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Primary and early childhood education teachers education in Higher Education in Brazil: quality in balance between the ideal and the possible, favoured and disadvantaged teachers

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Primary and early childhood education teachers education in Higher Education in Brazil: quality in balance between the ideal and the possible, favoured and disadvantaged teachers

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Abstract

Higher education of primary and early years teachers has been subject to many policy reversals and debates in the last three decades, mainly after the *National Education Guidelines and Framework Law* (LDBEN *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional*) was implemented in 1996. This law established that all teachers should be educated at higher education level. Thus, the aim of the current study is to analyse changes in, and discussions about, the higher education of teachers since the enactment of this law, reflecting on the question of quality in the balance, since not all teachers have the same access to higher education. The study is based on documentary analysis, bibliographic review of texts focused on addressing such changes in Brazilian daily life, and on debates about education level and institutional suitability to educate these teachers. Results have shown that despite the increased number of teachers educated at higher education level, schools aiming at teacher education at secondary level remain a reality that leads to significant differences within the country. We frame our analysis of the implications of the international higher education policy agenda on these developments within a Freirean conception of educational purpose.

Keywords: teacher education, primary education, early childhood education, teachers, higher education, history and current events

Introduction

In order for teachers' education in Brazil to reach high-quality standards, it is necessary to reflect upon local and national needs and feasibility, as well as analysing the communities that teachers will be educated to teach in including those beyond large Brazilian cities and capitals that manage to quickly educate their teachers at higher education level. Most Brazilian cities are small, many of them are located in rural areas, whereas other places have specificities such as indigenous or *quilombola*¹ schools whose students, in many cases, do not have access to secondary education or to Universities except for distance education programs or after moving away from their place of origin (Fernandes, 2018). Hence the importance of taking quality education to all corners of Brazil, rather than just granting diplomas to students.

Brazil presently has a significant deficit of teachers, lacking specific education in their field of expertise. In addition, a devaluation of social, financial and working conditions (evident since the beginning of the profession in the country and continues to happen), as well as significant abandonment of the teaching career, means that the number of young individuals willing to embrace the teaching career has decreased over time. On the other hand, this career has been increasingly sought after by individuals belonging to lower social classes, who are often unable to join other professional fields choosing the teaching career because it provides them access to higher education, as well as higher employability in a lesser 'manual' labour field.

Tensions and challenges for teacher education are witnessed in Brazil, such as a degradation of the condition of the teaching profession both in terms of salary, working conditions, and status and an intensification of work with loss of teaching autonomy, through control, charging for effectiveness through system assessments with blaming teachers, lack of recognition of teachers' knowledge, all of which leads to 'teacher malaise' (Rabelo, 2010a) and problems of attracting and retaining teachers.

Until the 1990s, primary and early childhood education teachers in Brazil were educated as priority in Normal schools, institutions aimed at educating teachers at secondary school level (Brazilian version of the French *École Normale*). Although these schools were easily accessed by the popular strata, the teaching profession was socially valued and mainly pursued by middle-class women, up to the 1960s.

However, since the implementation of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional, LDBEN*) in 1996, the number of primary and early childhood education teachers who have access to higher education has increased. Due to a lack of clarity in the law, which was dubious about whether, or not, these teachers would be allowed to continue to be educated at both secondary and higher education levels, as well as subsequent changes made in the legislation, many debates and disputes continue among courses, institutions and professionals.

LDBEN has enabled three educational environments to educate primary and early childhood education teachers: Universities, Higher Education Institutes (*Instituto Superior de Educação, ISE*) and Instituto

¹ Quilombolas are the current inhabitants of black rural communities formed by descendants of enslaved Africans, who mostly live on subsistence agriculture on donated, purchased or occupied land for a long time.

de Educação or Normal School (Secondary Education Institute), as well as three teacher education course types:

1. Pedagogy Course, higher education for education specialists and primary and early childhood teachers;
2. Higher Normal Course (Curso Normal Superior, CNS), which is aimed at educating primary and early childhood teachers at higher education level;
3. Normal Course, aimed at educating primary and secondary education teachers at secondary education level.

The study of Canen (1996) showed that teacher education courses privileging the technical dimension of education to the detriment of its articulation to contextual and intercultural concerns have also been present in some teacher education courses in Brazil and the UK. The consequence of such a technicist approach to teacher education impedes teachers' capacity to engage with cultural diversity.

Discussions on whether teacher education should be conducted in higher education or in schools have been held in several places worldwide, for example in Scotland see Shanks (2020). Zeichner (2013; 2014) has addressed global influences on educational policies, mainly on teachers' education, as well as highlighting the important role played by education in social justice and in educating critical teachers concerned with all social classes. Freire has always advocated for critical teachers' education, with emphasis on teacher/student interactions, as well as basing the teaching process on students' reality. Freire (1996, p.12) has stated that 'critical reflection about practice becomes a requirement of the theory/practice relationship'. Brazil still has Paulo Freire's legacy, although he has been widely criticised for his leftist ideals by the current Brazilian extreme right government.

However, according to Brock & Schwartzman (2004), who addressed several issues about the history and current conditions of the Brazilian educational system in comparison to other places worldwide, the Brazilian delay - in comparison to other countries - in expanding education to its citizens has also led to delay in teachers' education, which had specific repercussions in the aforementioned discussions about teachers' education in Brazil. Gatti et al. (2019) have addressed teachers' education in Latin America including Brazil. They emphasised the influence of educational reforms carried out in Latin American countries in the 1990s, among others, on the importance of providing higher education to teachers. However, these reforms were not easily or fully implemented in these countries due to advances and setbacks observed in institutions that were not equivalent to higher education, as well as to discontinued policies that were often implemented solely to comply with international agreements, among other aspects. Finally, it should be noted that teacher education is in crisis almost worldwide, although it is possible to identify good education centres in some countries. In this article, we examine how Brazil could become more open to the idea that teaching is not just about transferring knowledge, but also values, attitudes and communication processes, as well as about supporting and valuing the teaching profession to encourage young individuals to embrace the ideals defended by Freire (1996).

It is worth highlighting the importance of learning and reflecting about teachers' education in Brazil in comparison to that of other countries. The current study agrees with Darling-Hammond and Lieberman

(2017), according to whom, understanding the efforts made by other countries helps broaden one's perspective about what is possible, whereas making international comparisons enables seeing how ideas work in practice at a systemic level. The aforementioned authors have analysed efforts observed in places presenting well-developed teacher education systems and concluded that some initiatives were quite promising, namely: designing courses capable of linking theory to practice; connecting student learning to classroom teaching; establishing induction models to support new teachers through guidance and collaborative planning. Darling-Hammond and Lieberman (2017) have pointed out that such initiatives are rarely incorporated systemically.

With Shanks (2020), it is possible to challenge readers to make associations and to reflect about teachers' education issues in Brazil, namely: correlations between the history and the current status of teachers' education in Scotland and in Brazil, with emphasis on the need of linking theory to practice; institutional partnerships between schools and government agencies; concern with alternative teachers' education routes; the need to implement quality distance education courses based on critical reflection; reflection about the professional teaching induction issue and about the positive and negative aspects of these international programs (Rabelo, 2019). However, in this paper we will focus on standardising teacher education routes. The debate about academisation or practice, as well as the need to implement rapid education to overcome the shortage of teachers versus quality education remain despite the LDBEN enactment.

Method

Towards this end, the objective of the current study was to analyse changes and discussions about the education of higher education teachers after the LDBEN was enacted, as well as to analyse disputes among institutions, courses and professionals. The current analysis was based on documentary investigation and on bibliographic review of texts addressing such changes in Brazilian teacher education. The bibliographic review was followed by critical analysis of all official documents that have addressed the education of primary and early childhood education teachers (laws, decrees, bills, guidelines, resolutions, among others), as well as of academic texts focused on analysing policies aimed at educating primary and early childhood education teachers.

Historical background of teacher education at higher level in Brazil

It is possible that, as a legacy of the Portuguese colonisation, primary teachers in Brazil did not even have education courses until the 19th century. Only Normal Schools existed at that time, but they were not very popular, because anyone could be a teacher (given moral integrity and little knowledge of reading and writing). The education in Normal Schools only started to gain ground in the 20th century, when the idea of mandatory education began to be consolidated. There were some attempts to educate primary² and early childhood education teachers at higher education level before the 1990s, as we will

² Since the 1996 LDB, this segment in Brazil has been called "Early years of Fundamental Education" (anos iniciais do Ensino Fundamental). However, the current study has adopted the term "primary education", in compliance with UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1, 1997, quoted by EURYDICE, 2001) - a single teacher teaches all subjects in this education sector.

demonstrate in the table below.

Table 1: Timeline of teacher education before 1996 (Tanuri, 2000; Rabelo, 2019)

Year	Institution	Course level
From 1835 - 1939	Only Normal schools	Secondary-level teacher education.
1900 - 1945	Expansion of Normal schools	Continuity of the previous course, with more pedagogical subjects, but which does not give later access to attend higher education.
1934-1938	Superior Normal School is implanted in University	Normal course of higher education is created and finished 4 years later.
1939	Creation of the Pedagogy course	Higher education that still does not educate primary teachers, but does educate education specialists and teachers to teach in Normal schools.
1946	Reorganisation of the Normal school	Secondary teacher education courses that give access to those who finish the course to take higher education courses later, also includes the education of education specialists at the secondary level.
1959-1961	Normal higher education course is created	Normal teacher education course at a higher level and finished 2 years later.
1969	Pedagogy course starts to educate teachers	The Pedagogy course has guaranteed the possibility of also educating teachers for primary education and early childhood education.

First, it is necessary to explain the use of the term pedagogy in Brazil. Since the creation of the Normal secondary education programme, there have been categories of the so-called pedagogical disciplines. Initially, a single discipline – i.e. pedagogy – was introduced in general secondary education; later, other disciplines were progressively added to its discipline matrix. Therefore, although there is pedagogical education in the Normal course, this education has reached deeper levels after the implementation of Higher Education pedagogy courses.

This series of developments delineated above gave rise to the rhetoric that all education professionals would necessarily have ‘teaching practice’ in classroom. This debate also triggered the competition for an activity field between teachers educated in Normal schools and pedagogues graduated as teachers in colleges and universities of higher education (Fonseca, 2008; Maia, 2019). One cannot neglect that different arguments are incorporated, or not, by individuals/communities, such as the one in ‘defence of teaching as the basis of teachers’ education’, which was supported by different Brazilian associations and leaders in the field. Discipline matrix negotiations were implemented based on projects focusing on teacher education; however, these projects were conflicting, provisional and contingent.

After the 1980s, academic discussions started to question the technical profile of pedagogy courses (to educate only specialists without teaching practice); consequently, the function of pedagogy courses was brought to these discussions. There are several opinions about such a function, but the most

consolidated one is that ‘teaching is the basis of the professional identity of every education professional’. Not everyone agrees with such an opinion. According to Paiva (2006), among many others, this position was a mistake, since it fated pedagogy courses to only qualify individuals for teaching purposes, whereas pedagogues’ education had addressed other social life spheres. Making pedagogy courses responsible for educating primary education teachers, led them to be reformulated (Tanuri, 2000).

Teachers’ education at higher level based on the 1996 LDBEN

Previous efforts were not enough to educate all primary school teachers at higher education level in Brazil. In 1994, there were only 337 pedagogy courses across the country. Most of them were located in the South-eastern region with 197 courses (165 of them were held in private institutions). On the other hand, there were 5,276 Normal schools in the country in 1996 as we see in the figure below.

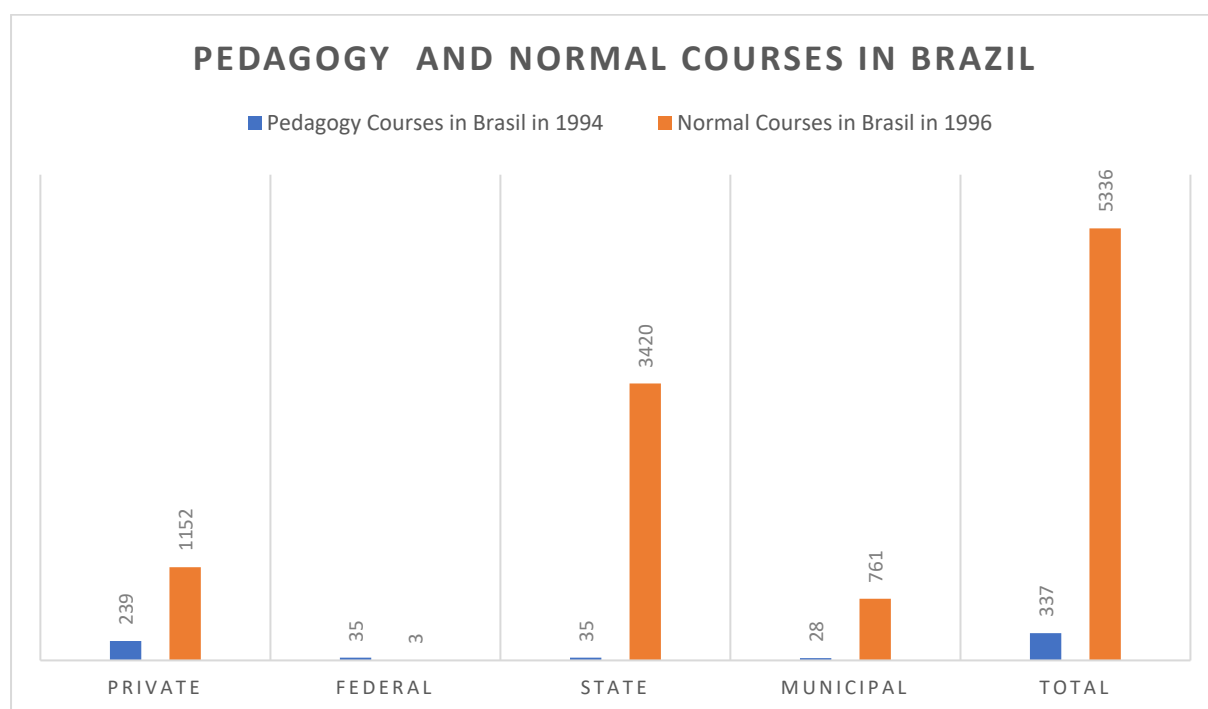


Figure 1: Pedagogy and normal courses in Brazil (Tanuri, 2000)

At this time a lack of teachers’ education policies and lack of governmental actions focused on teachers’ career and remuneration led to social devaluation of the teaching profession, which has significantly affected the quality of teaching at all levels. However, there have been several attempts to regulate teacher education in the last three decades since, as we will demonstrate in the table below and then we will analyse some of them.

Table 2 - Timeline of teacher education after 1996

Year	Legislation	Synthesis
1996	LDBEN (law 9394) is approved	<p>Article 62 - Teachers educated at a higher level, with a minimum of Normal secondary education for primary education is accepted.</p> <p>Article 63 - creates a new educational institution and a new course for teachers at a higher level - ISE (Instituto Superior de Educação- Higher Education Institutes) and CNS (Normal Course Superior).</p> <p>Article 87 – After the year 2006, only teachers educated at a higher level or with in-service training will be admitted.</p>
1999	National Curriculum Guidelines at Secondary Level, in Normal Mode	Instituted and validated secondary-level teacher education as the minimum education level accepted by LDBEN for primary and early childhood education teachers.
1999	Decree 3276/99	Provides for the education of teachers at a higher level to work in basic education giving exclusivity to Normal higher courses to educate teachers for early childhood education and primary education.
2000	Decree 3554/2000	Amends the previous decree by changing the word exclusively to preferentially, removing the exclusivity of Normal higher education courses to educate teachers for early childhood education and primary education.
2002	CNE – resolution 02	It establishes the minimum number of hours for teacher education in higher education to be 2800 hours.
2005	CNE – Feedback 05	Establishes the minimum workload of the pedagogy course in higher education as 3200 hours, suggesting that the 'specialisations' pass to post-graduations.
2006	CNE - National Curricular Guidelines for Pedagogy Courses	Maintained teaching as the central axis of pedagogues' education; they were able to qualify as both primary and early childhood education teachers, as well as for job positions such as supervision, educational guidance and school management. Ensured that higher education institutions capable of maintaining CNS in operation were likely to be transformed into Pedagogy courses.
2009	LDB change	It maintains the Normal course of secondary education as the minimum for the education of teachers of early childhood education and primary education, but encouraging higher education for such education.
2015	New National Curricular Guidelines for initial education at higher education level and for continuing education	They addressed all teachers' education courses, including the pedagogy course, increased the workload and created alternative routes for teachers who already had a major degree
2019	Change for the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Initial Education of Basic Education Teachers	Associate teachers' education with National Common Curriculum Bases

LDBEN (Federal Government of Brazil, 1996) was enacted within this context and it led to drastic changes in education, mainly in teachers' education. The establishment of Article 62, according to which basic education (ranges from early childhood to secondary education) teachers should be educated at higher education level, was the main change addressed in this version of the Law:

“Teachers' education to work in basic education schools shall take place at higher education level, with full degree in undergraduate courses held in universities and higher education institutes, which are considered the minimum education level necessary for the exercise of teaching in early childhood education, whereas the education offered at secondary education level, in Normal mode, accounts for the first four grades of primary school.” (Federal Government of Brazil, 1996, article 62)

LDBEN article 62 has set secondary education held in Normal Courses as the minimum education level for these teachers. However, it has stipulated - in 'Transitional Provisions' of LDBEN, §4 of art. 87 - that 'only qualified teachers with higher education degree or in-service education would be accepted until the end of the Education Decade'. This paragraph was interpreted as if there was a ten-year time lapse for teachers' education at secondary level, and for all teachers to be educated at higher education level (which, in theory, would happen in 2007).

There was confusion, as most people interpreted that there could be no more teachers without higher education after 2007. At the same time, the law guaranteed that the Normal course in secondary education was the minimum, guaranteeing places where there were not enough higher education courses.

Teachers have rushed to attend undergraduate courses, as described by Monteiro and Nunes (2006) in Pará State, but not always to the same degree in each state. Such teachers must be qualified, as required by law and by local governments, which have developed partnerships with higher education institutions – many of them, private – in order to qualify their teachers. This process has established a true educational market, whose prices change depending on the course curriculum having a longer or shorter duration and/or workload, being in-person or remotely, among other aspects. These courses were overall characterised as fast, short-lived, based on intensive and inhuman daily class load, simplistic content, providing reduced and fragmented coverage of curriculum offered during teachers' school holidays, counting a certain time of teachers' professional exercise as course load since they prioritise teacher certification over quality of education (Monteiro and Nunes, 2006).

These courses were 'marketable' because many primary education teachers in several places countrywide did not even have access to specific education for teaching. These teachers were called 'lay people', *leigos* in Portuguese, who do not even often have access to secondary education, as observed in statistical data provided by the Ministry of Education (Federal Government of Brazil, 2001). Based on such data, there were 86,070 lay teachers (without specific education for teaching) working in daycare, literacy, pre-school, primary and youth and adult education classrooms. After all of these policies were implemented, 5.2% of lay teachers were still working in primary education (39,104 individuals) and 8.5% in early childhood education (50,957 teachers) in 2019. In total, 90,061 teachers who worked in these sectors have secondary education, at most, although without specific education

for teaching (Federal Government of Brazil, 2020). These teachers would have to go through secondary education before joining higher education. It is worth noticing that most of these uneducated teachers live in the North-eastern, Northern and in part of the Midwestern region, i.e. this reality prevails in some regions and cities in the country – a fact that must be taken into consideration (Monteiro and Nunes, 2006; Federal Government of Brazil, 2020).

The National Curriculum Guidelines focused on educate Early Childhood and Primary Education Teachers, at Secondary Level, in Normal Mode (CNE - National Education Council – Conselho Nacional de Educação, 1999), emerged in 1999. This document, together with two guidelines issued by the National Education Council, has instituted and validated secondary-level teacher education as the minimum education level accepted by LDBEN for primary and early childhood education teachers. These guidelines gave new interpretations, focusing on allowing teachers to teach with the minimum guaranteed by law, which in many parts of the country was necessary.

This outcome confirms Tanuri's prediction (2000) that teachers' education held in secondary Normal courses may still exist for some time in several regions in the country, depending on the needs of each place. Monteiro and Nunes (2006) have highlighted that secondary-level teacher education held in Normal courses is necessary in many Brazilian regions due to lack and backwardness of higher education in different contexts. In addition, studies carried out with students of 'licenciatura' or licentia docendi courses³ show that students coming from Normal courses are the only ones who join higher education with a clear option for teaching (ibid). Data shown in Table 3 highlights the decreased number of Normal schools since LDBEN enactment. It is worth emphasising that this number had previously increased, since the country had 540 Normal schools in 1949 (Federal Government of Brazil, 1999a).

Table 3: Secondary-level teachers' education schools 1991-2019 - number of schools, enrolments and course conclusions (Federal Government of Brazil, 2003; 2010; 2019)

	Total				
	1991	1996	2002	2010	2019
Schools	5,130	5,550	2,642	-	-
Enrolments	640,770	851,570	368,006	182,479	78,773
Course completions	139,556	173,359	124,776	-	-

Based on Table 3, the number of enrolments, which first presented an upward trend in Normal Schools, has significantly dropped within approximately 20 years. It has happened because students stopped going to Normal Schools as they used to do before and schools started to close in many places⁴. Table

³ In Brazil, "licenciatura" (licentia docendi) courses are synonymous with undergraduate courses focused in teacher education, there is no "licenciatura" focused on educate professionals who cannot teach, unlike Portugal, for example.

⁴ Monteiro and Nunes (2006) have described this remarkable trend in Pará State, Northern Brazil.

4 shows that this phenomenon took place in all Brazilian regions, even in regions that did not have licensed teachers.

Table 4: Secondary-level teachers' education schools 2002 - 2017 - number of enrolments at national and regional level (Federal Government of Brazil, 2002; 2010; 2017)

Geographical Unit	2002	%	2010	%	2017	%
Brazil	368,006	100	182,479	100	94,793	100
Northern region	41,809	11.4	219	0.1	1,409	1.5
North-eastern region	194,090	52.7	80,827	44.3	10,126	10.7
South-eastern region	84,858	23.1	54,219	29.7	49,241	51.9
Southern region	35,959	9.8	46,279	25.4	33,742	35.6
Midwestern region	11,290	3.1	935	0.5	275	0.3

This data is concerning given that LDBEN Transitional Provisions (art. 87, §4) is still used as an argument to terminate teachers' education courses at secondary level, although without launching higher education courses or taking into consideration local educational demands and needs (Monteiro and Nunes, 2006).

However, since there is still a large number of lay teachers in all Brazilian regions, one cannot deny the need of keeping secondary-level teacher education courses in many places. According to Paiva (2006), some states have shown reversals in the Normal School extinction process. Among them, one finds Rio de Janeiro State, where this process slowed down in 2006 - 104 of these schools remained in operation in the year the research was conducted.

The dispute: three types of institutions to educate teachers

Another modification introduced by LDBEN lies in the creation of a new teacher education institution in article 62, namely: ISE (Instituto Superior de Educação - Higher Education Institutes), which, according to LDBEN article 63, would account for. A new institution was inserted in the educational landscape disregarding the recent trajectory of pedagogy courses. This overlap of courses has caused great controversy. Thus, the LDBEN has established three educational spaces (ISE, Normal School and University) focused on primary education and early childhood education teachers, as well as three types of teacher education course types, namely: Pedagogy Course; Higher Normal Course – CNS; Normal Course).

Each of the institutions ends up being defended by a certain group in society, as well as by its participants, because in fact the existence of these three institutions and the courses involve discussions between what would be most important in teacher education: theory or practice, as well as critical reflection or supposed neutrality (which is widely criticised as contributing to the reproduction of social classes). We cannot fail to emphasise that all these institutions develop pedagogical knowledge,

but what is criticised is the possibility that the courses that are located outside the Universities do not promote research and may bring little critical reflection.

Some individuals fear there will be a low level of critical quality education, as there is a bad fit between the practical nature of education and pressure on Universities to focus on research. Others defend this course because institutes can reach places that Universities cannot. There are even those who believe that pedagogues should only be 'specialists' rather than teachers. Thus, there is clear dispute between 'practical' (ISE) and 'academic' (University and Pedagogy courses) institutional spaces.

According to Saviani (2009), the new LDBEN enabled an educational policy aimed at lowering such disputes: ISE has emerged as second-tier higher education institution capable of providing streamlined and less costly education based on short-term courses.

Paiva (2006) has briefly examined this controversy, stating that Normal schools were traditionally responsible for the education of teachers in early childhood and elementary education, but the establishment of the need for teachers to have higher education has led to more than 500 CNS across Brazil without following any criterion, mainly within the scope of private institutions.

Only in 1999 (3 years after the LDBEN enactment) did resolutions and guidelines emerge to regulate ISE and CNS (Federal Government of Brazil, 1999b). At that time, there was also a spark to rekindle the controversy and competition between education institutions focusing on primary education teachers: a decree (Federal Government of Brazil, 1999c) was enacted that made the education of primary and early childhood education teachers in the CNS 'exclusive'. This change generated a strong reaction from universities, teachers' associations and teachers' education courses. Consequently, a decree (Federal Government of Brazil, 2000) replaced the expression 'exclusively' with 'preferentially'.

In 2002 the National Council for Education (CNE) established, for the first time, that the duration of higher-level education provided to basic education teachers in undergraduate courses should comprise 2,800 hours in at least three years. Such a resolution aimed at regulating courses that appeared to be disorganised and accepted working time in the classroom as part of the course load, among other aspects. Subsequently, CNE (2005) changed Pedagogy course guidelines, increased its course load to at least 3,200 hours, and turned Pedagogues into 'hybrid teachers' who do a little bit of everything, because they would have an education that addresses several issues such as: management, school inclusion, diversity, primary education, early childhood education, among others. It also suggested that specialisation courses provided to school principals, advisors and coordinators should be transferred to post-graduate courses, which all graduates could attend. This change took away the privileged position of pedagogues, who once had the historical prestige of providing these courses.

Not surprisingly these guidelines were criticised, mainly for going against what is recommended in article 64 of LDBEN. Consequently, CNE (2006) has instituted the National Curricular Guidelines for Pedagogy Courses. It also allowed educational institutions to provide such postgraduate qualifications to any graduate, at their own discretion. These guidelines have also ensured that higher education institutions capable of maintaining CNS in operation were likely to be transformed into Pedagogy courses, which led to the continuous extinction of Higher Standard Courses throughout the national

territory (Carneiro, Araújo and Paiva, 2013) and made Pedagogy undergraduate courses the ones accounting for education primary and early childhood education teachers. This change enabled transforming CNS into Pedagogy courses, as well as to use their workload and other guidelines.

However, according to Saviani (2009), curricular guidelines for Pedagogy courses follow the same trend as educational policies that tend to level things down. According to Maués (2003), these educational policies were influenced by educational policies determined by multilateral organisations (such as the OECD and the World Bank), which have encouraged the international reforms carried out by several governments in different countries and continents. These organisations have encouraged the 'universitarisation' (higher education) of teachers' education through a professionalisation process based on academic knowledge, at the expense of practical skills. The problem is that complying with such policies, without adapting to Brazilian intricacies, turns them into 'only for show' policies. In this case, implemented policies aim at fulfilling international organisations' demands, by providing higher education certificates to teachers, who actually received light and low-quality education that did not really correspond to higher education levels (Saviani, 2009).

There is a real danger that resolutions that extinguished specialisation courses in Pedagogy, as well as the transformation of CNS into Pedagogy focus on educating 'super-teachers' with strong appearance and fragile essence, since their education is theoretically emptied and fragmented, which provides them rudimentary and superficial knowledge, as well as minimal sense of research and knowledge production. Thus, it corresponds to the workers' education focused on maintaining the established order. The aforementioned resolutions may be a way to overcome the dichotomy between theory and practice, by using concepts that may be uncritically appropriated by neoliberalism (Dourado, 2015).

These developments nevertheless did nothing to address the underlying crisis of teacher scarcity in remote areas of Brazil. In 2009, there was a dispute over different Bills in the Congress: a) early childhood education teachers were the only ones allowed to have just the Normal Course certificate; b) only if they accepted primary and early childhood teachers with Normal course in places where there was no proven higher education for teachers; c) maintaining the acceptance of at least secondary school education in Normal mode for primary and early childhood education teachers. The last project changed LDBEN article 62 to maintain the possibility of the Normal School of secondary education as a minimum option for early childhood and primary education. This decision did not end the dispute between institutions and courses. Although the law established the minimum education level for primary and early childhood education teachers, it encouraged the pursuit of higher education, as described in the following paragraph:

"The Union, the Federal District, States and Municipalities shall adopt mechanisms to enable individuals' access to, and permanence in, teachers' education courses at higher education level in order to work in public basic education." (§4)

In other words, despite acknowledging the education of primary and early childhood teachers at secondary education level in Normal Schools, the legislation encourages them to access higher education. Subsequently, the new National Curricular Guidelines for initial education at higher

education level and for continuing education (Resolution 2/2015) were published in 2015. They addressed all teachers' education courses, including the Pedagogy course and created alternative routes for teachers who already had a major degree.

This policy settlement was short lived. These guidelines were replaced when another resolution (CNE, 2019) was published to define the 'National Curriculum Guidelines for the Initial Education of Basic Education Teachers'. These guidelines have generated significant criticism in academia and in professional associations because they were associated with the Bases Nacionais Comuns Curriculares (National Common Curriculum Bases, BNCC) and with the need for competencies, which were both questioned due to their association with international neoliberal policies, without further reflections on them and with large-scale international ranking projects (Anped, 2019).

Tardif (2013) reflects on the teaching professionalisation in the midst of the issue of teacher knowledge necessary for professional education. On the one hand, this has brought positive consequences, such as the attempt to improve the educational system, with a higher standard of teacher education and the implementation of new mechanisms for controlling results. However, the adaptation of neoliberal policies has imposed a hegemony of pragmatism and immediacy in the formation of disciplines that has made teacher education in higher education institutions and normal higher education courses, cheaper and eroded their scientific foundation (Tardif, 2013).

The truth is that Brazilians are accustomed to the existence of some laws that are not complied with due to their low effectiveness and that are changed when government officials realise this. Therefore, although the legislation decreed the need for higher education to be a teacher, in many places there was no teacher or courses to meet such a demand.

There is also resistance from people, because it forces them effectively to invest time and money to continue in a job with such stressful conditions and low remuneration.

In a previous research I analysed the teaching remuneration in Brazil and Portugal and found that although the salary in Portugal is low for those who enter the profession, s/he has career increases and ends up being equivalent to the majority of the salary that other higher education courses result in. In Brazil, the only benefit of teaching work is that there are many job openings, many of them public that have stability, but most of the time with a much lower salary than most salaries for those who take other higher education courses (Rabelo, 2010b). When one takes into account the highly feminised teaching profession, these conditions perpetuate common sense notions of 'work for love, less than for money' which continue to negate women's economic contribution and status.

All this encouragement to higher education has been reflected in the number of students enrolled in these courses. There has been a gradual increase in teachers with higher education and a decrease in those who do not have education or only that of the upper Normal course. The pedagogy course won the national dispute in 2017, since it accounted for the largest number of enrolments in undergraduate courses in Brazil - 296,776 new students enrolled in higher education courses, 9.2% of the total of college students; as well as for the largest number of graduates (126,144 individuals). It ranked second

in the total number of enrolled students (714,345), after Law School (879,234 students) (FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF BRAZIL, 2017).

Final considerations

Brazil has a great deficit of teachers, a lack of specific education in their field of expertise, devaluation of social, financial and working conditions, as well as significant abandonment of the teaching career (many individuals give up on the teaching profession after graduation, when they face the reality of school life). It mainly happens because the teaching profession in Brazil experiences the devaluation of its social, financial and working conditions which means that individuals willing to embrace the teaching career tends to decrease over time. Such devaluation is so great that there were government recruitment campaigns but without much success. In other words, the teaching profession in Brazil has been increasingly sought after by individuals belonging to lower classes who cannot find job positions in other professional fields. They sometimes choose this career, not because it is their personal choice, but because it enables them to have access to higher education, accounts for slightly higher employability and increases the likelihood of getting a job in a lesser 'manual' labour field (Gatti et al., 2019; Rabelo, 2010a; Rabelo and Monteiro, 2021).

In view of this examination of the policies that were intended to be implemented in Brazil, we agree with Ball and Bowe's (1992) position that different protagonists produce tensions in curricular policy. In this sense, it is necessary to shift the focus of dichotomies between production or implementation, as it is always necessary to reflect that the production of a policy is not carried out 'by decree', being the object of constant re-readings, elaboration of meanings and in the dispute for hegemony. Therefore, the changes happened because teachers are not mere executors of the policy, on the contrary, their education is sought by the people involved in the process, therefore, teacher education can drive change, but it must be viable within the context of life of teachers.

Lack of definition of teachers' education has contributed to the devaluation of the profession. Places and courses focusing on primary education teachers' education still coexist and continue to generate disputes and uncertainties in this field. Students often ask themselves: 'Which course should I choose? Which one is the best for me? Which one has the best employability?'

For there to be some consensus and progress in this debate, according to Tanuri (2000), there is no need for demobilising the experience accumulated by Pedagogy courses or by the huge public network of secondary education courses (the old Normal Schools) that can be capitalised and used. Carneiro, Araújo and Paiva (2013) have also highlighted the need of, and the important role played by, educational institutions found in the Brazilian hinterlands, which should not be disregarded. However, this lack of use of the accumulated experience of institutions and de-contextualised policies has led to the devaluation of professionals and to a deficient education unable to face educational issues.

Finally, the current study advocates for teachers' right to have access to high-quality higher education. However, the rush to terminate Normal Schools and the unrestrained pursuit of higher education for teachers have often weakened and degraded teachers' education rather than improving it.

International influences can be associated with alternative routes to teachers' education at higher level, which, in practice, often provides faster and lower-quality higher education courses. In addition, the Brazilian reality was not taken into consideration by those who tried to implement such alternative higher education routes, since it required commitment depending on the viability of different Brazilian locations, with different regions and different city types, whose teachers did not have access to specific teacher education and did not finish secondary education.

Offering diplomas without major reflections about the professional education of teachers was the only response to international requirements to present results 'only for show', which resulted in the legacy of teachers educated at higher education level, although with questionable quality. This requirement was taken advantage of by the market, i.e., by private company ventures that offered teacher education courses without analysing what was necessary to progressively educate teachers based on high-quality courses (Saviani, 2009).

Such neoliberal policies have been elaborated in an authoritarian and vertical manner and not with the broad participation of the educational community (Moreira, 2020). Teacher education 'cannot be seen only as a practical activity, based on instrumental rationality, but as an intellectual activity, guided by the conscious exercise of criticism and by a humanist posture', so the teacher needs to be educated in universities as spaces for criticism, professionalisation, research and construction of new knowledge (Moreira, 2020, p.1)

Freire in the book 'Pedagogy of Autonomy: Necessary Knowledge for Educational Practice' (1996) summarises his life's work in general guidelines on what is necessary to teach, just reading the summary we can perceive a list of several crucial aspects of teacher education, because it lists what the teaching requires: research; critically; critical reflection on the practice; fight for the defence of educators' rights; the belief that change is possible; curiosity; professional competence; recognise that education is ideological; joy and hope; within other aspects. When analysing these aspects, we realised that we still need to reflect a lot on Freire's guidelines, mainly for the education of teachers, who need to fight for their rights and those of students, actively participating in policies, aiming at a more critical, but also joyful vocation. because I hope that a day at school is a place where teachers and students are happy.

Finally, it is necessary to educate teachers without underestimating them, in line with teachers' reality (and with their working context, be it urban, rural, indigenous, riverside, quilombola, among others). Whilst teachers must reflect on their role within working towards the aspiration of social justice, it is also necessary learning from Freire (1996) that teachers need to form partnerships rather than disputes, that they learn together and make constant critical reflection about their work with those they teach.

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