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Teachers' Workload: Evidence and Ambiguity on Professional Identity

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Abstract: Understanding changes in the teaching profession as means of State control implies the hypothesis of teachers' identity reconfiguration. The *use of time* may be viewed as a powerful tool in rebuilding teachers' identity as well as an important element in the process of developing professional identity. This study aims at describing and analyzing secondary level teachers' actual workload, and it relies on the empirical data available concerning different national contexts, and on a description of the teachers' work composition. This description was obtained through enquiries about the daily work of teachers from different subjects. The methodology used focused on multiple case studies, and the inquiries were conducted in two Portuguese secondary schools. The main results of these inquiries show the teachers' overwork, and a significant dispersion through several types of tasks. Another important result shows that the available institutional data needs to be read along with the empirical studies conducted, for the latter reveal that teaching can no longer be considered a *soft* profession, particularly due to the workload and the need to develop very different but simultaneous skills. The increased control of the State over schools and teachers, and the increment of a wider set of tasks regarding school bureaucracy, organization and projects represent a significant percentage of the teachers' work time.

Keywords: Professional identity, professionalization, state control, teachers' identity, teachers' workload, teachers' control, teaching.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary social, economic and political relationships have been changing rapidly and have been transforming the educational processes in the most developed countries, namely as far as demands and conditions of teachers' work are concerned [1-4].

In Portugal, the *crisis* and the *instability* have been the most referred reasons to justify the educational and teaching situation of the last decades. According to several authors [5-7], the Portuguese educational situation has resulted from the mass schooling process that has been undergoing since 1974. This process has resulted in an abrupt increase in the number of students, schools and teachers, as well as in the heterogeneity of both students and teachers. It is also a consequence of the transition from a centralized bureaucratic administration, fostering the generally accepted principle of equal opportunities, to a more decentralized shape of government. This has provided answers to multiple social and political demands and expectations about the role of the State and the educational system, but also in the disclosure of discrepant indicators for (in) success.

Mass schooling had relevant consequences in the collective composition of teachers and in the social expectations about their work [8]. This has resulted in an identity crisis mainly visible in the incompatibility between the institutional demands around the needs of an heterogeneous student population, and the traditional professional references, particularly in a perceived erosion of the social prestige of the professional class [9, 10]. As schools became more complex organizations, with more centralized management processes and with external elements in the managing boards, teachers were forced to change and to adapt. They were forced to adjust and to provide answers and solutions to issues as varied as: creation of new student guided services; creation of new integrated subjects able to provide social care and extracurricular occupation; answers to the continuing demands on transparency and quality, both on a curricular dimension and on the faculty participation; schools integrated coordination mechanisms; community integration and organizational leadership.

Despite the expectations [11], the decentralizing political movement had no expression within the overall area of education. Traditionally determined by the State, during the 90's the teaching profession was subject of significant improvements in important matters such as salary, qualification requirements, career stages and stability. In turn, during the last decade, the State determined a work profile by shaping new teaching standards. It also increased school workload. In addition, several political measures, along with the creation of a more centralized curriculum, reinforced the teachers' responsibility towards the State and the society at large.

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2. ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVES

Similar changes have been operating both in Portugal and in other developed countries as means of, directly and indirectly, transforming teachers' work [12]. These changes have been interpreted in different ways.

Formosinho [8, 13] placed this shift in a frame of enrichment of required skills through the diversification of work tasks, demand for working in differentiated curricula, intervention in conception of school politics or greater expectations of internal coordination. As it implies broader decision instances and opportunities, the development of communicational competencies, and mostly, the need of more specific in-service training, can be interpreted as a process of *professionalization* of teaching [14].

From other perspectives, that evolution has also been interpreted as a *deprofessionalization*, namely due to:

- a threatening work intensification, by leaving less available time for scientific and pedagogical update, or for reflective reasoning about practice and teaching skills [15];

- a possible persistent feeling of overwork [16] affecting reasoned decision making, participation and control over long-term planning decisions, and also dependency from textbooks and other resources [17];

- focus on the immediate and the obvious, resulting on outcomes of very poor quality;

- decrease in team work, as there is no available time for team discussion or to deepen shared methods and ideas [17];

- doubts about *self-effectiveness* from the growing dependency on experts expected to guide task accomplishment [15].

A third emergent hypothesis integrates the previous one [18], and may represent an evolution to a collective division by an horizontal differentiation from distinct requirements in professional qualifications enabling accomplishment of middle management tasks or organizational leadership, associated to different conditions of career progression [8, 13].

These possible tendencies may also be understood in the light of the recent perspectives that point it as an overall process of teachers' identity configuration through direct and indirect effects of control exerted from the State for, as Bourdieu puts it, "when it comes to the State, one never doubts enough" [19].

3. CONTROL AND IDENTITY CONFIGURATION

In his organizational analysis proposal, Mintzberg highlights schools as a type of organization where direct control of professional work is made difficult, if not impossible, mainly by its demanding autonomy to face the complexity of its tasks [20]. At the same time, schooling outcomes and procedures seem too important to social development and state hegemony [19].

Ball described State control as a process mediated by three mechanisms: curriculum, market and school management [21]. Smyth *et al.* [22] deepen this proposal and suggest that the State operates teachers' supervision and evaluation, and engineer's compliance and consent through discipline or reward to assure curriculum implementation. The authors suggest that the State influences, implicitly or explicitly, teaching outcomes, work procedures both at a class and at a school level, beliefs and perceptions about the effectiveness and the schooling priorities, the work behaviors and routines through technical, bureaucratic, corporate, managerial, ideological and/*or disciplinary power* forms of control. Considering this line of thought, it comes with no surprise that, for example, (political) discourse may be understood as a powerful instrument to manage teachers' identity and guide change [7, 23, 24], and professionalism may be used as a lure to teachers' compliance, even if these are not fully aware of it [1].

Accordingly, it seems prudent to broaden interpretations of teachers' work process in light of recent political developments of the educational processes that inserted packaged curriculum, prominence of textbooks, learning standards orientation or the expansion of national testing throughout schooling [25, 26]. Several studies concerning teachers' work processes show how planning, for instance, may be experienced by professionals as a core task that becomes an opportunity to deploy professional autonomy but also a source of intensification [27-29]. Thus, what apparently means the use of discretionary professional reasoning may end in detachment from significant professional knowledge and expression of pervasive external controls, undermining possibilities for teachers to work as autonomous intellectuals [22, 30].

Identity construction is a complex process of building meaning from experiences, where it is acceptable the existence of an influential connection between work context characteristics and subjectivities [31, 32]. In this regard, new orthodoxies have emerged [33] and concepts as *colleagueship* [34] or *performance* [26] became induced subjectivities in the teachers' workplace, as well as in other social systems. This process may be crucial, along with other mechanisms, to sustain the State's role in producing *new teaching subjects* [35, 36].

3.1. Worktime - Overview

The ways through which time can act upon the reorganization of school and teachers' culture, as well as its ability to operate change through reconfiguration has been consistently suggested although mainly by prescriptive standpoints [37]. Hargreaves made clear that "time, (…) is a major element in structuring teachers' work. Time structures the work of teaching and is in turn structured through it. Time is therefore more than a minor organizational contingency, inhibiting or facilitating management's attempt to bring about change; Its definition and imposition form part of the very core of teachers' work, and of the policies and perceptions of those who administer such work" [34]. As such, it's possible that *worktime* prescription from local or national administrations, and mostly its expression in individual and collective dispersion, may reflect more or less assumed ideological principles, resulting therefore in somewhat *professionalizing* consequences. Clearly, as part of a structural form of control [38], *worktime* composition is

Table 1. Teachers' Worktime Studies: Overview.

Country/Data Collection Year/Main Methodological Features	Weekly Workload	Overall Worktime Composition
[36] England – 1989/1993 Work diary, between 7am and 12pm, 7 consecutive days' week + questionnaire 348 Secondary school teachers	54.4 h/week	31% - teaching, 33% - administration tasks, 24% - preparation/marking, 18% - professional development (includes class and peer meetings), from which 4% - formal professional development initiatives.
[37] France - 2002 Questionnaire 601 full-time secondary school teachers	39.8 h/week (39h47min)	51% teaching; 34.7% preparation and evaluation; 16.7% in non-contact and administrative tasks. From the total, 13h25min/week are performed at home.
[38] Scotland - 2005-2006 Self-completed time-use diary for two weeks; questionnaire; 338 secondary teachers replied in first week; 282 in second week	approximately 43.3 h/week (between 37 and 52 h/week to approx. 66% of sampled secondary teachers)	Classroom teachers: 20.80 h/week in class-contact (49%); 17% preparation; 15% evaluations; 5% formal professional development; 1.81 h/week in collegiate and management tasks (8%).
[39] England - 2009 Indirect application of work diary for one week; 237 secondary school classroom teachers and 164 heads of department	Classroom teachers: 50.4 h/week; from 8 to 11% at weekends. With formal managerial tasks (head dept.): 49.5 h/week	Classroom teachers: 37.4% in teaching; 30% in preparation/assessment; 11.3% in school/staff management and administrative support; 70% of out of school work is spent on planning/assessment.
[40] Switzerland – 2008/09 Questionnaire and self-completed time-use diary; 237 secondary school teachers, during 2 weeks	Full-time teachers: 45.08 h/week	76.5% in teaching tasks (including preparation and evaluation); 23.5% in other tasks (8.7% in administrative tasks, 3% in collegiate tasks, 2.6% in formal meetings).

not neutral in conducting teachers' work or in managing teachers' identity [23] and deserves to be looked at as an important institutional device of *disciplinary power* as first defined by Foucault [39].

As part of a frequent extensive analysis of educational systems, OECD and Eurydice have been deploying data concerning teachers' *worktime*. Eurydice's last available data concerning teachers' *worktime* [40] reports situations from 31 countries in 2006/2007 and these are consistent with actual official *worktime* in Portugal – 35 hours/week (h/week). In most countries where *worktime* is measured by *overall working time* (including teaching time, time of availability at school and time spent in preparation and marking activities which may be done outside school) secondary teachers work an average of 40 h/week (ranging from 27 hours in Turkey, to 48 hours in Iceland). In countries where time is measured by the *number of hours of availability at school, worktime* ranges from 20 h/week (in Italy) to 35 (in Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom). In these countries *teaching* represents the major contribution to *worktime* and it is not possible to distinguish the weight of other work considered components and, apparently is limited to *supervision after school hours*, *standing in for absent colleagues* and *support to future teachers and new entrants* [41]. The OECD report [42] last available data concerns the situation in 2010 and, as it is presented as *total annual worktime*, we can deduce, for the Portuguese case, a total of 34 h/week of *worktime* at school and of 38.7 hours of total *worktime* per week, above the average in OECD countries. These institutional descriptions of teachers' workload must

be, however, contrasted with other available data from empirical studies conducted in several national contexts.

The following studies (Table **1**) use similar methodological designs (namely by collecting data through work diaries or similar techniques) and concern the same sample profile (secondary level teachers) as our own, enabling comparisons between contexts and, therefore, providing a clearer picture of actual teachers' workload across other national contexts.

From these studies it is important to highlight: (1) the discrepancy between the results of the institutional and the empirical studies[1]; (2) the overall excess of official *worktime*, regardless of methodological options; (3) the important dispersion of *worktime* in other work components; (4) the differences in work composition in the accomplishment of management tasks.

In the Portuguese case, there is no record of studies treating the problem with similar depth. However, the acuteness and thoroughness of the changes that took place in the situation of the Portuguese teachers rouse our awareness to the fact that this analysis may reveal important elements for the characterization of the present situation. In 2004, Flores *et al.* [48] conducted an enquiry by questionnaire to

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[1] About the typical limitations of these studies see [49], where it seems clear that "Data on some teacher indicators in countries of the European Community, namely teacher salaries, teacher working hours, and teacher education, seem to be readily obtainable from national centres for statistics. Also data availability appears to be too low to calculate indicators. Although data are available on topics like working time (…) it has to be mentioned that they often concern only a small subset of potentially fruitful data categories. Partial information certainly reduces the scope of a particular indicator and, as a consequence, limits the validity and policy relevance of the information."

Table 2. Sample Composition (*n*= 20, initial respondents' sample included 24 teachers, 4 of these did not complete the task).

School	1	10
	2	10
Gender	Male	5
	Female	15
Teaching experience	Minimum 30 years	5
	From 15 to 30 years	8
	15 years maximum	7
Contractual situation	Definite nomination	13
	Annual contract	7
Middle management assignments		7
Foreign and Mother Language		6
Maths, Physics and Chemistry		6
History and Geography		3
Physical education		3
Biology		1
Technologies		1

240 teachers of several grades. The results from that enquiry show that 95% of the sample experienced an increase in bureaucracy, 69% reported an increase in control over teachers' work and 95% an increase in workload. Also significant is that factors such as bureaucracy and lack of time emerge as factors of greater dissatisfaction and that only 39% agree with a gain in autonomy and decision making opportunities in teaching tasks. These features collide with traditional notions of teaching as a soft job, in which other activities, such as family tasks and chores can easily cope with the activity of teaching.

As demonstrated [34], similar circumstances do not necessarily mean equal reactions in teachers' interpretation of situations. Therefore, we must be aware that, in order to consistently expand reflection about teachers' understanding of work and profession, analysis of these type of work traits must be completed with other forms of research not considered in the present study.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Purpose and Sampling

With this multiple-case study conducted in two public Portuguese secondary schools in 2008/2009 school year, we aim to update knowledge of actual teachers' daily work, by describing teachers' *worktime* and its use in each of

the assigned tasks comprising their work. In this paper we focus on the total weekly *worktime at* and *away* from school *worktime* (and therefore total weekly *worktime*), *worktime* in each of predefined components, with a particular emphasis on work composition at school. Schools comprised 7th to 12th grades, from 400 to 600 pupils (aged between 12 and 17 approximately) and 100 to 120 teachers. Considering the heterogeneity of the study, respondent sample included 20 teachers, representing different subjects, gender, in-service time, contractual link and middle management tasks, as described in Table **2**. Working time was collected from 9 weeks, each one comprising 7 consecutive days, summing 63 days - 36% of the official teaching days per year. Weeks with national or local holydays were avoided. However, those which included pupils' evaluation meetings were included.

4.2. Procedures

Following Harvey's research instruments [50], a checklist was applied as an instrument of time-use diary.

Its comprehensiveness in collecting data and accuracy provided by a closed definition of tasks, its frequency and duration proved to be ideal for the purpose of this study. Respondents were first intentionally selected (in order to reach the above features of sample stratification) and, from those groups, randomly chosen and asked to participate. On previously scheduled weeks, data were collected by the filling in the checklist at the end of each day. The individual results were sent by *e-mail*, or left in an agreed spot in each school. On the following day and at the end of each day, respondents received a notice (by email or phone message) reminding them to fill the checklist.

In terms of validity of the study, the construction of the enquiry instrument was adapted from the most relevant studies already conducted in this area [43, 46, 51, 52], and adapted to the Portuguese teaching specificities. To make sure that the respondents understood the checklist, each was asked to simulate, with the team of researchers, the filling of two checklists using their workdays. This simulation allowed the correction and adjustment of some of the items in the checklists. The respondents' reaction and contribution resulted in the rephrasing or specification of some tasks, while others were divided in two and made more exclusive. We added an open field at the end of each subcomponent (where respondents could add any task they felt uncertain about its meaning) and also an appendix to the checklist with extensive definition of each task.

In the final checklist, respondents had to indicate the moments of entrance and exit of school facilities and their work time in a set of concrete tasks grouped in three main components: 1-work *at school*, 2-*work outside* school facilities, and 3- work related to *formal continuous professional development events* (that in Portugal can take place either *at* or *outside* school facilities). *Work at school* component was divided in the following subcomponents: related to *management* (available only to respondents who were in charge of this type of responsibility, comprising tasks such as *formal meetings and task resolution)*, related to

Table 3. Total Weekly Worktime (includes work at and away from school; average of all sampled weeks; as official worktime differs among respondents, ratio relates individual reported worktime with individual official worktime).

Average (h/week)	Week Minimum (Week with Lowest *worktime*)	Week Maximum	Ratio of *Average Worktime* to Official *Worktime* (100%)
43.3	33.5	54.8	151.3 %

Table 4. Total weekly worktime at school related to official *directed worktime* (100%).

Average	Week Minimum	Week Maximum
145.9 %	110.9 %	188.7 %

Table 5. Total weekly worktime away from school (frequency reports the proportion of labour days in which worktime; ratio was registered is presented in relation to total weekly worktime).

Frequency (%)	Ratio (%)		
	Average	Week Minimum	Week Maximum
103.4	40.4	27.1	55

Table 6. Distribution of Weekly *Worktime* (at and away from school) across different work subcomponents (*frequency* reports the proportion of labour days in which *worktime* in the subcomponent was registered; *ratio* refers to the proportion of *worktime* devoted to the subcomponent in those days).

	Frequency (%)	Ratio (Average %)
Teaching tasks	124.6	77.3
Middle management (1)	82.2	35.1
School projects (2)	25.3	22.5
Peers' replacement (3)	10.4	28.8

teaching (comprising tasks mentioned above)*, related to school projects* (comprising *preparation*, *performance* and *assessment*), related to *peers' replacement, rest or breaks, and other tasks*. Each of these subcomponents was specified in concrete tasks. The same reasoning was used to the work performed outside school, which was divided in: related to *management* (available only to respondents who were in charge of this type of responsibility)*, related to teaching,* related to *school projects,* and *other tasks*. Teachers with middle management assignments checklist totalled 39

Table 7. Distribution of Weekly *Worktime* in Formal Professional Development Events (frequency reports the proportion of labour days in which worktime in the subcomponent) was registered.

% of Respondents who Completed *Worktime* in the Task	Frequency (%)
30	From 2.2 to 58 of sampled labour days

indicators, and other teachers' checklist totalled 28 indicators.

In front of the tasks the respondent had accomplished on that day, its duration should be indicated in minutes. The checklist ended with a blank with the indication to insert the description and duration of any other task accomplished and not immediately suitable in any of the previously displayed possibilities.

Intentionally, and according to the main goals of the research and the need to keep some degree of simplicity to respondents [53] a register of tasks sequence was not required.

From the checklist we were able to collect the frequency and duration of the tasks below on a daily and weekly basis:

- physical presence at school;
- work at school facilities;
- work outside school facilities;
- work in each subcomponent previously defined;
- work in each task;
- other tasks not previously defined.

Respondents' contractual link and weekly *directed time* ([43] we understood *directed time* as the time officially related with school premises and thereby previously registered in the respondent's work schedule) were previously collected through documental analysis.

5. RESULTS

Data corresponding to an average of 49.8 days (34.3 labour days) were collected from each respondent, corresponding to 79% and 76% of the initial sample. For the purpose of this study, it is important to highlight the results that illustrate *teachers' workload* (see Tables **1**, **2**, **3**), its *distribution around different components* (see Tables **3**-**9**) with a particular focus on *teaching* (see Tables **10**, **11**), and actual prominence of formal meetings (see Table **12**).

As shown in Table **3**, on average the respondents worked 43.3 h/week. However, when these results are related to individual official *worktime*, on average, respondents, report a weekly *worktime* that exceeds this figure in 51.3% (which means 52.95 h/week for a fulltime teacher). Following different official *worktime* among the sample, the minimum

Table 8. Distribution of Weekly *Worktime*, at School, across different work subcomponents (*frequency* reports the proportion of labor days in which worktime in the subcomponent was registered; *ratio* refers to the proportion of work--time devoted to the subcomponent in those days).

	Frequency (%)	Ratio (%)		
		Average	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
Teaching tasks	93.9	72.4	35	97.3
Middle Management	62.8	36.2	14.7	69.6
School projects	22.5	28.5	9.1	51
Peers' replacement	10.4	28.8	-	-

Table 9. Distribution of Weekly *Worktime*, away from School, by different work subcomponents.

	Frequency (%)	Ratio (%)		
		Average	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
Teaching tasks	94.5	82.1	65	96.6
Middle Management	34.2	34	14.8	70.6
School projects	8.2	16.4	4.9	48.9

weekly *worktime* was 33.29 h/week and the maximum was 54.50 h/week.

In all sampled weeks, respondents exceeded the official *directed worktime* at school in at least 10.9%. On average, this excess was 45.9% of that official *directed worktime*. There was, at least, one week in which this excess reached 88.7%.

Respondents worked away from school in a number of days that exceeds the sampled labour days – in fact, this does not necessarily mean that all respondents actually worked at home in all sampled labour days, but that in many of the sampled weeks several respondents worked during the weekends. When this occurred, it represented an average of 40.4% of total real weekly *worktime* (corresponding to 18.27 h/week), with a minimum of 27.1% and a maximum of 55%.

Teaching tasks is the most present work subcomponent, exceeding sampled labour days and reaching higher values of ratio of total worktime. *Middle management tasks* are accomplished in a significant number of labour days, though with a lower percentage of worktime. Notice that work in *school projects* happens more frequently than *peers' replacement* but the latter requires more time (relating to total worktime).

Considering the singularities of this task defined by the official continuous training system (irregularity in the

frequency and concentration of *worktime*, when it occurs), data collection for this task followed a different pattern. During the period of data collection, 30% of respondents completed the task, ranging from only 2.2% to 58% of sampled labor days.

At school, *teaching tasks* is the most represented subcomponent in the workload; the evidence of remaining below 100% of labor days may be explained by traditional shape of teachers' weekly schedule (it may occur that some teachers do not work at school in all labor days), and 35% as minimum may be explained by observation in a week without classes. Notice that *middle management* may reach 69.6% of weekly worktime, and that it appears in almost 63% of workdays.

Away from school, *teaching tasks* work occupies most of the time available, and it is almost daily accomplished. Following tendencies on previous figures, *middle management* is present in 34% of sampled labor days and may reach 70.6% of registered worktime. The same feature is observable in *school projects* – there were weeks with an almost residual worktime in the subcomponent, but others with almost half of total worktime.

Planning and *class time* are clearly the most frequent tasks. Planning is the subcomponent to which the respondents devote more time. However, from *Ratio 2* we can infer the weight of *assessment tasks* (very close to the percentage registered in *class time*) and *formal meetings*, when they occur. Worth noticing as well is the fragmented character of *reflective reasoning* (it occurs in 47% of sampled workdays, but not exceeding 26% of time devoted to the subcomponent, around 8.5 h/week in absolute terms) and of *professional studying/readings* (occurs in 25% of sampled workdays, reaching 6.6 h/week, in absolute terms).

Looking at what teachers do away from school in the *teaching tasks* subcomponent, it is visible that all four analyzed tasks are typically *domestic tasks* when compared with the frequency values shown in Table **10**. From *ratio* values, it is clear that *planning* and *assessment* have prominence when compared with *reflective reasoning* and *professional studying/readings*.

Gathering all *formal meetings* (from *middle management* and *teaching* subcomponents) teachers reported a frequency of almost 27% of labor days to the tasks, confirming the previous statement in Table **10** about its irregular character throughout the school year – it occupies a minimum of 18.9 of weekly workload and a maximum of 86.6 weeks mainly devoted to students' evaluation.

6. DISCUSSION

The obtained *total weekly worktime* values confirm overwork trends stated in previously quoted studies. Notice that, in our study, not all respondents had to officially work for 35 h/week since not all were fulltime teachers (that is the case of some annually hired). Therefore the use of the ratio *actual weekly workload/official worktime* indicator seemed more accurate to describe effective workload in parallel with the average absolute value of 43.3 h/week. Significantly,

Table 10. Weekly Distribution of Time in Teaching Tasks (*frequency* **reports the proportion of days in which** *worktime* **in the task is registered;** *ratio 1* **reports the proportion of time in relation to total weekly** *worktime*; *ratio 2* **the average proportion of time in relation to total** *worktime* **in days in which the task was performed**).

Total (*at* and *Away* from School)			
	Frequency (%)	Ratio 1 (%)	Ratio 2 (%)
Planning (1)	83.2	20.6	51.5
Class time	77.7	27.1	38.2
Assessment tasks	51.3	10.6	37.2
Reflective reasoning (2)	47	5.5	25.7
Professional studying/readings	25	3.3	19.9
Formal meetings (under superior assignment) (2)	17.5	7.55	41.5
Informal meetings previously scheduled	14.7	1.93	13.3

153% of official *worktime* means approximately 52 h/week, close to 54.4 h/week reported by the British teachers [43] meaning that, despite the methodological differences, apparently our results show that respondents are working, on average, under a heavier workload than their peers in countries reported in quoted studies. Overwork is also made clear when using *directed time* officially scheduled (see Table **4**). The fact that in all sampled weeks respondents exceeded the latter and that this excess reached 88.7% of *directed time* also seems quite significant. These results confirm the hypothesis presented by the researchers who defend the *deprofessionalization* and who suggest that overwork is not just a feeling but a factual working characteristic of the teachers who were part of this sample.

These results also confirm that, as previously stated, in order to characterize teachers' workload with some degree of objectivity, institutional data made available at Eurydice or OECD studies must be crossed with empirical data.

Teaching has been reported as an occupation with a significant amount of *worktime* displayed away from school, and associated to a number of female teachers in its social composition [9]. In this respect, our results (40.4% of total weekly *worktime*) go beyond those presented in other studies [43] – 26.8%, or in [44] – 36.6%, and show that actual teaching work enhances the need to do it on a daily basis. Worth mentioning is the fact that this feature of teachers' workload remains unaltered even after the legal extension of directed worktime that took place in Portugal in 2008, but which, effectively, did not change the situation. At this point, we can only speculate about its factors: lack of resources available at school, consequence of traditional socialization characteristics or of complexity that makes it a never ending

job. The fact is that, despite recent political measures, *work extensiveness* [43] remains an important and unresolved feature of teachers' work.

Since Hoyle's conceptualization of *extended professionalization* [54] academics from different national contexts have focused on how teachers' work composition has been changing (better said, enlarging) as organizations became more complex. In this context there is a trend to enhance the importance of *teaching* time and its related tasks, but also to the need of accomplishing other tasks concerning pupils' orientation, school and middle management or organizational projects. Although precise comparison is made difficult by different activities' coding and definition, our results show similarities with those of previously reported studies, as teaching, and its complementary tasks (planning, assessment), appear as the main section of teachers' work – in our case, both in terms of frequency and in proportion to total weekly *worktime* at school. However, using *subcomponent ratio* indicators, its presence in total respondents' *worktime* at school (77.3%) is less important than the equivalent reported [44] – 85.7%, in [45] - 81% and more important than those reported [43] - 55%, or [46] – 67.4%. As far as *middle management* tasks are concerned, it is important to underline a clear difference between the Portuguese teachers and other teachers involved in similar studies, whether in terms of frequency or in ratio of total weekly *worktime* at school, Portuguese teachers dedicate more time to this work component than others – notice that the accomplishment of such tasks represents an average 35% of total *worktime*. Significantly these tasks, even at home, represent the second work component in frequency and ratio, with at least one week with approximately 70% of total weekly *worktime* at home and an average of 34%. From the combination between frequency and ratio, it results that work in *middle management tasks* may be characterized by short but frequent periods along the week, which confirms its fragmented incidence. This work fragmentation is confirmed by frequency of work in other subcomponents (school projects and peers' replacement), not performed on a daily basis and not compulsory to all teachers. Its accomplishment represents more than a quarter of daily *worktime*. Despite common association between work fragmentation and intensification, Hargreaves [55] has shown that working in areas such as the ones mentioned above may be viewed as enriching to some teachers. Even though teachers' perceptions about these figures are not under scope in this paper, it seems an important step to evaluate the consequences of these figures considering that only nearly half of the Portuguese teachers expressed satisfaction about time dedicated to pastoral (in our case inserted in *middle management* subcomponent) and administrative tasks [48]. *Teaching* subcomponent, by its clear prominence in teachers' workload, deserves closer attention than other subcomponents. Hitherto, it is useful to specify that in the Portuguese secondary teachers' work composition it is current not to have classes, or even, *directed time*, in all labour days, and also that in our time sample an *end of term* week (mainly devoted to faculty meetings) was included. Both considerations may explain

Table 11. Weekly Distribution of Time in Teaching Tasks, Away From School, (*frequency* reports the proportion of labor days in which worktime in the task is registered; *ratio* reports the proportion of time in relation to weekly worktime in the subcomponent).

	Frequency (%)	Ratio (%)
Planning	70	65.3
Assessment tasks	50.1	65.9
Individual reflective reasoning	30.3	37.3
Professional studying/readings	20.5	36.1

Table 12. Distribution of Weekly Worktime, At School, in Formal Meetings (under superior assignment), across all subcomponents (*frequency* reports the proportion of days in which worktime in the task is registered; *ratio* reports the average proportion of time in relation to total worktime in those days in which task was performed).

Frequency (%)	Ratio (%)		
	Average	Minimum	Maximum
26.6	45.8	18.9	86.6

why *class time* occurs only in 77.7% of sampled labour days and, partially, why *planning* appears as more frequent than *class time*; it must be noticed that *planning* occurs mostly away from school (as other tasks with greater values shown in Table **11**), presumably on weekends. Despite these figures, *class time* is the task where teachers spend most of their worktime, although, if we still consider that class time is to be the core task in teaching profession, its figure (27.7% of weekly workload) seems rather short. It is in fact shorter than all results available in the previously quoted studies - ranging from 31% in [43] to 47% in [45], which means that, even though the *class time* absolute value of Portuguese secondary teachers is not far from their colleagues reported in those studies, the Portuguese teachers face a larger weight of all other tasks aside from *class time*. However, we believe that the option of recording its frequency and ratio in days when it actually occurred (made possible from the extension of sampled days throughout the school year) brings a necessary caution to this interpretation – when it is accomplished, *class time* occupies, on average, 38% of total workday, even so, less than figures reported in [44] – 40.1% and [45] – 47%.

It should be noticed the apparent personal/private character of tasks such as *planning*, *assessment*, and *professional studying/readings*, which are mainly accomplished away from school and, presumably, in favor of an individualistic work. Quite important appears to be the residual figure of *professional studying/readings* when related to the total weekly *worktime* (3.3%) that becomes

more important (19.9%) when related to total *worktime* in days when it is accomplished (which happens in an average 25% of labor days). In addition to these data we should include those regarding the formal events that contribute for the teachers' professional development (Table **6**). The opportunities to enhance professional skills and knowledge seem scarce, particularly when we acknowledge the constant need for updating the intellectual and methodological training required by the teaching profession, even if we consider for the purpose that they can be achieved from the development of other related tasks. Teachers' professional development has had an increasing role in political and scientific discourses concerning teaching professionalization and school improvement. In this context, recent developments on organizational and professional conditions that foster teacher improvement make *formal professional development events* only part of that process [56, 57]. Consequently, any conclusion about professional development made solely from features concerning this type of initiatives falls short. Therefore, a combined reading of several indicators is necessary.

Concerning *formal* and *informal meetings*, different methodological options in categorical definition of tasks make it difficult to compare our figures to those from quoted studies. Either because, apparently, both tasks were treated as undistinguished or because at least one was not considered or unclearly defined. Using its relation to overall weekly workload [43] points to 4%, [44] to 2.7%, [45] to 4.1% and [47] to 3% of time spent in meetings concerned with *teaching*. Our figures outstrip all of these results, mainly because the *formal meetings* weight (7.6%) reaches an average of 41.5% of *worktime* in the 17.5% of labor days in which they occur. Bearing in mind that these formal meetings concern *teaching*, and that to these we must add those concerned with *management* (including pastoral care) or subject faculty meetings; this sum results in the figures shown in Table **12** (present in 26.6% of labor days and occupying 45.8% of *worktime* in those days). These figures may confirm a current opinion that work in schools has been under a severe crisis of "*meetingicitis*" resulting from either recent bureaucratization of teachers' work or hope of a *contrived collegiality* [34] as answers to external demands of organizational or curricular coordination and efficacy.

CONCLUSION

Nowadays, Portuguese secondary teachers face a set of severe work conditions, with more pupils per class, and more disparate profiles in each class due to compulsory schooling extension to 12th grade. This is also a consequence of a severe national financial crisis – loss of net income and suspension of career progression since 2008. Simultaneously, it is easy to recognize that schools are no longer places where one can merely learn how to *write, read and count*, this is as evident as teaching is not only about *teaching classes*, or that teaching is a *soft* profession that enables workers to easily cope with their home tasks or other personal activities and relationships.

Our results, along with those from the reported studies, show respondents submitted to overwork, that their job goes well beyond school facilities and *teaching classes*, that they are compelled to attend to more formal meetings and that, despite the alleged intellectual nature of the work, the remaining time for professional update purposes is scarce. This study reveals that, as far as teachers' *worktime* composition is regarded, these are the main consequences of recent political control measures.

As previously stated, in Portugal, despite recent political measures leading to the reduction of State control, the State centralized control remains a traditional feature of the educational system and the teaching profession. It is not our intention to underestimate the pertinence of deepening this control by underlining its factors, but we find it relevant to stress the conditions through which that control is made visible, mainly through the manipulation of the working conditions, and, most importantly, the consequences it has for the teachers in particular and for the profession in general. Our results show that respondents are not teaching less hours than in the past, but that, considering the amount of total *worktime*, core teaching tasks such as contact time, planning and assessment, may be under the pressure of other teaching and non-teaching tasks.

Registered values for *planning* (its prominence in *teaching* workload and the evidence of being mainly accomplished away from schools) deserve a closer look. Most likely, they should be analyzed through data only possible with other methodological instruments. It seems useful to first consider the traditional centrality of the curriculum at school and class levels that characterizes the Portuguese situation [58]. It is also important to regard the stated perspectives and underline the possibilities of controlling teachers' work, particularly by distant mechanisms associated to the recently adopted political measures of the most developed countries that emphasize the curriculum standards, and the increase in national testing and teachers' performance evaluation. This may be enough to question if the reported *planning* time concerns an act of actual autonomous creation or, by contrast, if it lies in a driven process marked by the dependency on others' knowledge and determinations. In fact, there may be no correspondence between what officially means *competence* or *improvement learning strategies* and what is actually under scope in teachers' professional evaluation process that tends to stress on the instrumental and technical aspects of their work [59].

The growing fragmentation and diffusion of teachers' work may be an opportunity to enrich their work, as it is extended to organizational responsibilities towards other actors or mandated expectations from society. The issue lies on the limits of that fragmentation and diffusion. Whether there is a conflict between the perspectives and individual expectations of professionalization, namely on its reflexive and intellectual areas, or a counter-productive obligation of teaching improvement and of professional awareness and development? Ambiguities resulting from actual multidimensionality of legally prescribed professionalism may be posing problems to intellectual dimension of teachers' work, if we accept that the complexity of the teaching situation can only be solved with this intellectual investment that will allow teachers to decide *what to do* in the face of constantly changing class conditions [27, 60], and on gathering lifelong learning and prowess.

Recent changes in teaching conditions have been rooted either in neoliberal or post-Fordist trends of understanding work conception and relations, or public service management. We can only hypothesize if we are in the presence of either an intentional agenda of diminishing teachers' critical scholarship; or of a weakening of the collective awareness about educational purposes; or even of a result of limited ability to *see the forest* beyond daily work [30]; or the mere application of available ways to improve teachers and organizations efficacy in favor of pupils' learning and community development. Given that the political agenda has been supported in institutional data favoring social acceptance of schooling and organizational effectiveness problems and solutions [7, 61], the academic community must complement those results deepening knowledge and methodological designs to enlighten consciences and foster consensus based on more realistic and objective data from teachers' reality.

If we acknowledge the merging nature of *personal* and *professional* dimensions in identity construction, and that the structural conditions play an important role in changing mental constructions underpinning identities [31], work conditions are never neutral and teachers indeed respond to changes in different ways [15, 34]. It is possible that some perceive these ambiguous conditions as *natural* while others do may respond in a less peaceful manner, and probably, *identity crisis* is yet a story to be written in its full complexity. Our study does not explore the consequences in teaching effectiveness or the means applied by professionals to cope with overwork or control of their own workload, but we believe it solidly establishes the ground for further research concerning its impact on teachers' professional meaning and a possible shift in restructuring the teaching profession.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that this article content has no conflict of interest.

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