

## Brazil and Chile: the reproduction of the teaching workforce\*<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This article aims at unveiling the perception of teachers about their salary as one of the dimensions of professional valorization in the context of neoliberal hegemony. In the research, of an exploratory nature and without comparative purposes, basic education teachers from four Brazilian states (Mato Grosso do Sul, Pará, Paraíba and Paraná) and from the Maule region of Chile were heard through the instant messaging application WhatsApp. The Brazilian teachers interviewed are linked to state education networks; their employment relationships are by public tender and temporary contracts. Chilean teachers work in public schools and private subsidized schools (privately managed), although all remuneration is paid by the State. One hundred ninety-eight teachers from both countries interacted via WhatsApp. The statements were processed by coding, with the help of *Atlas.ti*, a qualitative analysis software, to conceptualize and establish relationships between the data collected from the point of view of Grounded Theory. The results indicate, in the Brazilian case, that teachers see an advance in legal rights, but they also perceive that local administrations, given their option for management models with priority focused on fiscal policy, have been gradually regressing such rights, which has produced effects on remuneration. In the Chilean case, the absence or very residual presence of the concept of *res publica* in the social context is perceived, in the teachers' point of view, as an important dimension of devaluation, which is intensified through remuneration.

### Keywords

Educational Policy – Neoliberalism – Brazil – Chile – Teaching work – Teacher Remuneration.

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## Introduction

This exploratory and non-comparative work reveals the reproduction of the teaching workforce within the Brazilian and Chilean experiences, which experience structural and conjuncture changes under the hegemony of neoliberalism, when: “Financial wealth grew in a totally regulated world and needed much more freedom to circulate than real wealth. [...] Finance, which must be commanded by production, has become dominant [...]” (Paulani, 2010, p. 38, our translation).

Hegemony is understood as “the ability of one class to maintain its domination over the other, through coercion and consensus, intellectual and moral formation” (Gramsci, 1980, p. 50, our translation). From this perspective, Chile is considered a laboratory country of neoliberalism as early as the 1970s (Anderson, 1995). The country has since kept a history under the aegis of the neoliberal project.

In the Brazilian case, the assumption of neoliberalism comes later. Such a process begins to occur, specifically, in 1989, one year after the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988), as a kind of revenge for the Democratic State of Social Law approved by the Magna Carta. The effort of the constituent movement, with wide social participation in a process of correlation of forces to bequeath a state of social protection, was weakened by the coming electoral process, when most of the population decided for another project of society.

Both countries, with different histories during the institution of the Neoliberal State, experience, through the exercise of electoral democracy, elections of governments that either openly intensify the neoliberal project or put it in latency. The effects of such project for immense sectors of the population in each country, by minimizing State intervention in the economy and giving centrality to the market as a regulator of all human actions, provoke reactions of all kinds, guided by those who live in the world of work, in addition to those who defend democracy as a measure of social justice.

Based on options of existing society projects in Brazil and Chile, the objective of this text is to analyze the perception of teachers about their remuneration, considered one of the dimensions of valorization of their workforce – responsible, therefore, for their reproduction, understood as a material condition of existence within the scope of the development of the productive forces, which requires a moral and intellectual plan (Gramsci, 1980).

This text is organized into three sections, in addition to the introduction: in the first, the contextual changes in the two countries and their implications for the reproduction of the teaching workforce are explained; in the second, the methodological procedures, analyzes and results are indicated; in the last, the final considerations are presented.

## **The marches and countermarches of neoliberalism in Brazil and Chile: implications for teacher remuneration**

The examination of the Chilean and Brazilian cases leads to the apprehension that, in projects in which more State intervention is promised – it should be noted, intervention

as a means for the State to guarantee greater social protection –, neoliberalism maintains its logic in macroeconomics and obliterates a more egalitarian social reproduction.

In the Chilean case, with Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1990), deregulation policies caused high unemployment rates, concentration of income in the hands of the rich, repression of union activities and privatization (Anderson, 1995). The educational sector was directly affected: the ownership and management of schools ceased to be public, with the State acting only in its regulation with the advent of so-called subsidized private education (Figueroa, 1997). Subsequently, all elections were won by the *Concertación*, a coalition of parties that, although marked in the political field by democratic inspirations, would preserve the neoliberal project in macroeconomics, continuing the dictatorial heritage and which, in terms of educational policies, although including changes, was only “more of the same” (Donoso-Díaz; Castro-Paredes; Alarcón-Leiva, 2015, p. 307, our translation).

The ongoing years in Chile pointed to another direction as of the social protests that took over the streets and questioned enormously the results of the project set in motion by the ruling class in 2019. The origin of the popular uprising in Chile was the increase in public transport fares initiated by students, when President Sebastian Piñera decreed a state of emergency, with the army at the forefront for popular containment.

In Chile, the popular demonstration led to the election of Gabriel Boric in 2021, when:

[...] if we consider that the largest mobilizations that Chile has had in the last twenty years have been led by issues related to education, it is not surprising that institutional policy is validated if one of the objectives of recent social movements was to influence this sphere. (Cabrera, 2022, p. 272, our translation).

Boric would represent a kind of leadership that emerged in student struggles and would be committed to building a society with greater social justice. The perspective of changes in sociability patterns in Chile intensified and culminated in a constituent process. The election of its members innovated by the criterion of equal gender choice and the defense of a Plurinational State. Chilean society, however, was mostly not ready for that novelty. The dispute that formed next was between the “*Rechazo*” and the “*Apruebo*”, in a plebiscite to approve or not the new constitution. The victory of the “*Rechazo*”, reveals that:

Chile is experiencing times of conflict, and most of the people know that the crises faced will not be resolved by plebiscites, but there is still hope that a new Constitution can alleviate the Chilean crisis. Despite the criticism, it is necessary to admit that the new proposal presented was good for the rights of women and indigenous peoples, expanded democracy and guaranteed human rights. However, although most Chileans recognize the need for change, the proposal was not approved. The question is: what kind of changes do the people of Chile want. (Lima, 2022, p. 02, our translation)?



This was a moment of important inflection in the ongoing Chilean project, indicating what the reforms of all orders, acclaimed and inspired by the last moment of social contestation, are facing in the current scenario. The centrality of educational policy continues to be privatization and “precariousness in the form of career entry has grown in the last decade, basically through non-tender and temporary contracts” (Souza, Abreu, 2017, p. 14). Thus,

[...] in Chile there continues to be great agreement between educational policy agents, who seem to do nothing to change the course of professionalization, from teaching performance, conceived as professional performance, finally to the evaluation of results. Despite what is claimed, the collegiate of teachers groups a much smaller number of teachers. Outside the teaching profession, their voices are annulled by educational entrepreneurs, owners, public managers, parents and guardians. Finally, everyone seems to have a voice, except teachers. (Alarcon-Leiva; Carissimi; Cardoso, 2022, p. 12, our translation).

In the Brazilian case, the conjuncture started in 2016 ended a cycle built from the beginning of the 21st century (2003), when a new political coalition came to the federal government. If neoliberal principles persist in macroeconomics, such principles would be weakened through policies of income deconcentration and expansion of the social policies that would soon begin.

Among the measures taken in the field of educational policy, with eyes to reproducing the teaching workforce as material conditions of existence, the *Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação* (Fundeb; Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Appreciation of Education Professionals), approved by Law no. 11.494/2007, recovered the concept of the right to basic education (Brasil, 2007). Fundeb removed the focus of politics in only one of its stages, elementary school – which met a neoliberal principle – and provided the legal link for the approval of Law no. 11.738/2008, which extended teaching rights, including the institution of the *Piso Salarial Profissional Nacional* (PSPN; National Professional Salary Base) and the extra-class working day of 1/3 (Brasil, 2007, 2008). It was intended, therefore, the realization of another conception of State, namely, the Neodevelopmentalist State. If on the one hand it did not break with the neoliberal state in macroeconomics, on the other hand it strained it, increasing social rights. Therefore, much more than a late approval of Fundeb, which occurred only in 2007 (Oliveira, 2009), it expressed the condensation of material forces by the State (Poulantzas, 1978).

The judicialization of Law no. 11.738/2008 by state governors, with the allegation of breach of the federative pact by the Union, which delayed the materiality of the PSPN in many federative units until 2023 and the 1/3 working day until 2020, shows how much the extension of teaching rights was under tense and intense correlation of social forces, together with the power of the State to concentrate power in the period in question (Brasil, 2008, 2013, 2020a.).

In this social situation, Law no. 13.005/2014 was also approved, which instituted the *Plano Nacional de Educação* (PNE; National Education Plan), articulating educational



planning at the federative level (Brasil, 2014). Its central axis was the expansion of the right to education for the entire population by means of expanding access, permanence, financing and quality, ensuring the reproduction of the teaching work.

Between 2003 and 2015, a cycle of teacher appreciation was built through the improvement of rights by the State throughout the country. The epicenter was teacher compensation. There was resistance by federal entities in terms of what is available in the public budget for the payment of remuneration. Although some have used other mechanisms to obliterate such rights, overall, the legal framework built, and the growth of public finances configured a scenario that gave materiality to the claims of basic education teachers.

The new cycle, initiated from the impeachment process of 2016, placed the country under an economic bias of conservative, neoliberal and false moralist profile centered on fiscal austerity, returning to the concentration of income and the dilation of social inequalities of all kinds. Thus:

In Brazil, fiscal austerity was sold as a fable of the grasshopper and the ant. The moral argument points out that excesses must be remedied with abstinence and sacrifice. These excesses have several faces – minimum wage increases, social spending, state interventionism and even the 1988 Constitution – and the remedy has a name: austerity. (Rossi, 2021, p. 01, our translation).

The starting point of fiscal austerity was the approval of Constitutional Amendment No. 95/2016 (Brasil, 2016), followed by the establishment of a series of counter-reforms that impacted, in Brazilian society, those who live from both formal and informal work. Social mobility, which occurred previously through the deconcentration of income and the expansion of social policies, with upward movements among miserable portions of the population and among fractions of the middle class, not only paralyzed but also retreated, with the return of the country to the hunger map given the amount of destruction of rights (Guedes, 2022).

This situation was aggravated by the arrival of the pandemic of the Sars- CoV-2 virus, which causes the covid-19 disease. With the administration of Jair Bolsonaro's government and the denial of the extreme right in the federal executive, not only health actions to combat the virus were boycotted, but also any social policy action that protected people. Included in this process was educational policies, whose great initiative, which would be the approval of a law to replace Fundeb due to its temporary nature, occurred *in absentia* and at the initiative of sectors of the Legislative Branch, with the support of organized sectors of civil society. The *Fundeb Permanente com Custo Aluno-Qualidade* (CAQ; Permanent Fundeb with Student-Quality Cost) was thus constitutionalized by Constitutional Amendment No. 108/2020 and regulated by Law No. 14,113 in 2020 (Brasil, 2020b). The new fund maintained the logic of the previous ones, of budget distribution per capita. However, it innovated in increasing the Union's resources, expanded the reserve percentage to 70% per year, at least, for the payment of teacher remuneration, created another modality of student cost and became a permanent fund (Brasil, 2020b).



This government was defeated by the democratic and popular forces of the country. The fundamental mark of everything that has happened in the educational sector will be remembered. It is hoped that the scandals involving the four ministers who, in four years, including one who could not be sworn in because he lied about his resume, will be central to the collective memory. The last Minister of Education in the government of this period was involved in the scandal known as the “Parallel Cabinet”, characterized by:

Bribe in gold, purchase of bibles and cash hidden in a tire. These are some of the elements of denunciations of a scheme revealed by *Estadão*: the parallel office. Pastors captured the agenda of the Ministry of Education (MEC) and charged for the release of funds. The case resulted in the fall and arrest of former Minister Milton Ribeiro. (*Estadão*, 2022, p. 01, our translation).

In 2022, most of the population decided to return to the project presented here and characterized as first cycle, which extended social rights and deconcentrated income. This project had guaranteed, by constitutional and infra-constitutional rules, the reproduction of teaching work through better material conditions of existence. Even so, in the federative sphere of high deconcentration of educational policies and budget availability, it has always been present on the part of local governments, the non-observance of the legal rules for such. When this is not possible, they resort to using exception patterns that can become rules.

The reproduction of the teaching workforce consists of multiple dimensions: training, career, remuneration and working conditions that impact the quality of life of workers. One dimension cannot be underestimated in relation to another: they identify the status of being a teacher in our societies.

This text, of an exploratory nature, intends to analyze, specifically in the field of teacher remuneration, without intending to compare between countries, the mediations that are identified. While they could guarantee the reproduction of the teaching workforce as fully as possible, such mediations are hampered not only by available budgets but, above all, by artifices used to reduce the rights of a labor category.

## **Remuneration as category of analysis and its mediation codes for basic education teachers**

The universe of this research covers basic education teachers from four Brazilian states and a Chilean region: in Brazil, Mato Grosso do Sul (MS), Pará (PA), Paraná (PR), Paraíba (PB) and, in Chile, the Maule region. It is noteworthy that, in the Brazilian case, all teachers heard are part of the public education network of the listed states. In the case of Chile, which is a unitary state, teachers are linked to both public and subsidized private schools, which are privately managed. In both cases, however, teacher remuneration is paid with public money; therefore, state money.

The composition of teaching remuneration for each of these Brazilian states represents a significant part of its budget. Teachers, when counted in a national scale, “represent the third largest occupational group in the country (8.4%), behind only clerks (15.2%) and service sector workers (14.9%). The profession even surpasses the civil construction sector



(4%)” (Research Report, 2012, p. 08). In Chile, in 2023, in protest on the streets, teachers asked for the payment of a

[...] debt calculated at about US\$8 billion (approximately R\$40 billion, at the current rate) arising from a reform approved during the military government. Pinochet transferred the management of public education from the central government to the municipalities, as part of his policies to reduce the state apparatus. For years, municipalities refused to comply with wage adjustments due to lack of resources, also affecting pension contributions. About 76,000 teachers were affected by this reform. President Boric, who took office in March 2022, pledged to pay off this “historic debt” with the resources of a tax reform that has already been rejected by Congress, but that the government is trying to revive with a new bill that he will present in the coming weeks. (*GZH Mundo*, 2023, p. 01, our translation).

Remuneration, as a category of analysis, was discussed with groups of basic education teachers, which will be explained below. From this discussion emerged mediations that understand it as a condition that would lead to the appreciation or devaluation of this category of workers. In short, it was a matter of analyzing the teachers’ perception of the composition of their remuneration, looking specifically at issues that directly and or indirectly interfere with their purchasing power.

The methodological procedures were, initially, based on the formation of groups of teachers for communication via WhatsApp, which allows interactions between teachers over a broader period, not limited to just one interview. Beyond that, in such groups the themes could be resumed, expanded and discussed from different points of view. Allied to this is the possibility of debates and exchanges proper to the conversations carried out in groups in this application.

The researchers invited teachers from the state education networks that integrated the research. They shared the invitation with other teachers to form the group for a limited period. The groups were composed, in total, of 198 teachers, as shown in table 1 below:

**Table 1** – Number of teachers who interacted in WhatsApp groups, by case

State/Province/Region	Number of Teachers
Maule/Chile	46
Mato Grosso do Sul	47
Pará	42
Paraíba	23
Paraná	25
TOTAL	198

Source: Prepared by the authors from the composition of the five WhatsApp groups (2024).



The chosen social network would allow the free interaction and dialogue between participants of a group based on the questions asked by the interviewer. Participation via WhatsApp is spontaneous. Respondents can express themselves orally or by text, in addition to sending files with documents, photos and videos, as demonstrated, for example, in the research by Santos and Costa (2024).

With the end of the discussions that took place in the WhatsApp groups, the analysis was carried out using Grounded Theory, based on the data. It is a methodology adopted to extract events or concepts from empiricism and then relate them in order to elaborate the theory (Cassiani; Caliri; Pelá, 1996).

Prigol and Behrens (2019) emphasize that this methodology, with a qualitative approach, aims at identifying the subjects' perceptions through their interaction with the environment in which they are inserted, leading to the understanding of their reflections in the research process. Thus, when considering that the main object was the analysis of the perceptions of the subjects on the themes of career and teacher remuneration, the chosen methodology favors a look at the data from their reality to then build the theory, since "[...] the theory based on the data is a field methodology that aims to generate theoretical constructs that explain action in the social context under study" (Cassiani; Caliri; Pelá, 1996, p. 78, our translation).

After data collection, the analysis of the subjects' contributions to the interactions was carried out through a coding, which aimed to divide, conceptualize and establish relationships between the data. This process was carried out with the help of *Atlas.ti*, a qualitative analysis software. The discussions undertaken in the different WhatsApp groups were separated into quotes. These citations were inserted in the software and codes were created from their reading, which were then grouped into subcategories. Finally, we arrived at the categories in which each of the citations was included, providing different analyzes and data crossings.

From the teachers' perceptions, specific speeches that emerged made it possible to reflect on their remuneration. The subcategories access, career progression and initial salaries were then generated, which are discussed in this work.

After the digression of methodological procedures and the technique resulting from it, when using social networks and the applications that compose them for the remuneration analysis category, defined here as that which "represents the amount received, including the salary and all other elements received by the teacher: bonuses, additional, allowances, among others" (Camargo; Jacomini, 2012, p. 02, our translation) and their mediations, the following recurrences of teaching speeches were selected as subcategories: access and career progression and initial salaries.

Regarding the subcategory career access, constitutional and infra-constitutional provisions guarantee it by means of public tender of tests and qualification (Brasil, 1988, 1996). However, the mediation that arises and that is translated by interactions as an element that devalues the workforce is that this access device has been gradually replaced by temporary contracts. This process has gained significant space within state education systems, where databases on teachers to be hired are growing, making these measures more important in the state bureaucracy than the competition itself for career entry, since the hired teacher will not integrate the teaching career.

Although the 2014–2024 PNE determines that public networks operate with a maximum limit of 10% of temporary contracts, the device has been disrespected by the networks (Brasil, 2014). It is pointed out that the average of public tender opportunities for state education networks has been six years (Palhares, 2024).

On this built process, the 2023 Basic Education Census (Brasil, 2023) records that, of the teachers who work in basic education in state networks, only 46% are effective. When considering the states included in the research, in the state network of Paraná 48% are effective; in the state of Paraíba, the number is 53%; the state of Pará has the best index, with 94% of the effective teachers; Mato Grosso do Sul experiences the most precarious situation: only 30% of the teachers who work in basic education in the state education network are effective (Brasil, 2023). In the Chilean case, the Maule region had 18,333 teachers in 2023, of which 11,311 (61.7%) were linked to municipal dependency and 145 (0.8%) to the local education service, in the case of public schools; 6,226 (34%) were subsidized private schools, which are private schools that receive amounts per student from the State, and may or may not count on the payment of tuition by families; 651 (3.5%) worked in paid private schools, which are entirely private schools, without state participation (Chile, 2023).

The career progression subcategory is the subject of discussion among effective teachers because it occurs only in this condition. In the conversation between them, although understood as a dimension of teacher appreciation, the materiality of the progression encompasses many contradictions and tensions. Career progression is guaranteed through the Planos de Cargos, Carreira e Remuneração (PCCR; Career and Remuneration Plans), whose national obligation was established by Fundef in 1996 (Brasil, 1996). Since then, all federative entities are required to approve, by law, this teaching valorization device. In the case of Brazilian states, all have approved PCCR laws (Brasil, 2022). Even so, access to progressions provided for in the PCCR is provided for less than 50% of Brazilian teachers, whose weaknesses can be proven: “The rules are clear and objective, built with a lot of struggle both in the state and municipal networks, however, the difficulty is in delaying payment and progression (five-year and horizontal)” (MS, citation 39, our translation). Even with the established legislation, progressions are not always accessible to teachers.

Another question punctuated by perception was: “The progression by time of service should be every 5 years. And it’s not automatic. We need to require progression. If this is not done, we do not have access and simply lose” (PB, citation 44, our translation). Or else, the rules change, making work precarious: “Recently, the PCCR of the teaching department of the state of Pará was changed, striking a blow at education professionals, reducing the bonus for ownership, which devalues and discourages the qualification of professionals” (PA, citation 38, our translation). In the Chilean case, this statement denotes another logic, which refers to the criteria of the private world: “Through it, some benefits were achieved for officials such as the payment of medical leave from the fifth day, bonus for head teachers, payment of bienniums, possibility of negotiating the exit from the institution with compensation, among others” (Chile, citation 4, our translation).

In many cases, access is hampered by rules and numbers of vacancies: “In less than ten years I reached the last class of level II (Specialization), and I was stationed in my



career, because the PDE is required to advance to level III” (PR, citation 4, our translation). Some pretexts were used to delay or prevent access: “Our five-year period is frozen. In the pandemic, level rises and quinquennials were cut, so those who completed five more years do not receive it, they will be two more years late because of it” (PR, citation 27, our translation). This speech shows the conduct of public management during the pandemic, which penalized teachers. Given that, the feeling is of demotivation to continue studies. Another case: “Our job and career plans do not have any salary change, we do not have a salary valorization with the doctorate. What I would gain the most is already related to the master’s degree, so we study, qualify, and more, the professional valorization is not directly related to our constant qualification” (MS, citation 113, our translation). It is important to mention that the doctoral degree is not included in the PCCR of teachers from the state education network of Mato Grosso do Sul. In the PCCR of this state, the last degree is the master’s degree (Mato Grosso do Sul, 2019). This logic is also perceived in the Chilean case, insofar as teachers denounce that the progression is linked to the financial availability of the State:

The teaching career, more than anything, has an evaluation system that filters the number of teachers based on the money available for each section. (Chile, citation 19, our translation).

The last subcategory that makes up the category of analysis in the remuneration dimension discussed here is initial salary. Perhaps it is this subcategory that most expresses the reasons for teachers’ organic organization in relation to their unions, which requires both national and local organization on their part, in the Brazilian case. The initial salary is present for any education worker, whether the teacher approved by public tender to enter the career, or the teacher with a temporary employment contract.

Brazil implemented minimum wage in 1940. Its institution is, therefore, at the origin of the social policy of protection by the Brazilian State (Brasil, 1940). The minimum wage not only adds a reference value for the workforce, but, above all, acts as a protection policy, if not for all workers, at least for important portions of them, who build the wealth of the private world. Therefore, the minimum wage has served as a parameter among public sector workers. Because of this, it is not uncommon to find in the demands of teachers from public schools the comparison between their purchasing power and the current minimum wage. The comparison between the salary of teachers and the minimum wage in a given period is indicative of loss or gain of one or the other. This comparison, which is a construction of the teachers’ union movement, was relevant on the occasion of the national obligation of a minimum student-year cost in 1996 (Brasil, 1996), although this movement requires more on the part of the State: its claim, at that historical moment, was already a national salary base for teaching, given that, in some regions of the country, there were teachers who earned less than the minimum wage (Arelaro, 2007).

As already mentioned, Brazilian basic education teachers have fought for more than 200 years for a base salary. This achievement came in 2008 with the approval of Law n. 11,738 (Brasil, 2008), which instituted the PSPN and which, paradoxically, was judicialized by governors, which delayed its implementation in many entities of the federation. Teachers’ dissatisfaction with their initial salary is also linked to this story, as

the PSPN was instituted for teachers trained at the high school level, with a working day of 40 hours per week (Brasil, 2008). Under this scenario,

In addition to low salaries contributing to not attracting more qualified professionals to teaching, there is the difficulty of retaining those who choose this path. Many teaching workers do not remain in their careers, leaving the profession for other careers that are better paid and valued [...]. (Barbosa, 2011, p. 152, our translation).

Low wages cause several effects on the constitution of the career, such as little attractiveness or overload of work to ensure survival: “The purchasing power decreases with each passing day. Therefore, so that we can have income that matches our needs for sustenance, we seek alternatives” (PA, citation 22, our translation). They can also deprive the guarantee of basic survival conditions: “My biggest expense is with housing (rent) and food. My purchasing power remains the same; due to rising prices, I am limited in some things like access to culture and training” (MS, citation 15, our translation).

Through the testimonies of the teachers participating in the research, it appears that, although the law guarantees the PSPN, there are still cases that indicate that its effectiveness only happens after many struggles and pressures to ensure its right, and this depends on the degree of mobilization of the teachers’ union movement.

In Chile, the establishment of salaries varies according to the contract signed with teachers, also resulting in low salaries; “the type of contract affects the employment relationship, it is distressing to work in a system that is unfair, in which we are poorly paid and in which uncertainty will take hold year after year as we do not know our hourly load and whether or not they will be delinked” (Chile, citation 37, our translation). Low salaries lead to work overload and insecurity regarding the material conditions of existence in the perception of the teachers participating in the research in all cases analyzed.

## Final remarks

The text aimed at verifying, from the perception of teachers, how their reproduction as a workforce is guaranteed through their remuneration, a central condition of survival in both Brazil and Chile. The methodology was based on procedures and techniques to capture teachers’ perception of how they understand and live with one of the dimensions that would guarantee teacher appreciation: their remuneration.

It should be noted that the participants are teachers in the world of work in contemporary times, living in a historical moment of hegemony of neoliberalism. However, the trajectories of both countries, in this project of structural adjustment in the capitalist mode of production in the face of their own crises, are different, both in time and because of the characteristics of their governments in the period in question.

Chile was the laboratory *par excellence* of such a project. Governments that followed had to live with the project and manage a society where the concept of *res publica* is residual in the social consensus. This is expressed in the teachers’ speech and there is a rebound in perceptions about the dimensions of remuneration.



In the Brazilian case, in which the assumption of neoliberalism happened later, but not without consequences for the social fabric, in a society much more heterogeneous than the Chilean one, it is possible to see, through government administrations, sometimes tensions with the neoliberal project, sometimes its total adherence. Therefore, two cycles of governance in the country can be computed, which showed different results when it comes to expanding or restricting rights for the population.

It was in such tension that teachers gained and advanced in terms of legally conceived rights; in several cases, these same rights were denied to them by local administrations. The advance of neoliberalism, in its last moment, raised prices in extreme ways and caused an accelerated inflation that could be managed – such as oil products and the energy sector, among others. Negative effects may still be occurring in teacher remuneration, as is clear from the statements reported here. All this may have been fatal to the gains of those who obtained them in the first cycle discussed.

As for the statements that represent what teachers think and feel in relation to access and career progression in Brazil, it should be taken into account that, in the federative sphere, local governments, when they are responsible for these dimensions of teacher appreciation, have opted for management models that prioritize fiscal policy and that aim at meritocracy and competitiveness in the public service, to the detriment of quality education.

On the occasion of the federal government's fiscal austerity plan in 2017, Brazilian states reproduced the logic locally, even breaking the wage equality between teachers with different employment contracts. There are states whose management option has been supported by the "New Public Management", according to which embraced award systems have an impact on both the dimensions of teacher appreciation and school management, building high levels of competitiveness among teachers.

Objectively and subjectively, neoliberalism entails profound changes in the world of work, which are expressed in the multiple dimensions of human life. This can be seen both in the material conditions of existence of the working class as a whole and, particularly, for each labor category. When this fact is considered from the perspective of a specific professional category, changes produced by this corporate standard in the way of understanding the world are also observed.

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