



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Lula's third mandate reignites hope in Brazilian early-career researchers

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Science in Brazil is centered on public universities and institutions that uplift Brazil to be a top-15 scientifically productive country worldwide (Lopes et al. 2021). This high productivity is partially related to the Workers' Party's investments in higher education until the mid-2010s (Silveira 2018). However, most Brazilian researchers (*i.e.*, students or postdoctoral fellows) are deprived of labor rights and work under low wages (e.g., ~US\$400/month for Ph.D. students). Brazilian science has suffered contingencies since 2014, but more severely during Bolsonaro's mandate (Mega 2019, Kowaltowski 2021, Silva Junior et al. 2021). On the brink of his presidency, Bolsonaro's final strike against science upheld the payment of the wage of researchers associated with the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel, threatening the livelihood of 200.000 people (CAPES 2022). Their salaries, nationally misconceived as scholarships, is their only income, since contracts demand exclusive dedication. Therefore, Bolsonaro's neglect to pay scientists exposed them to the explicit risk of not being able to afford housing or food, depriving them of fundamental human rights.

Mobilization in academia was quick and effective, leading to judicial measures against the federal government and a national strike. In response, the federal government allocated US\$90 million that guaranteed the payment of research fellowships a week late (Sanz 2022), but the damage was already done. The last month of Bolsonaro's mandate was marked with one more struggle for early-career scholars in Brazil. Contrastingly, Lula's mandate first month marked significant advances for them. After a historical meeting between Camilo Santana (Minister of Education), Lula, and the deans of federal institutes and universities, Camilo indicated the first adjustment of scholarships in ten years (Mazui 2023), both in the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education (CAPES). In addition, the federal government is taking expressive structural decisions supported by the scientific community, such as appointing well-respected scientists and professors for key government positions, such

as Denise Pires de Carvalho and Ricardo Galvão. Still, Brazilian scientists shall keep articulating to bargain with the current government for the extension of labor benefits to all scientists, the adjustment of undergraduate scholarships and salaries to postdocs and professors, and the revision of unfair contracts that push researchers to precariousness (e.g., demands for exclusive dedication in temporary positions). This is important for every researcher and education worker who must fight against precarious working conditions in Brazil or elsewhere (Kozlov 2022, Naddaf 2022). Mobilization continues: #ReajusteJa.

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All authors were responsible for creating the original concept and writing the first draft of this letter. BES and LMDV proofread the final version.

