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# Teaching work conditions and capital's productive restructuring policies

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Maria Rosilene Maués Gomes

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Pará (Brasil)

Carlos Nazareno Ferreira Borges

Universidade Federal do Pará (Brasil)

## Abstract

The study addresses teaching working conditions in the context of capitalist restructuring policies. It is a section of the doctoral dissertation that has been revised, updated and with some additions. The aim was to analyze the conformity of teaching work in Youth, Adult and Elderly Education (EJA), in Portuguese abbreviation) to the interests of capitalism. The textual construction was based on classic authors, such as Marx and Engels (1998), and contemporary authors such as Freire (2005), Adorno (1995) and Saviani (2007). This is a qualitative study based on document analysis and field research, observation, questionnaire, and semi-structured interview. The results revealed that on the one hand there is a discourse that supports the universalization of education and teacher formation. On the other, there is a control over the school and the formation of teachers so that convert to the interests of the capital project. It also revealed that teaching work at EJA is secondary and carried out under the guidance of capitalism.

Keywords: Work. Teaching working conditions. Youth, Adult and Elderly Education. Capitalist restructuring.

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## As condições do trabalho docente e as políticas de reestruturação produtiva do capital

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### Resumo

O estudo aborda condições de trabalho docente no contexto das políticas de reestruturação capitalista. Trata-se de uma seção da tese de doutorado revisada, atualizada e com alguns acréscimos. O objetivo foi analisar a

conformidade do trabalho docente na Educação de Jovens, Adultos e Idosos (EJA) com os interesses do capitalismo. A construção textual fundamentou-se em autores clássicos, como Marx e Engels (1998), e autores contemporâneos, como Freire (2005), Adorno (1995) e Saviani (2007). Trata-se de uma pesquisa de abordagem qualitativa, com base em análise documental, pesquisa de campo, observação, questionário e entrevista semiestruturada. Os resultados revelaram que de um lado há um discurso que sustenta a universalização da educação e a formação dos docentes. De outro, há um controle sobre a escola e a formação dos professores para que se convertam aos interesses do projeto do capital. Revelou, ainda, que o trabalho docente na EJA é secundarizado e realizado sob orientação do capitalismo.

Palavras-chaves: Trabalho. Condições de trabalho docente. Educação de Jovens, Adultos e Idosos. Reestruturação capitalista.

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## Condiciones de trabajo docente y políticas de reestructuración productiva del capital

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### 2 Resumen

El estudio aborda las condiciones de trabajo docente en el contexto de las políticas de reestructuración productiva capitalista. Se trata de una parte de la tesis doctoral revisada, actualizada y con algunos añadidos. El objetivo fue analizar la conformidad del trabajo docente en la Educación de Jóvenes, Adultos y Mayores (EJA, en la abreviatura en portugués) con los intereses del capitalismo. La construcción textual se basó en autores clásicos, como Marx y Engels (1998), y contemporáneos, como Freire (2005), Adorno (1995) y Saviani (2007). Se trata de un estudio cualitativo basado en análisis documental, investigación de campo, observación, cuestionario y entrevista semiestruturada. Los resultados revelaron que por un lado existe un discurso que apoya la universalización de la educación y la formación docente. Por otro, existe un control sobre la escuela y la formación de los docentes para que se conviertan a los intereses del proyecto capitalista. También reveló que el trabajo docente en la EJA es secundario y se realiza bajo la orientación del capitalismo.

Palabras clave: Trabajo. Condiciones de trabajo docente. Educación de Jóvenes, Adultos y Mayores. Reestructuración capitalista.

## Introduction

The article addresses the conditions of teaching work in the context of the restructuring policies of capitalism. The work originates from a section of the doctoral dissertation reviewed, updated, and added to some current reflections. The objective was to analyze the conformity of teaching work at Youth, Adult and Elderly Education to the interests of capitalism in its restructuring phase. To give theoretical consistency to our reflections, we take as a theoretical reference the studies of classic authors, among which we highlight: Marx and Engels (1998), Freire (2005), Adorno (1995) and contemporary authors, such as Saviani (2007) and Aranha (1996), Castro; Brito (2013), Oliveira and Vieira (2012), among others.

The desire for the theme in question arose from our life story intertwined with the context of Youth, Adult and Elderly Education, since we come from this type of education. In this sense, we understand that this research can greatly contribute to the problematization and the possibility of a teaching work capable of stimulating processes of emancipatory and liberating education. Although the scenario is not favorable, when we analyze educational policies, based on the orientation of capitalism, we find that, on the one hand, there is a discourse that supports the universalization of education and the formation of teachers. On the other hand, it is clear that there is a whole control over the school and the formation of teachers, so that these education professionals convert to the interests of the capital project.

Throughout the text, we demonstrate how teaching work has been inferiorized, carried out by people of little value from the point of view of the ruling class, although it has deserved some prestige in certain countries throughout history. In the current context, the teacher's work continues in accordance with the dictates of the oppressive capitalist system. Therefore, we proposed to offer reflections that contribute to a critical look at the current conditions in which teaching work at Youth, Adult and Elderly Education has been carried out, so that, from there, we can think of other possibilities to develop teaching

work in favor of the emancipation of Youth, Adult and Elderly Education's individuals.

Methodologically, the work was conducted by the principles of qualitative research, according to Chizzotti (2010), for whom this type of research enables the inseparability between individual and object of knowledge. To obtain the information, a literature review and field research were carried out, which provided the appropriation of the following techniques: semi-structured interview with two teachers from the municipal school network of Abaetetuba, Pará, that acted as coordinators of Youth, Adult and Elderly Education in the Municipal Secretariat of Education and Culture (SEMEC, the acronym in Portuguese) at that time, who were identified in this work by the codenames: coordinator Izabela and coordinator Giovana. From the participant observation and documentary research in the aforementioned Secretariat, we captured data for the years between 2015 and 2019 about the relationship of teachers who worked at Youth, Adult and Elderly Education in the municipal school network of Abaetetuba, Pará, in the three locations that make up the network, namely: city, islands, roads/extensions. The data obtained in the documents were systematized, organized in graphs, and analyzed dynamically, critically, and contextually.

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The article is structured in three sections, initially, we make a movement from the macro to the micro, starting from the concept of work in general; then, we deal with teaching work conditions; and, finally, we articulate the teaching work to the conditions of the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education, showing the first approximations with the results of the empirical research.

## Teaching work in the light of critical thinking

To understand the teaching work, we start from the etymology of the word "work". According to Aranha (1996), it originates from the Latin word *tripaliare*, from the noun *tripalium*, a kind of torture apparatus, formed by three sticks, in which the condemned were tied. The author also points out that this device was also used to trap animals that were difficult to tame. Nevertheless, if we stick only to the etymological presuppositions of the word, we will possibly associate work with torture, suffering, punishment, toil. Marx and Engels

(1998) point out that it is the action of man on nature, through work, that differentiates him from animals, so they believe that

One can distinguish men from animals by conscience, by religion, and by anything one wants. They begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, and this step forward is the very consequence of their bodily organization. By producing their means of existence, men indirectly produce their own material life (Marx; Engels, 1998, p. 10).

Based on this understanding, we say that work is in the essence of the human being. It is through work that men and women transform nature and adapt it to their needs. It is even by work that they produce their existence. For Marx and Engels (1998), it is the material conditions of what is produced that determine the bases of society. Therefore, it is through work that human beings, in their relationship with nature, build history, make culture, project the future, rescue the actions of the past and propose actions that can transform their existential realities.

Saviani (2007, p. 154) corroborates this thesis of Marx by stating that “[...] the act of performing on nature transforming it in function of human needs is the one we know with the name of work”. For the author, the human essence is produced by material conditions that transcend nature, which, therefore, is not constituted by a deity.

In the same line of thought, Freire (2006, p. 36) discusses that “[...] transforming natural reality with their work, men create their world. World of culture and history that, created by them, turns on them, conditioning them”. Unlike animals that do not make history, because they do not emerge in time, they are timeless insofar as they live a permanent today, man, according to Freire (1983), makes history, projects his existence, and transforms his reality.

These reflections on the work imbricated in the human essence contribute to understanding that human beings are different from all other forms of creation in nature. Human production, long before it becomes matter, is already projected in consciousness, something that is not possible in other animals. These, according to Aranha (1996), have a concrete, immediate and practical intelligence. These questions confirm the thesis that human beings do

not live without work, since it is through work that they become individuals, because they are not subordinate to the domains of nature, on the contrary, they dominate nature and adapt it to their needs. Despite this, Saviani (2007) recalls that

[...] the advent of private property made it possible for the class of owners to live without working, [...] but the private control of the land where men live collectively made it possible for the class of owners to live on the work of others, on the work of non-owners, who began to have the obligation, with their work, to maintain themselves and the owner of the land, converted into their lord (Saviani, 2007, p. 154).

6 Thus, the dynamics of labor, arising from the advent of private society, gave rise to the division of society into classes and, consequently, to the division of labor. Labor, once understood as a human essence, as a production of existence and its own material life, becomes a production of private property, from the point of view of capital. According to Lessa and Tonet (2011), from the moment that labor is used to produce the wealth of the ruling class, it becomes alienated labor. Therefore, the authors state that “[...] the essence of alienation in capitalist society is that it treats what is human as a commodity; and as a commodity it is a thing and not people, the inhumanity of this treatment could not be greater” (Lessa; Tonet, 2011, p. 96).

These initial considerations about labor as a fundamental activity of human existence express that only humans, as historical beings, materially produce society and, consequently, its existence. In addition, they do so in the most creative way possible because, unlike other animal species, they can three-dimension present, past and future time (Freire, 2005). It is in the reverse of a markedly capitalist society, in which work is produced to meet the needs of the economy, that we must think about teaching work at Youth, Adult and Elderly Education.

Teaching work in contemporary society follows the logic of totality in the capitalist order. Therefore, its materiality is made in an alienated way and subordinated to its guidelines (Castro; Brito, 2013). The authors also highlight that “[...] on the one hand, the work of the teacher focuses on the process of capital appreciation; on the other hand, it creates the conditions for the

training of labor that is consumed by capital and the State" (Castro; Brito, 2013, p. 124-125).

In this study, we focus on analyzing the conformity of teaching work in Youth, Adult and Elderly Education to the interests of capitalism. For this, it was necessary to understand what is meant by teaching work. According to Oliveira (2010), teaching work is a category that involves two fundamental elements of the human condition: the individuals and the activities developed by them. The author also highlights that the individuals are not only the workers involved in pedagogical practice in the classroom environment, but include, in addition to teachers, other professionals in the educational process.

It therefore encompasses the activities and relationships present in educational institutions, going beyond classroom work. We can consider as teaching individuals teachers, educators, monitors, interns, directors, coordinators, supervisors, advisors, attendants, assistants, among others (Oliveira, 2010, p. 1).

The author's understanding of teaching work, involving functions of the educational process beyond the classroom environment, reflects the context of the new form of organization of teaching work that involves

[...] new models of regulation and organization of work in schools, proposed by educational reforms, based on market-oriented management models, even if subtle, affect schools and teaching work in a profound way (Hypólito, 2012, p. 216).

The work carried out by the teachers who work at Youth, Adult and Elderly Education in the Tocantins river Amazon, Brazil's second most important hydrographic region, ratifies Oliveira's (2010) understanding of the concept of teaching work, since, due to the precarious conditions of public schools, especially those in the countryside, and the absence of professionals to perform the different functions, such as servants, cleaners, cooks, managers, pedagogical coordinators, secretaries, etc., teachers end up assuming many and varied functions, even if they are not prepared to perform them. This reality materializes in precariousness and intensification of teaching work. Thus,

[...] it is pertinent to defend that the school system transfers to the teacher the responsibility of covering the existing gaps in the institution,

which establishes rigid and redundant evaluation mechanisms and hires an insufficient workforce, among others (Gasparini; Barreto; Assunção, 2005, p. 191).

In addition to all the attributions that require more dedication and more physical and emotional effort, teachers are not guaranteed good conditions to develop professional work, much less exercise a prestigious profession in society. This conception of discrediting the teacher's work has remnants in Antiquity.

Manacorda (2010, p. 82) recalls that, in Greece, "[...] the job of master was the job of those who had fallen from grace". He was called a *grammatistés* and received a miserable salary. In Rome, the teaching work was carried out by a slave pedagogue and master, and "[...] with the evolution of the Roman patriarchal society, education becomes a profession practiced initially by slaves within the family and then by freedmen at school" (Manacorda, 2010 p. 102). Thus, teaching has had degrading dimensions since antiquity, demonstrating that it is a profession without social prestige and fair remuneration, practiced by people excluded from society.

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In the book "Education and Emancipation", Adorno (1995), when addressing the *taboo theme about teaching*, highlights that teaching work in Germany presented sometimes degrading dimensions that showed society's prejudice against teaching compared to other professions such as, for example, doctors, lawyers and university professors in relation to those of basic education. Adorno (1995) points out that teaching has already been associated with the profession of hunger, although he recognizes that it has some status and power for being responsible for contributing to the formation of prestigious professions, although it does not enjoy the same social prestige.

Freire (2005) emphasizes the need for the teacher to break with the banking conception of education, as it is nourished by the narration of pre-established contents, in which the students are conceived as empty containers in which the educator deposits the knowledge that emerges from the interests of the oppressors. Thus, banking education is at the service of the interests of the ruling class. "In fact, what the oppressors want 'is to transform the mentality of the oppressed and not the situation that oppresses them', and this so that, by better adapting them to this situation, they can better dominate them" (Freire,



2005, p. 69). This is one of the great challenges of the educator who wants to be revolutionary: to work the process of liberation with the oppressed, as well as the liberation from the oppressors.

Freire (2005), affirms the need for critical reflection of the oppressed about oppression. From Paulo Freire's perspective, only authentic, critical, and reflective thinking can awaken in individuals the interest in overcoming their dehumanization, because they will reveal that injustice and oppression are historical realities resulting from the unjust order of the system that generates *being less*. Therefore, dehumanization is not a given destiny or ontological vocation.

We have seen, therefore, that, in both Adorno and Freire, the category of work only has value when it is at the service of the ontological vocation of *being more*, since it is through work that men and women transform the world, adapting it to their needs. However, when the teaching work is not at the service of the humanization of the individuals, it becomes alienated work because it serves external interests to those who produce it.

In the following topic, we will deal with the conditions of teaching work, making a time frame of this debate from the 1990s.

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## Teaching work conditions: an analysis from the 1990s

When analyzing the context of teaching work conditions in Brazil, from the 1990s, we understand, based on the theories of Castro and Brito (2013, p. 117), that this work activity "[...] is part of the totality constituted by work in capitalism, being subject, therefore, to its logic and its contradictions". This makes us think that the struggle to overcome the dehumanization resulting from the restructuring of capitalism requires teachers, firstly, recognition and critical awareness of the oppressive reality; secondly, it requires thinking about actions capable of rescuing their denied humanity in the injustice, exploitation, oppression, and violence promoted by the oppressors who make marginalized and oppressed individuals work in the service of the interests of capital (Freire, 2005).

When we think of teaching work conditions, we often associate the concept with the conditions of physical and material infrastructure. To some

extent, it is possible to consider the assertion. Nevertheless, when we turn to the literature, we find that the concept is more comprehensive because it also involves the living conditions of workers (Oliveira; Vieira, 2012). It is important, before we stick to the concept, to understand, *a priori*, another concept that is intertwined with this one: it is the teaching condition. According to Fanfani (2010), the *teaching condition* refers to a constituent state of the process of social construction of the teacher's work. The word "condition", the author clarifies, carries with it a neutrality that prevents us from taking a position when we want to define the meaning of teaching activity in contemporary societies.

In this sense, we understand that the *teaching condition* is not a fixed term, but an open field, under construction, marked by advances and setbacks, resulting from social and historical constructions, which involve favorable or unfavorable possibilities, according to the macro and micro context in which this activity develops. Thus, Fanfani (2010, p. 2) points out that "[...] it is of particular interest to analyze, from a historical [...] and relational perspective, the set of actors, interests, power relations and strategies that unfold in this permanent struggle for the definition of the craft". Once again, we realize the relevance of historical processes to understand the vicissitudes of the present time.

By resorting to historical milestones, we see that the 1990s marked a historical period of reforms resulting from the restructuring of capitalism worldwide, deeply affecting the countries of Latin America. Neoliberal policies were adopted to overcome the economic crisis caused by the imbalance of the welfare state. In the educational field, such reforms, according to Silva and Abreu (2008), took shape from the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990. This Conference resulted in the World Declaration on Education for All, which proposes the satisfaction of basic learning needs as a central objective.

This conference provided the basis in Brazil for the construction of the Ten-Year Plan for Education for All, in force in the years 1993-2003. The event was also crucial for the elaboration of the new Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education of nº 9.394/1996 (LDB/96). From these legal provisions, several changes were implemented, aiming to adapt the educational system to the agreements made between the countries of Latin America and the

international organizations responsible for investments in educational reforms. Studies by Oliveira (2004) show that

It is possible to identify in these reforms in Brazil a new regulation of educational policies. There are many factors that indicate this, among them it is possible to highlight: the centrality attributed to school administration in reform programs, electing the school as the nucleus of planning and management; the per capita financing, with the creation of the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Elementary Education and the Appreciation of Teaching (FUNDEF, the acronym in Portuguese), through Law no. 9.424/96; the regularity and expansion of national evaluation exams (SAEB, ENEM, ENC), as well as the institutional evaluation and school management mechanisms that insist on community participation (Oliveira, 2004, p. 1, 130).

In the context of this new regulation of educational policies, one of the actions of the State was to implement the process of administrative, pedagogical, and financial decentralization, assigning greater autonomy and flexibility to schools, but also expanding their responsibility and, consequently, the demands of the teacher's work. The State's objective was to adapt the educational processes to the new requirements, to comply with the agreements established in favor of the productive restructuring of capital. In this context, the new Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education 9.394/96 legitimizes the neoliberal educational project of regulating education to the interests of capital. With regard to teaching work, a series of attributions is outlined, according to Art. 13, items I to VI, of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education:

- I - Participate in the preparation of the educational institution's pedagogical proposal;
- II - Prepare and comply with the work plan, according to the pedagogical proposal of the educational establishment;
- III - Ensure student learning;
- IV - Establish recovery strategies for lower-achieving students;
- V - To teach the established school days and class hours, in addition to fully participating in the periods dedicated to planning, evaluation and professional development;

VI – Collaborate with the school's articulation activities with families and the community (Brasil, 1996).

As the document describes, we have witnessed, from the new Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, an expansion of the responsibilities of teachers, which involves issues of pedagogical practice, the political pedagogical project, management, planning, evaluation, and the family-school-community relationship. One of the consequences of the new demands imputed is the intensification of teaching work, which will reflect on the working conditions of this education professional. Thus,

[...] it is possible to analyze the intensification both in quantitative terms related to the volume of tasks and in qualitative terms characterized by the transformations of the activity without the necessary social support to accommodate the demands of the work (Oliveira; Vieira, 2012, p. 174).

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For the authors, the intensification of teaching work results in greater teacher responsibility for school results, including students' success or failure, contributing to the "self-intensification of work." In addition, it is noticeable that the teaching work happens in precarious conditions, interfering with the students' learning, leaving the teacher "[...] with a feeling of dissatisfaction, emptiness, impotence in the face of the numerous tasks that are not directly related to their role as a mediator of the students' teaching and learning process" (Macedo; Cabral Neto, 2013, p. 156).

In addition to aspects about the intensification of teaching work, there are other nuances imbricated in the new dynamics of regulation of educational policies that affect the conditions of teaching work. For these reasons, it is important to understand how the literature conceptualizes the conditions of teaching work. For Assunção and Oliveira (2010), this concept involves issues that go beyond infrastructure and materials, as

[...] they are not restricted to the position or place of the job or to the realization of the work process itself, that is, the process that transforms inputs and raw materials into products, but also concerns employment relations (Assunção; Oliveira, 2010, p. 1).

Hypólito (2012), when analyzing the conditions of teaching work in schools, is based on the result of the research “Teaching Work in Basic Education in Brazil”, organized by Oliveira and Vieira (2010). The author highlights that the concept of *teaching work conditions* involves aspects such as: “[...] formation; career, remuneration, and forms of hiring; work process – intensification, workloads, times, characteristics of the classes (material and emotional aspects); physical and material conditions of work, among others” (Hypólito, 2012, p. 211).

Another author, Migliavacca (2010, p. 1), addresses the teacher’s working conditions highlighting that “[...] the expression alludes to the social, political, cultural and educational aspects that, in a given historical period, delimit the structural framework in which the teacher’s work process is developed [...]”. Fanfani (2010) points out that it is important to consider objective and subjective aspects on the subject, because teaching exists as an objective reality, but the values, the way of being, the dreams, the representations are present, that is, the dimensions of teaching subjectivity that cannot be dissociated from those more objective dimensions. In addition, Castro and Brito (2013) categorize *teaching work conditions* in six aspects, namely:

- a) the infrastructure conditions of schools;
- b) the professional conditions of teachers;
- c) the use of technological and pedagogical resources;
- d) the bureaucracy that is imposed on teachers;
- e) external evaluations of the teaching work;
- f) the implications of the political-pedagogical project adopted by official policies (Castro; Brito, 2013, p. 131).

Analyzing the concept of *teachers’ working conditions* from the point of view of different authors, it is possible to see a relative consensus in the literature, especially with regard to the objective and subjective dimensions of teachers’ work. Thus, when trying to equate the different factors, it is possible to state that *teachers’ working conditions*, from an objective point of view, refer to the inputs needed to carry out teaching practice, such as: physical facilities, materials, and equipment. From a subjective point of view, it relates to employment relationships; formation, valuing teaching work; the teacher’s physical, cognitive, and affective capacity; and social, political, cultural, and educational aspects.

In the following section, we will deal with teachers' working conditions in the context of the research, highlighting aspects related to the precariousness of temporary work.

## **Teachers' working conditions in the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education: unveiling the reality**

When analyzing the working conditions of teachers in the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education, we are considering it within the historical context since the period of colonization. This period alludes to the time when Jesuit priests, considered to be the first educators of the enslaved and indigenous people, began the educational processes, whose objectives focused on catechesis and the development of the country's economy.

Thus, the education of these individuals had a doctrinal bias and served the interests of the colonizers. Since then, we can already see that the educational work with adults was born with utilitarian and doctrinal intentions, as the Jesuit priests carried out a verticalized education that was very well guided by the interests of foreign capital (Haddad; Di Pierro, 2000).

Oliveira (2010) recalls that teachers have been treated as objects since the beginning of the formation of the Brazilian people. Our Brazilian cultural tradition did not allow teachers to enjoy freedom, participation, autonomy, and political options to transform the situation of oppression. On the contrary, they were just another

[...] instrument of domination and often remained in the lower chains of the process [...]. The teacher was the one who was going to saturate the blank pages that fell into his hands and mark them with the branding iron of that society (Oliveira; Fernandes, 2010, p. 122).

The rationale was that teachers should adopt a neutral attitude in their pedagogical work, as if the social problems, which were gradually worsening due to the oppression of the bourgeois class over the economically disadvantaged classes, were to be separated from the school.

This way of conceiving the work of the teacher extended, and still extends, to the conditions of teaching work in the current context. Teachers have taken on a large part of the responsibility for the conditions in which their work is carried out, without often reflecting on or considering the State's legal obligation to guarantee favorable conditions for the necessary performance of this teaching activity.

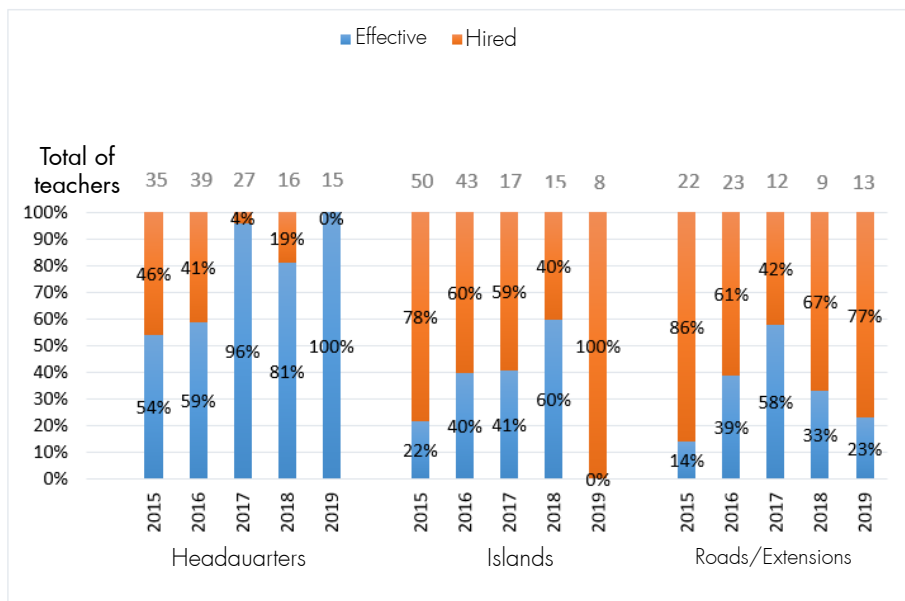
Perhaps one of the reasons for this attitude of assistance is related to precarious employment conditions. A study carried out by Oliveira and Vieira (2012) on teaching conditions in seven Brazilian states revealed that the working conditions of teachers in Brazil are permeated by problems of different orders, because

Brazil's unequal reality, sustained by the unjust distribution of wealth, results in regional differences, especially between its 5,564 municipalities, which are directly reflected in public education. These inequalities translate into poorer working conditions at the most basic stage of basic education, which also has the largest contingent, under the terms of the Federal Constitution of 1988, which states that elementary education and early childhood education are municipal priorities (Oliveira; Vieira, 2012, p. 178).

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With regard to local data, the North is among the Brazilian regions where social inequality is most evident. When we look at the universe in which teachers work, we see that the precarious conditions are evident in their employment conditions. In the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education in the Tocantins Amazon region, especially in the municipal network of Abaetetuba, Pará, the locus of this investigation, we found that the number of teachers hired was quite significant between 2015 and 2019, especially in the territory of the islands and roads/extensions, as shown in graph 1.

Graph 1 | Youth, Adult and Elderly Education teachers in the Abaetetuba municipal network (2015-2019)



Source: Tabulation produced by the authors.

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Even before we turn to the analysis of teachers' employment relationships, it is important to note in the graph the reduction in the number of teachers. At headquarters, we went from 35 in 2015 to 15 in 2019. On the islands, the reduction was from 50 teachers in 2015 to 8 in 2019. On the roads/extensions, there were 22 teachers in 2015 and only 13 in 2019. The aggravating factor is not only the type of teacher, but also the reduction in staff. In other words, we have fewer teachers over the period in question and, among those few, more temporary contracts than permanent ones.

When we look at graph 1 in relation to employment at the headquarters, we see that there was a gradual increase in permanent teachers among those who remained, despite the reduction in the number of staff, reaching 100% at the end of the period under study. This is important when we think about the need to develop teaching work with teachers who have the autonomy to talk to the students; who are assisted by continuous formation processes without interruption, as is the case with contractors, who are sometimes



on the staff and sometimes not; and who are guaranteed professional development with work position plans, career, and salary plans.

However, when it comes to Youth, Adult and Elderly Education in the countryside, precarious contractual relationships intensify. On the islands, for example, the percentage of contracted workers was 78% in 2015. This percentage fell to 40% in 2018. However, in 2019, it reached 100% of contractual ties. On the roads/extensions, 86% of jobs were contractual in 2015. In the period under study, the year with the lowest contract rate was 2017, with 42% of teachers under contract, but the number of teachers under contract grew again and reached an average percentage of 77% in 2019.

This reality of intensified contractual ties to work in Youth, Adult and Elderly Education in the countryside reveals the urban-centric vision that prioritizes education for those living in urban centers to the detriment of education in the countryside. This shows disrespect for rural students, the community and teachers who agree to work on precarious temporary contracts, without proper professional recognition. Hipólito (2012, p. 2019) analyzes this as an “[...] intense process of precariousness that affects careers, postpones competitions, fragments the category, imposes wage reductions and creates a reserve army ready to take on teaching jobs.”

Art. 67 of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education outlines the pillars of professional development, detailing, from item I to VI, the responsibility of education systems for this development. Theoretically, this article of the law guarantees entries by competitive examination, as well as the right to professional development, a wage level, functional progression, study and planning time, and adequate working conditions.

However, there is a strong contradiction between the reality experienced by teachers in precarious contractual conditions and what is established in the highest education law. We could conjecture that this is “ignorance” on the part of the teachers, but, when we look at the reality, we see that they are fully aware of the legislation, but that they do not have the autonomy to fight to guarantee their professional development. The fact that they are appointed by politicians on duty muzzles them and prevents them from fighting for their rights.

The precariousness of teachers' contracts is part of a policy to make work more flexible in order to meet the demands of capital's productive restructuring, which is perpetuated throughout Brazil and exposes people who need work to the worst working conditions. One issue in evidence is the way in which these contracts are put into effect. When asked how the teachers' contracts were carried out, the two teachers who were coordinators of the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education at Municipal Secretariat of Education and Culture in Abaetetuba municipality at the time of the research said:

From all the data I have collected in the sector over the last two years, I have seen that the majority of those hired are political appointments. However, the majority are from the territory of the islands, roads and extensions, and there is a guarantee here at the headquarters that those who have applied for a tender will be assign (Coordinator Giovana, 2019).

[...]

I did not see any criteria when I was there and took part in the assignment. The permanent teacher already comes from the school by ordinance. The ordinance says "the oldest teacher has to be assigned." The contracted teacher is appointed. There are no criteria, like, has the teacher ever worked in the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education? (Coordinator Izabela, 2019).

The two Youth, Adult and Elderly Education pedagogical coordinators made it clear that the teachers' contracts do not follow criteria that demonstrate the minimum commitment of the Secretariat to Youth and Adult Education. The pillars of professional development established in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education are invisible to the eyes of the Abaetetuba municipal education system. None of the items I to VI of the aforementioned Law are guaranteed to Youth, Adult and Elderly Education teachers.

It is clear, therefore, that local leaders are using their power to turn the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education into a job market. The coordinators themselves have shown that they have no autonomy to change this reality, since they are there to serve the bosses of the local authorities. No matter how much good will they have to try to improve the quality of education for the individuals of this type of education, they lack autonomy and freedom, but they also lack the courage to fight to guarantee the rights of those whom the work developed

should benefit. In view of this reality, Freire (1996) warns that, as decision-makers, we have the possibility of choosing whether we should transgress ethics, accepting the bossism of the oppressor class, or condemn it, refusing any fatalistic determinism that oppresses and imprisons us.

When, when analyzing the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education and the working conditions of the teachers who work with this public, we do not problematize the way in which the set of factors that involves the materialization of education in this educational segment takes place, we are, in some way, agreeing with the perverse order of the oppressive system. Furthermore, when we allow ourselves to be seduced by fatalistic, discouraging, and immoral arguments that, for the most part, are used by the system to justify immorality and transgression of public service ethics, when we agree with the discourse that insists on blaming the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education student himself for school failure, we are also agreeing with the system's traps. Therefore, our place must be different if we really want the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education to serve the population it serves, it must be the place of indignation, rebellion, struggle, and resistance.

The coordinator Giovana says that it is ensured that all teachers are permanent in the urban area. However, one must ask: Under what conditions were these permanent teachers assigned to the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education? Coordinator Izabela says that the permanent teacher arrives with an ordinance that guarantees their assignment based on age. In many cases, these teachers are dismissed from the elementary school system because of their age, because they have more than one job or because they have relationship problems and end up being assigned to the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education as a punishment. Coordinator Izabela said that the permanent teacher who comes to the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education has

[...] two contractual bonds, one with the state and one with the municipality. What we find most is with the state. The teacher works 200 hours in the state and goes to the classroom, so he also has a very difficult time, because he does not have the opportunity to visit the students. So, if the student is already tired, the teacher is twice as tired (Coordinator Izabela, 2019).

Based on what the coordinator Izabela said, it is clear that there is a complexity in the professional staff of the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education, which, on the one hand, is related to the history of devaluing the education of the individuals of this type of teaching and, on the other, the policy that aims to conform education to the interests of capital through the appointment of professional staff. Of course, these are not the only unfavorable aspects of teachers' working conditions in the search for emancipation, but they can be considered preponderant factors.

Thus, on the one hand, we have the contracted teacher who lacks the autonomy and freedom to develop work that contributes to transforming the reality of Youth, Adult and Elderly Education students, because he has sold his labor power in the worst possible way in exchange for guaranteeing the maintenance of the power of those who appointed him. On the other hand, we have the permanent teacher who arrives at the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education classes often too tired to cope with a third work shift. This is because the socio-economic conditions and insufficient salaries of these teachers force them to take on more than one job to supplement the family income.

20 These two extremes allow us to deduce that the problem of working conditions in the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education is not limited to the type of employment relationship, but to the very insignificance of the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education for the country's education system, as it is an education for those who have been left "halfway" or who have not even been allowed to progress. It is as if the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education is there as a simulacrum, just to prove to society that it has not been suppressed, or perhaps to justify its existence in the laws, but without meeting the objectives that are theoretically prescribed in the legislation.

## Final considerations

The reflections produced from the debate on teaching work conditions in the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education in the context of capital's productive restructuring policies allow us to point out some considerations about the way teaching work has been shaped to meet the demands of capital in its new form of organization.

The educational reforms implemented since the 1990s have changed the direction of education and consequently the configuration of teaching work in general, expanding and intensifying the process of precariousness. With regard to teaching work in the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education, these processes are even more latent because this is an audience of little or no interest to the State, since they are people who do not contribute to the country's economic growth from the point of view of neoliberal policies, because they are adults, elderly, young people in conflict with the law, women, rural workers, riverside dwellers, black people, poor people, among others.

The research also revealed that the process of making work more flexible interferes greatly with the autonomy of the teachers who work as Youth, Adult and Elderly Education coordinators in the municipality's education department, who express a lack of management to establish criteria suited to the needs of the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education public to hire teachers to work in this type of education. The Youth, Adult and Elderly Education represents a job market for local leaders and teachers are hired according to the interests of the ruling class.

It is worth pointing out that the conditions in which teaching work has been carried out have already been denounced by classic authors such as Marx and Engels (1998) and Freire (2005), including the former who state that the conflicts of historical contexts originate from the contradictions between the forces produced by consumer society and the modes of exchange. In Youth, Adult and Elderly Education teaching work, the contradictions between what is proclaimed in the legal provisions and what actually materializes in the reality in which the work is carried out are perceptible. Freire (2005) points out that the precarious working conditions of teachers require social engagement and a struggle for more dignified and humane working conditions in capitalist society. For the author, overcoming contradictions requires the oppressed to become aware of their situation of oppression and commit themselves to liberating praxis.

For Adorno (1995), our option, as critical individuals who aim for an education at the service of humanization, social justice, and the emancipation of individuals, cannot be to defend oppression.

It is therefore urgent to reflect on and analyze the interests, camouflaged as good intentions, of capitalism when it comes to education. Social movements, teachers' unions, municipal education councils and civil society urgently need to recognize the Youth, Adult and Elderly Education as a form of basic education and engage in the struggle to defend it, so that they can join forces to ensure that it and its teachers are recognized, respected and have favorable working conditions.

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Prof.<sup>ª</sup> Dr.<sup>ª</sup> Maria Rosilene Maués Gomes  
Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Pará (Abaetetuba-Brasil)  
Vice líder do Grupo de Pesquisa em Educação Básica Interdisciplinar da Amazônia  
Tocantina (GPEBIAT)  
Orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3426-7849>  
E-mail: [rosilene.gomes@ifpa.edu.br](mailto:rosilene.gomes@ifpa.edu.br)

Prof. Dr. Carlos Nazareno Ferreira Borges  
Universidade Federal do Pará (Brasil)  
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação  
Grupo de Estudo e Pesquisa, Lazer e Ludicidade (Moçaraí)  
Orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1908-3315>  
E-mail: [naza\\_para@yahoo.com.br](mailto:naza_para@yahoo.com.br)

Name and E-mail of the translator  
Affonso Henriques Nunes  
[affonsohnunes@gmail.com](mailto:affonsohnunes@gmail.com)

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