


## Identity, professional identity and teacher identity: Theoretical-conceptual notes

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### ABSTRACT

The categories of identity, professional identity, and professional teaching identity have historically been conceptualized from the perspectives of scholars of different nationalities, in specific approaches, and in various areas of knowledge. In view of the polysemy of the term "identity", it is necessary to situate the concepts in their various theoretical approaches in order to obtain a real meaning of what is meant when using it in academic studies and research. In the same way, the terms "professional identity" and "professional teaching identity", because they derive and are composed of and with the former, deserve the same treatment because they acquire different approaches in different theoretical contexts. Taking as a theoretical basis the productions of several scholars, in their studies on identity, professional identity and teacher identity – although the three terms have not been addressed by all of them – this article aims, based on a bibliographic review, to briefly discuss theoretical-conceptual notes of such categories. It is expected to subsidize researchers and scholars of the themes, with clues and references of exponent authors from different areas of knowledge and to achieve a greater understanding of these terms.

**Keywords:** Identity, Professional identity, Teaching professional identity, Teacher identity.

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## INTRODUCTION

The categories of identity, professional identity, and teacher identity have been historically conceptualized from the perspectives of scholars of different nationalities, in specific approaches, and in various areas of knowledge.

The studies of Claude Dubar (2005; 2006; 2012), a French sociologist, in the Sociology of Professions; Stuart Hall (2006), British-Jamaican sociologist, in British Cultural Studies; Anthony Giddens (2002), British sociologist, in Structuration Theory; Zygmunt Bauman (2001; 2005; 2007; 2009), Polish sociologist and philosopher, in the Critique of Postmodernity; Antônio da Costa Ciampa (1987), Brazilian psychologist in Social Psychology; Antônio Sampaio da Nóvoa (1999; 2007; 2009; 2019), Portuguese educator in the Science of Education, among many others.

In view of the polysemy of the term identity, it is necessary to situate the concepts, in their various theoretical approaches, in order to obtain a real meaning of what is meant when using it in academic studies and research. In the same way, the terms professional identity and professional identity of teachers, because they derive and are composed of and with the former, deserve the same treatment, as they acquire different approaches in different theoretical contexts.

It is important to note that, although the terms "definition" and "concept" are often used as synonyms by common sense, there is a considerable difference in their meanings. While the definition represents a more objective and direct explanation, usually found in dictionaries, representing, therefore, the meaning of something, the concept is something conceived by someone's thought, and may vary from person to person, depending on the area of knowledge addressed and the historical, social and theoretical context employed.

Taking as a theoretical basis the productions of several scholars, in their studies on identity, professional identity and teacher identity – although the three terms have not been addressed by all of them – this article aims, based on a bibliographic review, to briefly discuss theoretical-conceptual notes of such categories. It is expected to subsidize researchers and scholars of the themes, with clues and references of exponent authors from different areas of knowledge and to achieve a greater understanding of these terms.

## IDENTITY, PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF TEACHERS: AS CONCEPTS IDENTITY

Few terms are more polysemic and broad than "identity." In 37 lines, the Houaiss dictionary presents such broad and diverse meanings, such as "state of what does not change, of what always stays the same", or "awareness of the persistence of one's own personality" or even "set of



characteristics or circumstances that distinguish a person or a thing" (Houaiss and Villar, 2019, p. 423).

According to Campos (2023, p.1),

To pinch from these senses the meanings more related to human relations also does not reduce their polysemy appreciably. Much of what we do in our lives – from the occupation we perform to the kind of habits we entertain, from our political views to our appearance – helps shape who we are, our identity, therefore. In short, "identity" is such a broad concept that, at the limit, it can encompass our entire existence, our personality, collective affinities, public image, etc.

In his study, Gomes (2018, p.44) presents several concepts of identity in different areas of knowledge. Starting from the etymology of the word to the most recent studies, the author points out that it does not make sense to speak of identity in the singular, but of identities in the plural and dynamic identities, "[...], because identity (s) is/are an element(s) of mediation between subjects and the contexts of their lives, revealing, therefore, their instability caused to a large extent by the rapid transformations in society in general".

Paixão (2009) clarifies that identity comes from the term of Latin origin, formed from "*iden*" (meaning "the same") and the suffix "*-tate*" (indicator of a state or quality). The etymology of this word places it as a qualifier of what is identical or the same being an identifier of something that remains. Thus, from the etymological point of view, from the Latin *identitate*, identity means the quality of that which is identical; a set of a person's own characteristics, which is considered exclusive to him and, consequently, taken into account when he needs to be recognized; a person's awareness of himself.

In philosophical terms, the same author defines identity as the quality through which one or more objects of thought possess equal properties, even if they are distinctly designated. Generalizing, philosophically for Paixão (2009), identity translates the coincidence of a substance with itself, and the first logical principle of thought is the principle of identity, which comprises the meaning of the supreme law of being (metaphysical principle) and that of the supreme law of thought (logical principle).

According to Hobold and André (2008, p.5),

The situations experienced throughout the personal trajectory, through social relations and personal meanings, constitute identity. These situations that permeate personal experiences construct a person's "subjective self" and, at the same time, their intrapsychological self. Identity can be exemplified as a personal framework, that is, the reservoir of experiences that, little by little, the human being constitutes through social relations.

Thinking from the Sociology of Professions, Dubar (2005, p. 136) understands identity as "[...] the result, at once stable and provisional, individual and collective, subjective and objective,



biographical and structural, of the various processes of socialization that, together, construct individuals and define institutions".

Thus, Dubar (2005) defines identity as a product of socialization, emphasizing relational and biographical processes and suggests that identity is constructed through social interactions and personal experiences throughout life. It introduces the idea of "identity for the other" and "identity for oneself", highlighting the tension between how we are perceived by others and how we perceive ourselves. This duality is crucial to understanding identity construction, since identity is constantly negotiated between these two perspectives.

Thus, a construct can be affirmed that there is no defined and static identity (or identities), whether social or professional identity.

This assertion is corroborated by Ciampa (1987) when he proposes that identity is a process of continuous metamorphosis, resulting from the interaction between personal history, social context and individual projects. Thus, for Social Psychology, in the studies of Ciampa (1987), identities are the result of a phenomenon, a dynamic and constantly changing construction that manifests itself through characters, cultural roles played by individuals.

In Ciampa's (2001) conception of identity, we actually have several identities that are used separately at different times. However, the person is a totality, and in those moments what happens is the manifestation of a part of unity. But it is important to consider that even with different identities and constant changes (metamorphosis), our identity is a totality (Albuquerque and Gonçalves, 2020, p. 4).

Based on the Structuration Theory and focusing on the reflexivity of modernity, Giddens (2002) enriches the concept of identity metamorphosis by suggesting that identity is a reflexive project, shaped by social interactions and cultural influences, in which individuals constantly reevaluate and construct their identities in response to social changes. Giddens (2002) also points out that as a continuous process, identity is constantly influenced by social institutions such as family, education and work and points to globalization as a factor that complicates identity construction by exposing individuals to multiple cultural influences.

Still in this vein, specifically in British Cultural Studies, Hall (2006) states that identities are formed and transformed by belonging to various cultures (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious and national). It also evidences a structural and transformative change in modern society from the end of the twentieth century, in which "this change fragmented the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nationality, which in the past had provided us with a solid location as social individuals" (Hall, 2006, p.11). The British-Jamaican sociologist emphasizes that globalization and cultural changes fragment identities, leading to an "identity crisis," describing the postmodern subject as multifaceted and ever-changing, with identities that are continually constructed and reconstructed in different contexts.



In this sense, for Hall (2006, p.12), identity,

It bridges the space between the "inside" and the "outside" – between the personal world and the public world. The fact that we project onto "ourselves" these cultural identities, while at the same time internalizing subjectives with the objective places we occupy in the social and cultural world.

Giddens (2002), in making an analysis of modernity and its relations with the construction of identity, also points out that currently the globalizing tendencies of modern institutions are accompanied by a transformation of daily social life, with profound implications for personal activities. In this way, the "I" becomes a "reflexive project", sustained by a narrative of identity that can be revised.

This time, Bauman (2005) approaches the concept of identity in contemporary society from the so-called "liquid modernity", a state in which identities are fluid and unstable, precarious and subject to even more constant changes. It highlights that identity in liquid modernity is a continuous invention, the result of the need to adapt to an environment in constant transformation. This view contrasts with more static conceptions of identity, suggesting that in liquid modernity, identity is an even more unfinished project. For Bauman (2001), as we are faced with the uncertainties and insecurities of liquid modernity, our social, cultural, professional, religious and sexual identities undergo a continuous process of transformation, ranging from the perennial to the transitory, with all the anxieties that such a situation raises. Being on the move is no longer a choice, but an indispensable requirement.

The "crisis of identities" is addressed by Dubar (2006) in a more in-depth analysis in his work "The Crisis of Identities: The Interpretation of a Mutation", in which he "proposes an analysis of the relations between the crisis of modernity and the crisis of identities, crises that are not separate and that devalue the communitarian forms of social insertion, without being able to impose new corporate forms" (Albuquerque and Gonçalves, 2020, p.7).

Albuquerque and Gonçalves (2020), when studying the work of Dubar (2006), state that,

[...] The crisis of modernity is also a crisis of personal identities, being a consequence of the transformations that have occurred in three important domains of social life: mutation of gender relations and profound changes in family relations; changes in the world of work and in jobs and, consequently, in training and schooling; mutation in the nation-state and its institutions, which led to changes in legitimacy and representative democracy (Albuquerque and Gonçalves, 2020, p.7).

Although each scholar presents the category of identity in specific perspectives dictated by the context and by different areas of knowledge, points of convergence are evident in their theories. There is an emphasis on the dynamic nature and construct process of identities as a result of social interactions and personal experiences. On the other hand, from modernity and postmodernity, there is



an identity crisis, a fluidity and fragmentation of identities, giving them an instability, based on the influences of social institutions and culture, bringing a need for constant renegotiation of identity in response to social changes.

Agreeing with Dubar (2005, p.13), in which "human identity is not given in the act of birth; it is built in childhood and must always be rebuilt throughout life" and that it is a socially constructed and simultaneously unfinished process, the ideas of the cited authors rest on the same assertion. The individual is socialized in his trajectory through the world, incorporating norms and values, principles and behaviors that ultimately allow him to be congruent with the inherited identity matrix (the result of the primary socialization process) and that simultaneously facilitate his social integration (Santos, p.128). "Thus, identity is a process of permanent change that occurs from birth to the end of life, being permeated by social and work relations" (Hobold and André, 2008, p.5).

## PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

In order to conceptualize "professional identity", it is first necessary to define what is meant by "profession". According to Dubar and Tripier (1998), the term profession can have four meanings or four points of view: (i) the profession as a declaration – professional identity; (ii) the profession as a job – professional classification; (iii) the profession as an occupation – professional specialization; and (iv) the profession as a function – professional position.

Based on the authors' sense or point of view of professional identity as a "declaration of a profession", in the Sociology of Work and in the Sociology of Professions, it is studied as a particular set of professional representation and is linked to professions and work situations (Hosson et. al., 2015).

Because it is a continuous and ascending process, it begins in childhood, when the child dreams of exercising a certain profession – whether by admiring it, being interested in it or by family influences – and it is a self-evolving process. "[...] This identity represents a consistent mechanism of personal reconstruction, resulting from autobiographical trajectories, professional aspirations, and continuous self-reflection on professional practice" (Silva, Machado, and Moreira, 2020, p. 2).

Thus, Silva, Machado and Moreira (2020), when studying the works of several sociologists dedicated to the theme, define professional identity as

the mechanism of professional self-perception that seeks to capture a collective sense at work. The concept can be explained in terms of a person's relationships with others, resulting from the processes of socialization and rhetoric in a given context. From the study of personal identities, the understanding of professional identity derives from the sociology of professions and implies the definition of the place that is occupied by an individual based on their relationships in the work environment (Silva; Axe; Moreira, 2020, p. 1).



For the authors, " professional identity is the concept that describes people within their respective occupational contexts, marking not only their engagement in the profession, but also their investment in the construction of their professional trajectories" (Silva, Machado and Moreira, 2020, p. 1).

Silva, Machado and Moreira, (2020, p.12) conclude that professional identity overcomes barriers and scenarios of action, involves motivation, social identification, socialization and the worker's own subjectivity, which is projected in the aspirations and interpretations that he develops throughout his professional career.

On the other hand, Dubar (2005) argues that identity forms are constituted and/or reconstituted by social relations in the family, school and work spheres. Thus, despite the numerous sociologists who focus on this concept (Dubar, 1997; 1998; 2005; 2012; Slay & Smith, 2011; Amiel, 2017; Best & Williams, 2019, among others), it was privileged within the limits of this article to address only Dubar's studies, in which for the constitution of personal and social identity, the professional dimension acquires singular importance.

Work conditions the construction of social identities. Because it undergoes changes, work forces subjects to make delicate identity transformations in order to keep up with the evolution of work and employment. Dubar studies the constitution of identity forms, derived from social and work relations, after agreements between subjectivity and objectivity (Dubar, 2005).

For the same author, professional identity goes through moments of deconstruction and reconstruction, in certain particular moments of the individual's life, through remarkable facts as well as through professional situations that directly affect the individual.

Instead of the term identity, Dubar (2005, p.156) preferentially uses the expression "identity forms" in order to indicate that these are forms assumed by language that we can find in other fields and that refer to visions of oneself and others, of oneself by others, and also of others for oneself. They are "assigned categories" (identities for the other) and "constructed identities" (identity for oneself).

In order to understand the movement of the identity constitution, in addition to the involvement of personal aspects arising from life history, as well as from the social relations produced in the work context, it is necessary to know some relevant aspects of the relationship between mode of production and capital.

His theory on the forms of constitution of professional identities is based on research carried out by him (Dubar, 1997) in six large French companies in the process of modernization, over a period of 20 years (1960 to 1980). The research showed that companies demanded from employees a new form of relationship and commitment to the professional activity they performed. Three areas were explored: the "world lived at work"; the socio-professional trajectory of workers, especially





employment movements; and the relationship of employees with training, in particular, the way they learned the work they did (Dubar, 2005).

In this study, Dubar showed the following forms of identity: "identity outside of work"; "mobilized identity"; "identity of the trade"; and "mobility/flexible identity", as pointed out by Hobold and André (2008).

Alves et al. (2007), when studying the same works of Dubar (1997; 2005) affirm that the identity structuring is formed from the articulation of the identity processes that unfold in the multiple relationships in life, which are heterogeneous, inseparable, complementary or contradictory.

In this dynamic, biographical processes are considered – identity for oneself (what the individual says about himself, what he thinks he is, or would like to be), and relational processes – identity for another (who the other says I am, the identity that the other attributes to me). In the articulation of these processes, there is the attribution of roles by the other, the internalization that is the acceptance and experience of the role and the incorporation, a process by which this role becomes part of the individual's social-professional identity (Alves *et. al.*, 2007, p.273 – bold added).

The socially constructed identity undergoes alterations by the identity negotiations of the identity conferred by the other and the identity constructed for oneself. And, as Dubar (2005) points out, work constitutes a space for the occurrence of these identity negotiations, which will give rise to a structure of professional identity.

Thus,

Professional identity results from relationships and interactions at work, based on varied collective representations, building actors in the social, institutional or business system. Labor relations are based on the struggle for power in a context of unequal access, so we will have different typical identities in the exercise of the profession (Alves *et. al.*, 2007, p.273).

For Dubar (2005, p. 135), "identity for oneself and identity for the other are at the same time inseparable and problematically linked. Inseparable, since identity for oneself is correlated to the Other and to its recognition: I never know who I am except through the eyes of the Other."

Professional identity constantly undergoes moments of construction and deconstruction, resulting from the social, political and economic context, "[...] in certain particular moments of the individual's life, through remarkable facts as well as through professional situations that directly affect his person" (Hobold and André, 2008, p.5).

Dubar (1997) highlights four identities constituted in action at work: (i) Identity of "distancing": combines individual preferences with oppositional strategies; (ii) "Fusional" identity: combines collective preferences with alliance strategies; (iii) "Negotiatory" identity: combines polarization in the group with opposition strategies; (iv) "Affinitarian" identity: combines individual preferences with alliance strategies.





Comparing the editions of the book published in 2005 and the first edition in 1997, Hobold and André (2008) claim that the names previously given by Dubar were minimally changed. These are conceptualizations that the sociological team has unfolded from Sainsaulieu's studies<sup>5</sup> and that he enunciates them as follows:

- Stable identity threatened: work experiences and learning in the workplace are effectively valued by workers with stable identity threatened. They are individuals who assume the collective identity of the work group, and their discourse is always permeated by "we". The "subjective" self is greater than the "objective" self, that is, the inner will prevails to the detriment of the advances and innovations that surround the individual.
- Identity blocked: in this case there is a fusion of the individual with his or her profession. The repetitive and mechanical way of exercising the profession blocks him from innovations in the context of the labor market. He is an individual who is loyal to work standards, who considers his professional activity as unique and fundamental to the company. In the face of this fusion, there is the supremacy of objective transactions over subjective ones; The subject almost cancels itself out to the detriment of the profession and/or company.
- Identity responsible for their promotion: these are those people who are mobilized to progress professionally and perform their tasks with prominence and dedication. Everything they do is thinking about themselves and also about the company. The "I" is articulated with the "other", demonstrating a relationship of interdependence. "They know that if they invest in their work, they will reap the rewards of that commitment later on. They are the 'managers' who sometimes ignore each other, but who have in common an interest in management, leadership, and change in the organization" (DUBAR, 1997, p. 48).
- Autonomous and uncertain identity: this identity is also recognized as of the 'affinitarian' type. Affinities with other people and institutions are strongly valued as a way to maintain "networks" of contacts, aiming to facilitate entry into other jobs. This individual is significantly dedicated to their continuing education. In this case, the subjective transaction is what directs the objective transaction (Hobold and André, 2008, p. 7).

The authors conclude that the four forms of identity reconstructed by Dubar (1997, 1998, 2005), "[...] define the constitution of professional identity in labor relations. However, it should not be forgotten that biographical experiences, that is, life history, actively participate in these identity constitutions" (Hobold and André, 2008, p.7).

## TEACHING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

In view of the concepts of identity and professional identity - as a continuous and dynamic phenomenon, the teacher's identity is not an immutable or external datum that can be acquired, but is a process of construction of the subject, historically.

The teaching profession has its own specificities and is the subject of numerous academic studies. Although the activity of the teacher is often understood or experienced as a missionary vocation (Nacarato; Varani; Carvalho, 2011), Nóvoa (2009) points out that the characteristic of being a teacher is defined by his teaching professionalism, which is involved with several personal, experiential, experiential and contextual factors, but also with his initial and continuing education.

According to Albuquerque and Gonçalves (2020, p. 14),

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<sup>5</sup> Renaud Sainsaulieu (4 November 1935 – 26 July 2002) was a French sociologist specialising in the sociology of organisations



The teacher's identity is a process of construction of the subject and of the social and historical group, that is, it is a way that the teacher has to understand himself in a given context, subject to definitions and redefinitions in relation to others and to his professional group. The teaching profession emerges and develops in historical contexts and moments as a response to the needs that are posed by educational policies, by the Departments of Education of the States and Municipalities of the country, by the schools where they work and by society and its social, economic, political and cultural conditions, and in the processes of valorization and devaluation to which they are subjected.

From the studies of Dubar (2005), in the Sociology of Professions, it can be inferred that teacher identity refers to a set of "identity forms", which result from a variety of processes of socialization of teachers, in which transactions occur between an "identity for oneself" (which the subject attributes to himself in a tension between the real and the ideal) and an "attributed identity" (the "mandates" that others and culture attribute to the subject) (Garcia, 2010, p.1).

According to Rossi, Monteiro and Silva (2024, p.159),

[...] The process of identity construction is based on individual values, that is, on the conditions in which each one constructs their life history, on their way of being and being in the world, as well as on their representations, knowledge, anxieties, dilemmas, challenges, potentialities – in the sense in which it has in "being a teacher".

In this context, the teacher's identity can be understood as unique and at the same time diverse, that is, constituted by personal identity and professional identity, based on the social meanings of the profession, the reaffirmation of practices, and develops and adapts to the socio-political-historical context in which it is inserted.

Identity is constructed from the social meaning of the profession; the constant revision of the social meanings of the profession; of the revision of traditions. But also the reaffirmation of culturally consecrated practices that remain significant. Practices that resist innovation because they are pregnant with knowledge that is valid for the needs of reality. From the confrontation between theories and practices, from the systematic analysis of practices in the light of existing theories, from the construction of new theories. (Pimenta, 1999, p. 19).

On the other hand, Silva (2000) shows that the teacher's identity depends on his professional training, on the appropriation of experiences in the historical dynamics of the school, on the sense of belonging to the social group "teachers", on his experiences of socializing interactions with his peers in a given historical and social moment. Therefore, "being a teacher" goes beyond "being a teacher" in isolated moments of teaching. Being a teacher is a becoming, a *gradual and contextual continuum* (Pimenta, 1996).

Nóvoa (2009) also defends a joint construction of the profession, in which one only becomes a teacher through praxis, applying, in transformative practice in the classroom, all the theory learned in academic environments.



Thus, for Burchard *et. al.* (2020, p.18) Regarding the problem of the teacher's professional identity, the paths and mishaps throughout personal and professional life contribute to this construction, configuring itself as a process in constant movement, being continuous, changeable and unfinished, considering that, over the course of the career, the teacher is built and identifies with his profession. Citing Huberman (2000), the authors warn that "[...] The development of teacher identity is a complex process and not a series of events, which may occur naturally for some, and for others may be accompanied by moments of regression".

According to Dubar (2006; 2011), the contemporary world is experiencing a crisis of identities, and Arroyo (2000) points out that the human being becomes "human" to the extent that he establishes relationships with other human beings, taking into account the material conditions in which he lives. Thus, considering the teaching profession as differentiated, with a role of hope for transformation and progress of society, favoring solidarity, community living and respect between people, Gatti (2010) reports that in the current working conditions, in the school day-to-day with its enormous needs, as well as the social devaluation of the teaching work, the identity constitution of the teacher goes through the same crisis. What is verified in the reality of pedagogical practices is a phase marked by difficulties, uncertainties and absence of humanistic values, enabling feelings of insecurity, devaluation, anger, fear and sadness in teachers, which directly impacts their professional identity.

In this sense, it can be understood that the identity constructed by the teachers presents itself with a multiplicity of elements/aspects that intersect and interpret each other, permanently developed in a given historical-political-social context. Thus, the discussion about the teaching professional identity process presents itself as a context full of comings and goings, reflections that permeate the various dimensions that make up the human, be they affective, social, personal and professional dimensions, which evidences a vast exercise of teacher resignification in a multidimensional, gradual and, more than that, contextualized in a time and space of its own (DUBAR, 2005; DEWEY, 2010) (Rossi; Martin; Silva, 2024, p. 161).

In the same vein, Santos and Rodrigues (2010, p.17) conclude that

It is necessary to understand that the teacher's identity can be thought of not as a given, a property, a product, but as a dynamic and conflicting process, a space for the construction of ways of being and of being in the profession. Teacher training should seek relationships between the personal identity and the professional identity of the teacher, in this process, which are established with the students, with the families, with the educational institution, with the people with whom they live on a daily basis; In these relationships, the teacher constructs knowledge that constitutes the ideology that underlies his actions.

The teacher's identity is defined by the balance between personal and professional characteristics and is constituted in the social relationships that are established with the students, with the families, with the educational institution, in short, with the people with whom they live in their daily lives and in some way influence this construction. In this process, throughout their student and



professional careers, teachers construct knowledge and constitute the theoretical framework that underlies their actions (Nóvoa, 2001).

In summary, Nóvoa (2001) warns that in the teaching profession the identity process is constructed in a complex and diachronic way, dynamically, by accommodating innovations and assimilating changes that enable a psychosocial reformulation of each teacher, which leads them to feel and say they are teachers.

To be a teacher is to feel personal and professional, to decide and act according to life and action options, choices that, according to Nóvoa (1992), each teacher has to make, which intersect their way of being, with their way of teaching and reveal, in their way of teaching, their way of being, making it impossible to separate the professional self from the personal self. Each teacher has to do, which intersect their way of being, with their way of teaching and reveal, in their way of teaching, their way of being, making it impossible to separate the professional self from the personal self (Saboya, 2015, p.3).

Nóvoa (2019) also highlights the collective dimension of identity construction, since teachers see themselves as part of a professional community, whose shared norms and values shape their identities. Professional autonomy and critical reflection on the pedagogical decisions they make, as well as the necessary adaptations to the needs of learners, are also intrinsically linked to their professional teaching identity.

Emphasizing the relevance of initial and continuing education in the construction of their teaching identity, for Nóvoa (1999), training should be seen as a continuous process of professional development integrating theory and practice, allowing teachers to develop a deep and contextualized understanding of their profession. Also, the context in which teachers work, including educational policies, available resources and school culture, have a significant impact on the construction of teachers' professional identity.

In short, teacher identity is fundamental to the quality of education and the professional development of teachers, as teachers with a well-developed professional identity are better prepared to face the challenges of the classroom and promote quality teaching. A strong identity contributes to cohesion and a sense of belonging within the school community, which is essential for collaboration and continuous improvement of pedagogical practice. Thus, the recognition and appreciation of teachers' professional identity are crucial for their motivation and job satisfaction, helping to prevent *burnout* and promote a positive and productive work environment (Nóvoa, 2019).

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The concepts of identity addressed in this text, although they have been coined by several researchers, with different nationalities and backgrounds, in specific contexts and in different areas of knowledge, have in common their dynamics. It is an individual and at the same time collective construction; a dynamic and continuous process; They should be treated in the plural, "identities",



because they do not have a unique and immutable identity, given the concepts of professional identity, which are constructed at work, in the profession and in the exercise of work, in different contexts and by different influences.

Regarding the professional identity of teachers, it is evident that over time, several scholars have focused on the theme due to the relevance that teaching imposes on society. The teacher's actions and knowledge, their initial and continuing education, their interpersonal relationship with the entire school community, their pedagogical praxis - in which the theories learned are put into practice in the classroom, the social, economic, political context in which they live, all this influences their identity formation as a professional educator.

Studying the professional identity of teachers is crucial for several reasons that directly impact the quality of education and the professional development of educators, such as the improvement of pedagogical practice, stimulating innovation and creativity in teaching, the search for continuous training and professional development, adaptation to different educational contexts, whether curricular changes, technological or socio-cultural activities, professional engagement and the promotion of more inclusive and equitable educational practices, as well as their personal and professional well-being and satisfaction. Finally, studying and understanding the professional identity of teachers is fundamental for the improvement of education as a whole. By understanding and valuing this identity, it is possible to promote quality teaching, support the continuous development of teachers, and create a more inclusive and effective educational environment.

By way of conclusion, it is hoped that all the concepts discussed in this text can help researchers, educators, students and those interested in the subject with clues for a better understanding of the concepts of identity, professional identity and professional teacher identity, in addition to subsidizing them with various references to continue in the desired studies.



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