

Internationalization of Higher Education: The Imaginaries In The Conceptualization of The Cosmopolitan Citizen For The Internationalization of The Curriculum In Developing Countries.

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Abstract : *The globalization discourse where the generalized expression: the advances of the global society are given in an egalitarian form for all the regions, results in contradiction with the unequal impact of the globalization processes in countries with different level of economical development and cultural settings. These particularities define specific necessities in the cultural and educational environment according to a conceptualization of the cosmopolitan citizen that confront the hegemonic modern social imaginaries. The construction of an international curriculum in the context of a Mexican university needs to clarify the nature of the individual, in order to decide what kind of person the school wants to form.*

Keywords -cosmopolitan citizen, developing countries, internationalization, international curriculum, modern social imaginaries.

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I. Introducción

Internationalization, defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education (Knight, 2005: 13 [1]), is the most quoted definition of such dimension of Higher Education (HE). Nonetheless, this understanding gives the idea that HEIs should assume a reactive behavior in face of globalization. This results in an unclear comprehension of the objectives of the international education for the student, which brings difficulties in the construction of an international curriculum. This problematic finds support in Popkewitz (2009 [2]) in reference to his worries about who the student is, who he/she should be, and who adjusts to those images.

Studies carried on who the student should become and how he/she should be formed in the knowledge society (Castells, 1999 [3]) show the influence of policies and practices around the world. Policies and practices give way to a common comprehension that makes possible a repertoire of actions in a determined reality, that Taylor (2006) calls modern social imaginaries. This is the case of the different assumptions of the cosmopolitan citizen in the landscape of the internationalization of HE, where Popkewitz (2009) finds key elements of cosmopolitanism in the school reforms and in the curricula with assemblies and connections to the globalized world.

Based on Taylor's (2006 [4]) argument that people assume new practices by imposition, improvisation or adoption, theories, although not entirely by themselves, can define the contours of people's world and can become the natural way of social practices; and on Santos's (2005 [5]) idea that cosmopolitanism is mainly understood in a hegemonic manner, with educational policies that arise from a vision that we live in an information society, here we present different conceptualizations of the cosmopolitan citizen unveiling imaginaries that are translated to the world according to the reality of the central countries, but that find difficulties when they are implemented in the context of what Santos (2011 [6]) calls the global south.

Taylor's argument of imposition, improvisation or adoption as a generator of imaginaries can be supported with the fact that education policies are influenced by the effects of globalization in their rush for competitiveness (Dale, 1999 [7]; Bonal and Tarabini, 2011 [8]; Dale and Robertson, 2012 [9]). Such influence, according to Dale (1999), varies in relation to what he denominates as mechanisms, which differ in consonance

to a country's position in the world and regional economy¹. To this respect, Bonal and Tarabini (2009 [10]), point that the mechanism of imposition is the one that better defines the ways the GSEA (Globally Structured Educational Agenda) has installed itself in the educational southern politics. That is demonstrated in the dependency on the World Bank credits, which conditions the adoption of priorities and strategies..

II. Relatad Works

The studies related to the internationalization of the curriculum and the formation of a cosmopolitan citizen seems to be adapted to a commercial model adjusted to the income generation. On the one hand, the exclusive programs for international students that represent additional income, and on the other, a quantifier quality parameter in the form of rankings for the world class universities.

Some case studies refer to the cultural part of the curriculum in relation to the internationalization; they focus mainly in the development of respect and the understanding of other cultures. Brunton and Jeffrey (2014 [11]), analyze aspects of student mobility to adequate the curricula in order to propitiate the acculturation of international students and at the same time local students benefit from it. This study was carried on in New Zealand where the population of foreign students rises to 10,000 in only eight of the universities engaged with the international education (Icef monitor, 2015)². On another study, Futao Huang (2006 [12]) discusses the development of international curriculum in China, Japan and the Netherlands; in China, only accredited institutions are permitted to hold international students and to internationalize the curricula textbooks are imported from universities like Harvard, Stanford and MIT; in Japan are offered exclusive programs for foreign students in the fields of sciences; in contrast, in the Netherlands, international programs are open for the local students, the courses taught in English sometimes exceed the courses taught in Dutch.

These cases show how the social, cultural, economical, political and academic dynamics have a definite influence in the way the university decides to carry on their internationalization. As it is observed, the academic mobility plays an important role in the implementation of the internationalization of their curricula, which seems to obey to a market position of education.

On behalf of developing the intercultural ability, Killick (2012 [13]) and Leask (2009 [14]) pay attention to the perceptions of social learning of students in mobility to contribute to the development of the curriculum for the students that stay at home. However, in the study of I-ru Chen and Yat Wai Lo (2013 [15]) the intercultural is seen as a means to develop respect, democratic values and an emancipating attitude. In that sense, Gacel-Ávila (2005 [16]), proposes a reform to the educational paradigm recognized in the internationalization of HE, whit the objective of focusing in the academic content that results in a curriculum that turn graduates in real architects of social change.

As it has been observed, the development of intercultural capacities, traits of the cosmopolitan citizen, is directed outwards (different foreign customs and their comprehension to avoid cultural shock in preparation for the world of work). To this respect, it is well known that in the 21st century this functional part of the acquisition of intercultural knowledge cannot be set apart, it is also necessary to look at the local, especially in the context of our region, the Latin-American countries.

In this sense, Svensson and Wilhborg (2010 [17]), as well as Tunnerman (2010 [18]) and Gimeno Sacristan (2010 [19]), defend the importance of the integration of the university culture to the curriculum. Nevertheless, in the Latin-American universities, specifically in the Mexican ones, the strategies of internationalization are limited to the student mobility and the signing of agreements (Gacel-Ávila, 2005; Didou Aupetit, 2007 [20]). The question in face of such reality is how students will acquire the abilities of an international citizen when the Latin-American region is the one that sends fewer students abroad, 6.1%, and it also receives fewer students, 1.8% (UNESCO-UIS, 2012 [21]). Following a lower pattern, the university in this study shows a .13% of salient student mobility and a .04% of students from foreign universities³.

Nonetheless, student mobility per se is not guarantee of cosmopolitanism (Hannerz, 1996 [22]); neither are the individuals known as *Third Culture Kids*, defined by Pollock and Van Reken (2009 [23]) as the person who has spent years away from their mother culture and who constructs relationships with all the cultures without acquiring one totally.

A model of international curriculum requires clarifying the nature of the international student, found in the conceptions of the cosmopolitan citizen, which is the scope of this study in the idea of constructing a cultural platform that confronts the modern social imaginaries not suitable for our context.

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1. The eight mechanisms proposed by Dale (1999) are: borrowing, learning, teaching, harmonization, dissemination, standardization, interdependence and imposition.
 2. Data recovered at <http://monitor.icef.com/2015/02/new-zealands-international-enrolment-12-number-prospective-domestic-students-falls/> on February 24, 2018
 3. Data recovered from the bulletin of the Dirección de Comunicación Social UAS at: des.uas.mx/index.php?sec=3&tipo=i&id_noticia=7054&uas=1 el 29 de septiembre de 2016.

III. Methodology

The document analysis technique was used to review the different conceptualizations of the cosmopolitan citizen in the variety of strategies that in the modern social imaginary conform what is commonly known by internationalization and its influence in the curriculum. There were 14 documents selected for the analysis of the concepts of our main category, under the criteria of an adapted categorization of internationalization in a cartographic study of Stein and Andreotti⁴ (2016 [24]): commercial internationalization, internationalization for the public good, and critical and emancipatory internationalization.

IV. Discusión

As the scope of this study is to build a cultural platform for the internationalization of the curriculum, we aimed for the conceptualization of a cosmopolitan citizen that better fits the necessities and realities of a Mexican university. Such conceptualization should help building a cosmopolitan culture in the student and in the university. Culture is understood here in the notion of Geertz (2006 [25]) as a context or a set of contexts in the ones the individual expresses himself, but who in addition takes resources of his culture, administers and uses them from his own perspective. In that sense, the cosmopolitan culture should provide elements for the individual to make use of resources created upon the meeting of the local and the global in a conscious and reflective manner in his everyday reality.

The concept of citizenship in the cosmopolitanism has different interpretations. Short definitions like “citizen of the world” (Nussbaum, 1997 [26]) or “feeling at home in the world” (Sarup, 1996 [27]) enclose multiple perspectives and have an impact in the political educational discourse, as a result, the cosmopolitan identity is promoted through models or courses, student mobility or cultural encounters (Papastephanou, 2013 [28]). There are also, a series of precepts that permeate this concept from the classic Greeks, Diogenes (Nussbaum, 1997), going through the Kant’s enlighten cosmopolitanism, until reaching contemporary authors like Beck, Santos and Popkewitz.

In our times, education is revised to face the era of globalization from the perspective of a new citizenship. In the literature about internationalization we find references to that citizenship in the concept of the cosmopolitan citizen. We find definitions of that concept in the global imaginary as the citizen who:

“has his own preferences. Besides visiting a theater or a cathedral, this person would like to visit, for example, a market, to know the customs of the place; to an immigrant neighborhood to get a more complex idea of the social milieu; or even to a cemetery, if he wants to know the past of the city ...”⁵ (Bilbeny, 2007:9 [29]).

This description of cosmopolitanism coincides with the Waldron’s (2000 [30]) definition, who describes the cosmopolitan as a mixed being living in a mixed world, underlying in diverse cultures that offer rich and varied cultural material that constitute the being. This direct contact with diversity (in student mobility, for example) or indirect (through ICTs) is found in international education, and it is observed in its imaginary what it seems a jump to the development of respect for cultural diversity, a greater knowledge of the world, democratic formation, etc.

In Waldron’s definition is found what Beck (2005 [31]) calls *banal cosmopolitanism*, that means the cosmopolitanism that crosses borders as a blind passenger, like in the global consumerism. In a similar concept, Appiah (1997 [32]) explains that naïve cosmopolitanism is the one that follows the canons of neoliberal globalism. These forms of cosmopolitanism concur with Papastephanou (2013) assertion in regard to the visibility of a hegemonic-type-cosmopolitan education that presents an object-subject relationship; understanding as the subject the student and as the object the globalized world, where the subject benefits cognitively from the others, showing a moral and epistemic superiority. In this case, one of the approaches to education is to form individuals prepared to live and work abroad.

The study about transnational professionals of Colic-Peisker (2010 [33]) illustrates the above. The researcher argues that the development of the identity and belonging towards cosmopolitanism is given through profession, which is their global passport. Nonetheless, in a survey conducted in a US university (Han and Appelbaum, 2016 [34]) among international STEM students, with the objective of knowing the amount of students that plan to stay for future job opportunities, in the 47.8 percentage who wants to stay, there were no Latin-American students.

In that sense, we wonder if that type of cosmopolitanism is developed with a social responsibility compromise. What it is observed here is a cosmopolitan identity with no supportive cosmopolitan awareness. Among these imaginary of banal and naïve cosmopolitanism, the concept debates itself between an unguided universalism (McCarthy, 2011 [35]) and a hegemonic globalization (Santos, 2011).

On the other hand, Delanty (2006 [36]) understands the cosmopolitanism as the multiple ways in which the social world is constructed. The cosmopolitan awareness includes a social consciousness of today’s global

4. Stein and Andreotti (2016) present in their study four articulations of internationalization.

5. My own translation.

issues. In that sense, Beck's (2005) cosmopolitan look is a reality to the one individuals should respond in a historical, reflexive and dialogical manner in face of the cultural contradictions, local and global risks, the interdependences and the cultural mixture. This translation of the cosmopolitanism to the everyday reality invites, according to Beck, to the development of a public opinion about risks and rational decisions.

However, the understanding and knowledge of world issues is met by the internationalization of HE from an institutionalized cosmopolitanism (Beck, 2005), where the world is molded and ordered according to the organisms that take the decisions with respect to education. Education then requires of a reorientation of the discourse and mentality of the population, an orientation Nussbaum (2002 [37]) proposes as politically and civically guided. And that it would contribute with these benefits:

1. Through cosmopolitan education we learn more about ourselves.
2. We are better prepared to solve problems that require international cooperation
3. We learn to make consistent and coherent arguments and defend them.

That matching of the local and the global in education is an opportunity to understand and mitigate the effects of globalization, especially in developing countries, with the formation of an active and informed citizen, who owns the tools to resist being treated as a consumer of globalized cultural products. In contestation to that cultural globalization Santos (2011) sustains the oppositional cosmopolitanism as an emergence from below: the global south, the great majority in the planet. The sociologist explains that oppositional cosmopolitanism is the cultural form of the counter hegemonic globalization⁶. Then, it can be inferred that banal cosmopolitanism (Beck, 2005) represents the culture of hegemonic globalization.

V. Conclusión

So far, the exposed analysis provides guiding principles for the construction of a cultural platform that meets the reality of universities located in the global south. The cosmopolitanism in the dimension of social responsibility (knowledge and action in the problematic of the community and how this connects and it is influenced by the global); the dimension of knowledge and understanding of an interconnected and intercultural world (within a region where universities receive a 1.8% of international students⁷, but has a great cultural diversity); and the dimension of the capacity of critical argumentation based in Andreotti's concept of critical alphabetization (2006); which coincides with the concept of the plurality of knowledge (Santos, 2011), as the one that recognizes all knowledge as partial and incomplete, built in our contexts, cultures and experiences to transform our visions, with consistent and coherent arguments (Nussbaum, 2002), creating conscience and public opinion (Beck, 2006).

The variety of concepts shows the complexity of approaching the real needs of an international curriculum in a system fed by the global imaginaries of commercial internationalization. The construction of an international curriculum from a critical position and according to the local and social necessities is a process that can be understood depending on the time, habits, ideologies, and the evaluation of the cultural environment, which requires of a deeper study.

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⁷ UNESCO-UIS, 2012.

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