

CONCILIATION AS A CO-PRODUCTION TOOL IN THE BRAZILIAN LABOR COURTS: AN INTEGRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE



<https://doi.org/10.56238/arev6n3-350>

Submitted on: 10/27/2024

Publication date: 11/27/2024

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes conciliation as a co-production tool in the Brazilian Labor Courts, between 2020 and 2024, highlighting its effectiveness in conflict resolution and its contribution to democratizing access to justice. Conciliation is approached as a collaborative model, in which workers, employers, and the Judiciary work together to reach consensual solutions. Through an integrative literature review and analysis of statistical data, the research shows an inversely proportional relationship between settlement rates and the processing time of cases, also pointing out the relevance of the Judicial Centers for Conflict Resolution and Citizenship (CEJUSCs) in promoting a more agile and inclusive system. Among the challenges, the culture of sentencing and the vulnerability of workers in the face of pressure for quick settlements stand out. The study concludes that conciliation, supported by transparency, equity and trust, can strengthen the efficiency of the Judiciary, reduce litigation and promote social justice, and it is essential to invest in the training of mediators and the expansion of collaborative practices.

Keywords: Conciliation. Co-production. Labor Courts.

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INTRODUCTION

This study examined in an integrative way the co-production in the conciliation developed by the Labor Courts, between the years 2020 and 2024. Conciliation emerged in Brazil at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the creation of institutions and programs aimed at this purpose. This has spread in recent decades, with the growing awareness of the importance of peaceful conflict resolution and the confrontation of overcrowding in the courts (Lopes Neto; Bentes, 2023). The modality can be understood as a possibility of co-production of the justice service, as there is cooperation and communication between the actors involved with the service in search of a consensus on the best solution to the conflict (Rego; Teixeira; Silva Filho, 2019).

The demand for conflict resolution in this branch of the judiciary has increased every year: in 2020, 2,867,673 new cases were received, 2,521,958 were judged and 510,582 were reconciled; in 2021, 2,888,039 new cases were received, 2,826,046 were judged and 643,505 were reconciled; in 2022, 2,914,276 new cases were received, 2,875,082 were judged and 574,798 were reconciled; In 2023, 3,519,339 new cases were received, 3,537,998 were judged and 716,041 were reconciled, in 2024, 2,691,145 new cases were received, 2,628,335 were judged and 561,830 were reconciled. (TST, 2024).

In 2020, the Labor Court resolved 23% of its cases through an agreement. The rate increased to 45% when considering only the knowledge phase (CNJ, 2024). In 2021, the conciliation rate in the execution phase was 12% in the Labor Courts, while in the knowledge phase, it was 17.4 (CNJ, 2024). In 2022, 41.16% (TST 2024). In 2023, according to the Justice in Numbers 2024 report, organized by the National Council of Justice - CNJ, labor courts resolved 20.2% of their cases through agreements (CNJ, 2024). The conciliation rate was even more significant when considering only the first-degree knowledge phase, reaching 36.5% (TST, 2024). In 2024, this percentage rose to 44.84% (TST, 2024).

Within the scope of the lawsuits already filed, the following numbers of approved agreements deserve to be highlighted: 7,984 in 2021; 21,167 in 2022; 23,788 in 2023 and 29,092 in 2024. It should be noted that there was no such record in 2020, due to the COVID Pandemic. (TST, 2024). Despite such indices and numbers, some obstacles deserve to be highlighted. Perhaps the main obstacle to conciliation is that Brazilian society has a culture of the sentence, a mentality focused on heterocomposition, where the process is only valid when the sentence is imposed by the judge. This generates a large

number of lawsuits that often become long, lengthy and exhausting (Vavgenczak; Ningeliski, 2024), which finds shelter in the 1988 Constitution of the Republic, which establishes, in its article 5, item XXXV, that "the law shall not exclude from the consideration of the Judiciary any injury or threat to the right" (Brasil, 1988). (Sena; Muzzi Filho, 2017).

When the parties seek the solution of their conflicts in a consensual way, most of the time they show a great and well-founded concern about the validity of the agreement made. The Judiciary also presents difficulties in terms of training professionals and structure, which makes it difficult, in many cases, to conciliate and mediate efficiently. Often, the magistrate himself does not show interest in resolving conflicts in a consensual manner, only schedules a conciliation/mediation hearing for a mere legislative formality, making no effort to make the resolution of conflicts effective in these hearings Vavgenczak; Ningeliski, 2024).

Such difficulties deserve reflection within the scope of the Public Administration. How have such reconciliations been examined as co-production processes by Brazilian reports and publications? By applying mediation and conciliation in the Judiciary, the parties become the main actors in the resolution of the conflict, as they are the most qualified to reach a consensus on the dispute. However, if there is a conflict, it is notable that they will not reach a consensus alone (Vavgenczak; Ningeliski, 2024). Co-production in justice services can be defined as cooperation and communication between the actors involved with the service, in search of a consensus on the best solution to the conflict. In this definition, the importance of flexibility and communication between citizens who use justice services and the collaborative nature of co-production are emphasized, presenting greater prediction about the results of the service, both for the citizen and for the image of the Judiciary, from the perspective of the parties (Rego, 2015).

At the international level, the subject is not something new, especially because trust in judicial institutions is often shaken by the slowness of procedural procedures. The active participation of society in the construction of solutions to its own judicial demands can not only relieve the system, but also contribute to the construction of a fairer and more accessible environment (Bovaird, 2007). In addition, it involves institutional commitment, training of judges and mediators, in the creation of an environment that values citizen participation (Osborne; Strokosch, 2013). Tuurnas (2015) argues that citizens themselves, by contributing to decisions, promote a sense of collective responsibility. The efficiency of decisions involves the collaborative construction of these, as a mandatory step, in the case

of labor (Tuurnas; Pasi-Heikki, 2016; Ramirez, 2022), although in some countries this legal institute is still a frontier (Silva; Santinho, 2019).

Understanding co-production in labor conciliation processes in Brazil can expand the use of the tool in this and other subfields of the Judiciary, expanding the use of participation and efficiency in Public Administration, which will also strengthen the collaborative culture for peace in our country.

THEORETICAL BASES TO UNDERSTAND CO-PRODUCTION IN THE JUDICIARY

Co-production in the public sector gained relevance from the 1970s onwards, with the "Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis" in response to the centralization of governance (Ostrom, 1996), driven by the search for solutions that would overcome inefficiencies in the provision of public services (Pestoff, 2006). The co-production emphasizes the active participation of citizens in the delivery of public services. Parks et al. (1981) argue that the outcome of a service depends on the joint effort between producers and users. This definition is particularly relevant in the context of judicial services, where the interaction between the judiciary and citizens can significantly influence the effectiveness and quality of the services provided (Bovaird, 2007).

At the organizational level, it is crucial to develop management models that integrate co-production as part of service delivery, being an effective solution to face complex problems that require collaborative solutions (D'Alessandro, 2023). In public services, this refers to the active collaboration between service providers and their users, implying joint action to achieve more effective results (Weinitschke, 2023) transforming users into co-developers (Ferreira, 2023; Fang He, 2024)

In the public field, co-production has been studied in particular in three academic axes: public administration, with special attention to the work of Eleanor Ostrom (1996); science and technology studies (STS), originating from the work of Matuk (2023) and sustainability science (Bandola-Gill; Arthur; Leng, 2023). It has developed almost independently in several disciplines and has been applied in various areas of policy and practice, such as the environment, sustainability, education, social care and health (Bandola-Gill; Arthur; Leng, 2023; Birth, 2024; Almeida, 2024).

The co-production of judicial services involves a significant change in the way public services are designed and executed, based on active collaboration between the State and users. In this context, citizens not only consume services, but also participate in their

creation and continuous improvement, which places their experiences and knowledge as a central part of the process (York; Yazar, 2022) The direct involvement of the parties in the construction of the solution of their conflicts reflects this idea, as co-production helps to improve the perception of justice, reduces costs, and promotes a more accessible and effective environment. This process contributes to the creation of a more responsive and citizen-oriented justice system (Muller et al, 2022)

Thus, the co-productive model emerges to provide different processes and tasks, as governments face several challenges in terms of efficiency, quality of public service, participation, and it is essential to rethink the role of users, encouraging their participation in strategic decisions (Maranhão, 2023). Salm and Menegasso (2010) developed a typology that has been adopted by the literature, set out in Chart 1, regarding co-production models.

Table 1 - Model of co-production of public services and public administration according to citizen participation

Modelo de coprodução	Definição do modelo de coprodução	Participação do cidadão no processo de coprodução	Modelos de administração pública na coprodução
Nominal	Produção por meio de compartilhamento de responsabilidades entre pessoas da comunidade, preferencialmente voluntárias, e o aparato administrativo público do estado, com o propósito, apenas, de fornecer esses serviços.	Não há participação efetiva e de poder do cidadão sobre o Estado.	Velha Administração Pública
Simbólica	Estratégia para envolver os cidadãos na produção dos serviços públicos para demonstrar a força e a eficiência do Estado.	Quase sempre possui um caráter manipulativo e serve para demonstrar a eficácia do Estado.	Velha Administração Pública Nova Administração Pública
Funcional	Utilizada pelo aparato administrativo do Estado para a prestação de uma maneira mais eficiente e eficaz com a participação do indivíduo, em prol do bem da coletividade.	Ocorre por meio da solicitação dos serviços, de assistência ou um ato mais direto de efetiva produção.	Velha Administração Pública Nova Administração Pública
Representativa com sustentabilidade	Resultado da sinergia que se estabelece na realização dos serviços públicos onde participam os cidadãos, as organizações da comunidade e o aparato administrativo do estado, com um interesse comum em prol do bem comum.	Requer engajamento cívico do cidadão de maneira mais sustentável. Delega o poder ao Estado e sua interação com o cidadão e o desenvolvimento.	Novo Serviço Público
Coprodução para a mobilização comunitária	Estratégia para a realização dos serviços públicos de que participa toda a comunidade, norteada por princípios éticos e pela democracia normativa, com propósito de manter a sociedade permanentemente mobilizada.	Permanentemente mobilização da comunidade e supervisão da organização burocrática.	-

Source: adapted from Salm and Menegasso (2010)

The typologies of co-production of public services proposed by Salm and Mengasso (2010), based on the classifications of Arnstein, Pretty and White, are structured in five main models: nominal, symbolic, functional, representative with sustainability and self-

mobilization. Each of these models reflects a different approach to citizen participation and the relationship between the State and society in the provision of public services. For example, nominal co-production is based on volunteering and charitable work, while symbolic co-production uses citizen participation to reinforce the state's presence, often in a manipulative way. Functional co-production, on the other hand, is close to the New Public Management, while representative with sustainability and self-mobilization emphasize the autonomy and continuous involvement of the community, aligning with values of participatory democracy and social protagonism (Neto; Salm; Burigo, 2014).

In addition to the challenges already listed and the typology of Salm and Menegasso, the need for a public management model that goes beyond operational efficiency and promotes a commitment to public value has emerged. The Theory of Public Value Creation, developed by Mark Moore, provides the analytical framework for this integrative review, looking at how public managers and citizens can collaborate. This cooperation aims to formulate practices that directly meet the needs of the community, contributing to strengthening trust in institutions and legitimizing government actions as responses to society's expectations (Bonifácio, 2023).

It is important to highlight that the creation of public value involves three main categories: (1) Effectiveness: The government's ability to meet the demands and needs of citizens; (2) Efficiency: The appropriate and optimized use of available resources to generate the best possible results; (3) Equity: The consideration of ethical and justice dimensions in service delivery and public policy formulation (Moore, 1997).

Public value creation refers to the value that citizens expect from public services, similar to the return on investment in the private sector. However, in the public sector, the focus is on social and collective value, which depends on the efficient and transparent delivery of services (Mimbi, 2016). By associating the Theory of Public Value Creation with the concepts of co-production, it is highlighted that trust and performance are fundamental for the success of collaboration in the creation of public value. Trust facilitates the exchange of knowledge and resources, while performance is linked to the ability of stakeholders to implement these policies efficiently and with positive impact. (Morais; Martins, 2020). In this sense, the impact of co-production on satisfaction varies according to the level of citizen engagement and the context of the services offered. (Morais; Pandolfi; Sanagioto, 2020).

Thus, for this work, the following analytical categories were defined as a framework: "context", "citizen engagement", effectiveness, efficiency, equity, transparency and trust in the decisions co-produced by conciliation.

JUDICIAL CONCILIATION AS FERTILE GROUND FOR THE CO-PRODUCTION OF JUSTICE. IN SEARCH OF A FRAMEWORK

The implementation of enhanced co-production in judicial services can lead to a "transformative change" that reconfigures the relationship between citizens and institutions. This approach not only aims to give citizens a voice, but also aims at innovation and continuous improvement in the delivery of public services (Payne et al., 2008). Judicial conciliation should, on the one hand, harmonize society and, on the other hand, reduce the legal burden (Ivanova; Sheremetova; Solomeina, 2022). For this reason, the judicial authorities should be more interested in the procedure for resolving the dispute by an alternative method, and in the case of an initiative by individuals or legal entities, their proposal should be accepted taking into account the attributions presented to the judicial authorities by the State and the legislator (Stepanova; Intestine, 2023; Silveira, 2023).

Conciliation has historical roots that go back to primitive societies, where the resolution of disputes was based on force (self-tutelage). Over time, the need for peaceful and organized methods of dealing with conflicts has led to the emergence of alternative forms of solution. In Brazil, the practice appears in the Manueline Ordinances (1514) and the Philippines (1603), which encouraged agreements before the judicial process. Formal recognition occurred in the nineteenth century, with the Imperial Constitution of 1824, and was strengthened over the years with the Consolidation of Labor Laws (1943) and the Codes of Civil Procedure of 1973 and 2002. As of the 1988 Constitution, conciliation began to be prioritized as an effective method of conflict resolution, being integrated into legislation such as the Consumer Protection Code (1990) and the Special Courts (1995). In 2006, the National Council of Justice launched the "Movement for Conciliation", which consolidated the practice as a fundamental mechanism for social pacification, promoting its adoption throughout the Brazilian judicial system ((Rabbi, 2020).

Life in society implies the generation of conflicts of interest. To resolve them and seek peace, several mechanisms have historically been used, ranging from self-protection, judicialization, and the inclusion of alternative methods of conflict resolution. In this scenario, conciliation is seen as an ideal instrument, as it presents better efficiency of time,

human and material resources and that it is the parties themselves who resolve their differences, with the help of a third party called conciliator. This promotes social change, as it opposes the culture of litigation and the judicialization of conflicts (Álvarez, 2019)

Currently, conciliation has been used in different subareas of procedural law in countries, being inserted as a tool in the civil, commercial and administrative fields ((Ivanova; Sheremetova; Solomeina, 2022). In fact, most procedural codes in different countries provide for the resolution of disputes with or without the participation of a magistrate (Stepanova; Intestine, 2023), and there are several possibilities for peaceful resolution of the dispute between the parties, in the search for a democratic rule of law (Stepanova; Intestine, 2023). Thus, the so-called conciliation centers have emerged, implying a rethinking of the dogmatics of the jurisdiction's regulatory structures (Álvarez, 2019).

Dispute resolution methods can be classified as judicial or extrajudicial. The former may or may not require the active participation of a judge in the phase of finding peaceful ways to resolve. In conciliation, the magistrate acts only in the last phase and his function is effectively to verify the legality of the terms of dispute resolution reached by the parties (Stepanova; Intestine, 2023).

The extrajudicial modality aims to seek the peaceful solution of conflicts, with the active participation of individuals, through negotiation (without interference from a third party), mediation, conciliation and arbitration (in these three forms with the intervention of a third party). All offer advantages over the traditional judicial form. Mediation is an autonomous form of conflict pacification, in which an impartial third party, without any decision-making power, assists the parties with a view to a future agreement that benefits all. Conciliation is a consensual judicial or extrajudicial means of conflict resolution that the parties entrust to a neutral third person, the conciliator, the task of guiding them in the construction of an agreement. Thus, conciliation works as the effort of the third conciliator or conciliators) in conducting an agreement (Souza et. al, 2024).

In the scope of labor justice, conciliations will only be valid in the cases provided for in the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT), including ratification by the magistrate who supervised the hearing and pre-procedural mediation of collective conflicts. The provisions regarding the Private Chambers of Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, as well as the rules related to extrajudicial and pre-procedural conciliation and mediation provided for in the NCPC (CSJT RESOLUTION No. 174/2016, art. 7, §6), are inapplicable.

Labor cases are always subject to conciliation (CLT, art. 764 and art. 764, §1). The parties may enter into an agreement at any procedural stage (CLT, art. 764, §3). Once the hearing has begun, the judge or president will propose conciliation (CLT, art. 846). If there is an agreement, the respective term will be drawn up, stipulating the term and other conditions for its fulfillment of the agreed obligations (CLT, art. 846, §1). Once the phase of gathering evidence (procedural instruction) and final reasons is over, the magistrate or president will renew the conciliation proposal, and if this is not carried out, the decision will be rendered (CLT, art. 850).

The Judicial Centers for Consensual Methods of Dispute Resolution – CEJUSC-JT, are units of the Labor Judiciary to also hold conciliation and mediation sessions and hearings of cases at any stage or instance, including those pending judgment before the Superior Labor Court (CSJT Resolution No. 174/2016, art. 6).

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective of this literature review on the use of co-production in labor conciliation, a systematic descriptive study with a qualitative approach was conducted, using articles published in national and international databases as sources of evidence. A systematic review allows for the organization and integration of the knowledge already available, ensuring a transparent and replicable process (Campos, 2023). For Gracias (2023), this approach is important because it helps identify gaps in existing knowledge, provides a solid foundation for the development of new strategies, and guides future research in the field

Heikkinen (2022) summarizes a systematic review of the literature into three main phases: identification, screening, and inclusion. First, it involves the selection of relevant studies, usually using pre-established criteria and keywords for searching databases. In the screening phase, the studies are analyzed, excluding those that do not meet the established criteria, and in the inclusion phase, the studies are analyzed to answer the research questions. Thus, this research aims to synthesize studies on the process modeling applied in public organizations, both in Brazil and in other countries, through a systematic analysis using the integrative methodology.

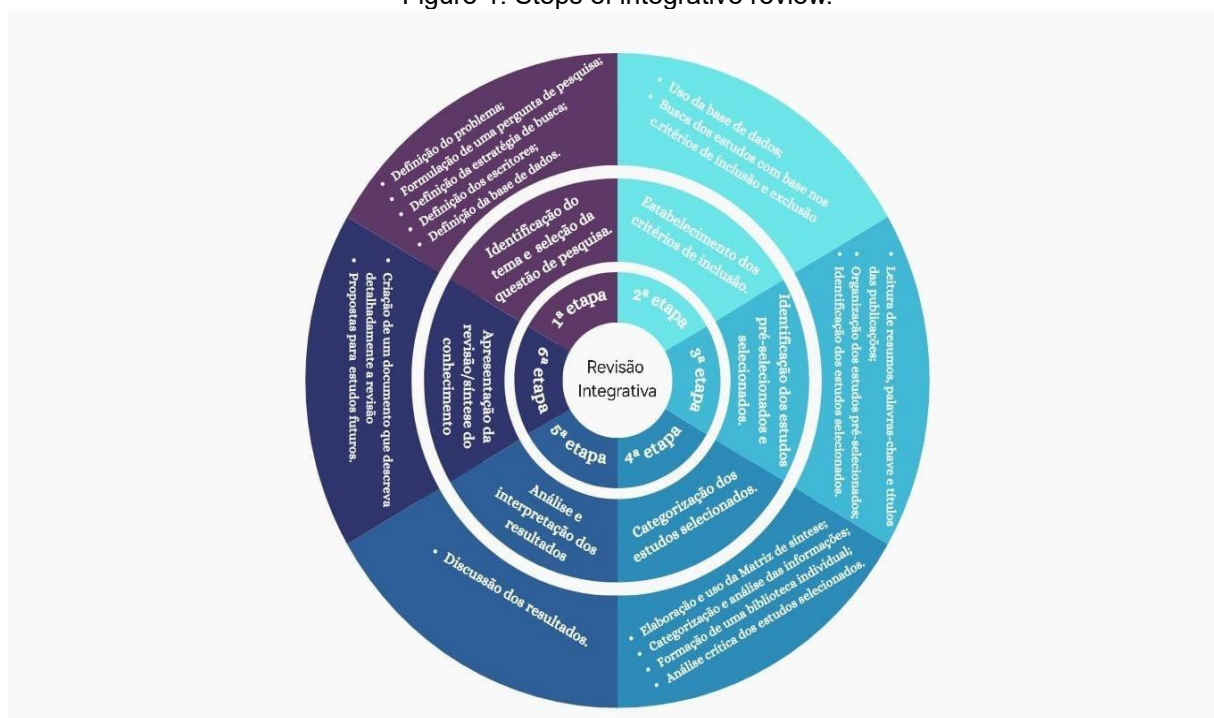
Integrative review is a valuable approach to evidence-based practice, as it allows for the combination of different perspectives and concepts drawn from the research analyzed. This methodology contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic,

providing a holistic view that considers the diversity of data. However, as noted by Machado (2024) in his discussions of fragmentation in the construction industry, the application of this approach requires a complex effort on the part of researchers. Complexity comes from the need to integrate information from multiple sources, which reflects a scenario where the development of specific skills and coordination between parties are essential to achieve meaningful results. In this way, integrative review, when applied with appropriate strategies, can improve data collection and analysis, contributing to more effective solutions in challenging contexts, such as the Brazilian justice system.

Based on the understanding exposed in this work and taking into account evidence-based research, a step-by-step guide is proposed for conducting an integrative systematic literature review. This approach is conceptualized and validated as an essential research instrument, widely applicable to various areas of knowledge, standing out for its ability to synthesize evidence and contribute to scientific and practical development (Nogueira, 2023).

Tom; Silva Júnior (2023), Botelho, Cunha and Macedo (2011), Gomes et al, (2024), propose the use of the integrative systematic review method as a research method that allows the creation of a theoretical or empirical synthesis on a specific topic. Based on these authors, the present work was carried out following six stages, namely: 1) identification of the theme and selection of the research question; 2) establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria; 3) identification of pre-selected and selected studies; 4) categorization of the selected studies; 5) analysis and interpretation of the results; and 6) presentation of the review/synthesis of knowledge. Figure 1 illustrates the breakdown of each of these steps.

Figure 1. Steps of integrative review.



Source: Tomaz; Silva Júnior (2023); Botelho *et al.*, (2011, p.129), Gomes *et. al.* (2024)

The present research was carried out in October and November 2024, using the Capes Periódicos, Scispace, Perplexity, Spell, Scielo databases, emphasizing that, in this phase of analysis and search for articles, only articles relevant to the theme of this integrative review were found in Capes Periódicos. After these searches, reports from the TST – Superior Labor Court and CNJ – National Council of Justice were included, emphasizing that for the purpose of analyzing the efficiency of the jurisdictional provision, data related only to the knowledge phase in the first instance were considered. First, because it is the moment when the vast majority of agreement approvals occur. Second, because it is possible to make a comparison with the cases judged in the traditional way, by the magistrate, where there is no influence of co-production, through conciliation. The choice of these sources was based on the existence of rigorously established search criteria, as well as on the wide availability of publications relevant to the thematic area of the study. The search strategies used keywords and Boolean operators, namely: "collaboration" AND "participatory" OR "co-production" AND "labor justice" OR "labor" AND "conciliation" OR "mediation", applied to the "topic" field in Capes Periódicos.

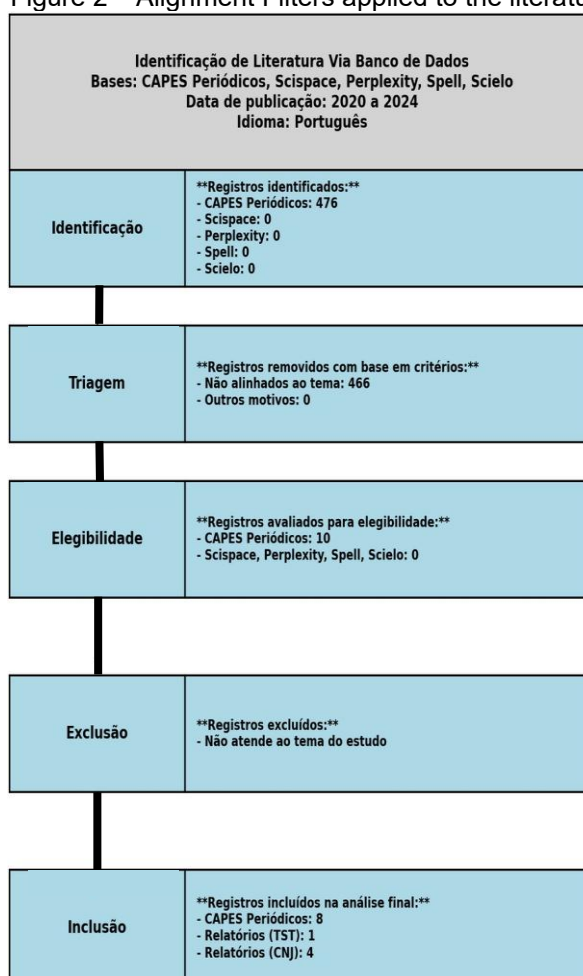
The search was restricted to documents published in Portuguese and was limited to the period from 2020 to 2024. Initially, 476 records were found in Capes Periódicos. After a screening, as for the time frame, 146 articles remained. By aligning these articles with the

theme of the study, taking into account the type of publication (journal/article), the keywords and the Boolean indicators, the number of selected documents was reduced to 10 (ten).

In the filtering process, a preliminary analysis of the general content of the articles was conducted, adopting as exclusion criteria those whose co-production approach involved other possibilities of participation in the labor courts, such as conciliation in the other subfields of law, as well as another article that, despite the publication being recent, mentioned a period prior to the one analyzed.

Given that these approaches are not aligned with the objective of this study, which consists of mapping and modeling lawsuits with emphasis on labor conciliation, 02 studies identified in the initial search phase were excluded. Thus, 08 studies were selected and considered relevant to compose the present review, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Alignment Filters applied to the literature



Source: authors (2024)

The synthesis matrix is used as an essential tool for data extraction and organization, allowing the synthesis of complex aspects of knowledge, facilitating the categorization and analysis of selected articles (Gomes et al, 2024). The question of the approximation between the problem and the researcher implies that the latter not only understands the problem in theoretical terms, but also connects with the practical implications and the contexts in which the question manifests itself. This approach facilitates the formulation of more relevant and targeted research questions, in addition to enabling a critical and engaged analysis of the data collected, contributing to the production of meaningful and applicable knowledge to the field of study. (Tomaz, 2022)

As a study with qualitative methodology, it is important to establish the validity and reliability of the research results to ensure the quality and credibility of the findings, aiming to mitigate threats that may compromise the correct interpretation of the results, thus providing a solid basis for the application of the findings in the researched context. (Heikkinen, 2022)

DATA AND DISCUSSIONS

The norms, scientific articles, and reports of the Judiciary studied in this work are listed in Chart 2, ordered from the most recent to the oldest, starting in 2020. It should be noted that they were carried out in Brazil, due to the theme of co-production in the national labor courts through conciliation. It is also important to note that 100% of the articles analyzed were published in the last five years, which demonstrates that the object of this work is a recent theme, in addition to being little addressed among academic studies. Such is the importance of the subject, that the Superior Council of Labor Justice - CSJT, on its website <https://www.csjt.jus.br/web/csjt/conciliacao-trabalhista/normativos>, when dealing with the "national management of judicial public policies for the adequate resolution of disputes", lists rules that support and support labor conciliation.

TABLE 2 - ABSTRACT ARTICLES

Year	Authors	Title	Summary	Publication Type
2020	Jorge Luiz Souto Maior, Valdete Souto Severo	Labor Justice as an Instrument of Democracy	It examines the role of Labor Law in the construction of a democratic society and the role of the Labor Court in promoting equity, aiming at the elimination of inequalities and the distribution of wealth	Law and Prx Journal, Rio de Janeiro

2020	Érica Nascimento dos Santos, Gabriela Queiroz Oliveira, Íthyla Moreira Carvalho dos Santos, Laís dos Santos Duarte, Manuelle Quintela Pires	The Conciliation System in the Labor Process	It examines the impact of conciliation on labor proceedings, highlighting its benefits and disadvantages, with special attention to the changes introduced by the 2017 labor reform.	Journal of Labor Law
2020	Maurício Avila Prazak, Marcelo Negri Soares, Angelo da Silva Souza	Extrajudicial Solutions to Business Conflicts in the Labor Courts	It conducts an analysis of out-of-court solutions to conflicts between employers and employees, with a discussion on mediation as a strategy to avoid the judicialization of labor disputes	Academic Journal of the Faculty of Law of Recife
2021	Jonathas Ferreira da Silva Lopes, Severina Francisca Roberto da Silva, Carlos Augusto da Silva Cavalcanti	Conciliation: Instrument of Celerity and Procedural Balance in the Labor Court	It discusses conciliation as an instrument of procedural speed and balance, highlighting mediation as an effective method for resolving disputes within the scope of the Labor Courts.	Vox Metropolitan Magazine
2021	Keila Andrade Alves Rubiano	The CEJUSC-JT and its Importance as a Policy for the Administration of Consensual Justice	It analyzes the structure of the Judicial Centers for Consensual Methods of Dispute Resolution within the scope of Labor Justice (CEJUSC-JT) and its relevance for the consensual resolution of labor disputes, focusing on the adaptations and challenges imposed by the context of the pandemic.	Journal of Judicial Policy
2021	Fábio de Medina da Silva Gomes	Reflections on the Judicial Agreement and the Institutional Management of Conflicts in the Labor Courts	It discusses the role of magistrates in judicial agreements involving domestic workers, with an analysis of the centrality of the judge in the conflict mediation process.	Revista Juris Poiesis
2022	Marciele A. de Vasconcellos, Cinara L. Rosenfield	Legal Controversies and Disputes for the Meanings of Justice in the Conciliatory Policy in the Labor Courts	It analyzes the controversies surrounding labor conciliation, with emphasis on the protection of social rights and the promotion of the humanization of the judicial system	CrH Notebook

2023	José Lopes Neto, Dorinethe dos Santos Bentes	Mediation and Conciliation in the Labor Courts: Yes to the Agreement and No to Labor Rights	It examines the flexibilization of labor rights in the context of mediation and conciliation, with a critical analysis of the possible negative impacts on workers	Ibero-American Journal of Humanities
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Source: created by the authors (2024).

For a better understanding of this stage, Chart 3 is shown below, which presents the methods and approaches of the analyzed articles and guides the study of each analytical category that will be addressed: context, citizen engagement, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, transparency and trust in the decisions co-produced by conciliation.

Table 3 - Framework

Title	Transparency	Citizen Engagement	Confidence	Equity	Efficiency	Context	Effectiveness
Labor Justice as an Instrument of Democracy	x	x	x			x	
Conciliation: Instrument of speed and procedural balance in the Labor Courts	x	x	x		x	x	x
Mediation and Conciliation in the Labor Courts: YES to the Agreement and No to Labor Rights	x	x	x		x	x	x
The Labor Process Conclusion System	x	x	x			x	x
The CEJUSC-JT and its importance as a policy of consensual Administration of Justice	x	x	x			x	
Reflections on the Judicial Agreement and the Institutional Management of Conflicts in the Labor Courts	x	x	x	x		x	

Legal controversies and disputes over the meanings of justice in the conciliatory policy in the Labor Courts	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Extrajudicial solutions to business conflicts in the Labor Courts	x	x	x			x	
General Report of the Labor Court 2023					x		
Justice in Numbers 2024					x		
Justice in Numbers 2023					x		
Justice in Numbers 2022					x		
Justice in Numbers 2021					x		

Source: created by the authors (2024).

CO-PRODUCTION REGARDING THE CONTEXT, CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND TRUST IN LABOR COURT CONCILIATIONS

Co-production in the Labor Court represents a collaborative model in which workers, employers, and the Judiciary come together to resolve disputes through conciliation. In this context, the parties involved have an active participation, and the magistrate, in addition to applying the law, acts as a facilitator of a more participatory and accessible justice. The 2017 Labor Reform encouraged this approach by introducing alternative methods of conflict resolution, with the aim of democratizing access to justice and reducing judicial overload (Gomes, 2021; Lee; da Silva; Cavalcante, 2021). In this scenario, the Judicial Centers for Conflict Resolution and Citizenship (CEJUSCs) play an essential role, by offering an institutional environment for mediation and conciliation, which provides a more agile and equitable justice experience, ensuring the protection of workers' rights and promoting a more agile and accessible system (Rubiano, 2021).

Citizen engagement in this system occurs at different levels. In many cases, workers participate in a conditioned way, that is, although involved in the process, they are in a

position where vulnerability and pressure for speed limit their total control over agreements (Santos et al., 2020; Gomes, 2021). However, extrajudicial mediation emerges as an alternative that provides greater autonomy and decision-making power, allowing employers and employees to dialogue directly and collaboratively (Prazak, Soares; Souza, 2020; Grandson; Bentes, 2023). This format of participation favors a more empowered engagement, where the parties can exercise broader control over the agreed terms, while respecting legal limits (Maior, Severo, 2020; Rubiano, 2021).

Building trust in the Labor Justice system is a crucial aspect for the success of this co-production. Workers' confidence is strengthened when the process is transparent, balanced and respects their rights (Vasconcellos; Rosenfield, 2022; Lopes, Silva; Cavalcanti, 2020). The presence of the magistrate is essential in this regard, as it can ensure that negotiations are fair and balanced, promoting agreements that protect the vulnerable party, especially in contexts where workers accept quick conciliations to avoid prolonging litigation. On the other hand, out-of-court mediation offers a less formal and more collaborative environment, where employers and employees have clarity and control over the process, reinforcing citizens' trust in the system (Prazak; Soares; Souza, 2020; Grandson; Bentes, 2023). Thus, trust in the Labor Justice system is promoted both by transparency and by the assurance that agreements will respect labor rights (Maior; Severo, 2020; Rubiano, 2021).

The analysis highlights that, although workers actively participate, their vulnerability can limit control over agreements, reflecting a tension between speed and protection of rights. The presence of magistrates is crucial to ensure transparency and justice, but even though extrajudicial mediation is more collaborative, it needs to ensure understanding and autonomy of the parties. Thus, the balance between efficiency and protection still requires improvement to strengthen trust in the system equally.

CO-PRODUCTION REGARDING EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS, EQUITY, TRANSPARENCY IN LABOR COURT CONCILIATIONS

Labor conciliation in the Labor Courts emerges as an essential practice to promote the agile and efficient resolution of conflicts, offering an alternative that relieves the judicial system and provides a quick response for workers and employers. This method contributes to reducing the processing time of cases, especially with the support of the Judicial Centers for Conflict Resolution and Citizenship (CEJUSCs), created after the 2017 Labor Reform.

These centers centralize and streamline mediation activities, ensuring that disputes can be resolved without the need for lengthy litigation, which directly reflects on the efficiency of the system (Lopes; Silva; Cavalcanti, 2021; Vasconcellos; Rosenfield, 2022). However, despite its effectiveness in reducing judicial congestion, conciliation brings to light the challenge of balancing this speed with the full protection of workers' rights, as many reports highlight that speed cannot compromise social justice and labor rights (Justice in Numbers, 2020; 2021; 2024).

For labor conciliation to be truly effective, it is essential that the mechanisms implemented protect the most vulnerable party in the relationship – usually the worker – against pressure for quick agreements that may result in excessive concessions of rights. This scenario requires magistrates and mediators to act rigorously to ensure that negotiation processes respect equity between the parties, avoiding what is known as "coercive harmony", where the need to quickly resolve the conflict can pressure the worker to accept unfavorable conditions (Vasconcellos; Rosenfield, 2022; Lee; Cavalcanti, 2021). Equity, in this sense, is a central principle, as it aims to promote a genuine balance between the interests of employers and employees, especially in contexts with large inequalities of power, such as in the case of domestic work (Gomes, 2021).

Transparency also plays a crucial role in building a reliable and accessible conciliation environment. In order for the worker to be clear about the terms of the agreement and control over the rights involved, it is essential that the process is conducted in a clear and informative manner. In CEJUSCs and court hearings, transparent mediation conducted by magistrates ensures that all parties fully understand the agreement, which not only strengthens citizens' trust in the Labor Justice system, but also promotes democratization and fair access to justice (Major; Severo, 2020; Rubiano, 2021). However, the pressure for speed can, in some cases, compromise this transparency, limiting workers' understanding of the legal implications of the agreements, as observed by Vasconcellos; Rosenfield (2022) and Lopes; Silva; Cavalcanti (2020).

Thus, labor conciliation, guided by the principles of effectiveness, efficiency, equity and transparency, presents itself as a robust model for the resolution of disputes within the scope of the Labor Courts. This model not only speeds up processes, but also focuses on ensuring that conflict resolution occurs in a fair and balanced manner, providing a safe and collaborative environment for citizens. The combination of these factors builds a conciliation system that meets the objectives of a more agile and democratic judiciary, while preserving

the protection of workers' rights and promoting accessible and reliable justice for all involved (Justice in Numbers, 2023; 2024)

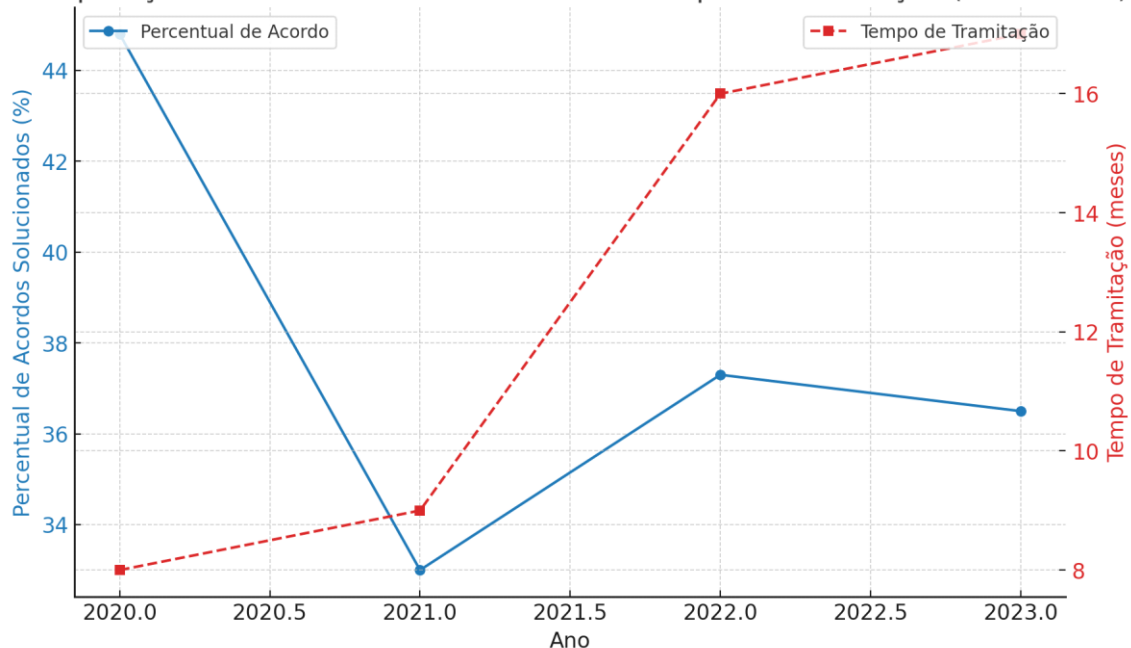
The benefit of labor conciliation is perceived in streamlining processes and relieving the burden on the judicial system. However, attention should be paid to the need to balance this speed with the protection of workers' rights, preventing efficiency from compromising equity. The "coercive harmony" mentioned reflects a concern about the pressure for quick settlements. For conciliation to fulfill its role, it is essential that mediators and magistrates ensure transparent and fair negotiations, where all parties fully understand the agreements, ensuring agile justice without sacrificing the protection of the most vulnerable.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EFFICIENCY OF CO-PRODUCTION IN CONCILIATIONS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE LABOR COURTS

The "Justice in Number" reports are annual publications of the National Council of Justice (CNJ) that statistically analyze the performance of the Brazilian judiciary. They monitor and evaluate the efficiency, productivity and challenges faced by each branch, including Federal Court, State Court, Labor Court, Electoral Court, among others. Thus, considering that those dense compendiums consolidate, among others, all the statistical data of the Labor Courts, they were chosen by this review, as a source of research for analysis and comparison between the number of approved agreements and the efficiency of the jurisdictional provision, in particular, regarding the duration of the proceedings. It should be noted that the report whose name mentions a year always refers to the data from the previous year.

In this context, in 2020, the labor judiciary solved 44.8%. In 2021, it solved 33%. In 2022, 37.3%. In 2023, 36.5%. On the other hand, as for the processing time of the process, it is compared from the receipt of the lawsuit to the judgment of the sentence in the first instance. Such a time, in 2020, was 8 months. In 2021, 9 months. In 2022, 16 months. In 2023, 17 months. The following chart illustrates these data:

Comparação entre Percentual de Acordos e Tempo de Tramitação (2020-2023)



Thus, it emerges from the graph that there was a drop in the percentage of settlements from 44.8% in 2020 to 33% in 2021, while there was an increase in the procedural processing time in the same period from eight to nine months. In 2022, there was a recovery to 37.3%, while the average duration of the process rose to sixteen months. In 2023, there is a slight reduction in agreement to 36.5%, with an increase in duration to 17 months.

This behavior suggests a possible inverse relationship between the percentage of agreements and the processing time in the periods from 2020 to 2021 and from 2022 to 2023, indicating that years with a lower co-production rate tend to have longer processes.

Between 2021 and 2022 there is no way to make this relationship. However, this is a period strongly marked by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted the normal processing of processes.

CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this study was to understand conciliation as an instrument of co-production in the Brazilian Labor Courts. This objective was achieved through theoretical development and empirical evidence collected, contributing to broaden the debate and subsidize magistrates, employees and employers with information on the subject.

The research addressed three main axes: (i) collaboration between the State, citizens and the judicial system to improve conflict resolution; (ii) the impacts of conciliation on the balance between procedural efficiency and accessible social justice; and (iii) the active participation of the parties in the conciliation process, with a focus on transparency, autonomy and mediation, elements that strengthen public trust and the democratization of access to justice.

The results indicate that, although workers actively participate, their vulnerability limits control over agreements, underscoring the crucial role of magistrates in ensuring transparency and fairness. Labor conciliation has proven to be effective in reducing the judicial burden and speeding up processes, but it requires a balance between speed and protection of rights, in order to consolidate confidence in the system. In addition, the analysis showed an inverse relationship between the percentage of settlements and the processing time of the cases, with the exception of the 2021-2022 period, impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study also offers theoretical and practical implications. In the theoretical field, it advances by highlighting the relevance of co-production in the public sector, specifically in the Labor Courts, showing that the engagement of the parties involved in conciliation can generate better results and greater confidence in the judicial system. The findings contribute to understanding how co-production can address judicial delays, increase trust in institutions, and promote greater equity in processes.

From a practical point of view, it is recommended to implement good practices, such as the training of mediators to promote collaborative and transparent approaches, in addition to the creation of indicators to assess the impact of conciliation on procedural efficiency. The strengthening of the Judicial Centers for Conflict Resolution and Citizenship (CEJUSCs) in underserved regions, the use of digital platforms for remote hearings and public campaigns on the benefits of conciliation are also suggested strategies. In addition, integrating unions and workers' associations in the discussions can contribute to improving conciliation processes and their results.

Among the limitations of the study, given the innovative nature of the theme and the consequent scarcity of material available for consultation, the analysis restricted to a few articles stands out, which may not capture all the complexity of the subject. Despite this, the results indicate relevant paths for decision-making in the labor system, reinforcing how co-production can promote autonomy, participation, and accessibility in the judicial system.

Finally, the findings inspire a future research agenda that explores, for example, how the qualification of mediators influences the transparency and trust of the parties or how co-production can be applied in other subfields of law, comparing results in terms of efficiency, equity and user satisfaction.

As highlighted by Elinor Ostrom (1996), effective solutions emerge when those affected by a problem actively participate in its resolution, aligning with the principle that a co-productive approach is fundamental to meet the real needs of society.

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