

## *Faculty work on Federal Institutes in the context of higher education expansion<sup>1</sup>*

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### **Abstract**

*The present paper presents and discusses some of the results of a research conducted in 2015, which analyzed the process of rearrangement of the Federal Professional and Technical Education Network in the context of the expansion of higher education, as well as its impact on the work of Federal Institute faculty members. It sought to identify what interfered with higher-education teaching, in order to understand the conditions, advantages, problems and hindrances found by teachers in their professional exercise. Research was qualitative in nature, and used documentary research, observation and interviews as data collection tools. The study evidenced that higher-education offer in the midst of professional and technical education reform had been consolidating in the Federal Professional and Technical Education Network since 2008, by means of Federal Institutes, which have acted as higher-education expansion agents. The experience under study was the rearrangement process, also called ifetization, of the Instituto Federal do Norte de Minas Gerais [Federal Institute of Northern Minas Gerais] (IFNMG), with an emphasis on the work of faculty members in undergraduate programs. As it happened, expansion placed teachers under insufficient work conditions, as it failed to provide them the necessary means. However, faculty members were expected to have a multi-functional profile, with a view to develop multiple tasks and fill institutional gaps. Research revealed the peculiarities in teaching work conditions in the institution's higher education programs, and also demonstrated the existence of more general conditions currently in place for these workers.*

### **Keywords**

*Higher education expansion – Federal Institutes – Teaching.*

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## Introduction

This paper presents and discusses the main results of a research concluded in 2015 (SILVA, 2015),<sup>4</sup> the purpose of which was to analyze the process of rearrangement of the Federal Professional and Technical Education Network (FPTEN), in the context of higher education (HE) expansion, and its repercussion on the work of Federal Institutes (FI) faculty members.

Faculty members' work conditions in these FIs were understood as a set of resources enabling their work, comprising facilities, available materials and equipment and the means for the undertaking of their activities, as well as other types of necessary support, depending on the nature of their output, that is, employment conditions and objective work conditions (OLIVEIRA; ASSUNÇÃO, 2010). HE offer in FIs was studied as an action related to public policies of HE expansion, which entail changes in structure, purposes, organization, management, target-audience profile, and in the work of their staff.

Such policies are understood as a governmental choice for formal education not to be separated from the political, economical and social context in which it was inserted. Thus, the process of HE expansion and its specificities in FIs are understood as multi-faceted and dialectic, considering two dimension under analysis: worldwide social changes that unleashed economic, political and educational reform in Brazil after the 1990s, and the institution under research, IFNMG, in the context of the rearrangement of the network to which it belongs.

Pertaining the first dimension, the Brazilian State reform, initiated in the 1990s, is worthy of note; under guidance of international organs, it presented guidelines promoting changes in order to accommodate and adjust capitalism to its new phase of expansion. These changes altered the social role of the school, and brought about the current changes in HE and professional and technical education (PTE).

One element characterizing the set of actions since then taken were focal social policies, which took place in order to restrain demands of the poorer strata, while, at the same time, displacing more universal policies, thus reducing the nature of public policies, from a universal dimension (however formal) to a strictly localized one.

In the research's micro-dimension, IFNMG was our field of study, and revealed both particular and general circumstances in the current Brazilian HE context. The research, qualitative in nature, sought to identify what interfered with HE teaching at IFNMG, and resorted to documentary research, observation and interviews as data collection tools; Discourse Analysis was used as analytical tool.

In an effort to summarize the research, this paper presents some of its results and data in three parts. Part one approaches the HE expansion process from the 1990s on. Part two discusses HE offer and faculty work on FIs. Part three analyses the process of foundation of IFNMG, and the work conditions of faculty members leading and living the expansion of undergraduate programs in the institution.

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**4-** Master's thesis developed on Public Policies in Education, at the School of Education, Federal University of Minas Gerais (FaE/UFGM).

## Higher education expansion in the 1990s

HE expansion in Brazil is recent, and currently undergoes its second wave. The first wave took place during the 1980s, and the second began in the late 1990s (NEVES, 2012). During both periods, expansion occurred predominantly in the private sector; however, from 2003 onwards, it took on peculiar contours.

Before speaking of this, it should be interesting to see the current phase of HE expansion as resulting from the process of restructuring capitalism (BERNARDO, 2004), which began in the late 1970s.

Instability is inherent to capitalism; it constantly undergoes accommodation and restructuring of its means of production and social organization in search of balance, so as to secure its reproduction and continuity. Among the strategies deployed, the training and insertion of the work force in productive processes are vital requirements. This has strengthened the idea that education, HE in particular, is a necessary requisite to economic and social development (MAUÉS, 2010). Reforms on Brazilian State and education legislation have strongly contributed with the goals set by such an understanding. In this context, reforms were progressively implemented targeting HE, regular education and PTE, among others – which were apparently disconnected, but profoundly related to the new market-oriented education model sought.

Pertaining HE, these reforms comprise especially its expansion and the flexibilization of its educational opportunities. As a result, in Brazil there is a growth in the diversity and flexibility of institutional models, with a view to reduce public expenditures, provide commercial openings and foster privatization by means of education laws, among other measures which frame Brazilian HE (SILVA JR.; SGUISSARDI, 2001).

A comparison by the *Censo Nacional da Educação Superior* [National Census of Higher Education] (CENSUP) of data from 1995, 2003 and 2013 allows us to measure the scope of such actions. The total number of HE institutions in Brazil grew significantly between 1995 and 2013: there were 894 such institutions in 1995 and 2,391 in 2013. Growth was higher in the period between 1995 and 2003, when the number grew by 108%. This was only possible by the speedy growth in the number of private institutions: 968 private HE institutions were created, which meant growth by 142%. The number of public institutions, however, went down: CENSUP records the existence of 210 in 1995 and 207 in 2003.

During the following period (2003–2013), besides growth in the private sector, there was also growth in the number of public institutions. 94 public HE institutions were created, which represents growth by 45% in the total number of HE institutions in Brazil. After 2003, a significant growth in public HE was recorded, although it continued to rank second in relation to the private sector.

During the same period, the number of students also grew as a consequence. The number of enrollments in HE more than doubled, going from 1,759,703 in 1995 to 3,887,022 in 2003. Between 2003 and 2013, the number once again nearly doubled, going up to 7,305,977.

The higher number of enrollments was still with the private sector. HE expansion by means of the private sector was privileged, to the detriment of the public sector. However, a significant growth in the number of enrollments in public HE was verified, especially after 2003. The number of enrollments in federal institutions between 2003 and 2013 grew by 83% in relation to the previous period (1995-2003). The literature registers restriction to HE growth by means of public institutions in the period from 1995 to 2002 (AMARAL, 2008; GOMES; MOARES, 2012). After the measures implemented by president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (in office 2003-2010) and continued by Dilma Rousseff (in office 2011-2016), we observe a number of peculiarities.

In order to reach the goals set by federal government and recommended by international organizations, public HE institutions were reorganized by means of time and space optimization guidelines, growth and creation of new programs, reduction and flexibilization of human and material resources. Measures destined to incentive the growth of public HE took on a leading role. Among such measures we may cite the *Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais* [Support Program for the Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities] (REUNI)<sup>5</sup>, the flexibility fostered by regulating distance education, as well as the creation of *Sistema Universidade Aberta do Brasil* [Open University of Brazil System] (UAB)<sup>6</sup>, the restructuring of the FPTEN and the creation of the FIs, presented as a new HE model in 2008. On the other hand, private HE also continued to be fostered, with a new element: high investment of public money in private HE institutions. Such investments were favored, from 2004 on, by programs such as *Programa Universidade para Todos* [University for All Program] (PROUNI) the *Fundo de Financiamento do Ensino Superior* [Higher Education Financing Fund] (FIES), which, from then on, were used as strategies to reach the goals posed by the *Plano Nacional de Educação* [National Education Plan] (PNE): reduce pressure on those that have hitherto been excluded from HE, while simultaneously strengthening the education market.

All these actions strongly affected HE teaching, by creating new tasks and demand, without actually offering proper work conditions. As a consequence, faculty and school management face work that is at once intensified and precarious.

Faculty members are under the pressure of various evaluation modalities, which contribute to heavier accountability and even guilt, to the introduction of new forms of financial retribution associated to student performance goals, to the conformity to school ranking mechanisms, which are fundamental to the functioning of the market to which it intends to conform.

## **Higher education offer and the faculty work in Federal Institutes**

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**5-** Federal Decree 6.096/2007 predicted an expansion which sought to double the number of enrollments by 2012.

**6-** Federal Decrees 5.622/2005 and 5.800/2006.

In the wake of PTE reform and under interference by international organizations, the *Centros Federais de Educação Tecnológica* [Federal Centers of Technical Education] (CEFETs) began to develop an alternative HE model, which was consolidated as the *new CEFET*, went through *Escolas Agrotécnicas Federais* [Agro-technical Federal Schools] (EAFs), rose to prominence with the *Universidade Tecnológica do Paraná* [Federal Technical University of Paraná] (UTFPR), and later became the FIs. According to Lima Filho (2002), this model differs from universities, as it is directed to immediate labor market placement, instead of focusing on research and academic, scientific, ethical and political studies. Such a model took a privileged place among Brazilian education policies after 2003; it modeled education as linked to the needs and demands of Local Productive Arrangements (LPAs), which begin in basic education, by means of technical courses integrated to secondary education.

In this scenario, Law 11.892/2008 restructures FPTEN and creates the FIs, from a reorganization of CEFETs, EAFs and Technical Schools, which, after successive alterations imposed by legal measures, were promoted to HE status, with functions beyond those of a university: they offer undergraduate and graduate programs, under the principle of the inseparability of teaching, research and service, while continuing to offer basic education committed to social transformation and regional development (BRASIL, 2010).

FIs, in their *new institutional*ity, are presented as variously advantageous, as they may answer some local problems in Brazilian society: (1) Verticalization of teaching, which guides FIs' philosophy and goals, seeks to optimize infrastructure and human and material resources. FIs are thus more economic and flexible than universities, which is in line with international requirements. (2) FI's HE offer contributes to the latter's expansion, which helps reaching PNE's goals, with which the country had been hitherto struggling. (3) Applied research and service are connected to technical services favoring regional development, which places them as help to social issues. (4) FIs' link to LPAs may favor regional development and government relations with productive sectors. (5) FIs' peculiarly *multiple* nature allows for a range of projects and programs under the various dimensions of the basic triad (teaching, research and service); they may thus cater for different audiences. (6) FIs may solve more immediate social problems, with the quick production of qualified work force at primary, secondary and university levels, by means of initial and continued education programs, as well as technical education on basic and higher levels. (7) FIs also offer licentiate degrees, which may help in teacher training on basic and PTE levels.

FIs' HE offer is guaranteed by the law which creates them, with some restrictions: licentiate and pedagogical training programs must compose 20% of their offer; the remaining 30% goes to technology, bachelor's degree, engineering and graduate programs.

According to *Uma nova proposta de Educação Profissional Tecnológica: concepções e diretrizes dos Institutos Federais* [A new proposal for PTE: FIs conception and guidelines] (BRASIL, 2010), such peculiarities are deeply grounded in social demands. Licentiate undergraduate programs are helpful in various fronts: providing against the lack of teachers; reaching secondary education universalization goals; solving the problem of bachelors and technicians predominantly taking over in various fields, and, in the last

decade, their massive taking over teaching positions. Technology undergraduate programs offered by the institution provide quick training, directed towards the production of specific knowledge. Engineering graduate programs contribute to the training of labor force responsible for the production of goods with high aggregate value, which favorably influence trade balance in a globalized world.

Contrary to expectations, FIs have stumbled across difficulties and contradictions, as they search to help solve the aforementioned social problems. As an example, faculty members involved HE programs offered by FIs are not required to have pedagogical training themselves. As a consequence, faculty members in various licentiate and pedagogical training courses are not, themselves, licentiates (OTRANTO, 2013).

In this large and complex institution fulfilling a social role, basic, technical and technological education faculty members are protagonists in one of the trends in the current wave of HE expansion. Their actions call attention, as they take place in the midst of successive construction and reconstruction processes, which significantly alter the goals the institution has to reach. These goals encompass understanding various different aspects, alongside reaching government-imposed expansion goals in a (sometimes overly) short period of time. Furthermore, there is a lack of material conditions, from personnel to infrastructure. Teachers also have to answer to the expectations of the population as well as to those of the productive sectors of the region in which the FI is located – once again lacking the means and the necessary understanding of what all this implies.

Various points of tension reveal the complex and growing workload teachers face in FIs.

Their work attributions demand growing flexibility a close dealing with students and with various work environments (MELO, 2010). An intimate relation with both basic and HE environments is also necessary (MACHADO, 2008). The work of these teachers is thus marked by the intrinsic complexity of PTE, allied with the heterogeneity of HE.

FI teachers' *lack of training* to deal with this complexity is worthy of note. Teaching for neither HE nor PTE is regulated in the form of a specific program, which strengthens concerns about the lack of qualified teachers in these areas.

FI teachers are also required to hold a nearly organic relation to LPAs, which further lays stress on their work. Official documents issued by the Ministry of Education (MEC) and the Department of Professional and Technical Education (SETEC) (BRASIL, 2003, 2009, 2010) establish that teaching activities must be developed in collaboration with the LPAs, given the close link between FIs and productive sectors, especially regarding the generation and adaptation of technical and technological solutions and in training, which should be beneficial to the LPAs. Grischke (2013) believes this link implies a *new institutional*ity, which entails a more flexible and innovative configuration in relation to the organization of teaching and schoolwork.

To this is added the tension caused by a series of government measures which came about in 2015, in the midst of the structural rearrangement. Among these measures, we may cite the *micro labor reform* – sanctioned by Laws 13.134/2015 and 13.135/2015, which relaxed labor rights by restricting access to unemployment insurance, wage allowances and off-season insurance –, the rise in interest rates and cuts in Federal government budget –

which had negative impact on HE by jeopardizing the due development of basic teaching, research and service activities, thus compromising the consolidation and expansion of HE institutions. In face of these cuts, which point to public education privatization, how to keep on working and still consolidate HE expansion with quality? This is what has been concerning education workers, and has prompted a series of strikes in the past years.

At the same time, a project regulating outsourcing was approved, and the Supreme Federal Court ruled in favor of hiring personnel into the public sector by means of Social Organizations. These measures put to risk rights and guarantees of public workers, as well as the offer of free services and their quality.

Another polemic measure was a proposition to improve basic education, as set by the document *Pátria Educadora: a qualificação do ensino básico como obra de construção nacional* [Educating Nation: basic education qualification as a work on national construction] (BRASIL, 2015), which represents the advancement of a business viewpoint in defining and implementing public policies for education. The discourse therein advanced counters many of the claims of faculty, student body and personnel, and furthers the business-oriented education reform, announced in 1995 and guided by accountability, meritocracy and privatization (FREITAS, 2012).

FI teachers are also under pressure by external evaluation processes. Both FIs and other HE institutions are increasingly adopting a quantitative approach to faculty work. The incessant search for goals and figures has been disturbing the routine of HE institutions, and places teachers at the mercy of institutional bureaucracy, under psychological pressure, labor overload and often frustration, as the same government which sets goals does not offer the necessary means for their fulfillment, while evaluating them, holding them accountable and punishing them. Evaluation results have, in general, been used to justify competence differentiation, and even classify and rank within the same institution, thus serving as criterion for the allotment of resources. This evaluation model has been very important in establishing and consolidating a market-oriented logic within HE institutions. It enabled performance control in face of the establishment of standards; the fostering of efficiency and productivity in the fulfillment of institutional tasks as instruments of economic development; the setting of utilitarian and homogenizing interests, which demand standardization of information, evaluation and accountability, with a view to reach goals; the setting of ranks allowing qualitative leveling, thus stimulating competition (SERAFIM, 2011).

In face of so many tensions, the first years of teaching in FIs were turbulent, as may be observed in the variously motivated and shaped struggles within the FPTEN. *For example, the Sindicato Nacional dos Servidores Federais da Educação Básica, Profissional e Tecnológica* [Basic, Professional and Technical Education Workers' National Union] (SINASEFE) led four national strikes: 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015. Their agenda highlighted the search of better work conditions and quality public education.

The passing of Law 12.772/2012, at the end of 2012, brought basic, professional and technical educators closer to those in HE. The equivalence obtained in the composition of pay between both types of career should be highlighted. Nonetheless, other problems still prevailed, such as the lack of dialog between workers and the Federal Government

and the discontinuity of negotiations, wage squeeze, bonuses that were only partially incorporated to salaries in retirement, the lack of isonomy between both careers that their separation entails, the inefficacy of the government proposal regarding the entrance and permanence of teachers in their careers, as well as their social acknowledgment, and the possible spending containment strategies and search for continued education behind measures such as the *Reconhecimento de Saberes e Competências* [Acknowledgment of Competences and Knowledge] (RSC).

This context leads to lowering the quality of teaching work in the FIs, which is visible in hiring conditions, amount of time dedicated to work and work regime. Despite public HE institutions being those that hire the highest number of full and part-time teachers, there are other types of hour-based wages (substitute and temporary). These supposedly more efficient and economic contracts veer towards the adoption of a new managerial model in the likeness of flexible labor market. Simultaneously, full-time contracts have not secured better conditions for full dedication to research and services within HE institutions. This is at least what recent research on the public HE expansion shows – especially those studying the impact of REUNI (COSTA; BRAGA; FERREIRA, 2014; PAULA, 2015). The wave of teaching work overload and loss of quality in virtue of the reconfiguration movement afflicting Brazilian HE institutions is in progress.

HE expansion policies lead towards an increasingly marked-oriented view characterized by: impoverishment of labor contracts, wage crushing regarding raises granted exclusively by means of bonuses, increase in the amount of teaching, research and service activities, lack of hiring for technical positions and management, and individualism and competition among teachers driven by quantification-based and marked-oriented evaluations.

## **The case of Federal Institute of Northern Minas Gerais (IFNMG)**

The case of IFNMG, as an institution undergoing *ifetization*, and, at the same time, as an agent in HE expansion, was studied with a view to know the changes imposed on institutions in the process of their conversion into FIs. It highlights the changes in the institution's daily life and in its official documents, alongside those changes perceived by faculty members.

The data collection instruments used were, therefore, observation, documentary research and interviews. Observations and documentary research helped in the characterization of IFNMG, in the understanding of the process of conception, implementation and offering of undergraduate programs, as well as the assessment of performance of teachers in these programs. The interviews sought to identify the perception faculty members have of the changes in the institution and in their work.

Ten teachers were interviewed, with varying profiles: rectorate and *campi* managers, class leaders, researchers, union members and those involved in service. The goal was to consider their different points of view on *ifetization*. The information gathered was divided into four categories: structure, management, aims

and teaching. These were further subdivided<sup>7</sup> so as to present details of the process of the transformation of the institution into an FI and of the repercussion of this transformation in the work of faculty members.

The analysis of the interviews revealed strong tensions, not only among the subjects' views, but within a single subject's view. Such tensions become evident in their account on the pleasure and pain in teaching, and in the acknowledgment (or lack thereof) of certain situations they were experiencing in the *ifetization* context and in the expansion of the institution and of its undergraduate programs.

The speech of those teachers holding management positions displayed stronger alignment with institutional and governmental discourse; however, they acknowledged the challenges posed by the increasing workload of teachers, and by the concurring expansion processes of both the institution and its undergraduate programs. In the account of teachers not involved in management, institutional expansion-related problems, such as lack of human and material resources, were more readily pointed and acknowledged, as they were directly affected thereby.

To varying degrees, all teachers noticed the change under which IFNMG was going, and pointed to difficulties raised by the speedy expansion both the institution and its courses were going through in recent years.

Among the alterations that took place, we may cite those posed by external and/or vertical decisions: legal decisions, institutional autonomy, and organization into blocks, aims and visual identity.

Law 11.892/2008, presented FIs as a huge novelty, when, in fact, these institutions underwent restructuring, as they stemmed from old and consolidated institutions which ceased to be autarchies. It was no different in the case of IFNMG. IFNMG was born the midst of the process of FPTEN reorganization, resulting from the union between CEFET-Januária (MG) and EAF-Salinas (MG). Two federal and independent institutions ceased to exist in order to birth a single autarchy. This was not a simple union, and took place under an atmosphere of tension, insecurity, expectations and anxieties in face of the vertical character of this new higher education model.

Eleven new schools were grouped around one head office, with a rector. Their symbols and goals were now the same as those of the FIs composing IFNMG. The old autarchies – CEFET-Januária and EAF-Salinas – even lost their visual identity. The institutional colors, their flags and coats-of-arms were extinct so a single and common identity could be adopted by all FIs spread around the country. A new configuration demands of teachers dynamism and ability to adapt themselves to a *new institutional*ity, which makes their teaching and managing activities more complex.

Another change in IFNMG's institutional autonomy was the way in which courses were offered. Law 11.892/2008 and Decree 5.840/2006 established quotas for specific types of programs: 20% for licentiate and pedagogical training courses and 50% for

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**7-** The research was divided in the following subcategories: a) Structure: scope and organization (legal nature and visual identity); b) Management: organizational blueprint and financing; c) Aims: teaching (goals, courses offered, enrollment, time and space), research and service (both under Projects); d) Teaching: teacher's attributions in HE programs (teaching, research, service and management); e) Work conditions: employment conditions, material resources, personnel, amount of time, training, social relations, evaluation, PLAs and political and union organization.

technical programs, 10% of which should be destined to the *Programa Nacional de Integração da Educação Profissional com a Educação Básica na Modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos* [National program for the integration of professional education into basic education in the young and adult education modality] (PROEJA).

It was observed that IFNMG has been struggling to reach the goals established concerning licentiate programs and PROEJA. In the case of PROEJA, difficulties stem from the fact that teachers must face students with very specific pedagogical needs, without ever having had training to do so. The same reason may account for the insufficient number of licentiate programs – a type of program historically marked by the under-appreciation and low social status of teachers and high dropout rates, alongside the difficulties that bachelor teachers face in training licentiates, which leads to both internal (e.g. on the part of faculty and managers) and external resistance, as society tends to demand and search for courses they deem of higher social status.

Regarding autonomy, Law 11.892/2008 aligned IFNMG's goals to those of the productive sector, in so far as it links teaching, research and service to the LPAs. The attempts to bring IFNMG closer to productive sectors and have it serve market interests are visible. An almost organic link is demanded between teacher's productivity to the LPAs, as these arrangements are set as base to the triad teaching, research and service. Research developed must be applied to the advancement, innovation and development of productive sectors; service must be of a technical nature; teaching must train qualified work force, supply the APLs demands and thus favor market interests. Such features are directly linked to the new innovation landmark, known as *Código de Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação* [Science, Technology and Innovation Code] (CT&I)<sup>8</sup>. The link between LPAs and FI faculty work, as well as the passing of the aforementioned law illustrate the federal government's take on science for the development of the country.

Despite all this, when this research was being conducted, IFNMG teachers were perceived do show a lack of clarity as to the LPAs. Some of the teachers interviewed uncritically incorporated official discourse pertaining the link between FIs and LPAs. Others did not know or acknowledge this link. None of the interviewees seemed aware of the market logic approximating IFNMG to productive sectors in the discourse on LPA and FI. This represents a risk, in face of the mercantilization of public HE in place since the 1990s, which has the infrastructure and personnel of HE institutions cater for private sector interests.

In general, *ifetization* is positively viewed by the subjects, as it caused the institution to grow, gave it autonomy to propose new courses, increased personnel and gave access to more resources to be invested on infrastructure, equipment and materials. They also approve the fact that IFNMG spreads towards the countryside and makes the offer of public higher education more democratic on the northern region of Minas Gerais.

However, many subjects stated that the increment in funding, however large, was still insufficient to properly accommodate the expansion goals set for the institution. Personnel also grew significantly, but in numbers still insufficient to answer the demands

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**8-** Law 13.243/2016.

posed by the consolidation process. Complaints about lack of personnel were frequent, especially regarding management and technical services to support teaching activities. Such a gap has teachers take over managerial positions, which weakens the quality of their work, as it becomes heavier.

The increase in HE offers is one of the most significant changes within the institution. Teachers were markedly interested in such offer, which, according to some, would cause the institution to rank higher in terms of status and social recognition. They offered other reasons for approving of this offer, related to an improvement in teacher-student relations, which would be favored by having a more mature student body. The expansion in courses was identified by some during the first three years after the change into IFNMG. Before *ifetization*, there were six HE programs, five of which offered by former CEFET-Januária e one by former EAF-Salinas. In 2014, this number grew three times; in 2018, it is estimated that it will be five times higher than in 2008.

Within IFNMG, problems were verified regarding faculty work, which were made evident by HE expansion; they interfere in teaching activities in these programs: the number of courses and enrollments grew before personnel were hired, and before the necessary infrastructure was in place; public biddings necessary for hiring services are slow; new laboratories are behind schedule or lacking altogether; material resources are scarce, from libraries to classrooms; internal regulation managing HE offer is also slow to be generated, which harbors uncertainty.

According to IFNMG's new academic and curricular organization, teachers must be integrated into a field of knowledge, being able to act in various different programs, teach various subjects and engage in different activities, despite their training being sometimes insufficient.

It is observable that teachers are prompted to invent and reinvent spaces yet to be constructed, so as to fulfill various theoretical and practical tasks; they have to deal with various relations among themselves and varying conceptions on how to educate and of the very *institution*; they must manage relations with students with different age ranges, levels and purposes. Many showed eagerness to acquire new knowledge and qualify their teaching practice, to take over positions as managers, researchers, inventors, innovators and to provide service in search to boost their careers and wages; such eagerness may account for their plunge into productivism and meritocracy, which foster competition and individualism among faculty members, as well as increase the already existing dissatisfactions.

Despite research and services activities being a part of IFNMG's goals, teachers are not always certain as to how to incorporate them into their tasks. This may be explained by the fact that the institution had long been dedicated to technical courses requiring no research and no service. This may also be due to the fact that not all teachers view the three as articulated and inseparable. Furthermore, some of the subjects interviewed claimed to find no conditions and no space to develop such activities, as they would need to submit proposals to public notices and compete with their peers for funding that is scarce. They see a lack of material and human resources, as well as work overload ensuing from the complexity of PTE teaching attributions.

Regarding managerial activities, most of the managers interviewed point to the fact that it is an intense activity, which demands many hours of dedication. Management is viewed as enriching, but difficulties were pointed in reconciling it with other attributions, such as research and publications.

Teaching is perceived as the lighter task, whereas management, research and service are deemed more burdensome. Such a take suggests that teaching, which is a traditional task in federal institutions, is still preferred over other attributions, despite their being mandatory. The weight of these other attributions may be ascribed to the lack of objective means to their fulfillment.

Within IFNMG, faculty members undergo two types of evaluation: institutional evaluation with a view to regulation, assessment and supervision, and performance evaluation with a view to career progression. These evaluations are pointed as prompting conflict, as they entail loss of institutional autonomy and the rise in control and measuring of goals set externally, in order to insert IFNMG into the education market by which current policies abide. Thus evaluated, teachers suffer under pressure. Their suffering is further intensified by the fact that FIs are evaluated by instruments that fail to accommodate their specificities, following the example of what happens in re-accreditation evaluations, which assess universities without actually doing so.

Regarding performance evaluation for career progression, it is observed that, with the new classes into which career paths are divided for higher educators, on the one hand, and basic and PTE educators, on the other (Law 12.772/2012), new and predominantly merit-based criteria were established for promotion and progression. This intensifies competition among peers in terms of work organization, productivism, meritocracy and entrepreneurship, which begin to guide promotion criteria. In this sense, it is observed that Law 12.772/2012 has changed how HE and basic and PTE teachers view their work. Management, research and services gained relevance, which may be seen as an impediment to progression, as there is not enough room for everybody to fulfill such attributions. Within IFNMG, there was observed a lack of spaces, which also put to risk the indivisibility between teaching, research and service, deemed necessary for HE.

*Ifetization meant more work*, especially in the shape of multitasking: working in various programs and institutional projects, taking part in various types of meetings, office work and purchases, planning the construction of new labs, etc. Words and phrases such as “difficult”, “this is new to me”, “overload” were recurring during the interviews. Besides the novelty of HE, these teachers still work with basic education, are involved in institutional programs and struggle to fill institutional gaps resulting from lack of infrastructure and personnel. As Dal Rosso (2008) states, faculty work was intensified, as it became more quantitatively and qualitatively demanding, and physically, psychologically and emotionally draining.

It is hard to assimilate these changes in the speedy and meaningful context of HE expansion and of FI configuration, as it has intensified faculty work related to class leadership, research and management. On the other hand, it also brought about the grouping of schools, and consequently a drastic cut in the number of managers, which

were before direct mediators with MEC. All these complex changes demand discussion, reflection and in-depth study, so their multiple effects may be assessed.

## Final remarks

This study gathered evidence that faculty work in HE programs at IFNMG is complex and peculiar in various ways, but also bears resemblance to teaching work currently taking place in other types of institution. Such complexity is arguably present in other FIs, as they all underwent similar realignment processes. It is thus important to study the reality of such institutions in order to find resemblances and peculiarities.

The creation of FIs in Brazil is the result of a policy that claimed to promote the growth of opportunities and access to public education from 2008 on. However, in practice, as we may see from the case here under study, this has been significantly changing these institutions, both in their goals and in their ways to pursue them, while promoting work overload and loss of work quality among faculty members.

The tension inherent to such a process affects the daily life and relations within these institutions, as changes are radical, contradictions between statement and reality abound, and uncertainties remain concerning *ifetization* and the future of such institutions and of their very workers.

We may infer that the complex nature of faculty work at IFNMG – somehow common to the various elements making up different types of teaching institutions – and the loss of quality it entails are inserted in a broader set of social changes in place since the 1990s, which changes gradually and progressively insert a new logic in government, especially in education management. It is the logic of business, which removes the right to public and free education and crushes the labor rights of public workers.

With the structural adjustment set in place in 2015 and intensified by the Michel Temer administration (2016-in office), situation has become worse, due to reforms currently taking place and recent regulation passed or about to pass. Are worthy of attention: a) Law 13.135/2015, restricting rights to bereavement benefits; b) Constitutional Amendment 95/2016, the so-called *Lei do Teto de Gastos* [expenditure law], which freezes public investment in social areas for 20 years, and limits, among other things, the hiring of tenured public workers in education; c) Law 13.429/2017, which expands the range of activities liable to be outsourced in both public and private institutions, and consequently impoverishes work relations; d) Social Security Reform, currently under discussion<sup>9</sup>, which is being sped under budgetary deficit claims denied by various specialists; this threatens the conquered right to retirement, and gives way to speculation in the shape of private pension funds.

This set of measures, deemed as *pacote de maldades* [evil set] has caused growing dissatisfaction among workers in both public and private spheres, as well as among retirees, annuitants and students.

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As federal government, representing the private interests that will benefit from such measures, advances in passing legal measures providing bases for these reforms, which will deeply affect the working class in the present and the future – strangling university activities, by cutting funds and programs destined to HE while fostering private education –, teachers and other workers seek to organize themselves and resist in defense of education that is free, public and qualified, and of the teaching status which corresponds to it. Unions are not always to be counted on, as many are taken by degraded bureaucratization.

This explicit class struggle is undeniable and seems to be currently spreading; its results shall be seen in social practice, and their consequences shall be visible.

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