

IDENTITY SHIFTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE CURRICULUM

DESLOCAMENTOS DE IDENTIDADE NA EDUCAÇÃO SUPERIOR: UMA INVESTIGAÇÃO SOBRE A INTERNACIONALIZAÇÃO DO CURRÍCULO

CAMBIOS DE IDENTIDAD EN LA ENSEÑANZA SUPERIOR: UNA INVESTIGACIÓN SOBRE LA INTERNACIONALIZACIÓN DEL CURRÍCULO

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ABSTRACT: This article sought to analyze reports of academics from different undergraduate and graduate courses at a University of Vale do Itajaí/SC that participated in the Brazilian Federal Government's International Exchange Program, Science without Borders (CsF). This is qualitative research of the descriptive-interpretivist type, characterized as a case study. It has as instrument of data collection written reports of eight academics from different courses of the institution who participated in the CsF between 2012 and 2017. The results indicated that, if on the one hand, the discourses of the students are based on a personal and professional training qualified for the labor market, as well as the expansion of the linguistic and cultural repertoire; on the other hand, social, cultural, economic, and geographical inequalities are still evident due to the still restricted access to the CsF by the popular classes. This study is considered to undertake reflections for a better understanding of internationalization in the Higher Education curriculum.

KEYWORDS: Higher education. Identities. Science without borders.

RESUMO: Este artigo buscou analisar relatos de acadêmicos de diferentes cursos de graduação e pós-graduação de uma Universidade do Vale do Itajaí/SC que participaram do Programa de Intercâmbio Internacional do Governo Federal brasileiro, Ciências sem Fronteiras (CsF). Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa do tipo descritivo-interpretativista, caracterizada como um estudo de caso. Tem-se como instrumento de coleta de dados relatos escritos de oito acadêmicos de diferentes cursos da instituição que participaram do CsF entre 2012 e 2017. Os resultados apontaram que, se por um lado os discursos dos acadêmicos pautam-se em uma formação pessoal e profissional qualificada para o mercado de trabalho, assim como a ampliação do repertório linguístico e cultural; por outro lado, ainda se evidenciam desigualdades sociais, culturais, econômicas, geográficas pelo acesso ainda restrito pelas/das classes populares ao CsF. Considera-se que tal estudo empreende reflexões para uma melhor compreensão sobre a internacionalização no currículo na Educação Superior.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Educação superior. Identidades. Ciências sem fronteiras.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo buscó analizar los informes de los académicos de diferentes cursos de pregrado y posgrado de la Universidad de Vale do Itajai/SC que participaron en el Programa de Intercambio Internacional del Gobierno Federal de Brasil, Ciencia sin Fronteras (CsF). Se trata de una investigación cualitativa de tipo descriptivo-interpretativo, caracterizada como estudio de casos. Tiene como instrumento de recolección de datos los informes escritos de ocho académicos de diferentes cursos de la institución que participaron en el CsF entre 2012 y 2017. Los resultados señalaron que, si por un lado los discursos de los académicos se orientan por una formación personal y profesional calificada para el mercado laboral, así como la ampliación del repertorio lingüístico y cultural; por otro lado, las desigualdades sociales, culturales, económicas, geográficas se evidencian por el acceso aún restringido de/para las clases populares al CsF. Se considera que este estudio realiza reflexiones para una mayor comprensión de la internacionalización en el currículo de la Educación Superior.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Educación superior. Identidades. Ciencia sin fronteras.*

Initial anchors

The development of means of communication and means of transport is a result of what we call globalization. The world scenario has gone through countless transformations with the advent and influence of new technologies in the most different areas: social, environmental, political, geographic, among others.

In relation to Education, Knight (2004, p. 5, our translation) stands out: “internationalization is changing the world of higher education, while globalization is changing the world of internationalization”. In this perspective pointed out by the author, it is understood that globalization, a term coined in the 1980s, is a global flow of ideas, knowledge, people, goods, services and technologies.

Internationalization, in turn, highlights the relationships between countries, peoples, cultures and institutions. The transformations that this process of intensifying international economic and political integration, also known as globalization, has been generating and implying in the way we live and how nations and their organizations have established themselves are evident. These new realities have created a new challenge to anthropological, cultural, social, economic, linguistic thinking, causing new theoretical-methodological references to be developed, reconfigured or remodeled so that we can explain and understand the countless socioeconomic and sociocultural changes of/in our times.

In this way, nations and their populations are increasingly interconnected and symbolic elements and cultural meanings are increasingly interrelated and resignified in/by the relationships and actions carried out by and with people in a given time and space. Thus, the sociology of education and comparative education have the possibility of understanding and explaining how globalization has influenced academic mobility. For example, enabling a deeper analysis of the internationalization of the curriculum, especially regarding Higher Education.

Based on what Araújo and Silva (2015) underline, we are faced with a new social and pluri/multicultural dynamic, in which the different social groups inscribed in these processes are understood from another perspective, that of heterogeneity.

For Ribeiro (2011), globalization can be described both from the intensification of the circulation of people, goods and information, and from the “reconfiguration” of the relationships between different places. People, values, goods and information do not circulate in a disconnected way; however, they occur when their influencing capacities become present and active in different contexts.

Globalization has been defined, studied and analyzed from various perspectives over the centuries. There is, therefore, no rigid definition of this social and global phenomenon. When we look at the different concepts of globalization, new windows and new terms are opened. As a result of new frontiers, as well as the hybridity of cultures (GARCÍA CANGLINI, 2019), globalization is established as one of the consequences of the Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC). This is because the imperatives of a globalized world also emerge in the context of Education, in which under and from a discourse of the need to recruit workers who have developed skills that allow them to move into other cultures, speak other languages, think globally, starts by promoting internationalization strategies in the sector. As a result of different social, cultural and economic movements, globalization has enabled academic mobility and numerous programs and projects have emerged in various countries and institutions around the world.

What can be inferred is that globalization, IoC and academic mobility are themes linked to the issue of identity, or rather, the displacement of identity(ies) in and by the liquidity and fluidity that now constitutes not only human relations, but people's lifestyles, ways of thinking, being, acting, feeling (BAUMAN, 2001; 2005; HALL, 2011).

Regarding the Internationalization³ of Higher Education (IoHE), in Brazil and worldwide, this has been widely debated in different countries. Sub-themes such as academic mobility, multiculturalism and interculturalism gain greater prominence in the academic world (ARAÚJO; SILVA, 2015; KNIGHT, 2004). Issues such as international curriculum, language skills and competences, institutional and state policies, for example, underpin discussions about internationalized and globalized education.

Considering the above, the weave of this text aims to analyze the reports of academics from different undergraduate and graduate courses at a University located in Vale do Itajaí/SC who participated in the Brazilian Federal Government's International Exchange Program entitled Science without Borders (SwB) (BRASIL, 2011). Experience in which some contemporary phenomena of sociological, cultural, economic, educational and linguistic interest are inscribed, with repercussions in the field of the Higher Education Institution (HEI), from the personal and professional changes that occurred during the formative process, change of country and with the proposal of internationalization.

Experiences of transition of spaces in which it is necessary to look at and from some issues presented by these students: the (re)negotiation of their ethnic, cultural and linguistic identities and their academic practices. In this way, we understand that the narrative constituted by the academics' report in this study constitutes a strategy to reflect on transits of identity and knowledge of the academic's reality, their place of speech, their sense of belonging (integration) and/or (non)belonging in the face of internationalization.

Methodological anchors

The methodology of this study is based on a qualitative approach of the descriptive-interpretative type (BOGDAN; BIKLEN, 1999; BORTONI-RICADO, 2008), characterized as a case study.

This research has as a data collection instrument written reports from eight students, selected from a total of 50 texts by academics from different courses at the researched institution, located in Vale do Itajaí/SC, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, who participated in the SwB Program, covering the years 2012 to 2017.

³ “Aurélio defines “internationalization” as the “act or effect of becoming international”, “Becoming international”. The word “international” comprises four definitions: “That which takes place between nations: “That takes place between nations. Whose names extend to different nations. That spreads across several nations” (DWYER, 2013, p. 57, authors’ highlights, our translation).

The textual productions of these eight participating academics were woven with informal and personal language, making discursive the learning during the participation in an exchange movement in which the production of knowledge, academic research and the exchange of experiences in other countries were relevant aspects in the during the analyses.

The empirical basis consists of texts by academics upon their return to Brazil and activities carried out at the University. These textual productions, which are analyzed from a content analysis guided by a descriptive-interpretative analysis (BORTONI-RICARDO, 2008), served as a basis for trying to understand what this experience represented in the academic and, eventually, professional future of the participants; as well as for the university institution with regard to enabling and promoting developments, namely: scholarships, projects, language policies, research and projection in the national and international academic scientific scenario.

Within the proposal to discuss current issues and those related to IoC, we explore the theme that contributed to the reorientation of the view on academic mobility processes within a perspective closer to Sociocultural Issues of Contemporary Education, enabling us to understand ways of thinking about social relations, the individual, work, society and the new global configurations that have emerged in recent centuries.

Internationalization of Higher Education and Science without Borders

Studies report that the SwB generated punctual and positive results for internationalization, highlighting the insertion of international academic mobility. The focus of the program was to encourage Brazilian academics, both at undergraduate and graduate levels, to travel to universities abroad and experience academic studies and research experiences in different contexts. (ARAÚJO; SILVA, 2015; GOMES; CHIRELLI; TAKEDA, 2019; KNIGHT, 2004; PICCIN; FINARDI, 2019; RIO, 2017; THIESEN, 2019).

Thus, within the scope of the internationalization of teaching and academic mobility, there is a growing demand for the use and learning of foreign languages in the university space. This demand highlights the gap between the precarious formation in foreign languages in Basic Education and the communicative needs of the academic context. Thus, there is a need to implement a pluri/multilingual university language policy that considers the linguistic diversity involved in the internationalization process.

The Brazilian government, in an innovative action with the SwB (BRASIL, 2011), for example, spearheaded the first major project of policies for the internationalization of

university education with the aim of inserting itself in the international and intercultural dimension of the globalized world, in a first moment in federal universities and, later, expanding to private institutions, with the aim of covering and democratizing the access of the academic community (professors and students) to international exchange and promoting a great mass of university mobility.

It is understood that the way in which governmental and institutional language policy guidelines are, in practice, implemented or reinterpreted, and as Ball and Mainardes (2011) point out, the process of Internationalization of the Higher Curriculum, drives a more inclusive education, promoting equitable or excluding access to opportunities that reinforce privileges.

What Dutra and Gayer (2015) discuss is in line with Bourdieu (2013) tensions about *cultural capital* and access to cultural goods, whether social, symbolic, or linguistic. In the case of the academics participating in this study, it can be inferred that their *cultural capital* through experience, acquisition or preference for a foreign language and knowledge of other cultures from the interest in doing an exchange, as can be seen in textual productions of these subjects, it is constituted by linguistic and cultural practices that, despite the exchange, have not been considered in other international contexts. In other words, they are not official, they are not hegemonic and they are not legitimized.

This *cultural capital* that constitutes the academics of the University researched here does not meet the knowledge of the culture and language of these subjects during their experience in these countries, as can be seen from their reports. This, as stated by Araújo and Silva (2015, p. 82), is still a question of thinking in the place of legitimized science in relation to the production and circulation of knowledge.

According to Araújo e Silva (2015, p. 85), it is possible to infer that there are areas/fields of knowledge more and less valued, namely: the area/field of Exact Sciences in relation to the area/field of Human and Social Sciences, “hard sciences” and soft sciences”, when it comes to internationalization. Thus, as occurs internally in Brazil, there is a demand for scientific production and dissemination when thinking about the “qualis” concept attributed to journals, for example, and the legitimacy that this implies in the Brazilian academic society.

In thinking about international productions, it is also possible to observe the prestige/disrepute polarization, academic validation/non-validation and the intrinsic and extrinsic power relations that are present and perpetuated by/in hegemonic countries, such as Boston and Harvard universities, in the United States (ARAÚJO; SILVA, 2015). And, in this

sense, we can understand a race of universities in developing countries (peripheral ones), which crave the "certificate" of quality and excellence that universities already consolidated in the world carry/have. However, it is also possible to think that, for some Brazilian students, this is the only opportunity and possibility to interact, exchange, dialogue, learn about and with other realities located in these internationalization processes.

Internationalization and other/new experiences

The SwB was a watershed in the academic and professional life of these students, due to its ruptures, deconstructions, (re)cognition of oneself and the other, of their language and that of the other, of their culture and that of the other. Let us see what academics enunciate:

Science without Borders was essential for me to fulfill my dream of traveling abroad and visiting and experiencing a new culture and improving my knowledge of the English language. [...] Australian people don't have much patience or even complacency with people who don't speak the English language, they expect you to have a good knowledge of the language as you came to attend a university course [Report 01, Year of Exchange: 2014, degree in Architecture, Australia, 12 months duration].

It was a very good opportunity to participate in Science without Borders. [...] I found the food and the cold weather very strange, my course companions were always very helpful and friendly. The way they relate to foreigners has always been very open and respectful. Without a doubt, having lived during this academic year in such a different country, having lived with people from all over the world and with different languages, was incredible! [Report 02, Exchange Year: 2015, degree in Chemical Engineering, Sweden, 12 months duration].

(...) The exchange was a brilliant way to promote interaction between my course and the course at the Chilean university, I was very comfortable despite not having an advanced level of Spanish, I was able to follow the classes and lead a very independent life in the country. The approximation of the Spanish language to Portuguese helped my integration into Chilean life [Report 03, Year of Exchange: 2016, degree in Biology, Chile, 12 months].

I already knew a little about the modus operandi of American culture and habits. There is no denying the great miscegenation in the country and the large number of graduate students from other nationalities studying at the university, speaking other languages [Report 07, Exchange Year: 2017, postgraduate degree in Business Administration, United States of America, 18 months duration].

Such narratives imply thinking about the fluidity, mobility, flexibility (BAUMAN, 2005) that imprint marks on the personal and professional lives of these subjects by the lived experience and, therefore, "what happens to me" and not "what happens", as stated by Larrosa

(2011, p. 5). In this case, from the opportunity to travel to another country and from the leading role undertaken by academics, to experience and live other and new cultures, improve and expand the linguistic repertoire already learned in their country of origin. What is inferred here is the role of Education as an instrument of social equality and as a possibility to overcome the cultural, economic, social and linguistic marginalities of the reality experienced by many Brazilian students.

However, for Bourdieu (2013), the ideologies that socially circulate in different social spaces, such as the school and, we add here, the university, materialize from structures that reinforce and reproduce the domination of one class at the expense of others. Such structures of power and domination are built within discourses, such as the pedagogical and social groups, and have to do with the habitus that legitimizes, classifies and/or excludes subjects from the social hierarchies (position) that they come to occupy in a given social field. What allows them, therefore, to be able to say or not to say, to be able to act or not to act based on an authorization of this saying and this action, as the assumed/occupied social hierarchy is measured in that social field (the school, the university, by example). That is, it authorizes oneself to say and act in that social field, given the relations of power and strength that are constituted there and also begin to constitute this subject. As an example, we can mention the relationships that materialize in these social places:

[...] I noticed that many students had doubts during classes but did not express themselves to ask due to the great distance between teachers and students. This was a negative point so that other foreign colleagues could often resolve various questions. I had to break some implicit protocols (of formality) and I didn't realize that the teachers were bothered or thought it was disrespectful [Report 06, Exchange Year: 2017, Degree in Chemistry, Poland, 12 months duration].

I felt a great surprise that some professors owed my predicates as an applied and dedicated student, my knowledge of the subjects covered in class, my punctuality, responsibility and commitment to my research. A professor even mentioned that this was considered an exception behavior among many Brazilian academics, that our fame in relation to studies was not the best. At first, I confess that I was surprised and even "offended", but as the months went by, I understood what the teachers meant... Many students really fell into the profile of being poorly prepared or committed to their studies. [Report 07, Exchange Year: 2017, postgraduate degree in Business Administration, United States of America, 18 months duration].

To get to postgraduate school was a journey of a lot of struggle and huge personal sacrifices. Getting a CAPES scholarship in my master's and doctorate and the chance to go to Europe to do this stage of my education was something that would never have crossed my mind. Poor, 5 out of 9 children, farming parents with no education, I took the entrance exam to the

University with many financial difficulties. During my academic journey I divided my semesters between classes at university, tutoring (work grant), weekend work in a bar and English language classes. There were many sacrifices as I mentioned earlier that prepared me to face the challenges of a postgraduate degree and having lived 18 months in another continent. [...] I used what little English I knew for communication and research activities. It was very difficult to make myself understood and to understand what was happening [Report 08, Exchange Year: 2017, postgraduate degree in Environmental Engineering, Belgium, 18 months].

From this perspective, both the school and the university are still prepared to receive students considered "ideal" and "traditional", based on the social and hierarchical relationship assumed by the teacher as the sole provider of knowledge and the student as a passive being to learn from that teacher. Therefore, thinking also about the concept of *cultural capital* presented by Bourdieu (2013) and the different social fields that constitute these subjects until they enter school or university, allows us to look at the values that affect their saying and actions in society and in their entry into these institutions.

Bourdieu and Passeron (2012) thus mention that inequality is present when those students already chosen/already elected from the social spaces of which they were constituted, would determine the entry and permanence of these subjects in school and also at the university. against the idea that there is democratization and social equality.

Agreeing with Freire (2019[1968]), it is not possible to think of subjects outside of ethics or the social and historical context in which they are inserted. Therefore, the educational process cannot be oblivious to this, in order not to “sweep what is fundamentally human in the educational exercise: its formative character” (FREIRE, 2019[1968], p. 34, our translation). In addition, it emphasizes the importance of bringing theory and practice closer in thinking about the protagonism of the cultural identity advocated by Freire (2019[1968]). The author points out the importance of the subjects' assumption, in a movement to value their individuality, their subjectivity, their cultural and historical aspects, their autonomy in relation to the other, which should not and cannot be disregarded as an educational practice. This is because the protagonism of the subjects/actors or participants must transcend the intent of education.

From a historical and social perspective, Freire (2019[1996], p. 16, authors' highlights, our translation), understands the student as a social and historical subject who brings his knowledge to the school and academic sphere, emphasizing that “*formation* it is much more than just *training* the student in their skills” and that the ethical posture must always be sought, “the universal ethics of the human being”.

Internationalization: Marginalization or Ascension?

Some reflections led the world to recognize the cracks in the Third World, they gave visibility to the margin, the subaltern had a voice and visibility to go beyond the Marxist vision or the East-West division, to another great gap that was organized between the North binomial -South, in the context of the internationalization of education. About this, the subjects signal:

At certain moments I felt a great distance from some academics and people in general when they knew I was Brazilian. Such stereotypes always surface.... Brazil, beer, beautiful and “relaxed” women, samba, body on display, etc. This experience has certainly already borne fruit and there are great job prospects due to the SwB. It was all very positive! Even so, we still carry that look of exotic and different even strange in their eyes. (..) [Report 01, Year of Exchange: 2014, degree in Architecture, Australia, 12 months duration].

There is a lot of curiosity about our big cities, especially Rio de Janeiro and its famous favelas. Conversations almost always ended about football. Despite the education system in Canada being one of the best in the world and the quality of life with the health and social security system, the Canadian, even with a higher degree of education still carries the image of exoticism in Brazil. The SwB program has opened doors for us to show more of our country and its wonders. For some students and teachers to know about some advances that we have in Brazil in relation to technology was a big surprise [Report 04, Year of Exchange: 2017, degree in Computer Science, 12 months duration].

I arrived in Denmark afraid of what this 12 month adventure would be like in a country so distant and different from ours! I confess I didn't feel like a mutt (...) [Report 05, Year of Exchange: 2017, degree in Business Administration, Denmark, 12 months duration].

Some people have an idea that we are more like our colleagues on the African continent, they have no idea of the industrial park in Brazil, our technological advances that we have and that we master. What made me very uncomfortable and sometimes offended was the reverberated image that many Europeans (especially some Belgians) have of Brazil. I left this experience, believing even more in our potential as a people and nation, in my strength to overcome it. I am extremely proud to have gone through this program and now realize that our country has great advantages. I was able to better understand how we function as a society. This vision made me prouder of my roots, where I came from! Regardless of everything we see wrong in our country, this is my place of “speech”, this place is mine! If we don't start to recognize our potential and who we really are, we won't be able to assert ourselves in a way that makes a difference in the eyes of the colonizers.. [Report 08, Year of Exchange: 2017, postgraduate degree in Environmental Engineering, Belgium, 18 months duration].

By analyzing this excerpt from the reports, we propose to revisit the analysis of writer Nelson Rodrigues (1993), illustrating the trauma suffered by the Brazilian people in 1950, when the Brazilian team had been defeated by the Uruguayan soccer team in the World Cup final, in the Maracana Stadium. Rodrigues (1993) coined the popular expression “complex of mutts”. The author's idea leads us to an inferiority complex when we compare ourselves to the rest of the world. In countless moments of our Brazilian history there are traces of our old mutt complex, in various social spheres.

However, when we come across such reports from academics, we show that even with all the advances that have taken place in Brazil in recent decades, with the implementation of various policies in areas such as education, encouraging academic mobility, internationalization of teaching, access and distribution of *cultural capital*, the ideology that constitutes the Brazilian in its mutt complex still permeates our discourses. In other words, they are historically situated practices that echo the attempts to internalize social and ideological relations that are still hegemonic, official, legitimate and homogeneous, which constitute the discourse of these subjects.

When reflecting on the arrival of globalization within the context of the internationalization policies of Higher Education, it is necessary to consider the decolonial thinking that, according to Mignolo (2013, p. 131, our translation), preaches about “global equality and economic justice, but which also declares that Western democracy and socialism are not the only two models that guide our thoughts and actions”.

Internationalizing as a local practice is thus an exercise in mobility (moving positions, discourses, perspectives etc.), freedom (so that one lives from difference, listening to the other, in Freirean terms) and problematization (since convincing reveals the other's desire for colonization). Internationalizing, in this aspect, also implies rethinking the public space.

In this sense, Mignolo (2010) warns of the importance of confronting universalism, hegemonic thinking, in its most diverse aspects and achievements, highlighting the urgency of distancing ourselves from predominantly Westernized basic norms regarding moral and learning about being human in contemporary times, redefining the space of the collectivity.

From a macro-analytical perspective, it is to think about/in the displacements of students through contemporary reflection on the geopolitics of scientific knowledge. Far from being exchanges made randomly and without any political significance, student migration today is the main face of the internationalization process of Higher Education, even becoming a State policy in different countries.

Thus, when analyzing the reports of academics who participated in the SwB university exchange, they signal a different reality from the official discourse, and we infer that the actions, even if timid of Internationalization within the University, come from movements almost isolated from some departments or even from some professors, together with the guidance of the International Relations Centers and the Language course of the institution that is the field of this research.

Final anchors

This article, which sought to analyze written accounts of the experiences of academics from different undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the researched University, located in Vale do Itajaí/SC, who participated in the SwB, indicates that education from a contemporary society presents characteristics related to others and new forms taken by work; the high competitiveness and the demand for qualification of the workforce mean that education promotes differentiated and up-to-date formation.

If on the one hand, the academics' speeches point to a qualified personal and professional formation for the labor market, as well as the expansion of the linguistic and cultural repertoire; on the other hand, social, cultural, economic, geographic inequalities are still evident due to the still restricted access of the popular classes and the look that is cast on these subjects coming from social places that are not legitimated, or not so prestigious by society and by the academic sphere itself.

In a more egalitarian and inclusive vision of education and society, defended here in this text, is that programs such as the SwB allowed and promoted Brazilian students to have access to the cultural goods of countries where they could live and experience other and new realities.

Finally, we consider that this article is not reduced to an attempt to generalize its findings, but rather to offer some urgent reflection possibilities for a better understanding of the internationalization of the curriculum. That is, to enable teaching and learning processes in Higher Education that meet the demands of the labor market at the end of their undergraduate and postgraduate studies, considering real and non-ideal subjects. In this way, we hope to contribute beyond the educational field, and that the process of internationalization of Higher Education in the future points towards institutional sustainability and scientific-technological development with relevant and inclusive social results.

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