

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS  
IN BRAZIL AND BAHIA**

**ORGANIZAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS E AS AVALIAÇÕES EXTERNAS  
NO BRASIL E NA BAHIA**

**ORGANIZACIONES INTERNACIONALES Y EVALUACIONES EXTERNAS  
EN BRASIL Y BAHIA**

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**Abstract:**

This article presents results of a qualitative study on external evaluations proposed by international organizations, in addition to presenting the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) in Brazilian regions and seven Identity Territories in Bahia. Data collection involved analyzing documents and semi-structured interviews with elementary school teachers and coordinators. Results showed a increase in IDEB scores from 2007 to 2023 and that the evaluative culture is present in municipalities, and brazilian states, however, interviews revealed criticisms of these evaluations' effectiveness in reflecting actual learning, justifying the need for deeper reflection on the use and impact of external evaluations in education.

**Keywords:** external assessments, basic education development index, international organizations, territory of identity.

**Resumo:**

Este artigo apresenta resultados de uma pesquisa qualitativa sobre avaliações externas propostas pelas organizações internacionais, além de apresentar o Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica (IDEB) nas regiões brasileiras e em sete Territórios de Identidade da Bahia. A coleta de dados envolveu análise e entrevistas semiestruturadas com docentes e coordenadores do Ensino Fundamental. Os resultados mostraram um aumento no IDEB de 2007 a 2023 e que a cultura avaliativa está presente nos municípios e estados brasileiros, contudo, as entrevistas revelaram críticas à eficácia dessas avaliações em refletir a aprendizagem real, justificando uma reflexão mais profunda sobre o uso e impacto das avaliações externas na educação.

**Palavras-chave:** avaliações externas; índice de desenvolvimento da educação básica; organizações internacionais; território de identidade.

**Resumen:**

Este artículo presenta resultados de una investigación cualitativa sobre evaluaciones externas propuestas por organizaciones internacionales, además el Índice de Desarrollo de la Educación

Básica (IDEB) en regiones brasileñas y siete Territorios de Identidad en Bahía. La recolección de datos incluyó análisis de documentos y entrevistas semiestructuradas a docentes y coordinadores de escuelas primarias. Los resultados mostraron un aumento en las puntuaciones del IDEB de 2007 a 2023, y eso la cultura evaluativa está presente en los municipios y estados brasileños. Sin embargo, las entrevistas revelaron críticas sobre la eficacia de estas evaluaciones para reflejar el aprendizaje real, justificando una reflexión más profunda sobre el uso e impacto de las evaluaciones externas en la educación.

**Palabras clave:** evaluaciones externas; índice de desarrollo de la educación básica; organismos internacionales; territorio de identidad.

## Introduction

The word 'evaluate' comes from the Latin *a + valere*, which means to attribute value and merit to the object under study, whereas external evaluation, also called systemic or large-scale evaluation, is conceived, planned, elaborated, corrected, and has its results analyzed outside the school (Machado *et al.* 2022). This type of evaluation is fundamental for efficient education, since this measurement allows verification of whether pre-established objectives were achieved, with a view to the possible correction of distortions in the educational process. However, it is necessary to consider that the results obtained in school performance tests are not conclusive and should be used in conjunction with other instruments (Santos, 2019). Performance evaluations constitute central arguments of educational managerialism for defenders of neoliberalism and international agencies. As an example, we highlight the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO, which points out the need to build a culture of evaluation in school systems. According to this international agency, "[...] the need to evaluate the quality of educational processes in the classroom, teacher performance and the work of school administrators, among other aspects, is becoming increasingly important<sup>1</sup>" (UNESCO, 2019). These guidelines are part of a context of educational reforms that aim to meet the neoliberal managerial and technical-instrumental logic of education regulation.

In Brazil, in the 1990s, several political and economic reforms were proposed as a result of influences from supranational organizations following the Washington Consensus. A wave of neoliberal thought invaded the country and several actions and ideas in accordance with this thinking emerged in the field of education. According to Harvey (2005, p. 3), neoliberalism is

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<sup>1</sup> This citation, like all others in this text, was translated from Portuguese from the original works.

a theory about economic policy practices that asserts that human well-being can best be promoted through the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual freedom, free markets and free trade.

It was during this time that Brazil began to follow recommendations from international organizations to regulate its economy and redistribute its investments, proposing spending cuts in all areas, including education, but the impact was not limited to investments. The main objective of education in this neoliberal context became workforce training and the development of productive forces to serve market interests, to the detriment of citizenship education for the country's children and youth.

Considering these facts, in this article we present in the first part this brief introduction; in the second part we have some strategies used by the capitalist system to ensure the implementation of its neoliberal project for society, which has as one of its instruments in the area of education, external evaluations as a quality parameter, which are backed and endorsed by international organizations; in the third part, we present the methodological aspects used to conduct the research; in the fourth part, we demonstrate the data evidenced in the investigated context, based on IDEB results in seven (07) Identity Territories of Bahia<sup>2</sup>; and finally, we present the final considerations.

### **The role of international organizations in external evaluations**

Among the international organizations that have in their scope guidelines for educational issues, we can mention the World Bank (WB), with a focus on defining countries' macroeconomic policies; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO, which deals with issues involving the mitigation of cultural, social and educational inequalities in countries. This international agency brought together 15 Latin American countries in November 1994, under the coordination of the Regional Office of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC), with the aim of strengthening the evaluation culture in education, as part of a proposal of global capitalism (Guerrero, 2018); the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), responsible for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an evaluation system for 15-year-old

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students in 79 countries worldwide. Even though the focus of these organizations is not specifically education, they all have some type of relationship with educational processes, whether through project financing or recommendations that can become law for member countries.

For Lima (2022), international organizations have an important characteristic: the dissemination of a capitalist economic system throughout the global scenario that seeks to promote various changes, including the emphasis on competition and private investments in countries, deepening inequalities and establishing hierarchical standards for the development of nations. For these international organizations, the notion of development is linked to the privatization of public services and the participation of private companies in the economy based on a business and hierarchical logic that aims for efficiency in public services (Guerrero, 2018).

Education came to be treated as essential to contribute to economic development starting with Resolution 1515/1960 (Action Agreement for Economic Development of Less Economically Developed Nations), from the UN General Assembly, when it ceased to be seen as a right and came to be viewed with economic purposes, incorporating reforms in education systems, both in rich countries and in low-income ones. One of the main theoretical perspectives guiding the policies of these international organizations in the educational area is the theory of human capital, by Theodore Schultz, according to which, a type of capital is a fundamental element for development, because,

although it is obvious that people acquire useful abilities and knowledge, it is not obvious that these abilities and this knowledge are a form of capital, that this capital is, in substantial part, a product of deliberate investment [...] much faster than conventional (non-human) capital, and that its growth may very well be the most unique characteristic of the economic system (Schultz, 1973, p.31).

The author in question understands a country's development based on the valorization of knowledge, which, once acquired, becomes a determining factor for gaining social and financial prestige underlying the logic of the capitalist system. Thus, based on his theory, investing in workers is crucial for the advancement of companies or the system itself, which will directly impact the supply of more qualified labor for the job market. From this perspective, by becoming a quantifiable measure, knowledge is converted into a form of wealth production, so that training workers through education means increasing the capacity for wealth production and boosting the development of countries (Kelniar; Lopes; Pontili, 2013). Institutions such as the World Bank also highlight investment in education as a 'cornerstone' (Banco Mundial, 1992, p. 2), stating that education

expands the productive capacity of societies and their political, economic and scientific institutions and contributes to reducing poverty, adding value and efficiency to the work of the poor and mitigating the consequences of poverty on issues related to population, health and nutrition (Banco Mundial, 1992, p. 131).

We can note that this discourse includes expressions such as 'work efficiency' and 'productive capacity', which indicate the need for education to submit to the logic of capital. Furthermore, UNESCO, in its document titled "World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs", known as the Jomtien Declaration (1990), points out that

[...] basic education must be centered on acquisition and effective learning outcomes, and no longer exclusively on enrollment, attendance in established programs and fulfillment of requirements for obtaining a diploma. Active and participatory approaches are particularly valuable with regard to guaranteeing learning and enabling learners to fully exhaust their potential. Hence the need to define, in educational programs, the desirable levels of knowledge acquisition and implement performance evaluation systems (UNESCO, 1990, p. 2, our emphasis).

We emphasize that UNESCO is aligned with the OECD regarding external evaluations by advocating that, to improve their indicators, countries should adopt measures such as "[...] the implementation of a national curriculum and standardized evaluations, the demand for versatile professionals capable of taking on different grade levels, subjects and positions, distance learning and the progressive reduction of public investments in this area" (Soares, 2020, p. 10).

In the early 1980s, with the aim of coordinating countries' development efforts through the perspective of education for the labor market, these international organizations not only made recommendations to countries regarding investment in the State, but also initiated a logic that became known as the 'Evaluator State' (Schneider; Ribeiro, 2020). This State model emerged in a context of various reforms that were occurring at the international level in view of the severe crisis of capitalism between 1970 and 1980. During this period, the principles of neoliberalism gained prominence, focusing on the creation of a State that promoted competitiveness in the economy and sought to stimulate new social and economic arrangements, allowing the participation of different social groups in the configuration of the State. This contributed to opening space for the participation of Civil Society Organizations of Public Interest (OSCIP) and business groups in the provision of public services, whose state policy has been shaped by various characteristics:

the first of them, based on technical rationality (neotechnicism), is justified by the need for modernization, debureaucratization and combating the supposed inefficiency of the State. The second direction of the political-administrative measures undertaken by the State is justified by imperatives of a political nature and is grounded in neoliberal and neoconservative projects. In this direction, the privatization of the public education system is proposed. The third direction obeys imperatives 'of a philosophical and cultural nature (promoting community participation, adapting to the local context) and of a pedagogical nature (centering teaching on students and their specific characteristics' (Schneider; Ribeiro, 2020, p. 08).

Based on this neoliberal ideology, the State has the duty to establish and maintain an accountability model to identify possible social problems or provide conditions to evaluate services, establishing efficient standards. These control mechanisms are aligned with labor market demands and, to measure them, evaluations must be carried out which, through indicators, allow diagnosing the situation of education in that time frame, attesting to its evolution or not. Beyond diagnosis, the results can indicate possible areas for reducing public expenditures, or points where spending is inefficient (Schneider; Ribeiro, 2020; Machado et al., 2022).

It is necessary to observe that for this Evaluator State, the main focus does not lie in measuring subjective factors, such as values and citizenship, but rather in objective knowledge, both in teaching and in preparing students to become workers in the future. To this end, mechanisms of indicators and evaluations are established to provide diagnoses quickly, which can guide reforms in the public and administrative sphere.

International organizations play a fundamental role in this evaluation process, basing themselves on ideological points, such as Schultz's logic centered on human capital, previously mentioned. This vision advocates that education should be an investment to train workers and, therefore, the more efficient the educational diagnosis, the better the formulation of public policies will be. These organizations are also strongly linked to conducting large-scale evaluations, such as PISA, conducted by the OECD, which

[...] is an evaluation of an international comparative character that seeks information about the performance of basic education students. It has been applied at three-year intervals and its results aim to generate indicators about numerous aspects of the education systems of participating countries. From the analysis of these results, reports and recommendations are generated for countries with the purpose of 'contributing' to the evolution of education systems. The Program evaluates a sample of 15-year-old students from participating countries (Pereira, 2021, p. 8).

PISA is structured each year in the following knowledge domains: 'Reading (2000, 2009), Mathematics (2003, 2012), Sciences (2006), Electronic Reading and Problem Solving (in all cycles)', whose exams are conducted through "Test Booklets; Questionnaires; and

electronic tests, which aim to obtain data on academic performance, socioeconomic and cultural aspects of students and schools that participate in the Program" (Pereira, 2021, p. 9).

Therefore, it is important to observe that this evaluation seeks to measure the necessary knowledge to determine whether there is efficient and effective learning in the training of future workers or qualified professionals to maintain the system, according to the perspectives of international organizations, as well as the interest groups they represent. PISA, like other national external evaluations, is conducted by the State, which assumes responsibility for this diagnostic of evaluating students in the 15 and 16 age range and, through this function, it can verify whether the public service is aligned with the recommendations of international organizations, always aiming to improve the efficiency of educational processes. This is because, according to the perspective of these organizations, knowledgeable workers are fundamental for the country's development and, therefore, conducting evaluations to measure it is justified.

The official data recorded in the 2022 PISA, whose results were published on December 5, 2023, indicate that Brazil is below the OECD average, since among the 81 member countries that took the test in the curricular components of Portuguese Language, Mathematics and Sciences, it was evidenced that 73% of students are below level in Mathematics, with 93 points below average; 50% are below level in reading, with 66 points below average; while 55% were below level in Sciences, with 82 points below average. As an example, we present in Table 1 Brazil's results in relation to some countries, which are organized in alphabetical order, whose results are divided by area, and next to each score is the respective country's position in the ranking:

**Table 1** - Example of PISA Results in Brazil in relation to other countries.

Country	Position	Reading	Position	Mathematics	Position	Science
Brazil	52°	410	65°	379	62°	403
Canada	8°	507	9°	497	8°	515
South Korea	4°	515	6°	527	5°	528
United States	9°	504	34°	465	16°	499
Estonia	6°	511	7°	510	6°	526
Philippines	76°	347	76°	355	79°	356
Indonesia	71°	359	70°	366	67°	383
Ireland	2°	516	11°	492	12°	504
Japan	3°	516	5°	536	2°	547
Mexico	49°	415	57°	395	57°	410
Singapore	1°	543	1°	575	1°	561

Source: OCDE (2023).

We observe in Table 01 that the first places are held by developed countries that obtained better performance in PISA, namely: Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland, Estonia and Canada, which stood out in Mathematics. Brazil, however, ranked 65th out of a total of 81 countries that took the PISA evaluations in 2022. Regarding other areas, official data indicate that in reading, Brazil reached 52nd place; and in Sciences, it ranked 62nd. According to the OECD (2023), the socioeconomic factor is responsible for a 15% variation in performance evaluation, considering that learning conditions are fundamental for an evolution in results. Thus, students from schools in better infrastructure conditions and who have teachers with higher education degrees tend to have better results, directly impacting the reduction of dropout and repetition rates (Santos, 2019).

As a strategy, the implementation method of this policy involves aligning schools with normative devices of national scope, under the guidance of international agencies, in order to ensure that their educational purposes are followed by all teaching units. To this end, it controls everything from the mechanisms of educational policy formulation to the classroom, with the elaboration of didactic material for schools, census evaluation, accountability, quantitative goals, in addition to meritocratic mechanisms of political, cultural and economic domination, pointing out justifications that legitimize its position (Freitas, 2018).

The business reform of education (Idem) is inserted in this context. It is a worldwide movement demanded by this scenario and consolidated in the neoliberal phase as a reference for educational policy, mainly from international organizations, foundations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), business institutions and also academics who align with its theoretical and market-oriented assumptions.

In Brazil, large-scale evaluations have been carried out since the 1990s, when the Basic Education Evaluation System (Saeb) was implemented by the National Institute of Educational Research (Inep). Although over the years Saeb evaluations have served as a form of diagnosis for the elaboration of educational policies, many municipalities have complained about the results for not being represented as isolated units in the national evaluation. Because of this, starting in 2005, Saeb was restructured and came to be composed of two external evaluations: the National Basic Education Evaluation (Aneb) and the National School Performance Evaluation (Aneresc) which conducts census-based assessment and became popularly known as Prova Brasil (Brazil Test). With the joining of Saeb and Prova Brasil, the Basic Education Development Index (Ideb) emerged in 2007, which aimed to objectively measure the quality of basic education. Santos (2019) emphasizes that quality education is that through which the school must promote mastery of knowledge and the development of cognitive and affective

capacities indispensable to meeting students' individual and social needs. According to Felício (2011), it is necessary to be careful when addressing the issue of quality, because the term devoid of its political dimension enables the displacement to the school of terms from the business area such as 'efficiency', 'effectiveness' and the expression 'quality' itself, giving it an ideological character of the market. Understanding how the results of large-scale evaluations have served to diagnose possible problems in Brazilian education has been the object of several studies in Brazil, such as Santos (2019, p. 67):

Ideb associated teaching performance (proficiency in Portuguese Language and Mathematics) with approval/failure rates, highlighted two acute educational problems in national education and emphasized the need for political actions to resolve these, which are problems that impede the growth of Brazil's position in the ranking of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Starting in 2013, another evaluation was incorporated into Saeb, the National Literacy Assessment (ANA), which aims to measure literacy and alphabetization levels in Portuguese Language and Mathematics of 3rd year Elementary School students from public schools. These evaluations applied at all levels of education aim to measure the productivity of each school, stimulate competition between school units and hold them accountable for the quality of teaching. "This process transfers the State's responsibility for learning to schools and students, confirming the logic of the neoliberal minimal State" (Martins, 2019, p. 265). We observe that in this testing logic there is an emphasis on Portuguese Language and Mathematics, which leads to curricular narrowing, which reduces teaching practice to being based on teaching for the evaluations. In this context, the basic content, which should be only the starting point, ends up becoming the final objective of education, thus limiting students' learning and development potential. In this way, the evaluation process has as a parameter to rank schools or education networks, and

[...] contributes to classificatory and exclusionary practices, which evidence meritocratic ideas that often end up glorifying institutions, networks and regions to the detriment of others, which, instead of receiving greater pedagogical and financial support through specific policies, end up being marginalized, which ultimately further reaffirms social and educational inequality (Gomes, 2019, p.28).

It is worth emphasizing that representatives of private foundations and institutes have been present in the administrations of the Ministry of Education (MEC) and have used tactics to achieve their objectives, mainly linking basic education funding to the implementation of the competencies and skills of the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC) and to the results of external evaluations. This is verified in some normative setbacks highlighted by Vieira

(2022), such as the new Basic Education Development Fund (new Fundeb), established by Law No. 14,113 of December 20, 2020, and the Annual Student Value by Result-VAAR, corresponding to 2.5 percentage points of the budget if the networks manage to meet the goals of ‘improvements in management and learning with reduction of inequalities’ (Art. 5 III).

The VAAR-complementation, by rewarding municipalities with better results without considering the underlying socioeconomic inequalities, exemplifies a meritocratic approach that has the potential to deepen educational disparities. External evaluations play a central role in this system, which are used as criteria for resource distribution and as metrics to measure educational progress. Conditions such as the minimum participation of 80% of students in national exams and the reduction of inequalities measured by these tests reinforce the importance attributed to these evaluations in conducting public policies, in addition to the requirement of filling the position of school administrator by merit and performance, which underlines the meritocratic logic permeating even school management. We can perceive that funding is conditioned on the implementation of the educational policy imposed by MEC, which follows the dictates of international organizations and education businesspeople, when conditions are established in Art. 5 III and Art. 14 of the new Fundeb Law, so that the transfer of resources is made, namely:

The filling of the position of school administrator by merit and performance; the participation of at least 80% of students in national assessment exams; the reduction of socioeconomic and racial educational inequalities measured in national exams of the national basic education assessment system; the collaborative regime between State and Municipality; curricular frameworks aligned with the Common National Curriculum Base (Brasil, 2020).

We perceive an alignment with meritocracy and external evaluations. However, for an egalitarian education, ‘learning’ and ‘results’ should be decoupled, because in the way they are conducting the evaluations, the results of increase in IDEB do not always mean learning, since schools base their work on training for the tests, to the detriment of the main thing, which is knowledge and the real conditions in which access to it has unfolded.

## **Methodological aspects of the research**

This text presents an excerpt from a larger research project that had the general objective of analyzing the impacts of the Articulated Action Plan (PAR) on rural schools in Brazil and Bahia. However, we extracted from said research to use in this text only the data that deal with

external evaluations, according to one of the specific objectives, which is to verify whether the actions of PAR contributed to increasing Ideb in Brazil and Bahia, in the time frame from 2010 to 2023. This is qualitative research with an exploratory approach, which "allows the researcher to contemplate qualitative data in a systemic way, with an understanding or interpretation of the analyzed phenomenon" (Lösch; Rambo; Ferreira, 2023, p.3).

PAR is part of the Goals Plan All for Education Commitment, a strategic program of the Education Development Plan - PDE, established by Decree 6,094 of April 24, 2007, during the Lula government, which inaugurated a new collaborative regime, reconciling the actions of federated entities without harming their autonomy, primarily involving political decision, technical action and meeting educational demand, aiming at the improvement of educational indicators, some of these being focused on student performance evaluations (Cardoso; Santos; Santos, 2022). PAR is composed of four dimensions: 1 – Educational management; 2 – Training of education professionals; 3 – Pedagogical practices and evaluation; 4 – Physical infrastructure and pedagogical resources. All of them have several indicators with resource investment for the improvement of the quality of education (Cardoso; Santos; Santos, 2022). Each PAR cycle lasts four years, and the 1st cycle began in 2007, ending in 2010. Therefore, we chose 2007 to begin collecting data on the results of said Plan. In the 4th cycle (2019-2022), the novelty of PAR was its articulation with the goals of the PNE and the BNCC, in order to meet models based on standardized, meritocratic rankings, evaluations subsidized by private foundations and institutes that make up the Movement for the Base and All for Education (TPE)<sup>3</sup>.

The data presented in this text were collected through documents on the official INEP website (2010-2023), referring to Brazil and seven Identity Territories of Bahia (Tables 03 and 04). And also, through semi-structured interviews with teachers and coordinators of Elementary Education from municipal networks that are part of the investigated identity territories. To preserve the identity of the subjects, they were identified in the research results by the name of their respective territories of origin.

According to Freitas (2009, p.23),

the territory is conceptualized as a physical space, geographically defined, generally continuous, characterized by multidimensional criteria, such as the environment, the economy, society, culture, politics and institutions, and a population with relatively distinct social groups, which relate internally and externally through specific processes.

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<sup>3</sup> Among the members of TPE, we highlight: Gerdau, Bradesco, Itaú Social, Unibanco, Fundação Lemam, Suzano Paper and Cellulose, GOL Airline, Instituto Natura, Instituto Península, Globo Organizations.

It is important to highlight that IBGE data (2023) indicate Bahia as the 5th Brazilian state in territorial extension. It occupies 33.6% of the Northeast region and 6.64% of the national territory, with 564,692.669 km<sup>2</sup>, and the population consists of 14,136,000 inhabitants. Considering that Bahia has 417 municipalities distributed across 27 Identity Territories<sup>4</sup>, observing the page limit of this text, to present the data on IDEB, we chose to make a spatial excerpt of seven (07) identity territories (Table 2) which together contain a total of 124 municipalities in Bahia.

**Table 2** - Delineation of the researched Identity Territories.

<b>Território de Identidade</b>	<b>Descrição do Território</b>	<b>Municipalities</b>
Baixo Sul – 15 Municipalities	Also known as Costa do Dendê (Palm Oil Coast), it is composed of 15 municipalities, which occupy an area of 7,695 km <sup>2</sup> , with a population of 361,362 inhabitants (Brasil, 2023).	Aratuípe, Cairu, Camamu, Gandu, Ibirapitanga, Igrapiúna, Ituberá, Jaguaripe, Nilo Peçanha, Pirai do Norte, Presidente Tancredo Neves, Taperoá, Teolândia, Valença, Wenceslau Guimarães.
Costa do Descobrimento – 8 municipalities	It has a territorial extension of 12.1 thousand square kilometers, a total population of 342.3 thousand inhabitants and is composed of eight municipalities (Brasil, 2023).	Belmonte, Eunápolis, Guaratinga, Itabela, Itagimirim, Itapebi, Porto Seguro, Santa Cruz Cabrália.
Extremo Sul – 13 municipalities	Total area of 18,514 Km <sup>2</sup> (IBGE, 2023). The region borders the states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, and the Atlantic Ocean, in its population we find Tupi indigenous people (coast) and Aimorés (interior), in addition to non-indigenous people	Alcobaça, Caravelas, Ibirapoã, Itamaraju, Itanhém, Jucuruçu, Lajedão, Medeiros Neto, Mucuri, Nova Viçosa, Prado, Teixeira de Freitas, Vereda.
Litoral Sul – 26 municipalities	Also known as Costa do Cacau (Cocoa Coast), it has a total area of 14,683.5 Km <sup>2</sup> and 772,600 inhabitants (Brasil, 2023).	Almadina, Arataca, Aurelino Leal, Barro Preto, Buerarema, Camacan, Canavieiras, Coaraci, Floresta Azul, Ibicaraí, Ilhéus, Itabuna, Itacaré, Itaju do Colônia, Itajuípe, Itapé, Itapitanga, Jussari, Maraú, Mascote, Pau-Brasil, Santa Luzia, São José da Vitória, Ubaitaba, Uma, Uruçuca.
Vale do Jiquiriçá – 20 municipalities	It is located in the South Central region of Bahia and has an area of 10,467.49 km <sup>2</sup> , with a population density of 29 inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> (Brasil, 2023).	Amargosa, Brejões, Cravolândia, Elísio Medrado, Irajuba, Itaquara, Itiruçu, Jaguaquara, Jiquiriçá, Lafayette Coutinho, Laje, Lajedo do Tabocal, Maracás, Milagres, Mutuípe, Nova Itarana, Planaltino, Santa Inês, São Miguel das Matas, Ubaíra.
Recôncavo – 20 municipalities	It has 576,600 inhabitants, a population density of 110.39 inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> , occupying an area of 4,570 km <sup>2</sup> (Brasil, 2023).	Cabaceiras do Paraguaçu, Cachoeira, Castro Alves, Conceição do Almeida, Cruz das Almas, Dom Macedo Costa, Governador Mangabeira, Maragogipe, Muniz Ferreira, Muritiba, Nazaré,

<sup>4</sup> The Identity Territories of Bahia can be viewed on the website: [https://www.seplan.ba.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/Territorios\\_Municipios\\_2012\\_2015.pdf](https://www.seplan.ba.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/Territorios_Municipios_2012_2015.pdf)

		Salinas da Margarida, Santo Amaro, Santo Antônio de Jesus, São Felipe, São Félix, Sapeaçu, Saubara, Varzedo.
Sisal – 20 municipalities	It covers an area of 21,256.50 km, with a population of 570,720 inhabitants (Brasil, 2023).	Araci, Barrocas, Biritinga, Candeal, Cansanção, Conceição do Coité, Ichu, Itiúba, Lamarão, Monte Santo, Nordestina, Queimadas, Quijingue, Retirolândia, Santaluz, São Domingos, Serrinha, Teofilândia, Tucano, Valente.

Fonte: Seplan, [2018?].

## Research results

Despite being part of a larger research, we concentrate in this text on the objective related to the IDEB score in Brazil and in the Identity Territories of Bahia mentioned in the previous topic. INEP created IDEB following guidelines from international organizations (OECD, WB, UNESCO, among others) with the aim of establishing standards and criteria to monitor the education system in Brazil, in the search for indicators that could measure the development of Brazilian schools and the progress of programs put into practice by the State since 2007. According to Santos (2019, p.5), in IDEB are combined: "flow indicators (which include approval, repetition and dropout) and scores in standardized exams, obtained by students in the 5th and 9th years of Elementary Education, and 3rd year for High School students." In Table 3 we find the IDEB of all Brazilian regions in the period covering the four cycles of PAR.

**Table 3 - Ideb of Brazilian states by region (2007-2023).**

REGION	STATE	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
NORTH	Acre	3,7	4,2	4,5	5,0	5,3	5,7	5,8	5,4	5,7
	Amapá	3,3	3,8	4,0	3,9	4,3	4,9	4,7	4,7	4,8
	Amazonas	3,4	3,8	4,2	4,5	5,0	5,3	5,3	5,3	5,6
	Pará	3,0	3,6	4,0	3,8	4,3	4,5	4,7	4,8	4,8
	Rondônia	3,9	4,3	4,6	5,1	5,3	5,7	5,5	5,3	5,5
	Roraima	4,1	4,2	4,5	4,8	5,1	5,4	5,5	5,3	5,4
	Tocantins	4,0	4,4	4,8	5,0	5,0	5,4	5,5	5,1	5,4
NORTHEAST	Alagoas	3,1	3,4	3,5	5,7	4,3	4,5	5,3	5,3	5,7
	Bahia	3,2	3,5	3,9	3,9	4,4	5,3	4,9	4,9	4,9
	Ceará	3,5	4,1	4,7	5,0	5,7	6,1	6,3	6,1	6,5
	Maranhão	3,5	3,7	3,9	3,8	4,4	4,5	4,8	4,7	5,1
	Paraíba	3,3	3,6	4,0	4,2	4,5	4,7	6,4	5,0	5,3
	Pernambuco	3,3	3,7	3,9	4,1	4,6	4,8	5,3	5,1	5,3
	Piauí	3,3	3,8	4,1	4,1	4,6	5,0	5,4	5,3	5,7

	Rio Grande do Norte	3,2	3,5	3,8	4,0	4,4	4,5	4,7	4,5	4,8
	Sergipe	3,2	3,4	3,6	3,8	4,1	4,3	4,6	4,8	4,9
CENTER-WEST	Distrito Federal	4,8	5,4	5,4	5,6	5,6	6,3	6,1	5,9	5,9
	Goiás	4,1	4,7	5,1	5,5	5,6	5,9	6,0	5,7	6,1
	Mato Grosso	4,3	4,8	4,9	5,2	5,5	5,7	5,7	5,5	5,8
	Mato Grosso do Sul	4,1	4,5	5,0	5,0	5,3	5,5	5,5	5,2	5,3
SOUTHWEST	Espírito Santo	4,3	4,8	5,0	5,2	5,5	5,7	5,9	5,8	6,1
	Minas Gerais	4,6	5,5	5,8	5,9	6,1	6,3	6,3	5,9	6,1
	Rio de Janeiro	4,1	4,4	4,8	4,9	5,2	5,3	5,4	5,3	5,5
	São Paulo	4,8	5,3	5,4	5,8	6,3	6,5	6,5	6,1	6,2
SOUTH	Paraná	4,8	5,3	4,5	5,8	6,1	6,3	6,4	6,1	6,5
	Rio Grande do Sul	4,5	4,7	5,1	5,4	5,5	5,6	5,8	5,8	5,8
	Santa Catarina	4,7	5,1	5,7	5,9	6,1	6,3	6,3	6,2	6,2

Source: INEP (2024).

When observing Table 3, we identified that there was an evolution of IDEB in practically all Brazilian states each year. However, the difference in the starting point in the score between the North and Northeast regions is notable, as they started with lower scores compared to other regions, with the exception of the states of Roraima and Tocantins. Among the states of these two regions we have the highest results in Ceará which had 3.5 in 2007, and reached 6.5 in 2023; and, in second place, the state of Piauí which started with 3.3 in 2007 and reached 5.7 in 2023. The state with the lowest result in the analyzed period was Rio Grande do Norte which started with 3.2 and reached 4.8 in 2023. These results are different from other Brazilian regions (South, Southeast and Center-West), which already started with higher scores, with São Paulo and Paraná being the federated entities with the highest results. Although the Ministry of Education established the score of 6.0 as the goal to be achieved for all Brazilian states and municipalities by the year 2022, São Paulo, Paraná and Santa Catarina reached the goal in 2015, and from then on, remained above the projected index. Cruvinel and Santos (2019), highlight that historically, the South, Southeast and Center-West regions of Brazil have always had more investments in all areas, and education is no different. Therefore, they emphasize that for an improvement in the quality of education reflected in the growth of evaluations, the school needs to have investments in adequate infrastructure, equipment for the development of activities, computer laboratory, library, teacher remuneration and training, among others. The data in Table 3 show that the vast majority of Brazilian states had higher scores in 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic, and that most have not yet reached the score

obtained in that year, since from 2020 to 2022 it was a time of difficulties worldwide to maintain school activities, due to health issues and infrastructure difficulties in schools, especially in the North and Northeast regions (Cardoso; Santos; Santos, 2022; Santos; Santos, 2024).

The National Campaign for the Right to Education document (2024) which presents the report with the assessment of the 2014 PNE, highlights that in the last decade, millions of black people, poor people, from rural areas or from the North and Northeast regions were excluded from access, permanence and completion of stages, modalities and levels of education, and that when observing the results of the PNE Goals (2014-2024), by states, "[...] we see repetition of the pattern of inequality within the North and Northeast regions" (CONAE, 2024, p.80). However, from the emergence of PAR, progress is perceived in all regions regarding the actions of the indicators of the four dimensions in states and municipalities, which contributes to the continued increase of IDEB in these federated entities (Gepemdecc, 2023).

Regarding Bahia, the Brazilian state on which we concentrate our study, in state schools, Ideb increased only 1.7 in the course from 2007 to 2023, according to Table 3. In municipal schools of the state, we chose to verify the variations in seven (07) Identity Territories already mentioned, and to obtain their scores, we used the following formula each year: Average = sum of the scores of all municipalities in the territory, whose result was divided by the number of municipalities in the territory, thus established:

$$\bar{N} = \Sigma (N_i / m)$$

Average  $\bar{N}$  = SUM  $\Sigma$  (score of the municipalities -  $N_i$  - divided by the number of municipalities - m)

By applying this formula we found the results shown in Table 4.

**Table 4** - IDEB of the researched Identity Territories (2010-2023).

Territory	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
Costa do descobrimento	2,8	3,3	3,6	3,5	3,8	4,1	4,3	4,1	4,2
Extremo Sul	3,2	3,7	4,0	4,3	4,6	4,8	4,6	4,3	4,8
Litoral Sul	2,5	3,1	3,6	3,4	3,9	3,9	4,2	3,8	4,0
Vale do Jiquiriçá	2,9	3,4	4,0	3,8	4,3	4,7	5,0	4,5	4,8
Recôncavo	3,3	3,4	3,9	3,7	4,2	4,2	4,6	4,6	4,7
Sisal	2,6	2,9	3,0	3,0	3,2	3,2	3,3	3,7	4,5
Baixo Sul	2,7	3,2	3,5	3,6	4,0	4,3	4,3	4,5	4,3

Source: INEP (2023).

Based on the scores achieved in the analyzed period (2007-2023), growth is observed in all territories, whose increase ranged from 1.4 to 1.9. It is noticeable that the Territory with the lowest result was Recôncavo da Bahia (1.4), and the one that obtained the highest score was Sisal (1.9). We observe that the scores in Table 4 are not discrepant in relation to most states in the Northeast region and, especially, to the state of Bahia (Table 3), since this state increased only 1.7 in the same period. The distinction in IDEB scores among Brazilian municipalities may be a consequence of social, economic-financial and social control aspects, in addition to pedagogical and structural ones, including "[...] those related to family and housing conditions (Lourenço *et al.*, 2017, p. 28-29), added to the school attendance rate, number of students, proportion of teacher per student, teaching experience, variables such as teacher salary, personnel (academic staff, administrators and support staff) and school resources (books, computers, buildings, etc.)" (Moraes, 2018, p. 48-68). It is also important to highlight studies that point to the existence of municipalities and states that have resorted to the use of strategies aimed at purchasing didactic material and consulting services from private companies for student training, aiming to obtain an increase in Ideb in evaluations.

That said, since IDEB is the intersection of performance (Prova Brasil and Aneb) with school achievement (approval), it aims to guarantee learning and flow, based on the data presented. Thus, despite the increase in scores, as demonstrated above, we can infer that investments in educational programs in all states, mainly through PAR<sup>5</sup>, may have contributed to this, but there is still a need for investments in teacher training and to seek to resolve structural issues that directly affect the teaching-learning process in these territories. Freitas (2023) emphasizes that standardized tests are insufficient to verify the learning and performance of an education network. Therefore, for this author, the results do not provide concrete information about the quality of teaching in a school, since they do not show how the student learns, nor about what they learned, much less about their learning potential. When interviewing teachers and pedagogical coordinators from some schools in these researched identity territories, we asked: "Do external evaluations contribute to the improvement of the teaching-learning process in your municipality? Why?" Here are some responses:

In the network where I work we see very little improvement in teaching-learning from the application of external evaluations, because students are trained to answer the tests, there are 4 companies from outside the city that manage the educational process and do not study the local reality, but rather, the preparation of these students to

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<sup>5</sup> Regarding the increase in the quantity of some elements of rural school infrastructure in Brazil, consult the research data from Gepemdecc/UESB on PAR in Table 4 at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/15RYImxCiYkpyuAShTj0kij4CC7r0S0B/view>

answer the tests. I understand that it does not help because there is no reflection on the results of the evaluations, but rather, on the quantity of correct and incorrect answers, in a quantitative way, the problem of non-learning is not studied, but rather, how to lead them to get the expected answer right (Costa do Descobrimento, research interview, August 15, 2024).

In the network where I work there is pedagogical planning by unit and there is specific pedagogical material, based on the descriptors of Portuguese and Mathematics and on education systems that obtained the maximum SAEB score. This material was a partnership with Sobral because the education secretariat together with the municipal administration, analyzes the methods and techniques for the improvement of education, and, consequently, improvement in the external IDEB evaluations (Sisal, research interview, August 20, 2024).

No. External evaluations only express results of student learning, based on descriptors that were mechanically placed so that students would get them right when taking the evaluations (Extremo Sul, research interview, August 20, 2024).

Yes, because by creating strategies, we seek to improve the teaching-learning process. Meetings are held with the direction and coordination to search for strategies. A strategy used by most schools is contact with previous evaluations, from there simulations of the Saeb Evaluation are made (Vale do Jequiriçá, research interview, July 10, 2024).

Unfortunately, no! Because the absence of a permanent staff of teachers to serve all students, the lack of work in curriculum analysis and organization, absences of quality continuing education for the pedagogical team (teachers, Supervisors, Counselors, Directors and Vice-Directors), incentives for new methodologies applied in the classroom, not as a "preparation for a test", but rather as a guarantee of a provided right, article 3 of the LDB that proposes equal education and that stimulates the freedom to learn, teach, research and disseminate culture, thought, art and knowledge, among others that emphasize a democratic and participatory education (Litoral Sul, research interview, July 10, 2024).

The reality presented in the subjects' statements shows that the tests carried out in their municipalities have served, mainly, to increase the budget of evaluation companies that sell educational services, raising questions about the real effectiveness and purpose of these evaluations. However, for Santos, Silva & Terreros (2023), the central point of criticism of these MEC policies is not their form of measurement, but the educational purposes they project, namely, to adapt to the Global Educational Reform Movement under the guidance of International Organizations that serve market interests with: standardization of/in education, emphasis on teaching basic knowledge and skills, teaching based on predetermined results, accountability policies based on tests, greater control of the school with free market ideology, outsourcing of management and privatization of public schools. It is observed that these mechanisms disguise the results insofar as there is training to answer the questions, and that the adoption of ready-made packages from companies does not contemplate a critical education, based on the reality of students.

## Final considerations

This study initially discussed external evaluations and the consolidation of educational policies aligned with the interests of capital, under the guidance of international agencies: OECD, WB and UNESCO. Regarding the excerpt of the research conducted on the IDEB of schools in Brazil and Bahia, in the time frame from 2010 to 2023, the results showed that there was a small evolution in the scores of all researched identity territories, however, the interviewed subjects highlighted that the results of external evaluations do not correspond to the real learning of students, since municipal networks hire specialized companies with ready-made packages to train students for their implementation. This practice has been happening mainly because the federal government, as an apparatus of the State in the service of capital, has linked the IDEB result to the sending of financial resources to federated entities.

Therefore, the evidenced data demonstrate that for quality education to occur it is necessary to observe the importance of the continuity of actions in plans, programs and projects, such as PAR, for the strengthening of the dimensions reflected by the variables of educational management, teacher training, improvement in school infrastructure and conditions for the implementation of a pedagogical practice aimed at expanding the learning of students.

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