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## Bureaucracy and Outsourced Professional Identity

Burocracia e Identidade Profissional de Terceirizados  
Burocracia e Identidad Profesional Subcontratada

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## Abstract

**Research objective:** to understand the influence of bureaucracy on the professional identity of outsourced individuals at the Federal University of Viçosa – Florestal *campus* (UFV/CAF).

**Theoretical framework:** The theoretical axis sought to deepen in public administration and its bureaucratic processes, in outsourcing and its origin, and in the phenomenon of identity.

**Methodology:** Descriptive qualitative case study carried out with data triangulation: semi-structured interviews with outsourced individuals; document analysis; and observation, analyzed through the Discourse Analysis of the French Pecheutian current.

**Results:** Three semantic paths were obtained: the identity of outsourced workers; bureaucratic features; and outsourcing mechanisms. The first brought three themes, which are the characters in the speech; the professional trajectory; and the similarities and differences between outsourced employees and servers. The second deals with the bureaucratic procedures of outsourcing. And the third deals with the insecurities caused by outsourcing control mechanisms. As conclusions, the UFV/CAF, the city of Florestal and the outsourced company were the most prominent characters in their identities. It was found that employees live under constant professional insecurity. Finally, the identity of the exclusion of outsourced workers was reported, mainly due to the difference in treatment and in the rights and duties to which they are submitted.

**Originality:** The study is innovative in the sense of analyzing identity from the perspective of the bureaucracy of outsourced employees working in the public sector.

**Theoretical and practical contributions:** The main contribution of this work is related to the complementation of studies on outsourcing and identity in the public sector, with an analysis to be carried out observing elements of bureaucracy, still very present in government agencies. The study can also contribute to a generalization of Brazilian organizational studies about the professional identity of outsourced subjects, considering the high use of this type of contracting in the country.

**Keywords:** Identity, outsourced, bureaucracy, public administration.

## Resumo

**Objetivo da pesquisa:** compreender a influência da burocracia na identidade profissional dos indivíduos terceirizados da Universidade Federal de Viçosa – *campus* Florestal (UFV/CAF).

**Enquadramento teórico:** O eixo teórico buscou aprofundar na administração pública e seus processos burocráticos, na terceirização e sua origem e no fenômeno da identidade.

**Metodologia:** Estudo de caso qualitativo descritivo realizado com uma triangulação de dados: entrevistas semiestruturadas com os indivíduos terceirizados; análise documental; e observação, analisados através da Análise de Discurso da corrente francesa pecheutiana.

**Resultados:** Foram obtidos três percursos semânticos: a identidade dos terceirizados; as características burocráticas; e os mecanismos da terceirização. O primeiro trouxe três temas, que são as personagens do discurso; a trajetória profissional; e as semelhanças e diferenças existentes entre funcionários terceirizados e servidores. O segundo trata dos procedimentos burocráticos da terceirização. E o terceiro trata das inseguranças causadas pelos mecanismos de controle da terceirização. Como conclusões, a UFV/CAF, a cidade de Florestal e a empresa terceirizada foram as personagens de maior destaque nas identidades. Foi constatado que os funcionários vivem sob constante insegurança profissional. Por fim, foi relatada a identidade de exclusão dos terceirizados, principalmente devido à diferença de tratamento e de direitos e deveres a qual são submetidos.

**Originalidade:** O estudo é inovador no sentido de analisar a identidade sob a ótica da burocracia de funcionários terceirizados inseridos no setor público.

**Contribuições teóricas e práticas:** A principal contribuição deste trabalho está relacionada à complementação dos estudos sobre terceirização e identidade no setor público, com análise a ser realizada observando elementos da burocracia, ainda muito presente nos órgãos do governo. O estudo pode igualmente contribuir para uma generalização dos estudos organizacionais brasileiros acerca de identidade profissional de sujeitos terceirizados, tendo em vista a alta utilização desta modalidade de contratação no país.

**Palavras-chave:** Identidade, terceirizados, burocracia, administração pública.

## Resumen

**Objetivo de la investigación:** comprender la influencia de la burocracia en la identidad profesional de las personas subcontratadas en la Universidad Federal de Viçosa - *campus* Florestal (UFV / CAF).

**Marco teórico:** El eje teórico buscó profundizar en la gestión pública y sus procesos burocráticos, en la subcontratación y su origen, y en el fenómeno de la identidad.

**Metodología:** Estudio de caso descriptivo cualitativo realizado con triangulación de datos: entrevistas semiestruturadas a personas subcontratadas; análisis de documentos; y observación, analizada a través del Análisis del discurso de la corriente pecheutiana francesa.

**Resultados:** Se obtuvieron tres caminos semánticos: la identidad de los trabajadores subcontratados; características burocráticas; y mecanismos de subcontratación. El primero trajo tres temas, que son los personajes del discurso; la trayectoria profesional; y las similitudes y diferencias entre empleados y servidores subcontratados. El segundo trata de los trámites burocráticos de la subcontratación. Y el tercero se ocupa de las inseguridades que genera la subcontratación de los mecanismos de control. Como conclusiones, la UFV / CAF, la ciudad de Florestal y la empresa subcontratada fueron los personajes más destacados en sus identidades. Se constató que los empleados viven en constante inseguridad profesional. Finalmente, se informó la identidad de la exclusión de los trabajadores subcontratados, principalmente por la diferencia de trato y en los derechos y deberes a los que están sometidos.

**Originalidad:** el estudio es innovador en el sentido de analizar la identidad desde la perspectiva de la burocracia de los empleados subcontratados que trabajan en el sector público.

**Aportes teóricos y prácticos:** El principal aporte de este trabajo está relacionado con la complementación de estudios sobre outsourcing e identidad en el sector público, con un análisis a realizar observando elementos de burocracia, aún muy presentes en las agencias gubernamentales. El estudio también puede contribuir a una generalización de los estudios organizacionales brasileños sobre la identidad profesional de los sujetos subcontratados, considerando el alto uso de este tipo de contratación en el país.

**Palabras clave:** Identidad, subcontratado, burocracia, administración pública.

## Introduction

Outsourcing, a type of work in which the employee is hired by one company but physically works in another organization, can be understood as a form of job insecurity in which the outsourced employee does not have institutional priority (Camilo & Costa, 2019; Pereira *et al.*, 2017). In public administration, outsourcing intensifies with the reform of the state and the introduction of managerial public administration (MPA) or managerialism in the 1990s. In APG, the government loses its main objective when it seeks only to maximize managerial efficiency by forgetting social needs (Paes de Paula, 2005).

Outsourcing in public administration, especially in federal universities, proved detrimental to outsourced individuals, mainly their identity. In recent studies, aspects such as low and late salaries were highlighted (Barbati *et al.*, 2016), lack of identification with organizations (Silva & Garcia, 2018), granting of privileges and sponsorship (Camilo & Costa, 2019; Santos *et al.*, 2019), the invisibility of employees (Lara *et al.*, 2020), informal hierarchies with staff, turnover (Camilo & Costa, 2019) and non-investment in employee qualification and training (Santos *et al.*, 2019).

This fact, some of the shared values, should be remembered or addressed in the performance of outsourced services favoring the dysfunctions of the Brazilian public administration (Santos *et al.*, 2019). Thus, managerialism (Bresser-Pereira, 1998), in an attempt to reduce bureaucratic dysfunctions, ended up intensifying them.

Therefore, this research aimed to understand the professional identity of outsourced individuals in an environment guided by APG bureaucratic practices, based on a case study conducted at the Federal University of Viçosa – Florestal *campus*. In addition to contributing to studies on outsourcing, the research presents a new perspective by addressing bureaucracy's influence on subjects' identities. Next, the article brings a brief theoretical framework about the three main guiding aspects of this work, namely, public administration and bureaucracy, work and outsourcing, and identity. Then, the methodological aspects adopted and the results are presented, subdivided according to the themes found. It ends with the final considerations.

## Public administration and its bureaucratic processes

It is difficult to think of any current public organizational context without referring to bureaucracy: a structure where authority is exercised through a position, which has regulations related to the function performed, with the division of labor according to technical skills, hierarchy, obedience, and documented processes (Weber, 1978). In addition to the *Weberian* look, bureaucracy can be defined and analyzed from the perspective of the "actor," considering the concept of "street-level bureaucracy," which evaluates the performance of the bureaucrat and not only the norms that surround him (Brodkin, 2012; 2013). For this study, however, it was decided to consider bureaucracy as organizational rationality, which uses the classical *Weberian theory*. In this context, it is noteworthy that the ideal bureaucratic model described by Weber (1978) excels in impersonality in relationships. However, human beings are complex, rational, and emotional, and impersonality entails a lack of attention to the individual needs of citizens in public administration (Merton, 1970).

In addition to impersonality, according to Merton (1970), procedures become slow and loaded with formality by seeking total legality in all procedures, often without a critical interpretation of reality. Afraid of taking risks in the exercise of the function, in the event of non-compliance with any rule, the public servant incurs an excess of rigor in documentation and processes, which must follow the entire legal schedule. However, no bureaucracy in the world is devoid of personalism and informality (Ramos, 2009). These issues can be glimpsed in the current public administration, as Paes de Paula (2005) observed, as impersonality gives way to the "way," which perpetuates the clientelist and patrimonialism characteristics of the Brazilian public administration.

There is an attempt to modernize public management in Brazil, adding elements of the private sphere to increase institutions' efficiency and economy. Managerialism, implemented by Bresser-Pereira (1998) in 1995, was the precursor of such measures, which expanded the possibility of outsourcing in the public sphere. As mentioned by Cavalcante and Carvalho (2017), since managerialism, new changes have yet to emerge from the state apparatus, making the theme a challenge for public managers (Bresser-Pereira, 1998; Paes de Paula, 2005).

Given this managerial perspective, outsourced services arise in public administration, especially since several positions and competitions have been extinguished, which are now exercised by employees subcontracted by a private company, defined through bidding. Currently, outsourcing seeks to focus on planning and risk management, with instruments such as Normative Instruction No. 5 of the Ministry of Planning (2017) to formalize the control and inspection of the service. When planning, the bureaucratic stiffening of public administration actions can be made more flexible, forcing a greater focus on the result (Mizael *et al.*, 2020). For this study, we recognize the effort to try to ensure the improvement of public services through managerialism. However, we consider that bureaucratic procedures are still dominant and can influence the lives of outsourced subjects in their relationship with work since the hardening of inspection and the bureaucracy inherent to public service are present in their daily work.

## Work and outsourcing

Subcontracting, or outsourcing, as it is popularly known, transfers to another employer the obligation to fulfill responsibilities related to hiring employees and managing labor. It happens mainly in middle activities, that is, functions that are not the focus of the contracting institution. Public administration is carried out through a bidding procedure and signed through a contractual instrument, through which the winner of the event makes employees available for the provision of the service provided for in the notice. (Marinho *et al.*, 2018).

Druck (1999) and Druck *et al.* (2019) highlight this new configuration in Brazil, which, from the 1990s, came into force with *Toyotist* ideals and began to disseminate outsourcing with greater intensity, based mainly on the Japanese model of total quality and rationalization in its factory production relations. According to Druck (1999), outsourcing was the most significant characteristic imported from the Japanese model in Brazil. The public administration seeks economy from the lowest price, and the winning company aims only at its profit, which may contradict the main public interests and bring undesirable defects in the selection of employees, such as the appointment of workers (Santos *et al.*, 2019).

Brito *et al.* (2012) reinforce outsourcing as exploitation, from reducing rights, excessive working hours, high turnover, job insecurity, and fragmentation of functions. The fear of unemployment ends up causing disciplinary coercion in employees, who always need to demonstrate the excellent development of their work through submissive conduct (Costa, 2007; Druck, 1999). Such characteristics are inherent in outsourcing, increasing the precariousness of work, the discrimination of employees, and the collective weakening of the working class. Employees who perform outsourced functions perform critical functions, suffer from salary delays, are at risk for lack of training, and may even suffer defaults with companies that do not bear their obligations (Barbati *et al.*, 2016; Costa, 2007; Costa, 2017).

Third parties suffer discrimination by contractors directly, that is, effective servers. This prejudice may be related to the informal hierarchy attributed to the term middle and end activities, as the differentiation of the position is already a kind of discrimination (Barbati *et al.*, 2016). All these particularities can interfere with the worldview of individuals who act as outsourced employees, impacting their identities. Discrimination, providing an identity of exclusion of the outsourced employee vis-à-vis the organization in which it operates (Brito *et al.*, 2012; Dubar, 2005), makes them feel invisible in their professional performances (LARA *et al.*, 2020).

## Identity Card

Identity has different concepts for the various scholars of the social sciences. Psychologists focus on personal identity; sociologists believe in identity from human interaction; anthropologists believe that identity is inherent in the culture into which subjects are inserted (Carrieri *et al.*, 2008). In this work, the perspective of sociology is considered, which considers social interactions as fundamental for identity formation. For Dubar (2005, p.136), identity is “the result at once stable and provisional, individual and collective, subjective and objective, biographical and structural, of the various processes of socialization that together build individuals and define institutions.”

It is essential to understand the phenomenon of socialization as a crucial element in the identity formation of individuals. Identity is often unconsciously constructed because the society in which the subject is inserted has economic, cultural, and customary traits incorporated into people's behaviors without critical reflection (Dubar, 2005). It refers to Berger and Luckmann's (1985) concept of knowledge for primary socialization, in which the person has contact with a specific world that presents itself as the only possible reality. Thus, all symbols, behaviors, and roles apprehended are considered authentic in the individual's identity. Secondary socialization would take place from the specialization of knowledge related to the professional scope. Secondary socialization may cause a break from primary socialization if there is a new interpretation of reality.

Despite understanding identity from the perspective of socialization, this study also understands it as a dialectical relationship (Bauer & Mesquita, 2008), in which there is common sense among people in a given society. However, there is also subjectivity, both configuring the identity of individuals. Another relevant perspective arises from the studies of Souza and Carrieri (2012), who treat identity as a discursive practice guided by the rationality of individuals, a theory that highlights the importance of understanding identity from Discourse Analysis.

Identity is also manifested through symbols, which have different meanings for different individuals. This characteristic reflects the uniqueness of identity: some symbols are universal for a particular group, which shares life experiences socially; others are unique to each individual in their social construction acquired since childhood (Dubar, 2005).

Another essential element for understanding identity is the professional trajectory, which constitutes a label given to the individual by himself in his identity formation based on his experiences (Dubar, 2005). Therefore, for Fernandes *et al.* (2009), professional identity is often confused with the individual's identity since his professional trajectory is part of much of his history. In some cases, the individual's identity is at odds with that attributed to society, causing a conflict between such (virtual) identity and the identity that the individual believes to be true for himself (real). When there is this conflict, the individual needs to adapt, being able to carry out an objective transaction, a strategy in which the individual adapts externally to change the social conception about his identity, or a subjective transaction, a strategy carried out internally that aims for new identities for himself, failing to incorporate some characteristics of his trajectory. These transactions construct the identities of individuals (Dubar, 2005).

## Methods

According to Souza and Carrieri (2014), qualitative research has focused on interpreting social relations. Therefore, a qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive study was carried out (Marconi & Lakatos, 2010). In this study, the interaction methods analyzed were the day-to-day work, the collective behavior of outsourced employees and their relationships with effective servers, and the interaction related to the institutions themselves (Creswell, 2007; Denzin, 2006). Social constructionism was adopted as an epistemological position, believing there is an everyday basis between the subjects. Still, people construct their reality differently in the same context (Berger & Luckmann, 1985).

The case study is the research method of this work (Yin, 2001). Carrieri *et al.* (2008) propose it as one of the possible paths for investigating identity-related phenomena within a specific social context. The case study was conducted at the Federal University of Viçosa, Florestal *campus* (UFV/CAF), a public higher education and technology institution located in Florestal, Minas Gerais. It has more than 80 years of

existence, starting to offer higher education courses by UFV in 2006 through Reuni, and before it was only a technical school known by the acronym CEDAF – Central de Ensino e Desenvolvimento Agrário de Florestal (UFV, 2021), still common when referring to the campus.

Data collection was done through three sources, setting up a data triangulation. First, documentary research was conducted in the notices referring to the ten contracts in force for outsourcing UFV/CAF labor and consultation with Brazilian legislation regarding bidding, outsourcing, and public administration. In line with this, semi-structured interviews were conducted with outsourced employees (Gil, 2009), according to availability, without the criterion of time of performance, age, or gender. Sixteen interviews were conducted, with an average duration of 30 minutes, of which nine were done in person and seven remotely, all recorded and transcribed. The final form of data collection was performed from observation, as one of the authors acts as a technical-administrative servant of the university, with the relevant information recorded in a field diary. (Lopes *et al.*, 2002; Roese *et al.*, 2006). The collection occurred between March and July 2021 and was only started after the favorable opinion number 4,593,565 of the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Viçosa, which took place on March 16, 2021.

The analysis was thorough Discourse Analysis (DA), following the molds of the Pecheutian French current, considering that nothing would be authentic in the construction of the discourse, as it is done through thoughts and concepts permeated through the social roles assumed by individuals (Narzetti, 2011). The characters inserted in the discourse were also analyzed, through which the interviewees express their opinions, agreeing or disagreeing with the positioning of their roles within the inserted context. Finally, in this work, the discursive strategies of persuasion according to the concepts of Faria and Linhares (1993) were analyzed: the ideological transfer of responsibility or guilt to another character; the implicit or explicit ones; silences; and lexical selection.

## Results and discussion

The total number of outsourcers working at UFV/CAF, 80, was reduced, at the time of data collection, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the quest to reduce the virus's transmissibility and save resources in the crisis, not all contracts were operating at their full capacity. The total number of employees tendered in public protocols was 109, and contracts 099/2020 (7 vacant posts), 205/2020 (17 vacant posts), and 067/2019 (5 vacant posts) were reduced.

UFV/CAF is linked to approximately 54% of its costing budget with outsourcing, considering the 2019 fiscal year. For comparison purposes, through the open data of the Fala.Br information access platform, in the same year, the Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP) had about 32% of the funding budget committed to outsourcing; the Federal University of Alfenas (UNIFAL) about 35%; the Federal University of Maranhão (UFMA) approximately 26%; the Federal University of Tocantins (UFT) about 22%; and the UFV headquarters *campus*, in Viçosa, approximately 15%.

This situation reinforces the justification for studying outsourcing at UFV/CAF. In table 1, we have the profile of the outsourced employees interviewed regarding the specification of the position, gender, working time at UFV/CAF, and many companies that worked as outsourced at UFV/CAF.

**Table 1**  
Profile of interviewees

Code	Position	Gender	Working time at UFV/CAF	Number of companies that worked as outsourced at UFV/CAF
T1	Gatekeeper	Female	Six years	2
T2	Gardener	Men	age 19	3
T3	Receptionist	Female	Eight months	1
T4	Janitor	Female	18 years	3
T5	Driver	Men	Four years	2
T6	Continuous	Female	Eight months	1
T7	Driver	Men	Six years	2
T8	Receptionist	Female	15 years	6
T9	Maintenance worker	Men	1 1/2 year	1
T10	Driver	Men	Ten and a half years	2
T11	Driver	Men	Six and a half years	2
T12	Gatekeeper	Female	1 1/2 year	3
T13	Receptionist	Female	Two years and a half.	3
T14	Janitor	Female	11 years	3
T15	Receptionist	Female	1 1/2 year	2
T16	Office boy	Female	1 1/2 year	2

The average length of service found was approximately six and a half years, showing that, despite the high turnover emphasized in the studies by Costa (2017); Santos *et al.* (2019); and Brito *et al.* (2012), this is not the case at UFV/CAF, as only six of the employees interviewed have less than two years of work at the institution. Such stability is reinforced by the fact that most have already passed through two or more contracting companies operating at UFV/CAF. Of the respondents, we have the majority of women (10). Information on age and level of education were not questioned because they did not influence the issue of bureaucracy in the identity of outsourced workers, the focus of this study.

Table 1 shows the outsourcing contracts in force at UFV/CAF at the time of data collection with the respective positions and numbers of employees hired.



**Table 1**  
Outsourcing contracts in force in July 2021

Agreement	Trading Floor	Role	Number of employees
099/2020	65/2020	Receptionist	6
		Continuous	4
012/2017	285/2016	Vehicle washer	1
014/2017	286/2016	Dairy Assistant	2
128; 2019.	66/2019	Gardener	12
228/2019	97/2019	Waste collector	1
		Bricklayer	2
		Janitor	4
		Plumber	2
		Carpenter	1
		Metal worker	1
		Electrician	4
272/2019	157/2019	Driver	4
067/2019	26/ 2019	Doorman/Watchman	13
069/2020	46/2020	Guard	8
205/2020	139/2020	Cleaning	7
072/2020	36/2020	Agricultural Assistant	8
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>80</b>

Given the data in table 1, comparing them with that in table 1, it is possible to verify that the interviews with the outsourced covered 6 of the 10 contracts in force on campus at the time of data collection. The total number of companies winning the Auction and that hold the contracts shown in table 1 are seven, as the same company has two contracts with the Cleaning and Doorman/Watchman positions, another has two contracts with the Campus Maintenance and Gardener positions, and a last one has two contracts with the Vehicle Washer and Dairy Auxiliary positions.

It is important to emphasize that the dynamics of companies are always changeable since the Law that currently governs bids in the country (Law No. 8.666, 1993) determines that the validity of contracts can be, at most, 12 months, extendable for a maximum of 60 months. With this, a new bidding process can bring a different conjuncture from companies holding outsourced labor contracts.

After the presentation of the profile of the interviewees and the outsourcing situation of UFV/CAF, the results were organized and discussed based on the disclosure of the characters present in the speeches and their representation to the outsourced; the personal, professional trajectory of the outsourced; the congruence and ruptures between effective servants and outsourced employees within the context of UFV/CAF; the bureaucratic characteristics present in the actions of inspectors and contract managers and the subcontracted employees themselves in their work activities; and, finally, the insecurities of outsourcing at UFV/CAF.

## Speech characters

Identifying and analyzing the characters present in the outsourced discourse helps us to understand how their identities are constructed. Recalling Dubar (2005), identity is constructed from the individual and collective symbols shared in a given context, and the discursive characters represent such symbols. In

conclusion, UFV/CAF, the city of Florestal, and the outsourced company were the most prominent characters in the identities.

The UFV/CAF campus, or CEDAF, as many still prefer to call it, appears with solid emotional significance due to two main aspects: the physical characteristics of the campus and the family connection.

Regarding physical characteristics, for most interviewees, the campus is synonymous with quality of life. The UFV/CAF facilities have a very wooded environment full of ponds. In the interviews conducted in person, it was possible to capture the sounds of birds and other animals in the background, which corroborates the interviewees' perceptions. T10 reinforces that "this **landscape**, this beautiful view, this **clean air** that we breathe [...] it is a **privilege** to be able to enjoy". With this same perspective, T14 reinforces that he goes through the guardhouse every day at the end of the day and says, "#teamocedaf. I love it here, I love working here. [...] It is a **great place** to spend the whole day".

Likewise, the campus emerges as an institution present in the lives of outsourced workers through the work history of family members or the study itself prior to the professional activity. From this feeling comes the idea of "wearing the T-shirt," T11 metonymy that expresses pride and dedication to his place of professional performance, considering that his entire paternal family retired on campus. However, T8 gives us a new perspective on the campus representation, using the expression, "regardless of whether I work or not, here is part of my life. It is part of my history". It is inferred that representation has no relation to work; that is, identity is more personal than a professional identity.

The second discursive character found was the city of Florestal in Minas Gerais. The fact that it is small and quiet, with an estimated population of 7,602 people (IBGE, 2021) and few employment and leisure opportunities, made UFV/CAF a crucial element in the lives of outsourced workers. This is because, according to Dubar (2005), identities are not free from environmental and social interference since the context in which the individual is inserted is subject to their characteristics.

Interviewee T3 states, "in Florestal, **all we have is the university**. [...] I stay there all day; I go for a walk on the weekend." Thus, it is inferred that in the city of Florestal, all you have is the university: leisure options, work options, and study options. That is, the municipality has its meaning in people's lives summarized to the institution, such is its importance for the city. In addition, the outsourced T12 states that "whether we want it or not, the city's economy revolves around CEDAF. [...] the money, let us say, revolves within our city because of UFV." According to Baumgartner (2015), universities can expand human development in the cities where their campuses are installed by promoting education, culture, and job offers.

Allied with the idea that the municipality's economy depends on the campus, employee T9 states that he expected to work at the university because the organization is a reference within the city. He says, "Sometimes we go out of town to **work**." The use of the expression "we" can be considered a strategy of persuasion through the ideological transference of responsibility (Faria & Linhares, 1993) since the opinion given by most of the interviewees tries to convince through a generalized speech on behalf of the entire population of the municipality. The lack of employment is such in the city that T14 states that his only professional hope if he no longer comes to work on campus, is to seek an opportunity in Belo Horizonte. Therefore, during the observation, it was noted that getting a job within the university guarantees a status in the city. Employees are not exempt from using institutional symbols, such as brooches, shirts, caps, bags, and other artifacts (Field Diary, 04/05/2021).

The third and last discursive character found was the outsourced company, which intermediates the hiring procedures. Outsourced employees were asked about the company's representation in their lives immediately following the campus representation question. It was possible to observe the change in the countenance of some interviewees. While some showed disinterest, others became more serious, contrasting wildly with the cheerful countenance and brightness in the look observed in the previous question.

(1) I do not know **anyone** from the company yet; my contract was only for Whats, and during the pandemic yet, **without any contact**. So I really **cannot** speak. [...] Very **cold**. And an unequal relationship of being a job title, a job post. (T8)

Many employees need to learn more about the company they are hired. The relationship with the company is considered "cold," something that not even outsourced companies are aware of. Employee T13 defines the company: "I do not know **anything about** the company, but at least this: they are **nice** to me. [...] they **pay my salary**. That is all." The lack of bond in such a statement refers to the need for belonging and professional identification with the organization that hires you. Similarly, during the interview, T15 even stated that if he needed to go to the company, he would have to look for the address, as he could not even tell his location. According to her, the company "is **just an intermediary**," making it clear that its link is more robust with the university itself.

## Subjective professional trajectory

The choices made at the expense of others and the paths taken are crucial to understanding identity. Understanding the professional trajectories of outsourced subjects is imperative for analyzing their identities since individuals attribute a small amount of each life experience to their characteristics, configuring and reconfiguring their identities continuously (Dubar, 2005). In this work, we seek to group the movements the interviewees demonstrated together, aiming at a generalization.

(2) They took it and invited me, and I was in that **pool hall**: "What now? Do I go there to university? It is going to be cool, but it is only going to be two months. " Because in the COMPANY, it was a guaranteed thing. [...] However, I said, "**I will opt for CEDAF** because I believe that there for me it will **open the doors**." (T7)

The first aspect being observed is subjectivity facing other market employment options. In the interviews, it was possible to perceive that the quality of life, leveraged by the opportunity to work close to home, is preponderant in the subjective choice of outsourced employees concerning work. As in statement 2, in the Field Diary of June 17, 2021, a third party noted a casual conversation in which he reported receiving another job offer in an area of interest. However, the calm, the proximity to home, and the possibility of new opportunities that the current job offered weighed more since the remuneration would be equivalent in both options.

Employee T11 reported that he no longer receives a higher salary to be closer to his son, which brought harmony to his personal and professional life. In addition to being close to the family, T11, T10, and T5 expressed that they can work out, such as walking and running, after work hours, using the campus space. Reconciliation and family harmony were also present in the discourse of some women who are mothers, such as T1, T8, and T12, presenting professional trajectories shaped by the creation of children or their proximity. Thus, the decision process in the professional trajectory of individuals involves emotional factors, not counting only the financial aspect.

(3) I worked all my life in commerce. I worked Saturday, Sunday, and holiday, so it was a great opportunity for me. As **much as** we are outsourced, many people earn the same salary but need to take the bus and go to Belo Horizonte, Betim. (T1)

It is interesting to highlight the lexical selection in utterance 3, in which T1 uses the expression "more than" to refer to her work as an outsourcer. This choice of words suggests that outsourcing has few financial advantages, especially when compared to campus staff. Out-of-town work relies on the time expenditures brought about by the need for transportation, making employees see the simple fact of working in the city as an essential criterion of job selection.

## Similarities and differences between third parties and servers

Considering the relational aspect in the construction of identities, it was essential to identify the main similarities and differences between the effective servers and outsourced employees in the execution of the work to verify the possible existence of discrimination, some bureaucratic characteristics, and the identity configuration of outsourced employees. Three aspects were found: first, the work performed by

outsourced and effective workers; second, the differences in treatment; and third, the differences between the rights and duties of civil servants and employees.

The differentiation in the execution of the work was perceived only for the positions of office boy and receptionist, who work directly with effective employees of the administrative staff, mainly due to the lack of commitment of the staff to the work and the shortage of servants, which requires an effort of the entire team. Employee T13 states that there is an extra "overload" of outsourced workers. On the other hand, T15 attributes this burden to the lack of staff at UFV/CAF, an institutional need. In the same vein, T6 believes that it carries out more activities for the "greater good" to ensure the proper functioning of the institution.

Regarding the second aspect, which deals with differentiation in treatment, it was noted that most employees feel effective, although they need to be more effective. T5, for example, says it feels "the **same thing as** being effective." This fact is worrying, as it can constitute an ambiguity in their identities, that is, they wish to be effective and are treated as well as the effective ones; however, they are outsourced, which was also identified by Brito *et al.* (2012): In other words, the relationship can be characterized by the ambiguity of real and virtual identities (Dubar, 2005).

Still on the treatment, T15 states it is "very well treated. [...] I also believe that I treat them very well; even if I do not, I can be fired." The discourse of T15 implies a feeling of apprehension to which the employee is submitted, considering that some effective servants can define her professional destiny through a kind of informal hierarchy between classes (Barbosa, 2010; Costa, 2017). Employees T10 and T11 state that they are well treated because they know how to be humble and do not give "room to speak," showing a kind of submission to which employees put themselves, which refers to the disciplinary coercion established by outsourcing (Costa, 2007; Druck, 1999). The clear idea is that the treatment received is due to the employee's behavior. However, implicitly, there is also the idea that the differentiated treatment is due to the condition of outsourced. T10 uses the expression "know our place," implicitly demonstrating that he understands his position as submissive to servants.

Regarding the last aspect of rights and duties, it was possible to perceive that outsourced employees do not know about them or where to find them. The reading of the notice and the contract turned more to the search for the necessary qualifications to be hired, and many considered the documents with a language difficult to understand. Employee T8 uses the artifice of irony when she states: "To be honest, I think we have only duties. The rights have not yet been filed. The duties I know. Now the rights I **do not know**."

Regarding the effective servers, T8 claims that "the rights I know everyone. The duties I know and she still needs to be fulfilled." Through this comparative discourse, it is possible to understand how the employee puts herself in an underprivileged situation of power.

(4) The question of rights and duties is only a certain **freedom** of choice. Actually, he books the vacation that month that would be **good for him**. As for the outsourced, the company determines the date that is **good for it**. (T10)

Most outsourcers, such as T16, who states that "just working is too good, I thank our God for that", do not care about the differences in existing rights and duties, thanking God for the simple fact that they are employed (Costa, 2007). Employee T10 states in statement 4 that the workforce has the "**freedom**" to schedule their vacation according to their needs, while the outsourced has their vacation determined by the period that is good for the company. The lexical selection by the term "freedom" suggests that the outsourced feels trapped in the face of differences in rights and duties.

However, even if there is an awareness that they are from a different category of work than the workforce, outsourced workers often prove to be unfair and discriminated against with such differentiations, which leads to an identity of exclusion (Dubar, 2005; Brito *et al.*, 2012). Employee T4, for example, points out that she is "**sad**" and "**shaken**" in cases of recess in which servers have an optional day-off and outsourced workers need to work, showing themselves to be emotionally unstructured in the face of these situations. Injustice is also perceived by T13, as it uses the "**devalued**" and "**humiliated**" lexical selections, highlighting how inferior she feels. The lack of recognition also makes employees feel excluded from the institution. T8 states the following: "I think the biggest problem is you not being seen. It **hurts!**"

[...] when people praise, thank, the name of the people does not appear, never appeared". Faced with the lexical selection "**hurts**", the hurt of the outsourced company is noted for not having their work praised. Lara et al. (2020) perceived the invisibility of outsourced workers, making the statement meet their findings.

## Bureaucratic characteristics

The bureaucratic characteristics are present in the daily work routine of outsourced workers; in how the functions of employees are determined; and in the work evaluation process conducted by the employees who act as inspectors. Regarding the work routine, T8 states that it "performs much beyond what is foreseen" in the tender protocol. On the other hand, T13 states that it started to perform more functions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, inferring that it is due to the fact that the servers do not act the way they should because they are in remote work. In addition, with the physical absence of permanent servants who supervise the work of outsourced workers, inspection is compromised since, according to Marinho *et al.* (2018), the inspection must be done *on-site*. These and other reports, such as statement 5, described vehemently during the interviews, show that the work exceeds what they are paid to do.

(5) **We do a lot more. So much more.** [...] Honestly, I don't even think about it much; otherwise it gives you a small quantity of **sadness**, you know? Really what I do, and if I do **too much**, I do it for my taste and my **affection** for the campus and the **people** who work with me. (T15)

Although the speeches sound positive, in which the outsourced perform extra functions willingly, it is possible to implicitly perceive fear in the face of the risk of dismissal. For example, T3 says, "you either work, or you get fired because you have 200 people wanting to be in your shoes." In this same sense, T8 reproduces statements he heard throughout his career at the university, using interdiscursive relationships that reinforce his ideas. She states that the outsourced "cannot fail, cannot leave it until tomorrow", making it clear that this idea comes from an institutionalized fear due to the high number of resumes sent. The imminent risk of dismissal may tacitly coerce them to go beyond the functions of the contract.

Regarding the second bureaucratic characteristic, the determination of functions, most of the interviewees showed a perception similar to that presented by T9, who states that "the company does not participate directly [...]. It just does the bureaucratic part, let's say, of the payments and labor. It doesn't involve the question of what the functions are like, what is being done." Therefore, as the roles are determined by the inspectors or the heads of the sectors, the outsourced see the staff as their superior heads, although this link does not exist officially. It is possible to notice that the interviewees use the personal pronoun "mine" attributed to the heads of the university sectors as if they were their own, or they are confused about it. As there is a perception of a leadership relationship between the workforce and outsourced workers, it ends up institutionalizing the informal hierarchy between the categories of work (Barbosa, 2010; Costa, 2017).

In addition, the relationships are permeated with personality since there is reciprocity of this treatment by the servants who supervise and manage the outsourced contracts. Employee T4 states that the feeling towards the servers is "Reciprocal. [...] They do, and we do, **giving back**." Similarly, T10 reports that she seeks to contribute to "**her**" leadership since she tries to "**facilitate**" the work so as not to "**burden**" outsourced workers. Due to the attitudes of the effective servants, the employees feel gratitude and build a sense of retribution, marking a possible interdiscursive relationship with the religious-Christian discourse and going beyond the meanings attributed to the bureaucratic professional relationship. Thus, it is noted that although there are well-defined rules, they are not followed to the letter in practice, characterizing personalism, which, according to Ramos (2008), is one of the characteristics of the hybrid rational and patrimonialist model of the Brazilian bureaucracy.

Finally, evaluation, the third and last bureaucratic feature, was perceived by most employees as uninterrupted, implying that they feel obliged to constantly provide good service. Outsourced T11 reports that he feels evaluated "by everyone", claiming that "we are always being watched". In a similar vein,

employee T4 states that people who perform a good job are "well regarded" in the corridors of UFV/CAF, that is, they have a prestigious position within the university. However, this form of tacit evaluation carried out by all suggests that there is no institutionalized way of monitoring outsourced work. In addition, it reveals an interdiscourse with the Toyotist ideals, in which "each one tends to become a supervisor of the other", maintaining the control of individuals in the organization (Alves, 2000, p. 12).

## Insecurities

One aspect was unanimous in the perception of employees: professional insecurity. Such insecurity comes from the short duration of the contracts, which are renewed every 12 months, for a maximum of 60 months; and also from the history of companies that abandoned the contract at UFV/CAF, failing to pay the due labor terminations. In the Field Diary, on 05/12, it was noted that the employees of one of the contracts were in turmoil in the face of the delay in the payment of salary by one day. The track record is so traumatic that just one day was enough to cause chaos among the group.

Among the main characteristics attributed to the period of termination of a contract, the employee T10 considers it as "heavy" and "negative", and T13 defines it as "distressing" and "scary". The explicit feelings give us the idea of how events happen suddenly, causing them excessive fear. This corroborates the studies by Costa (2017), who notes how the disappearance of outsourced companies without proper payments causes a change in the behavior and life of outsourced companies, who are constantly afraid. The psychological shock can also be illustrated by the following statement:

(6) That isn't very good. That's **terrible**. The psychological is very **shaken**. [...] It's a **tense** moment, the head gets **confused**, we get **worried**. It hinders our productivity in these times, because it is very difficult for you to work worried about whether or not you will continue there in that job. Well, it was a **trigger**, I'm **anxious**. (T15)

Professional insecurity is also reflected in the daily lives of outsourced employees, who are unable to carry out adequate life planning due to the financial instability that is created, with the constant feeling that they can be fired at any time. It is not possible to make plans and life is restricted to family financial priorities, according to T1, who says that he is "afraid" even of making a commitment to "travel". Thus, the instability is extended from the professional environment to the entire personal life of the outsourced, taking root in their identities.

## Final considerations

The main contribution of this study is to understand the elements that permeate the lives of outsourced employees of UFV/CAF, taking into account the bureaucratic characteristics of public administration. The limitation of the duration of contracts is determinant in the identity of outsourced employees, which proved to be full of the feeling of professional and personal insecurity, in addition to the identity of exclusion in front of the staff with whom they work.

The identity of the outsourced subjects was permeated by elements that bring the discursive characters of the UFV – Florestal campus, Florestal's municipality, and the outsourced company as striking in their lives. Despite having the campus as a refuge, outsourcers go through situations of differentiation with effective servers that cause them a feeling of inferiority. In the treatment received, the feeling of injustice was present and the rights and duties, which many employees are unaware of, have a clear differentiation, reflecting the identity of exclusion brought by some outsourcers. It was also possible to perceive that, even in the face of difficulties, university work is seen as a positive milestone in their trajectories, since, comparatively, previous jobs did not have qualities currently evidenced by employees. The characteristics focus more on the quality of life: tranquility in the execution of work, proximity to home, greater time with the family, among others.

The last identity characteristic of employees is the bureaucracy that shapes their activities, present in the functions performed, in the determination of functions and in the evaluation process. The functions are

determined by the chiefs or inspectors, which leads to an informal hierarchy. Most outsourcers reported that they perform much more than the functions provided for in the contract, which may occur due to the constant fear of dismissal, intensified by job insecurity. Finally, there is also a fear institutionalized by the feeling of always being evaluated, an evaluation that is little instrumentalized, performed only tacitly.

It is suggested to fill gaps found in this work for future research. Thus, a first direction is the study of the identities of contractors at federal universities, focusing the interviews on only one type of position. This could be broken down into two surveys: one focused on understanding the identity of those who have administrative functions, exploring the internal knowledge that these employees have about labor outsourcing contracts; and another carried out with those who work more distant from management, as is the case of gardeners positions, for example. Thus, a comparison could be made between the identity configurations of people who work in different outsourced functions within the same institution.

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