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Introductory Chapter: Communication, Education, and Internationalization - Paths and Possibilities of the Systems in the European Union

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1. Introduction

The crisis in the European Union was a scenario announced long ago. Authors point a series of situations that indicated the construction of a structural crisis in the European continent: the globalization of economy under the influence of large economic spaces; the limits of market economy and the failure in the compatibility between growth and solidarity; the intense outsourcing that changed the productive network from a goods economy to a service economy; the shortage of workplaces, even with the existent cycles of hiring and expansion; the fast change in the nature and content of occupational structure; the decrease of private and public savings, with consumerism reinforcement; the transnational flow of capitals; and the collapse of leadership behavioral values [1–16].

In this environment surrounded by the possibilities of a structural crisis, the consolidation of the European Union and its yearnings for mobility and employability and the strengthening of transnational economies found a possible answer in the search for a common education, with accreditation and validation in partner countries [17]. It is the search for formative educational process internationalization. This word has gradually replaced the concept of globalization in education, being more accepted in formative spaces.

2. Communication, education, and internationalization

The concepts around internationalization are diverse, and they represent different understanding perspectives of the social and formative space. These concepts are permeated by individual, collective, and block interests that tend to strengthen certain visions of the world and society.

In the academic field, a place of dispute and contradiction, these visions about what is the internationalization of higher education and its impacts are, very often, focus of problematization and lively discussions. Therefore, it is important to understand that the discussion around the internationalization of higher education occurs inside the discussion of the own concept of globalization. In the last years of the twentieth century, in educational scope,

the word globalization was being gradually replaced by the idea of internationalization, since the first notion is seen in the formative space as negative and conflicting [18].

Giddens 1990, p. 64 apud [19] defines globalization as the "[…] intensification of world social relations that bond distant locations in such a way that the local events are conditioned by events that happened many miles and vice versa" (free translation). Albrow [20] goes beyond and says that globalization is "[…] the process by which the population of the world became increasingly unite in a single society" (free translation). But whoever thinks that it is only financial is wrong. Giddens himself [21] affirms that the "[…] globalization is political, technological, and cultural, as much as financial" (free translation), influenced by communication systems. It can be noticed when thinking about the Bologna Process [1].

Indeed, technology and communication have facilitated the dissemination and the exchanges among countries instantly, expanding the perception that "the distant world is closer than we think" (free translation) and the feeling that it is possible to touch it and change it. Giddens [21] reinforce that feeling the world, without obstacles and widely, ended the "age of nation-state," with its determined obstacles. This seems to be here the main problem when discussing about the word globalization. It seems to be, in the ordinary mind, mediated by the mass media, synonym of free market, end of trade barriers, reduction of social spending, and end of social security, just to indicate some of the related subjects mentioned as the "social apocalypse" caused by the globalizing neoliberal vision.

Giddens [21] reinforce that "[…] globalization is not, therefore, a singular process, but a complex set of processes" (free translation). This perspective is important, as the notion of globalization is associated with the idea of loss, withdrawn. When thinking about Bologna, this was one of the feelings the participants of formative educational activities had about the whole process [17, 22–25], and this was also noticed in the social communication/journalism area. Indeed, losses occur, because deep curricular and formative changes were established, but there are also possible gains with the interrelationships with other countries, among them the resurgence of cultural identities, previously fragmented and forgotten by national societies, and "new economic and cultural areas inside e through nations" [21].

Santos [19] remembers "globalization results, indeed, from a series of political decisions identified in time and in authorship," since it "[…] disorganized the hierarchies of the previous global economy" (free translation). This recognition of "time and authorship" reinforces that the epistemological breach caused by globalization had an important moment, time, and space in the disorganization of systems and crystallized hierarchies, but it does not mean, necessarily, that it could not be resignified [19].

This resignification has been made and in the educational field gradually slowed down the notion of globalization by using the expression internationalization. Less rejected by the wider community, the expression tries to agglutinate resignified elements of globalization, producing similar effects, as in the case of regionalization [26–28]. Internationalization, apparently less threatening than globalization, is defined as the expression of postures and actions updating, and it is already practiced in the foundations of university. Therefore, the impact is mitigating, but not the necessary actions to consolidate the formative processes necessary to the Bologna implementation.

Morosini [29] says that:

> *The internationalization of higher education (Ides) is considered as any systematic effort that aims to make higher education more responsive to the demands and challenges related to the globalization of society, economy, and job market. (Free translation)*

This response action to the challenges and demands of society is also shared by other authors. Knight [30] affirms that internationalization has as its focus on "[...] the process of integrating and international or intercultural dimension into the research, teaching and services functions of an institution of higher education." More pragmatist, Knight [30] understands the interaction in an international scope focusing in the university pillars. Really close to the opinion of Morosini [29], Wende [31] reinforces that the internationalization of higher education includes "[...] any systematic, sustained effort aimed at making higher education (more) responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalisation of societies, economy and labour markets." These indications, despite having their focuses on Brazil and North America, are applied worldwide.

3. Paths and possibilities

In the Portuguese space, these perspectives are also shared to a greater or lesser extent. With Bologna, Portugal awakened to education and learning as fundamental parts in the knowledge economy. About this perspective, Reis and Camacho [32] indicate that:

> *Politically, this process also fits in the strategic option that the European Union made, in 2000, to become until 2010, in the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy of the world, capable of a lasting economic growth, anchored in a sustainable economic progress, with environmental concern, followed by a quantitative and qualitative improvement of employment and social cohesion (Lisbon Strategy). The concept of knowledge economy fits in the scope of knowledge society and assumes a strong bet in the increase of the levels of human resources skills, namely through a lifelong learning process, and in the scientific and technological development. (Free translation)*

Mobility—from students, professors, and technicians—reinforced by the Bologna speech, allowed this knowledge economy to be shared among nations. Formation and investigation networks were created and tuned, resulting in more fluidity of knowledge, which is close to what Castells [18] calls informational economy. In addition, the curriculum realignment, not fully creating common contents but approaching common professional competencies and skills, allowed students, professors, and technicians to be inserted in realities that were totally different from what they experienced in their home countries [33]. It is on this path that the Bologna proposal eased the interaction and the exchange of expertise among countries, even if not totally set and operational [14, 16, 34, 35].

Internationalization, reinforced and amplified by the Bologna speech, allowed the modernization and the debureaucratization of university structures, which resulted in more attractiveness and visibility [13–16]. Giddens [21] certifies this, indicating that "[...] new economic and cultural zones *inside* and *through* nations"

(free translation) are created and reinforced. But we cannot fail to realize that, as universities open to a new market, more "technological and technocratic," new demands as "[...] efficiency, productivity, competitiveness, profitability, cost-benefit analysis, result evaluation, results-based management" (free translation), never considered before with emphasis in public institutions and in the "doing" of professors[1], are reinforced and put in the center of the formative educational speeches [33].

This new technical-educational-formative vocabulary, mixed with technological elements, consists in a new paradigm of formation, which has teaching as its focus. Formative processes were resignified, creating the perspective of the constitution of a new society composed by competent citizens for a transnational community that has its curricula denationalized[2], focused on the continent's future [36, 37].

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[1] About these changes, Josep M. Blanch, professor of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), in an interview for Bianchetti [33], highlighted the impacts of Bologna on the teaching work in his institution: "But changing from an 'old' system, based on teaching, masterful, from an university more similar to the German and French type, universal, encyclopedic, with many contents, to a model similar to the Anglo-Saxon, where the reference center becomes the student and not the professors is something complex. ECTS credits are no longer counted in the professor-hour system (basic reference of the system based on the professor's 'teaching'), but in student-hour system (rhetorical reference of the system based on the student's 'learning'). An old credit meant 10 professor-hours, more or less. Now, a new credit becomes 25 student-hours, which depending on the subjects, might be seven professor-hours, ten hours of fieldwork and eight hours in the library depending on the subject or content, if it is more theoretical, practical or experimental. Therefore, this is a change of concept. [...] about this I calculate that the transition from the modern system to the post-modern, from the old system to Bologna system, I assume – talking about my work field – a 30% work increase, at least, which clearly should imply 30% more in means, human, technical, and material resources, not to mention the difference between the linear and diachronic time of the 'thesis that traveled by boat' in the 1980s and the synchronic and instant time of the archive that 'travels' through internet" (free translation).

[2] The project *TUNING Educational Structures in Europe*, which began in May 2001, had as its aim obtaining a degree of convergence in the European Union and in the higher education systems in the block countries. Five major areas were the focus: mathematics, geology, management, history, and education science. The program's aim was to define professionally accepted parameters in these major areas.

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