | 43.4 | 43.4 | 32.6 |
| | Urban Non-Metropolitan | 1.2 | 38.2 | 38.2 | 10.0 |
| | Rural | - | 9.0 | 9.0 | 1.9 |
| Northeast | Metropolitan | 1.0 | 23.6 | 23.6 | 38.0 |
| | Urban Non-Metropolitan | 0.8 | 22.4 | 22.4 | 17.7 |
| | Rural | 0.5 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 3.7 |
| Southeast | v | 0.3 | 28.8 | 28.8 | 35.8 |
| | Urbano não metropolitano | 0.8 | 27.2 | 27.2 | 20.6 |
| | Rural | - | 47.3 | 47.3 | 6.1 |
| South | Metropolitan | - | 25.4 | 25.4 | 30.6 |
| | Urban Non-Metropolitan | 0.9 | 35.6 | 35.6 | 12.7 |
| | Rural | - | 24.6 | 24.6 | 2.3 |
| Central-West | Metropolitan | 1.2 | 63.7 | 63.7 | 32.7 |
| | Urban Non-Metropolitan | 1.1 | 37.6 | 37.6 | 21.0 |
| | Rural | - | 36.5 | 36.5 | 6.8 |
| Brazil | Metropolitan | 0.5 | 30.2 | 30.2 | 35.2 |
| | Urban Non-Metropolitan | 0.9 | 29.5 | 29.5 | 17.3 |
| | Rural | 0.3 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 3.6 |

Source: (Matijascic, 2017, p. 21)

The research reveals that *the main employer of basic education teachers is the public sector*, with (i) 64.3% of contracts in metropolitan regions, (ii) 88.8% in non-metropolitan urban regions, and (iii) 96.2% in rural regions. Only in metropolitan regions (35.2%) and non-metropolitan urban regions (17.3%), the private sector is present in basic education.

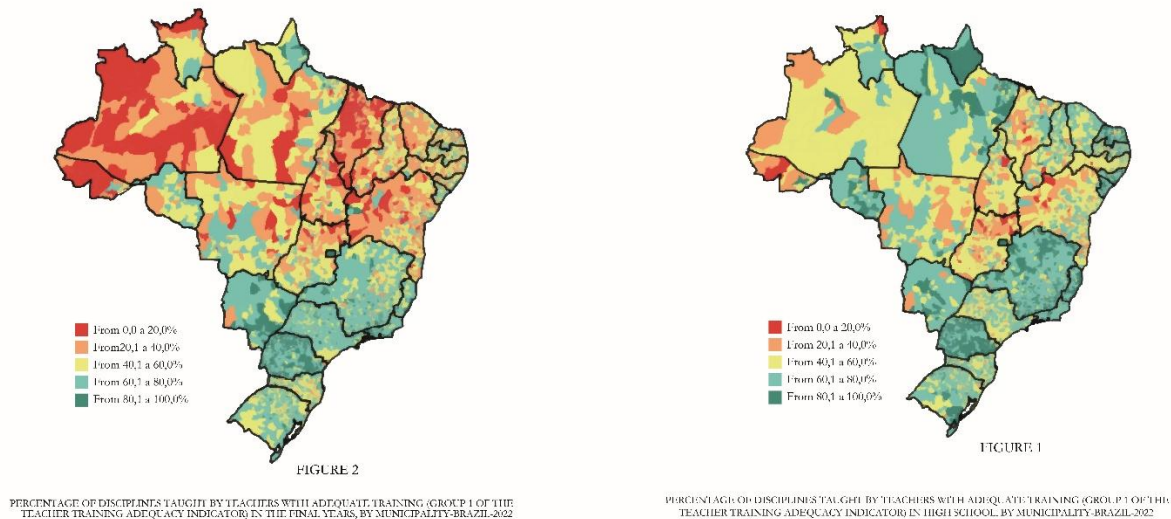
Within the scope of INEP, the most current documents are the 2022 School Census and the Notebooks of Studies and Research in Educational Policies number 08, aimed at contributing to the new PNE. Regarding the amount of workforce involved in the teaching occupation, the first document reports the existence of 2,315,616 teachers working in 178,346 (one hundred and seventy-eight thousand, three hundred and forty-six) basic education schools in Brazil (Brasil, 2023a, p. 39; Brasil, 2023b, p. 10, 12). It also reveals that there are 1,414,211 teachers (61.1%) working in elementary education (Brasil, 2023a, p. 41), 656,954 thousand teachers working in early childhood education, and 545,974 in high school (Brasil, 2023a, p. 39, 40; Brasil, 2023b, p. 10).

Concern about teacher formation is a constant. Regarding the level of education of those working in elementary education, the census highlights that 86.6% had a college degree, mostly at the undergraduate level, 8.5% have a degree in normal education, and 4.9% have a high school diploma or lower (Brasil, 2023b, p. 10). Of those working in high school, 96.1% had a college degree (mostly with a bachelor's degree), and 3.9% had a high school diploma or lower (Brasil, 2023b, p. 11). The 2022 Census focuses on the balance of Goal 15 of the PNE, producing indicators that enable to recognize the Adequacy of Teacher Formation - ATT to the subjects they teach in the schools in which they work, in the initial and final years of elementary school and in high school, measured by the qualification obtained by the teacher within the scope of higher education. This prioritizes the presentation of data regarding the situation of the states in (i) that correspondence, (ii) continuing education, and (iii) the number of

teachers with postgraduate degrees; (Brasil, 2023b; Brasil, 2023d; Moraes; Albuquerque; Bof, 2023, p. 128-132).

Figure 1 highlights the areas with the highest (green areas) and lowest (red areas) percentage of correspondence between the degree in initial formation and the area of activity, in the final years of elementary school and in secondary school, showing a high percentage (red areas) of teachers who do not have adequate formation for what they teach in the final years of basic education.

Figura 1: Percentage of subjects taught by teachers with adequate formation

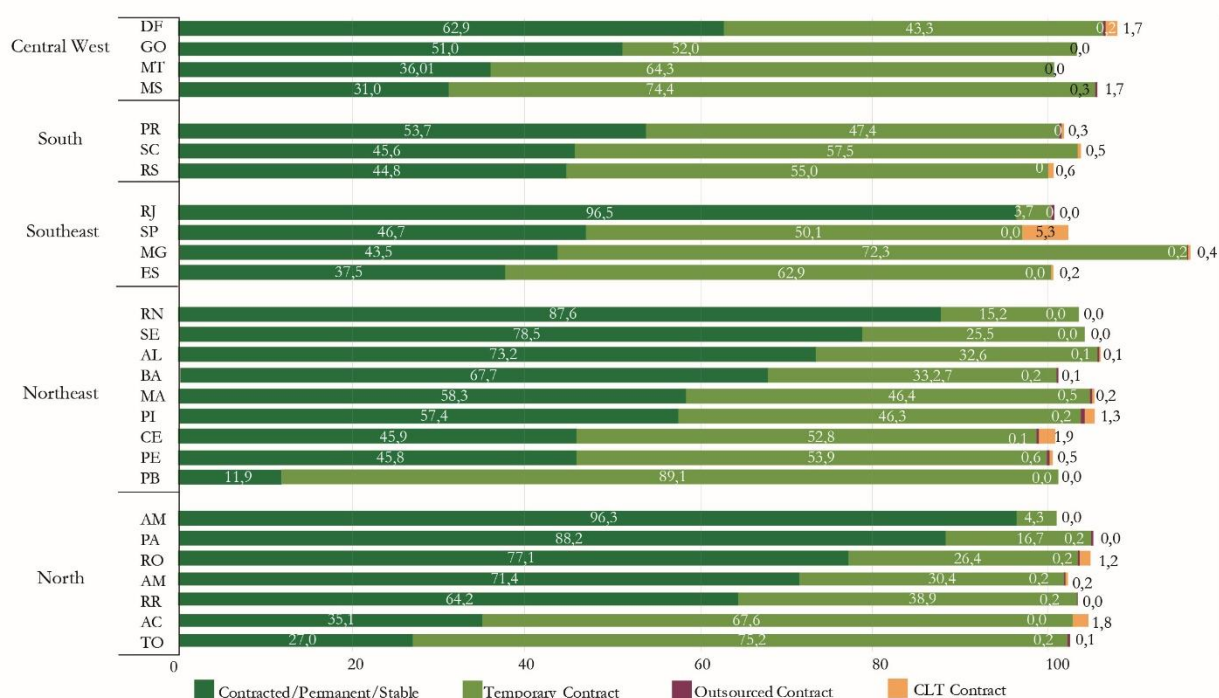


Source: (Brasil, 2023a, p. 45, 48)

Under pressure from student performance assessments and educational reforms, teacher formation and work policies are being designed, as teachers are operating under surveillance and extremely unequal conditions. Overall, the discussion raises concerns about teacher formation to meet the requirements of basic education assessments, particularly regarding (a) literacy (the Brazil Literacy Program) in early childhood education and youth and adult education (EJA) and (b) concerns about the objective conditions for meeting the demands of the new high school education system.

In the same document, INEP defines and develops the analysis of the Teacher Regularity Indicator (*IRD-Indicador de Regularidade Docente*), which refers to (i) the functional status, (ii) the hiring regime, or (iii) the type of employment relationship. Among teachers working in public high schools, 54.2% have permanent/stable contracts and 48.4% have temporary contracts throughout Brazil, noting that these data vary across each state. Stable contract indicators also indicate the volume of unstable/temporary contracts that complement the staffing required to run high schools in the states (Moraes; Albuquerque; Bof, 2023). When the analysis goes into detail about the differences in teacher regularity in high school in rural and urban areas, it leads the document to highlight “the national fragility and inequality when considering the permanence and regularity of teachers in school” (Moraes; Albuquerque; Bof, 2023, p. 134, 136).

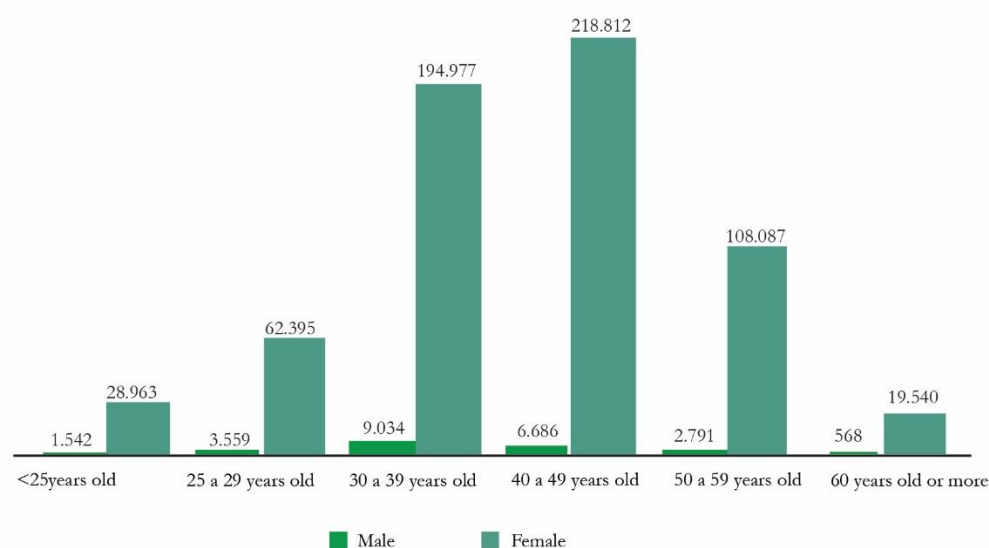
Graph 1: Percentage of high school teachers in the public school system, by job status, employment status, or type of employment relationship – states – 2022



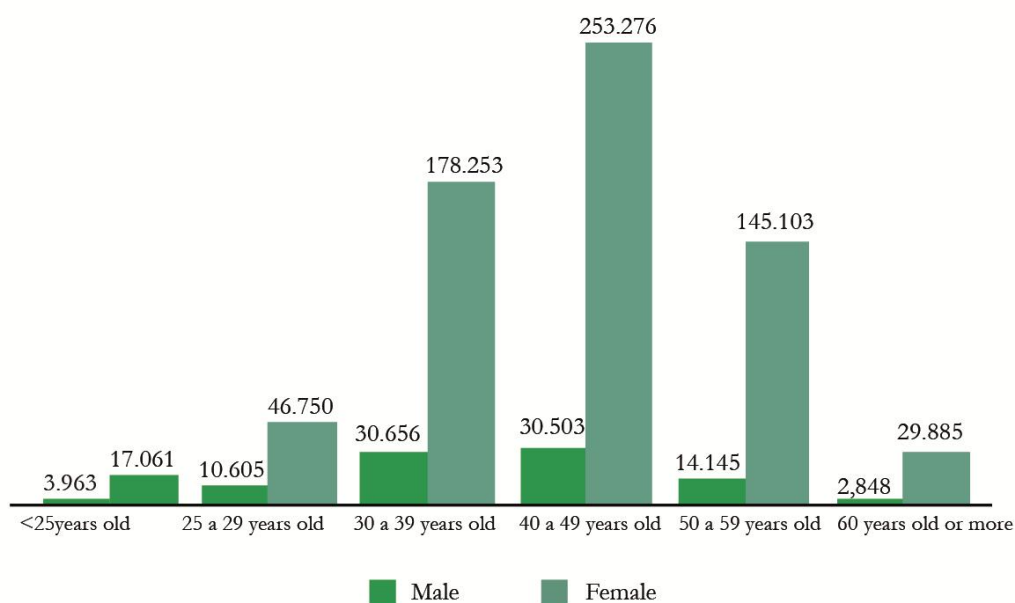
Source: (Fernandes, 2023, p. 134)

The data provided by the Basic Education School Census regarding the age group and gender of teachers working in early childhood education, elementary, middle and high school are particularly relevant, as we can see in the following sequence of graphs (Brasil, 2023a, p. 40, 42, 43, 46).

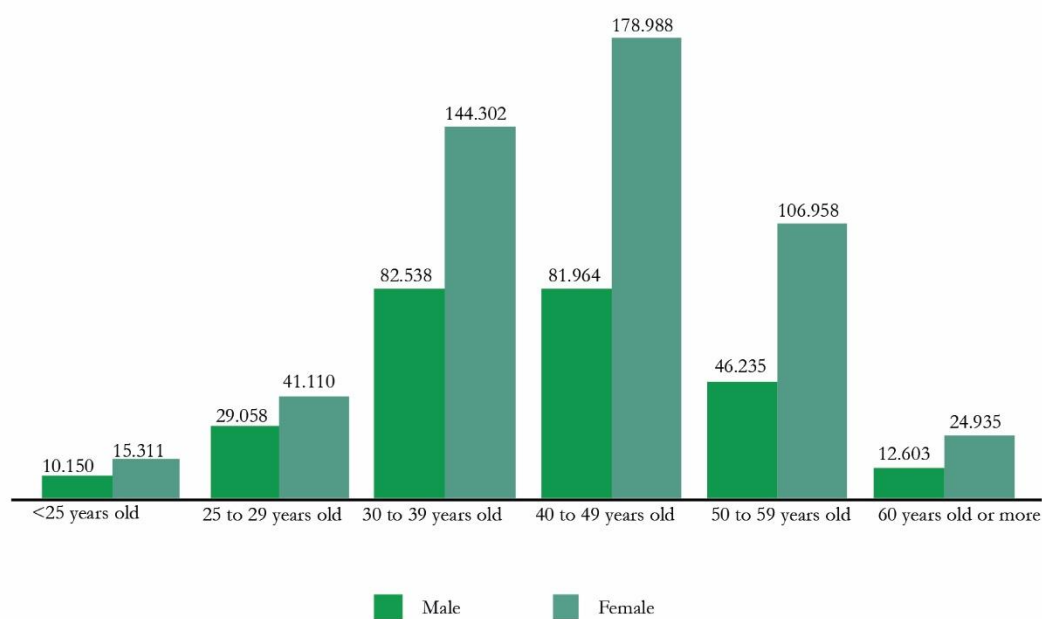
Graph 2: Number of teachers in early childhood education, by age group and sex – Brazil – 2022



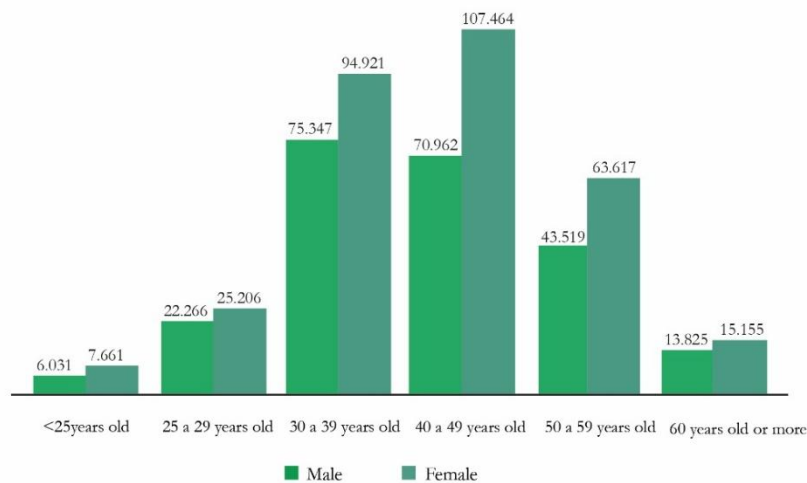
Source: Deed/Inep

Graph 3: Number of teachers in the initial years of elementary school, by age group and sex – Brazil – 2022

Source: Deed/Inep

Graph 4: Number of teachers in the final years of elementary school, by age group and sex – Brazil – 2022

Source: Deed/Inep

Graph 5: Number of secondary school teachers, by age group and sex – Brazil – 2022

Source: Deed/Inep

In addition to demonstrating that males have lower participation in early childhood education and the initial grades of elementary and middle school, the Census reveals a teaching force predominantly between 30 and 60 years old, demonstrating an alarming aging trend. Contributing to this situation are the ongoing state reforms within the ultra-neoliberal cycle, which are particularly violent toward teachers, through pension reform, the reduction of public service exams, and the expansion of precarious contracts. These, taken together, demonstrate an educational policy that projects a reduction in the number of teachers needed to meet the educational demands of the Brazilian population. It is worth noting that the predominance of women and the extension of retirement periods highlight the immense strain on a predominantly female teaching force that spends its entire life (i) planning instruction and (ii) in the classroom. Combine this indicator with the double workload of women, widely denounced in the literature (Zibetti; Pereira, 2010), and we find a truly exhausted teacher.

In this particular aspect, INEP produces a scale of Teaching Effort Levels, which allows us to recognize the severity of these teachers' situation:

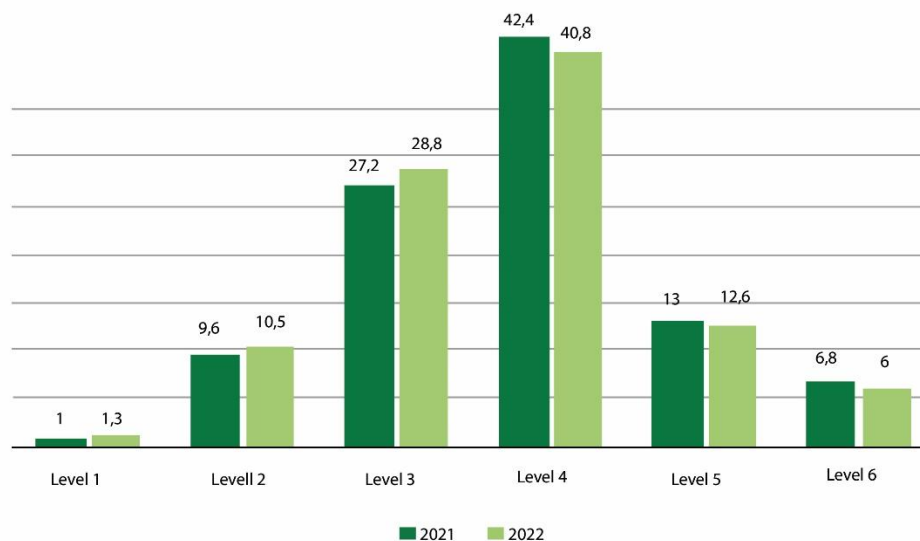
Chart 1: Description of teaching effort levels

| Levels | Description (characteristics presented by at least two-thirds of the teachers) |
|---------|---|
| Level 1 | Teacher with up to 25 students and working in a single shift, school, and phase. |
| Level 2 | Teacher with between 25 and 150 students and working in a single shift, school, and phase. |
| Level 3 | Teacher with between 25 and 300 students and working in a single shift, school, and phase. |
| Level 4 | Teacher with between 50 and 400 students and working in two shifts, in one or two schools, and in two phases. |
| Level 5 | Teacher with more than 300 students and working in three shifts, in two or three schools, and in two or three phases. |
| Level 6 | Teacher with more than 400 students and working in three shifts, in two or three schools, and in two or three phases. |

Source: (Moraes; Albuquerque; Bof, 2023, p. 137)

The data on the percentage of public-school teachers working in high school, compared to the teaching effort scale established by INEP, is staggering! Combine the age-group data with the teaching effort indicators, and we will see the severity of the burnout experienced by teachers.

Graph 6: Percentage of teachers by teaching effort indicator (TDI) levels – Brazil, 2021-2022



Source: (Moraes; Albuquerque; Bof, 2023, p. 137)

Teachers working in basic education in Brazil are under pressure from a progressive process of effective administrative reform (to be consolidated with PEC 32⁸), guided by the ultra-liberal principles of a minimum State for social policies and a maximum for the release of public funds to the private sector of the economy (Salvador; Behring; Lima, 2019; Salvador et al., 2012).

This pressure is evident in (i) the low availability of stable employment contracts; (ii) the low salaries received about the hours worked and the amount of work performed; (iii) the intensification of workloads relative to the number of schools they work in and the number of students per class. Furthermore, teachers are (iv) held virtually exclusively responsible for the problems of national education (Evangelista, 2016); (v) they have been discredited in various ways by discourse aimed at convincing the population that they are not fulfilling their social function; (vi) they are monitored by the basic education evaluation system, by the "school without political parties," and by the active presence of the armed wing of the State within and around schools. It is under these specific conditions that teachers work in basic education. These determinations are constitutive of what constitutes concrete educational work and are fundamental to the transposition of educational work into consciousness, as concretely conceived.

THE LOGIC OF CAPITAL IN THE EXPLOITATION OF THE TEACHER WORKFORCE – IN THE STEP OF THE CONCRETE TEACHER, REACHING THE CONCRETE TEACHER THOUGHT

Among the laws of development of modern society, the fundamental principle of capitalist production relations is the hiring of labor to extract more value!

[...] To extract value from the consumption of a commodity, our owner of money must have the good fortune to discover, within the sphere of circulation, in the market, a commodity whose use value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value, so that consuming it is truly

⁸ Proposed Amendment to the Constitution that "Amends provisions on public servants, employees and administrative organization. Chamber of Deputies. PEC 32/2020. Available at: <https://www.camara.leg.br/proposicoesWeb/fichadetramitacao?idProposicao=2262083>.

embodying labor, therefore creating value. And the owner finds this special commodity in the market: it is the capacity for labor, or labor power. (Marx, 1989a, p. 187).

[...]

To transform money into capital, the owner of money must find the free worker in the commodity market, free in both senses: that of disposing, as a free person, of his labor power as his commodity, and that of being free, entirely stripped of all things necessary for the materialization of his labor power, having, besides this, no other commodity to sell (Marx, 1989a, p. 189).

How is this founding relationship of the development of capitalism as a broader mode of production – in which educational work is inserted – expressed in the work of teachers?

The owner of labor power is mortal. [...] Labor forces withdrawn from the market through wear and tear or death must be incessantly replaced by at least an equal number of new labor forces. The sum of the means of subsistence necessary for the production of labor power also includes the means of subsistence of the workers' replacements, their children, thus perpetuating this race of commodity owners in the market.

To modify human nature, so that it attains skill and dexterity in a given kind of labor, and becomes a developed and specific labor force, education or formation is necessary, which costs a greater or lesser sum of commodity values. This sum varies according to the level of qualification of the labor force. The costs of formation, negligible for the common labor force, are therefore included in the total values expended for its production (Marx, 1989a, p. 192).

We argue that the foundational dynamics of capitalism's development are mirrored in the existing national education system, which does not operate in isolation from capitalist production relations. Instead, it is woven into both the process of value circulation and the management of public interests aligned with private interests. The literature extensively examines the processes of value circulation and the extraction of surplus value related to the work of teachers in private education. However, the integration of teachers' work within capitalist production relations in the context of public services, as far as our current understanding goes, requires further exploration. In this regard, we propose several observations worthy of deeper investigation in more rigorous research.

Marx's in-depth analysis of the processes of production and circulation of commodities shows that the employment of labor power (the labor process) crystallizes, in the use-value in production, a value – “expenditure of human labor power”; “quantity of value-creating substance contained in it, labor” (Marx, 1989a, p. 45) – which will be taken back by the capitalist when he sells the commodity and receives for it an amount of general equivalent corresponding to the value it conveys (Marx, 1989a, p. 210-223).

Marx (1989a, p. 43) highlights that commodities are “material vehicles of exchange value” being “the necessary mode of expressing value”. Commodities are “vehicles of value” (Marx, 1989a, p. 118), means of circulation of value (Marx, 1989a, p. 116-143), means of circulation of “materialized social labor”, in which value performs the “somersault” that allows the capitalist to recover it at the end of the process (Marx, 1989, p. 119). In this way, “value is only realized through exchange” (Marx, 1989a, p. 93), which forces capitalists to carry out a continuous circulation of goods to (i) making the value return to the starting point (the capitalist's pocket) and, in a new production process (through the hiring of labor power in exchange for wages and its employment as living labor on dead labor), (ii) adding more value (Marx, 1989a, p. 221-223).

The State, that is, the public sector, is integrated into this process of commodity circulation as (i) a direct consumer of goods (which drives capitalism in cycles of crisis), (ii) a legislator and regulator of guarantees for the circulation of value toward capitalist coffers—producing a complex legal and political structure to support these guarantees—(iii) a guarantor of investment risks, and (iv) an active participant in the production and reproduction of the workforce. Educational policy is deeply integrated into this process. The private education sector, on the other hand, is integrated into this process (i) by assuming the role of workforce formation in a manner more aligned with market interests, which includes ideological control, (ii) by integrating the process of workforce formation (as a commodity that effectively crystallizes more value in the production process) into the very logic of commodity production and

circulation. In this last aspect, the fundamental principle is the hiring of the teaching workforce (which arrives to him fully qualified), to make it work in the time/space of formation more workforce that he governs (as immediate private owner of the right to use the facilities and the legal time in which the education of segments of the working class takes place).

The immediate objective of the capitalist (who controls the labor-power production chain) is to extract more value during the production process of the commodity labor-power (Marx, 1989a, pp. 210-223). The capitalists choose to produce use-values that are advantageous to them, insofar as (i) “it has exchange-value, an article destined for sale, a commodity,” (ii) it has a “higher value than the sum of the commodities necessary to produce it” (Marx, 1989a, pp. 210-223). This general law determines that the capitalists will not undertake to produce use-values unless they are guaranteed that there is a market, that is, that there is demand for the use-value they produce.

The laws capitalist development dictate the ongoing nature of the capital-labor relationship. However, the proportion of labor that capitalists integrate into their production processes varies based on the perceived benefits of employing that labor, which in turn fluctuate with wage levels and the advancement of productive forces, particularly in the area of information technology and robotics. Research indicates that capital’s objective was never to fully incorporate the surplus labor prevalent in Brazilian social formation. This surplus labor force, often categorized as simple labor, is trained within public institutions and functions as an “army of unemployed workers at the disposal of capitalist exploitation” (Marx, 1989a, pp. 505-512; Marx, 1989b, pp. 730-743). For workforce formation to be advantageous to capitalists, it must meet three criteria: (i) it should be technically pragmatic (Kuenzer, 2007), (ii) it must lower the costs associated with producing use values, which includes reducing the expenses of formation the workforce itself (Marx, 1989a, pp. 502-512), and (iii) it should ideally be financed by the workers, often through wage exchanges for formation, accruing debt, or the transfer of public funds managed by the State as payment for societal services rendered.

In the current context of Brazilian social formation, the capitalist segments that operate in the labor force production chain (the national education system) obtain the advantage of producing the use-value of the labor force, receiving, in the very act of producing this use-value, the surplus value they extract from the employment of the teacher's labor force. They produce a use-value that is already remunerated in the production process itself; they are exempt from selling the use-value they produce (the labor force) because they receive payment in advance for the sale of the vacancy for the formation of the commodity labor force that the teacher trains. Furthermore, they can also obtain advantages in ideological control of the formation of this class segment, when they also control, directly or indirectly, the means of disseminating the knowledge defined as necessary in a given historical time!

Being a commodity produced and circulated by the same laws of commodity production and circulation, the teacher's labor force (which bears the particular value of producing more value than it costs the capitalist) also crystallizes value by producing labor power (this value is evident in the highly specialized labor force). However, in the context of education, the process of value crystallization (transferring technical or scientific knowledge to students in formation that transforms it) that the teacher's labor force promotes occurs after the capitalist receives in advance the amount of value that the teacher's labor force crystallizes in the process of labor force formation. This characteristic of the private school educational process is fundamental because it relieves the capitalist of the obligation to sell the commodity whose production process it drives. The production of labor power in the private sector is remunerated in advance by the capitalist. The teacher's labor force, like other labor forces, receives its salary after completing each monthly cycle of years of work in which it forms the labor force. The skilled workforce (paid with family wages or through taxes), that is, the student who honed their labor force during their education, becomes the owner of the value crystallized by the teacher's labor force, but realizes this value only when (and if) the capitalist (owner of all means of production) hires them. The capitalist, who, by controlling the productive forces, facilitated the teacher's encounter with the means of production and the labor force in formation, has already received the share of the production of this labor force that they were interested in and is exempt from selling it. And only incidentally will they endeavor to reclaim this commodity, whose production they financed and for which they received advance payment (whether through tuition fees, credit/debit systems, or state subsidies), if it proves advantageous in a new cycle of surplus value extraction.

It is important to recognize that the process of labor production and circulation does not change whether it occurs in the private or public sector. The fundamental difference between the two is that in the private sector, the surplus value extracted from the teacher's labor force is appropriated in advance by the capitalist. However, in the public sector, the capitalist must employ the labor force produced by the public education system to appropriate the value crystallized in each labor force as power (its interest in this labor force, however, is limited to the segments in which its employment promotes the advanced development of productive forces, enhancing the cycle of surplus value extraction). The labor force formation that occurs in the public sphere is doubly advantageous to the capitalist because (i) surplus value is extracted from the teachers' labor, which it incorporates into the commodity production process when it hires the labor force at some point, and because (ii) it is exempt from expending resources on the formation of this labor force.

ACTING SURPLUS VALUE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

With this (developing) logic in mind, we can understand the volume of value extraction that capitalists set in motion when operating in the area of “educational services.” For example, consider the data published by Forbes regarding the tuition fees charged by 25 of the most expensive schools in Brazil, which in cities like São Paulo can reach over R\$12,000, often linked to loyalty fees (Lima, 2022).

In August 2022, the National Federation of Private Schools (FENEP-*Federação Nacional das Escolas Particulares*) published the 5th edition of “Numbers of Private Education in Brazil,” using data collected between 2012 and 2021 from (i) the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD-*Pesquisa Nacional de Amostra por Domicílio*), which began collecting data on the school system attended in 2016; (ii) the Household Budget Survey (POF-*Pesquisa de Orçamentos Familiares*); (iii) statistics from the National Accounts System (SCN-IBGE-*Sistema Contas Nacionais*); (iv) microdata from the Annual Social Information Report (RAIS-*Relação Anual de Informações Sociais*); and (v) the School Census and Higher Education Census compiled by INEP. The explicit objective is to assess the margin of advantages that actually exist in the Brazilian education market.

The aforementioned report shows that in 2021, there were 40.5 thousand private basic education establishments in Brazil (FENEP, 2022a, p. 21, 23), accounting for 15.6% of total enrollments (FENEP, 2022a, p. 28). This vast private education network is established with a view to “5.2 million households with at least one student enrolled in private education, in which there are approximately 20 million people” (FENEP, 2022a, p. 23), with 6,421,498 enrollments reported in 2021 (FENEP, 2022a, p. 42). The document highlights the downward trend in basic education enrollment (4.7% in 2021), explained by the “falling birth rate,” population aging, and the “COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021” (FENEP, 2022a, p. 29), without explaining the relationship with the reduction in the purchasing power of wages due to tax and labor reforms (especially after the Temer administration), wage flattening, and the reduction of retirement and pension benefits. It is also noteworthy that the downward trend is smaller in the Southeast region.

It is reported that in 2020, the private education sector had 1.2 million formal employment contracts (3.4% of all formal jobs in the country), with 850,000 positions in basic education (FENEP, 2022a, p. 22). It is also noteworthy that “in 2019 alone, the gross added value of this sector (its contribution to “GDP”) was 126.5 billion reais” (FENEP, 2022a, p. 2). The document reports that “the average salary in Brazil for full-time private basic education teachers is close to the salary at the beginning of the decade [2010/2011], around R\$3,000” (FENEP, 2022a, p. 22). The document also highlights that, in “2020, approximately 12,000 to 50,000 jobs would be created if the education sector had payroll tax relief applied to it” (FENEP, 2022a, p. 22). The publication’s launch is emphatic:

Private education contributed nearly R\$20 billion to the Official Social Security and FGTS (FGTS). The document also highlights the sector's importance to the labor market: private education had 1.25 million formal employment contracts in 2020. This number will rise to approximately 1.5 million in 2022. This represents 3.4% of all formal private-sector jobs in Brazil (FENEP, 2022b).

In turn, the Basic Education Census (Brazil, 2023a) records that, of the 47.4 million total enrollments in basic education for the public sectors (municipal 49% and state 31.2%), 9 million enrollments were made in the private basic education network (19% of total enrollments). It is interesting to highlight that in INEP publications, the expansion of places in early childhood education is attributed to the increase in places offered by the private sector (Brazil, 2023b, p. 5):

Despite the 5.8% drop in enrollment in early childhood education between 2020 and 2021, there was an 8.5% increase between 2021 and 2022. This growth was mainly due to the private network, which saw a 25.3% increase in the last year (29.9% in daycare and 20.0% in preschool), while the public network saw a 3.5% increase (8.9% in daycare and 0.3% in preschool) (Brasil, 2023b, p. 6).

The Basic Education Census reveals the size of the private sector in basic education. Regarding registered private establishments, there are 41,011 schools located in urban areas (40,399) and rural areas (672). There are 32,838 private early childhood education schools, 23,673 private schools serving the early years of elementary and middle school, 14,405 private schools serving the final years of elementary and middle school, and 8,644 private schools serving high school (Brasil, 2023b). Neither of these two INEP documents details the number of teachers working in the private sector. There is a clear campaign for better quality private facilities for early childhood education, with no reference to the total public resources invested in purchasing early childhood education places in the private sector.

The data presented allows us to approximate:

- i. the particular use value of the different forms of educational work, which refers to the teacher workforce as the only commodity that can further qualify the workforce, that is, that can transmit the accumulated knowledge necessary for future generations to continue carrying out the work of transforming nature;
- ii. the value that the teacher workforce adds to each workforce production chain (public and, mainly, private).

We argue that the discourse on the “valuation” of teachers carries contradictions that can only be revealed by recognizing the processes in which this “valuation” appears as a profound devaluation of teachers working in public services and a profound recognition by capitalists of the effective use value of teacher labor in the process of production and valorization. This “valuation” in no way results in better careers, salaries, or working conditions. On the contrary, it is effectively accompanied by devaluation in the sense of lightening formation, precarious contracts and working conditions, low wages, surveillance and the impediment of the freedom to learn and teach, the assignment of increasingly broader and new functions, or the proposal of strategies to transfer teaching functions to other segments of society (Adrião; Garcia, 2018; Afonso et al., 2021; Evangelista et al., 2022; Evangelista et al., 2019; Facci, 2019; Frigotto, 2017; Jacomini; Gil; Castro, 2019; Oliveira, 2008; Oliveira; Barbosa, 2017; Magalhães et al., 2018).

We can say that the discourse surrounding the “valuation” of teachers is fraught with contradictions that can be illuminated by acknowledging the processes through which this “valuation” manifests as a significant devaluation of teachers working in public services. It also highlights a profound recognition by capitalists of the actual use value of teacher labor in the production and valorization process. This “valuation” does not translate into improved careers, salaries, or working conditions. Instead, it is often accompanied by devaluation characterized by reduced formation requirements, precarious contracts, substandard working conditions, low wages, heightened surveillance, restrictions on the freedom to learn and teach, an increasing assignment of broader roles, and initiatives aimed at transferring teaching responsibilities to other sectors of society (Adrião; Garcia, 2018; Afonso et al., 2021; Evangelista et al., 2022; Evangelista et al., 2019; Facci, 2019; Frigotto, 2017; Jacomini; Gil; Castro, 2019; Oliveira, 2008; Oliveira; Barbosa, 2017; Magalhães et al., 2018).

SUMMARY – THE ONTOLOGY OF THE CONCRETE TEACHER IN MOTION

In the challenge of recognizing the path to what educational work has effectively been, we hope to have demonstrated, throughout this manuscript, the effective unity that remains constant

between (i) the demands of capitalist production relations in the sense of producing surplus value, employing increasingly cheaper labor; (ii) the division of educational labor reflected in the CBO, as an expression of the labor-power production chain in Brazilian social formation; and (iii) the pressure for cheaper prices and greater control of the conditions in which educational work is carried out in Brazilian social formation, as part of the labor-power production chain, whose production cost the capitalist needs to lower. Although the concept of educational work makes an immense contribution to the unveiling of the relationship between work and education in human ontology (Saviani; Duarte, 2012), as a generalization, an abstraction, in the sense of what education has been and what *it should be*, it proves insufficient for the adequate understanding of how the objective conditions are constructed for work to be effective in Brazilian social formation (highlighting the composition of the teaching staff, working conditions, salaries and qualifications according to data from IBGE/INEP).

It is necessary to recognize that the nature of educational work (its ontology) is determined by the particular way in which each class segment, in each social formation at different historical moments, manages to reproduce and produce its existence. In capitalism, the nature of educational work is ultimately determined by the laws of labor force employment to extract surplus value. What the labor force can and should know is restricted to these same interests (Kuenzer, 2007). This condition requires that, as a class organized for itself, that is, guided by its interests, the working class establish the parameters of what is necessary to know to confront the economically dominant class, the capitalist class. This task is profoundly compromised when working-class organizations are weakened.

At this very moment, the Brazilian working class is experiencing significant weakening in several fundamental ways: (i) it struggles to sell its labor power, as reflected in employment statistics, and often does so under precarious conditions; (ii) its wage power is being eroded due to wage stagnation and the increasing cost of essential goods; (iii) it has been inundated with narratives that dismiss political struggle and class organizations, and has not found the necessary support within these organizations for the daily battles it faces against employers—currently, fewer than 20% of active workers are union members, coupled with the concerning reality of a fragmented working class represented by more than ten union federations; (iv) it has become disjointed from the historical references that once empowered it to secure rights and even state control during the 20th century.

Under these conditions, more than ever, it is urgent that we seek the concrete teacher—to create the conditions for recognizing the multiple determinations of their existence—"not in the heads of men," but "in the transformations of the mode of production and exchange," "in the economy of the epoch in question" (Engels, 2018, p. 78). This is not to deny practice as a material transformation guided by theory and brought to life by real people struggling to overcome the radical chains in which they find themselves imprisoned (Marx, 2018; Barata-Moura, 1994; Barata-Moura, 2018). Rather, it is to reclaim the critique of political economy and scientific socialism as frameworks for recognizing the starting point for organizing the working class to overcome capitalist relations of production. It is precisely because the concrete teacher (a synthesis of multiple determinations), through the laws of value extraction, increasingly approximates the proletariat, that their education urgently needs to respond to the need to recognize and position themselves as members of the working class. This is precisely the core that makes teachers important to capital and the working class, which precisely gives rise to the struggle over their formation. Anti-capitalist pedagogy cannot neglect the method of multiple determinations, lest it become lost in "ontologies of praxis" rooted in idealism (Barata-Moura, 2023).

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DATA AVAILABILITY DECLARATION

The content underlying the research text is contained in the manuscript

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in this article.